

CLIMBING THE LADDER

Book 4 - Chutes and Ladders



Chutes and Ladders

Book 4 of *Climbing the Ladder*

by Michael Loucks

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The Second Rung
Climbing Higher
Chutes and Ladders (*)

* Work in Progress

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I. Making Plans

July 13, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Keiko-chan, «結婚してください» (*Kekkon shite kudasai*)?" ("Will you marry me?")

She smiled, "もちろん結婚するよ!"» (*Mochiron kekkon suru yo!*) ("Of course I'll marry you!")

"I take it that means 'Yes'," I chuckled.

Keiko nodded happily then kissed me.

Given our special circumstances, we had agreed to forego the traditional betrothal ceremony, and to exchange rings as soon as they arrived.

"Hold out your hand, please," I requested.

She held out her right hand and smiled, "Remember, this is the traditional hand for Japanese. The right ring finger is said to be directly connected to the heart."

I nodded and slipped the ring onto her finger, then handed her the box with my ring. I held out my right hand, and she slipped the ring onto my finger.

"You look uncomfortable in that suit," Keiko said with an inviting smile.

"Perhaps you should take it off!"

I took her hand and led her upstairs where we undressed, got into bed, and made love, with Keiko on top of me. After we both had our release -- multiple for Keiko -- she stretched out on top of me.

"I love you, Jonathan," she said dreamily.

"I love you, Keiko-chan. I think we should schedule the «yuino» for August 13th. That would be three weeks after you finish this round of chemo, and is enough time for everyone to plan to be there."

"I think that makes the most sense."

"And we should speak to the Shinto priest to choose a day for our wedding."

"We need a Japanese calendar," Keiko said. "We want a «大安» (*Taian*) day for the wedding. The Kanji mean 'great peace' and those days are the most auspicious for wedding ceremonies, but also for starting a new business, moving to a new home, or beginning a journey. I actually have one in my drawer, which I'll check when we get out of bed."

"How common are those days?"

"Every sixth day," she replied. "The «六曜» (*Rokuyo*), or 'six days'. The cycle repeats throughout the year, and resets on the first day of the month on the Japanese calendar, which isn't identical to the Western one. Because of the number of days in a year, a specific date will not be the same type of day each year. Each day has a different auspice.

"The first is «先勝» (*Sensho*), and brings good luck in the morning, and bad luck in the afternoon. The second is «友引» (*Tomobiki*) and it brings good luck all day, except at noon. The third is «先負» (*Sakimake*), which brings bad luck in the morning, good luck in the afternoon.

"The fourth is «仏滅» (*Butsumetsu*), which brings bad luck all day, and is the worst day of the cycle. The fifth is «大安» (*Taian*), which brings good luck all day,

and is the best day of the cycle. Sixth is «赤口» (*Shakku*), which brings bad luck all day, except at noon."

"Do you actually believe that?"

"I think the best answer is to ask why we would needlessly tempt Fate or upset the «kami»? And it will matter to the priest. But you should treat it as you would a horoscope, which is basically how I think about it."

"OK, but I do have to ask, but the day you began your cancer treatment?"

"«先勝» (*Sensho*), so good luck when they began the chemotherapy. And Monday is «友引» (*Tomobiki*), so good luck except at noon."

We lay together for about fifteen minutes until Bianca knocked on the door and let us know that dinner would be ready in five minutes. We reluctantly got out of bed, took quick showers, dressed, and Keiko got her calendar from her drawer and scanned it as we went downstairs.

"Perfect!" she exclaimed. "August 13th is «大安» (*Taian*)!"

"So even picking the date was good luck," I chuckled.

"I think Saturday, October 8th or Saturday, November 12th are the best choices, if the priest is free one of those two days."

"Whatever will make your parents, grandparents and the «kami» happy will make me happy."

"Mom is serious about it, my grandparents a bit less so, and my dad thinks the same as I do."

"I'm all for keeping your mom happy," I replied. "At least as far as I'm able to, not being Japanese."

We sat down at the dining room table and Keiko held out her right hand.

"Does that mean what I think it means?" Kristy asked.

"It does! Jonathan asked me to marry him!"

We received congratulations from Jack, Kristy, Bianca, Juliette, and CeCi, though unfortunately, Deanna was at work.

"Did you pick a date?" Bianca asked.

"We need to check with the Shinto priest," Keiko said, but the options right now are October 8th or November 12th, both of which are Saturdays. Those are 'lucky days' on the Japanese calendar."

"Where?" CeCi asked.

"One step at a time," I chuckled. "Keiko will call the priest tomorrow to find out if either of those days works for him. Keiko, what's a proper venue?"

"A Shinto shrine," she replied. "There are none in Chicago. I think the closest one would be Hawaii, though there might be one in California. A large garden would work."

"What about the Chicago Botanic Garden?" Jack suggested.

"What do you think, Keiko?" I inquired.

"I like the idea! But then we certainly need the October date if we want to be outside. November might be cold. If it's OK with you, I'll call tomorrow and find out if it's possible and the details."

"What's with the rings on your right hands?" Juliette asked.

"That's traditional in Japan," Keiko replied.

"Some places in Europe do that, especially in the East Bloc," Kristy observed.
"Dad has Russian Orthodox friends who wear theirs on their right hand."

"We have to have a bridal shower!" CeCi declared.

"And a bachelor party!" Jack added.

"How about a joint one?" I replied. "I was going to ask you about yours so I can arrange with the usual guys, plus whoever you want me to invite."

"And a joint bridal shower, if Kristy and Keiko don't object," Bianca suggested.

"The problem is," Keiko said, "I can't be around large groups of people."

"We'll figure something out," Kristy said. "Let's chat after dinner."

I figured the bachelor party would be simple -- beer, burgers, and brats in the backyard. Neither Jack nor I were heavy drinkers, and a simple cookout would suit us both.

"Jonathan, does everyone know about Saturday?" Kristy asked.

"Yes," I replied.

Saturday was Keiko's birthday, and unfortunately, I couldn't take her out for a romantic dinner because of her weakened immune system, but Jack and Kristy had offered to cook and serve us a romantic meal in the Japanese room. Bianca graciously offered to make a cake for us. And Keiko's parents and grandparents would visit briefly during the afternoon.

When we finished eating, Kristy and Keiko went to the Japanese room and Jack and I cleared the table, washed the dishes, and cleaned up the kitchen. While we worked, we agreed on the cookout idea, and after checking the calendar, chose August 20th. When we finished, Jack and I went to the Japanese room to see what the girls had come up with.

"We're going to keep it small," Keiko said. "We'll each invite six girls. I'll have to wear a mask the whole time, but I'm OK with that. What did you come up with?"

"A cookout," I replied. "We'll invite about twenty guys, including some of Jack's friends from High School. Is there a best man at a Japanese Wedding?"

"No. The only participants besides the couple and priest are fathers, who make an offering to the gods. You would ask your grandfather or your father's or mother's brother, in the absence of your father."

"I'm not seeing my grandfather agreeing to offer anything to any god," I replied. "Would my mom's brother be OK?"

"Yes, of course, given it needs to be a male relative. Do you think your grandparents will attend?"

"I have no idea," I replied, "but it's on them, not on me. I'll invite them, and make it clear that it's a Shinto ceremony. Did you two pick a date for the party?"

"We're thinking August 21st," Kristy said. "But I need to make sure Allyson is available."

"If I calculate correctly," Keiko added, "that's the Sunday before the third round of chemo."

"OK. I'll put everything on the calendar in pencil and we can adjust as necessary."

"We'll leave you two to spend time together," Kristy said, getting up.

"We did THAT right after he asked me!" Keiko declared with a huge smile.

Kristy and Jack laughed, then left the room. I went to the kitchen, updated the calendar, then return to the Japanese room to spend time with Keiko. We sat together for a bit, then she called her grandparents and parents to give them the good news, and I called my mom.

"I'm happy for you, Jonathan," she said. "Keiko is a wonderful girl!"

"Your opinion matches my thorough analysis of the situation," I replied. "So I believe I'm fully aware of that!"

"You can be such a smart aleck at times!" Mom declared. "Do you have a date?"

"Even I'm not crass enough to bring a date to my wedding!" I teased.

"Will you stop!" Mom demanded, laughing. "I meant, have you decided on a day for your wedding?"

"Oh," said flatly.

"Jonathan Edward Kane!" Mom growled, but she was laughing.

"All three names! I'm in deep sneakers now!"

"Look, Mister..."

"Either Saturday, October 8th or Saturday, November 12th. We're hoping for the October date because we want to have the wedding at the Chicago Botanic Garden. We need to confirm with the Shinto priest."

"Oh, that's going to go over SO well with your grandfather."

"As I said to Keiko, that's his problem, not my problem. I'll invite him and let him know it's Shinto, and he can choose to be a little man or a big man. I have my bets."

"Me, too," Mom replied.

"I should tell you something important that will also likely have grandpa have a conniption fit -- there's a very good chance Keiko won't be able to have kids. Keiko and I will adopt if that's the case, but Bianca and I are going to have one together."

"Oh, for heaven's sake!" Mom said, laughing. "That should send him right off the deep end!"

"If you'll pardon the language, tough shit."

"I work in a High School! Do you think I've never heard that word? And worse?"

"No, but being polite to my mom is important."

"And I appreciate it. I suppose I can't say anything about your choice, given how you came into the world."

"I do NOT need details!" I chuckled. "I know the basic process!"

Mom laughed, "You're too funny. You know I meant the fact that I wasn't married to your dad."

"I know. I'll fill you in on the details once we have them. I don't know all the traditions as yet, but we'll make sure you know."

"How far are you taking those Japanese traditions?"

"I'll be wearing a kimono."

"I think I'm going to buy a better camera than my Instamatic!"

"I'm sure we'll hire my friend Dustin to take professional photographs, but you're obviously welcome to take as many as you like."

"Do I need some kind of special outfit?"

"No. Just normal wedding attire. It'll be outside in early October, hopefully, and temperatures are usually in the 50s. I think they have a banquet hall, but I'm not sure, and obviously I don't know if it's available."

"Just let me know. Congratulations, Jonathan. I'm very happy for you."

"Thanks, Mom!"

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, then went back to the Japanese room to spend time with Keiko before bed.



July 14, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Late on Thursday morning, I went to see Kendall Roy in Compliance to let him know to expect the application from Overland Park.

"The only hiccup is I begin my annual sensitive leave on Monday. Mr. Matheson will handle any concerns or any client questions."

"Unless the documents arrive tomorrow, the transfer won't be complete until around the 27th. It's coming in as instruments and cash, right?"

"Yes. There's no point in liquidating their current holdings beforehand to transfer only cash. I'll begin re-allocating their holdings when I return."

"Then for sure no earlier than the 27th by the time I complete my review, Legal signs off, and their current broker transfers the accounts."

"OK. There will be a secondary application for their charitable benevolence fund. I'm not sure when they'll request to transfer that account, but I'd expect it in the next two weeks."

"Total amount?"

"Eighteen plus three, so about \$21 mil."

He made some notes.

"OK. Have a nice vacation. Doing anything interesting?"

"Spending time with my fiancée who's having chemo."

"Sorry. I hope it works."

"Me, too," I replied. "And no need to apologize."

"You should have all the paperwork waiting for you when you return."

"Thanks."

I left his office and returned to 29 to continue my research. At 11:25am, I left the office to meet Bev for lunch.

"I asked Keiko to marry me yesterday," I said once we had our food.

"Totally not surprised!" Bev declared. "Did you set a date?"

"Keiko is making some calls today. We're hoping for October 8th."

"Justice of the Peace?"

"Shinto priest."

"OK, now THAT is a surprise!" Bev exclaimed. "You aren't religious!"

"Neither is Keiko, but it's her cultural tradition, and I get to wear a kimono."

"I'll bring my camera!"

"That's the same thing my mom said when I spoke to her last night."

"I assume there will be a bridal shower?"

"Yes. Kristy and Keiko are planning a joint one, and Jack and I will have a joint bachelor party. You and Glen will receive invitations."

"How is she doing? Be honest, Jonny."

"I think the best thing to say is that the first round of chemo was successful, but there is a long way to go. The doctor didn't give a prognosis because Keiko is in the middle group; not the best, not the worst."

"Which means?" Bev asked.

"That the first round of chemo reduced her leukemia cell count significantly, but didn't eliminate it, and she had some increase in cancer cells afterwards. It's basically a neutral result. That said, there were none in her spinal fluid, which is a positive development. We'll know more after the next round, which starts on Monday. How are things with Glen?"

"Good! He found a teaching job at Lane Tech. He was issued a temporary Illinois teaching license, but it should be made permanent before it expires in two years."

"That's great! How is your job?"

"I like it. I signed up for paralegal classes starting in September."

"Nights?"

"Yes. Glen agreed he'd watch Heather while I'm taking classes."

"And you two?" I asked.

"I expect him to ask me to marry him once he starts his new job in August. I'll say 'yes', obviously."

"Obviously! Are you happy, Bev?"

"Yes. That's not slight on you, Jonny."

"I didn't take it as one," I replied. "All I ever wanted is for you to be happy."

"Are you?"

"Yes. I love Keiko and I'm lucky to have her."

"But her..."

"Bev," I interrupted, "what kind of man would I be if I let that affect how I think about Keiko? Bianca flat out asked me what I'd do if Keiko received a terminal diagnosis and I said I'd still ask her to marry me. I said I wouldn't be able to look at myself in the mirror if I pushed her away because she has cancer."

"You were always very protective of me," Bev said. "Even after I treated you badly."

"I can't even begin to imagine the stress you were under as a pregnant teenager, and then the mess with Bob and paternity, and then wanting to keep your relationship with Glen secret. Did you decide what to do about your parents?"

"I don't want to talk to them."

"I understand that, and it's your decision, but I'd try to reconcile."

"Your mom never reconciled with her parents."

"And after having dinner with them at my uncle's house, I fully understand that. The difference is, your dad isn't a Republican Evangelical Fundamentalist. I'll invite my grandparents to the wedding, but I'll be shocked if they attend, given it's going to be what is, in their mind, a pagan ceremony."

"Did he use that term?"

"No, I actually learned it from my friend, Anala. CeCi uses it too to refer to Christmas and Easter as 'pagan holidays'."

"What denomination is she?"

"Quaker," I replied. "Though not so much that you'd notice."

Bev laughed, "Which means you got her into your bed!"

"No comment," I replied.

"Does anyone at your house go to church?"

"Bianca, occasionally, with her mom or grandmother, to make them happy. Kristy is nominally Lutheran, but stopped going when she moved out of her parents' house. She and Jack are marrying at her mom's church."

"And your Indian friend is Hindu, right?" Bev asked.

"Yes. She goes to a Hindu temple in the suburbs, though I don't know any details. None of the boys go to church, as I'm sure you can imagine."

"No church would have them, I suspect."

"I honestly don't know. Tom and Maria are Catholic, and I know she goes regularly, and Tom occasionally goes with her. But neither she, nor her sister, nor Lily, were fanatical the way my grandfather is, or the way Rachel Kealty was."

"That was the girl who was totally into you, but who was too religious for you, right?"

"Yes. I might have handled that better, but, in the end, someone with an Eastern mindset is a better fit."

Bev smirked, "It fit, alright!"

I laughed, "You told me, that first night, that you were very happy you didn't see it before it was in you because you would have freaked out!"

"Despite wanting to do it, I was naïve."

"Me, too. But it's pretty easy to figure out! And you were not shy about telling me what you wanted!"

"Guys have it so easy!" Bev complained good naturedly. "Orgasms are basically automatic!"

"Poor baby," I teased.

"Did you land that new client?"

"Yes. We sealed the deal while I was in Kansas yesterday."

"You're amazing, Jonny!" Bev exclaimed.

"I know," I said smugly.

Bev laughed, then said, "That is so not you! But the answer *is* so you!"

"You know I like dry humor," I said. "I always have."

"Does that cool ring on your right hand have some special meaning?"

"It's my engagement ring. I thought I'd explained that Japanese tradition -- both the man and woman wear engagement rings. What I discovered last night is that the right ring finger is traditional in Japan, not the left."

"So you can wear your wedding ring and none of the girls at bars will know you're married!"

"You know me better than that," I replied.

"I do, and it was a dumb thing to tease you about. Sorry."

"It's OK."

We finished our meal, I paid the check, left a healthy tip, and then Bev and I headed back to work.



July 15, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday, as Keiko and I had agreed, CeCi joined Jack, Kristy, and me, and we met Dustin and Archie at Connie's on 26th Street.

"You should have seen the house I shot today," Dustin said after we ordered. "It's the kind of house I expect you to own in a few years! Two-story, 5,500 square foot, red brick, five bedrooms, servants' quarters, hardwood floors, a finished

basement and attic, and a gorgeous fireplace. And get this, the finished basement has a sauna that would hold at least twenty people, along with a whirlpool. And the topper? The guy who owns it is your age and is from a small town in Ohio near Cincinnati."

"What's he do?"

"He's a student at IIT, but he's some kind of computer whiz kid. He ran a computer business in High School."

"What were you shooting for?" I asked.

"Brown Construction did the work and asked me to shoot it for a layout in a magazine."

"They did the work at my house," I replied. "But I don't think my house is going to win any architectural awards!"

"Tell him the best part, Dustin," Archie prompted.

"It has an elevator that goes from the first floor to the attic, with a stop on the second floor!"

"No way!" CeCi declared. "An elevator in a private home? Not just like a dumbwaiter?"

"An honest-to-goodness elevator that two people could use comfortably," Dustin confirmed.

"Crazy!" CeCi exclaimed.

"Now you have your goal, Jonathan!" Kristy exclaimed.

"Where's the house, Dustin?" I asked.

"Woodlawn Avenue in Kenwood. About ten blocks north of the university."

I wondered if that was the guy Anala was seeing. The bare facts fit, and I hoped I'd have a chance to ask her, but she and I had lost touch since she had started seeing the guy from Milford. I'd absolutely invite her to the wedding, and I hoped she'd show up. I also hoped she'd have time to talk, but that was looking increasingly less likely.

"I'd like to see the photos, if that's not a problem," I requested.

"It's not," Dustin replied. "Obviously, I can't give you copies, but I can show them to you. I'll develop them on Monday or Tuesday. Looking for ideas for your next house?"

"More out of curiosity," I replied. "The next house is several years away. I'm planning on buying a two-flat via an REIT at some point in the next year."

"REIT?"

"A Real Estate Investment Trust," I replied. "It's a tax-advantaged way to own real estate for investment purposes. Basically, it's a legal structure to avoid double-taxation by paying out the bulk of the profits as dividends to the shareholders. It's much easier to manage the costs associated with owning and operating rental properties that way, without incurring additional tax liability."

"Can anyone set one up?" Archie asked.

"Yes, but there are rules you have to follow such that an individual cannot simply set one up for themselves. I'll need to have a hundred shareholders, plus

follow the 5/50 rule, which means that any group of five investors cannot hold more than fifty percent of the shares. I'll invite all of you to invest, and the minimum will be low."

"A hundred investors?" Jack asked. "How?"

"I'll allocate shares to everyone invested in my Cincinnatus Fund, which is about two dozen at the moment. That's how I'll ensure the shares are distributed widely enough. If I can't find a hundred investors, I'll handle it differently. But we're several months ahead of ourselves at the moment. I need to onboard the new client I signed on Wednesday before I even think about looking for the investment property."

"So an adjutant professor of English from Elmhurst College can afford to get into it?" Archie asked.

"You got the job?" I asked.

"I did!" Archie said happily. "I received the offer letter yesterday and accepted immediately."

"Congrats!"

"Is there any way a poor teacher can invest?"

"Beyond the REIT? Absolutely. If you want to invest in the stock market, your best bet is an S&P Index fund, because Spurgeon's minimums are too high. I wish I had a way to allow all my friends to invest at a lower rate, but I don't see those rules changing anytime soon. Two firms -- Fidelity and T. Rowe Price -- offer them, with no minimums. And starting now, you'll eventually have enough to invest directly with me.

"My goal is to be able to allow any friend to invest with me, but I'm not at a point where I can ask for that kind of change. I'll get you the materials and help you through it, but it really is easy. The key is starting now, and investing regularly. As I explained to my new clients on Wednesday, if you start with \$500, then add \$100 a month, and do so for thirty years, at the passbook rate, you'll have around \$90,000. If, on the other hand, you earned 20% returns, which is typical for Spurgeon, but not guaranteed, you'd have just under \$2,000,000 when you're ready to retire."

"Seriously?"

"Seriously. The market return last year was just over 20%, and Spurgeon beat that significantly. This year I'm projecting around 20% for the overall market, and I'll beat it. But you'd earn those returns with the S&P Index."

"So if I follow your plan, I'm a millionaire when I retire?"

"I can't guarantee it, but yes, that's what would happen if I generate the returns I'm talking about."

"Get me the information as well," Dustin requested.

After we ate our pizza, we went to see *Staying Alive*, which was a sequel to *Saturday Night Fever* which starred John Travolta. I'd seen the VHS version the previous year, so I knew the backstory, while Dustin and Archie had seen it in the theatre when it had been released in 1977, and Jack and Kristy had seen it on VHS right after they'd begun dating. The music was great, as was the dancing, but the storyline was mediocre. After the movie, we got ice cream, then Jack, Kristy, CeCi, and I headed home, and I joined Keiko in our bed.

"What did you find out?" I asked.

"October 8th works for the Shinto priest and the Botanic Garden. The priest said he'll hold that date for us; the Botanic Garden needs a deposit of 10% and needs to know how many people we'd have at the reception to calculate the cost. What do you think of sixty? Twenty I choose, twenty you choose, and twenty we negotiate?"

"I think that might work," I replied. "I'll call on Monday and make the arrangements for the deposit."

"It's expensive."

"And will be worth it. Can we get the kimono in time?"

"Yes. I also called the shop in San Francisco. My grandmother will come by tomorrow morning at 9:30am to take our measurements. Then I'll call the shop to place the order."

"Perfect."



July 16, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"What do you plan to do for the next two weeks?" Bianca asked at breakfast on Saturday morning.

"Take care of Keiko," I replied. "I'm basically not even allowed to *think* about work for two weeks."

"You're joking!" CeCi exclaimed.

"I am, but only to a point," I replied. "I can't trade in any way, shape, or form, because I'm only allowed to trade through monitored accounts at Spurgeon, and

I'm not allowed to trade in those accounts during this time. If something crazy happens in the world, Mr. Matheson will decide what to do, if anything. None of my positions is particularly volatile, and I closed out my July call and put options, so I have none outstanding."

"What are those?" Keiko asked.

"They're the right to buy or sell shares of stock at an agreed price, usually as a hedge to lock in profits or limit losses. There are various ways to use them, and unless you're really interested, just consider them similar to buying insurance, and that will give you the basic idea of how I use them."

"I think we can leave it at that," Keiko replied.

We finished breakfast and Keiko and I went to the great room so I could watch CNN Headline News, which I usually did on weekday mornings at work, and occasionally did on weekends at home. The lead story was about a terrorist bomb which had exploded about two hours earlier at Orly Airport in Paris. Initial reports were that there were fatalities, but details were sketchy, which was to be expected in such a situation.

"Does that impact anything for work?" Keiko asked.

"Given it was in the terminal, and not aboard an aircraft, it'll briefly affect the French franc, but by Monday morning in Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Singapore, things will have calmed down that the markets won't react very much. Had it been aboard a plane, that airline's stock would have plummeted as soon as trading began, assuming regulators didn't prevent it from trading."

"They can do that?"

"Yes. There are a number of reasons a stock might not open for trading. That said, it's almost always possible to execute a private transaction which doesn't go through an exchange."

"Isn't that cheating?" Keiko asked.

"No. Stock exchanges exist to create orderly markets, but nothing prevents me from buying and selling stock underneath a buttonwood tree or in Tontine Coffee House."

"I take it those both have meanings?"

"Yes. The traditional meeting place for brokers in the 18th century was under a buttonwood tree in New York City. The Tontine Coffee House is where they met after signing the Buttonwood Agreement, which, in effect, created the New York Stock Exchange. They met there because it was a place where traders, underwriters, bankers, and politicians met to conduct private and public business. They used that facility until 1817, and then met in various buildings until they moved to 11 Wall Street in 1865.

"The first shares traded were the Bank of North America, the First Bank of the United States, and the Bank of New York. The First Bank of the United States closed when its charter ran out in 1811, and its successor bank actually still exists -- Girard Bank -- though there are rumors it's going to be taken over by Mellon Bank in the next month or so. The Second Bank of the United States wasn't chartered until 1816. The Bank of New York still exists with that same name, while the Bank of North America is now part of The First Pennsylvania Banking and Trust Company."

"You know all that just off the top of your head?"

"One of the modules I had to study covered the origin of the various stock exchanges. The banking information I know because banks are an important part of my job on the FX Desk. I've actually expanded my analysis to include Savings & Loans."

"How does it work with Bianca and Jack being here?" Keiko inquired.

"Neither of them has a securities license and isn't in a position to take any action on my behalf. They won't need to take the time off, either. There's actually no regulation that requires it, but it's considered a good practice for anyone in a position to manipulate client accounts.

"The only person with a brokerage license at Spurgeon who doesn't have to take time off is Noel Spurgeon. Everyone else has to take ten consecutive trading days of vacation. That does two things -- ensures we take a real vacation and helps ensure we aren't engaged in any illegal trading schemes or manipulating client accounts."

"What could you do?"

"The big one would be to hide losses, which I could do with complex transactions that are, in effect, akin to kiting checks, if you know what that means."

"I do. I remember from our personal economics class that it basically means writing a check from Bank A and depositing it in Bank B without enough money in Bank A, then writing a check from Bank B for the amount of the Check from Bank A."

"In a nutshell, yes. And there are more complicated schemes that use multiple people, and if done successfully, can multiply the money many times until someone cashes out and the entire scheme collapses. You could do it at stores as

well, if they offer cash back, and again, if done successfully, you could multiply the money you had until you walk away and the scheme collapses."

"So you would know how to do that?"

"Yes. Both the classes I attended and the study material from Spurgeon explain all the things that are illegal in some detail so we know how to spot them, and know what we can't do. Mainly, that's a banking problem, but you could easily do it with stocks as well. The most common illegal practices in the legitimate securities industry are front-running and churn. On the illegitimate side, it's pump-and-dump.

"Front-running is buying or selling before a large trade by a client to take advantage of the market movement. It is, in effect, stealing part of the client's profits. Churn is trading securities instruments -- stocks, bonds, options, and so on -- for the sole purpose of driving up commissions and fees. Pump-and-dump is an illegal scheme to raise the price of a generally worthless stock, then sell it."

"How would that work?"

"Usually with what are called 'penny' stocks -- that is, stocks with so little value they can't be traded on a regular exchange. Someone buys up as many of the shares as they can as cheaply as they can, then uses a telephone boiler room to entice unsuspecting people to buy shares, often with outlandish claims. When the price reaches a target point, the original purchaser sells the bulk of their holdings to the marks, the price collapses, and everyone loses money except the schemers. It works because often the only person willing to buy the shares is the schemer, so nobody can get out."

"Is that what happened in 1929?" Keiko asked.

"A lot happened in 1929, but the biggest problem was speculation with borrowed funds, either on margin or from banks, on the belief that the market would go up forever. Right before the crash, British investor Clarence Hatry and some associates were jailed for fraud and forgery, which created a crisis of confidence. Markets became extremely volatile, with wild swings in prices.

"Then, on Black Thursday, October 24th, 1929, the market dropped about 10%, and trading was so heavy that quotes were delayed and almost nobody knew their positions during the trading day. Leading investors tried to offset the problem by buying shares at inflated prices, but margin calls -- that is, a requirement to add money to an account against which you've borrowed to buy stock -- increased, forcing many people to sell when they couldn't come up with the funds.

"The market lost another 10% or so on Black Monday, October 28th, 1929. The same level of losses occurred on Black Tuesday, the 29th, for a two-day loss of over 20%. Losses continued, though there were occasional upturns, until 1932, when the market had lost about 90% of its value. At that point, the market began a slow, steady climb.

"Following the crash, regulations were enacted, beginning with the *Glass-Steagall Act* in 1933, which mandated separation between commercial and investment banking, and created the FDIC which insures bank deposits. Additional regulations included the *Securities Act of 1933* and the *Securities Exchange Act of 1934*. They've been updated, and other regulations passed as well."

"Could it happen again?"

"A serious decline in the value of the stock market? Absolutely. The key is, banks wouldn't fail, and margin investing is heavily regulated, as is short selling. So while it would hurt, it wouldn't cause a repeat of the Great Depression. A much

larger risk is runaway inflation and a stagnant economy. That's why we saw the Feds raise interest rates into the stratosphere, though they're coming down now."

"Changing the subject, are you doing your usual Saturday tasks?" Keiko asked.

"Yes, Bianca and I will go to the grocery store and dry cleaner, and after lunch, we'll resume working on a baby. Other than that, I'm all yours!"

"You're seeing Violet tomorrow, right?"

"That's the plan, unless you have some objection."

"No, not at all. I don't want you sitting around the house because I have to."

"I love you, Keiko, so I'll do whatever you need me to do."

"Yes, but as I've said, you need to take care of yourself and spend time with your friends."

"And I will. I had lunch with Bev on Thursday, I was out with Jack, Dustin, and Trevor last night, and I'm seeing Violet tomorrow."

The doorbell rang, interrupting our conversation, and I went to answer it. As expected, it was Keiko's grandmother who had come to measure us for our wedding kimono. She, Keiko, and I went to the Japanese room, and Atsuko used a cloth tape to take our measurements, marking them down in a small notebook she had brought with her. Once she had completed that, I served green tea, and then Atsuko left. Keiko called the shop in San Francisco, spoke for about ten minutes in Japanese, and once she'd completed the call, she explained the conversation.

"He promised he could have the kimono to us by August 15th. Mine would be traditionally white, with the proper «角隠し» (*tsunokakushi*), a formal white hat. Yours will be a black jacket over a black upper garment and a grey-and-white striped lower garment. I assumed it was OK for him to charge your same credit card."

"Yes, it is. As soon as we marry, I'll have cards issued in your name on a joint account. Are the kimono coming from Japan?"

"Originally, but they have a stock and might have the appropriate sizes in their storeroom. If not, they'll call on Monday to arrange for appropriate ones to be sent."

"Then, we should start making our guest list."

II. Round Two

July 16, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I think I may have underestimated," I said. "My mom and a date, if she chooses to bring one; my grandparents; my uncle and aunt; Violet; Dustin, Archie, Costas, Trevor; Jack and Kristy; Tom and Maria; Stuart and guest; Lily and Jim; Bev and Glen. That's twenty-one, and doesn't include our housemates and others I'd want to invite, including Anala and guest; Beth and guest; the members of Jeri's group and guests; Mr. Matheson and guest; Mr. Spurgeon and guest."

"Do you think Mr. Spurgeon will attend?" Keiko asked.

"I have no idea if he or Mr. Matheson would attend, but I feel I need to extend the invitations. The same is true with my grandparents, though my mom agrees that it's unlikely they'll show up for a Shinto wedding. But we have to assume they will for planning purposes. Your list is just about as long, right?"

"My parents and grandparents; my aunt, uncle, and cousin; my two great uncles and their wives who all live in California; Emmy and a guest; three girls from High School you haven't met and their boyfriends. That's nineteen, right there, and that's the minimum list. I almost think we need to go to eighty, though there is some overlap because obviously I'm friends with the girls who live here and want them there."

"Then I'll ask Chicago Botanic Garden about having eighty guests. If we can work that out, we'll need to get invitations out fairly quickly."

"You're going to need time to make phone calls on Monday."

"I have an AT&T calling card, so I can use it from the hospital."

"Are you planning to sit with me all day, every day?"

"Yes."

"You know that's not necessary," Keiko replied.

I smiled, "I know you've said that, but I can't go to work."

"You shouldn't just sit in my room all day for five days. At least have lunch with one of your friends a few days, and it would make sense to make all the phone calls from home."

"It feels almost like you're trying to push me away," I said.

"Never! But I'm concerned that if I don't say something, you won't properly look after your own needs."

"I need *you*, Keiko!" I said.

"I know you do, and I need you, but we'll also both need time to do our own thing, even if we do most things together. You'll have guy friends you want to hang out with, and I'll have girls I want to hang out with. May I make an observation?"

"If my fiancée can't, I'm not sure who could."

"Bianca, Jack, Bev, Beth, Anala..." Keiko said with a smile.

"Never mind," I chuckled. "What's your observation?"

"I think your relationship with Bev growing up, and your lack of guy friends colored how you think a couple should behave. Other than work and school, did you do anything with anyone other than Bev?"

"Rarely," I admitted. "As in, a few times in my life."

"Have any of your other relationships been like that?"

"No, not really."

"Because it wasn't typical. And you didn't spend time with other couples, did you?"

"No, we mostly just hung out together. We didn't even go to the movies very often, only a few times."

"But a lot of sex, right?" Keiko asked with a silly smile.

"Yes and no. It was never the focus of our relationship. There were comparatively long stretches where we didn't fool around, and that part of our relationship only lasted around eleven months. I'd estimate we were together that way around twice a month, if you averaged it out, and Bev was the one who decided."

Keiko laughed softly, "Of course she was! Girls always decide! Boys are almost always willing and ready!"

"Possibly," I replied with a grin.

"There's no 'possibly' about it!" Keiko declared. "Not that I'm complaining in any way! But going back to my point, we both need to do things for ourselves and

with our friends. You've made some good friends and you don't want to lose them. Think about how you feel about losing touch with Anala."

"You make a valid point," I replied. "But you're having chemo."

"Yes, and I know you'll take me there and bring me home and take care of me, but you have to take care of yourself, too."

"You won't allow me to win this argument, will you?"

"No!" Keiko declared mirthfully. "Shall we complete the list?"

We worked together and ended up with a list of seventy-seven names. which included Noel Spurgeon and Murray Matheson and their guests. I'd be pleasantly surprised if they attended, and wouldn't think ill of them if they didn't. My grandparents, on the other hand, were a different story. If they couldn't see far enough past their narrow worldview to attend the wedding of their only grandson, that would cause me to think ill of them, and would likely portend lifelong estrangement, as it had for my mom for a similar reason.

I had little time for people with such narrow, parochial worldviews such that they looked down on, and even avoided, people who did not follow their specific god and his specific rules, despite claiming to follow the same god as others. The alleged messengers of Abraham's god couldn't agree amongst themselves, with three main branches of Judaism, two main divisions in Islam, and thousands of so-called 'Christian' churches which couldn't even agree on ANY common doctrine as far as I could tell.

All that did was convince me that no supreme being could possibly exist, as if he or she were all-powerful, then there wouldn't be any question of what he or she wanted. In my mind, science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard's made up

Scientology religion was just as believable as some of what I felt were silly claims by the major faiths.

Only Buddhism had tenets that were largely believable and acceptable as a whole, but many people considered it a philosophy more than a religion. As for Shinto, while neither Keiko nor I took many of the tenets literally, I was happy to honor her grandfather by following their cultural tradition, 'lucky days' and all.

With the guest list complete, I went to find Bianca so we could make our weekly trip to the grocery store and dry cleaner.

"How goes the wedding planning?" Bianca asked, as I backed out of the garage.

"All we've done so far is come up with a proposed guest list of just under eighty. I need to call Chicago Botanic Garden on Monday and make the arrangements and negotiate a price. Once that's done, we'll send out invitations. According to Keiko, Chicago Botanic Garden will handle the catering for the reception, so that simplifies things. Dustin will take our photos, which also simplifies things. We already ordered our kimono and Keiko reserved the date with the Shinto priest. Other than a cake, I think that covers everything important."

"Honeymoon?" Bianca asked.

"No matter when we tried to do it over the next six months, Keiko would either be having chemo, recovering for it, or preparing for it. I think next Summer is our best bet. If there's a time when she's feeling OK, we'll take advantage of the trip to Saint Martin that Mr. Spurgeon promised."

"You missed out on a wild time!"

"Yes, but all things being equal, I'd rather have Keiko."

"No criticism, but it's quite the serious change for you."

I chuckled, "No, this is what I was like in growing up with Bev -- totally dedicated to one person. The guy you met was not really me. It was...like I was the proverbial kid in the candy store with infinite money in his pocket. I think I might have eaten a bit too much candy. That's not a regret, mind you, only a comment that the Jonathan you met wasn't *me*."

"I like the Jonathan I met!" Bianca declared. "I'd hate to see that change."

"Other than the 'American Gigolo' behavior -- minus being paid for it -- nothing is going to change. I'll still have my quirky sense of humor, still do the other things I do, have a baby with you, and so on. Other than not having sex again after you get pregnant, nothing else should change between you and me. Well, unless you want it to."

"No way! The only thing I would change is the expiration date of great sex with you! And I'm not really complaining, because I totally understand what you want and why, and that's what will make you happy. And that is all I want -- you to be happy."

"Are you happy?"

"Yes! A great job with a great future; you're going to be the father of my kid; I'm with Juliette, who I really like; we have a nice house to live in; and I have great friends! What more could I ask?"

"I'd say the fact that we're both happy means we found the right way forward. If you had asked me in May 1981 what my life would be like in July 1983, my answer would have looked nothing like it actually is!"

"What? You didn't think you'd sleep with forty-odd women, including having sex with at least two virgins in front of a group of their closest friends?"

"That too," I chuckled. "But I meant already having my securities licenses, having my own clients, managing around \$50 million, owning a house, and everything else. I figured I'd still be working in the mailroom after two years, just ready to move up to runner on the exchange floor."

"You seized the initiative and made this happen. That's ALL you, Jonathan."

"I had help."

"As you said, your uncle got you your foot in the door. You did the rest."

"With help from Murray Matheson, not to mention you, Jack, Anala, Jeri...you get the picture."

"And yet, you made it happen."

"I still find it amazing how quickly everything came together."

"You're just that good!" Bianca declared. "Not to put a damper on this and changing the subject, but when will you know the results of this week's chemo?"

"They'll draw blood a week from Friday, and we'll have the results on the following Monday. As I understand it from her oncologist, she'll need at least two more rounds after this one.'

"She can come home, right?"

"Yes, so long as she's feeling up to it. The first one was a double cocktail, plus the lumbar catheter. This one is just one drug, and she had no blasts -- cancerous

cells -- in her spinal fluid in either of her tests. That's a seriously positive sign, even if her other results were only so-so. I do need some advice."

"You've come to the right place! The Doctor is in!"

I chuckled, "I'll give you a nickel when we get to Jewel! Keiko is telling me I don't need to sit with her all day, every day, at the hospital."

"She's not one to play games," Bianca said. "Some girls would say you didn't need to, but then throw it back in your face if you didn't. That's not Keiko. You should at least go to the gym on your usual days. You're allowed in the Hancock Center, right?"

"Yes, just not on any of the Spurgeon floors, and I can't talk to anyone who is in a position to actually act on anything I might say."

"So meet me in the gym on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. And the other days, go out for lunch. You guys will be home for dinner, right?"

"Yes, but I wouldn't count on Keiko eating anything. They'll give her dextrose via IV, and they prescribed an electrolyte solution with glucose she can drink. It's meant for babies with diarrhea, but will work for her, too. The big problem comes if she can't even keep that down, because then she'll need an IV, which would mean staying in the hospital."

"What's her main risk?"

"An opportunistic infection, which is why we have the UV/electrostatic air cleaners."

"I've noticed a lot less dust in the house since that unit was installed."

"A nice added bonus," I replied. "I certainly don't mind when I'm dusting or mopping!"

"Same!" Bianca agreed.

We arrived at Jewel, completed our shopping, stopped at the dry cleaner, then headed home.

We had just put the groceries away when Keiko's parents and grandparents arrived so they could wish her a happy birthday. I served tea and cookies, and Keiko opened the presents her parents and grandparents had brought. They stayed for about an hour, and Keiko and I spent the rest of the afternoon together. At 6:00pm, Jack and Kristy brought in the meal they had prepared.

"Japanese?" I asked.

"I called Keiko's grandmother on Wednesday and asked for ideas," Kristy said. "The dinner service -- plates, cups, napkin holders, and flatware -- is our gift."

The plates, cups, and napkin holders were beautiful porcelain with Japanese designs, and the flatware had what I was sure were faux ivory handles.

"I hope the patterns are authentic," Kristy said. "I had to go with what I could find at Pier 1."

"They're beautiful," Keiko said. "Thank you."

"We'll leave you two to eat. Bianca will bring your desert when you're ready."

Thanks, I said.

They left and at Keiko's prompting I said "«Itadakimasu»", the Japanese blessing.

"We have wonderful friends," I said as Keiko and I began eating the fish, rice, and vegetables Kristy and Jack had prepared.

"We do!" Keiko agreed.

The food was awesome, and as promised, Bianca brought in a cake when we'd finished, and she, Juliette, Jack, Kristy, and CeCi sang *Happy Birthday* to Keiko. The seven of us shared cake and ice cream, and everyone gave Keiko a small present, with CeCi bringing Deanna's gift as Deanna was working. Keiko opened her gifts, and our housemates cleared away all the dishes. Once they were out of the room, I handed Keiko a small package, which she opened.

"It's beautiful!" Keiko exclaimed.

I'd bought her a small jade pendant which she had me put on her.

"I'm lucky to have you," I said, taking her into my arms.

"Make love to me one last time before Monday, please," she requested.

I scooped her into my arms, carried her upstairs, and we made love, then cuddled in bed for the rest of the evening.



July 17, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Is it still OK to hug you?" Violet asked after I showed her my ring.

"Yes, of course! Keiko isn't the jealous type, she knows we're close friends, and she made a point of saying that I need time with my friends, and she specifically mentioned you."

"You know I was worried because so many girls are possessive."

I nodded, "And one thing I promised myself was that my relationship with you was non-negotiable, and I would never have a committed relationship with anyone who couldn't accept that."

"Thank you," Violet said.

"You'll receive an invitation to our wedding, of course, as well as one to a joint bridal shower for Keiko and Kristy."

"Do you know the dates?"

"Our wedding will most likely be on October 8th at Chicago Botanic Garden. The wedding shower will be August 21st, which is the day after my bachelor party. You received your invitation to Jack and Kristy's wedding, right?"

"Yes," Violet confirmed.

"You can ride with Keiko and me to Jack and Kristy's wedding, and I'll make sure you have a ride to the Chicago Botanic Garden as well."

"Thanks! If your mom needs a place to stay, she's welcome to stay here."

"I appreciate that, and I'll let you know. On another topic, we have our first baseball game of the Summer on the 30th. It's a night game so I'll plan to be here around 5:30pm. I assume we're eating hot dogs at Comiskey for dinner?"

"Of course! And nachos!"

"I should be able to find out about Hawks tickets when I go back to work. I'll have a bit more access this year. Are there any teams you specifically want to see?"

"The Oilers, so we can see Gretzky. We play them here twice, once in November and once in January."

"OK. I'll try for one of those. Any other teams?"

"The Blues or the Red Wings, but those games are probably taken, because they're the big rivalries. I bet you can get Whalers or Penguins tickets with no trouble."

I laughed, "I bet! Or the LA Kings. I'll see how many games I can get. I'll try for a Bears game as well, but that will be whatever is available. Are you at all interested in basketball?"

"Not really, so if you can forego those in favor of hockey or football, you should!"

"I'll see what I can do. Do you need help in the kitchen?"

"Always! I enjoy doing things like that with you."

"I enjoy them, too!"

We went to the kitchen and Violet put me to work as her sous chef, meaning I did the chopping, slicing, peeling, and other assistant tasks.

"Are you taking a class in the Fall?" she asked.

"Yes. The stats class. It's something I really do need to understand better, even though I have Bianca to do most of the heavy lifting with regard to spreadsheets and data analysis. Are you taking two classes?"

"Yes," Violet replied. "I hope it works out so we can meet after class the way we've been doing."

"I hope so, too."

We had a wonderful meal, and an enjoyable dessert. After helping clean up, I headed home to be with Keiko.



July 18, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Early on Monday morning, Keiko and I headed to Rush-Presbyterian Hospital so she could begin her second round of chemotherapy. We checked in, and rather than a private room, Keiko was brought to a ward which had a dozen recliners, each with its own IV stand and monitors.

A clerk checked her in, then directed her to one of the recliners, which had a reasonably comfortable chair next to it for me. Keiko and I sat down, and a nurse came over a few minutes later to check her vitals and draw blood. About ten minutes later, a technician arrived to start an IV with the chemotherapy drug, as well as a D5 Ringer's.

We both read for about an hour before Doctor Morrison arrived to check on Keiko, accompanied by a medical student he was training.

"How are you feeling this morning, Keiko?" he asked.

"So far, so good," she replied. "I felt pretty good the past two weeks as well. And Jonathan took time off from work to be with me here."

"That's good to hear! How are you doing, Jonathan?"

"I believe 'on top of the world' is the correct phrase -- I asked Keiko to marry me and she said 'yes'."

"Congratulations! When is the wedding?"

"October 8th," I replied. "I'll call later to make the arrangements."

"Use the phone in my office," he said. "I'll let the nurses know, and they'll let you use the phone."

"I appreciate that, thanks."

"Keiko, I'll come check on you again after lunch, but if you need me for anything, just let the nurse know."

"I will," she said. "Thanks, Doctor."

He moved on to see another patient and Keiko beckoned me close.

"Add Doctor Morrison and guest to our list," she said.

"OK. That makes seventy-nine if everyone attends," I replied, then wrote a note in my notebook.

I sat with Keiko for the rest of the morning, sometimes talking, sometimes just holding her hand, and sometimes both reading. At 11:30am, I left to head to the Hancock Center to work out in the gym with Bianca, then had lunch with Beth.

We had a good conversation and traded referral names, and then I headed back to the hospital. I checked in with Keiko, then went to Doctor Morrison's office to call the Botanic Garden to make the necessary arrangements.

The price quoted was significant, but when I took into account that it would cover the wedding venue, the reception hall, and the catering, I decided it wasn't outrageous. After going over the options, I asked them to fax a contract to the mailroom to Jack's attention with a note to bring it to me, and promised I'd put a check for the deposit in the mail in the morning.

"All set," I said to Keiko when I returned to the chemotherapy ward. "They're sending a contract to the fax machine in the mail room and Jack will bring it home."

"You didn't call him, did you?"

"No. I asked them to fax it to his attention with a note to deliver it to me. I'll read it tonight, then mail a check with the deposit tomorrow. What are we doing about the invitations?"

"Do you know anyone who runs a print shop?"

"No, but I can ask call around tonight to find out if any of our friends know anyone. Otherwise, it's the *Yellow Pages*. We will need to order a cake, so I'll ask if they know a bakery as well. Chicago Botanic Garden covers everything else for the fee, and that includes parking and anything else for which they normally charge."

"Great! Thank you!"

"Well, I'm spending *our* money," I chuckled. "So thank yourself as well!"

Keiko smiled, "It's not ours just yet!"

"It may as well be! And I want you to start thinking that way, please -- our money, our house, our car, and anything else. The only thing I ask is that you stick to the budget we create together."

"Of course!" Keiko declared. "My parents will continue to pay my tuition, as they promised."

"Please don't have them pay rent for next month."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive. How are you feeling?"

"OK, so far. It was late the first day when I started feeling bad last time, and this round isn't as intense. I ate lunch and kept it down, which is a good thing. We'll see what happens with dinner."

"Kristy promised to make simple food, including soup, for dinners this week. And we'll avoid spices in the hopes you can keep some food down."

"You know that's not necessary," Keiko said.

"I know no such thing! Your friends love you as much as I do, and we all want you to beat the leukemia. And they all want to help in any way they can."

"I appreciate it. What are you doing tomorrow?"

"Having lunch with Marcia. I left a message for Anala, and I hope she'll call me back and we can meet for lunch this week, but I'm not counting on it."

"It seems so wrong that she simply dropped you for this other guy."

"I agree, but that's her choice. This is the last time I'll try to get in touch with her."

I spent the rest of the afternoon with Keiko, and Doctor Morrison came by as he promised. Just after 4:00pm, the chemo drugs had been fully administered, so I took Keiko home. She did manage to keep her dinner down, and we spent time in the Japanese room before I walked her up to her room to say 'good night'. I couldn't kiss her, because of the chemo drugs, so once she'd gone into her room, I went back downstairs to spend a bit of time with my housemates watching TV. Just before 10:00pm, Bianca and I went up to her room to work on our baby.



July 22, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday afternoon, after a week of chemo for Keiko, Doctor Morrison came to speak with us.

"Keiko, you're doing great," he said. "Your side-effects aren't as bad, and while it's small consolation when you can't keep solid food down and always feel cold, the fact that you can eat broth and Jell-O is a good sign. As for next steps, we'll draw blood a week from today. We're looking for a reduction in blast cells, and the bigger the reduction, the better."

"What would you consider successful?" I asked.

"Keiko's blast count went from about 33% to 14%, then rose to 16% as of Monday. We want to see it below 8%, that is, reduced by at least half from where it is, then maintain. A small increase after this round is not failure."

"Define small, please," I requested. "And explain the prognosis."

Doctor Morrison nodded, "You want it straight. No more than a percentage point. If it's more than that, I'd have to reclassify it as refractory AML with early relapse. The prognosis would be bleak, and the only reasonable course of action would be a marrow transplant. Unfortunately, none of Keiko's family match sufficiently."

"I don't want to wait to see what happens," I said. "I want to ask Loyola to set up a bone marrow drive. They'll need you to confirm that it's legit."

"Of course. Just give them my office number and I'll send them everything they need, and coordinate the necessary technicians, though they can probably use Fourth Year students from their medical school."

"I'll make the call on Monday morning," I said. "Is there anything else we can do for Keiko?"

"You're doing it," Doctor Morrison said. "Believe it or not, Keiko having a positive attitude, a loving fiancé, and supportive friends, can make the difference between success and failure."

"We hope you'll come to our wedding with your wife," Keiko said.

"I'm looking forward to it!" he replied. "I'll see you next Friday unless you spike a high fever or feel like you have a cold."

He left and once the nurse checked Keiko's vitals, the IVs and monitor were disconnected and we could head home.



July 23, 1983, Aurora, Illinois

On Saturday, I picked up Violet at noon, and we headed to Aurora for Shelly's wedding to Doctor Perry Nielson. I'd considered staying home with Keiko, but in the end, decided I needed to attend Shelly's wedding. To ensure Keiko wasn't alone, and to foster good relations, I had called her parents, who came to the house to stay with her while I attended the wedding. Keiko and I both carefully avoided mentioning I was taking Violet as my 'date', though Violet and I were obviously going just as close friends.

"Did you do anything during the week except sit with Keiko?" Violet asked.

"I went to the gym three days, and had lunch with Beth, Bev, Marcia, and Nelson, and met over lunch with Nancy King, my tax attorney and Robert Black, my CPA."

"Oh, that sounds like fun!" Violet teased.

"Not really, but I need their advice to stay out of hot water with the IRS. The tax code is insanely complex, and even with a tax attorney and a CPA, it's easy to make mistakes or miss out on legitimate deductions. But my most important goal is not doing anything that is questionable in any way. I don't want any extra attention from the government."

"You're subject to serious oversight, from what you've said."

"Yes. Spurgeon has to file all manner of trading reports on a daily basis, as well as quarterly reports, to the SEC. And they can request additional information at any time. I've had that happen once so far, and it will very likely happen regularly over my career."

"Why?"

"If you're very successful, they suspect you're cheating. Not because you've necessarily done anything wrong, but beating the market consistently is a red flag in their minds, and raises questions of illegal activities such as insider trading or front-running. We discussed those terms."

"Right, basically cheating by having secret information or cheating your clients."

"Exactly. Those things do happen, so the SEC is vigilant. As Mr. Matheson and Mr. Spurgeon have said, oversight is a cost of doing business. And Mr. Spurgeon insists on a squeaky clean shop. It's OK to come right up to the line, but going even a fraction of an inch over is grounds for dismissal."

"That's good."

"And it ensures our customers know we're completely above-board and is one of the major selling points for Spurgeon Capital. If I can tell a potential client that the returns we generate are free of even a whiff of a violation of securities regulations, it helps them trust us. Granted, the SEC isn't perfect, and they do miss stuff, but Spurgeon has been investigated so many times and come out clean that it's a strong selling point. He has had people violate regulations, and he fires them on the spot, and reports them to the government. That also helps his reputation for running a clean shop."

"Why would someone cheat at Spurgeon?"

"Greed, arrogance, ambition, and impatience are the main drivers. The guy who was busted not long after I started felt he was smarter than everyone and couldn't be caught. He wasn't as smart as he thought he was, and the weak link in his chain turned out to be a relative who gave him up to the IRS."

"Wow!"

"Well, he was using his relatives' accounts to trade without supervision, and the IRS asked one of them about the accounts. The person, afraid they were going to go down, immediately flipped. Spurgeon found out about it from a contact at the IRS and fired the guy before the IRS made a referral to the US Attorney for prosecution."

"A smart move."

"Very."

We arrived at Saint James Lutheran Church on Ogden Avenue, just east of Route 59, about twenty minutes before the wedding was scheduled to start. We were ushered to seats on the bride's side. Bianca was already at the church, as she was a bridesmaid, and she'd brought Juliette and CeCi with her. Jack and Kristy arrived a few minutes after we did, and were seated next to us.

I had only been to a pair of weddings, both Catholic, and the Lutheran service seemed simpler, at least from what I remembered about Tom and Maria's wedding, and my mom's friend's wedding when I was eight or nine. When the ceremony ended, Violet, Jack, Kristy, CeCi, Juliette, and I went to Denny's to have coffee as we had about ninety minutes before we could get into the reception hall. After about an hour at Denny's, we drove to Long Island Sound on New York Street, in Aurora.

"Is it OK to ask you to dance?" I inquired of Violet as I pulled into the lot.

"Is it OK with Keiko?" Violet asked.

"Not just OK," I replied. "She insisted, but only if you were comfortable with it."

"With you? Yes. I don't mind if you dance with other girls, but I don't feel comfortable dancing with anyone else."

"I discussed it with Keiko and I'll only dance with you, Bianca, Juliette, or CeCi, but mostly you."

"Her decision, or yours?"

"Hers, because I was only going to dance with you. She felt it would be rude to refuse to dance with our housemates, and I conceded the point. I'll only dance with them if they ask, though."

"Keiko is...no, I shouldn't say that."

"Go ahead, because you're going to say what I know is a distinct possibility."

"She's acting as if she's going to die," Violet said quietly.

"I'd modify that slightly and say that she's acting as if she knows there's a significant chance she's going to die."

"You don't seem to be doing that."

"I acknowledge that it's possible, but I choose to act as if she's going to be cured."

"But do you think so?" Violet asked.

"I honestly don't know," I replied. "And neither does the doctor. As best I can tell, no doctor could give us a definitive answer, and all we can do is continue the chemotherapy and see the results. Ready to go in?"

"Yes. I'm sorry if I depressed you."

"You didn't. It's a possible outcome of which I'm aware, and I've considered it. I choose to have a positive outlook unless something forces me to think otherwise."

We got out of the car and headed into the banquet hall. We were seated with our other housemates, except for Bianca, who was at the head table with Shelly and Perry, and we had a great time. I did end up dancing, once, with each of my housemates, but otherwise only danced with Violet. For slow songs, Violet and I danced in what Juliette referred to as 'Junior High style' -- with room between us, rather than bodies pressed closed together.

As Violet and I had agreed, we left as soon as Perry and Shelly had made their exit and we headed back into the city.



July 25, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday morning, I placed the call to Loyola and spoke to an assistant in Chancellor's office about bone marrow testing, and after providing some details, the young woman, Kelly Cook, promised to call Doctor Morrison to confirm and to obtain the necessary information. She promised that someone would call back no later than Wednesday morning.

When Keiko's grandmother arrived, I headed to the print shop that I'd located to review sample wedding invitations. I arrived at the shop and asked for Patrick Demerath. The clerk summoned him and he invited me into a small office.

"Your fiancée isn't with you?" he inquired.

"No. She's recovering from chemotherapy, so has to avoid going out in public as much as possible."

"I'm sorry to hear that. I hope she recovers fully."

"Me, too."

"Let me show you our collection of invitations," he said, pulling what looked like a photo album from a shelf behind him.

"Keiko, that's my fiancée, wanted something simple but elegant. Are you able to include Japanese characters?"

"If you can provide examples, I can have a graphic artist create them, yes. There would be additional cost."

"I understand. Everything will be in English, but we'll want names rendered in Japanese. I have the names in English and Kanji."

I handed him a piece of paper on which Keiko had written our names and her parents' names in Kanji.

"Did you have a specific color scheme in mind?"

"No."

"Let me show you some examples."

We looked through the book and I chose a slightly off-white paper with black script, and we discussed the text. Keiko and I had agreed we'd use the traditional wording in English, which made things easier. Once we'd agreed on everything, Patrick brought in their graphic designer to verify the Kanji and once everything was set, he provided a price quote for a hundred invitations, and after thinking about it for a minute, I signed the quote sheet.

"We can have a proof for you by Friday, then deliver the entire order on Friday of next week."

"Thanks," I replied.

I wrote a check for half the cost, received a receipt, and after shaking hands with Patrick, I headed home. Keiko was having a so-so day, but was able to keep her soup and Jell-O down, which was a positive sign, but not being able to touch her without wearing surgical gloves was frustrating, even if I understood the rationale. Keiko's grandmother stayed for about two hours, which allowed me to do some cleaning and laundry.

Once Atsuko left, I took the *Chicago Tribune*, *Crain's*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Economist* to Keiko's room to read while I sat with her. As she had after the first round, Keiko mostly slept, but I wanted to be there if she needed anything. The intercom system I'd purchased at RadioShack was handy, but I simply felt better being with Keiko as much as possible.

I read in the *Trib* that on Saturday, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had ambushed a Sri Lankan Army patrol, killing thirteen soldiers. Funeral plans had been made, then canceled, setting off riots which had created a serious crisis. According to news articles, the crisis looked set to turn into a full-blown civil war.

As terrible as it was for the people of Sri Lanka, I expected it to have little effect on the markets, though it would increase my global volatility and conflict scale slightly. Events in the East Bloc were far more relevant, as was the start of hurricane season, which could, depending on severity, have significant impact on the US economy. I made a few notes, though I wouldn't be able to act on them until the following Monday when I returned to the office.

The day was quiet, Keiko slept most of the time, and after bringing Keiko her meal, I had dinner with my housemates. Bianca and I made our daily attempt at making a baby, and then I sat with Keiko until bedtime.



July 26, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Tuesday was much like Monday, though without any errands. Late in the afternoon I dressed and headed to Jeri's house for our monthly dinner.

"How is Keiko?" Allyson asked after everyone had arrived.

"Recovering from round two of chemo," I replied. "We'll know more next Monday when we see the test results. I proactively contacted Loyola to start a bone marrow testing drive, and they confirmed today that they'll begin on August 15th, when students start returning to campus."

"Proactively? As in, she might need one?"

"Yes. They already tested her relatives, but didn't find a good match. Supposedly a sibling is best, but Keiko is an only child, and neither her parents nor her cousin were close enough."

"That sucks," Nelson observed. "I'll mention it at work. Nobody there is Japanese, but that's not a requirement, right?"

"Correct. It would significantly increase the chances of a match, but it's not a limiting factor. I don't know the technical details, but it has to do with the genetic makeup of the blood, which is why siblings are the most likely match."

"I can mention it at the bank," Pete offered. "We actually have some Japanese nationals working in the office."

"I appreciate both offers," I said. "Thanks."

"Have you been tested?" Jeri asked.

"Not yet. I'll do that on Friday when Keiko has her blood drawn for her tests."

"Miss Jeri?" Karl announced, coming into the room. "Dinner is served."

Jeri, Allyson, Pete, Gary, Nelson, and I all followed him to the dining room and took our usual places, with Jeri and I at the ends, and the other four on the sides. We had a great meal, wonderful conversation, and after dessert, I skipped drinks and headed home to be with Keiko.

III. Status Quo Ante

July 29, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"How was your week, Keiko?" Doctor Morrison asked when he came into the exam room at Rush-Presbyterian Hospital on Friday afternoon.

"The nausea and diarrhea became progressively worse, though this morning wasn't quite so bad."

"Have you kept anything down?"

"Just the special water you prescribed until this morning, when I ate a bit of Jell-O and some broth and didn't immediately feel as if I needed to throw up."

"All of that is normal, unfortunately. As long as you can keep the fluids down, you won't become dehydrated and your electrolytes will stay in balance. How much are you drinking?"

"Two bottles a day, plus sips of regular water all day."

"Good. Keep doing that and try soft foods as soon as you feel up to it. I'd like to do a complete physical, then I'll have Mary draw blood. I'll step out so you can change into a gown; panties only under it, please."

He left the room, and I helped Keiko, who was very weak, change out of her loose-fitting clothes and into a hospital gown. About five minutes later, Doctor Morrison returned with Nurse Mary and conducted a thorough physical exam.

"All things considered, you're doing well," Doctor Morrison said after Mary had drawn blood. "I know it might not feel like it, but other than your slight fever and the digestive problems, I don't see any other negative effects -- your heart is strong, your eyes are clear, there's no swelling, and you show no signs of infection. You're still immunocompromised, so continue wearing your mask if you have to go out. Any questions?"

"Just one," Keiko replied. "Is it OK to sleep in the same bed with Jonathan?"

"It's been a week, so I'd say that's fine. I'd advise against intercourse, but in the end, that's up to you. Anything else?"

"No."

"Then you can get dressed. Mary will come back in a few minutes to draw blood from Jonathan for bone marrow matching."

"Thanks, Doctor," Keiko said.

"I'll call you on Monday with the results," he said.

He and Nurse Mary left, and I helped Keiko dress. A few minutes later, Nurse Mary returned and drew a tube of blood from my left arm.

"Do you consent to being entered into our registry which will be shared with other hospitals via the National Marrow Donor Registry?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied. "I absolutely want someone to help Keiko, so I have to do the same for others."

I wondered how the country would react to blood being drawn from every baby at birth, and their records entered into the database. That would significantly

increase the chance of anyone being able to find a match, but I was positive the idea was a non-starter given the general distrust of government that was common in the US.

"OK," Nurse Mary said. "If you'll just sign this form, you're all set."

I scanned the form, found nothing objectionable, and signed it. I handed it back to Nurse Mary, and then the three of us left the examination room.

"Do you think we could go to Grant Park?" Keiko asked as we left the hospital. "I want some time outside."

"Sure," I agreed.

Twenty minutes later, I'd parked and Keiko and I were sitting in the grass in Grant Park.

"You're going out tonight, right?" Keiko asked.

"Yes, Dear," I replied with a goofy smile.

"Oh, stop!" Keiko demanded, but she was laughing. "You know why I asked."

"Because I have a strong predisposition to be with my fiancée!" I countered.

"Which is a good thing! But you know my point."

"I do. And CeCi is my companion tonight. Do you remember that Violet and I are going to see the Sox play the Yankees tomorrow night?"

"Yes."

"Do you want me home when Doctor Morrison calls on Monday?"

"I do, but he didn't say when he'd call, and you need to be in the office."

"I do," I agreed. "And given it's my first day after two weeks off, I probably should work my standard hours, though I think I'm going to go in early to catch up. Your grandmother will be at the house on Monday, right?"

"Yes, in the morning. Kristy will be home in the afternoon."

"Will you call with the results?"

"If it's bad news, I don't want to tell you over the phone. Are you OK with waiting until you get home?"

I actually didn't see a problem with her calling, and I wanted to know as soon as possible, but I felt I had to defer to Keiko's wishes.

"If that's what you want, yes, I'm OK with it."

"Good. You confirmed the order for the invitations, right?"

"I did. The only other thing I need to do is the weekly grocery shopping. I don't need a trip to the dry cleaner as I haven't worn a suit in two weeks except for the wedding last Saturday. Do you still plan to attend Jack and Kristy's wedding?"

"Yes, though obviously it's a week after I finish a round of chemo, so I may not be able to stay long."

"Jack and Kristy understand," I replied. "Allyson offered the use of her guest room, so I was thinking we go to the wedding, then go to Allyson's house so you

could nap before the reception, then stay at the reception as long as you're feeling OK. Obviously if you don't feel up to it, we'll just come home at any time."

"I want to try going to the reception, so if you could arrange that with Allyson, that would be great."

"I'll take care of it," I said. "Did you decide what to do about the Fall semester?"

"I registered for classes before I had the first round of chemo, but the university will allow me to withdraw late, if necessary. The challenge is three rounds of chemo during the semester, which would mean missing about half my classes. I think my best option is to not take classes in the Fall, and start again in the Spring. If everything goes well, I could take Summer classes and still graduate on time."

"I have to leave that decision to you, and I'll support whatever decision you make. I do plan to take the stats class at Circle. It'll be Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 7:00pm to 9:00pm."

"I assume you'll go out with Violet after class?"

"She did say she was hoping we could continue to do that, and I would like to."

"May I say something direct?" Keiko inquired.

"Of course!"

"One of the things I like most about you is that you're decisive. Ever since I received my diagnosis, you've been, well, fawning and too deferential. I want you to be the strong, decisive man I fell in love with. To use a phrase I read in an excerpt from a book by Frans de Waal, you should be the 'Alpha Male'. It's why you're so successful."

"Alpha male'?"

"It was about chimpanzees and male dominance, and he suggested it might apply to humans. My psychology professor had us read some excerpts from that book. I think pretty much everyone you work with would qualify as an 'Alpha male'."

"Are you trying to say I work with a bunch of chimpanzees?" I asked with a grin.

Keiko laughed, "You said it, not me! But they are all aggressive, dominant, and decisive, right?"

"Yes, they are. Back to us, you don't think I should ask your opinion and take your views into account?"

"Of course you should, but you can do it without being submissive."

I took a breath and nodded, "I was always submissive to Bev, and I think that goes back to our conversation about how things were for me growing up. With regard to Bev, doing what she wanted kept her happy."

"Which made YOU happy!" Keiko declared mirthfully.

"I was submissive before I realized my best friend had turned into a girl!" I chuckled.

Keiko laughed, "Come on, you couldn't have missed her developing!"

"I didn't, but I didn't think about it until that night in the barn when she kissed me. She was always just 'my friend Bev'. I need to find a balance between being what you called an 'Alpha Male' and treating you properly. The guys at

Spurgeon, with a few exceptions, do not balance their behavior and do not treat their wives properly."

"What you called 'coke and hookers'?"

"Yes, though you could call it 'coke and secretaries' or if the rumors about Mr. Spurgeon are true, 'coke and teenagers'."

"I was a teenager until my birthday!" Keiko smirked.

"Technically," I chuckled. "But usually when we say that we mean Junior High and High School age, not college. And for him, ninth grade isn't too young, at least according to the scuttlebutt."

"What do you think the age of consent should be?"

"Fifteen, but even at age twenty, I would never consider having sex with a fifteen-year-old girl, even if it were legal. Mr. Spurgeon is thirty-eight."

"Don't you think that's up to the girl?"

"Yes, of course! I said *I* wouldn't do it. The concern I have is what would happen if Mr. Spurgeon were to be arrested. That would not be good for the firm."

"No, it wouldn't. It seems like an awfully big risk."

"I agree, but as Jeri has pointed out, the rules are different for the very rich."

"And for politicians or politically connected people," Keiko added. "But you don't agree with that, do you?"

"I acknowledge that is the situation, but I object strongly. Laws should apply equally to the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak. In fact, the laws should be tougher on the rich and powerful, given they have the means to defend themselves, which the poor and powerless do not."

"Jonathan Kane, radical socialist!" Keiko teased.

"Hardly! But being rich means you can hire good attorneys, and if you combine that with lax enforcement, the problem becomes worse. Noel Spurgeon could spend a million bucks fighting the government with F. Lee Bailey as his attorney, whereas someone living in Cabrini Green has an overworked, underpaid public defender."

"We've never really discussed it, but do you agree with progressive taxes?"

"I think that's what our republic has instituted, and that's fine! I'd prefer a flat tax with a large personal exemption, deductions for state income and property taxes, and nothing else, because it would put an end to the ridiculous amount of time and energy wasted on complying with the tax code! But you could do the same thing with two or three tiers, but again without all the loopholes and exceptions. It might lead to me paying more taxes, but I also wouldn't need a CPA and tax attorney on retainer!

"With a simplified system, even with three tiers, nearly everyone could file their tax return on single-sided form -- list all your income, subtract the deductions, calculate the tax. I know some people would have a fit about not receiving a lower rate for long-term capital gains, but with the system I'm proposing, the tax rates could be much, much lower than they are now."

"That seems more Republican than Democrat."

"I don't identify with party labels; I'm only concerned about what works and what's the most efficient way to provide public services and pay for them."

"Our family is Republican, because my grandfather holds Democrats responsible for Japanese being interned in concentration camps during World War II, despite many of them being American citizens. According to my grandfather, over 120,000 Japanese-Americans were put in concentration camps, and around two-thirds of them were citizens!"

"I remember that from American history, and it's shameful. I recall a number of German-Americans suffered the same fate, but not to the same extent."

"Not even close. California law defined 'Japanese' as anyone who had one-sixteenth Japanese blood. That means having a single great-great-grandparent who was Japanese indicated someone who should be arrested and interned. Think about that -- our great-great grandchild would qualify. There were no such rule for Germans, and only about 10,000 were interned, but based on individual decisions."

"Which is how America is supposed to work," I observed.

"My grandfather is friends with Fred Korematsu, who sued the US government and lost in the Supreme Court. My grandfather knew him in California, and when my grandfather moved to Chicago at the urging of friends here, Korematsu-san chose to stay in California in his job working as a welder supporting the war effort. His treatment and subsequent loss at the Supreme Court are disgusting."

"You'll get no argument from me."

"We should probably head home," Keiko said. "You have your evening out, and I'm pretty tired. I plan to sleep in our bed with you tonight."

"OK."

We walked back to the underground garage where I'd parked my car, then drove home to Rogers Park. I showered and dressed, then made broth for Keiko. Once she had eaten her beef broth, Jell-O, and two Saltine crackers, CeCi and I left the house to meet Jack, Kristy, Dustin, Archie, Costas, and Trevor for dinner at Ed Debevic's.

"Long time, no see!" Sophie exclaimed when she came to the table.

"Hi, Sophie! How are you?"

"Good! I heard from Dee that you're engaged!"

"I am."

She offered congratulations, then took our drink order. The meal was awesome, as always, and Sophie flirted lightly, but it felt more a part of the schtick than anything serious. We left her a healthy tip when we paid the bill, then headed to the theatre to see *National Lampoon's Vacation*, starring Chevy Chase. The movie was absolutely hilarious, and we all enjoyed it. After the movie, we had ice cream, then CeCi and I headed home.

"Next Friday?" I asked CeCi when we walked into the house.

"These dates are fun, but do not end the way I wish they did," she replied. "But I totally understand why they can't. And yes, I'm happy to go with you next Friday."

I hugged her, she kissed my cheek, and I headed up to the master bedroom. Keiko was already in bed, but was reading, so I undressed, brushed my teeth, used the john, then climbed into bed next to her.

"Just cuddle me tonight, OK?" she requested.

"Of course."



July 30, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Violet and I arrived at Comiskey Park in time to watch the end of batting practice, and once the Sox had gone to the clubhouse, we went to a concession stand to get hot dogs, nachos, and Cokes, then returned to our seats which were in the upper deck, about halfway down the third-base line.

"For the next game, we might not be able to get to the ballpark in time for batting practice," I said. "Keiko and I are having a traditional Japanese engagement party with our families, called a «yuino», at noon. We'll be done in time for you and me to make it before the National Anthem, but probably not much before."

"You're sure that's OK?"

"It is. I discussed everything with Keiko and she's insisted I do things with my friends, and that absolutely includes you!"

"Did you get the wedding invitations out?"

"Not yet. The printer will have them ready next Friday, and we'll spend Saturday addressing them, and get them out the next Monday. Did Kristy call you about the bridal shower?"

"Yes. I'll be there!"

"Great!"

The game started out with each team scoring a run in the first inning, but then things settled down until the fifth inning, when the Sox plated two runs to take a 3-1 lead. They added a single run in sixth and another in the seventh, to take a 5-1 lead, which they held until the end of the game. We were deprived of a half-inning of baseball, as was always the case when the home team was leading in the middle of the ninth inning.

"Great game!" Violet exclaimed. "The one against the Orioles will be tougher. They look to be one of the best teams in the league, and I bet we meet them in the playoffs."

"As a die-hard Reds fan, I have an innate hatred of the Orioles because of 1970! They beat us four games to one in the World Series! What really sucked was the Reds lost both home games, and playing 2-3-2 meant they had to win at least two of the three in Baltimore, which they couldn't do."

"But they won back-to-back World Series in '75 and '76!"

"Yes, after losing in '72 to the A's. Another team I innately hate!"

"And the Dodgers, right?" Violet asked.

"Of course! I suspect your opinion of the Yankees is similar."

"Everyone who isn't from New York hates the Yankees! Or they should! What do you think of the Red Sox?"

"They beat the Reds in the greatest game in baseball history! The sixth game of the '75 Series. I was eleven and Mom let me stay up to watch the night games. Even though the Reds lost that game in extra innings, it was simply amazing to watch. The Carlton Fisk walk-off home run broke my heart, but that didn't change my opinion of how great that game was. But we came back from 3-0 in the seventh game to be world champs!"

"The Sox haven't won the title since 1917, two years before the Black Sox Scandal. Of course, the Cubs haven't won since 1908! Fisk had a good game tonight for the Sox -- a hit and two walks in four appearances, and scored three of their runs."

"He's a great player, but Johnny Bench is still the greatest catcher in baseball history. First catcher to lead the league in home runs, and most career home runs by a catcher, not to mention fourteen All Star Game appearances, ten Gold Gloves, and two league MVPs. Sparky Anderson famously said after the '76 Series that he wouldn't embarrass any other catcher by comparing them to Johnny Bench."

"He's retiring, right?"

"Yes. He hasn't caught much the past three years, mostly playing third or first. Did you know that a bunch of Reds were in the US Army Reserve during the Viet Nam War, including Bench, Pete Rose and Bobby Tolan? Bench also went to Viet Nam with Bob Hope and the USO between the '70 and '71 seasons."

"I didn't know those things; I mostly followed the Sox and Cubs."

"Shall we head out?"

"Yes," Violet said.

We left the stadium and took the L to University Village. We walked to Violet's house, where I'd left my car. I walked her to the door, we hugged, she kissed my cheek, and once she was safely inside, I headed home.



August 1, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday, I went in an hour early to allow myself extra time to create my daily analyst report. I had notes I'd taken while reading the newspaper during my time off, and I'd also followed the equity and currency markets in the *Wall Street Journal*, so I wasn't coming back to work completely unprepared. Bianca and Jack chose to come in at the normal time, so I was alone during my drive, and other than Rich and Mark, the overnight traders, there was nobody in the office.

As usual, I made a pot of coffee, then caught up with Rich. Once he'd filled me in on overnight trading in Asia and Europe, I went to my desk and confirmed that the Overland Park union accounts had been properly transferred. They had, and a secondary account had been established for their benevolence fund, but the transfer was pending.

I had quite a bit of work to do to reallocate the union holdings, but that would have to wait until I completed my analyst report. I used every minute before my report was due to complete the updates. I factored in the developments in Sri Lanka, and other events, and increased my global volatility and conflict score by two points, which moved it from green to yellow, creating a small risk warning, which, of course, Mr. Matheson noted immediately.

"Global risk 'on', but just barely," he noted. "But your outlook on gold and silver is still bearish."

I nodded, "None of these low-level conflicts will have a significant impact on the precious metals market. I expect to sell December gold and silver sometime in the next two months."

"You locked in your profits; how sure are you?"

"I am not uncertain," I replied. "That said, all it takes is one Reagan or Thatcher speech, or some move by the Soviets or Red Chinese, and it turns around."

"Nothing on your radar except Central America and Grenada?"

"Not at the moment. I don't see the Afghanistan conflict widening into some kind of regional war, which is entirely possible in Central America and northern South America. Mexico seems safe at the moment, as their Marxist-Leninist insurgents, the FLN, were run to ground about ten years ago. There are hints of it being reconstituted, but I haven't seen anything definite. Of course, I don't have a contact at the CIA to ask, so you never know! That said, I don't see any reports of the Mexican Army battling insurgents."

"That would be a hell of a problem," Mr. Matheson said. "Senator Taft from Ohio raised that as a nightmare scenario when he was arguing against the US joining NATO."

I nodded, "I remember that from Ohio history. He was one of about a dozen US Senators to vote against it because they feared it would destabilize post-war Europe. I'd say they were mistaken, at least so far as things have turned out. Without NATO, it's likely the Soviets would have used the threat of military force to control even more of Europe, if not outright used force."

"And risk nuclear war?" Mr. Matheson asked.

"If the US hadn't joined NATO, would we have extended the nuclear umbrella to them?" I countered.

"Good point. How was your time off?"

"Relaxing. Keiko came through her chemo better than the first round. We'll know the results later today."

"I hope they're positive."

"Me, too."

"You saw the Overland Park positions are in, right?"

"Yes, and the account for their benevolence fund is open and awaiting transfer of their holdings."

"Those should be in today. How do you plan to handle the asset distribution?"

"Carefully," I said with a grin. "I'll slowly sell off most of their current holdings and reinvest those funds according to my asset allocation plan. I have to hold some of it in Treasuries with appropriate maturities to avoid forced redemptions when the quarterly transfer to their bank is made to cover pension payouts."

"The benevolence fund doesn't have structured payouts, which means I have to overweight short-term treasuries so I can transfer money with only four weeks' notice. I'll use a mix of four-week T-Bills and staggered two-year Treasury Notes to ensure I have cash when I need it. That will cost me about a quarter of a point overall, but right now I need capital more than I need that quarter point."

"Oh, to be young and just starting out!" Mr. Matheson said with a smile. "I need that quarter point right this fucking minute!"

"Stay the course; the gold and silver plays will get you there. And I'd say we'll have a big play on the Philippine peso before the end of the year. The signs are all there. It's just a matter of when."

"Short it immediately?"

"You certainly could, but I can't say right now that they'll devalue before the end of the year. The other one, and you'll see this when you read the report, is Australia."

"Bullshit!" Mr. Matheson protested.

"The numbers don't lie," I said. "They have to float, and soon. They don't have the resources to keep the peg. They'll fight it until there's a crisis, then throw in the towel. If they had ten times the reserves, they could hold it; they don't."

"That'll be a hell of a play. When?"

"I'd estimate late fourth quarter this year or early first quarter next year. I'll keep my ear to the ground, and so should you, but I would strongly advise against talking to anyone about it."

"You think you're scooping everyone? That nobody else knows?"

"No, but the last thing we want is to spook anyone. If you short it now, they can defend. We have to wait, but be first in, but not too early."

"You're learning, Kane. And you have a nose for this stuff."

"The information is there if you look for it. I do."

"I'm curious if you think there will be a coördinated effort to force a float."

"Yes, and you know the risks of trying to set it up. Get your money in first, THEN coördinate to protect your position."

"Keep it up, Kane! I'm curious who you're going to find to do the analysis once you move up."

"I'll do some of my own," I replied. "I know it breaks the mould, but I'm good at it."

"So far," Mr. Matheson said. "You have to keep it going."

"I plan to."

"Go make some money!"

I left his office and returned to my desk and sat down with a printout of all the securities that had been transferred from Overland Park's previous brokerage and began mapping out a strategy to reallocate the assets. I didn't want to move too quickly, and wanted to avoid any taxable events. Had I been Noel Spurgeon, I could have demanded they liquidate their holdings and transfer only cash, but I didn't have that kind of pull at this stage.

I began by identifying the weakest assets -- equities with little or no upside, significant downside risk, and which didn't pay dividends, along with any bonds which were below investment grade. Those so-called 'junk bonds' typically had higher interest rates, but the risk of default was too high for my taste. I could generate equivalent returns with safer moves than holding risky corporate debt. All it would take was an economic downturn and the paper could become worthless almost overnight.

There was also a new class of 'junk bonds', which, rather than being the result of degraded financial performance, were intentionally issued as 'junk' for use in leveraged buyouts. One of those, the LBO of Gibson Greetings, had paid off handsomely. It had been bought with nearly \$80 million in junk bonds, but was about to complete a \$290 million IPO, which would net former US Secretary of the Treasury William E. Simon about \$66 million for less than eighteen months' work.

It was tempting, and Michael Milken, an investment banker with Drexel Burnham Lambert, had specialized in it, but he, like Madoff, seemed to be promising things which were simply too good to be true. The claimed returns were outrageous, even compared to Spurgeon's market-beating returns, but Milken was playing with fire, as the junk bond market could collapse without warning. And that was if he was playing everything straight, which was a question, as it was with Madoff.

Spurgeon showed some of the best returns in the industry, and I knew everything we were doing was on the correct side of securities and banking regulations. I could see someone beating us by a few percentage points, but the kinds of returns Madoff and Milken were promising were so much higher that I couldn't see how they could be playing everything straight. In the end, they weren't my problem, and I would steer clear of both of them and their strategies. Well, we now used Madoff's clearing services, but not his strategies and had no money with him.

I identified a dozen stocks I wanted to sell immediately and entered the orders into the computer. Ten minutes later, I had confirmation the trades had been executed, and I allocated the assets to purchasing a series of T-Bills and Treasury Notes, as I'd described for Mr. Matheson. Those orders took a bit longer to fill, but by noon, I had all the trade confirmations.

I ate lunch with Bianca and we worked out, and when I returned to the office, I had confirmation of the transfer of the benevolence fund assets. I evaluated the assets in that fund, and found they were more conservative, which I'd expected. I didn't see anything that jumped out right away with potential downside, as a huge portion was in highly rated municipal bonds.

The downside of that was that as interest rates fell, those bonds could be called, or would mature, and I wouldn't be able to replace them with equivalent returns, meaning they would take on a bit more risk. That would be mitigated by the Treasury holdings, which would, as I'd said to Mr. Matheson, prevent forced redemptions in a down market, which eventually would come.

I spent the rest of the afternoon doing research, and at 5:00pm, I left the office. Jack joined me, leaving Bianca to drive home alone, though she was right behind me the entire way to Rogers Park. I parked the car in the garage and hurried inside to find Keiko, who was in the Japanese room.

"Hi," I said. "Did you hear from Doctor Morrison?"

"Hi," Keiko replied. "Yes. 8%. He wanted it under 8%, but he says 8% is OK. It's the same result as before - successful, not the best, but also not the worst; we continue as planned. We'll know more when I have the blood test before the next round of chemo."

"How are you feeling?" I asked. "I don't mean physically. Well, I do want to know that, but emotionally first."

"I'm OK. It is literally right on the line where Doctor Morrison wanted it to be."

"You're sure you're OK?"

Keiko smiled, "You have a positive outlook, right?"

I nodded, "I do."

"Then I do, too."

My positive outlook was based on the progress Keiko had made -- her blast count had fallen from 33% to 14% to 8%, and she had gone from having blasts in her spinal fluid to not having them. She was approaching the 'magic number' of 5%, which if she could stay below it, would classify her as in remission. The tests in two weeks would tell the story -- if Keiko's blast count was 9% or lower, the round of chemo would be considered a success.

"I need to change, will you come upstairs with me and let me know how you're feeling physically?"

Keiko smiled, "You know how I feel physically!"

"I do! But you know what I meant!"

I took her hand, and we went up to the bedroom so I could change out of my suit into shorts and a T-shirt.

"I feel better," she said. "I managed two Saltines with a bit of peanut butter, in addition to the broth and Jell-O, and didn't throw up."

"That's good. Are you drinking enough?"

"Yes. I drank some tea as well as the prescription drink and water."

"Good."

I finished changing, and Keiko and I went downstairs so I could help Juliette and Kristy finish making dinner. Keiko, in addition to her broth and Jell-O, also ate some mashed potatoes with butter. After dinner, Jack and Juliette cleaned up, and with Keiko's blessing, Bianca and I went up to her room to continue our quest of making a baby.

"I think I might be pregnant," Bianca said as we cuddled afterwards.

"Your period isn't due yet, is it?" I asked, trying to remember when she'd had her last one.

"Next week, Tuesday or Wednesday, but I feel different. I can't really describe it, but it's different from how I've ever felt before. But it would make sense because of the hormone changes that occur almost immediately. If my period doesn't come by Wednesday, I'll get a home pregnancy test. If that's positive, I'll make an appointment with an OB/GYN at Loyola. They're in our Blue Cross plan."

"If that's true, I'll be very happy!"

"Me, too," Bianca agreed, "but also sad, because that's the end of this part of our relationship. But you've never really wavered from your plan to have a traditional relationship, though I'm happy you made an exception to have a baby with me."

"As am I! That's one thing Keiko will in all probability not be able to do."

"She's holding up pretty well, given the test results," Bianca observed.

"She is, but seen from one perspective, they're really *status quo ante*, because the next step is still the same -- another round of chemo. Doctor Morrison had projected a total of five rounds if she didn't go immediately into remission, and we're still on that path."

"Have you considered taking her to Mayo Clinic or someplace like that?"

"All my research, which I admit is limited by my lack of medical training, shows that what Doctor Morrison is doing is the best practice and going to another hospital won't change things. Fundamentally, to get into any kind of experimental therapy, she has to either have a bone marrow transplant that doesn't work or not be able to find a match. Neither of those are true as yet, and we don't know if she'll need one.

"In the end, we have to take each day as it comes, which, unsurprisingly, is how life works in general. There are no guarantees, and I think the story of my entrance into this world proves that unequivocally. I think I can say with absolute certainty my dad didn't expect a madman to blow up the plane on which he was flying home after a business trip!"

"True."

"Or what happened to Paula," I replied. "Or anyone in any kind of fatal accident. And so on. As I said a month or so ago, unless we're told there is no hope for survival, we'll continue to act as if there is and not allow the diagnosis to deter us. Does it impact us? Absolutely. Does it control us? No."

"Does anything faze you?" Bianca asked.

"Watching Heather being born," I said. "That affected me the way nothing ever has, though I suspect being with you when we have our baby will have an even greater effect."

"But nothing else?"

"I suppose the answer is that things do affect me, I just don't show it, except on the rarest of occasions. When Bev revealed the name of Heather's dad, the adrenaline rush was intense and I actually dropped the handset. I recovered right away, but that was a real shocker."

"More than the paternity hearing?"

"Yes. In a sense, I was prepared for that by things Nelson said in advance of the deposition and after. I knew there was something going on, just not what. And when it was revealed, Bev freaked out, as you can imagine she would, and I had to stay strong for her."

"Similar to when you went to Kansas."

"Yes, and if you think about it, without that bizarre sequence of events, including Bev having a brief affair with a teacher, I wouldn't have my biggest client! I can't imagine how I'd have ever met an Overland Park detective who could put me in touch with his union without everything that happened leading up to it."

"I was totally surprised when you decide to ask Violet to travel with you," Bianca said, "and even more surprised when she agreed. I thought that might be the breakthrough that led you to be with her."

"She made an effort, but she wasn't able to overcome the trauma she experienced. In some ways, I'm surprised she's not institutionalized the way her older sister is. Violet is actually a very strong person, but the psychological damage inflicted by her parents will never fully go away."

"I can't even imagine what that must have been like. I mean, if you trust *anyone*, it's your parents. And their job is to protect you."

"Yes. She's an amazing young woman, but despite her best efforts, she couldn't get to a place where she could be with me the way we both obviously wanted."

"Is that going to be a problem in the long term?"

"No. Well, not for me, because I've made my commitment and you know what that means. For Violet, maybe she eventually overcomes it, and if she does, I'm confident she would never think about asking me to violate my vows. It's just not who she is."

"That makes sense. Go again, just to make sure?"

"Yes."

IV. Test Results

August 4, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"What was so urgent we had to have lunch today?" I asked Marcia when we met at a diner on Illinois Avenue.

"I have a rumor that you need to hear, but you can't ever reveal where you heard it."

"I don't have protection as a member of the Press, but short of an official investigation, I won't say a word."

"A friend of mine, who is a court clerk, says that the FBI has been investigating corruption in the courts. Supposedly it's going to run in the *Trib* tomorrow."

"What kind of corruption?" I asked. "Fixing traffic tickets?"

"Fixing a murder case, among other things."

"Whoa!" I exclaimed.

"And bribes in divorce court and family court, too," Marcia added.

"How widespread is this?"

"At least a dozen judges, thirty lawyers, some Sheriff's deputies, and others."

"Damn," I said, shaking my head. "And you say this is going to hit the *Trib* tomorrow?"

"Yes."

"Does Nelson know?" I asked.

"I have no idea," Marcia replied. "I'm not hooked into Jeri's cabal."

"Then I'm going to call him when we finish lunch. I'll use a pay phone, and I won't reveal who told me."

"Thanks. How are things otherwise?"

"Our wedding plans are moving along. I'll pick up the invitations tomorrow, and we'll address them on Saturday. You should receive yours sometime next week. It'll be for you and a guest."

"I'm not sure who I'd invite; maybe I'm being too picky."

"I don't think so," I replied. "Why lower your standards? That seems to me to be a recipe for being unhappy and unfulfilled, or worse."

"I think that's easy for you to say because you found your soulmate."

"I'm not sure you're evaluating things correctly," I replied. "I messed up badly with Bev, who was clearly my soulmate from the time I was little."

"YOU messed up?!" Marcia objected. "She's the one who ran off with other guys, including one old enough to be her dad!"

"And yet, that would probably never have happened had I not kept my intention to move to Chicago secret until it was a done deal. Even then, if I'd asked her to come with me, including if that meant waiting a year until she graduated from

High School, those things would not have happened. Obviously, I can't prove that because it would have fundamentally changed my life and how I handled things here in Chicago, so who knows what might have happened? There's no question my failure to communicate with her and failure to ask her to come with me led her to see other guys. I can't imagine her having done that otherwise."

"I see your point," Marcia replied, "but she's still responsible for her actions."

"Of course she is!" I agreed. "But she took my behavior to be complete rejection, so it's not as if I can escape responsibility for my actions that set the stage for hers. We're both responsible, but I was the one who created the conditions that led to things falling apart."

"Is that how you see our relationship? I mean, before Keiko?"

"I think that was more about compatibility of worldviews."

"Sex," Marcia said flatly.

"Not just that," I replied. "Politics, relationships, communication styles, and a host of other things. That's not to say they couldn't have been overcome, but we were not in a place where I felt that was possible. Then there was the whole trust issue."

"You mean the trip to Wisconsin?"

"Yes, though I'd say that was a symptom of a clash of worldviews and an extreme difference in communication styles and approaches to relationships than anything else."

"It was pretty clear you'd sleep with anyone who asked except me."

"That's not true," I replied. "First of all, I *did* sleep with you. And you know what happened."

"You hated it," Marcia said flatly.

"That's not how I'd characterize it. I think it's better to say that taking into account our views and experiences, that encounter was evidence for me that we weren't compatible. Had we been on the same page, or even in the same chapter, things might have been different. But that would require one or both of us to have had a very different personality. Our second encounter was different, but at that point, there was so much baggage that it made a romantic relationship difficult, at best."

"Do you analyze everything that way? Never mind! What am I saying? Of *course* you do!"

"It's just my nature," I replied. "And that nature has served me well for the past two years."

"Given how quickly you've moved up, I don't think I could argue with that."

We finished our lunch and after I paid the bill, I went to a payphone in the lobby and called Hart-Lincoln and asked to speak to Nelson. When he came on the line, I explained what Marcia had related to me at lunch, but without identifying her.

"If that's true, all hell is going to break loose," he said. "How much do you trust the person who gave you the tip?"

"I'd say on a scale of one to ten, it's a nine, at least."

"I promise you I'm not involved in any way," Nelson said, "and I hope nobody at my firm is. This is going to create a, well, shitstorm."

"You think?" I asked. "I mean, fixing a murder case? Taking bribes to decide divorce and child custody rulings? That's corruption beyond the usual stuff that happens in Chicago."

"Thanks for the heads-up. I'm going to talk to my supervising partner as soon as we hang up. I'll state it comes from an anonymous, but entirely trustworthy, source."

"Thanks, Nelson."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, and returned to the office where I immediately asked to see Mr. Matheson. It was nearly an hour before I could see him, an hour I spent looking for *any* evidence of what Marcia had told me, but finding none. What I needed was a contact inside the Department of Justice who would be willing to talk, and the chances of that happening were near zero.

"How reliable is your information?" Mr. Matheson asked after I explained what Marcia has said.

"I trust the source, but I can't find anything to back it up. That makes sense if it's an undercover operation by the FBI and other government agencies."

"When will the story break?"

"My source indicated someone had spoken to a reporter at the *Trib*, so I'd say tomorrow for sure, if not in the 'Green Streak' afternoon edition."

"Do you see any market effects?"

I shook my head, "No. I mean, Chicago municipal bonds might take a hit of a few bips, but they'll recover right away. This appears to be a court and police

problem, not a financial governance concern. Yes, there will be obvious political ramifications, but I think Mayor Washington will, rightly, lay it at the feet of Byrne, Bilandic, and more directly, Mayor Daley, or to put it more succinctly -- The Machine. If Mayor Washington is able to do that, and I believe he'll be successful, it actually helps him with the next election, both for mayor and for the City Council. In the end, though, none of that much matters to our strategy."

"That sounds about right," Mr. Matheson said. "Write a short analyst note for me so we can show when we knew."

"Will do."

I left his office, returned to my desk, and wrote a brief analyst note detailing the conversation I'd had with Marcia and my conclusions. I left a copy for Mr. Matheson and put the original in my file, then returned to my usual analysis work, which occupied the rest of the afternoon.



August 5, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

As we'd speculated, the news broke on Friday morning, with the *Chicago Tribune* reporting on what was being called 'Operation Greylord'. The news article confirmed Marcia's information, and while indictments weren't being handed up just yet, the investigation had uncovered bribery and other malfeasance in the courts which had affected the outcome of trials and other judicial proceedings. Both the FBI and the IRS were involved, as was the Postal Inspector, as there were mail fraud changes in the offing, in addition to racketeering, bribery, and conspiracy.

"This is bad," I said as I read the article at breakfast on Friday.

"It's Chicago!" Jack exclaimed. "What do you expect?"

"This is even beyond the usual graft and corruption! And beyond Capone, who was simply providing goods and services the people of Chicago wanted and which were denied them by the government!"

Bianca and Jack both laughed.

"So, it was just capitalism?"

"Free market trade!" I chuckled. "Not that I'd advise breaking the law that way, and especially not advise ignoring the tax code!"

"What's your serious take on Capone?" Jack asked.

"I think Prohibition was ill-conceived and impossible to enforce, similar to the current 'War on Drugs'. In the end, if people want something badly enough, someone will provide it, and that will be lucrative and spawn battles for control of the market in ways government regulation cannot control. Both Prohibition and the War on Drugs spawn violence and increase lawlessness, while not actually preventing the sale or use of the things they purport to control. We all know where to buy coke, just as everyone knew where to buy whisky or beer during prohibition."

"What's your solution?" Bianca asked.

"Legalize it, regulate it like other over-the-counter drugs, and tax it! That basically eliminates all the gang crime because people can just go to Osco or Rexall and get their coke or pot. Yes, you'll still have the crime committed by the users who need to feed their habits, but that can be dealt with much easier than a Columbian drug cartel with insane amounts of money and access to automatic weapons!"

"Deal with it how?" Jack asked. "I mean crime by drug users?"

"Rehab and education. If they aren't breaking the law by using, there is a better chance they'll seek help. Look at the anti-smoking campaigns as an example. Taxes make up the bulk of the cost of a carton of cigarettes, so the government gains revenue, but they're also working to reduce the number of smokers and having some success."

"Don't you think more people would use drugs if they were legal?" Bianca asked.

"I suspect there would be some increase from that, but a concerted effort at education and rehab would likely be as successful as the anti-smoking campaigns. At least the government had the sense not to try the Prohibition model with cigarettes!"

We finished breakfast, and I drove the three of us to work. I completed my usual morning routine, including updating my daily analyst report. With Bianca's help, I'd created a new index to go along with what I had called my global volatility index -- a financial volatility index. I now had two ratings, one which was more or less subjective, and one which was objective.

The renamed 'political volatility index' was purely subjective, but the 'economic volatility index' was based on the change in prices of precious metal contracts, changes in interest rates, changes in major currencies, and the S&P 500 index. Unsurprisingly, Mr. Matheson called me in mid-morning to explain my method and my thinking.

"We used the absolute values of the changes because this isn't meant to measure trends only volatility, and eventually, combined with the political volatility scale, develop a global risk score. By plotting a line with the daily numbers and comparing it to market volumes, we'll have a good indication of what the herd is thinking."

"I like it," Mr. Matheson said. "If we can find any type of predictive correlation between that number and exchange rates, we'll have even more arbitrage opportunities. Every bip in our favor is significant money. Is this something you can get on everyone's desk?"

"It's one of Bianca's spreadsheets, so there's no reason others can't use it and modify it to suit their needs. One important thing Bianca pointed out -- if we change the formulae, we need to go back and recalculate all the previous ratings for comparison. The spreadsheet will do that automatically when it generates the chart, but that will invalidate any previously printed charts and reports."

"Similar to how the Dow has a fudge factor when they change out stocks so that the numbers aren't skewed."

"Except in our case, we're not going to include a fudge factor to avoid invalidating past numbers. At the moment, I see the trend line on the chart as being the key thing -- as overall volatility increases, risk increases, but also opportunity. Technically, it's the first derivative, that is, the slope of the line, that matters. The computer can't tell us what to trade or when to trade it, but it can provide information to help make those decisions."

"Computers can't develop client relationships, so I don't think we need to worry about being replaced by computers!"

I chuckled, "That wasn't my point, but I can see how you could get there from what I said. Even if things advance to where computers can make decisions, I think they'd be limited to arbitrage or flips, because there's no way a computer can do the kind of analysis you do."

"Nor what you do," Mr. Matheson replied. "Computers are tools, like hammers and screwdrivers. And we'll use them to gain an advantage. That means anything you two develop is company confidential."

"Absolutely. I'm not about to give up our edge to anyone outside Spurgeon!"

"Keep up the good analysis work. Did you finish rebalancing your fund?"

"Yes. The final trades were made earlier today. I'll have a revised version of my asset allocation plan to you on Monday morning."

"Any major changes?"

"Just reflecting the amount I have to keep in Treasury instruments to allow for the cash withdrawals for the retirement plan and benevolence fund, and a few things I decided not to sell because they have decent upside potential. I did receive the notice from the bank in Kansas City that handles the Overland Park city accounts and they'll forward the pension contributions on a quarterly basis, with the next contribution due on September 2nd. The benevolence contributions come the first Friday of each month."

"Perfect. I saw in your report that you're targeting a dozen unions in the Midwest. That's a good plan. Keep me posted, and I'll come with you for any presentations."

"I'd really like to land the IMRF, but Illinois law doesn't allow that. It's managed by a group of trustees with very specific asset allocation rules."

"You'd have billions under management overnight if it were possible to bag them!"

"I take it you saw that I also intend to send prospectuses and other materials to every major law firm in Chicago."

"I did. I'm behind you on all of those. It would be nice to bring in some high net worth individuals if possible."

"Tougher, because they tend to be like Margaret Lundgren. What I need is more trust fund kids like Jeri."

"Ask her."

"I intend to."

"Keep up the good work and go find more ways to make some money!"

"On it!" I replied.

I went back to my desk to work for about an hour before Bianca and I had lunch together. I explained what Mr. Matheson had said, and she said she'd get the spreadsheet to the other analysts with personal computers. When we finished lunch, we left the office to head to the gym.

"Hi, Samantha," I said to Noel Spurgeon's daughter, who was in the hallway.

"You're wearing a suit!" she declared.

"Since January," I replied. "Your dad promoted me."

"From the mailroom? Really?"

"Yes. Really."

"That's different!"

The elevator arrived, and we got in, ending the conversation.

"How old is she?" Bianca asked.

"Seven, I think," I replied.

"She seems older."

I nodded, "She does. Mr. Nelson calls her 'the Pipsqueak' and says she's the 'Queen Bee'."

"Mr. Spurgeon doesn't have a son, does he?"

"No. Supposedly, it'll be whomever Samantha marries who runs Spurgeon after he retires."

"That sounds as if Noel Spurgeon is going to pick her husband."

"That's the drift I get, or at least veto anyone who isn't capable of running Spurgeon. I seriously doubt they'd ever willingly let a girl run the place."

"All their dicks would shrivel and their balls rise back into their abdomens!" Bianca declared.

I laughed and nodded, "Pretty much."

We worked out, showered, and returned to the office for a relatively routine afternoon. At the end of the day, Bianca took the L home and CeCi and Kristy met Jack and me in the lobby of the Hancock Center. We headed to Star of Siam for dinner, then went to see *Risky Business* at Water Tower Place. The movie was

fantastic, and had several really hot scenes with Rebecca De Mornay, several of them nude.

"I'll never think of the L the same way!" Jack declared when we left the theatre.

"What do you think, Kristy?" CeCi asked. "Up for a ride on the L? I am!"

"And we'd all get arrested!" Kristy declared. "That would be the end of my legal career before it even started, Jonathan would lose his securities licenses, and Jack would never get his!"

"It would be a badge of honor in Hollywood!" CeCi declared.

"Pretty much anything goes in Hollyweird!" Kristy observed.

"Would you do it, Jonathan?"

"Would I have sex with Rebecca De Mornay on the L? Absolutely!"

CeCi, Kristy, and Jack all laughed.

"I meant with *me*!" CeCi countered.

"If I wasn't engaged and I could be sure I wouldn't be arrested, I'd go for it!"

"The engaged part is the bigger impediment," Jack observed.

"It is," I confirmed.

As was our usual practice, we headed to Oberweis for ice cream, then headed home.



August 6, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Bianca and I started our normal Saturday errands in the morning, rather than the afternoon, in order to pick up the invitations from the print shop. They were ready, as promised, and after double-checking they were correct, I wrote a check for the balance. Mr. Demerath wasn't in the office, so I left him a note thanking him, and then Bianca and I headed to Jewel and the dry cleaner. We were home by lunch, and after lunch, I sat down with Keiko to address the invitations.

"I don't have the best handwriting," I said. "But I can print nicely. How about I address the envelopes and you write the guest names on the invitations? You could also use Kanji for anyone who is Japanese, something I'm completely incapable of doing."

"That sounds like a good division of labor," Keiko agreed.

Three hours later, with my hand beginning to cramp, we finished addressing the envelopes and personalizing the invitations. I was very happy that our home address had been printed on the return envelopes, and all that was necessary to prepare them was to add a postage stamp.

"Are you taking them to the Post Office?" Keiko asked.

"I don't think that makes sense, really. It's already 3:30pm, so taking them to the mailroom on Monday makes sense. They'll be picked up in the morning. I'll hand deliver Mr. Spurgeon's and Mr. Matheson's invitations, just as we're hand delivering the ones for our housemates."

"Is there anything left to do?"

"Dustin confirmed he's available, the Botanic Garden will handle literally everything about the reception, you confirmed with the Shinto priest, the kimono

should be here before Friday, your grandparents are organizing the «yuino», and Beth's friend who runs a bakery committed to making the wedding cake."

"What about your grandparents?"

"Who knows? My aunt and uncle will be there for sure, but my grandmother was non-committal."

"And your cousin?"

"Aunt Wendy felt it was better if she was elsewhere, and I have to agree."

"Is your mom bringing a date?"

"She's been seeing a divorced judge of the Clermont County Court of Common Pleas. I encouraged her to invite him, and she said she'd consider it. Is there anything else you can think of that we need to do?"

"No," Keiko said.

The phone rang, and Juliette answered it, then came to the Japanese room.

"A young woman named Anala is on the phone for you, Jonathan."

I got up and went to the kitchen to take the call.

"Kane," I said into the handset.

"Jonathan, it's Anala. I owe you an apology."

"Yes, you do," I replied.

"What are you doing today?"

"I just finished addressing wedding invitations."

"Yours?!" Anala asked, surprised.

"Yes. You've missed a lot since March 23rd."

"You remember the specific day of our lunch?"

"I do. Remembering facts is a key indicator of success in my job."

"Do you have time to talk?"

"Come to dinner at the house with Keiko and me, if you're free."

"Keiko is your fiancé?" Anala asked.

"Yes. Dinner is at 6:00pm. It will most likely just be the three of us, but it's possible one of my housemates will be home."

"Bianca or Shelly?"

"As I said, you missed a lot. Shelly married a doctor a week ago."

"How about 5:30pm?" Anala suggested.

"That's fine," I replied. "See you then."

We said 'goodbye' and I hung up, then returned to the Japanese room.

"Anala is joining us for dinner," I said.

Keiko smiled, "That's good. I know you were unhappy that she didn't get in touch."

"That's true."

Keiko decided to take a nap, and while she did that, I went to the kitchen to prep for dinner. According to the calendar, only CeCi would possibly be home, but she often went out on Saturday nights after her shift. Both she and Deanna were working as many hours as they could during the Summer, because hours during the school year were somewhat limited, as they could only work evenings and weekends.

When Keiko woke from her nap, she helped me prepare dinner, and Anala arrived, as planned, at 5:30pm.

"Anala, you remember Keiko from the housewarming," I said when I showed her into the Japanese room.

The look on Anala's face showed she immediately understood Keiko's situation, even if she didn't know specifically what was wrong.

"Keiko is undergoing chemotherapy for leukemia," I said. "Please sit down and I'll tell you about the past four months."

I spent twenty minutes catching Anala up on everything that had happened since the end of March before I had to get dinner on the table. Once we'd sat down to eat and I'd given the Japanese blessing, I continued, with Anala listening intently. Keiko also listened as she ate, though she had soup, Jell-O, and mashed potatoes I'd made, rather than the more substantial meal I'd made for Anala and me.

"I know I said it before, but I really do need to apologize for not returning your calls. It's no excuse, but I've been very busy with my final year in the architecture program and with my boyfriend."

"The guy in Hyde Park?"

"Kenwood, actually, about eight blocks north of the university."

"On Woodlawn Avenue? With a sauna in the basement?"

"OK, now HOW do you know that?!" Anala exclaimed in surprise.

"My friend Dustin took photos for a magazine spread. Boyfriend means he's Hindu? I thought he was from the Cincinnati area."

Anala laughed, "There are Hindus in Ohio! But no, he's a lapsed Catholic exploring Eastern wisdom."

"I seem to recall not being Hindu being a sticking point," I said lightly.

"It's complicated," Anala said. "More than likely, I'll go to a matchmaker and find a Hindu man."

"A matchmaker?" Keiko asked.

"The Hindu community is small and dispersed, so it's not easy to find a suitable match just by going to my temple or Indian cultural events. There are matchmakers to help solve that problem. Jonathan has read the *Kama Sutra*, so he understands my view on marriage."

"I do," I confirmed. "The short version is that it's not about finding a love match, it's about finding a compatible person who you will love."

"That's right," Anala confirmed. "When is your wedding?"

"October 8th," I said. "You'll receive an invitation, and you're welcome to bring your boyfriend. The invitations go out on Monday."

"Thanks. I'm not sure if he's available, because he has even more going on in his life than I do. But either way, I'll be there."

"That will make Jonathan very happy," Keiko interjected.

We finished our meal, and Anala offered to help clean up. After dinner, we had tea, and then Anala bade us goodbye, promising to stay in touch.

"I don't think she will," I said to Keiko once Anala had left.

"Why?" Keiko asked.

"Just a feeling," I replied. "The conversation seemed strained and very different from the ones we've had in the past. I'm not sure what happened, but something did."

"Does that bother you?"

"It makes me sad because my conversations with her were so helpful, but she and I are no longer close the way I am with Bianca, Jack, Marcia, or Beth. And you're the most special person in my life."

Keiko smiled, "I love when you say things like that, even though it's not necessary."

"That's what makes them special," I replied. "Even though I know you know how I feel, you like hearing me say it. And I like hearing you say those things, too."

"Which is not what I expected," Keiko said. "It's a very different side of you from anything I had seen before. I'm going to guess only Bev ever saw it."

I shook my head, "Not really. Well, a bit after Heather was born, but not while we were actually a couple, even if we never acknowledged being a couple. You are the only person I've ever felt this way about."

"You loved Bev, though, right?"

"And I still do, but not the same way I love you."

"I'd like to use the hot tub," Keiko said.

"If you're sure."

"I am. It's just you and me, so it'll be fine. I do want to wear a bathing suit, though."

"I'll go turn on the heat," I said.

"Not too high, as I still have a slight fever."

"OK," I agreed.

I went outside, removed the canvas cover, then turned on the water heater. I returned to the house, and Keiko and I went upstairs to put on our bathing suits. Once we'd changed, we went downstairs, out the back door, and onto the porch. I carefully helped Keiko into the tub, then turned on the jets which circulated

aerated water. I sat down next to Keiko and leaned back against the wooden staves.

"I know I said this before," Keiko said, "but thank you for building something close to a Japanese bath."

"You're welcome. Brown Construction recommended fiberglass until I explained my main rationale for the tub."

"Is it possible to use soap in this tub?"

"No. To do that, we'd have needed a tub with forced air instead of forced water. Forced water keeps a calmer surface, and the aeration makes it feel silky."

"I noticed! And it's not a big deal, it was just a curiosity. I love it! Along with the flowers, the *bonsai*, and what we call the Japanese room."

"I have an affinity for all things Japanese," I said. "Especially you!"

"«愛してる» (*ai shiteru*)," Keiko said. ("I love you.")

"«Ai shiteru»" I responded.



August 10, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Wednesday morning, right after she got out of bed, Bianca used the home pregnancy test. She and I waited together and five minutes later, she squealed happily.

"Positive!" she exclaimed.

We hugged and exchanged a soft kiss.

"The only downside is yesterday evening was the last time we can be together," she sighed, resting her head on my chest.

"Dirty diapers? 2:00am feedings? Potty training?" I suggested. "Not to mention labor and delivery!"

Bianca laughed softly, "You might have a point! But you also know what I meant."

"I do. If you're OK with it, I'd like to come to your appointments."

"I want you there!"

"When do we tell?"

"Did you say anything to Keiko yet?"

"No. I wanted to wait until you were sure. Did you say anything to Juliette?"

"She knew my period didn't come, but she promised not to say anything. I think you have to tell Keiko today."

"I agree. When do you want to spread the news beyond those two?"

"Usually people wait until the second or third month, in case anything happens."

"You mean a miscarriage?"

"Yes. Those are more common than most people think. So I think sometime in October."

"I'll leave that to you. We'll need a cover story for the doctor visit."

"I'll see if I can set it up for Saturday or an evening."

"Is there anything you need to do differently?"

"Not right away, but Juliette suggested vitamins and folic acid right away, and I started those a few days after I missed my period. Are you going to wake up Keiko?"

"No. She needs her sleep, and I think it can wait until we get home tonight."

We went downstairs to have breakfast with Jack, and after we'd eaten, the three of us headed to the Hancock Center. It was a busy, but uneventful day in the office, though Bianca did take time to make a private call to arrange an appointment with an OB/GYN. She managed to get an appointment for the morning of August 20th, a Saturday. That meant we wouldn't have to try to explain a dual absence during the work week.

That evening, when we returned home, I asked Keiko to come up to our room with me while I changed.

"Bianca took a home pregnancy test, and it was positive," I said.

"I'm happy for you both!" Keiko said. "And now you're all mine!"

"Bianca made that comment! You know that's what I want."

"I do. And I am very happy you'll have a baby of your own."

"The children we adopt will be ours, Keiko-chan. I won't make any distinctions."

"I didn't think you would, just that I knew it was important to you. I know it's a bit premature, but when do you think we'd adopt?"

"I hadn't thought about it," I replied. "I think the timing really has to be up to you."

"I think I need to finish chemo first."

"I agree," I said. "I've heard it could take a long time if we want an infant, so I'm going to ask Nelson for a referral to an attorney who specializes in adoption so we can understand the process."

"That makes sense. Remember, I have my blood test tomorrow morning."

"I remember. If you want me to come along, I'm able to duck out for an hour."

"I don't think it's necessary. I'm just going to see the nurse who'll take my vitals, then draw blood."

"OK. Just say the word and I'll meet you there."

"No need."

I changed and Keiko and I went downstairs to have dinner with our housemates.



August 12, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I'm not going out with you guys tonight," I said to Jack as he, Bianca, and I drove into the city. "Keiko's blood test results will be communicated late this afternoon, and I want to be with her tonight."

"Are you concerned about a bad outcome?" Jack asked.

"Always," I replied. "I'm not taking a traditional 'hope for the best, prepare for the worst' approach, but that doesn't mean I refuse to see the potential negative outcomes."

"I probably shouldn't ask, but what do you actually think?"

"At each step, Keiko's been in what Mr. Matheson calls the 'muddy middle', with regard to investments, where you don't know if the results will be good or bad. The concern is if that continues. Unless she enters remission, the prognosis is not good. On the flip side, each treatment has about halved her blast count, and the blasts in her spinal fluid disappeared completely. The real risk, according to her physician, is an opportunistic infection, but we're doing everything we can to minimize those risks."

"And what will today's results tell you?"

"If her blast count has risen by more than a percentage point, it's not a good sign. Either way, she'll continue chemo, but a negative result means she'll need a bone marrow transplant. Loyola's drive starts on Monday, and I've mentioned that to everyone I know. The best chance is finding someone with Japanese ancestry, as they're more likely to match."

"It sounds like you think that's going to be necessary."

"It's a hedge," I replied. "That said, I think the odds are that she will."

"What's the prognosis, if that's the case?"

"According to Doctor Morrison, it's a high-risk, low-success treatment that you only try if there are no other options."

"Shit, man," Jack said.

"Yeah. And that's if a match can be found. And those odds aren't good. I think I mentioned that a sibling provides the best chance of a match, and Keiko is an only kid. Other relatives have a much lower probability."

"Even parents?" Bianca asked.

"Yes," I replied. "I don't understand the details, but if you think about basic genetics, half from mom, half from dad, it makes sense."

"If being Japanese is important, you need to find a large group of Japanese."

"Keiko's family is working on that, as her grandfather has plenty of friends in California. I'm not sure how things work in Japan, but if we get to that point, I'll ask at work. Mr. Matheson knows people in Tokyo."

"Why not ask right away?" Jack inquired.

"I don't have test results to back up the request, and honestly, I don't want those results."

"I assume you let CeCi know you weren't going out?"

"Yes."

We arrived at the Hancock Center, and once I'd parked, Bianca and I took the passenger elevator to 29, while Jack took the freight elevator to 30. That was one thing I would never countenance if I ever ran my own firm, something both Jack

and Bianca were encouraging me to do. That required significantly more Assets Under Management, or AUM, in my fund. I had about a tenth of what I'd need to have a good chance of success, and that was going to take time.

"Morning, Rich," I said after making a fresh pot of coffee. "Anything exciting in Asia or Europe?"

"No. It was a fairly calm day in Asia, and Europe looks the same. No wild swings, and I closed out several positions Mr. Matheson didn't want to hold over the weekend."

"Thanks, Rich," I said, and walked to my desk to begin working on my daily analyst report.

The moves Rich had made on behalf of Mr. Matheson were about risk reduction, as some major event over the weekend could cause wild swings in currencies, and being caught in a market moving the wrong way could wreck not just a position, but an entire portfolio. The trouble was, there was no way to predict the unpredictable. Even using my new volatility indices wouldn't help, as they were meant to show trends, not predict one-off events.

It was possible to predict some one-off events, such as currency devaluations, or as I'd recently done, a potential float of a currency, by examining factors such as interest rates, exchange rates, debt, debt service, bond rates, and trade balances. Bianca was working on a model that delved deeply into trade imbalances, hoping that we'd have useful predictive analysis to give us an edge in currency trades.

That information was currently used, but in a somewhat crude way, as without a computer, those calculations would take days, and before the personal computers, would have been prohibitively expensive to run. Now, every analyst

would have their own computer and Bianca had proposed teaching a course in *VisiCalc*, so analysts could build their own models.

One thing was certain -- we'd need more computer programmers. Bianca had enough work to keep her busy for a year already, and as people used her spreadsheets and mainframe programs, requests were coming hot and heavy. It was giving Spurgeon an edge, and that edge could easily turn into tens of millions in additional gains. That edge was also a selling point, which I was using in my attempts to raise capital for my fund.

The rest of the day was typical -- lunch and the gym with Bianca, but I was distracted during the afternoon, anticipating Keiko's test results. At the end of the day, Bianca and I headed home, while Jack went to meet Kristy.

At home, I found Keiko in the Japanese room, sitting in one of the Papasan chairs.

"Hi," I said. "Did you hear from Doctor Morrison?"

"10%," Keiko replied with a hitch in her voice. "The new diagnosis is refractory AML."

V. A Change of Plans

August 12, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Keiko's words hit me like a runaway freight train, but I had to keep control of my emotions. I walked over to her, took her hand, and gently urged her up from the Papasan chair and into my arms.

"Tell me what you need, Keiko-chan," I said lovingly.

She sighed deeply, "A miracle."

"What else did Doctor Morrison say?"

"That I should continue the chemo, because it's helping, but he put me into the system for an immediate bone marrow transplant. We'll have to go to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for that."

"Have they found a donor?"

"No, the drive you arranged at Loyola doesn't start until Monday, and one is being organized in San Francisco by my great uncle."

"And what do you need from me right now?" I asked.

"Just hold me, please."

I sat down in the Papasan chair and Keiko climbed into my lap. I wrapped my arms around her, and she curled up, resting her head on my shoulder.

"Did you tell anyone else?"

"No. I wanted to tell you first."

"We should tell your parents and grandparents," I suggested. "I can make those calls if you want."

"Not right now; just hold me, please."

"Of course, Keiko-chan," I agreed. "Did the kimono arrive?"

"Yes, this morning. But I'm not sure we should..."

I didn't wait for her to finish the sentence.

"Keiko, I'm going to marry you," I said firmly.

"But..."

"But what?"

"You know where this leads," Keiko sighed, then began sobbing.

I simply held her, as there was nothing else I could do at the moment. I kissed the top of Keiko's head, or rather, the scarf she wore to hide her hair loss. About five minutes later, she sat up, reached for a tissue, dabbed her eyes, and blew her nose.

"What else did Doctor Morrison say?" I asked.

"Nothing he hasn't already said, other than that I absolutely need a bone marrow transplant. There really isn't much else to say."

"Did he tell you how long we have to find a donor?"

"No. I asked, but he said there is no way to tell, but obviously sooner is better."

And not just for the transplant in my mind -- the wedding, too.

"Keiko, let's get married tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?"

"At the «yuino». It's a «Taian» day, and my mom will be here. And we'll have my aunt and uncle, and your parents, grandparents, aunt, uncle and cousin in attendance."

"We need a marriage license," Keiko replied. "And it's too late to get one today."

"I bet if I call Noel Spurgeon, he could make that happen."

"You're serious?"

I almost replied 'deadly' but caught myself before the words left my mouth.

"Yes."

"What about October and the money we've spent and the plans we've made?"

"Is there anything in Shinto that would prevent repeating the ceremony?"

"I don't know. It's something we'd have to ask the priest."

"Let me call Noel Spurgeon and find out if it's possible. Of course, I might not find him at home, but let me try."

"OK," Keiko replied. "I'm not sure it's a good idea, though."

"I, on the other hand, think it's a *wonderful* idea."

I helped her from my lap, then got up and went upstairs to my room to get the company phone directory from my bag. I found Noel Spurgeon's home number and dialed it. A woman, who I assumed was his wife, Valerie, answered.

"This is Jonathan Kane calling for Mr. Spurgeon," I said. "Is he available?"

"We're just about to go out. Let me check, please."

A minute later, Mr. Spurgeon came on the line.

"Spurgeon," he said.

"Yes, Sir. I'm sorry to bother you at home, but I have a request for a significant favor, if possible."

"What do you need?"

"Keiko received her test results, and they aren't good. I'd like to marry her tomorrow, even if it's a civil ceremony, but we don't have a marriage license. Do you have any contacts in the County Clerk's office?"

"I know Stanley Kuser personally. He was my attorney in the mid-70s. I can call him, and I'm sure we can find a way to accommodate your request. I take it the October date is off?"

"No, we'll still have that, assuming Keiko is well enough, but..."

"I get it. Murray said he offered a contact I have at Mayo Clinic. Do you want that?"

"Yes, please. I was going to ask on Monday."

"My jet is available to fly you both up, and I'll authorize whatever time off you need. Let me call Stan and figure out how to handle this. I'll call Judge Milton as well and arrange for him to perform the ceremony tomorrow morning."

"Thank you, Mr. Spurgeon."

"Keep making me money the way you are, and I'll grant any reasonable request, and some unreasonable ones, too!"

"I very much appreciate that, and I'm sorry to disturb your evening."

"Give me thirty minutes and I'll call you back."

"Thank you."

I hung up and then went downstairs to the Indian room.

"He's going to call his friend, the Cook County Clerk, to see if a marriage license can be issued today, and arrange with a judge to marry us in the morning. We can still have the public ceremony on October 8th. He also offered his Gulfstream III to fly us to Mayo Clinic, as well."

"All that just because you asked?"

"All that because I'm making him hundreds of thousands of dollars this year, and millions in the future. I've already made him something like five times my loaded salary and bonus numbers."

"Loaded?"

"Including benefits and taxes they pay, such as the employer portion of Social Security and Medicare."

The phone rang, and I knew it wasn't Noel Spurgeon calling back that quickly, so I suspected it was my mom calling to say she'd arrived. I went to the kitchen to answer the phone and discovered my guess was correct. I didn't say anything about Keiko's diagnosis or our plans, and simply said I'd see her tomorrow.

"That was my mom," I said to Keiko when I returned to the Japanese room. "She's safely at Violet's and we'll see her tomorrow. I should probably call Violet and let her know the ballgame is off for tomorrow evening. I can't very well leave you alone on our wedding night!"

Keiko laughed softly, "No, I suppose not. Are you sure, Jonathan?"

"Positive."

"If we do have a judge marry us, do we say anything to anyone?"

"That's an interesting question. Noel Spurgeon will know, but I'm positive he'd keep it to himself. I'll need to change some paperwork at Spurgeon to make you my beneficiary rather than my mom, and check to see about insurance. You're on your dad's policy from Bell Labs, right?"

"Yes, so long as I'm enrolled in college full time."

"What about next semester if you don't take classes?"

"I'm still enrolled in a full-time degree program. I'd have to not take any classes for an entire year, but even then, I could apply to remain enrolled due to special circumstances."

"OK. Do you feel like eating?"

"No, but I should."

We went to the kitchen and after checking ingredients, I decided to make vegetable stir fry and rice, which Keiko felt she would be able to eat, as her digestive system was slowly returning to normal. Keiko sat at the dinette table while I made our meal, and when I had the stir fry ready, we decided to sit there to eat. Just as I sat down, the phone rang.

"Kane," I said.

"Jonathan, it's Noel Spurgeon. Did Murray advise you to always keep a grand of cash around?"

"Yes."

"Good. Be at the Clerk's Office at 118 North Clark Street, Room 120 at 7:00pm. Bring \$400. That covers the license and the clerk's time. Do you have recent VD tests? A syphilis test is required."

"We both do, because she had one before her treatment began and I had one when I had blood drawn to check for a marrow match."

"Take those results with you tonight. Then tomorrow morning be at 119 West Randolph Street, Lower Level, at 9:00am. Judge Milton will be waiting for you."

"Do we need witnesses?"

"No, but you can bring up to six people with you if you want. You'll need \$300 for the ceremony and the judge's honorarium."

"The judge is cheaper than the clerk?" I asked.

Noel Spurgeon laughed, "It's the Chicago way!"

"Of course it is," I chuckled. "Thank you."

"On Monday, come see me and I'll put you in touch with the top oncologist at Mayo."

"Thank you."

"Keep earning, Kane. The rewards are almost limitless. Have a good evening."

"You, too."

I hung up and sat back down.

"All set," I said. "We need to be at the Clerk's office at 7:00pm, then meet the judge at the courthouse tomorrow morning at 9:00am. On Monday, we'll make the arrangements to fly to Rochester."

"And we don't say anything to anyone?"

"It's up to you, but either way, October 8th will be a party to celebrate our marriage, and I would like to have the Shinto ceremony as we planned."

"I want to think about it. I'll decide before we meet at the restaurant for the «tuino»."

"OK. Let's finish eating, then get dressed so we can be at the Clerk's office on time."

We ate, then went upstairs to change. Once we were dressed, I got the cash from my desk, and we headed out to the car.

"I didn't realize you kept so much cash around," she said.

"Murray Matheson advised me to do that for emergencies. It's weird because I had more in that small lockbox than I had in my savings account right before I came to Chicago."

"Is it safe to do that?"

"Nobody goes into my room, so I'm not worried, and it's in a locked box. I'll give you the spare key, which I keep at the office."

"But what if someone were to break in?"

"We'd lose a lot more than cash," I replied. "Perhaps I should have an alarm system installed."

"That would make sense, I think."

"I'll call on Monday. There is something we never discussed -- are you changing your name?"

"In Japan, the husband and wife have been legally required to use the same surname since 1896. It can be either the husband's family name or the wife's family name, but almost always it's the husband's. I had planned to do that."

"From what I understand, you can put anything you like on the marriage certificate, and that becomes your new legal name. You don't have a middle name, so you could be Keiko Suzuki Kane, if you wanted."

"I like that idea," Keiko replied. "People always ask me about a middle name when I fill out forms, and there's no way to specify I don't have one. Your suggestion will prevent that hassle in the future. Is there anything else we have to decide before we do this?"

"Other than whether we tell people or not, nothing I can think of."

"We'd at least have to tell the priest, right? Because he wouldn't be signing a marriage license."

"True. Practically, it would create a problem with anniversary celebrations, but only we would know that."

"This doesn't seem like you," Keiko observed. "You're always direct and honest."

"My concern is the negative reactions we might have from your parents or grandparents. My mom will understand, I think, as will our friends. Of course, the downside is if it were to get out, then people might be more offended. I'll handle it however you want to handle it."

"Is it OK to think about it overnight?"

"Yes, of course."

When we arrived in the Loop, I parked in a garage not far from the Clerk's office. Keiko put on her mask, and we walked to the building that housed the office. The doors were locked, but promptly at 7:00pm a man came to the door, unlocked it, and opened it.

"Mr. Kane and Miss Suzuki?"

"Yes," I replied.

He let us in and led us to the office where marriage licenses were issued.

"You must have some serious pull to make this happen on a Friday night, he observed as he handed me an application form.

"Friends in the right places," I replied.

I filled out the form, listing our names, addresses, and birth dates, then marked the boxes stating neither of us had been married. I handed back the form, along with a white envelope with the cash to cover the fee and the emolument for after-hours service on a Friday. He asked for our IDs, completed the form, then filled out a marriage license. He entered some details into a computer, stamped the license, and handed it to me.

"Good luck, Mr. Kane, Miss Suzuki."

"Thanks for taking time out of your Friday night."

He nodded, held up the envelope, and smiled, "You're welcome."

He escorted us out, and license in hand, we walked back to the garage where we'd parked.

"I think that might be the first time I was ever in a government office and didn't have to wait forever! The Secretary of State's office is the worst!"

"All patronage jobs and no incentive to be efficient," I observed. "And I suspect there are ways around the lines for the right people."

"Mr. Spurgeon?"

"It wouldn't surprise me at all. When I spoke to him earlier, he said that if I continued earning money for him, he would grant any reasonable request, and some unreasonable ones as well."

"What does that mean?"

"I read it as an invitation to ask for any favor I need, and he'll grant it if possible. He certainly has enough money to do whatever he wants, or as they call it at Spurgeon, 'fuck you' money. That is, you can say 'fuck you' to literally anyone and not worry about the consequences. According to Jeri, that means legal trouble, too. Fundamentally, Noel Spurgeon has enough money to buy his way out of any trouble, one way or the other."

"How would that work with criminal charges?"

"A private flight to a country that doesn't extradite to the US. And he has enough money to make that work without even working up a sweat. The key is positioning funds outside the US, in places the US cannot touch -- numbered Swiss, Bahamian, or Cayman Islands accounts would be a start. Keeping gold coins and bullion in some offshore location that would be shipped to whichever non-extradition country he chose if the need were to arise. And he could easily change his identity."

"How would he do that? Just fake IDs?"

"No, real ones. With enough money, you could easily convince a country to issue completely legitimate IDs in some other name. Think Witness Protection if you need an example. The only caveat would be that his fingerprints are on file with the SEC, so they could identify him if he were arrested. If there were no fingerprints on file, it would be difficult to absolutely identify someone with a legitimate passport, birth certificate, and so on. It happens in the US, too, outside Witness Protection."

"How?"

"The usual way is to find a child who died who would be about your same age. Get their birth certificate, which is fairly easy to do, then use that to get a driving license, and so on. You want a kid because they won't have a social security number or any work history. You make up a story like your parents were missionaries, or you worked on their farm, or whatever, so cover for any gaps, and barring a mistake or your fingerprints being on file, it would be really tough for anyone to figure it out. That said, as more and more things are computerized, it becomes easier to check for discrepancies."

"I didn't realize anyone could get any birth certificate."

"They're public records," I replied. "I suspect, at some point, they'll make it more difficult to get a birth certificate, but I can get a copy of mine by simply filling out an application and sending it with a check to Clermont County. And once you have a birth certificate, you can get every other piece of documentation. Did you know that driver's licenses didn't have photos until relatively recently?"

"Really?"

"Really. The first ones issued with photos were in California in 1958. Texas didn't add them until the mid-70s. New York and Tennessee still don't require photos."

"Wait! Driver's licenses without photos?"

"Yes. There are other states that allow non-photo licenses, but I don't know which ones. I know those because I ran across an article about identity documents while doing some research."

"That's weird."

"Plenty of things which we consider normal would be considered weird less than fifty years ago -- TVs, direct-dial telephone calls anywhere in the Western world, ubiquitous cars, computers, battery-operated devices, and so on."

"I suppose so."

"Remember, there are many people alive who were born before the first airplane flight, before the Model T, and before incandescent light bulbs were commercially available."

"OK, OK!" Keiko said with a laugh. "It's not so weird, I guess."

"Think about this -- it's been less than a hundred and twenty years since the Civil War ended, and less than forty years since the end of World War II. Compare that to, say, the Roman Empire, which, depending on which way you go, ended fourteen hundred years ago or about five hundred years ago. One interesting thing I remember from history is that the empire which finally defeated the Roman Empire existed until seventy-five years ago."

"You mean the Ottomans, right?"

"Yes. Back to us -- is there anything special you want to do on your last night of freedom?"

Keiko laughed softly, "Isn't that the question I'm supposed to ask you?"

"I suppose it usually is the guy who is looking at marriage as a straitjacket, but I don't see it that way."

"So I'm not your 'ball and chain'?" Keiko asked lightly.

"Not even close! Bianca teased me about that, but I reject the idea completely. And she was only teasing."

"I did limit things with her."

"On the contrary, you gave me far more freedom than I would have given myself!"

"Can I ask you something that might bother you?"

"Ask me anything, Keiko-chan."

"Did you want to get married immediately because you think I'm going to die?"

"If I had to give a one-word answer, it would be 'no'. The longer answer is that I'm concerned, of course, as I know you are. But that aside, the pressing need is that you have to be ready to undergo your bone marrow transplant at any moment. It's a difficult procedure that has a lengthy recovery period, and your immune system would be even more compromised than it is now. That might mean we couldn't have our ceremony in October, no matter what we might want."

"Logical and practical as always," Keiko observed.

"As I've said, I'm going to maintain a positive attitude. Doing anything else is defeatist. We continue to live our lives together, making adjustments as necessary. That's all anyone can ever do. You evaluate each piece of information as you receive it, and adjust your thinking to take it into account, then decide if you need to change course."

"That's basically your approach at work."

"Because it has to be. I can't predict the future, though I can draw educated and logical conclusions from information I have. That doesn't guarantee a specific outcome, but it gives me the edge. An analogy might be playing blackjack where you can improve your odds by counting cards. You don't know the next card that's going to turn up, but the odds tell you how to bet. Casinos mitigate that by using multiple decks."

"Another analogy would be playing stud poker, where you see a large number of cards on the table, and from those, you can deduce the odds that a player has a specific hole card, which informs how you bet. You don't know for sure, but from what you see, and from betting patterns, you can make educated guesses."

"Do you play poker or blackjack?"

"No, but Bianca explained them to me when we were discussing basic statistics. It's what led me to know I needed to take a stats class."

"I bet you'd be good at poker."

"Gambling always struck me as foolish, given the odds are always stacked in favor of the house. Granted, a friendly poker tournament would be different, but growing up, I didn't have any money for that kind of thing."

We arrived home, and I placed a call to Violet to let her know I couldn't make the baseball game. She was very disappointed, but I promised to see her on Sunday. Once I'd completed that call, Keiko and I went upstairs. She was tired, and we'd have a long day on Saturday, so we took a warm bath together, then climbed into bed and quickly fell asleep.'



August 13, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"What do you want to do about telling people?" I asked Keiko as we dressed on Saturday morning.

"I think we have to tell them, and explain why," she said. "I don't like the idea of keeping it secret, especially given people might find out. That would hurt your reputation of always being honest."

"A very good point," I replied. "Do we tell our housemates beforehand?"

"I think that's up to you, really," Keiko said. "I'm OK either way."

"Noel did say we could have six people there," I said.

"We could ask Jack and Kristy, and tell everyone else afterwards," Keiko suggested.

"I think that would upset Bianca," I replied. "We can just ask everyone in the house. I'd consider my mom, but if we ask her and don't ask your parents, it could be awkward. Let's just tell our housemates and give them the option of joining us."

"You'll have to wake up Deanna and CeCi, I suspect," Keiko said.

"They won't be upset," I replied. "Jack and Kristy might still be in bed, too. Only Bianca is usually up early."

We finished dressing, and I went to Jack and Kristy's room and knocked on the door.

"Come in," I heard Jack say, muffled by the door.

I opened the door and stepped in, seeing them snuggled in bed.

"Sorry to bother you, but there's been a change of plans. Keiko received bad news from the doctor yesterday. She's going to need a bone marrow transplant, and because we have no idea when that might happen, we're getting married in about ninety minutes."

"Shit, man, that sucks," Jack said, then quickly added, "The diagnosis, not the impromptu wedding."

"You need a marriage license," Kristy said.

"I called in some favors and we were issued a license at 7:00pm last night."

"Mr. Spurgeon?" Jack asked.

"Right the first time. He also arranged for a judge to perform the ceremony this morning at 9:00am. We'll still have the Shinto ceremony on October 8th, Keiko's situation permitting. Do you two want to come with us?"

"Absolutely!" Jack declared. "Give us twenty minutes to shower, dress, and eat a quick breakfast."

"You have about an hour," I replied. "Let me go tell the others."

I stepped out, closed the door, then went up to the attic where Deanna had her studio and bedroom. She was sleeping, but I gently woke her and explained the situation.

"CeCi and I have to be at work by 10:30am," she said.

"That should work out OK, given we'll be in the Loop and I can give you two a lift to Venice Café after the ceremony. It'll be short, I'm sure."

"What about the Shinto wedding?"

"If Keiko's health allows it, we'll do it, even though we'll already be legally married."

"How bad is it?" Deanna asked. "I mean truthfully."

"Bad. A bone marrow transplant is, as her doctor said, a high-risk, low-success procedure. But it's the only chance she has, so we're doing it. I'll be taking her to Mayo Clinic for an evaluation soon."

"OK. Let me take a quick shower and dress. I absolutely want to be there. Did you tell CeCi?"

"She's next."

I left the loft and went to CeCi's room and had basically the same conversation, then went downstairs, where I found Keiko speaking with Bianca, explaining our plans.

"Don't you want to ask your mom?" Bianca asked.

"She'll be at the public ceremony on October 8th," I replied. "We'll tell them all at the «yuino» today, but inviting some, but not all, might cause divisions and resentment. This way, if they're upset, they can be upset with me, not with each other. We already have enough disunity on my side of the family that we don't need more."

"Do you think your grandparents will be at the gathering today?" Bianca asked.

"It's in a private room at a bar, which my aunt said was a non-starter for my grandparents, not to mention that a Shinto priest will be there. My aunt was working on them, but I don't know if she had success or not."

"That's so small-minded I don't even know what to say!" Bianca said, shaking her head.

"It's their decision," I replied. "The fact that my mom will be there is likely an issue for them as well."

"Our baby is going to go over SO well with them!" Bianca said sarcastically, shaking her head.

"Again, their problem, not mine. Our baby will have three wonderful grandparents, and your grandparents seem OK."

"Until they find out I'm pregnant. They'll lose it for a bit, but in the end, babies are great equalizers in Mexican families!"

We had breakfast, with our other housemates joining us, then the eight of us left for the courthouse, with Deanna and CeCi riding with Keiko and me, and the others riding with Bianca in her car. Twenty-five minutes after leaving home, we arrived at 119 West Randolph Street and parked in a lot nearby.

The eight of us walked together to the courthouse and were admitted by a guard once I'd shown my ID. The guard directed us to Judge Milton's chambers, where we found the door open and the judge sitting on a settee, waiting for us.

"Mr. Kane and Miss Suzuki, I presume?" he said when Keiko and I appeared at the door.

"Yes, Your Honor," I said.

"Come in," he said. "I see you have guests, but I think there's enough room to do the ceremony here, rather than in my courtroom. I understand you have a license issued last night?"

"Yes, your honor."

I handed him the license and a plain white envelope with the fee and honorarium.

"Miss Suzuki, I hope your treatments are successful."

"Thank you, Your Honor."

"The only thing required by Illinois law is an affirmation of consent and a pronouncement of marriage by an authorized member of the clergy or judiciary. Did you want to do anything more?"

"No, Your Honor," I said. "We're planning a full Shinto ceremony in October."

"Then if you two would stand in front of me, and your friends gather around, we'll get started. What names shall I use?"

"Jonathan and Keiko," I replied.

He nodded, and we moved to stand before him, while our friends stood in a semi-circle behind us.

"Jonathan, do you consent to marry Keiko?"

"I do!" I said emphatically.

"Keiko, do you consent to marry Jonathan?"

"I do!" she said, equally emphatically.

"Then, by the power vested in me by the State of Illinois and in front of these witnesses, I declare that you are husband and wife! You may kiss the bride!"

Our friends applauded and Keiko lowered her mask briefly so we could exchange a quick kiss.

Judge Milton signed the marriage license, had us both sign, then promised to file it first thing Monday morning, and promised we'd have our certificate within ten days. I shook hands with him, he congratulated us and wished us luck, and then we all left his chambers.

"That was fast!" Juliette declared.

"Words NEVER said to Jonathan!" CeCi teased.

I chuckled, "A problem I thankfully never had!"

"How does it feel to be married?" Jack asked.

"Good," I replied.

"Me, too," Keiko added. "Though other than the piece of paper, nothing has changed. We've basically shared everything for a few months."

"Including sharing Jonathan with me, so I could get pregnant!" Bianca declared.

"Not exactly," I chuckled. "You and Keiko were never involved!"

Everyone laughed.

"You know what I meant, you goofball!" Bianca declared.

We reached our cars and Keiko and I drove CeCi and Deanna to work, even though they'd be a bit early. Once we'd dropped them at Venice Café, Keiko and I headed home. When we arrived, I made tea, and she and I relaxed in the Japanese room until it was time to get ready for the «yuino». Given we'd be out, Bianca and Juliette had promised to do the shopping and take care of my dry cleaning, which I greatly appreciated.

Keiko and I left the house at 11:15am, heading for Berwyn, where her grandfather had reserved a private room at FitzGerald's, a club on Roosevelt Road. When we arrived, I saw the club didn't open to the public until noon, and wondered if we could get in before then, though on second thought, I was sure Ichirō had made the necessary arrangements.

I parked, and we walked to the door and were immediately greeted by a hostess who led us to the private room where her grandparents and parents were waiting. My aunt and uncle arrived about five minutes later, after having picked up my mom from Violet's house. Keiko's aunt and uncle, Yukiko and Bob, and her cousin Ailea, walked in a few minutes later. Last to arrive, except for possibly my grandparents, the Shinto Priest, Koichi, and an assistant, Masahiro.

At noon, I went over to Aunt Wendy and Uncle Alec.

"Should we wait for grandpa and grandma?" I asked.

"No," Aunt Wendy said. "The Shinto priest was a serious problem, but a bar is completely out of the question. I tried, but couldn't convince him."

"Sadly, I'm not surprised. Then I'll let Ichirō know we're ready to begin."

I went over to him and bowed slightly.

"My aunt says my grandparents are not coming."

He frowned, "That is unfortunate."

"Keiko and I would like to make an announcement before we begin, please."

"Of course, this is a celebration for you, so, please, by all means!"

He bade everyone to sit and Keiko and I stood at the end of the long table that had been set up.

"Keiko would like to say something, and then I have an announcement," I said.

"Keiko-chan?"

"I received the results of my blood tests yesterday, and Doctor Morrison believes I will need a bone marrow transplant. Jonathan and I will be going to Mayo Clinic soon for further evaluation."

There were gasps and looks of concern from all our guests.

"Because of that," I said, "and because of all the uncertainty it brings, especially with regard to timing, Keiko and I were married by a judge this morning in a very brief civil ceremony. We intend to have the Shinto wedding ceremony in October, Keiko's situation permitting."

There was stunned silence until Ailea, Keiko's seven-year-old cousin, spoke up.

"You got married?!" she asked.

"Yes," Keiko said. "Jonathan insisted!"

"It's that bad?" Ichirō asked quietly.

I nodded, "According to Doctor Morrison, this is the only possible treatment that will cure Keiko, and it's high risk with a low chance of success. She'll continue chemotherapy, as it's keeping the cancer under a semblance of control, but controlling it isn't a cure."

"Setting that aside for the moment," my uncle said, "congratulations on your wedding."

That broke the ice a bit, and others joined in congratulating us. Keiko and I took our spots at the center of the long table, across from each other, with our families on our respective sides of the table.

Contrary to the usual tradition, Keiko's parents and grandparents had arranged the «yuino», and only symbolic or token gifts would be exchanged, though each of them would be wrapped in rice paper. Ichirō had coördinated with my uncle, who assumed the role which would normally have been filled by my dad. Before the gifts were opened, Koichi gave a blessing in Japanese which Keiko had suggested, then translated it to English.

ひふみよいむなやこともちろらね
しきるゆるつわぬそをたはくめか
うおゑにさりへてのますあせえほれけ

*I know of the people living across the ocean surrounding us,
and I believe are all our brothers and sisters.*

Therefore, why are there constant troubles in this world?

Why do winds and waves rise in the ocean surrounding us?

*I only earnestly wish that the wind will soon puff away all the clouds which are
hanging over the tops of the mountains.*

Once the prayer was complete, the gifts were opened. First, was «kinpou», a gift of money wrapped in rice paper, which my uncle and Keiko's father had given jointly. Next came a white «hakama», a traditional man's skirt, which represented fidelity. Next were two «naganoshi», clam shells which represented longevity and which would go on our Spirit Shelf. Next came «shiraga», thread made of hemp, representing the wish for the couple to grow old together, which would also go on our Spirit Shelf.

Next, was «konbu» a gift of dried kelp, wishing us healthy children. That caused a momentary pang as Keiko and I would likely never have biological children together, but we'd adopt, and a wish for their health was just as valuable. After that came «surume», which was dried cuttlefish, representing the wish for a long marriage.

The next gift was for Keiko -- «suehiro», a Japanese hand fan, which was meant to represent a happy future. Following that was «katsuo-bushi», which was dried bonito, given to me, and representing virility. Finally, an additional cash gift, «yanagi-daru», was intended for us to purchase *omiki*- a saké to use in the wedding.

Following the gift opening, a meal was served, with a mix of Japanese and American styles, with my favorite being vegetable tempura. After the meal, we

drank toasts of warm saké, and were served Japanese cakes which Keiko's mother and grandmother had baked.

The next two hours were time for everyone to get to know each other, and to cement the unity of the two families. I was disappointed with my grandfather that he couldn't see his way clear to attend, but that was his choice, and there was nothing I could do about it. Everyone else seemed to get along very well, and my uncle announced that we'd have a meal together in the restaurant on the 95th floor of the Hancock Center the following Sunday, following the bridal shower.

At 3:00pm, we all left FitzGerald's. Keiko was very tired from the exertion and fell asleep in the car on the way home. When we arrived at the house, I helped her up to bed so she could sleep, then went downstairs. Bianca asked me to take a walk, and I agreed.

"It's bad, isn't it?" she asked once we had walked a short distance from the house.

"Yes," I replied. "I did my own research, so take this with a grain of salt. The two-year survival rate is less than 30%, and the five-year survival rate is about 10%. The main cause of death is opportunistic infection followed by what's called graft-versus-host disease, which is akin to rejection in organ transplants. Survival rates are better among younger people, but I couldn't find anything definitive."

"Those are pretty lousy odds," Bianca observed.

"That's true, but the alternative outcome is certain."

"What will you do?"

"I refuse to think about that," I replied. "Right now I'm focused on Keiko continuing her chemo, finding a marrow donor, and her having the treatment. I acknowledge the possibilities, but I'm not going to speculate what happens."

"That's not how you operate at work," Bianca observed. "You plan for all contingencies."

"This is different. Keiko is a very different kind of investment. And I refuse to give into fatalistic or defeatist thinking."

"You need to be prepared," Bianca replied quietly.

"If by that you mean acknowledge that it's possible she'll die, I have. It's also possible I'll die. I know the odds are against me dying, but they were against my dad dying the day he walked onto an airplane in 1963. Please stay positive for Keiko's sake."

"That's easier said than done," Bianca observed.

"I know," I replied. "But do it anyway. For Keiko, for me, for you, and for our baby."

VI. Medical Appointments

August 13, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"How are you feeling?" I asked Keiko when she came downstairs after her nap.

"Better. I'm still a bit tired. Doctor Morrison said if I'm too easily tired, we could do another transfusion. I'm going to call him on Monday morning. You don't need to take off work for that, especially given you're going to miss work if we do go to Mayo Clinic."

"So long as you're sure."

"I am."

"What did you want to do for the rest of the day?"

"It's our wedding night tonight!" Keiko said with a smile. "We have to make love at least once!"

"So long as you're up for it."

"I think you're the one who has to be 'up' for it!" she teased.

"Fortunately, that's never been a problem!" I chuckled. "How does it feel to be married?"

"It happened so fast!" she smirked.

I chuckled, "Again, that's never been a problem! But in all seriousness, I understand your point. And I could answer my own question in various ways, but the one I think that best describes how I feel is that the piece of paper and the judge's words simply confirmed something that was already true, once we'd decided to marry."

"That does fit your thinking," Keiko observed. "When you decide to do something, it's a *fait accompli*, at least in your mind, which is, of course, what matters to you."

"It is, but I'm also looking forward to the ceremony on October 8th. And if your treatments interfere with that, we'll reschedule. I know it's important to you to follow tradition, if only to please your parents and grandparents."

"My parents weren't happy we didn't invite them, but my grandfather understood, especially once I explained what you had done to arrange it at basically the last moment. They're happy we're still planning the full ceremony."

"Which is sufficient reason to do it in my mind, even if we have to adjust the timing."

"How do I change my driver's license?"

"Once we receive the marriage certificate, you simply take it, and your current license, to the Secretary of State's office and they'll make the change and issue you a new license. Once you have that, we'll go to the bank and add you to the checking and savings accounts. You'll need to do the same with Loyola and with Doctor Morrison and the hospital. The one thing I'm not sure about is the car title and registration. I can add you to the insurance right away, and I'll do that on Monday, but I'll have to check with the Secretary of State on that. I also want to add you to the deed for the house."

"Are you sure you should do that now..."

"Positive. As I said before, I won't change my behavior based on your illness unless and until I'm forced to do so by circumstances. I absolutely want to maintain a positive outlook, and Doctor Morrison said that was an important factor in the success of your treatment. And it's not feigned -- I really do believe you can be cured."

"But the odds..."

"Is this where I quote Han Solo? *'Never tell me the odds!'*"

Keiko smiled, "But isn't that how you make decisions at work?"

"In a sense, but the odds are far fuzzier than any offered in a casino because there are too many unknowns. Similar to a casino, longer odds result in bigger gains. Generally, the more risk you can tolerate, the larger your potential gains, but the more likely you are to lose. But, and this is important, in my mind, I took zero risk in marrying you. I love you, Keiko, period. What's going to happen is going to happen, married or not, and I'd much rather be married to you than not."

"It's hard to be positive when the news is always bad," Keiko sighed.

"Except that's not true! It was neutral, not bad, until this last report. And your blast count is low enough that it's not crowding out the good cells. That's something, even if you need a marrow transplant. If I understand correctly from what I've read, you have much more time than someone who has a higher blast count."

"You always seem to find the positive in things."

"Perhaps because of the way I was raised," I replied. "When every day was a struggle, even the smallest positive development was important. I could have focused on how poor we were, and how little I had, and that we had to manage carefully to have enough to eat, and blamed the universe or 'the man' or whomever, and let that hold me back or get me down. I didn't do that then, and I won't do that now."

"That said, I'm not blind to the possibility, and I know it frightens you, but I promise you that no matter what happens, I will be there for you and with you, and do everything in my power to care for you and help you. Nothing is going to interfere with that, Keiko. Nothing. And it's my fervent hope we have sixty or seventy years together. And it's on that hope that I base my actions."

Keiko smiled. "It makes it easier for me to know you have that determination."

"And you have the same determination," I replied. "We'll beat this thing together. On a more mundane note, what do you want to do about dinner?"

"Are there any newlyweds here?" Jack called out.

"In the Japanese room," I called back.

Jack and Kristy came in carrying a cake, which to my surprise had Keiko's and my names on it, as well as bride and groom figurines.

"We ordered Italian," Jack said. "Kristy will go pick it up. Kristy is fully aware of Keiko's diet and there will be things she can eat. Bianca and Juliette will be here shortly; they went to get ice cream."

"Thanks," I said. "I had just asked Keiko about dinner, so perfect timing."

"The food will be ready in about forty minutes," Kristy said. "We'll put the cake in the fridge and leave you two alone until dinner."

"Thanks, Kristy," Keiko said. "We really appreciate it!"

"I wonder how they had the cake made so fast on a Saturday afternoon," I said once Jack and Kristy had left the room.

"Asks the man who arranged a marriage license and a marriage ceremony on a Friday night after 5:00pm, and had us married before 10:00am the next morning!"

"You might have a point," I chuckled.

"I want to ask a philosophical question -- does it bother you that you were able to do something that most people could never do?"

"I think my answer has to be 'no', so long as I don't misuse it to hurt others. Using what happened last night as an example, the clerk made several hundred dollars and so did the judge. As for Mr. Spurgeon, he did it because he wants to keep me happy and earning money for him. A counter example would be those judges, lawyers, and police who took bribes and payoffs to fix murder trials. Or corrupt politicians who enrich themselves and their friends at public expense. Do you have a problem living a life of privilege?"

"No, I was just curious given what you've said about growing up."

"I never resented anyone who had more than I did, and I don't now."

"What do you think about giving to charity?"

"It's a good thing, and it's something I intend to look into once I receive my annual bonus. Do you have a specific charity in mind?"

"No, but I think it's important for people who are well off to be charitable and philanthropic."

"I agree. I'll do some research, and speak with Jeri -- her mom supports all manner of charities from the Foundation."

"When's your next dinner with your friends?"

"On the 31st. It was originally set for the 23rd, but we changed it because you have chemo that week, and it's Wednesday because I have class on Tuesdays and Thursdays."

"You know, I haven't asked, but how is your client development going?"

"Slow, but that's normal for someone who is just starting out and doesn't have an industry-wide reputation and a track record of market-beating gains. Part of my plans for the coming week are to make follow-up calls for the letters and prospectuses that I sent out.

"Remember, my timeframe is longer because I'm still an analyst, which means I don't have any specific business development goals to earn my bonus. I do that by finding opportunities for Mr. Matheson and other traders to make money. Granted, bringing in new business helps, but it's not my primary job."

We had a very nice Italian meal with Jack, Kristy, Bianca, and Juliette, followed by cake and ice cream. After dinner, the six of us watched *Blazing Saddles*, which Bianca had rented at the video store. After the movie, Keiko and I went up to our room and made love for the first time as husband and wife.



August 14, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I can't believe you got married yesterday!" Violet exclaimed when I arrived at her house for our usual Sunday visit.

"Did my mom tell you why we did that before she left this morning?"

"No."

"On Friday, Keiko received her test results, and her oncologist says she needs a bone marrow transplant. We don't know when that will happen, so we might not be able to have our Shinto ceremony on October 8th. Because of the uncertainty related to finding a donor and scheduling the procedure, I arranged to have a marriage certificate issued Friday night, and to have a judge marry us yesterday morning."

"It's bad, isn't it?"

"It's not good," I replied. "I'm going to take Keiko to Mayo Clinic for an evaluation and investigate any new drug trials to give her the best possible chance to beat the leukemia."

"I'm sorry," Violet said. "I should have said 'congratulations, not said what I did.'"

"It's OK," I replied. "You were surprised by the news, just as our families were yesterday. Keiko's cousin had the same reaction you had."

"You're not taking a honeymoon, are you?"

"No. We'll travel once Keiko recovers from her transplant."

"You say that as if it's a sure thing."

"I'd rather focus on the positive than the negative. I do want to apologize again for missing the game yesterday."

"It's totally OK. Are we still going to be able to meet after classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, starting in two weeks?"

"Yes. I want to, and Keiko would insist."

"Will you help with dinner?"

"Yes, of course!"



August 15, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday morning, I completed my usual tasks, and at 9:00am, went to see Mrs. Peterson in Personnel. I described what had happened, and after an expression of concern and surprise, she explained what I would need to do.

"First, you may want to fill out a new W-4, changing your status to married, and possibly adjusting your deductions. Do you have an accountant?"

"Yes."

"Then verify with him what you should show, because what you don't want to do is under-withhold. I can't provide you with specific advice, as I don't know the totality of your financial situation. You can fill out the form at any time, but sooner is usually better."

"OK. I'll call Robert Black as soon as I return to my desk."

"Good. Next, you should change your beneficiaries on your life insurance forms. Illinois law requires you to list your spouse unless she signs a waiver."

"OK. My intent was to name her as beneficiary."

"Last, there's the question of insurance. Our policy does not have any pre-existing condition exclusions. but there is a ninety-day waiting period when you add someone to your policy, except in the case of a baby. I take it Keiko has insurance?"

"Through her parents, as a full-time student."

"They should keep her on their policy until the end of November, when your policy here will begin covering her. Depending on how the policy works, they may need to keep her on it until the end of December, but it would become secondary after the ninety-day waiting period. That means it might, within the policy limits, cover anything not covered by our policy, but our policy is basically the gold standard."

"OK. I'll make sure her father is aware. Anything else?"

"No, that's it for now. You'll obviously need to take care of any personal financial accounts, and so on, and your CPA or attorney can advise you. If you don't have a will, I suggest creating one, but again, speak to your attorney about that."

"Thanks, Mrs. Peterson."

"You're welcome. I hope things turn out well for your wife."

"Me, too."

I left her office and returned to my desk, then placed a call to Robert Black. Once again I explained the situation and, after expressing concern for Keiko, he asked several questions, then advised me to modify my withholding. I thanked him, ended the call, then placed a call to Nelson. After congratulations and expressing concern for Keiko, he and I discussed creating simple wills. I also asked for advice on changing the deed for the house and the title for my car.

"Not to be insensitive, but I'd advise you not to do that, as it could complicate things if the worst happens."

"Maybe so, but the symbolism is important to me," I replied. "What's the downside?"

"Probate, mostly. There are other considerations for high net worth individuals, but I know you'll reject protecting yourself in the case of divorce out of hand."

"You're right. And I'm not exactly 'high net worth'."

"Not yet, but you will be, and you do have significant assets. It's too late for this now, but you probably should have had a pre-nuptial agreement that limited your wife's ability to force liquidation of positions in your fund."

"That would be insulting and show a complete lack of trust," I protested.

"I understand your feelings on the matter, but my job is to advise you about worst-case scenarios. In any event, it's water under the bridge, given your spur-of-the-moment marriage. What about October 8th?"

"We're still hoping to have the Shinto ceremony that day, but a lot depends on Keiko's treatment."

"Keep me posted. I'll draw up the simple wills and send them to you. I assume you simply want to leave everything to Keiko, and vice versa?"

"Almost. I want to set aside \$25,000 for my mom. I'll increase that in the future, but for now, that's the number."

"OK. I'll take care of it."

"There's one other thing," I said. "And this has to be completely confidential."

"Everything you say to me as your attorney, except for expressing intent to commit a crime, is confidential."

"Bianca is pregnant. We'll need to draw up some kind of document."

"I know you well enough that had to be intentional."

"It was. Bianca wanted to have a child with me and odds are Keiko cannot have biological children, so she agreed to Bianca and me having one together. Keiko and I will adopt when the time comes."

"That complicates things a bit," Nelson said. "Let me review this with a partner in family law and get back to you, but the basic rules in Illinois are that your unborn child does have some claim on your estate."

"Just let me know, please. See you next week at Jeri's."

I ended the call, then called Cheryl, Mr. Spurgeon's secretary, to relay my request for the contact at Mayo Clinic. Cheryl gave me the name and number of an oncologist that Mr. Spurgeon's contact had provided, and who was expecting my call. She also let me know Mr. Spurgeon had made the corporate Gulfstream III

available, as he'd offered on Friday night. I thanked her, ended the call, then called Keiko to relay the oncologist's name and number.

All of that out of the way, I returned to my analyst duties, including working with Bianca on the volatility model. She and I ate lunch together, then went to the gym to work out. When I returned to the office, I found a message slip noting that Thad Baker, a partner at Allen & Baker, had called about the prospectus I'd sent. I returned the call, and his secretary put me through to him.

"Thanks for returning my call, Mr. Kane."

"Jonathan, please," I replied. "You called about the proposal and prospectus I sent you?"

"Yes. Do you have some time to meet with me to discuss it?"

"Of course. What's convenient for you?"

"How about Thursday at 1:00pm?" he offered.

"I'll be at your offices at 1:00pm on Thursday," I replied.

"Thanks, Jonathan; see you then."

We ended the call, I made a note in on my desk calendar, then went to Mr. Matheson's office to let him know about the meeting.

"It sounds preliminary," he observed.

"I agree. I'll gather information and answer his questions. I suspect he'll have to take it to the other partners for approval, similar to Hart-Lincoln."

"I'd say that's a sure thing. Just let me know how it goes. On another topic, Noel let me know about your weekend activity. Are you sharing that?"

"Our families and closest friends know, and I saw Mrs. Peterson this morning to discuss changing my taxes, insurance, and beneficiary. Did Mr. Spurgeon let you know about me taking Keiko to Mayo Clinic?"

"Yes. He said he'd authorized as much time off as you need. I know you well enough that you won't neglect your job while taking care of your wife."

"I'll do my best."

"Keep me posted."

"Will do!"

I returned to my desk and continued my usual afternoon research and analysis. Just after 3:00pm, Keiko called to say she'd spoken to Doctor Weiss at Mayo.

"He can see me at 2:00pm on Friday afternoon," Keiko said. "Will that work?"

"I just need to let Mr. Spurgeon's secretary know we need the jet and let Mr. Matheson know I'll miss Friday. Did you speak to Doctor Morrison?"

"Doctor Weiss promised to call him to get my records and discuss treatment while we wait for a bone marrow donor."

"OK. Let me make the arrangements. I love you, Keiko!"

"I love you, Jonathan!"

We ended the call, and I dialed Cheryl's number and asked her to make arrangements for Keiko and me to fly to Rochester on Friday. She promised to do that and call me back with the details. She called back about an hour later.

"The plane will be waiting for you at Meigs on Friday at 10:30am. It will fly you to Rochester, wait for you, and bring you back to Meigs that evening."

That schedule would allow me to work for a few hours on Friday morning, assuming Kristy could bring Keiko to Meigs. I was sure she could, but if not, I'd work out another plan. Being able to create my daily analyst report was very important, and Mr. Matheson had made a point of how he'd missed it during my two-week leave.

"Perfect," I said to Cheryl. "Thanks."

"You're welcome."

I ended the call, then let Mr. Matheson know I'd be in early on Friday and leave about 10:00am to head to Meigs.



August 18, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Jonathan Kane to see Thad Baker," I said to the receptionist when I walked into the offices of Allen & Baker.

"Please have a seat and someone will come to get you."

"Thanks."

I sat down and she made a call, and about two minutes later, a young woman came to the door and invited me to follow her to Thad Baker's office.

"Good afternoon, Jonathan," he said. "Please, have a seat. Can Sue get you anything to drink?"

"A Coke would be nice, thanks."

"A Coke for Jonathan and coffee for me, please," he said to his secretary.

"Right away!" she exclaimed.

She left and returned a minute later with coffee and a Coke.

"I have to ask," Mr. Baker said, "how long have you been doing this?"

"I'm relatively new. Spurgeon has been in business for about ten years, and I joined two years ago. I have my Series 3 and Series 7 securities licenses, and currently have about \$50 million under management personally, and Spurgeon has about \$3 billion under management. I'm one of the fund managers, and I'm also a foreign exchange analyst."

"And the returns in your proposal and prospectus are legitimate?"

"All the statements in the prospectus are audited, except for my new fund, which was just established this year. And to answer a question I've been asked before - Spurgeon Capital has never once been found to have violated securities laws."

"How is it that you can consistently beat market returns?"

"To use a cliché, knowledge is power. I, and other analysts, do the legwork to know which financial instruments will generate the best returns, and to take positions before the general public. As I said, it's all legal, and requires always

being at the top of our game. As Mr. Spurgeon says, nobody makes billions pitching underhand."

"What kind of risk would we be taking on?"

"Actually, less than if you were invested in an S&P or Dow index fund. That said, I won't pull any punches -- as with any investment, it is possible that you could lose all your principal and any gains."

"That's not exactly a strong sales pitch!"

"Perhaps not, but if you read through the prospectus, as I'm sure you have, it says that, couched in legalese and financial jargon. While I cannot guarantee returns, Spurgeon has historically made money in both up *and* down markets. And remember, the first 8% profits belong solely to the investor. That gives us the incentive to beat that by as much as possible, within our risk parameters."

"I compared your returns with the returns we're currently earning on our investments and they're significantly better, even allowing for the higher fees. What's the process?"

"You fill out an application, our Legal and Compliance teams will review the application, then our New Accounts team will arrange to transfer your investments from your current broker. The entire process takes less than two weeks. What's needed on your end?"

"I simply need to confirm with Joe Allen, the other name partner. I'm the managing partner, so, in the end, it's my decision, but I always run things by him."

"I brought the application form with me," I said, taking it from my satchel and handing it to Thad Baker.

"Joe is in court today and tomorrow, so I won't speak to him until Monday."

"OK. I'll look to hear from you next week. If you have questions, please call. I will be out most of tomorrow, but I'll be in the office all day Monday. What is the value of your current holdings?"

"A million and a half."

"Thanks for taking the time to meet with me."

"Thanks for coming in."

We stood up, he walked me to reception, and we shook hands. I got into the elevator, nodded to him, and when the elevator reached the ground floor, I walked out of the building and headed back to the Hancock Center.

When I arrived in the office, I let Mr. Matheson know what had transpired.

"How much?" he asked.

"A million and a half," I replied.

"Great job, Kane!"

"Thanks."

I went back to my desk and placed a call to Bill Wyatt.

"What can I do for you?" he asked. "You can't be ready to upgrade!"

I chuckled, "Not yet. I'd like you to look for a two-flat for investment and income."

"I'll pull a list from the MLS, view them myself, and let you know. Give me a week."

"Perfect. Thanks, Bill."



August 19, 1983, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota

"This is crazy!" Keiko said once the Gulfstream had taken off from Meigs Field for our flight to Rochester.

"It sure beats flying commercial! Don't get too used to it, though! I'd need to be richer than Matheson to afford something like this.

"How much is that? I mean, not Mr. Matheson, but how much would you need to own a plane?"

"Given all the costs associated with it, at least two hundred million. And I don't mean assets under management, I mean personal net wealth. This plane, new, costs something like \$15,000,000, and would cost around \$300,000 a year to operate, plus fuel and airport fees."

"What's your goal?"

"The same as it always was -- to have a comfortable life, marry, have kids, and enjoy myself. I've actually achieved all of those things; well, the baby is on the way."

"I just wish I could have a baby with you."

"We will," I replied. "What do you think about trying to find a Japanese child?"

"I can't imagine that would be easy," Keiko replied. "I hear it's hard to adopt an infant as it is, and there are very few Japanese people in the US."

"It doesn't hurt to ask," I observed. "But I'll be happy with any baby we adopt."

"We have to get through the bone marrow transplant first, assuming they can find a donor."

"Please stay positive, Keiko-chan. Loyola started their marrow drive, and as students come back for class, I'm sure more and more will be tested. And more people are being added every day to the National Marrow Donor Registry, which was started in Minneapolis."

"It's difficult," Keiko sighed.

"I know, but Doctor Morrison said staying positive will improve the chances of success. As strange as that sounds, he did say that the statistics back that up. Being depressed makes an opportunistic infection more likely and makes outcomes worse."

"With your help, I can do it."

"I love you very much, Keiko-chan."

"I love you, too, Jonathan!"

The flight was quick, and a car was waiting at the airport to take us to Mayo Clinic, where a medical student met us in the lobby.

"Keiko Suzuki?" she asked.

"Yes," Keiko replied.

"Hi. I'm Kalinda Sharma, a Sub-Intern in oncology. Would you come with me, please?"

We followed her to the Oncology Department, and she introduced us to Doctor Martin Weiss.

"How are you feeling today, Keiko?" Doctor Weiss asked after he had greeted us.

"Tired," she replied.

"Understandable. Our plan for today is a complete physical, blood tests, and then a meeting with our bone marrow transplant specialist. He's been in touch with the Registry in Minneapolis and will be notified the moment a suitable match is found. Do either of you have any questions before we begin?"

"No, I don't," Keiko said, and I shook my head.

"Then, please go with Kalinda."

Keiko and I followed the medical student to an exam room. She asked Keiko to change into a gown, then stepped out of the room. I helped Keiko change, and four minutes later, Kalinda came back into the room with a nurse. Kalinda checked Keiko's vital signs and wrote the information on a chart, then the nurse, Michelle, drew blood and had Keiko provide a urine sample. Once that was complete, Doctor Weiss came in and performed a complete physical exam and asked Keiko about her medical history.

"I'd like to ask a question, if I might," I said.

"Sure Jonathan," Doctor Weiss replied.

"All of that information is in Keiko's records. Why ask her about it again?"

He smiled, "Every physician repeats the same questions upon a first visit because things change, patients remember things, and, while I don't believe it's the case with Keiko, patients lie or change their stories. By asking, we find things that were forgotten, missed, or purposefully omitted."

"Thanks for answering the question."

"Don't ever hesitate to ask your physicians questions, even if you think it might be silly. It's always appropriate to ask those questions."

"I'll remember that."

"Keiko, you're in excellent condition, all things considered. Having reviewed your records, I believe you're an excellent candidate for a marrow transplant. With regard to treatment, my recommendation is to have the next round of chemo and then reevaluate. I don't believe either of the experimental trials is appropriate at this time."

"Why is that?" Keiko asked.

"The chemo is keeping your leukemia under control and you haven't had so much as a sniffle other than that brief condition attributed to allergies, and as I said, you're an excellent candidate for a transplant. The experimental treatments have more severe side effects, and could leave you in worse shape with regard to having the transplant."

"OK," Keiko replied.

"I'll evaluate the results of the next round of chemo with Doctor Morrison, and we'll decide on the best course of action following that. I'll make sure he has the results of today's blood test results no later than Monday morning. Do you have any questions?"

"When you say 'under control', what does that mean?"

"So long as your blast count is significantly reduced by each round, and doesn't increase by more than 5% between each round, we consider your leukemia under control. Any other questions?"

"No," Keiko answered.

"Then let's get you to Doctor Gualtieri, the marrow transplant specialist. Kalinda will escort you. If you have any questions before you leave, let Kalinda know, and she'll bring you back to see me. Otherwise, I'll see you when we find a donor."

"Thank you, Doctor Weiss," Keiko said.

We shook hands, he left, and Kalinda led us to Doctor Gualtieri's office. He didn't perform an exam, but instead conducted an in-depth review of Keiko's diet, daily routine, and just about every other aspect of her life, including what he termed 'intimate relations'. I was surprised at the level of detail he requested.

"Why is that important?" I asked.

"It's part of the evaluation of overall risk. Close, intimate contact is a transmission vector for infections. The bigger concern is the number of people in the household, though that's mitigated by the air cleaning systems you have. The reason this is a concern is that any kind of infection would delay the transplant."

"Sorry, I wasn't objecting to the question, simply wondering why the details mattered."

"There are some activities which are riskier than others, but you haven't reported doing any of those, and given you're married, you're exclusive with each other."

Which wasn't true just a month ago, but there was no point in raising that with Doctor Gualtieri.

"How big a risk is it?" Keiko asked.

"It's simply part of the overall risk profile," Doctor Gualtieri replied. "There are no specific objective criteria, only subjective analysis. When the time comes, we'll discuss how you can reduce your risk of infection and a diet to boost your recovery. On that topic, how quickly are you able to come here?"

"Jonathan?" Keiko prompted.

"We have access to a corporate jet," I said. "We can, in many cases, be here within a few hours. If the plane is elsewhere, we'd take a commercial flight, which might mean six to eight hours, or possibly overnight. I thought this wasn't a time-critical as an organ transplant."

"It's not, but time is of the essence because of the necessary preliminary procedures, which involves both chemo and radiation prep. The goal of that process is to destroy cancer cells. suppress your immune system, and ablate your diseased bone marrow. The side effects can be pretty severe. They include, among other possibilities -- nausea and vomiting; diarrhea; hair loss; mouth sores or ulcers; infection; bleeding; infertility or sterility; anemia; fatigue; cataracts; and in rare instances, organ complications, such as heart, liver or lung failure.

"The procedure itself is simple -- a transfusion of donated marrow cells via your existing catheter. We'll keep you for a short time following the transplant, then turn you over to Doctor Morrison in Chicago as soon as you feel up to travel, and having access to a private jet makes that much easier. Of course, we'll stay in close touch with Doctor Morrison and coordinate care. There are possible complications from the bone marrow transplant -- graft-versus-host disease, which is akin to rejection of an organ transplant; stem cell graft failure; organ damage; infections; cataracts; infertility; new cancers; and, in rare cases, death.

"I know that sounds terrible, but the alternative is that your leukemia progresses to a point where chemotherapy is no longer effective, and eventually your immune system will be unable to fight off even a mild cold, which would likely lead to pneumonia and even high-dose antibiotics won't resolve it. There are many other possible infections as well, and while there is risk if you have the marrow transplant, that at least gives you a fighting chance.

"After the marrow transfusion, you'll be closely monitored, as I said, and will likely receive blood transfusions while your body is unable to generate enough healthy blood cells. We'll likely prescribe immunosuppressants, as well as antibiotics, to preemptively fight infections. I know that might sound contradictory, but we want to prevent graft-versus-host disease.

"Finally, you'll meet with a nutritionist before you leave us. He or she will develop a diet for you, but the general guidelines are to eat a wide variety of healthy foods, including vegetables; fruits; whole grains; lean meats, poultry and fish; legumes; and healthy fats, such as olive oil. You should limit salt intake, severely limit alcohol, not eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice, and absolutely not use any tobacco products. You'll also want to engage in regular physical activity. Any questions?"

"Do you have all of this in writing?" Keiko asked.

"Yes. You'll need to sign consent forms that include all of that, and I'll give you copies before you leave today, along with a brochure that describes the procedure. You can read those at your leisure, because you won't need to sign anything until you return for the procedure."

"Is there any way of predicting which symptoms or complications Keiko will have?" I asked.

"No," Doctor Gualtieri replied. "Let me reassure you about one thing, and it's the thing that most people need reassurance about -- death from graft-versus-host disease is far less likely than death from refractory AML. Any other questions for me?"

"Not at the moment," Keiko replied.

"Call me any time with any questions. And, of course, I'll call you as soon as we locate a donor. Do you have any questions for Doctor Weiss?"

"No," Keiko replied.

"Then let me give you the paperwork and call Kalinda to walk you out."

"I need to call for a car," I said.

"Use my phone, please," Doctor Gualtieri offered.

I placed the call while he gave Keiko the paperwork, and then he called Kalinda to walk us out. Twenty minutes later, we were boarding the Gulfstream for the return flight to Meigs Field.



August 20, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday morning, Bianca and I drove to Loyola Medical Center for her appointment with Doctor Janice Wisniewski.

"How are you doing?" Bianca asked as I pulled out of the alley behind the house.

"I'm doing OK," I replied. "In the end, it all comes down to finding a marrow donor. The doctors at Mayo said that the chemo is effectively controlling Keiko's leukemia, which gives us time to find a donor."

"What does 'controlling' mean?"

"I asked that question and per Doctor Weiss, it means her blast count is significantly reduced by each round of chemo and doesn't increase by more than 5% between each round. That can't continue forever, but the longer it does, the more time we have to find a donor,"

"That sounds like better news than you had."

"I think it's about the same, really. Both Doctor Morrison and Doctor Weiss said that chemo won't save her, and that eventually it will become ineffective or she'll develop some kind of infection. We just have to hope for a match. Anyway, what does this doctor visit involve?"

"A physical exam, blood tests to check for anemia or elevated blood sugar. The main problem they look for with the physical exam is high blood pressure. They'll also do a breast exam and a gynecological exam."

"And you're OK with me being in the exam room for that?"

"First of all, you've seen everything! And you've done your own close exams and probed deeply!"

"All kidding aside, I have no clue what that means."

"A breast exam is basically checking for lumps; a gynecological exam uses a device called a speculum to allow the doctor to do a Pap smear, which is collecting cells from my cervix to check for abnormalities. That's basically a cancer check. At future appointments, they'll do an ultrasound and we'll get a picture."

"Cool!"

"At some point we'll go to Lamaze classes to learn about childbirth so you can coach me."

"Hey, I have experience! I was with Bev when she delivered!"

"But you'll go to classes with me, right?"

"Of course I will."

VII. Diversification

August 20, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Do you have that exam every time you see a doctor?" I asked Bianca when we left Doctor Wisniewski's office.

"You mean the gynecological exam? Once a year, since I lost my virginity. They don't do Pap smears or internal exams until a girl has sex for the first time."

"That would imply cervical cancer is caused by sex," I said.

"I honestly don't know about that, but I'm sure it has to do with the taboo of violating a girl's virginity."

"I suppose that makes sense, though you would think medicine would ignore those taboos."

"That makes sense from a purely medical perspective, but there are a lot of girls who would freak out over that kind of exam if they were virgins. And the patient's views have to be taken into account, even if it doesn't necessarily make sense. And logic doesn't override taboos or religion for most people."

"You know me," I replied. "I'm guided by logic."

"Bullshit!" Bianca protested. "Getting married to Keiko last weekend had zero to do with logic!"

"Actually, it was completely logical." I countered. "I love her and want to spend my life with her, so the logical thing to do was to ask her to marry me. Once I'd

done that, we scheduled a wedding date, but given Keiko's health, it was logical to get married right away so we didn't have to contend with conflicts with her treatment."

"Love isn't logical!"

I chuckled, "That wasn't what you said! You said what I did last weekend was illogical!"

"OK, Greg!" Bianca smirked.

"Greg?"

"Brady! He did a whole thing with his dad about exact words. It had to do with driving a car versus driving the Brady's car."

"I must have missed that episode of *The Brady Bunch*! Back to the pre-natal exam, Juliette was exactly right about the vitamins and the folic acid."

Instead of heading home, we went to Jewel to do the weekly shopping, stopped at the dry cleaner, and then headed home, where Dustin, Archie, Costas, and Trevor were setting up for the bachelor party. Bianca and I put the groceries away, I hung my suits in my closet, then went to the Japanese room to spend time with Keiko before the rest of Jack's and my friends arrived.

"How are Bianca and the baby?" Keiko asked.

"So far, so good," I replied. "No ultrasound, but Bianca's vitals are good, they drew blood, and performed an exam. She just needs to eat a balanced diet, do low-impact exercises, take her vitamins and folic acid, and avoid alcohol."

"Good! I'll remind her to be very careful to not touch me or any of my clothes or sheets or anything because that could harm the baby."

"She did mention your chemo to the doctor today, and the doctor said the same thing. Bianca's also supposed to avoid smoke, and fortunately, nobody on the FX team smokes in the office."

"Your boss in the mailroom did, right?"

"Cigars, until his cardiologist made him quit, but he only smoked in his office, not in the mailroom. Does anyone in your family smoke?"

"No. My dad did as a teenager, but my mom made him quit before she'd kiss him. He obviously wanted her badly enough to quit smoking! Did you ever try smoking? Or pot?"

"No. I wasn't interested, and even if I had been, I didn't have money to literally burn! I see no point in taking up smoking cigars, even though it seems to be a thing all traders do. Whisky is really my only vice."

"Besides girls!" Keiko teased. "Fortunately for me! And even more fortunate that you gave up that vice except for me!"

"And I happily did so."

"You guys are mostly staying outside, right?"

"Yes. Nobody will bother you in this room. Is everything set for tomorrow with the girls?"

"Yes," Keiko replied. "You and Jack are going to the Cubs game tomorrow, right?"

"Yes. We don't want to crash your bridal shower. Glen, Dustin, and Archie are joining us."

"Are you telling the guys we're married today?"

"Yes," I replied. "They'll understand why we did what we did. And so will the girls. Is Monday's plan still the same?"

"Kristy will take me to the hospital before class, my mom and grandmother will visit, and you'll pick me up. That's set for all five days. Do you still plan to take a long lunch on Tuesday and Thursday and come see me?"

"Yes. I'd skip going to the gym this week, but you insisted I not do that."

"Remember what we talked about."

"I remember. That's why I'm doing what you asked me to do."

"You're taking great care of me, Jonathan," Keiko said. "And I very much appreciate it. It's obvious you love me, but you also need to focus on work and stay in good shape. You're going to miss time when we're in Rochester, so you need to be at work now."

"I know," I replied. "That doesn't make it easier."

"Jonathan," Jack said from the door to the Japanese room, "our friends are starting to arrive."

I kissed Keiko, then followed Jack into the backyard. I was very happy that both Tom and Stuart could make it, as I hadn't seen Tom very often since he'd married. When I greeted Stuart, he pulled me aside.

"Tom and Maria separated," he said quietly.

"That sucks," I observed. "Is it something that can be solved?"

"I can't share what he's told me privately," Stuart replied. "But I'd say there isn't much chance of reconciliation."

"Bummer."

We rejoined the other guests, and Jack introduced me to several friends from High School, as well as his brother and a cousin. From my perspective, the only downside of the bachelor party was that my female friends weren't able to attend. Most of them, including Marcia, Violet, Bev, and Beth, would be at Keiko's and Kristy's joint wedding shower.

Once everyone had arrived, and the grill was on, I stepped up onto the deck and called out for everyone's attention.

"I have an announcement to make," I said. "As most of you are aware, Keiko will need a bone marrow transplant. Because the availability of a suitable donor is unpredictable, it might be that she's in the hospital on October 8th. We're still planning our Shinto ceremony at Chicago Botanic Garden that day, but out of an abundance of caution, Keiko and I were married by a judge last Saturday."

After a few seconds of stunned silence, my friends applauded and cheered, and I received several hearty handshakes and claps on the back. None of the guys questioned my decision, though I had some good-natured ribbing from Stuart about tying myself down when I had so many gorgeous young women interested in me. He was a guy who I felt would never marry or even date exclusively, something I couldn't personally contemplate.

We had a great time stuffing ourselves with brats, burgers, and other food, washing it down with beer and pop. Just before the party broke up, Stuart brought out a bottle of *The Glenlivet*, a single malt Scotch whisky. and everyone shared a toast to Jack and me. Following the toast, most of our friends left, though Dustin and Archie stayed to help clean up.

Because I had been with the guys and outside all day, I showered before getting into bed with Keiko.

"Did you have a good day?" she asked.

"Absolutely," I said, as she snuggled close.

I reached over, turned out the light, and my wife and I quickly fell asleep in each other's arms.



August 21, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday morning, when I turned on CNN Headline News, I was greeted with a report of the assassination of Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino Jr., an important opposition figure in the Philippines. He had been shot immediately after disembarking from his plane on his first visit following an exile in the United States.

That news convinced me that my analysis of the Philippine peso was correct, and that the puts I'd purchased at the end of May would pay off handsomely. I made a note to call Rich at Spurgeon early in the evening and have him buy more November puts, if the price was right. I contemplated whether I should call Mr. Matheson, given I'd been predicting devaluation for months, and decided it was better safe than sorry.

"It's goddamned early!" he growled when he answered the phone, clearly having been woken by it.

"It's Kane," I said. "Benigno Aquino was assassinated in Manila. I plan to call Rich as soon as he's in the office to extend my position and buy more November put options."

"Fuck that!" Murray Matheson growled. "Let me call around and see if I can find someone to take those trades right now. How much?"

"\$20 million," I said.

"Options, not straight puts, right?"

"I can't take the risk," I replied. "I'll pay the extra bips for insurance."

"OK. I'll piggyback that on my move, which will be a massive short combined with put options. How sure are you for November?"

"I am not uncertain," I replied, using my code phrase for being as sure as I could be.

"Let me get on the phone; thanks for the call."

"You're welcome."

He hung up without saying 'goodbye', which was his usual style. If I was right, and I was sure I was, I'd theoretically make something on the order of \$4,000,000, a return of around 20%, minus the cost of the put options, which were already in the money based on a 7% devaluation in June. I expected the next one to be at least 20%. If things played out the way I expected, even with doing nothing else

for the rest of the year, I'd have a 29% return on my fund. By my calculations, the DOW and NASDAQ would return around 20%, so I was in very good shape.

"How much money did you just make?" Keiko asked.

"None," I replied. "The options are for November, so that's when I'll settle."

"How does that work?"

"I buy Philippine pesos at the market, then deliver them in exchange for dollars. If my counterparty played it right, he insured himself by shorting the peso or by using a mix of options."

"Everyone can't make money," Keiko observed. "Who loses?"

"Anyone holding accounts denominated in Philippine pesos or who has contracts for imports denominated in dollars or a European currency. Or, put simply, the Philippine people."

"And you're OK with that?"

"I didn't do it to them," I replied. "Ferdinand Marcos did. I'm simply taking advantage of his mishandling of the economy, and, though I obviously can't prove it, assassinating his main rival. Fundamentally, if a country raises its financial risk profile, people do not trust its currency, which causes fluctuations in exchange rates. A country can defend against that by having a strong central bank with significant reserves and a willingness to raise interest rates; the Philippines have neither, and it's the fault of their government."

"A dictator, right?"

"Yes. And, if you look at what the financial markets are doing, they are punishing Marcos for being, please excuse my using this word, an asshole dictator. At some point, things will be so bad in the Philippines that the people will rebel and Marcos will be exiled, or, more likely, killed. But that's up to the people of the Philippines, much as it was the people of Iran."

"Wait! You support the Iranian government?"

"Hell no! They traded one dictator for another, and one with religious motivation. But they rose up against the Shah, which they should have done. Unfortunately, things got worse, not better, similar to Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. Revolutions are often ugly, with ugly results. The US is an anomaly compared to the Russian Revolution, the French Revolution, the English Civil War, the Spanish Civil War, and many others, which resulted in some form of autocracy."

"So revolutions don't work?"

"Often it's out of the frying pan and into the fire. But, we do know it's possible, from our own experience. Hopefully, others will follow that example, rather than the more common negative ones."

"Back to my question -- how much *could* you make?"

"It depends on the devaluation, which I'm guessing will be around 20%. That would net my fund around \$4,000,000, less the cost of the options, which is a few percent. They already devalued by 7% in June, so my options are in the money, that is, profitable."

"You used a word I haven't heard before -- 'bips'. What is that?"

"A 'bip' is a basis point, or a tenth of a percent. Basically, it's an additional cost for me having the option to sell or not sell, with the buyer required to complete the transaction if I choose to exercise the option. I am, in effect, paying for the right to force him to make the deal if I want to, but not have the right to force me to make the deal.

"Mr. Matheson is going to use straight put options, which means he agrees to complete the transaction no matter what. By not paying what amounts to an insurance premium, he makes a bit more money. And given he's likely to take a position in the range of half-a-billion dollars, half a percent is a big deal!"

"I'm missing something. If you have the Philippine pesos to sell, didn't you buy them at the higher rate?"

"No. I don't own a single Philippine peso. The contract says I have to deliver pesos at the end of November. I can buy them at any time prior to the day the contract settles. The contract prices are predictions of the future, and I predicted a much larger drop than the one in June, which is why I bought contracts that expire at the end of November. Those contracts had factored in a devaluation of about 5%, so I've only made about 2% so far. My overall profit will depend on the price Mr. Matheson can negotiate before the markets open."

"How much of that \$4,000,000 is actually ours?"

"When it all shakes out, about \$50,000, but that has to stay in the fund as 'carried interest', or I'd end up paying half of it in taxes."

"And that's over and above your salary and bonus, right?"

"Yes. Mr. Matheson will likely make \$2,000,000 in salary, bonus, and commissions this year, and his carried interest is something around \$50,000,000 total."

"How does he get that out?"

"He can take it out, he just has to pay taxes on it. There are strategies to reduce taxes, mainly having to do with long-term capital gains. He'll likely cash out completely when he retires, and I'd wager he'll wind up with something on the order of \$100,000,000."

"Those numbers are mind-boggling!" Keiko declared.

"I know! When Spurgeon finally decides to get out of the game, he's likely to have north of \$600,000,000 in total assets. And that will be a VERY interesting situation, because he has to find the right person to run the firm, or investors will move their money away from Spurgeon, and with less capital, there is less opportunity for gains."

"What do you do with that kind of money?"

"Whatever you want!"

After breakfast, I helped Bianca and Juliette prepare for the bridal shower, and at 10:30am, Jack and I left the house to head to Wrigley Field for the Cubs game against the Braves. We met Glen, Dustin, and Archie outside the ballpark, then went in, taking our seats in the bleachers.

The game was wild, with the Braves scoring six runs in the top of the first, chasing Dick Ruthven from the mound. It wasn't all Ruthven's fault, though, as the Cubs made three errors which resulted in three un-earned runs. The Cubs got one back via a lead-off home run by Thad Bosley, then scored a run in the second inning and three in the third inning to make it 6-5.

Unfortunately, with the Braves scored single runs in the fourth and fifth innings, putting them up by 3, while the Cubs rallied back with 2 in the bottom of the fifth to make the score 8-7. Another run for the Braves in the sixth, and two in the seventh, put the game out of reach, at 11-7. The Cubs did score single runs in the seventh and eighth, but it wasn't enough, and they lost 11-9.

"Those three errors sank them in the first inning," Glen observed as the five of us left the stadium.

"Five different Cubs pitchers," Archie observed, "and the only one who didn't give up a run was Proly, who only faced one batter."

"This isn't their year," I said with a smirk.

"What year IS?" Dustin asked, disgustedly. "Seventy-five years since the last World Championship, and no hope in sight! At least the Sox are having a decent year!"

I had plans with Keiko, so while the others had pizza at a small pizzeria in Wrigleyville, I headed home so that Keiko and I could join our families at the restaurant on the 95th floor of the Hancock Center. My grandparents had been invited, but despite encouragement from Alex and Wendy, they had chosen not to attend. We had a great time, though Keiko and I didn't stay late as she tired very easily.



August 22, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday morning, I left the house early so I would be able to leave the office at 3:30pm to take Keiko home from the hospital.

"Morning Rich!" I said when I walked in. "How is the Philippine peso?"

"Down a bit; Mr. Matheson made a number of private trades, and I made some on the market on his behalf. Others are piling on, as you would expect."

"Anything else major happen in the overseas markets?"

"No. Just some minor fluctuations in regional currencies, as you'd expect in a situation such as this. but nothing worth trying to eke out a few bips. Europe is calm so far, and there wasn't much movement in precious metals since Friday's London fix."

"Thanks."

I performed my usual morning routine, sat down at my desk with a hot cup of coffee, and began work on my daily analyst report. Bianca had created a template in *WordPerfect* for me, which helped, as that provided all the 'boilerplate' information, as well as put the necessary dates on pages, and had all the normal disclaimers. I completed each section, updated my analysis of political risk, entered the new market volatility index information, and bumped up my global risk factor by half a point, based on instability in the Philippines.

Once all of that was completed, I went to Personnel to check on the availability of Bears and Hawks tickets, securing four Bears tickets for September 11th versus Tampa Bay, as well as four tickets for five Hawks games -- against the Penguins on October 27th; against Edmonton on November 13th; against Boston on December 18th; against the North Stars on January 25th; and against Winnipeg on March 21st.

I returned to my desk and spent the rest of the morning doing a complete portfolio analysis, Just before lunch, Naomi from the mail room brought me an envelope which contained the signed application and transfer forms from Allen

& Baker. I verified they were complete, let Mr. Matheson know, then took them to Legal to begin the new client onboarding process.

"Allen & Baker are on board," I said to Bianca when we sat down to have our lunch.

"You're on a roll, Jonathan!"

"There's still a long way to go," I replied. "No resting on my laurels."

"I can't imagine you doing that," Bianca observed. "That's just not you."

"I'm just saying that there is still plenty of hard work to be done. And that will never change. I'm sure you see how hard Matheson and Spurgeon work. To me," I continued, lowering my voice, "that's the minimum level necessary for success, because if I do it your way, I'd be competing against them, rather than cooperating with them. And remember, I still have a lot to learn and I need to have a Rolodex full of contacts."

"You have a secret weapon!" Bianca smiled. "I'll go with you!"

"Yes, and so will Jack, and I'll pick up teaching Ellie later this year or early next. She still has two years of school, not to mention having to find a job in the industry. Hopefully, Spurgeon will hire her, but there are no guarantees. Jack has another year before he'll be considered for runner or trading assistant. We're getting WAY ahead of ourselves."

"And yet, we have to keep our long-range goals in mind and do what's necessary to achieve them."

"True," I agreed.

We finished our lunch, went to the gym, and then returned to the office to complete our workday. I left early, as planned, and headed to Rush-Presbyterian to see Keiko.

"How are you feeling?" I asked when I sat down next to her.

"The first day is always the easiest," she said. "Doctor Morrison did say I'll receive a blood transfusion on Monday."

"How were the results of the tests they ran at Mayo?"

"Just barely under," she replied. "It was up a total of 4% since the end of the previous round."

"Good," I replied. "That means 'status quo' and we continue the treatment plan."

"That's what Doctor Morrison said, and he spoke with Doctor Weiss, who concurs."

"On a totally positive note, I received the application from Allen & Baker today and turned it in to Legal to start the process of bringing them on board."

"That's great!" Keiko declared.

A few minutes after I arrived, the tech came to disconnect the empty IV bag, and after a check of Keiko's vitals, I was allowed to take her home.



August 23, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Tuesday, after leaving the office early and taking Keiko home from the hospital, I drove to University Village and parked in front of Violet's house. We

intended to follow our previous pattern -- dinner before class, then pie and coffee after class while we worked on homework. As usual, I helped her put the finishing touches on dinner, and after we ate and cleaned up, we headed for Circle.

"What class do you have tonight?" I asked.

"Economics; My Monday and Wednesday class is music history, which is my Fine Arts elective. Your friend won't be in school this semester, right?"

"Teri? Correct. She and her brother were Seniors in High School and are at UofI now. The only way she'd have stayed here was if I'd asked her to marry me."

"Did you consider that?"

"In the sense that I was aware she was interested and continued to see her, yes, but it became increasingly clear to me that Keiko was the girl I wanted. I let Teri know that, and that was basically the end, which it had to be."

"Sure. I was just curious if you considered alternatives."

"I did, including you!"

Violet smiled, reached over and grabbed my hand and squeezed it.

"I just wish things had been different," she said wistfully. "I'm glad you're my friend."

"And I'm glad you're mine," I replied, squeezing her hand gently.

I walked her to her classroom, then went to my classroom in the same building. Ninety minutes later, I left the classroom and joined Violet for the walk to the diner.

"How was your class?" she asked.

"It's going to be tough, but it's something I need to understand, at least at a basic level. How about you?"

"I think econ will be fairly easy. I read several chapters in the book before class and understood them, so I have something of a head start."

"Good. Do you have homework?"

"To read two of the chapters I've already read! I took notes on them, so no, no homework. You?"

"Some very basic math problems -- determining mean, median, and mode for sets of data, and plotting a few curves."

We reached the diner, ordered, and while I worked on my assignment, Violet read further along in her econ book, and a chapter of her music history text. Later, I walked her to her house, then drove home.



August 25, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Now that Hayes has won election to Congress, have you put in an application?" I asked Marcia when we met for lunch on Thursday.

"Yes." she replied, "and I've already spoken to his Chief of Staff. I'm confident I'll be hired for a role in his district office."

"That's great news!" I declared.

"How is Keiko?"

"You saw her on Sunday!"

"Yes, of course," Marcia replied, "but I meant how she's handling the chemo,"

"The same side effects -- hard to keep anything down except broth and Jell-O, she's very tired, it ensures she won't have any hair, and otherwise makes her feel lousy."

"No word on a bone marrow match?"

"No. Her grandfather arranged for testing in California, where he has many Japanese-American friends, though our best bet will be either 'Issei' or 'Nisei', born of two Japanese parents. Those words mean 'First Generation', that is, immigrants who came from Japan; and 'Second Generation', that is, those born here to parents born in Japan. Those are the most likely to match, though anyone, of any ethnicity, could potentially match."

"What happens if they can't find a match?"

"Nothing good," I replied.

"You both seem so calm; I'd be half-insane if it were me."

"So, same as normal. then?" I asked with a smirk.

"Jerk!" Marcia exclaimed, but she had a smile on her face.

"I think, at least for me, the question is, how would freaking out help things?"

"It wouldn't, obviously, but it's a normal human emotion."

"I'm anything but normal!" I chuckled.

"You said it, not me!" Marcia declared.

"Back to the original question, when will you hear about the job?"

"By the end of next week, at the latest."

"Keep me posted," I said. "Lunch again next month?"

"Absolutely," Marcia agreed.

We finished our lunches, and when I returned to the office, there was a message from Bill Wyatt, so I returned his call.

"I have four buildings that might interest you," Mr. Wyatt said. "Two in Rogers Park, one in Lincolnwood, and one in Wrigleyville. They're all two-flats in good condition and listed at a reasonable price. I'll fax you the listing sheets and you decide which ones you want to see."

I thanked him, we ended the call, and ten minutes later, Mia brought me the fax. I put papers in my satchel and resumed my usual afternoon research and analysis. Recently, Mr. Spurgeon had purchased a subscription to a private newsletter covering the US military, which was delivered each day by fax.

The key information I could glean from it was the location of the US fleet positioning, especially aircraft carriers, which had to move in advance of any US military action. The newsletter also covered news about 'choke points' in the sea

lanes, including the Straits of Hormuz, the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, and the waters around Indonesia.

Another newsletter, which we'd been receiving since before I started at Spurgeon, covered oil production in every major field in the world, as well as tanker movement. A third report covered container ships and port volumes, again on a daily basis. I was positive there was a way to make use of those numbers in some kind of predictive model and discussed it with Bianca just before I left for the hospital to pick up Keiko.

Keiko was suffering the same general set of side effects, though she also had a runny nose, which Doctor Morrison attributed to allergies, as blood tests showed no indication that would point to a viral or bacterial infection. They were giving her antibiotics as a precautionary measure, so that made sense to me, as a layman, given Keiko had complained about mild hay fever in the past.

"How were things at work today?" she asked once we were in the car and on the way home.

"Good. No major moves, though I did receive a list of four possible buildings from Bill Wyatt. I'll look at them next week."

"Will your fund buy them?"

"It doesn't fit the asset allocation rules I established. Buying into an REIT is within those rules, but individual real estate is not. I don't have enough individuals to whom I could spread the REIT shares, so I can't use an REIT at the moment. I can, on the other hand, use my carried interest as additional collateral to obtain a better rate on a commercial loan through our prime broker."

"Prime broker? Not a bank?"

"Sorry, a prime broker is a bank. They provide overnight capital for clearing trades, find securities to borrow for a short, and clear trades. We actually have two firms that do that for us -- one is Madoff Investment Securities, who clears our NASDAQ trades, and the other is Goldman Sachs, who handles everything else. I'll go through Goldman for this."

"I don't know if you ever explained about buying buildings."

"For the income," I replied. "I'll contract management services with Kasia Pucinski, and she'll handle everything, including renting the property, maintenance, and coördinating repairs. I'll simply receive a monthly check from her that is the net of the rent, less her fees. It won't be a lot of income at first, but as I buy more buildings, the relative cost compared to the income will go down. And I'll have capital gains in any increase in property values."

"You plan to keep our current house when you, I mean we, buy a new one, right?"

"Yes. It'll be another investment property which will also generate income. I want to make sure I have multiple income streams and don't have all of my wealth tied up in securities and other financial instruments. I'll diversify into a number of asset classes, including art. One of my goals is to help Deanna become a 'rock star' abstract artist, similar to Jackson Pollock. Granted, that's a stretch, but if we can get the right kind of publicity, she'd have a shot. The other thing I want to do is support CeCi in her filmmaking."

"Is that normal for people at Spurgeon?"

"Not really. They'll buy art as an investment, but it's not about supporting the artist. And they often don't really diversify outside of financial products. I don't want to be dependent on any one thing, or even one class of things. Once I have

sufficient resources, I'll look for small businesses in which I can invest to create both income and growth."

"It's amazing how far you've come and that you have everything mapped out, but knowing you, I wouldn't expect anything else! I'm curious if you plan to retire young or keep working?"

I laughed, "I'm not even twenty-one! That's something I haven't considered, and I don't even know what my criteria would be. My original goal was to be comfortable, and everything I'm doing is towards that goal -- ensuring I don't depend on any single source of income. Once that's done, then I suppose the goal is to be what is politely called 'independently wealthy', but which is called having 'fuck you!' money in the financial services industry."

"Meaning?"

"Having enough money that you can say 'Fuck you!' to anyone about anything and not have it hurt you in any significant way. And that's one reason I want to diversify my investments outside of Spurgeon Capital. Right now, only Mr. Spurgeon has that much. Murray Matheson *could* if he moved money out of the various Spurgeon funds and diversified, but right now, he's dependent on Mr. Spurgeon and can't say 'Fuck you!' to him. Heck, I think at this point, Mr. Matheson would do anything Mr. Spurgeon asked him to do, even if it were illegal!"

"Because he has to?"

"His wealth is basically tied directly to Spurgeon. Part of it is that the rules require having a significant percentage of your compensation held in the Spurgeon Select Fund. Twenty-five percent of my bonus is paid into that fund, rather than into my fund or directly to me, and it has a five-year lockup period, or one year if you leave, but payout timing is at the discretion of Mr. Spurgeon.

Nobody wants to take their money from the Spurgeon Select Fund because it signals disloyalty."

"But isn't it your money?"

"Yes, it is, but it's a sign of loyalty to Mr. Spurgeon. My advantage, and that of any other fund manager like Murray Matheson, is that your commissions are in your fund, held as 'carried interest'. That said, taking it out would incur significant tax liability, which also locks you in."

"So, how could you ever leave?"

"I would go to the investors in my fund and get written commitments from them to move their money to my new firm. I could even re-use the same fund name, because it's registered to me as fund manager. I'm governed by my employment contract, but it does not prevent me from leaving or taking my clients with me. The 'golden handcuffs' are strong, but not unbreakable."

"Has anyone ever done it?"

"Not in the sense that they left voluntarily. Mrs. Peterson, the Head of Personnel, told me the story of a hotshot young trader who was the fair-haired boy, similar to me. He was idealistic and didn't like the culture and refused to go along, but unlike me, he actively fought it. That eventually led to Noel Spurgeon terminating him and blackballing him with every firm in Chicago, New York, and London. The guy then tried to work outside the industry, but every time he found a decent job, Mr. Spurgeon used his money and influence to have the young man fired. Supposedly, the only job he could find was flipping burgers."

"But could that happen to you?"

"Obviously it could, but that's why I'm executing a strategy that allows me independence and making investments outside Spurgeon. And I know enough to counter any attempt at blackballing me."

"You have dirt on Mr. Spurgeon?"

"It's an open secret, but nobody has the guts to use it against him. It's my ace in the hole, so to speak."

"What is it?"

"Mr. Spurgeon has a penchant for bedding underage girls, and I know someone who knows who those girls are."

"Jeri, right?"

"Yes. I would never use it against him unless he came after me."

"Even though he's breaking the law?"

"That's between him and the government. You know I try to mind my own business and let other people mind theirs, and honestly, if a fifteen-year-old girl wants to have sex with someone, that's her business, not mine nor the government's. Even if I weren't married, I'd have zero interest in girls that age, but I'm not about to tell them they can't make their own decisions. Seriously, Illinois would say that Bev and me having sex was a crime, even though she initiated it and was only a year younger than I was."

"Do you think the government should butt out of regulating your work?"

"Nearly all the regulations are about transparency and not cheating customers, so, really, they don't get in the way if you're honest, which I am. Sure, there's red

tape, but mostly that's handled by Legal and Compliance. I keep detailed notes about my trades, but I'd do that even without regulations. Ultimately, the regulations don't prevent me from making honest trades in good faith. It's not like the law we just discussed where even honest, ethical, and consensual action is prohibited by the government. That's a VERY different thing."

"I suppose you would have objected to Prohibition, right?" Keiko asked.

"I love what I heard from Marcus, the foreman for Brown Construction -- 'Al Capone once said that he was a businessman supplying the people of Chicago with goods and services denied to them by their government'. It fits my view perfectly. If I want to drink, or smoke, or screw, or get high, and I don't hurt anyone else, it's nobody else's business."

We arrived home, and I helped Keiko to her old room, where she had to sleep during the week of chemo and the following week. After making sure that she was settled, I left the house and headed to Violet's for dinner, followed by my stats class.

VIII. "The Target Is Destroyed"

August 26, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday, after I completed my usual morning routine and handed in my daily analyst report, I called our contact at Goldman Sachs.

"Waterston," he said when he answered.

"Kane at Spurgeon Capital. I'm looking to line up funding for two commercial real estate purchases."

"You, or your fund?" he asked.

"Me. A pair of two-flats. I'd guarantee the loans by using my carried interest as excess collateral. What's the rate?"

"So long as your carried interest is in excess of thirty percent of the loan amount, prime plus a quarter on a five-year balloon, with zero down. The origination fee is only a half-point."

That meant paying interest only on the note, which was normal for commercial loans. I could pay down the principal at any time during the term, or refinance some or all of the principal at the end of the term. That wasn't a problem, but a mortgage rate of around 12% was tough, especially when combined with an origination fee equal to a half percent of the purchase price.

That said, I didn't see rates coming down significantly in the next five years, and I didn't want to wait for five or possibly ten years for them to return to more historical levels of around 6%. I'd have to evaluate the purchase price, the rents,

the property taxes, and estimated maintenance to determine if it made financial sense."

"Would you send me a term sheet, please?"

"I'll fax it to you with a list of requirements. Send me a fund statement, please."

"Will do."

"Talk soon," he said, and hung up immediately, which was typical in the industry.

I replaced the handset in the cradle, printed a fund statement from the IBM mainframe, and then faxed it to Will Waterston using the speed dial button on the fax. I waited for the send confirmation, then went back to my desk. About ten minutes later, Anna brought me the term sheet. I scanned it and the requirements, then called Bill Wyatt about the two-flats he'd identified.

"All four of these look like good candidates," I said. "Let's start with the one in Wrigleyville and the brick construction in Rogers Park."

"Great! When would you like to see them?"

"I could do it any afternoon next week after 3:30pm. I'll just get into the office early. Monday would be best, as I don't have class that evening."

"I spoke to the listing agents for the two properties I'm not representing, and any afternoon should work," Mr. Wyatt said. "Let's meet at the Wrigleyville unit at 4:00pm. We'll see that, then head to the one in Rogers Park."

"Sounds good. I'll see you there."

"Before I let you go, do you have financing lined up?"

"I spoke to my prime just before this call and it won't be a problem. I'll need to do a complete financial analysis to see if it makes sense, but I want to see the properties first. I'll want to see lease documents along with maintenance records."

"I'll get the information right away."

"Thanks."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, and returned to my usual analyst work. I left the office at 3:30pm, as I had all week, so I could go to the hospital to drive Keiko home. Once she was settled, she again insisted I go out with Jack and Kristy, so despite my inclination to stay home, I found CeCi in the great room and we left to join Jack and Kristy at Giordano's for pizza.



August 29, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday I went into the office early so that I could leave at 3:30pm to see the buildings Bill Wyatt had identified. As we had agreed, I met him in Wrigleyville to see a stone walkup on North Wilton Avenue, about four blocks from Wrigley Field. The building was well-maintained, and had two long-term renters who, according to the listing sheet, had consistently paid their rent on time for the previous two years, and there had been no criminal activity at the address.

The rents being charged were a bit low, but that had to be counterbalanced with the fact that the renters were long-term and reliable. That counted for quite a bit, given having the property vacant for any amount of time would offset any minor deficiency in the rents being charged. The problem was, with interest rates at the

level they were, I'd just barely break even when everything was taken into account.

That was something I expected, and the property's value would certainly appreciate, given the close proximity to Wrigley Field. Considering my timeframe, I felt I could fairly easily pay down the principal during the interest-only term, and that would reduce the monthly outlay. The worst-case scenario, as I saw it, was that I'd sell it for the capital gains.

"What do you think?" Bill Wyatt asked after we left the building.

"It's a possibility," I replied. "I'll obviously want to see the other three. This one is a bit pricier, but given the location, I think the long-term prospects for appreciation, as well as rent increases, is absolutely there. The rents in that building are a bit below market; are there any city regulations about rental rates?"

"No. Chicago doesn't have rent stabilization or rent control ordinances on the books."

"OK. Let's go see the brick construction in Rogers Park. I can also call the other one, which is about three blocks from the one we're going to see, if you have time.'

"I think so, yes."

"OK. I'll meet you at the house on West Jarvis, though I'll stop to use a payphone."

"Sounds good."

Twenty minutes later, I toured the second two-flat, and while the price was significantly lower, it needed a bit of work, and both tenants had leases under a year old, compared to four and six years at the Wrigleyville property. This one, though, had rents which were slightly above market for the area, and the property would be profitable assuming I could keep it rented. That, of course, was offset by the money I'd need to spend to bring the building up to my standards.

"What do you think?" Bill Wyatt asked when we left the house.

"If I decided on this one, I'd offer at least 15% under the asking price because it needs repairs, and because of the rental history. Let's go see the third one."

"Do you want me to call to see if we can see the fourth one, too?"

"Why not? Let's stop by my house, you can use the phone, and I can let Keiko know."

We left the house on West Jarvis, headed to my house on West Morse, where Mr. Wyatt made a phone call, and I spoke with Keiko and Bianca.

"Are you feeling better after your transfusion this morning?" I asked Keiko.

"A bit, but it'll be better in the morning. It's always about twenty-four hours."

"Did Doctor Morrison have anything to say?"

"Not really. Obviously my grandmother will take me for my blood draw on Friday, and we'll have the results on Tuesday because of the Labor Day weekend."

"OK."

Mr. Wyatt finished his call and confirmed we could see the building in Lincolnwood. I kissed Keiko, then Mr. Wyatt and I left the house to view a two-flat on West Estes Avenue, about four blocks from the house I'd once rented. It was similar to the previous house, though it had aluminum siding rather than being brick construction.

It was the least expensive of the four, and needed work, which meant offering significantly under the asking price, as I would for the other Rogers Park house. We left it, and headed for the fourth house, which was on North Tripp in Lincolnwood. It wasn't quite as nice as the building in Wrigleyville, but it was nicer than both the Rogers Park buildings.

"Any thoughts?" Bill Wyatt asked after we'd seen the fourth building.

"I need to crunch the numbers so I can make an offer. I may make an offer on two buildings, as I have enough available capital if I decide to do that. Are there any pending offers?"

"No."

"Then, give me a week, and I'll have a decision and an offer or offers."

"OK. If any other offers come in, I'll let you know."

"Thanks."

We shook hands, and I headed home. I ate leftovers, then spent some time with Keiko before she went to sleep in her old room, as we couldn't sleep in the same bed until Saturday.



August 31, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Wednesday evening, I joined my friends at Jeri's house for our monthly dinner. Once everyone had assembled, I provided an update on Keiko.

"How do my Japanese colleagues at the bank get tested?" Pete asked.

"I'll give you Doctor Morrison's card," I replied. "He'll arrange it, and there's no cost. We really appreciate it."

"Anyone can be tested, right?" Jeri asked.

"Yes. I'll give you all one of the doctor's cards. You, or any friends or relatives, can call to arrange to be tested."

"I was already tested at Loyola," Allyson said. "And I'm encouraging everyone I know at school to be tested."

"Thanks, Allyson."

"How is work going, Jonathan?" Gary asked.

"I brought in some new clients in the past five weeks and my assets under management are around \$50 million."

"Wow!" he exclaimed. "What's your goal?"

"The sky's the limit," I replied, "But I'd like to be at \$200 million in two more years. I believe that's doable."

"If my math is right, that would earn you a cool million in commission, right?" Pete asked.

"Around that."

"Crazy!" Allyson declared. "I was sure you'd be successful, but a millionaire by the time you're twenty three? Just wow!"

"I do have to outperform the market, or I won't be able to bring in anywhere near that."

"You're doing great so far!" Jeri declared. "I'm very happy with the returns!"

"Me, too," Nelson replied. "And I know Gary is as well."

"Miss Jeri?" Karl said, coming into the room. "Dinner is served."

We all went to the dining room, where Karl and Karolin served dinner.

"Marcia was hired as Assistant Chief of Staff for newly elected Congressman Hayes," I announced. "She'll be running his district office. I believe it would be to all our advantages to have her join our group again."

"Jonathan makes a good point," Nelson said. "Having what amounts to direct access to both a Senator and a Representative would be a good thing. We have legal, banking, finance, and medicine covered, along with Jeri's ties to the philanthropic class through her mom's foundation."

"I'll think about it," Jeri said.

I could tell she was a bit perturbed by my suggestion and how quickly Nelson had agreed, but it did make sense.

"I think I have to agree with Jonathan and Nelson," Gary said.

"And if Jonathan wants it, I think we should do it," Allyson said.

"Makes sense to me," Pete added. "We've all hitched our wagons to Jonathan's financial prowess, so unless somebody has a really good reason, opposing what he suggested doesn't make any sense to me."

I could tell Jeri was upset, but she handled it like a mature adult.

"Then it's obvious we should invite her. Jonathan, will you let her know?"

"Yes, of course."

"Nelson, anyone in your firm anywhere near *Operation Greylord*?" Pete asked.

Nelson shook his head, "No. The partners actually called an all-staff meeting and made a clear statement that nobody at the firm was being investigated, and to our knowledge, none of our clients was involved in any way. From what we can tell, it's mostly sole practitioners or very small boutique firms. If you think about it, it makes sense. A big firm has far too much at stake to even think about something like that."

"What will happen with cases the judges heard?" I asked.

"You can bet every single order and every single conviction will be appealed, and the state will certainly look at trials with suspicious 'not guilty' verdicts."

"Can they do that?" Allyson asked. "I thought 'not guilty' meant they couldn't come after you again, no matter what."

"The argument would be that if you paid the judge, you didn't *actually* stand trial, because it was a sham, and as such, jeopardy didn't attach. The same would be true if you tampered with the jury. But making that case would be difficult, if

not impossible, so the usual solution is to stack state and federal charges to put the guy in prison. In the end, the government won't care which way they lock him up. That said, the fixed murder trial might be declared 'not a trial' and they'd try him again, in addition to any new charges."

"What happens to anyone who was convicted?" I asked.

"They'll file for relief, but the bar is very high. They'd have to show that not only was the judge corrupt, but that he was corrupt in their case, and that resulted in reversible error. In other words, you'd have to point to something specific the judge did, and show they were bribed or otherwise corrupted. But all that does is buy you a new trial, and you might lose that one, too. It's a long shot."

"What happens to the judges?" Allyson asked.

"They'll go to prison if the Feds have the goods, which I'd say they do. We won't know until the indictments are handed up, which could be months or even years. The prosecution could take a decade."

"Seriously?" I asked.

"Trials such as the ones we're talking about, especially with undercover investigators and wiretaps, are complex. and can take years from indictment to verdict. That's especially true where there are so many defendants who all need separate trials."

"How high could this reach?" Pete asked.

"Who knows?" Nelson replied. "Potentially up to the Chief Judge, the State's Attorney, and the Clerk of Courts. I haven't heard even a hint of involvement from anyone in the Byrne or Washington Administrations. Of course, this being

Chicago, Ward Committeemen, Aldermen, and state legislators could easily be involved, along with big name attorneys. All we can do is wait and see."

None of that would really affect the FX Desk, though I'd include a synopsis of the conversation in my analyst report in the morning. The conversation turned to other things, and after dinner, I gave Allyson a ride home.



September 1, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Holy shit!" Bianca gasped mid-morning on Thursday.

Before the two words had completely left her mouth, I got up and rushed to Mr. Matheson's door, ignoring Mia and Anna.

"The Soviets just shot down a civilian 747 near Sakhalin Island!"

"Bullshit!" he responded.

"George Shultz is on CNN right now, and they have recordings of the communication between the Soviet Air Force ground controllers and the pilot in the interceptor aircraft."

"Holy fuck! Moves?"

"Normally, I'd say gold, but every single sign is bearish, and not just a little bearish. In fact, I was going to short it tomorrow."

"Don't do that."

"Already crossed off my list! Defense stocks, but they're already overbought because of the tension over the Pershing II missiles and the Strategic Defense

Initiative. Trading in the parent company of KAL, the Hanjin chaebol, will be halted, and there will be a pullback in airline stocks, though manufacturer stock won't take much of a hit because they're all defense contractors. Oil will spike, but only briefly. My advice is to stand pat. I'll reevaluate my short of gold and silver next week."

"Stand pat in the face of a major crisis?"

"My analysis is solid. This will cause a diplomatic kerfuffle, but given the temperature outside isn't already ten million degrees Kelvin, we're not going to war over this. That said, it might well heat up the regional conflicts in Central America and western Asia. I'd also keep my eye on Grenada -- that would be a perfect thumb in the Soviet's eye when they're on the back foot. I repeat my advice -- wait and see."

"A gutsy call."

His phone rang just then, and he held up his index finger, indicating I should stay. He pressed the speaker button on his phone.

"Matheson," he said. "You're on speaker. Kane is here."

"What moves are you making?"

"Kane's advice is to stand pat," Mr. Matheson said. "I think he's right."

"World War III is about to start and you say 'stand pat'? What the fuck, Kane?"

Murray Matheson nodded to me.

"Well, as I said to Mr. Matheson, given nobody has launched nukes, this is simply going to be a diplomatic situation. If there's any retaliation, it'll be

peripheral. My money is on Grenada, because it's easy pickings right in our backyard. Otherwise? Gold might move a bit, but every single indicator is bearish. The Soviet currency isn't convertible, and trade sanctions aren't going to do much, given anything important is already restricted.

"Defense stocks are already up due to tensions, including SDI and the Pershing II missiles. KAL parent stock is halted, and there will be blips in the other stocks, but that won't last. Oil will spike briefly. That's it. Wait and see what happens. I suspect a loud complaint at the UN and some meaningless trade sanctions. The real response will be around the periphery. My advice is to stand pat and look for opportunities."

"And you agree with that analysis, Murray?" Mr. Spurgeon asked.

"The kid makes good points," Murray Matheson replied. "There isn't even a small selloff which you could use to pick up cheap shares. Kane did say he'd planned to short precious metals tomorrow, but he's holding off on that."

"The biggest news story of the year, and we stand pat? How will that look?"

Mr. Matheson looked to me and nodded.

"Like the cool as cucumber assassins we are," I replied. "That it takes balls to say our strategy is correct even in the face of a significant event. Panic buying and selling is for the herd, not seasoned professionals. That's the story. Our strategy is sound, and we're going to beat the market by around 50%. I certainly will!"

"The balls on this kid!" Noel Spurgeon exclaimed. "Thanks, Kane. Murray, come see me."

"Be right up," Mr. Matheson said, then pressed the speaker button to disconnect.

"Thanks, Kane. Go look for opportunities."

"On it!" I declared.

I went back to my desk and Mr. Matheson left the office to go to 32 to see Noel Spurgeon.

"Anything new from CNN?" I asked Tony.

"No. After Schultz finished his press conference, it's just the usual blathering talking heads speculating wildly. What's your take?"

"I suggested to Mr. Matheson and Mr. Spurgeon we stand pat and continue with our strategy. If this was going to escalate in any way that really affected us, we'd already be dead."

"Nukes?"

"Where else does it lead? Call it an 'act of war' and you know for sure the Soviets would execute their war plans instantly. The fact that they've denied it so far tells me they realize they fucked up and Reagan is smart enough to work that for a diplomatic and propaganda advantage, and not crazy enough to blow up the world."

"OK, in your mind, what WOULD it take for a military response?"

"A death wish. Look, we can fight proxy wars in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola, Grenada, or wherever else, but the Warsaw Pact has no more desire to end the world than NATO does. I say the Soviets miscalculated and screwed up, and we understand that. A real war between the US and the USSR cannot end well for anyone in the world."

"Mutual Assured Destruction?"

"Yes."

"So no moves at all?"

"As I said to Mr. Matheson, trading in KAL's parent was halted, and I don't see this causing more than a brief blip for airline stocks. Defense stocks are already overvalued because of Reagan's military ramp up to recover from the neglect following Viet Nam. We already barely trade with the Russians and their currency isn't convertible.

"Something I didn't mention is that KAL's safety record is a complete shitshow, so if they weren't part of the Hanjin chaebol, that would have been priced in. Bottom line, if this turns serious enough to affect the markets, the markets will be the least of our concerns. Well, unless some company could make SPF 1,000,000 sun screen!"

Tony laughed, "I think that's a lead-lined, reinforced-concrete underground bunker in Cheyenne! And whatever the Sovs equivalent is."

"They actually still have civil defense shelters, which we've mostly given up on. Supposedly they built the Moscow subway deep enough to survive nuclear attack and would use the tunnels and stations as nuclear air-raid shelters."

"If the air raid sirens or the Emergency Broadcast Network were activated, it would be total chaos and panic. You have to wonder if they'd bother."

"I'm not sure I'd want to have twenty minutes to contemplate a certain death, either immediately or due to after effects," I said. "Just a bright flash, then nothing, seems preferable."

"You guys are morbid!" Joel said. "Jonathan, what's your prediction for the Dow?"

"In what timeframe?" I asked.

"Yesterday's close to close on September 30."

"Up slightly," I replied. "It's what, 1205 now? It closed at 1216 yesterday, so my estimate is 1230. Tony?"

"About right, assuming you're right about today."

"The Dow is down about 1%; the S&P 500 is trading in an even narrower range. I'm not uncertain. Panic buying and selling is exactly what we *don't* do. The herd does that and we make a ton of money when they do. But they aren't doing it. Volume is in the usual range for a boring Thursday that isn't before an options expiration Friday. If you don't believe me, plug the numbers into the volatility spreadsheet Bianca created. It'll show no significant change."

We watched CNN for another twenty minutes, but with nothing new, I returned to my desk to continue my usual daily research and analysis. I left the office about 11:30 to meet Marcia for lunch at the deli where we usually had our lunches. We discussed the downing of the Korean plane while we waited for our food at the counter, which unsurprisingly was what almost every other person in the deli was talking about.

"I insisted that Jeri bring you back into our group," I said once we had our lunches.

"And why would I want to come back?" Marcia asked.

"Because you aren't petty, immature, or foolish," I replied.

"Jeri?"

"No, but if she can see her way to reverse her decision, I see no reason for you not to accept it. The others agreed with me, by the way; all of them."

"Can I think about it?"

"Of course, but honestly, there is no downside. And if you're worried that she'll kick you out again, it's not up to her at this point."

"You?"

"I would never act unilaterally the way Jeri did. If you remember, I objected, and she overruled me. This time, she tried, but the others all supported me."

"So she doesn't want me back?"

"No, but so what? You'll receive value from the dinners and the connections, and we'll receive the same from you. That's what matters. And that's over and above being my friend, which I would hope was valuable enough to set aside how you feel about your second cousin. Just do it!"

Marcia smirked, "I would, but you married Keiko!"

I laughed, "Not that 'it'!"

Marcia smiled, "I know. How are the wedding plans shaping up?"

"It's what you would call a 'turnkey solution' -- we pay, and Chicago Botanic Gardens does literally everything except invitations, the cake, and the

photographer, and for a fee, they'd provide the cake and photographer. We're using Dustin, of course."

"How is Keiko doing?"

"Slowly recovering from her latest round of chemo. She'll have blood tests tomorrow, and we'll have the results on Tuesday because Monday is Labor Day."

"She has more rounds, right?"

"At least two, though if they find a marrow donor, that would change things."

"No luck?"

"Not so far."

"Bummer."

"I agree. When do you start your new role?"

"On September 26th. I wanted to give plenty of notice to the City. Speaking of work, was it chaos this morning?"

"No. It was pretty calm, actually, and for the markets, this was just a blip."

"Seriously? Reagan is likely to start World War III over this, and you think it's just a 'blip'?"

"As I said to Mr. Matheson and Mr. Spurgeon this morning, if this was going to cause a war, the nukes would have flown already. Reagan will bluster, complain to the UN, and tell the Soviets they've been bad boys. There might be some minor sanctions, but we already barely trade with them, and their currency isn't

convertible. I know you think he's 'Ronnie Ray Gun', but a strong defense is not the same as, say, rolling tanks through the Fulda Gap!"

"The 'Fulda Gap'?"

"The predicted main route for a Russian armored invasion of West Germany. I bet they didn't even increase the DEFCON level this morning because the plane was downed several hours before anyone knew about it. Korean Airlines thought the plane had been forced down at first, and from the report I heard, the Japanese Civil Aviation Bureau reported that 'Japanese self-defense force radar confirms that the Hokkaido radar followed Air Korea to a landing in Soviet territory on the island of Sakhalinska'. A few hours after that, Secretary of State Schultz held his press conference to confirm the plane had been shot down."

"So, no response? Really?"

"Secretary of State Schultz is meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko in Madrid next week. They'll yell at each other in a suitably diplomatic manner, and we'll take some nominal action like banning Aeroflot from landing in the US, and we'll bitch to the UN, but I guarantee nothing will come of that because the Soviets will exercise their veto power on the Security Council to block it. I suspect the International Civil Aviation Organization will have an emergency meeting, and they'll issue some kind of statement reprimanding the Soviets because there isn't a veto available."

"I've never heard of that group."

"I learned about it today when I was double-checking KAL's safety record, which is spotty at best. They're one of the worst major carriers in terms of safety, something I knew from a research report Tony wrote on airline stocks."

"Changing subjects, how is your class going?"

"It'll be a challenge, but worth it. Looking at the syllabus, I see the homework problems are going to take several hours, but I have plenty of time when I'm sitting with Keiko, plus I do some of it while I'm having coffee and pie with Violet after class."

"And Keiko is OK with you spending so much time with Violet?"

"Yes. That was one of my criteria for any long-term, exclusive relationship -- that I could still have female friends, specifically including Violet, and being able to see her regularly."

"I'm not sure I could have handled that."

"Which is another reason why you and I are simply close friends."

We finished our sandwiches and chips, exchanged a chaste hug, and I headed back to the Hancock Center.

"Mr. Matheson wants to see you," Anna said when I walked into the office.

I acknowledged her and went to the door to Mr. Matheson's office. He waved me in and indicated I should close the door.

"Is there a problem?" I asked.

"Only for me!" he chuckled. "You, on the other hand, are the proverbial 'fair-haired boy!'"

"How can I help?" I asked.

"Exactly the response I predicted! Noel has been toying with an idea for a year or so, and the exchange between the two of you this morning tipped the scales. I'm sure you know every trader or desk has their own analyst, or in the case of the FX desk, four, though that includes Pérez. As you can imagine, there's a large duplication of effort which is, in effect, wasted, and it's costly."

I nodded, "That was something I noticed and wondered about, but I always assumed that had to do with specific needs for each trader or desk. That doesn't mean work isn't duplicated, but it does mean not everything is duplicated."

"Correct, but overall, we could achieve the same result with fewer analysts."

"I'm not sure I like the implications of that comment," I said.

"Why?" he asked with a slight smile. "Lay it out."

"Well, reading between the lines, Mr. Spurgeon wants to create a research group, similar to Legal or Compliance, and reduce the total number of staff. That would reduce our overhead costs and increase profit without too much added risk. This theoretical research group would create our daily reports, but also field special requests.

"But there are pluses and minuses. Reduced cost is obviously a plus, as is the fact that every single staff member would receive the same morning analyst reports. But that's also a negative, as there is significant value in alternate viewpoints which would potentially be lost if there's a single report per asset class and an overall 'state of the world' report."

"OK, so how do you mitigate that?"

I thought for about a minute before I answered.

"Write the reports with the consensus view on each topic, but include a section for dissenting views. That would ensure that someone who had a unique insight wasn't silenced by the group, so to speak. And, if you tracked the dissents to see how often they were right, that would help us better understand when we should be contrarian.

"I think, and this is simply off the cuff, we need more data-driven decisions, and by that, I mean the work Pérez is doing. In fact, if we consolidated the researchers into a single team, I'd suggest using at least one of the headcount slots to hire a second programmer. Pérez already has enough work to keep her busy for at least a year, if not longer."

There was also the fact that she was pregnant, and when she delivered, she'd be out for six to eight weeks, but I couldn't say that just yet.

"That's some pretty good analysis and insight for something I just sprang on you. Now, tell me why I'm not happy."

"Two things might cause that," I replied. "One would be that you wouldn't have your own dedicated team. But your body language and tone tell me that's not the problem. Therefore, the problem is that Mr. Spurgeon decided that the team should report to the Senior Vice President. And, if I know you well enough, and take what you said before at face value, your solution to THAT annoyance is to make me Head of Research, or whatever title Mr. Spurgeon chooses."

Mr. Matheson laughed, "You just won me a \$10,000 bet, Kane!"

"How so?"

"That you'd figure it out without any more information than I gave you, AND come up with a way to ensure 'group think' didn't interfere with research. Will you take the job?"

"How many people do I have to fire?" I asked.

"Does that matter?" he asked.

"I want to know what exactly I'm getting myself into."

"There are eighteen analysts. I don't know what the total headcount should be, but it's certainly not eighteen. Your first task would be to figure out how large the team should be, and the composition of the team. Then, yes, you'd go Neutron Jack on the team."

'Neutron Jack' was Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric, so dubbed by *Newsweek* the previous year for his slash-and-burn approach to increasing stockholder value.

"I'm not sure I'd point to him as a model," I said. "I mean, sure, on a purely financial analysis, he's taking care of the shareholders. But I personally think cost-cutting for the sake of cost-cutting is bad business."

"Don't fucking say that outside this office!"

"I will if I can back it up! Honestly, if the quality of a product or the quality of service and support decline, that is not success in my book, as it harms the customers, who are the very reason the business exists. Making money is only part of it."

"You're not going socialist on me, are you?"

"Not at all! I simply have a different view of capitalism. Let me put it this way -- if the capitalist seeks only maximum profit without regard to anything else and

accumulates significant wealth at the expense of the public, how long before they bring out the guillotine and give him a haircut?"

"An interesting take."

"We're all about maximizing our performance, but we sure don't do it at the expense of our clients. That is Mr. Spurgeon's number one rule. Is he wrong?"

"Jesus Christ, Kane!" Mr. Matheson exclaimed.

"Well?"

"Point taken. Will you take the job?"

"And to show I'm not a wild-eyed Commie, what's in it for *moi*?"

Mr. Matheson laughed, "You'll double your salary as soon as the new department is created; bonus potential will be reset next year."

"And moving to a trading position?"

"Build the new team, get it firing on all cylinders, then I'll sponsor you for your Series 30 license. Assuming, of course, you continue to earn returns and bring in new business."

"And Research would report directly to you?"

"Yes."

"I accept," I said.

"OK. Let me cycle back to Noel. Don't discuss this with anyone until you hear from him, for obvious reasons."

"Mums the word," I replied. "Thank you."

"On another note -- the markets barely noticed the shoot down. Your gutsy call was exactly right. Go make some money."

"Yes, Boss!" I exclaimed.

I left his office and returned to my desk. I very much wanted to say something to Bianca, but I knew that I had to keep my mouth shut. One thing was certain, and that was that if I was going to make \$90,000 a year in salary plus bonuses and commissions, I could afford to buy at least two buildings.

The afternoon was typical, despite the downing of the plane, and the market closed about 1% down for the day, which per my volatility measures was within the normal trading range. The market could go up or down on any given day for a host of reasons, but it usually moved within a range. It was when it exceeded those ranges, or when volume increased or decreased without a significant event, such as options expiration or action by the Fed, that we had to pay very close attention.

At the end of the day, I left the office and headed to Violet's house for dinner, and from there to class. After class, Violet and I followed our usual routine, and after I walked her to her house, I drove home.



September 3, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"How are you feeling?" I asked Keiko after we ate a light lunch on Saturday, after I had spent the morning analyzing my options for buying the buildings I'd seen.

"I'm OK to go to Jack and Kristy's wedding, if that's what you mean."

"It is."

"Then shall we get dressed?"

"Absolutely!"

We went up to our bedroom, which we could share again, as a week had passed since her last chemo round, and dressed for the wedding -- me in a dark suit, and Keiko in a Japanese-style floral print dress. Once we were ready, I let Deanna and CeCi, both of whom had taken the day off, know it was time to leave, and the four of us headed out to my car. Bianca and Juliette had already left, as Bianca was part of the wedding party.

Just over an hour later, we were in Batavia at Immanuel Lutheran Church on Webster Street. The parking lot was already filling, as Kristy's dad had gone all-out for her wedding, and was paying for their ten-day honeymoon in Jamaica. Once I parked, the four of us went into the church for the ceremony, which, unsurprisingly, was nearly identical to Shelly's, which had been at a different Lutheran Church.

Once Jack and Kristy had kissed and been introduced, Keiko and I left to head to Allyson's house so that Keiko could nap. Deanna and CeCi would go with Bianca and Juliette to the reception, and we'd join them just before the meal was to be served, skipping the open bar.

At Allyson's house, we let ourselves in with the key she'd provided and went up to the guest room.

"Lie down with me?" Keiko requested. "I've missed it for the last two weeks."

"Absolutely," I agreed.

We both stripped down to our underwear and climbed into bed. Keiko snuggled close and fell asleep, and I simply relaxed. I held her while she napped, and when she woke, she felt refreshed enough to attend the reception, which we did. She managed two dances with me, but otherwise mostly sat at our table. At her encouragement I danced with each of the girls who lived in the house once, including Kristy.

As soon as the cake was cut, we left for home so Keiko could get to bed. We didn't miss out on cake, though, as Bianca brought home pieces for us, though we couldn't eat them because we were already in bed.

IX. Big Moves

September 4, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"How are you feeling today?" I asked Keiko when she woke on Sunday morning.

"OK. I was obviously tired from the exertion yesterday, but eleven hours of sleep helped. You didn't have to stay in bed with me after you woke up."

"You're right, I didn't. I chose to! Shall we dress and have breakfast?"

"Yes."

"Are you going to Violet's for dinner after the game?" Keiko asked when we sat down to eat.

"No. I see her twice a week as it is, and because we're going to the game together, we'll eat there. I plan to simply drop her off at her house after the game, then come home."

"Have you decided what to do about the buildings? I know you spent several hours analyzing them yesterday morning."

"I was surprised you didn't ask!"

"Usually, you volunteer that kind of information!"

"True. I was still mulling my options. The best long-term strategy would be to buy the two buildings in Rogers Park that need rehab, as I could likely acquire them at a price significantly below market. The downside of that is that it's

riskier, as I'd have to spend money upfront, and neither building has a history of long-term rentals.

"The best short-term strategy would be the buildings in Wrigleyville and Lincolnwood, both of which appear to be in excellent shape, and both of which have a history of long-term rentals over the past fifteen years -- an average of three years for the one in Lincolnwood and four years for the one in Wrigleyville. I'd have to pay more for those, but the income stream would be more reliable.

"Finally, I could mix and match and do one of each. If I did that, I'd most likely go with the one in Lincolnwood and a brick building in Rogers Park. That would, in effect, split the difference."

"Two buildings?" Keiko asked. "Can you really afford that?"

"We. Can *we* afford that."

Keiko smiled, "Sorry. Can we afford that?"

I had been sworn to secrecy by Mr. Matheson, but in my mind, that could not include Keiko because she was my wife. And I was positive she wouldn't say a word to anyone.

"Yes," I said quietly. "You need to keep this completely private between us, but some changes are coming at Spurgeon, which will lead to my salary doubling and being sponsored for the Series 30 Branch Manager's license."

"No way!" Keiko exclaimed, then lowered her voice. "\$90,000 a year?"

"Yes. I'll have a new role as Head of Research, complete with staff reporting to me. I'll continue reporting to Murray Matheson, and he'll sponsor me for the license I need to eventually run my own team of traders and brokers."

"Or start your own firm!"

"One step at a time! So far, I have seen no reason at all to leave Spurgeon, and given I'm basically being promoted for the third time in just over two years, I can't imagine leaving even if I did have sufficient assets under management. I'm curious if you have any input on the strategic options."

"You seem to have the Midas touch, so I think that would lean towards the more aggressive, long-term strategy. That said, this is your first foray into real estate, which suggests a more cautious approach. Did you speak to your uncle?"

"Not yet. That's why I'm having breakfast with him tomorrow."

"Are you leaning one way or the other?"

"Towards the conservative approach. The cash flow from the rents would cover the mortgage and property taxes, even allowing for the fees Kasia would charge to manage the properties. I'd have to spend money on maintenance, but that's recouped in appreciation of the properties, not to mention that as the mortgage is paid down, the cash flow situation looks better.

"Going the other route, I'd have to borrow more than the buildings were worth or liquidate some holdings to pay for the rehab. That doesn't make a lot of sense to me. The middle route is a real option, but my inclination is towards a conservative approach, as I can't really sustain losses, so I need to do some risk mitigation. That's why my strategy for my Cincinnatus Fund will, in all likelihood, return about twenty percent less than the Spurgeon Select Fund."

"Is that a problem?"

"Not for a very junior person. So long as I beat the S&P, I'm good, and I should beat it by something like six to ten percentage points, which could be as much as 50% better. So far, I'm on track for around 29% returns. The Spurgeon Select Fund is on track to be another five percentage points higher, or 34%, compared to the S&P prediction of around 20%. Of course, there are still four months to go, and a lot can happen in those months."

"Well, given it's *our* money," Keiko said with a smile, "and traditional Japanese principles suggest caution and conservatism with regard to finances, I would recommend the approach with the lowest risk, at least until you could sustain the loss without it impacting our finances."

"Wise counsel," I replied.

We finished breakfast, I kissed Keiko, and I left the house to pick up Violet so we could join Dustin and Archie at Soldier Field for the Bears game against the Atlanta Falcons. The Bears were still too heavily dependent on Walter Payton to have a serious chance at making the Playoffs, but they had drafted several players with significant promise -- Jimbo Covert, Willie Gault, Dave Duerson, and Richard Dent. If those draft picks panned out, the Bears would be serious contenders to make the playoffs and, in a few years, have a shot at the Super Bowl.

The game was hard fought, with the teams exchanging the lead several times before the Falcons scored a touchdown with less than ten minutes to go, and the Bears couldn't answer, resulting in a 20-17 loss in the opening game of the season.

"That was fun!" Violet declared as we left Soldier Field to walk back to my car. "Of course, it would have been better if the Bears had won!"

"They're getting better," I replied. "Give them a year or two."

"What are you doing tomorrow?"

"Hanging out at home. We're going to grill, but it's just my housemates, Keiko, and me. You're welcome to join us, though you'd have to take the L."

"What time are you grilling?"

"Around 3:00pm. You could easily get home in the daylight."

"What time should I show up?"

"Any time after around 10:00am. I'm having breakfast with my uncle to discuss real estate."

"The buildings you mentioned that you want to buy?" Violet asked.

"Yes. I have a pretty good idea about what I want to do, but I want a professional opinion."

"That makes perfect sense."

I dropped Violet at her house, then headed home to spend the evening with Keiko.



September 5, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday morning, I met my Uncle Alec at Lou Mitchell's. Once we ordered, I explained what I was thinking, and just as I finished, our food arrived.

"My first concern is that you're overextending yourself," Uncle Alec said after we began eating. "Your current income won't support that if you had empty units for an extended period."

"My income is going to be significantly higher than the headline base number," I replied.

"You're talking about taking commissions directly instead of as carried interest?"

"No. My commissions on new business will be much higher than I anticipated, and my base salary will also be significantly higher. I intend to guarantee the loans with my carried interest, which means I'll only pay prime plus a quarter on a five-year balloon, with zero down, and the origination fee is only a half-point. Remember, my current mortgage is covered by the rent that the others pay, and they aren't going anywhere anytime soon."

"Including Jack and Kristy?"

"They'll stay at least until he's promoted. Going back to the buildings, the two I am most interested in have a history of long-term leases, are brick construction, and appear to be in excellent shape. I believe, and I'd like you to confirm, that Wrigleyville and Lincolnwood should see above-average property value appreciation over the next ten years."

"I'm confident that's a reasonable assessment, but you know there are no guarantees."

"Obviously. In addition, you don't foresee interest rates coming down significantly in the next five years, do you?"

"Not with the specter of inflation spooking the Fed. The Reagan Administration would love to see lower interest rates to spur the economy, especially before next

year's election, but the Fed is independent, and Paul Volcker isn't about to be swayed by the Bully Pulpit."

"That's my analysis as well," I confirmed. "Given that, waiting doesn't make sense because I'd forego the appreciation, and when interest rates come down, property values will increase."

"I'm not sure why I'm here," Uncle Alec said with a smile.

"Call it a sanity check," I replied. "This is your area of expertise, not mine."

"Have you had inspections?"

"No. That's the next step. I didn't want to pay for them until I was sure the finances worked, and circumstances improved significantly on Thursday."

"Something to do with KAL 007?"

"Indirectly, yes. I can't say more right now."

"Understood. Noel always did play things close to the vest. I'd say you have your mind made up, and if the finances work, then I can't see any reason not to proceed."

"Then I'll submit offers about ten percent below asking, contingent on inspections. I suspect at least the Wrigleyville owner won't budge on his asking price, but it's not out of line for the neighborhood."

"That makes sense. What about management?"

"My friend Kasia is a property manager and is offering property management services. I included her fees in my financial analysis. She'll handle pretty much everything."

"That is the way to do it. On to more important topics -- how is Keiko?"

"Hanging in there," I replied. "She had blood drawn for tests to see how well this recent round of chemo worked. I strongly suspect more of the same -- keeping the leukemia in check. It's a matter of whether or not they can keep it in check long enough to find a marrow donor and if Keiko can avoid opportunistic infections."

"You're always a straight shooter; what do you think?"

"The same as always -- we're going to fight until we win or we can no longer fight. The odds aren't great, but neither of us is going to give up."

"That's the answer I would expect from you. If there's anything I can do to help, please ask."

"Right now, it's about finding someone of Japanese heritage who is a match. Yes, there's an outside chance of Keiko matching with someone who isn't Japanese, but the odds are pretty long. A sibling would have been the most likely match, but Keiko is an only child. Her grandfather put the word out in the Japanese community in California, so hopefully that will bear fruit."

"I hope so, too. As I said, if I can do anything, anything at all, just ask."

"Thank you."

We had a light conversation about investing and real estate while we finished our breakfast, and I picked up the check and paid. My uncle and I shook hands, I

thanked him again, and then I headed home to spend the day with Keiko, my housemates, and Violet.

We had a nice afternoon, most of it spent in the backyard, and because it was just our housemates, Keiko could join us outside without her mask. Violet stayed until 6:00pm, and then I walked her to the L.

"Violet is becoming more confident," Bianca observed when I returned to the house. "I know she's taken the L before, but she's no longer skittish or afraid of her own shadow."

"The new counselor made all the difference," I said. "Violet is only seeing her once a month now, and she's spending time with Lily, Bev, and a girl she went to school with. That's a huge improvement from when I first met her."

I nodded, "It is. Next up is teaching her to drive."

I had planned to do that during the summer, but with Keiko's situation, Violet and I had agreed to put it off.

"What happens when you're no longer taking classes?" Bianca asked.

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

The rest of the evening was quiet, and Keiko and I went to bed around 9:00pm, a bit early for me, but I very much wanted to fall asleep spooned together.



September 6, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Despite the long weekend, Tuesday was a relatively normal day at Spurgeon, though I was a bit distracted as I was expecting a call from Keiko about her test results. It finally came just after 10:00am.

"My blast count is 6%," she said. "Doctor Morrison conferred with Doctor Weiss and they concurred that my leukemia is still controlled."

That was as low as it had ever been and was approaching 5%, a level which indicated remission. Of course, staying below that number was vital, and doing so without regular chemo was the goal. Unfortunately, it didn't appear that was possible, but with a blast count at that level, Keiko's overall health would improve. Her fatigue now mainly was related to the severe effects of chemo on her system rather than cancerous cells crowding out good cells.

"That's good," I said. "Almost down to 5%. Is there any word on a donor?"

"Unfortunately, no. They agreed that I should continue with the next round of chemo as planned. They'll draw blood again on the 20th to check my blast count. The same applies as last time -- so long as the increase is less than five percentage points, it's considered controlled."

"OK. Do you need anything from me?"

"Always! But my grandmother is here now, so I can make do without you while you work and go to school! I love you, Jonathan! I'll see you tonight."

"I love you, Keiko-chan! See you tonight."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up and returned to work. At lunch, I informed Bianca about Keiko's blood test results.

"How long can this go on?" Bianca asked.

"Theoretically, indefinitely. Practically, with her weakened immune system, she'll eventually contract something that would mostly be innocuous for you or me, and it will be life-threatening for her. If she survives it, it would likely delay chemo treatments, which creates the potential for the leukemia to become uncontrolled."

"How long?"

I shrugged, "The doctors won't say, and the research I've done is inconclusive. But, every day gives us an opportunity to find a marrow donor."

After lunch, I placed a call to Bill Wyatt.

"I'm interested in making an offer on the Wrigleyville and Lincolnwood properties," I said. "My offers would be contingent on passing inspection. I have a mortgage commitment letter sufficient to cover both properties."

"Do you have an inspector you prefer?"

"No. If you recommend one, I'd appreciate it."

"Actually, given I have the listings for both of those properties, I'd prefer not to give that recommendation for what I think are obvious reasons."

"OK. I'll call the management company I intend to use and ask for a name so we don't create a conflict of interest."

"What are you offering?"

I'd considered that question since I'd spoken with my uncle, and I'd made a slight modification, not wanting to seem as if I was lowballing the best of the four properties.

"On the Lincolnwood property, 10% below the listing price; on the Wrigleyville property, 6.5% below the listing price."

"OK. I'll fax you the offer sheets, and you can sign them and fax them back. Once I have them, I'll present the offers and let you know what they say."

"Thanks."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up and dialed Kasia Pucinski. We had a brief conversation to catch up before I explained the reason for my call.

"I use Tom Gellico," she said. "He's a straight-shooter, thorough, and includes re-inspection after repairs as part of his fee. He's a bit more expensive than most, but well worth it. Let me give you his number."

She gave me the number, which I wrote down, then repeated it back to her.

"Thanks. Would you fax my attorney a copy of your standard property management agreement?"

"Absolutely. Who?"

"Nelson Boyd at Hart-Lincoln," I replied, then supplied his fax number.

"I'll do that right away! Let's have lunch when you're ready to sign."

"Of course! Thanks."

We ended the call, and I dialed the inspector. He wasn't in his office, so I left a message with his assistant with the property addresses and asked that he call me. About ten minutes later, Anna brought me the offer sheets for the buildings. I checked the numbers against my spreadsheet, signed them, and asked her to fax them back. The return call from the inspector came just before 4:00pm. We discussed his fee, and I agreed and provided him with Mr. Wyatt's name and number to coordinate the inspections.

After work, I headed to Violet's house for dinner, then went to class, and after our usual pie and coffee, I headed home.



September 8, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"They both countered," Mr. Wyatt said when he called just before 10:00am on Thursday morning. "Wrigleyville came down 2% from their listing price, and Lincolnwood 5%. Do you want to negotiate further?"

"No," I said after a moment's thought. "I'll accept both counters. Would you draw up the contracts and send them to Nelson Boyd at Hart-Lincoln?"

"Absolutely. What kind of closing are you projecting?"

"Call it October 14th," I replied after consulting my calendar. "The funds can be available two weeks after I send all the paperwork to Will Waterston at Goldman Sachs. That gives us three weeks to complete the inspections and either make repairs or modify the sale price to accommodate."

"Sounds good. I'll get all the paperwork done and sent to your attorney."

"Thanks much!"

We said 'goodbye', and I hung up. About two minutes later, Mia let me know that Mr. Spurgeon wanted to see me in his office. I verified that she had let Mr. Matheson know, which she had, and I headed up to 32.

"Go right in," Julie said.

I walked into Mr. Spurgeon's office.

"Shut the door and grab a seat, Kane."

I did as instructed, then waited for him to speak, as he preferred to initiate conversations, and if there were to be 'small talk', he'd be the one to do it.

"First, how is your wife?"

"According to her doctors, both here and at Mayo, her AML is controlled. Right now, that's the best we can hope for until they find a marrow donor."

"I called a good friend with Goldman in Japan. He's an Anglo, but he's willing to put the word out with his colleagues if you authorize the release of Keiko's blood typing profile to St. Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo for matching."

"Obviously, we will. I'll have Keiko call Doctor Gualtieri, the coördinator at Mayo, and authorize that."

"You can make that call now if you like. I'll call my contact now."

"I appreciate that."

He picked up the phone to place his call, and I got up and moved to the guest phone next to his sofa. I called home to give Keiko the news, and she promised to call Doctor Gualtieri immediately. After finishing the call, I returned to the chair

in front of Mr. Spurgeon's desk. He spoke to his friend in Tokyo for several minutes before replacing the handset.

"It's about midnight in Tokyo right now, isn't it?" I inquired.

"Yes. He'll follow up with the hospital tomorrow, and once they're ready, he'll send out a memo asking for volunteers for marrow donor testing."

"We really appreciate it. Thank you."

"You're welcome. Now, onto the matter at hand. Based on your conversation with Murray, I'm appointing you as Spurgeon Capital's first Head of Research. Effective Monday, all researchers will report to you, and your new salary will go into effect. As Murray told you, your bonus amount will be reviewed next year, though, as you know, there are discretionary bonuses for individuals who perform well above average."

That was a strong hint that I'd receive at least the maximum bonus available per my contract and perhaps significantly more. Even without that, my commissions were far in excess of any bonus amount offered, and my carried interest would continue to grow each year and easily eclipse the bonus amounts. The rationale for the bonus was to provide a way for staff to have some liquid income, as so much of our compensation was tied up in the various funds the firm managed.

"Thank you," I replied.

"There are seventeen analysts besides you, and I strongly believe we can create better results with a smaller, focused, centralized team. I don't know the correct size for the team, so I expect you to propose one that will generate high-quality research and be able to respond quickly and nimbly. I suspect you haven't thought about it, but do you think you'd need a secretary?"

"I don't believe so," I replied. "I think we're all capable of sending and receiving faxes, using the copier, and making coffee. We all answer our own phones, don't have many meetings, and don't have much outside correspondence. I think we have better use for headcount than a secretary."

"OK. It's up to you, and you'll have your headcount to configure the way you feel best. I'd like to see a complete analysis completed by the end of the month."

"OK. What about seating? If we leave everyone *in situ*, it's going to create conflict."

"As you know, we have vacant space on 29 next to the FX team's space. We'll configure that in any way you prefer, and we'll size it for twenty, as your team will expand as we grow, most likely with people like Pérez. Your 'data-driven' decision-making gives us a very nice edge, though we won't keep that edge unless we continue down that path. I want a proposed office layout by Friday of next week so we can arrange for construction. Are you confident Clinton can manage that project?"

"Yes. I'll act as a mentor for him, but he's absolutely capable. He's in Jamaica on his honeymoon and returns to work on the 15th."

"OK. That won't impact the schedule given it'll take that long to get the contracts for the build out signed. If Clinton completes it successfully, we'll move him to a runner's position as of the first of the year. Nelson will bitch, but that's nothing new."

I chuckled, "True, but Jack Nelson is very good at what he does."

"Which is why I pay him what I do. As for your new role, we'll call all the analysts into the large conference room for lunch tomorrow to announce the new

structure. While we're doing that, a memo will be circulated to all the trading desks."

"You'll get pushback," I replied.

Mr. Spurgeon smiled, "Tell me something I don't know! But if we reduce the size of the team by a third, that's a big reduction in overhead."

"It is," I concurred with a nod.

I understood I was being given a target to meet. I'd been thinking about the structure of the team, and I was confident I could come in under twelve analysts. My thinking was two analysts each for each area of focus -- equities, fixed income, commodities, and FX, plus Bianca and a second analyst/programmer.

That totaled eleven if I included myself, and I was confident a team of that size could perform well so long as I chose the right people. The downside would be that seven people would lose their jobs. I didn't relish that thought, but that was around \$700,000 in total cost savings, which was nothing to sneeze at.

The tentative headcount I had in mind would easily accommodate vacations, sick days, maternity leave, and other situations as I'd have backups for each position, and I could provide backup for any team member. I still needed to formalize my idea and get it down on paper, and as I thought about it, setting the headcount at twelve and leaving one slot open would give me flexibility.

"Keep this quiet until Murray and I announce it tomorrow."

"I will."

"Good. Once this is settled, Murray will sponsor you for your Series 30 license. There's no limit on your upside, Kane."

That was true, but as with everyone who worked at Spurgeon, that was only true if I continued to perform at the highest levels. I was confident, but I also was aware that there had been several 'flash-in-the-pan' traders in the ten years since Spurgeon Capital was founded.

"Thank you for your confidence."

"And thank you for the capital inflows. As you're fully aware, AUM is what matters and what allows us to take positions other firms only dream about."

"I'll continue prospecting."

"Dismissed, Kane."

"Yes, Sir."

I got up, left his office, and returned to my desk. Much later that evening, after dinner with Violet and class, I arrived home, and Keiko and I went straight up to our bedroom. We got ready for bed, then climbed in, and Keiko snuggled close.

"Doctor Gualtieri faxed the necessary information to the hospital in Tokyo," she said. "What happens now?"

"Mr. Spurgeon's friend will call the hospital, and in fact, probably has because it's around noon in Tokyo right now. Once the hospital is ready to begin testing, he'll send out a memo to all of his colleagues. I think that gives us a very, very good chance of finding a match."

"At least better than here in Chicago, that's for sure!"

"On another note, I was formally offered the new role today. I start on Monday. I also accepted counteroffers on the two buildings."

"Pretty amazing, Jonathan! So Bianca will work *under* you?"

I laughed, "If I were a typical Spurgeon 'Suit', your teasing would be spot on! Of course, I will have leeway to hire a secretary!"

"She has to be at least fifty and a grandmother!" Keiko teased.

"Well, given how good Raquel Welch and Jane Fonda look in their mid-forties, that works!"

Keiko laughed, "Perhaps I need to rethink my comment!"

"I honestly don't believe I'll need a secretary," I replied. "I will hire another programmer to work with Bianca, but the downside is I will likely have to fire seven people."

"That's bad."

"It is, but my rough, back-of-the-envelope calculations indicate it would save Spurgeon somewhere around \$700,000 a year if not more."

"Whoa!"

"Yeah. That's real money, even for Noel Spurgeon!"

"And fewer people can do all the work?"

"Yes. There are redundancies, but it's also the case that the work Bianca is doing increases the amount of information available for making decisions, and it

doesn't require extra headcount. Yes, someone has to interpret current events, as there is no way a computer can do that, but the charts that show trends are vitally important. Those had to be done either manually or with costly mainframe time in the past. Now they're done on PCs on desks."

"Do you think computers will ever be able to trade automatically?" Keiko asked.

"I think if there's a way to get the information into a program and process it quickly, the computers could do arbitrage. However, once that is computerized, it'll reduce the chances because anyone can do it, so the price spread will quickly converge. We know that from what happened with OTC prices once Madoff created NASDAQ. Before that was computerized, you had to call around to various brokers to get price quotes, which could vary wildly. If you could find a discrepancy, you could make a fortune in a short time. That's not really possible now.

"Beyond that, I think there are plenty of opportunities for computers to execute trades based on specific strategies, so long as they could be defined in a program. Certainly, they could execute limit orders without human intervention, which would make things more efficient. Still, I'm not sure you can program the way Noel Spurgeon or Murray Matheson think into a computer. According to Bianca, perhaps someday, with what they call 'Artificial Intelligence', but that research hasn't born real fruit."

"Interesting," she observed, then moved on top of me. "I'm not too tired..."



September 9, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday morning, I placed my orders using options to, in effect, short gold and silver. There had been a volume uptick in Tokyo, Hong Kong, and London, and combined with the bearish indicators, I simply couldn't wait. Looking at the

numbers, someone else had the exact same idea and had beat me to the punch by a few hours. Others would soon pile on, and that was why I had to pull the trigger.

The strategy was simple -- offsetting put and call options, with settlement on October 28th. The puts were about four percent below market price, and the call options were about three percent below market price. So long as gold and silver moved more than five percent, I'd make money, and the larger the drop, the more I'd make. In the best-case scenario, I'd allow the call options to expire unexercised and buy gold and silver at market to cover my puts. In the worst-case scenario, I'd exercise the call options and take a small loss.

"You're sure about October puts?" Mr. Steinem asked as he entered the orders.

"Positive. I could hold out until the end of the year, but if you check the prices for November and December puts, they indicate a bear market in precious metals. The October contracts aren't nearly as bearish. Given the spread difference, my profit would be about the same either way, so I'll take the shorter term."

"OK. Your orders are in. Want me to execute immediately in London?"

"I do."

I heard some keys click.

"Done. You'll have your trade confirmations shortly."

"Thanks."

I hung up, then began work on my daily analyst report. When I completed it, I took it to Mr. Matheson's desk, then returned to mine and called Mr. Steinem again.

"I need a quote on selling 3000 Z immediately at market," I said.

Given lot sizes, I was selling Z3,000,000, or about \$480,000.

"Z? I haven't traded in Zaïre since I've been here! What's going on?"

"Every single indicator says they're going to devalue and float. Their currency reserves are almost nothing, and the official exchange rate is bullshit. That said, the central bank will certainly sell me those in exchange for real money!"

Mr. Steinem laughed, "Some would say our fiat currency isn't real money."

"Some would be 'gold bugs', too," I chuckled. "I get it, but we live in the real world, not Fantasyland!"

He laughed again, and I heard some keys clicking.

"OK. We have no holdings in the Zaïre. The option price for September delivery is 0.1400 SDRs to the Zaïre. The official peg is 0.1575 SDRs."

SDRs were 'Special Drawing Rights' from the International Monetary Fund and were the currency peg for the Zaïre since 1976.

"Execute that immediately, please."

I heard some keys clicking.

"OK. You've sold 3000 September Z at 0.1400 SDRs. Out of curiosity, what's your projection for the float?"

"At least 50%. According to Bloomberg, the current exchange rate is 6Z to the dollar, while the black market rate is 35Z this morning."

"I expect Murray to make a much bigger move."

"I'd line up as much as you can find at that price."

"Thanks for the heads up! You should have your trade confirmation shortly."

"Thanks."

I hung up, and unsurprisingly, about five minutes after Mr. Matheson had arrived, he called me into his office.

"I'd ask if you were out of your mind, but your analysis is solid. How sure are you?"

"I am not uncertain," I replied. "Check their currency reserves and the spike in the black market exchange rate. They have no choice. Steinem is rounding up as many contracts as he can find, which I suspect won't be many, but you'll make a mint on it."

"What was your move?"

"3000 Z at 0.1400 SDRs. Or, around Z6 to \$1. It'll be at least double that in the next week. I'd move now because the signs are so obvious that anyone looking at the currency will be making moves."

"Watching those obscure currencies has paid off. That's a strategy to continue."

"Betting on economic mismanagement by governments seems like a reverse sucker's bet!" I chuckled.

"Ain't THAT the truth!" Mr. Matheson said with a laugh.

He picked up his phone and instructed Mr. Steinem to sell as much as possible down to 0.12 SDRs.

"That will wake somebody up," I observed.

"If I go in heavy, I can actually force their hand. They may not be ready to devalue, but an attack on their currency means they have to devalue because they can't defend. Your numbers don't lie. Good job, Kane! Go find more!"

"Yes, Boss!"

The rest of the morning was uneventful, and just before noon, Tony, Joel, Bianca, and I went up to the large conference room on 32. I hadn't said anything at all to Bianca, not even a hint, and I expected to get some grief from her on that, but I also knew she'd understand why I had remained mum.

Lunch was Ricobene's, and the portions were huge. Given the size of the breaded steak sub with marinara sauce, plus fries, I wasn't going to need dinner, and possibly not breakfast in the morning! I regretted I'd miss my workout, but that couldn't be helped because of the meeting. Noel Spurgeon and Murray Matheson walked in just after the last of the analysts had sat down to eat.

"Good afternoon," Noel Spurgeon said. "I hope you're all enjoying your lunch. I have an announcement to make. Effective Monday, all of you are part of a consolidated Research Department, which will perform research and analysis for the entire firm. Rather than individual analyst reports, you will contribute to an overall report. The Research Department will report to Murray Matheson and be led by our new Head of Research and Chief Analyst, Jonathan Kane."

"What the fuck?!" Paul Jablonski, who was the oldest of all the analysts, swore. "You can't be serious!"

"Not only am I serious, but you're welcome to leave right now. In fact, I invite you to. Clean out your desk and report to Personnel. Do not return on Monday."

"What?!"

"You heard me. You're fired. Leave. Does anyone *else* have any objections?"

Everyone was silent as Paul got up, muttering under his breath, and left the conference room.

"The goal of this change is to provide consistent, firm-wide research and analysis. Rather than each team having its own report, we'll have consolidated reports, which will be deeper and more thorough, and we'll also be able to do more research overall. I've asked Jonathan to develop an overall plan, and he'll speak to each of you starting Monday.

"For the moment, continue with business as usual, with the exception that you report to Jonathan rather than the head of your Desk. Effective Monday, please forward a copy of any reports or notes you write. I'm meeting with all licensed professionals immediately after this lunch to bring them up to speed. Very soon, we'll begin building out the empty space on 29, and all of you will move there once the build-out is complete. Any questions?"

There weren't any, which didn't surprise me, given what had happened to Paul Jablonski. The conversation during lunch was muted, and nobody said anything about the new structure. I remembered something my history teacher had taught us about Lyndon Johnson, suggesting that the way to victory was through 'winning the hearts and minds of the people'. That would be a significant challenge, but one I had to overcome.

When lunch ended, Bianca wanted to talk, but I suggested we wait until we were at home. I couldn't put off Tony so easily, and we went to the break room.

"Nice coup," he said with a friendly smile.

"Not something I expected," I replied. "As I understand it, it was in the works for some time, and Mr. Spurgeon decided to pull the trigger."

"It makes sense," Tony said. "There's a lot of duplication of effort. And using my analytical skills, I can see where that leads. I know you know my skill set, and we get along, so all I'll say is that you have my full support."

"Thanks. I appreciate it."

He absolutely would be a key member of the new team, but I couldn't say that to him. I was sure he knew that, so we shook hands and returned to our desks to complete the workday.

X. Insecurity

September 9, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"When did you know?" Bianca asked once we were in my car.

"Thursday of last week," I replied. "Right after the KAL 007 news. But I was sworn to complete secrecy."

"Which makes perfect sense. How many layoffs?"

"I don't know just yet, but Mr. Spurgeon is targeting reducing the size of the team by a third."

"That would mean six layoffs, well, five after Jablonski shot off his mouth."

"Seven, actually," I replied. "I want to hire another data analyst. You have more work than you can handle and enough to keep you busy full-time for a year, even if there are no more requests, and the chances of that are asymptotically approaching zero!"

Bianca laughed softly, "Nice. Something your stats prof said?"

"Yes."

"Why seven?"

"I figure the correct configuration of the team, at least to start, is a pair of analysts for each asset class -- equities, fixed income, commodities, and FX, plus two data

analysts. That's ten, not including me. That leaves me with one open slot if I use Mr. Spurgeon's 'guidance' of twelve."

"'Guidance', right!" Bianca said with another soft laugh. "Sure."

"What? You didn't hear the air quotes?" I chuckled. "The new space will be configured for twenty, and I have to decide the layout next week."

"What are you thinking?"

"At Hart-Lincoln and Allen & Baker, they have what they call 'pods'. They're cubicles with a pair of L-shaped desks. That would allow easy collaboration between the analysts in each asset class while affording a bit of privacy. For the data analysts, I'm thinking of an office configured for four. We'd also have a break room and a small meeting room."

"Do you rate a secretary?"

"It was suggested as an option, but I don't think I need one. First, I don't receive enough phone calls or mail to justify it; second, every single one of us can manage the fax machines and copiers and make calls to the mailroom or whatever. And none of us have many outside meetings. I can use that slot for a data analyst instead. You'll be the team lead, obviously."

"That won't cause a problem when people find out you're the father of my baby?"

"I do need to disclose that to Mr. Spurgeon, but I'm positive it won't be a problem, given you've proven your worth to the firm."

"Not to mention the number of Suits banging secretaries, meaning nobody can *really* complain."

"I agree, but that's not a card I want to play unless I don't have another choice. We need more secretaries like Anna, who flat-out refuse to sleep with Suits."

"She slept with YOU!"

"I'm not quite sure how I'm supposed to take that," I chuckled. "But it's also the case that I wasn't her boss or someone with any actual authority. And if it's about sleeping with co-workers, not only did I sleep with you, but I fathered a baby with you!"

"True! But you know someone will claim favoritism."

"Which is what cost Paige her job. Fundamentally, Spurgeon Capital operates on favoritism. If Noel Spurgeon likes you and thinks you can make him money, you have advantages other people do not have. I'm the perfect example of someone who is *useful* to Noel Spurgeon, so he provides incentives to ensure I stay useful to him."

"Changing topics slightly, what was with your play on the Zaire?"

"The fundamentals were such that a run on their currency would force their hand. My trade set the stage, then Mr. Matheson went all-in. I checked later, and more traders piled on, shorting the Zaire. They're screwed now, and I bet you anything they devalue before Monday."

"Wait! YOU caused that?"

"In the sense that I saw the potential for a run on the currency and traded to force the issue, yes. It was only a matter of time."

"Jesus. How much will you make?"

"Between \$200,000 and \$350,000 for my fund, depending on how far they devalue. I really couldn't go in heavier than that. Matheson will clear probably fifty million, which will solve his fund performance problem. He could have made more, but there simply weren't enough Zaïre to allow that."

"And you personally?"

"When all is said and done, between \$20,000 and \$35,000 in carried interest."

"\$35,000 would mean you made my entire year's salary in a day! I mean, I see the overall Spurgeon numbers, but with you, it's real, if you know what I mean."

"I do, and there are times when I don't believe it myself. But I also understand now that the playing field is not level and that the average investor has no hope of earning returns similar to Spurgeon, even allowing for the difference in total investible funds. Fundamentally, I, and the other traders and analysts, have access to information that the average man on the street could never have, and it's all perfectly legal."

"Sure, but it's knowing what to do with that information, right? I mean, otherwise, every analyst could be doing what you do."

"That's part of it, but it's also the self-confidence and strength of character to actually do it. It requires a willingness to take risks, knowing that you could fail. Right now, I can work with a net; doing that in the future will be more and more difficult."

"Why?"

"Because I use a number of techniques to ensure I don't lose big, but those same techniques limit my upside. I'm confident in my abilities, but I'm also at a point where I have to ensure I don't take any big losses because that would ruin my

chances in the future. Once I have a track record, I can make more significant moves and not be as aggressive about backstopping my trades. That would increase my returns, and I could survive a miscalculated trade or one where some outside event made the data irrelevant. KAL 007 could have done that. Of course, it can go the other way, too, such as anyone who was long oil futures right before the embargo."

"How Spurgeon's dad made his fortune," Bianca observed.

"Yes. And remember, he was a college professor who saw the data, made a bet, and turned his \$2,000,000 inheritance into \$50,000,000. That shows the power of options -- a tiny amount of capital can control a huge position."

"And if he had been wrong?"

"Then he'd have lost a chunk of that money. He used call options, which meant he didn't have to make the trades if the price went down. He would simply allow those options to expire."

"Explain how he settled. He wouldn't have had the money to purchase the oil represented by those options."

"He sold them to the predecessor company of CITGO -- Cities Service Company. They operated refineries and were more than happy to buy the options from him and exercise them to get cheap oil they could refine into gasoline and sell that at inflated prices."

"Ah, that makes sense. Back to your currency trade -- when will they devalue?"

"Given the run, I think they might have to do it this weekend. Once Mr. Matheson and other traders in London, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Paris started selling, the handwriting was on the wall."

"Could you do that again?"

"Under the right conditions, yes. We made a bet on the devaluation of the Philippine peso, which hasn't paid off yet because they had the currency reserves to withstand the immediate pressure. That won't last forever, and I expect them to devalue by the end of the year, but on their terms, not forced. And that's why I chose the exercise dates I did."

"How does that work?"

"If a government has sufficient foreign currency or gold reserves or can raise interest rates, they can defend their currency either by purchasing it on the FX market or attracting capital inflows with higher interest rates. In the end, though, nearly any currency that has a formal peg can be forced to float by the market. That's going to happen to Australia, and probably by the end of the year. That one will likely be forced."

"Why doesn't anyone else see this?"

"They do. I had already seen movement with the Zaire. Somebody else figured it out before I did, and it was that move that caused me to make mine immediately and ask Murray Matheson to start the dogpile. Whoever that other trader was, and I can find out, was likely someone with limited assets who was hoping someone else noticed. It's the same thing with the Bolivar trade I made earlier in the year, though we were first there. On the Philippine peso, we made a long-term play."

"Is there any way I can put my money into your fund rather than the Spurgeon Select Fund?"

"The only requirement is that the retained portion of your bonus goes into Spurgeon Select. Any other contributions can go to any fund."

"I'm going to make that switch, then."

"You'll make more money in the main fund," I countered. "Are you sure?"

She took my hand, put it on her stomach, and said, with a knowing smirk, "I am not uncertain!"

I chuckled, "Nice. How are you feeling?"

"I feel fine. I mean, I'm only about two months along. Fortunately, I haven't had any morning sickness, and that's the main thing during the first trimester."

"You'll have to clue in the ignorant guy, but when do you start showing?"

"Sometime after the first trimester. I wear loose-fitting blouses to work, so nobody will notice until around the middle of the second trimester. The only question is, do I say anything before people ask because it becomes obvious?"

"I have no idea what the protocol for that is. I mean, our housemates and my mom know. I think it's up to you to decide what to say and to whom. I suppose I should tell Violet."

"So she can ask for a baby?" Bianca teased.

I chuckled, "First of all, Keiko would never agree, but even if she did, I don't think Violet having a baby is a good idea."

"I was teasing, and honestly, I think you might be surprised."

"OK, let me modify that -- she's moving in the right direction to be able to care for a baby, but I'm not convinced she'll ever be able to *make* a baby. She made an effort with me before Keiko and simply couldn't get past the mental block caused by memories of seeing her dad raping her older sister, aided and abetted by her mom."

"I can't even imagine," Bianca said. "I probably shouldn't have teased you about that."

"It's OK. Going back to work, there is one other thing -- Mr. Spurgeon promised I'd be sponsored for my Series 30 license, most likely next year."

"The last piece you need to be able to go out on your own."

"Minus the additional hundred million or so in AUM," I chuckled. "That's actually the harder part! And convincing the money to come with me."

"Can Noel Spurgeon stop that?"

"Not formally, but he certainly could use his position to encourage the money to stay with Spurgeon. And, honestly, I'm making a ridiculous amount of money already, and he's providing the opportunity to make even more."

"Sure, but why pay him when you don't have to?"

"I understand the argument, but unless something happens to force my hand, I'm happy to stay, learn, and become extremely wealthy."

"I know it's against Spurgeon rules to disclose your comp, but what kind of salary bump?"

"Double. The bonus potential won't change until next year. But I've already had a discretionary bonus this year, which is over and above my potential bonus."

"What will your income be for this year?"

"Not including retained earnings, around \$150,000."

"Jesus! We are SO getting a nanny when the baby is born!"

"I figured that was going to be the case. Are you assuming a live-in?"

"Swedish *au pair*?" Bianca teased.

I chuckled, "Again, Keiko is very tolerant, but that might be a bit much! I figured we'd use Keiko's room as a nursery once we're past the 'wake up every two hours to eat' stage. Well, assuming Keiko's chemo is finished by then."

"What do you think?"

"I think if we haven't found a marrow donor by then, we're looking at a worst-case scenario."

"You asked how I was feeling; how are *you* feeling?"

"I'm OK. I worry about Keiko, but the situation isn't dire just yet, and the chemo has her leukemia under control. Noel Spurgeon arranged for a friend in Tokyo to coordinate testing, which means we'll have a much better chance of finding a suitable match."

"Would you have to go to Tokyo for that?"

"I'm fairly certain they could fly the donated marrow to Mayo. That will be inconvenient for me, but not nearly as much as trying to spend months in Japan."

"How would you handle work?"

"I have no clue at the moment. I'll cross that bridge when I come to it."

We arrived at the house, I parked in the garage, and then we went inside. I let Keiko know I was home, then went upstairs to change and returned to the Japanese room to sit with her.

"The Chinese food will be delivered at 6:15pm," she said. "You, me, and CeCi. Deanna is working, and Bianca and Juliette are going out."

"OK. How was your day?"

"They're all basically the same," Keiko replied. "I can't really do much because I can't be around people. I wish I could take classes, but that's not possible. I did check into correspondence courses, and Loyola does have a program, but it's mostly for prisoners and military."

"Do you think they'd make an exception?"

"I asked. I'm supposed to hear next week. I did point out that I'm basically a prisoner in this house!"

"I wish there was something I could do about that," I said. "You do spend time outside, right?"

"Yes, of course. Every morning I sit on the deck. But that will be tough during the winter, and even if I have a fire in the fire pit, there won't be much sun many days."

"I think we need to figure out things you can do besides stay home and go to the hospital. What if tomorrow we go to a forest preserve. We should be able to walk, just the two of us, and find a spot where we can relax without anyone near us."

"I'd like that! How did the meeting go today?"

"Overall, pretty well. One of the older analysts objected, and Mr. Spurgeon fired him on the spot."

"Wow! He can do that?"

"It's his company, so he can basically do whatever he wants. My employment contract with Spurgeon makes it clear that my employment is 'at will', which means Noel Spurgeon doesn't even have to give a reason to fire me. And, in a sense, that analyst saved me one decision. I still have to decide who to keep and who to let go."

"I would hate having to do that."

"I don't relish it, but I'll put together a set of objective criteria, and I'll review their analyst reports for the past year. With Bianca's help, I'll also develop some kind of performance rating system that I can use to evaluate them now and in the future."

"I assume Bianca is safe."

"She is, and not because she's having my baby! In fact, I'll hire a second person for her team and eventually a third or fourth. I think, in the long run, there is significant value to be had by using computers to do high-speed data analysis."

Right now, I'm thinking I need to eliminate six more analysts and hire one data analyst."

"Ellie?"

"I want her to graduate. We're supposed to get together in the next week or two so I can begin teaching her. She has two more years of school, after this one."

"Bianca didn't finish," Keiko observed.

"That's true, but computers are different. And she's taking night classes the same as I am."

"Jonathan?" CeCi said from the door to the Japanese room.

"Yes?"

"Deanna asked me to mention she left a note for you on the fridge about a show in Evanston next weekend. She's going to have six pieces there. She wondered if you'd escort her to the opening on Friday the 23rd."

"She asked me," Keiko quickly interjected. "I said I didn't mind."

"Then I'll do it," I replied. "Will she be home at a reasonable time tonight?"

"Yes," CeCi replied. "She's coming straight home from work. Sophie and Ivy have plans."

I chuckled, "Same professor or a new one?"

"Not a professor. They met a well-to-do guy at an art show, and he's more than happy to shower them with gifts in exchange for their attention!"

"Which they are all too happy to give!" I grinned. "If we're still up, I'll speak to Deanna when she comes home tonight; otherwise, in the morning. Did Keiko tell you Chinese was being delivered at 6:15pm?"

"Yes! I'll be in the other room to give you some privacy."

"Thanks."

"You see how she looks at you, right?" Keiko asked once CeCi had left.

"Yes, but she and I both know I'm married! She's never once, even on our Friday dates, done anything even slightly inappropriate."

"I wasn't accusing either of you," Keiko said quickly. "I was just making an observation."

I wondered about that, and perhaps I had misjudged Keiko's feelings about CeCi going out with me on Friday evenings.

"Are you concerned, Keiko-chan?"

"No. I probably shouldn't have said anything."

"But you did, and I think that means there's at least some concern on your part."

Keiko sighed, "But not what you're thinking."

I considered for a moment and nodded, "You're unhappy that we can't go out together. It's not about CeCi, specifically, but about the fact that I take CeCi on Friday nights, and Violet and I go to sporting events."

"Yes," Keiko admitted, sounding sad. "I'm sorry."

"For what? Telling me how you feel? I want to know, Keiko-chan, and I don't want to do anything to hurt you."

"I haven't been a very good wife to you," Keiko said, sounding sad.

"I'm the only one whose opinion matters on that, and I say you have. Being a good wife has zero to do with having sex or going on dates. What matters is we love each other and agreed to spend our lives together. Nothing else is guaranteed."

"That's not guaranteed, either," Keiko said quietly.

"Yes, it is," I replied. "We didn't make traditional vows, but they say 'until death do us part', and there is literally no way to know when that will be. Remember what I said about my dad? And about my friend Paula? And my mom's friend's husband? Nobody knows when they'll die. Not me, not you. So, yes, the only thing that is guaranteed, and what makes a marriage, is a promise to love each other and be together."

"You really believe that?"

"I do. When I said I loved you, I meant it. When I said I wanted to marry you, I meant it. I still do. That means that if it's a choice between making you happy and going out on Friday nights, then it's an easy decision. If the amount of time I spend with Violet is causing you to feel neglected, I can fix that."

"No, I couldn't do that to Violet," Keiko said. "She needs you."

"And so do you."

"But what do you need?"

"I have you, Keiko-chan."

The doorbell rang, signifying that our food had arrived.

"We'll finish this later," I said as I stood up.

I went to the door, paid the young man who had brought it on his motor scooter, then brought the food to the dining room table. I called CeCi, then got plates, bowls, and spoons from the kitchen, though no forks, as all of us could eat with chopsticks. We shared the hot and sour soup, beef with pea pods, and chicken with broccoli amongst the three of us, along with large portions of rice.

We enjoyed our meal, and when we finished, CeCi and I cleaned up, then Keiko and I went to the Japanese room to spend time together.

"What do I need to do to make you happy?" I asked.

"You make me happy by loving me," Keiko replied. "I just feel I'm a burden and interfering with you enjoying life."

"I am enjoying life," I replied.

"You don't miss being with all the girls? And having sex basically every day?"

"I was behaving like a kid in a candy store with unlimited money in his pocket," I replied. "Remember what I said about how things were between Bev and me? I suspect that's far more typical than what I was doing. And it's not as if we never have sex."

"But you never ask."

"Not to be a jerk about it, but I didn't ask before, either!"

Keiko laughed softly, "I asked, just like the other girls did, so you never needed to ask."

"And I knew better than to ask Bev! It was obvious from day one who was in control. I'm pretty sure that's true for most guys on the planet!"

"I think you're probably right."

"I know it's difficult to stay positive," I said. "But the one thing you do not have to worry about is my love for you and my commitment to be with you, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, until death do us part, which I hope is many decades from now."

"I think you have the richer part covered!" Keiko said with a smile.

"We're certainly in a very good situation in that regard."

"Can we go upstairs and make love?"

"Yes!"



September 10, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"CeCi mentioned your request," I said to Deanna when I went up to her attic studio on Saturday morning. "She also said you spoke to Keiko about it. I'm happy to escort you."

"Thanks. It's at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center in Evanston. The exhibit opens at 6:00pm on Friday the 23rd."

"If I go in early that Friday, we can easily make that. What should I wear?"

"A suit would be perfect."

"And quite the contrast with your poor, starving artist attire! But answer this -- how does that persona work when your escort is wearing an expensive tailored suit? People will think you're faking it or they'll think I'm a cheap bastard! Either way, you look bad."

Deanna frowned, "I hadn't considered that angle. What do you think?"

"I think if you want to continue your persona, I have to dress down. And that means jeans and a polo shirt, and not one with an alligator."

"It's a crocodile, actually," Deanna replied. "Most people think it's an alligator, but it's actually a croc."

"Everyone I know thinks it's an alligator!"

"Which kind of fits, because the American press dubbed Lacoste 'the Alligator' in 1927, after he wagered for an alligator-skin suitcase with the captain of the French Davis Cup team."

"OK, so not one with a crocodile, then," I said with a smile. "How do you plan to introduce me?"

"As my friend," she replied. "That will work without any questions because you wear your wedding ring on your right hand, and it doesn't look like a traditional wedding ring."

"Sounds like a plan. What happens at these shows?"

"Hopefully, people buy my paintings! But mostly, it's just talking with asshole art snobs who wouldn't know meaningful art if it bit them in the ass."

"I think I'd notice if one of your paintings bit me in the ass!" I chuckled.

"Smart aleck!" Deanna exclaimed.

"Are the people who visit these galleries really that bad?"

"Worse. And the critics are generally self-entitled idiots."

"And artists are high-strung, self-aggrandizing dilettantes," I replied with a smirk.

"And your point is?" Deanna asked with a twinkle in her eye.

"No point, just making conversation!"

"You're a goofball, Jonathan!"

"Thank you! I do have one other thing to discuss," I said. "I'd like you to stop paying rent, and I'll provide you with a monthly stipend. It's time to be a serious patron of the arts."

"Under different circumstances, that would call for a celebratory fuck, but I know you can't."

"No, I can't. And there's no *quid pro quo* attached other than you keep painting."

"I couldn't stop doing that any more than you could stop being analytical. It's just who we are. That said, if Keiko were to ever give you a 'hall pass', I'll thank you properly!"

I smiled, "There is no chance of that happening, and I don't want one; not because of you, because of me."

"No, you wouldn't want one because you're the last person on the planet who would cheat. It's just not in your nature. My ethics are somewhat different, obviously."

"Obviously, given you offered to be my mistress!"

"Yes, I did. And while I know you can't accept, the offer is there."

"And it's appreciated," I replied. "As is your understanding of why I could never do that."

"I'm curious, with sex off the table, what's in it for you?"

"The satisfaction of helping a friend and of following the traditional practice of patronage. That is what responsible, wealthy individuals ought to do. Granted, I'm not wealthy yet, but I'm getting there."

"I assume from your offer that work is going really well? We haven't spoken in depth since the whirlwind wedding."

"It is. I was promoted to the newly created position of 'Head of Research', and I'll have around a dozen people reporting to me, including Bianca."

"Wow! I take it that means more money?"

"Significantly, though, honestly, the salary pales compared to my commissions, bonuses, and the carried interest in my fund. If things go the way I think they will, I should make between \$20,000 and \$35,000 just this weekend."

"Do you realize how crazy that is?"

"I do. Your stipend will start next month."

"Thanks. Not to sound mercenary or anything, but you didn't mention how much."

"Sorry! A hundred bucks a week, plus your room and board."

"For real?"

"For real. You can tell the snobs and critics to kiss your ass!"

Deanna laughed, "I'd do that anyway, but at least now I won't have to worry about basic living expenses! You won't be upset if I take fewer hours at Venice Café, will you?"

"I fully expected that, or even to quit outright. I mean, by the time you subtract transportation, taxes, and so on, you'll receive more from me than you do in a paycheck, you won't have to pay rent, utilities, or for food, and you'll have much more time available."

"How do taxes work?"

"It depends on what you choose to do. No judgment, but do you report income from selling your paintings?"

"No."

"I assumed that was the case. Eventually, that could land you in some serious hot water with the government, so I'd advise operating as a sole proprietorship or Subchapter S corporation. That's easy enough to do, and I'll cover the costs of the attorney to set it up. What you'll do is add up everything you earn, including sales of paintings and the stipend, deduct the cost of your materials, and pay income tax on the rest, though it won't be much at all, and possibly zero. You'll also pay self-employment taxes, which cover Social Security and Medicare."

"That sounds complicated."

"It actually isn't, really. Just keep a ledger, either on paper or on the computer, of all your expenses -- paint, canvas, brushes, smocks, easels, and so on. Keep track of your income the same way -- the stipend and any sales you make. Filling out the tax form should be straightforward, but if not, I'll cover the expense of the CPA. I have a tax attorney and CPA on retainer. Your biggest challenge is a name for your corporation!"

"Could I just use my name?"

"Yes. Something like 'Deanna Haight, Inc.' would work. Or you could add 'Art' to it if you wanted. Or 'Creations'. Or anything you like. The only limits would be using something patently offensive or if someone already had the name registered."

"I like 'Deanna Haight Creations'," she said.

"Then I'll speak to Nelson on Monday and ask him to set it up."

"And I'll give notice to Venice Café tonight. I'll make my last day September 30th."

"OK. I need to get going so Bianca and I can do the shopping. Keiko and I are going out for the afternoon."

"Out?"

"To a forest preserve. It's kind of like Cincinnati Nature Center. We'll be able to walk as a couple, spend some time outside, and mostly avoid others."

"OK. I'll probably see you tomorrow morning, then."

I left the attic, said 'goodbye' to Keiko, and then let Bianca know I was ready to go shopping.

"I need some advice," I said once I pulled out of the garage.

"You've come to the right place! Keiko?"

"Yes. She feels...inadequate, I guess is the right word, or maybe insecure. That she's not fulfilling her role as my wife."

"In general, or one specific aspect?"

"In general," I replied.

"I assume it's OK to be blunt?"

"You assume correctly."

"First, did she say something, or are you inferring it?"

"She said something. It started when she commented about how CeCi was looking at me."

"She and every other girl you've been with except maybe Kristy!"

"Not every girl," I replied. "There are several who were, and probably still are, unhappy."

"OK, fine, yes, but my point was it's not just CeCi. Deanna still wants to be your mistress, and you know I'd sleep with you in a heartbeat."

"I'm aware of both of your desires," I replied.

"Did you discuss it with Keiko?"

"Yes, but I'm not sure she accepts my interpretation. Fundamentally, I think she feels that not being able to have kids, not being able to go on dates, not being able to go to sporting events, and not being able to make love very often means she's not a good wife. I tried to point out what the usual Western vows say, but I don't think that allayed her concerns. I even said that the essence of marriage is loving each other and being together until 'death do us part', something which is unpredictable for anyone, but that didn't help."

"Did she suggest changing anything?"

"No. I specifically asked about Friday nights and seeing Violet, and she said she didn't want me to stop doing those things. I know sometimes girls don't say what they feel or mean, but Keiko isn't like that."

"No, she's not. I'm no psychologist, but I'd say the source of the problem is you each have a different approach to her leukemia. You are afraid she's going to die; she is sure she will."

"How do I fix *that*?" I sighed.

"I'm not sure you could, short of the doctors saying she's in remission. Even then, she might still harbor that thought because if I remember correctly, you said you have to be in remission for five years to be considered cured."

"That's right, because it could flare up again, and there's no way to predict if that will happen. The five-year limit isn't actually a limit, either; it's just that statistically speaking, later flare-ups are very rare after five years in remission."

"I think you can see why she would feel that way."

"Yes," I replied with a heavy heart. "I try and stay positive for her."

"But don't you think she knows you're putting on a good face?"

"You mean, does she know I'm afraid she'll die? Yes. But I have never wavered from my belief that she can beat this."

"And in your analytical way, you calculate the odds, and if they point a certain way, you follow them."

"Actually, in this case, the odds are against her," I sighed. "And I think she knows I know that. And because of that, she thinks, perhaps subconsciously, that I'm putting on a front. I'd say that might be true, to a point, but only in the sense that I acknowledge the possibilities but act as if things will go in her favor."

"That said, some things are simply because I love her, and that includes marrying her. Once I decided to do that, nothing could stop me except a firm 'no' from her. As I said when I made the decision, I don't want to be the kind of man who would cut and run in the face of adversity."

"And the man you are is exactly why I wanted to have your baby," Bianca said.
"Is that causing a problem with Keiko?"

"I don't think so. I mean, yes, not being able to have children bothers her, but you having one with me doesn't."

"Is that a sure thing? I mean, that Keiko can't have kids?"

"If the chemo had worked, pregnancy might have been possible, though Doctor Morrison was careful to say it would be unlikely. According to my research and the literature from Mayo, the full-body radiation treatment before the bone marrow transplant precludes any possibility of becoming pregnant."

"So she could, in theory, get pregnant now?"

"Yes, but the odds are tiny. Not to mention, we use rubbers because of her chemo and because getting pregnant would be a serious problem. She obviously can't take her birth control pills."

"I think the only thing you can do is love her," Bianca observed.

"Which is the conclusion I came to as well."



September 11, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I really enjoyed the walk in the forest preserve," Keiko said as we showered on Sunday morning.

"Me, too!"

We finished our shower, and began dressing, but I was interrupted by the phone ringing.

"Kane," I said when I picked up the handset.

"You're a fucking witch, Kane!" I heard Mr. Matheson's booming voice announce.

"Zaire?"

"Yes. They *floated* after an **eighty** percent devaluation! The FX fund will clear around sixty million when I close out the positions on Monday."

That was actually outside the far edge of my analysis, and my fund would clear \$400,000, and I'd personally make \$40,000 from my share of carried interest.

"When?"

"At a press conference in Kinshasa yesterday. I want your best analysis of your speculation about Australia. You have a nose for these things, and we have to be in first!"

"But not too early, or they'll be able to defend."

"I know you start your new role on Monday, but don't neglect your currency research. Spurgeon will tolerate you taking your time on the staffing changes if you sniff out opportunities like the Bolivar and Zaire! I'll see you tomorrow. Enjoy the game today."

"I will," I said.

He hung up, as was typical, and I replaced the handset in the cradle.

"Work?" Keiko asked.

"Yes. My currency trade netted me \$40,000."

"That's way more than you thought!"

"Yes, because Zaire did something unexpected. They devalued their currency, which I had predicted, but then they let it float, too. If things go a certain way, I could make even more than forty grand, but I'm not greedy, so I'm going to close out my position when Hong Kong opens for trading. I'll call Rich when I arrive home from the Bears game and have him buy enough Zaire to cover my puts."

"That money has to stay in the fund, right?"

"To avoid taxes, yes, but I could take it out at any time."

"And that's yours, no matter what?"

"Yes. If I were to leave for any reason, or be fired, all of it would be paid out."

"How much do we have now?"

"The numbers aren't formally calculated until January, but based on current asset values, we have about \$400,000 in carried interest that will accrue in January."

"Unbelievable! That's just for this year, right?"

"Yes. Obviously, the fund made a lot more than that because I only accrue about half of our take on income over the hurdle. Do you remember how that works?"

"Yes. There's a fee that is paid that goes to Mr. Spurgeon to run the firm and pay salaries, then there's the share of profit over 8% that you take, though you don't get to keep it all; Mr. Spurgeon gets about half. How much is in your fund now?"

"Around \$60,000,000, of which about \$6,000,000 is Noel Spurgeon's personal money."

"Does that include the money you're managing for your friend Jeri?"

"No. Her trust has to be legally separate. I mostly track the same investments in her trust, but there are a few things I can't do. For example, I couldn't make the currency trade with her account because it involved a naked put."

"That sounds so strange! Like you're working without clothes on!"

"Or a net!" I chuckled. "Basically, it means I sold an asset that I didn't own and would have to buy at market. My other currency trades have been backstopped with call options, but not this one because there is almost no active trading in the currency except when Zaire's Central Bank buys or sells or for trade and foreign exchange purposes. And I didn't have the time to try to find a counterparty, which also would have tipped my hand before I made my move."

"And it's legal to manipulate a country's currency that way?"

"Not just legal, but it's how exchange rates are set accurately. A country wants to have the most favorable exchange rate possible and will seek to keep it better than its natural level, in whichever direction best benefits its economy. That's the point of a fixed currency peg, though, in the case of Zaire, it had to do with an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, which had bailed them out.

"The problem with that was it artificially propped up the currency, and nobody was willing to accept the official exchange rate. The government basically

adjusted the exchange rate to match the low end of the black market rate for their currency, then delinked from the IMF's Special Drawing Rights or SDRs.

"Normally, devaluing currency helps a country's economy by making exports cheaper, making domestic industry competitive with imports, and raising the price of imports. That helps build a good foreign reserve balance, which is the key to a stable currency. BUT, unless the economy is fundamentally sound or can be made fundamentally sound, it's a lost cause, and the end is hyperinflation, re-domination, and default. Rinse and repeat until the economy can be stabilized."

"If I can distill that," Keiko said, "countries lie about the value of their currency, and you make them tell the truth?"

"Something like that, yes. It's similar to shorting a stock -- you're announcing your belief it's overpriced. If the market agrees with you, it forces the price down. You can be squeezed if it doesn't, or the company can defend itself. I explained a short squeeze, right?"

"Yes. You bet the market will go down, and it goes up, and you have theoretically unlimited losses because you have to buy the shares to cover your short, no matter what the price. But I think you said you can somehow insure the position."

"Yes. You buy call options to limit your potential losses in exchange for some of your potential profit. And I need to get going, or I'll be late to the game!"

I kissed Keiko, then headed out to pick up Violet at her house so we could meet Dustin and Archie at Soldier Field to see the Bears play the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

XI. A Hard-Nosed Prick

September 11, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Rich, it's Jonathan," I said when I called the FX desk after returning from the Bears 17-10 victory over the Bucs.

"What's up?"

"I need you to buy 3,000,000 currency Z immediately at market, please, to cover my put on Friday."

"I saw that! An amazing call!"

"Yes and no," I replied. "I saw the opportunity based on the fundamentals, then had Murray Matheson lead the herd to force the issue!"

"I don't see an active market on Z at the moment. This will likely be a Central Bank transaction. Let me place a call to Hong Kong. Do you want to set a maximum price?"

"What's the last price of any trade?"

"0.035," Rich replied.

"I sold at 0.14 SDRs, so I'll pay up to 0.04 SDRs."

"OK. Maximum is 0.04. Let me work."

"Thanks, Rich."

"I'll call you with a confirmation once I find someone to sell you the dog-shit currency!"

"That 'dog-shit' currency netted the FX desk about sixty mil, so speak kindly of it!"

Rich laughed, said 'goodbye', and we hung up.

"Problems?" Keiko asked.

"No. It's just that there isn't an active market in the currency. Someone will sell it to me, and I'm willing to pay a bit above market price to close out the position. I could wait, but I want to lock in the profit. There's no sense in being greedy! Someone will take the trade because anyone holding that currency risks losing even more, or the central bank will, to get hard currency reserves."

"What happens if they can't improve their economy?"

"Bad things," I replied. "Did you study what happened in Germany after World War I?"

"Only briefly."

"Too bad because what happened from 1918 to 1934 is what brought Hitler to power. One of those things was a collapse of the currency, the Mark. Because of massive debt and reparations payments, combined with economic collapse, a loaf of bread in Berlin that cost around 160 Marks at the end of 1922 cost 200,000,000,000 Marks by late 1923."

"WHOA!" Keiko gasped. "Two hundred *billion*?!"

"Yes. By November 1923, one US dollar was worth 4,210,500,000,000 German marks."

"*Trillion?* You're not joking?"

"I'm not joking. That's what Zaire is in for, though probably not to that extreme. I suspect the currency will devalue by half again over the next few years, then accelerate. It's a pattern. And there won't be a market in the currency because nobody will want to hold it for more than a few seconds if they can help it. The currency could devalue so fast that your pay for a day could be worthless by the end of the workday."

"How do you fix it?"

"Germany instituted a new Mark backed by assets, in their case, it was pegged to mortgage bonds priced in gold, then got the economy in order. But Zaire is not Germany. Germany had a stable economy until they foolishly went to war, and on two fronts, to boot. Zaire did not.

"They also suffer from the fact that they're a one-party totalitarian military dictatorship run by Mobutu Sese Seko, who seized power via a coup in 1965. That was about five years after Belgium granted the Belgian Congo independence. Being a former colony, their economy was necessarily tied to their colonial masters. A former colony with a weak economy and military dictatorship is not a recipe for success."

"How did you learn all that? We certainly didn't learn much in geography in eighth grade or world history in ninth."

"My research. In order to understand currencies, I've had to learn about the countries, so I've prepared fairly extensive research reports on countries like Venezuela, the Philippines, Zaire, and others. Australia is also an interesting

situation as they still have a fixed exchange rate. Mostly those cannot survive in the modern world of relatively free international trade."

"I remember seeing dollars that could be redeemed for silver."

I nodded, "Silver notes. They were discontinued in 1963 and could be redeemed for silver in some form until 1968. They weren't pulled from circulation, and there are enough of them in the hands of collectors that they don't have much value above face. I occasionally saw one at work while I was in High School. I saw plenty of 'Wheat' pennies, and I actually found a silver quarter, which surprised my boss, who allowed me to keep it. Those were last struck in 1964."

"Changing topics, how was the game?"

"OK. The Bears managed to win, though I don't have high hopes for the season."

"Is that your last football game?"

"Yes. There are three hockey games between now and the end of the year. I actually have four tickets for the game against the Penguins on October 27th because they suck, and everyone is more interested in games against the Red Wings, Blues, Oilers, or Canadian teams. But I'm happy to go to any games, as is Violet."

"Did you need to do homework?"

"No, I finished it last night."

"Then let's sit in the Japanese room, listen to music, and cuddle."



September 12, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Morning, Rich," I said when I walked into the office on Monday morning.
"Thanks for finding my currency!"

He'd called me the previous evening and had found enough currency to close out my position at 0.0365, a reasonable price that locked in my profits.

"You're welcome. I've lined up enough to cover the FX fund trades, so Murray can close out his positions today if he chooses."

"What price?"

"A range from 0.0365 to 0.0382. There just isn't much of a market outside the Central Bank and a few French banks. Nobody wants to deal in the currency."

"No surprise there," I acknowledged.

"Any other moves?" Rich asked.

"Well, the bet against the Philippine peso is still waiting to play out, but I have until the end of November before those contracts settle. I still feel good about it. Other than that, I'm keeping my eyes on Australia."

"You think they have to float?"

"Yes, but they also have sufficient reserves to fight it off unless there's a coördinated effort. Even Mr. Matheson and his friends in London and Hong Kong can't force that one by themselves. The timing will be tricky because we want to beat the herd but not telegraph such that Australia could defend. The thing is, internally, I think they know it's coming because they have better info than I do. It's just a matter of domestic politics when they pull the trigger."

"Murray is friends with the Deputy Finance Minister and knows Joe Dawkins, the Minister."

"Interesting."

"You've seen his Rolodex! There are an almost unbelievable number of cabinet ministers, high-ranking bureaucrats, and politicians in it."

"I'm working on building my own, but he's had a twenty-year head start!"

"Congrats on your new role."

"Thanks. And I have a ton of work to do to get the new department up and running!"

I went to my desk and began my morning analysis. I completed it, put it on Mr. Matheson's desk, and then went up to 30 to Personnel to sign my new employment contract.

"Congratulations, Jonathan," Trish said. "I couldn't talk you into drinks after work, could I?"

"Let me check with my wife," I said with a smile.

"No fair!" she pouted. "You aren't wearing a ring!"

"Yes, I am," I replied, holding up my right hand. "My wife is Japanese-American, and their tradition is to wear it on their right hand."

She frowned, then said, "Mrs. Peterson is expecting you. Go on in."

"Thanks."

The new contract was a manager's contract, which allotted a few extra benefits -- my vacation would accrue at 1.8 days per month for five years, and then 2.2 days per year. That meant I'd now have three weeks of vacation, of which two had to be Sensitive leave. In five years, I'd have four weeks of vacation.

In addition, my basic life insurance would be four times my annual salary, which meant if something happened to me, Keiko and my baby with Bianca would be well taken care of. More importantly, at least for me, was that any funds I put into the Spurgeon Select Fund would be matched at 50¢ on the dollar of any amount up to 10% of my base salary.

The downside of the match was that it vested over five years. That wasn't a change from my previous benefits plan, but the increased match tightened the golden handcuffs even further. Leaving voluntarily would leave a lot of money on the table. I had no plans to leave despite both Bianca and Jack encouraging me to think about it.

"Any questions?" Mrs. Peterson asked.

"I've never managed anyone before," I said. "I'm going to need advice."

She smiled, "The fact that you came right out and said that bodes well. I know the directions Mr. Spurgeon has given you, so when you complete your evaluations, come see me before you communicate anything to anyone, including Mr. Matheson or Mr. Spurgeon. In one sense, you have it easy, given all the analysts are white males under forty, except for Bianca Pérez, and I can't imagine she'd be on your list of cuts."

"I intend to hire another data analyst," I replied. "Mr. Spurgeon knows that."

"Which means how many will be cut?"

"I have more evaluation to do, but my initial thought is that we need eight analysts, two data analysts, and me, for a total of eleven. There are seventeen after Mr. Spurgeon fired Paul Jablonski, which means I would cut seven and add one. It's possible one of the other analysts could do the data analysis job, but they would need sufficient computer skills. That's something I'll determine with my analysis in the next two weeks."

"That's a good plan and comes in under Mr. Spurgeon's guidance, which is always a good thing. Be very careful when you speak to people to not make any commitments until you've presented a list of staffing changes. Mr. Spurgeon will give you a relatively free hand but may offer suggestions."

I chuckled, "Which would be like suggestions from a colonel to a sergeant in the Army."

"That is something to consider, but that said, if you can make your case, he'll support your decisions. I believe you've experienced that several times."

"I have. What level of access do I have to past performance reviews?"

"Complete. They're all your team now, so the only thing off limits is the restricted portion of their personnel files."

"What's in that portion of the file, if I'm permitted to ask."

"Some examples would include divorce decrees which affect assets held by Spurgeon, court orders for wage garnishment, work eligibility documents, Immigration records and forms, medical records, and so on. Basically, anything of a personal nature that does not have a direct impact on job performance."

"OK. I would like copies of their most recent performance reviews."

"Do you want compensation numbers?"

"No. I don't want that to affect my decision. Those numbers are set by Mr. Spurgeon, right?"

"Correct. He'll ask for your input, in addition to the performance evaluations, but he's the sole vote when it comes to compensation of any kind."

"It is his money," I replied with a smile.

"May I give you some private advice not to be repeated?"

"Yes, of course."

"I've seen rapid advancement similar to yours twice in Spurgeon's history. I discussed the one who was blackballed by Mr. Spurgeon after a falling out and couldn't get another decent job. The other one is still here but declared bankruptcy two years ago. There are two lessons -- one, don't overspend your base income; two, have a bulletproof exit strategy, even if you never actually intend to use it."

I nodded, "Good advice. I'm not living to my current income, and I don't intend to significantly change my lifestyle. I save a good chunk of my income as it is, using rolling CDs to gain higher returns, given anything else I might do except real estate, life insurance, or annuities has to be in my monitored Spurgeon account."

"Good. I'm sure you've deduced that most of the traders have a high net worth, but it's illiquid, and with their expenses, they live paycheck-to-paycheck."

"That was my situation growing up, though, with almost no money. I resolved to never have to do that again in my life."

"Just be careful of temptation; there's plenty of it here."

"So I've noticed," I replied with a wry smile.

"Yes, that, too, obviously!" she said. "Is there anything else with which I can assist you?"

"Not at the moment."

"I'll have Trish get you copies of the evaluations. Please make sure you lock them in your desk if you aren't actively reviewing them."

"Is it OK to take them home to review?"

"Yes, so long as you ensure they aren't seen by anyone else."

"Thanks."

I returned to my desk and began updating my currency and precious metals research. About twenty minutes after I'd started, the phone rang.

"Kane."

"Nelson here," he said. "I've reviewed all the contracts. The purchase contracts are in the standard form for Illinois and contain the appropriate language to protect you if the inspector finds any problems. The real estate management contract is also fairly standard. Unless you have some specific concerns, I'd say it's OK for you to sign them."

"Good. What do you suggest with regard to titling the properties? I'd like them to be marital property."

"Your best option is an S Corp with you and Keiko as the sole shareholders."

"OK. Set that up under the name Yuusuke Holdings. That's spelled Y-U-U-S-U-K-E."

"Japanese?"

"Yes. It's a composition of two Kanji characters, '*isamu*', which means 'courage', and '*yu*'), which means 'to protect'. When combined, they yield the name 'Yuusuke'. It's the Japanese name Keiko chose for me because there is no actual analog for 'Jonathan'. You'll be able to get that done in time?"

"Yes. It's simply a matter of filing it with the Secretary of State."

"Great! In addition, I'd like you to set up an S Corp for Deanna."

"I can do that, but you'll want to chat with Bob Black or Nancy King because, for an artist, there's a risk the IRS would rule it a 'hobby', not a 'business'. I'll get the paperwork done -- it's literally filling out a few forms. If you have time, I'll transfer you to Nancy."

"I'd appreciate it. Thanks."

"What name for the corporation, if it's formed."

"Deanna Haight Creations," I replied. "And she should be the sole shareholder as she'll take any passthrough income or loss."

"OK. I'll courier the contracts to you. I assume there's a Notary at Spurgeon?"

"Several. Do I need to sign the incorporation papers?"

"I'll act as your agent, so I can file all the necessary paperwork each year, and I'll also receive any notices from the Secretary of State for renewals and that sort of thing. And file the required annual reports. Those are boilerplate for something like what you or Deanna are doing."

"Thanks again."

He transferred me to Nancy King, my tax attorney, and I explained my two requests to her.

"For the real estate purchase, no problem at all. Just ensure Bob has a copy of the incorporation papers and you keep the necessary detailed records for tax purposes. For your friend, the artist, I have some questions."

"Shoot."

"First, is she actively marketing and selling her art?"

"She displays in galleries three or four times a year. She also has selected works on display for sale at the School of the Art Institute. And she has made some private sales, including to me."

"Does she have other income?"

"She was working at Venice Café but is leaving that role. I'm acting as a patron, providing her with room and board, studio space, and a small stipend so that she can complete her degree at the School of the Art Institute."

"How is she paying for that?"

"She has a full scholarship."

"And she intends for her art to be her full-time job once she graduates?" Nancy asked.

"Yes, she does," I confirmed.

"Does she make a profit?"

"I honestly don't know, and she is going to try to expand the gallery shows."

"I'd say, at this point, go ahead, but let's discuss how she handles any losses that might be reported on her tax returns when the time comes. The main thing that will help her with the IRS is extremely accurate record-keeping, as well as sincere, sustained efforts to turn a profit."

"OK. Let Nelson know he should go ahead with setting up her corporation."

"Just a point -- the money you're giving her, as well as the room and board, are not deductible by you."

"Understood. What about the value of the room and board to her?"

"She'll have to report it. The value would be the average of what you're charging your other housemates for rent, utilities, and anything else you provide."

"I'll make sure I keep accurate records."

"Similarly, you should ask the management company you'll be using to provide you with detailed monthly invoices. That'll make Bob's job easier."

"I'll make sure that happens. Thanks."

We said 'goodbye', and I hung up. My next course of action was clear -- review all of the evaluations. Once I'd done that, I'd rank everyone based on those evaluations and modify the rankings based on my one-on-one discussions. I would also have to take into account their area of focus, given my initial thoughts about the composition of the team. Two who I was positive I'd keep were Bianca and Tony. Beyond that, it was a wide-open field.

I spent the rest of the morning doing my usual research, then had lunch with Bianca. After lunch, we went to work out in the gym, and when we returned to the office, the package from Nelson was on my desk. I reviewed the contracts, then took them to Personnel and had Trish notarize my signatures. Once that was accomplished, I faxed copies to Will Waterston at Goldman so he could initiate the loan paperwork. After I'd done that, I called Bill Wyatt to let him know I'd signed the contracts, and he offered to pick them up. I agreed, and mid-afternoon, he did just that.

"I'll order the inspections this afternoon," I said. "The inspector will provide copies for you and send the originals to the lender. If there are any deficiencies, I'll call you right away."

"Thanks. Is there anything else I need to do?"

"Not at the moment. I'll coordinate with Nelson Boyd to ensure everything is set for the closing. Do you have a preferred title company?"

"No."

"OK. I work with Chicago Title, so we'll have them handle the closing. You'll need either a wire transfer or cashier's check at the closing for any downpayment

and the fees. They'll call you no less than three business days before the closing with the exact amount."

"Then I'll wait to hear from you."

We shook hands, he left, and a few minutes later, Murray Matheson called me into his office. He indicated I should shut the door and sit down, which I did.

"I know Noel gave you a free hand, but I don't want to lose Tony."

"We're on the same page," I replied. "The only two people I have confirmed in my mind are Bianca and Tony. I'm happy to hear any other input you might have and any inside information you might have on who Mr. Surgeon likes or doesn't like and which desks will be pissed if their person is let go."

"All of them!" Mr. Matheson said with a grin.

"I figured. The question is, who can appeal to Mr. Spurgeon and make it stick? I ask that because the last thing I want to do is start a fight I know I'm going to lose. That benefits nobody. I'm sure all the analysts are qualified, but I'll review their evaluations, as well as selected reports from the past six months, to see how well they did. But, again, if someone can force the issue, I'd prefer to know right now."

"Enderlee will be the biggest pain in the ass."

"Tell me something I didn't know!" I replied. "The whole 'aquarium' situation and the copier fiasco made that clear."

"The thing is," Mr. Matheson said. "He's a pain in Spurgeon's ass, too, and your calls have outshone ANYTHING Enderlee has done in the past year. I think you could make it stick. Thiele is the one who would be able to win an appeal."

I nodded, "That doesn't surprise me, either. He's one of the nicest guys here."

"If you ever insult me by calling me a 'nice guy', you'll be out on your ass!" Mr. Matheson said with a grin.

"Don't worry," I replied sincerely. "I won't."

He laughed hard, "The saying 'nice guys finish last' is proved every day in this industry. Thile and you are outliers. Assholes like Enderlee are often the most successful."

"You're successful," I said with a sly smile.

"And I *know* I'm an asshole; Enderlee doesn't think he is. That's the difference. Noel and I are both hard-nosed pricks, and we know it. You're one, too, and you know it. You do the same thing we do -- temper it because we all see value in not pissing off everyone in sight. Enderlee simply doesn't care. Thiele is the exception that proves the rule because he is successful without being a hard-nosed prick."

Besides me, he was the one guy with a securities license who didn't succumb to the 'crack and hookers' mentality.

"Well, I only operate on facts," I replied. "I don't consider that hard-nosed."

Mr. Matheson laughed, "That's the very definition of hard-nosed! You don't allow emotions or feelings or any other bullshit to influence your decisions. I bet you anything you care to wager that getting married was a purely logical decision based on analysis."

"Minus being in love with Keiko."

"I'll grant you that, but even being in love with her wouldn't have mattered if your analysis didn't indicate you should do it."

"You might have a point," I allowed with a smile.

"That's why you do such a good job -- you do not let feelings or emotions or whatever get in the way of your analysis, and you aren't afraid to pull the trigger when your analysis tells you what to do. There are already lefties crying in their milk about the evil currency traders who wrecked the Zairean economy."

"I explained it to Keiko as forcing reality on the government. They're the ones who screwed over their people, not us. They tried to prop up their currency by hiding behind the IMF. It was going to collapse at some point, and the fact that we profited from it isn't our fault, any more than I was to blame for buying Tylenol stock when it hit rock bottom after the cyanide poisoning."

"Did anyone object?"

"Yes. One of my friend's girlfriends complained I was taking advantage. I pointed out that every share I bought was offered willingly by the seller, so it was on them, not me. Granted, in the case of Zaire, we precipitated the devaluing and float, but that wouldn't have worked if the government hadn't completely failed in their role of managing their domestic economy and their balance of trade."

"As I said, a hard-nosed prick."

He had a point, but it was only about business, not in my personal life. While his point about being analytical was accurate, I wanted to be known by my friends as a nice guy. I felt I was doing OK in that regard and was successfully keeping the 'hard-nosed' behavior contained to work.

"Flip my question around -- is there anyone you think should go?"

"Jablonski successfully removed himself, and he would have been the one I dropped first. Otherwise, it's a matter of who you think will provide the best analysis. You can't do everything, but your name will be on everything, so choose wisely."

"I'll bring you my list before I present it to Mr. Spurgeon. I absolutely want your input."

"Do you have a plan?"

"Tentative. I'll have a formal one by the time I finish the conversations, which I'll start next week."

"Don't neglect your analysis!"

"Never."

"You didn't pull any punches on Australia in your report this morning."

"The problem is, as I said, I can't predict the timing. They *have* to float eventually, and you know they'll try to do it by surprise at a time that benefits domestic politics. If you have any contacts in the Australian Finance Ministry, now is the time to use them."

"Let me see what I can do."

"Thanks."

"Keep up the good work, Kane. And turn the Research Department into a well-oiled machine."

"Will do."

I left Mr. Matheson's office and returned to my desk to complete my day. At 5:00pm, Bianca and I left the office and headed home.



September 14, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"We're home!" Kristy called out when she and Jack walked into the house on Wednesday night, just before bedtime.

"How was Jamaica?" I asked.

"Is that where we were?" Kristy asked with a soft laugh. "Who knew?"

"I can see your tan, so I know you were at least outside!"

"Ignore her," Jack said. "We had a good time, went to the beach, had great food, as well as did the thing she's implying!"

"I don't think she was *implying* anything," I chuckled. "I have some news."

"First, how is Keiko?" he asked.

"About the same," I replied. "There's no question she needs a marrow transplant, but her leukemia is controlled, which gives us time. Mr. Spurgeon called a friend in Tokyo who is coördinating testing there, which gives us a much higher chance of finding a donor."

"How's the wedding planning going?" Kristy asked.

"Chicago Botanic Garden takes care of most things, and everything else is set. We've received most of the RSVPs, including from Keiko's relatives in California, and no declines."

"That's good. What's your news?"

"There have been some changes at Spurgeon," I said. "You're looking at the Chief Analyst of Spurgeon Capital and Head of the new Research Department."

"Holy shit!" Jack exclaimed. "How did THAT happen?"

"After the Soviets shot down KAL 007, I recommended standing pat on our positions, and when Mr. Spurgeon pressed me on it, I stuck to my guns. He'd been thinking about creating a Research Department for a few years and decided to pull the trigger. I need to work with you to build out the empty space on 29 as offices for my team. We can discuss it tomorrow afternoon."

"Nice raise?"

"Yes. I also pulled off another big currency trade over the weekend. The FX desk cleared over \$50 million."

"And you personally?"

"About \$40 grand."

"Jesus!"

"And I signed contracts to buy a pair of two-flats. I close on the 14th of next month."

"Holy shit, man! You're kicking ass and taking names!"

"I'll let you guys get settled, and Keiko and I are going to bed. We'll talk tomorrow."

We all said 'good night', and Keiko and I went up to bed.



September 15, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"You're going to have to help me with this," Jack said on Thursday afternoon while we were standing in the empty space on 29.

"This one will be easy," I replied. "I owe Mr. Spurgeon the proposed office layout tomorrow. He'll have the plans drawn up, then bring in Brown Construction. All you have to do is work with the foreman, who I hope will be Marcus Washington. It'll basically be on autopilot. All you have to do is ensure everything is done correctly and on time and that Mr. Spurgeon doesn't have to be bothered by anything."

"How many people will move into this space?" Jack asked.

"TBD," I replied. "But we'll configure it for twenty analysts. I'll have an office, there will be a break room, a small meeting room, and then an office to house up to four data analysts. The sixteen remaining seats will be low-walled cubicles. I've gone back and forth on that, but I think an open space will foster collaboration."

"From what you said, it sounds as if there are going to be some reductions."

"That is a logical conclusion, but please keep that to yourself."

"Others will figure it out."

"Yes, they will, but you live in my house, so we don't want people thinking you have inside information."

"When Bianca announces her pregnancy, that's going to create potential problems," Jack observed.

"I agree there will be a bit of drama, but Mr. Spurgeon expressly stated he wants more data-driven analysis. She has more work than she can do in a year, so we'll hire at least one more analyst like her. The fact that Mr. Spurgeon is happy with her means nothing else really matters."

"How do I get him to even know who I am?"

"He does. He specifically mentioned your name. Do this well, and I'm positive you'll be rewarded. I was. Nothing works better than success."

"And if I screw up?"

"Don't! Seriously, being confident that you can do it is more than half the battle. I'm here for questions, but I honestly doubt you'll need to ask any. You've run the mailroom without any trouble, including handling the difficult 'Suits', right?"

"Obviously, or I wouldn't be here."

"Then this is just one more supervisory task. Jack Nelson will help you navigate any internal roadblocks, and if he can't, let me know, and Mr. Matheson will."

"I saw the memo about Matheson being in charge. I was surprised it was assigned to him."

"I suspect that's at least in part because I'm the Head of Research, but also because Mr. Spurgeon already oversees Legal, Compliance, Personnel, and Mr. Nelson's team. At some point, I expect Mr. Spurgeon to delegate oversight to someone else. Bianca suggested Spurgeon needs an operations manager."

"What do I need to do now?" Jack asked.

"I'll turn in a drawing on graph paper of a rough layout, which will go to Brown Construction, who'll draw up plans and get permits. That's when you'll be assigned to supervise."

He returned to 30, and I went back to my desk to finish my day. At 5:00pm, I left the office so I could head to Violet's house for dinner and, after that, go to class.



September 16, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday morning, I took my rough drawing of a layout for the Research Department to Noel Spurgeon, as he'd requested.

"Why the segregated area for the data analysts?"

"Two reasons. One, it's a separate team that works differently than the traditional analysts. Second, if the time comes to add another trading desk, the space is pre-configured to do that."

"Your team?" Noel Spurgeon asked with an arched eyebrow.

"That is one possibility," I replied.

"Good thinking. I'm sure you don't know who will fill the slots, but what's your thinking about the team's configuration?"

"Two data analysts and eight analysts; two each for equities, fixed income, FX, and commodities. That would ensure we could cover vacations and sick days. I'd appoint a lead for each team, though I can't say who they are except for Pérez for the data analyst team. I would like the headcount to be set at twelve to give me some leeway if I find there are any bottlenecks or obstacles."

"Cutting a third of the team?"

"A third plus one, given there will be an open slot. That means eliminating six of the current staff, given Jablonski self-terminated."

Mr. Spurgeon smiled, "Nice turn of phrase, and that is exactly what happened."

I nodded, "Shooting off your mouth in objection to something being announced is very bad idea. A *private* conversation would have been well-received, even if ultimately nothing changed."

"Exactly right. Continue."

"I seriously doubt any of the current staff could do the data analyst role, so that's why six more have to go. Obviously, if one of them has the skills, I'll consider them for that role."

"You're going to get pushback."

I nodded, "I am, but we'll produce better results and more thorough analysis while saving the firm somewhere around \$600,000 in loaded costs, if all twelve spots are filled. That's money directly in your pocket."

Mr. Spurgeon laughed, "You don't have to sell me, Kane! I provided you a target, and you came in under it. Bring me a report two weeks from today with that information and names for each slot. I'll approve it, along with an allocated headcount of twelve."

"Thank you. I'm going to ask up front -- is there anyone with complete protection? If so, I'd like to know now so I don't waste time. Ditto anyone you want gone for some reason."

"You don't pull any punches, do you?"

"I see no point in doing that. I mean, if I acted like an economist, you'd fire me on the spot!"

"I actually fired an analyst not long before you came to Chicago for writing 'on the one hand...but on the other' consistently in his analyst reports for three weeks. I couldn't take it anymore and canned him. It's one thing to provide a range of outcomes, but at some point, you have to make the call. You do."

"Names, please."

"Keep Kirov; lose Burton."

I'd already planned to keep Tony Kirov, so that was no problem. Don Burton was one of Enderlee's two analysts, and to me, that was a strong signal that Enderlee's days were numbered.

I nodded, "OK. I'll take that into consideration."

"You used to be afraid of me. Should I worry?"

"Only if you plan for the Spurgeon Select fund to have the best total annual return in perpetuity!"

"Get the fuck out of here!" he ordered, laughing and shaking his head.

I left the office and returned to 29, satisfied with the results of my conversation with Mr. Spurgeon. Now, I had to complete the review of every analyst's evaluations and a sample of their reports. I had thought about objective criteria for ranking the analysts, but that would be a challenging task. I was close to settling on a mix of clarity of analysis, willingness to take a stand, personality, and attitude.

As for the lead for each team, I'd have to consider a mix of seniority and relative skills. The one challenge I had was picking two analysts to turn into FX analysts. I was the only dedicated FX analyst, so I could mentor them as well as contribute to the daily report. And that made me wonder if I might select only one analyst to be dedicated to FX. That would give me one person who could work on long-term projects, fill in, or take on special projects. The more I thought about that, the more I felt that was the correct approach.

At the end of the day, Bianca and I met Jack in the parking garage, and the three of us headed home.

"How did Kristy manage with missing classes?" Bianca asked Jack once I'd pulled out of the garage.

"She spoke to all her professors as well as her counselor as soon as we set the date, and they agreed to a plan that allowed her to make up any missed assignments from last week and this week. They were actually pretty cool about it."

"Are you guys going out tonight?"

"No," Jack replied. "Kristy is going to use tonight, tomorrow, and Sunday to complete her missing assignments and reading, so she's back on track on Monday."

"What about you, Jonathan?" Bianca asked.

"Just a quiet evening with Keiko. She insisted I should go out with CeCi, but CeCi is covering a shift at Venice for a waitress who has strep."

"You could come out with Juliette and me. We're meeting some girls from Loyola at Giordano's, then going to a comedy club."

"Thanks, but I have a lot of reading to do before Monday, and I can do that while I'm sitting with Keiko."

"Trying to decide who to keep and who to let go?"

"Yes. Noel Spurgeon approved my staffing plan, so now it's just a matter of figuring out who fills each of the slots. The data analyst role will be open in two weeks, so if you know someone with computer and stats skills, have them put together a résumé. Same goes for you, Jack."

"College degree?" Bianca asked.

"Preferred but not mandatory, given neither you nor I have one! A clone of you would be perfect."

"I mostly only know Sophomores and Juniors, so probably not."

"I might know a guy," Jack said. "He built one of those early computers but can't remember the name."

"An Altair 8800, I suspect," Bianca suggested.

"That sounds right," Jack said. "Then he had an Apple II, a TRS-80, and eventually a Commodore. He's working at a company in the 'burbs as a programmer. He got that job right after High School, but he's not happy."

"Get a résumé," I directed. "Once the position is open, turn it in to Personnel, and they'll take it from there."

"How much does it pay?"

"I can only go by what I've seen so far, but I'd say around \$30 grand plus bonus, which can be significant, but we have to wait to see what Mr. Spurgeon authorizes to know for sure. One question -- is he going to be OK with working for Bianca?"

"Good question. He's the classic nerd who is probably still a virgin at twenty-one. I don't think I ever saw him go on a date. I'll ask him."

We arrived home, I greeted Keiko, changed, and then, after checking with Jack and Kristy, I ordered pizza for the four of us.

XII. I Think I Can Manage

September 18, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Have you figured out what you want to do yet?" Keiko asked late on Sunday morning.

"I have a score for each person, and I've ranked them," I replied. "Now I need to have a conversation with each person, then move them up or down in the ranking table. The bottom seven go unless that somehow includes all the analysts for a specific asset class, which is unlikely. I did change my plan slightly from what we discussed. I'm going to name an assistant who won't have a specific portfolio. That person will work on special projects but also cover for when I'm on vacation or out of the office for some reason."

"Do you have someone in mind?"

"Tony Kirov, who works with me on the FX desk. Mr. Spurgeon named him specifically as someone to keep. I didn't disagree, and Tony comes out on the top of my list. The analyst Mr. Spurgeon suggested he'd like to see gone ranked in the 'drop zone', as it were, and would have even without prompting."

"How do you feel about having to fire people?"

"Neutral," I replied. "I understand the principle that a business is in business to make a profit, and it is in the best interest of the business to operate as efficiently as possible. That said, I understand it affects real people, and I empathize, but I also know my job exists only because I provide far more value to Spurgeon than it costs him to keep me employed. He doesn't owe me anything except as

specified in the contract, and that includes being let go if I don't meet performance standards or I interfere with Spurgeon making a profit."

"OK, but the people who lose their jobs, what happens to them?"

"They'll be paid severance, as specified in their contracts, plus they'd be eligible for any of their investments to be cashed out as of December 31st, but Mr. Spurgeon has discretion to pay them out immediately. That can be a significant amount of money and should tide them over until they find a new role. Granted, I'm in a different position, but think about what I would walk away with if I was terminated."

"OK, but you're special! Very special!"

"I'm not sure Noel Spurgeon has the same reasons you have!" I chuckled. "But an analyst who has been at Spurgeon for five years should have something on the order of \$30,000 in investments and retained bonus. That's in addition to severance, which is a month of pay for every year of service, up to five, and a minimum of one. That means anyone who is laid off will receive about a year's salary in payouts."

"That does change the picture," Keiko agreed. "Who has to tell them?"

"That would be me," I replied. "Mrs. Peterson from Personnel will assist me, and she's in any meetings where someone is let go for any reason."

"So, if you were to leave, Mr. Spurgeon could hold your money?"

"Yes. That's a consideration as well. Golden handcuffs are still handcuffs. The interesting thing is that I could take the money that *isn't* mine with me because the contracts I'm signing with my investors don't have a lockup period."

"Weird."

"I'm not in a position where I could request a lockup period, and the clients I'm signing up aren't in a position to agree to one."

"You haven't mentioned your business development recently."

"I've had a number of calls and discussions, but nobody has requested I come to speak to them. It'll happen, though, as I'm already receiving word-of-mouth inquiries from other unions because of the returns I'm reporting to Overland Park. Jeri is also mentioning me to other trust fund kids."

"How does that work?"

"Someone sets up an irrevocable trust for their child or grandchild and appoints a trustee to manage the money. The child can draw some amount of money during the life of the trust, often a monthly stipend of some sort. When the trust terminates, all the proceeds are paid out. In Jeri's case, it's at age twenty-five. Before then, other than her stipend, she can withdraw funds to pay for college or buy a car, but not buy any real estate.

"A trust also has rules about what investments can be made. In Jeri's case, I can't sell short or the equivalent, cannot use options, and cannot invest in commodities. There are limits to how much can be invested in various asset classes as well. The goal is to ensure that the trust isn't put at risk by, for example, putting everything into a single stock or investing it all in gold."

"You could make more money for her if you didn't have those restrictions, right?"

"Yes. But it's not up to her -- her grandparents set the rules. But it's not like she's not making a ton of money. Barring a reversal, her \$3.8 million will be at least \$6

million by the time she's twenty-five. At least. That's ultra-conservative and would be what I'd tell Jeri I was targeting. I feel comfortable telling you it'll be north of \$8 million in 1990 when she turns twenty-five."

"And that's all hers?"

"Yes. Of course, her mom is worth something like \$400 million, but a good chunk of that is Foundation money. It's not hers, per se, but she controls it, so it might as well be. There are tax and other restrictions on what she can do, but there's no reason she couldn't pay herself \$5,000,000 a year to run it. Well, except bad PR if that information leaked out.

"So the way to handle *that*, is to have the Foundation pay most of her expenses and take a modest salary of a few hundred grand, which isn't out of line for someone running a major charitable organization. They have to, to attract the best talent. Otherwise, those people go to industry where they could make significantly more."

"Things I never knew! Are you ready for lunch?"

"I am!"



September 20, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday, I had met with eight analysts to evaluate them for the new team. It was clear to me that three of them were very unhappy with the re-organization, and those analysts were each downgraded two spots in my ranking list. One of them had already been in the 'drop zone', and the change moved another one there.

On Tuesday, I met with the remaining analysts and moved another one into the drop zone based on attitude, and at that point, I had a list I felt represented the strongest team I could build. With that list of names, I began filling the slots. I penciled Tony's name into the assistant slot as a senior analyst responsible for special projects. I also penciled in Bianca's name as the lead data analyst.

The choice for fixed income was fairly easy, as Mark Burton was the most senior analyst in that area, and was one that Mr. Spurgeon wanted gone. That left Joel Stein and Mark Sinclair, and given Joel had been hired by Mr. Matheson, he'd be the lead for that team. The decision about commodities was also fairly easy, as there were four to choose from, and two were head and shoulders above the other two. I penciled in Steve Mansour as the lead and Ken Parker as the second analyst.

Much more difficult was the choice for equities. I had nine to choose from for two positions, though one of the seven who were above the drop zone would be offered the FX analyst role. I'd done my best to get a feel from each of them for how they'd respond to switching from equities to FX and how well I thought I could work for them. That led me to a slightly different course of action than my ranking sheet indicated.

The top-ranked equities analyst behind Tony was Scott Moreland, but he was also the one I felt could handle the FX role and work closely with me. I penciled his name into that slot, though I'd have to discuss it with him once Mr. Spurgeon reviewed my list.

If he chose not to, then I'd need to shuffle people around and go with my second choice. The downside of THAT was that it meant that either the third or fourth-highest-ranked equities analyst would be let go. Hoping that would not happen, I penciled Scott Moreland in for FX and John Peters and Bill Young for equities, with John as the lead.

I triple-checked my proposed staffing list, then went to see Mr. Matheson. He reviewed the list and smiled.

"Dumping *both* of Enderlee's guys and keeping both of mine?"

"That is my honest evaluation. I'd have dumped Mark Burton even if Mr. Spurgeon hadn't suggested he'd like to see him out."

"For certain definitions of 'suggested'?" he asked with a raised eyebrow.

"I would very likely have taken that suggestion no matter what, but Burton has a seriously bad attitude."

"I see you basically eliminated all the malcontents. A new broom sweeps clean?"

"Given we're moving into a new structure, the last thing I want is anyone who isn't all-in. All of our livelihoods will depend on the work of the new Research Department, and I want to make sure it runs like a well-oiled machine."

"One thing I know I can count on is you won't be afraid to speak up or pull the trigger. I have no complaints about this list. Enderlee, on the other hand, is going to lose his shit."

"My heart bleeds," I replied. "He can get with the program and stoke the engine or get off the train."

"Jesus, Kane! Now you sound like Noel!"

"And your point is?" I asked with a grin.

"Get out of here! Go see Noel. I think he'll be happy."

"I am, so he should be."

"We've created a fucking monster!" Mr. Matheson said, shaking his head but also laughing.

I left his office, went back to my desk, called Julie, and arranged to see Mr. Spurgeon first thing on Wednesday morning. That completed, I spent the rest of the afternoon doing research. After work, I headed to Violet's house for dinner, then went to class.



September 21, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I have a tentative plan," I said to Mr. Spurgeon on Wednesday morning.

"I don't want to see a tentative plan; I want to see *the* plan."

"I understand that, but to produce it, I need your permission to speak to Scott Moreland about switching from equities to FX."

"He's one of our best equities analysts."

"Yes, he is. And you're losing at least some of my time as the sole FX analyst. I need someone who can produce similar quality reports when I'm on vacation or out pitching investors or managing. I want him."

"Why not Kirov? He had FX and equities before Matheson brought you on board."

"I have a specific role in mind for him. I can go into detail now or wait until Friday. Which?"

"Friday. Make it happen."

"Thank you. I'll be back with a final plan on Friday, as promised."

"I'll expect you then. I received a quote and drawings from Brown Construction. I'll sign the contracts by Friday and then put Clinton on it. Dismissed."

As I turned to leave, he picked up the phone and dialed. I walked down the hall to where Scott sat and asked him to come to the conference room to have a chat.

"Well," he said when I shut the door, "Mrs. Peterson isn't here, so I'm assuming this is positive news."

"I'd like you to switch asset classes and work with me as an FX analyst. You're the only one of the entire team I trust with taking over my work."

"I've focused on equities since my first day here six years ago and for three years before that at Lehman."

I nodded, "I remember from our conversation. I'm positive you can do this, otherwise, I wouldn't offer it to you. That said, this is not a 'take it or leave it' conversation. If you say 'no', you'll be an equities analyst. I want you for FX, and I'll make sure you have all the tools and information you need to be successful. My job depends on me making the right decision, and I'm positive this is the right decision."

"Do I have time to think about it?"

"I owe Mr. Spurgeon a completed staffing plan on Friday morning. If you say 'no', I have to shuffle roles, so I need to know by tomorrow morning at the latest."

He grimaced and was silent.

"I'll do it," he said after a moment.

"Thank you. Keep this to yourself until Mr. Spurgeon approves my plan. He knows I was going to have this conversation with you."

"Can I ask you a question, off the record, man-to-man?"

"Sure."

"How the *fuck* did you pull this off? You were in the mailroom less than a year ago!"

"I know it'll sound trite, but hard work, determination, and absolute loyalty to Murray Matheson, along with sniffing out major currency and precious metals plays. Add in bringing in around \$60 million in new money, and I think you can see why."

"OK, but how?"

"I asked for study material for my securities licenses inside of the first few weeks I was here, and I have both a Series 3 and Series 7 license. I showed Mr. Matheson I could make money and I could do research, and he gave me the opportunity. I seized it and ran with it."

"Still off the record -- if you ever decide to open your own shop, take me with you."

"If that day ever comes, I'll talk to you."

"Thanks. I'm fully on board."

"I was sure that was the case."

We left the conference room. I headed back to my desk on 29, and began working on the formal plan I would turn in to Mr. Spurgeon on Friday morning. Just after 4:00pm, Keiko called.

"My blast count is up slightly, at 7%, which Doctor Morrison said is promising, as the next round of chemo should knock it below 5%."

"That's great! Anything else?"

"My white count was slightly elevated. I don't have any symptoms, but Doctor Morrison conferred with Doctor Weiss, and they want me to take antibiotics prophylactically. Doctor Morrison called in a prescription for me, and my dad picked it up and brought it to me."

"Did he say what he suspects?"

"It could actually just be my body recovering, but it could also be some kind of infection. You remember bacterial infections are very dangerous for AML patients, I'm sure. He prescribed the antibiotics out of an abundance of caution. With no symptoms, it won't interfere with the chemo, and they'll give me a higher dose of antibiotics via IV."

"OK. My plan for next week is to come in early so I can leave early and take you home from the hospital. I'll see you tonight after Jeri's dinner."

"Have fun! See you!"

"I love you, Keiko-chan!"

"I love you, Jonathan!"

We said 'goodbye', and after I placed the handset in the cradle, I resumed working on my report. I completed it just before the end of the day and locked the original and backup floppy in my desk before leaving the office to head to Jeri's house for our monthly dinner.

Gary, Nelson, Allyson, Pete, Marcia, Jeri, and I had a good time together, and when our evening was finished, I drove Allyson to Loyola, then headed home.



September 23, 1983, Chicago and Evanston, Illinois

I delivered a copy of my plan to Julie first thing on Friday morning, and at 9:30am, I received the call I was expecting. I went up to his office, and Julie sent me right in and closed the doors.

"A bold plan," Mr. Spurgeon said. "Who helped with the organizational structure?"

"Nobody. I simply analyzed the situation and asked myself how to achieve the results you desired. The plan I put forward will achieve your goals of tighter, more focused analyst reports and more data analysis while creating cost savings north of \$600,000."

"I see you kept both of Matheson's guys and dumped both of Enderlee's."

"All three of Matheson's guys," I replied with a grin. "That fulfills your advice to keep Kirov and dump Burton, which was backed up by my analysis of the team. Perhaps if Mr. Enderlee had better analysts, he wouldn't be earning such lousy returns. A twenty-year-old punk kid with limited experience is kicking his ass."

Mr. Spurgeon laughed, "I like you, Kane. You don't fuck around or mince words. Murray also says you're a witch!"

"He's just jealous," I grinned.

"What happened to that eighteen-year-old kid who was scared to even step into this office?"

"He paid attention to every word Mr. Matheson spoke and every move you made."

"Keep it up, Kane. The sky's the limit."

"I do need to disclose something to you, but I'd ask you to keep it to yourself."

"What's that?"

"What might be perceived as a conflict of interest. Bianca Pérez is pregnant; I'm the father, and yes, Keiko is fully aware. Pérez is due in April."

"Not something I would have expected from you!"

"It's something that Pérez and I discussed for some time, and with it being very unlikely Keiko can have children, it presented an opportunity to have a biological kid. Keiko and I will adopt if things go the right way."

"There are no rules against those types of relationships here. Everyone is an adult, and I am not anyone's dad."

"Except Samantha's, of course."

He laughed, "She's in school now, so she won't be prowling the offices. Are you comfortable with putting this plan into action immediately?"

"I wouldn't have presented it if I wasn't. I will need to move people around until the new space is ready."

"That's fine. Take this to Mandy Peterson. She'll make the necessary arrangements, and you can inform the staff on the 30th. She'll have reference checks, releases, and other paperwork necessary. You'll call each person down and inform them, then Mrs. Peterson and her staff will handle everything else."

"Got it. When will the desks be informed?"

"I'll speak to each person who's losing someone before 3:30pm."

"OK."

"I'll sign the personnel requisition for another data analyst. You can begin looking on Monday. Mrs. Peterson will assist you with recruiting. Any questions?"

"No."

"Dismissed."

I left his office and went to Personnel to speak with Mrs. Peterson. Trish ushered me in, then shut the door to the office as instructed by Mrs. Peterson.

"Mr. Spurgeon approved this plan?" she asked.

"Verbally," I replied. "He also said he'd send you the personnel requisition form for the open position so we could begin looking on Monday."

"One moment."

She picked up the phone, dialed, and, as I'd expected, confirmed with Noel Spurgeon that he'd approved my plan and that he'd be sending the personnel requisition later in the day.

"OK," she said after she replaced the handset. "You intend to lay off Mark Burton, Keith Fowler, Jake Anderson, Jim Kowalski, Lee Dodge, Rob Levinson, and Frank Birch. The effective date of the end of their employment would be September 30th?"

"Yes."

"And it appears you intend some kind of promotion for Tony Kirov."

"All I can do is propose the role and title; Mr. Spurgeon determines compensation, and as far as I'm aware, I'm not to be privy to those decisions."

"That's correct. All compensation is a private matter between the individual and Noel Spurgeon. Obviously, Personnel knows as we have responsibility for payroll. I'll confirm with Mr. Spurgeon if Tony's compensation will change. Tony has been here long enough he knows not to ask you about it."

"I will need to make some seating changes," I said. "I need the analysts focused on each area to sit together. Scott Moreland will move to the empty desk in FX until the new space is available. Joel Stein will move to the desk next to Mark Sinclair; John Peters will move next to Bill Young; Ken Parker will move next to Steve Mansour. I'll speak to Jack Nelson about doing that on Monday, October 3rd. There's no reason to pay overtime, and none of the analysts have much to move."

"I'll take care of all the necessary paperwork. The protocol is we call each person individually to the Personnel office, inform them their position is being eliminated, and then they sit with Trish or Leslie to complete their paperwork and receive their severance check. It's important you not engage them in debate or state anything other than their position has been eliminated in a re-organization. We'll handle any questions. If someone approaches you afterwards, simply say that you've said all you're permitted to say on the matter, and they should address any questions to me."

"Understood," I said.

"Do you have job requirements for the open position?"

"Yes," I said. "It's the last page in the papers I just handed you. I asked Bianca Pérez for input."

She looked over the list and nodded.

"This will do. I'll get it to our recruiters, Pencom Systems, as soon as I have the form from Mr. Spurgeon. You'll need to have him sign off on the computer equipment, which I would surmise will match what Bianca has?"

"Yes. Otherwise, we have the necessary equipment and subscriptions to the news reporting services; I'll just have to re-assign some of them. I'll make sure Jack Nelson is aware once everything is announced. I will need to speak to him briefly about the need to move people, but I can do so without naming names."

"Jack will keep it quiet; he's used to knowing things in advance."

"I remember, but I also don't want to overstep my position."

Mrs. Peterson laughed, "I'm not sure you could at this point. Just remember what we discussed."

I nodded, "I haven't forgotten."

"I think that's all I need right at the moment. I'll get started on the paperwork and the severance agreements."

"Thank you."

I left her office and returned to my desk. I spent the rest of the morning on research, and then Bianca and I ate lunch together in the break room. We couldn't talk privately, though, as Mia and Joel both joined us. When we finished lunch, we headed to the gym to work out.

"I mentioned our impending arrival to Mr. Spurgeon," I said. "I wanted to make sure there wasn't a problem."

"Right, because it's not like Suits are banging secretaries right and left!"

"His comment was that everyone is an adult, and he's not anyone's dad."

"And yet, he bangs girls young enough to be his daughters if the rumors are true."

"I suspect they are. In any event, no concerns."

"I take it your plan was approved?"

"In its entirety. Mrs. Peterson will contact a recruiter on Monday to begin the search for a data analyst. Make sure you or Jack turn in any résumés you have on Monday."

"I don't, but Jack has one from his friend he mentioned. I'll make sure I tell him on the drive home after work, given you're leaving early."

After our workouts, we returned to the office. I worked for about an hour, then went to 30 to see Jack Nelson.

"I'd ask how things were going, but I'd say it's pretty obvious," he said, waving his unlit cigar towards me.

"And I'd ask how things were going for you, but I don't think it ever changes!"

He laughed, "No shit, Kane. What's up that you shut my door?"

"On the 3rd, I'll need your team to move four analysts for me. Mrs. Peterson said I could share names with you."

He nodded, pulled out a pen and pad, and wrote down the names of the people I wanted to move and their destinations.

"I conclude from this you're laying off some of the analysts."

"A wise conclusion, though I'm not authorized to share those names. That said, you can surmise a few from what I just told you."

"Mandy Peterson will give me the entire scoop on Thursday of next week, I'm sure. Please tell me you fucked over Enderlee!"

I chuckled, "I believe the sentiment is unanimous, and while that might be the outcome, it wasn't intended."

"Fuck that asshole. It's one thing to be a prick like Matheson who will listen to reason. Enderlee is a bigger prick than Noel Spurgeon, and that's a high bar!"

"Are you sure you should be saying that to a Suit?" I asked with a grin.

"You're no Suit, Kane, and you know it! If the place were full of guys like you, my job would be a lot easier!"

"Thanks. I assume Mr. Spurgeon talked to you about the build-out on 29?"

"He did, and let me know the contracts were signed. Clinton will run with it, which I'm sure you already know. Estimated completion is mid-November because the permits will take a month."

"I love how the permitting process takes longer than the actual construction."

"Welcome to Chicago! At least we won't get any Mickey Mouse shit from Brown Construction. I asked for the same foreman, and we'll have him."

"Good. I'll get you the specs on my fish tank."

"Fuck you, Kane!" Mr. Nelson growled.

I chuckled, "Changing subjects, how is your heart?"

"OK. The exercise is OK, but the diet I could do without, though the wife insists. And no stogies or bourbon is pure torture! Back to work topics, are you getting a secretary?"

"I can't imagine needing one," I replied. "I don't have enough work to justify it, and I'm married."

"Yeah, like THAT stops anyone here except you and Thiele."

"I am hiring another data analyst like Bianca Pérez, but we'll only start looking next Monday, so I suspect they won't start before the construction is finished."

"That would make things easier if they need the same equipment as Pérez."

"They do," I confirmed. "I'll speak to Phil about the computer equipment."

"OK."

We finished our conversation, and I returned to my desk to complete my day. As planned, I left at 3:30pm so I could be home in time to shower and change before Deanna and I had to leave for Evanston. When I arrived home, I greeted Keiko, showered, changed into slacks and a polo shirt, then went to sit with Keiko until it was time to leave.

"Make sure you play your part well tonight," Keiko said.

"I will, at the gallery! I don't think you'd approve of Deanna's idea for playing my part properly!"

Keiko laughed softly, "No, I wouldn't!"

"You did say it was common in Japan!" I teased. "So long as the wife wasn't displaced."

"And I also made it clear I didn't agree with the practice!" Keiko said lightly.

"You did, and you know I'm teasing you!"

"Of course! I'm not contemplating this in any way, shape, or form, but Deanna would fit that model, as she'd have no intention of trying to displace me or steal you away."

"That's totally true about her, and you don't need to remind me that there are zero degrees of freedom with regard to that particular activity! Not that I'd want them, anyway."

"You're a guy!" Keiko protested, but she was smiling.

"Yes, I am, but I also understand the commitment I made. Do I notice attractive girls? Sure. But noticing them is the limit. And besides, none of them can hold a candle to you!"

"Right, because I look SO pretty after chemo! No hair anywhere, and I've lost weight. I swear, I look like I'm twelve!"

"And when you complete your treatment, all your hair will grow back, and you'll gain weight. But you know I love you for what's inside!"

"I love *you* inside!" Keiko tittered. "I'll probably be asleep when you get home, but tomorrow morning, for sure!"

"Whatever you want, Keiko-chan!"

Deanna came into the room to let me know it was time to go. I kissed Keiko, then Deanna and I headed out to my car.

"I haven't been to one of these," I said. "So I need to know how you want me to behave."

"I'll introduce you as my friend, but act as if we're having the best sex imaginable and you're completely infatuated with me. I'll act a bit disinterested, which will ensure I receive maximum attention from the guys with money."

"So," I chuckled, "you're great in the sack, and I put your feet to sleep?"

"You know that wasn't true, but yes, that's the best way to get attention from men who have the money to buy art."

"I take it you priced your paintings fairly high?"

"Not me, the gallery. They price them, take a commission, and I receive the rest. It's going to be counterintuitive for you, I think, but setting the prices high actually helps sell art."

"Well, it's something in limited supply, and by setting the price high, you imply there is more demand than supply, which would entice a collector to buy for fear of missing out."

"OK, never mind! I should have known you'd figure it out right away!"

"So this is all a *kabuki* play?" I asked.

"Absolutely! Everyone has a part to play, and the gallery owner or show coördinator is the director. In this case, it's a show coördinator, as the Noyes Cultural Arts Center is run by the City of Evanston. The show leases space and operates it as if it were a private gallery. Evanston collects a set fee, as well as sales tax, while the coördinator takes the commissions. The coördinator for this one runs the gallery in Oak Park we visited."

"How successful are these?"

"This is only my third show, and the first two weren't very successful, but that's normal when you're starting out. What I really want to do is book a gallery in San Francisco. If I could do that, would Keiko be OK with us traveling there together?"

"You would have to ask her, but I think she'd say 'yes'. Remember, my priority is her treatment and care, so that would have to be taken into account."

"Obviously," Deanna agreed. "I suspect it would take six months to a year to organize something like that. I'm not even sure I could make it happen because I don't have a name yet."

"Look into it, and we'll see if we can make it happen. I'm developing contacts, and I'm positive I could ask Mr. Matheson or Mr. Spurgeon about art galleries, and they would know someone. I don't know much about it, but I think you should try to get more shows in Chicago and maybe Milwaukee or Indianapolis."

"Those aren't exactly hotbeds of the art world! New York and San Francisco are, and there are some other cities with lesser but important galleries. Taos, New Mexico, is famous for its art colony, and Austin, Texas, has a growing art subculture."

"Figure out what you need to do to promote yourself and get your name out, and I'll provide the resources."

"I really appreciate it! Now, if I could just convince Keiko to let me show my appreciation!"

"I'm flattered, but please don't."

"I totally understand, and I would never do anything that would hurt Keiko, but a girl can have her fantasies!"

"Yes, she can!"

We arrived at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center, and Deanna instantly assumed her artist persona -- disaffected, starving, and disinterested in her 'friend', as she called me, but implying we were sleeping together. Most men were dressed in suits, and many of them had gorgeous women on their arms. The ones who didn't, Deanna pointed out, were the art critics, which also included one woman.

"Miss Haight? I'm Stan Jakes from the *Trib*. Could I ask you a few questions?"

"Sure," she said distractedly.

I almost laughed at the role she was playing, but I understood she had a part to play, and she wanted to play it to perfection. She introduced me, then Mr. Jakes asked her a few questions about her background, though everything he asked was listed on the flyer that described her art.

After those preliminaries, he asked her to interpret a pair of her paintings, which I found very interesting, as they were abstract. What was even more interesting was that once she explained what the paintings were trying to convey, I actually saw things I hadn't noticed before and understood her intent.

The one I found fascinating was titled «La petite mort», and it was blindingly obvious, at least to me, that it was about having sex with CeCi and me. The colors and shapes, despite not depicting any tangible object, did convey intense feelings, and I decided if the painting didn't sell, I was going to buy it. I thought about just buying it outright, but I wanted her to make sales and get her name out.

"Mind if I ask about your escort?" Mr. Jakes asked.

"He's a good friend who provides my studio space. He's a stockbroker."

"Any hot tips?" Mr. Jakes asked.

"I do trade stocks, but my focus is on foreign exchange," I replied. "It's speculative currency trading, and it's not something I'd suggest most people try. An S&P 500 index fund would be perfect for you, as you earn the total market return, which is far better than what you'll receive from an S&L!"

"Thanks. How did you meet?"

"Through some mutual friends at the School of the Art Institute," Deanna replied.

Sophie and Ivy were in attendance, and the two of them were hanging all over a man in his forties wearing a very expensive tailored suit.

"Where do you work, Jonathan?"

"For Spurgeon Capital, based here in Chicago."

"Miss Haight, if you'll pardon this, Jonathan, could I call you for background on the stock market? Not for attribution, just questions."

"If you write a positive article about Deanna, I'd be more inclined to say 'yes'," I said with a grin.

"Journalistic integrity doesn't allow me to make that kind of agreement," he said firmly.

"What kind of agreement?" I asked. "I simply said that if you wrote a positive article, I'd be more inclined to agree. I didn't actually *ask* you to write a positive article, nor did I say I wouldn't talk to you if you didn't!"

"You're awfully young to have attended law school!"

"I didn't," I chuckled. "My expertise is analyzing the foreign exchange and precious metals markets, and I apply the same logic to pretty much everything I do, and I am careful to only say what I mean!"

"Do you have a card?"

I took one of my 'broker' cards from my pocket and handed it to him.

"Thanks," he said. "Miss Haight, could I get a picture of you with the first painting? My photographer is here with me."

"I think the third one is better," I suggested.

"I don't disagree," Mr. Jakes said, "but I don't think my editor is going to accept me writing about orgasms in the 'Entertainment' section!"

I chuckled, "Probably not, though I suspect it would sell a lot of papers!"

"And generate even more cancelations!"

"Sadly, I suspect you're correct."

Mr. Jakes called over his photographer, who took several pictures of Deanna next to her work titled 'Sunset'.

While that was happening, the show coördinator put a small red sticker on the frame of «La petite mort», indicating someone had purchased it. That meant \$600, minus a commission, for Deanna. I was both thrilled and disappointed and

was tempted to ask who had bought the painting and offer them double what they'd paid, but that wouldn't help Deanna.

"Congratulations," I said once the two members of the press had walked away.

"I can't believe someone paid \$600 for my painting!"

"I'd pay whoever bought it double to have it," I said. "Once you explained the painting, I decided I'd buy it if nobody else did."

"You should have if you like it that much!"

"That doesn't help either of us in our goal of getting your name out there. I bet whoever bought it displays it and talks about it, which will increase interest in your paintings."

As we were talking, the show coördinator put a yellow sticker on 'Sunset'.

"What does that mean?" I asked quietly.

"A bid below the reserve price. An orange sticker is one that's below the asking price but above the reserve."

"Reserve?"

"A secret minimum; even I don't know it. If nobody meets the reserve, the show coördinator has the right to buy the piece for the reserve price or return it to me, or I could choose to sell it to the bidder."

"Wait! The coördinator could set the reserve to \$10 or something?"

"No. The absolute minimum is agreed between us. The secret reserve is intended to allow someone to indicate interest but allow the painting to remain available if someone wants to pay the displayed price."

"Mind if I ask your minimum?"

"\$150," she replied. "I suspect the coördinator will buy at least one for her gallery if they don't all sell."

"That seems awfully complicated!"

"Says the man who makes complex trades in the currency market for a living!"

"Point taken!" I replied. "I think «La petite mort» might have been underpriced. But it's hard to know."

"It's impossible to know! Even the gallery owners and appraisers have trouble setting prices because an artist who is hot today could be cold tomorrow, or vice versa. I suspect you've never looked into it, but prices on so-called 'priceless' works of art are highly variable. They're nearly always sold at auction with a high reserve because nobody can price them accurately."

"Interesting."

"I need to mingle; you just play the fawning rich guy who is having the best sex of his life!"

"I think I can manage," I chuckled.

XIII. I Want You to Take Me Home

September 24, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I'm sorry I was asleep when you came to bed last night," Keiko said when we woke on Saturday morning.

"There's no need to apologize! We didn't arrive home until after midnight."

"How did it go?"

"She sold some of her paintings," I replied. "So it was very good for her. One of them sold for full price, and the other three at or above the reserve price. Those are set by the gallery owner who ran the show, by the way."

"Did you have fun?"

"I enjoyed playing the hot, rich guy who implied he was having the best sex of his life with the disinterested artist!"

Keiko laughed softly, "In Deanna's dream!"

"It was all an act, of course! I mean, sure, we know her desired situation, but she choreographed the entire thing. She had a nice interview with a reporter from the *Trib* who I spoke to as well. I hope he writes a positive review of the show and specifically of Deanna's work. The reporter wants to develop a relationship with me, too."

"For?"

"Background on the financial markets. I wouldn't be quoted, but I'd answer questions about how things work and explain what's going on in the markets. Obviously, I can't give him Spurgeon proprietary information, of course, but I can give him more general information."

"How does that help you?"

"The goal is to have contacts in every possible field because you never know what kind of information you might need. Being able to pick up the phone and call a reporter is as valuable as being able to pick up the phone and call, say, a computer engineer in California. And it's through those contacts that I build my contact list as well. Mr. Matheson has a Rolodex with something like a thousand numbers from around the world."

"And he won't share?"

"Never. That's something every trader, broker, or money manager guards zealously. You don't want someone else annoying your contacts. I have access to them by asking Mr. Matheson to speak to them. I did that with regard to the Australian dollar. He knows what he can and can't ask and how often he can call. I don't, and I could mess things up."

"That does make sense. Do you have any plans today other than your usual Saturday errands?"

"No. I had just planned to hang out at home. Shall we get out of bed?"

"I suppose. I really enjoy cuddling naked in bed with you, and we won't be able to do that for two weeks starting Monday. Will coming to the hospital in the afternoon interfere with your new role?"

"No. First, the staff changes don't happen until Friday of next week, so things just operate as they have until 1:00pm on Friday. And by then, all the European markets are closed, and there are only a few hours left of trading in the Americas."

"I suppose we should get some breakfast," Keiko said reluctantly.

We got out of bed, dressed, and went down to the kitchen to make breakfast. About two hours later, after Keiko and I had eaten, Bianca and I left the house to head to Dominick's, as we felt they had far better fruit and produce than Jewel.

"How are things going down on Friday?"

"Just after lunch, we'll call the seven into the Personnel office. I'll inform each person individually, then Trish and Leslie will go over their severance packages with them. Once that's done, Jack will distribute a memo with the new seating arrangements, and they'll move on Monday afternoon. None of them have enough stuff to warrant overtime for the guys, and Friday will be too hectic."

"And the new space?"

"The permits will take three to four weeks and construction two to three. We'll move into the space mid-November. That will probably be done on a weekend, given we'll be moving eleven, as opposed to four, and I can't really afford to have my computers down for a few hours during the week."

"So, like a normal Suit!" Bianca smirked.

I laughed, "OK, sure, but I won't call Jack Nelson names and complain to Mr. Spurgeon if something breaks. I'll work with Phil to get it repaired or replaced."

"Would they be willing to set up an extra workstation just in case? You know, configure for nine analysts instead of eight? That way, if someone's system breaks, there's a spare they can use."

"That's not a bad idea. I have to talk to Phil on Monday about equipment for the new data analyst, so I'll ask for the setup for the empty slot, which is approved. That way, if I do hire someone, we already have the gear, and I can ask for equipment for them and make that the new spare. The real challenge is additional Bloomberg terminals, which Mr. Spurgeon will have to pull strings to make happen. And this would be the time for you to request anything you need."

"I could run my simulations far faster on a Sun-1 system."

"From that company that was basically spun off from Stanford, right?"

"Yes. It runs a version of the Unix operating system and can run rings around the 4381 for what I need to do, especially as I wouldn't be competing for processor cycles with trading. I can work out how to transfer the data, similar to what we do for the PCs."

"How much?"

"I'd estimate around \$9,000, but once you take into account the IBM licensing and other factors, it's not crazy."

"How much faster?"

"Roughly triple, based on what I know, perhaps even faster. And I'll have access to the C programming language and the Unix tools and will be able to do things that the mainframe can't easily do."

"Get the specs. How do we go about buying one if I'm able to convince Mr. Spurgeon?"

"We'd have to talk to a sales rep from Sun. It's similar to IBM mainframes in that way. We can't go to the computer store and buy one."

"Would we need two?"

"No. One will easily support both analysts, especially given I can have a hundred percent of the machine cycles overnight, which I cannot do on the mainframe because of nightly batch processing."

"You've sold me. Get the specs and arrange for a call with a salesperson. I'll need to loop Phil into this, of course. We can't do it without Information Systems agreement."

"I bet none of his people have a clue about Unix; they're mainframe guys. They had to learn about microcomputers when you asked for the first Apple II."

"Out of curiosity, how did you learn Unix?"

"At Loyola. They have a PDP-11 running Unix."

"How many people can use the system?"

"Three -- one has the graphical terminal, and the other two use serial terminals. Unix has a command line similar to DOS, though much, much more powerful. And that's what I would use, anyway, even on the graphical terminal. But I'll be able to display high-resolution graphs on that display, which the mainframe can't do on the standard terminals we use or even with the board in your IBM PC."

"Do you want to change the hiring spec to include Unix experience?" I asked.

"You know, we probably should. We really don't want someone who is just a mainframe programmer. In fact, that's going to be less and less important as time goes on. Computers from Digital, Prime, and others are replacing mainframes, and IBM PCs will get faster and come down in price, to the point where traditional mainframes will become less important."

"That matches the research I've read, but that's not my sector, so I don't spend a lot of time on it. I think I might have to change that. In fact, I think I'm going to assign Tony the task of producing a monthly research report on computers and related topics, though focused on technology, not financials. I assume I can send him to you to get some pointers as to where to start?"

"Of course! OK to change subjects?"

"Given you started that one, it's up to you!"

"How did things go last night?"

"Deanna sold some paintings and was interviewed by a reporter. Supposedly, there will be an article in tomorrow's *Chicago Tribune*. Did you see any of the paintings she showed?"

"No. You know she's very touchy about anyone going into her studio except you, and you're careful."

"One, called «La petite mort», was amazing. It sold for \$600, and I was jealous of the person who bought it."

"Orgasm?" Bianca asked.

"Yeah, it was an abstract expression of the threesome Deanna, CeCi, and I had. I only saw it once it was hung at the art show. I had no clue when I first looked at it, but once she explained it, the emotions were blindingly obvious."

"It was that good?" Bianca asked. "I mean, you've been with as many as eight girls during baseball games!"

"Let's just say it was over the top and leave it at that!"

Bianca laughed, "Compared to the baseball games? Really?"

"Other than having sex in front of others, they were pretty conventional."

"If you call losing my virginity in public 'conventional!'"

"I don't call inside a dorm room 'public,'" I chuckled. "It's not like being in the outfield at Wrigley or on the fifty-yard-line at Soldier Field!"

"OK, with an *audience*, Mr. Pedantic!"

"I make my living by being very precise in my analysis! And I have to write clear reports that communicate what I'm thinking!"

"Is this what life is going to be like?"

"For the next fifty or sixty years!" I chuckled.

"And when your son or daughter speaks to you that way?"

"I'll laugh, but not as hard as you will!"

"You're right!" Bianca declared.

"Speaking of that, how are you feeling?"

"Just fine. Remember, we have our next pre-natal checkup on October 1st."

"I remember. How often are they?"

"About two months apart until the eighth month, then it all depends on how my blood pressure is. If it's normal, then not until my due date to check on my amniotic fluid level."

"Check the oil'?" I teased.

"Only if I can use your dipstick!"



September 26, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday morning, after a quiet weekend at home, I kissed Keiko goodbye, promising to see her at the hospital at about 3:45pm. I really would have preferred to be with Keiko, but I had limited days off, and we'd agreed that I needed to save them for when she had her transplant at Mayo. I hoped we'd find a match soon, but so far, neither the testing in Chicago or California nor in Japan had borne fruit.

The first thing I did was write my usual analyst report, then went to Personnel to let Mrs. Peterson know that I wanted to modify the position specification to emphasize Unix experience, at Bianca's suggestion. She made the update and then asked how I was feeling about Friday.

"Neutral," I replied. "I don't like the idea of people losing their jobs, nor having to convey that information, but it's part of running an efficient business and

adapting your business model to the current conditions, whatever they might be. Someone has to convey the information, and that's me."

"And the fact that you decided who?"

"It was a purely objective analysis of skills, past performance, and fit with the new model."

"And how, pray tell, is 'fit' an objective analysis?"

"I reviewed past encounters and analyzed their philosophy during our discussions. I've had interactions with all of them as well, and I believe my analysis will stand up under scrutiny."

"That sounds subjective to me. What objective, identifiable standard could you point to?"

"Not being a dick," I said with a grin.

Mrs. Peterson laughed, "I'm not sure that's quantifiable, but it fits more into what Justice Stewart said about obscenity -- 'I know it when I see it'."

I nodded, "I get your point, and I'll admit that it is somewhat subjective. That said, it was the last criterion, and ultimately, I'd keep someone who was a dick who was far better than the next best candidate."

"Reasonable. And 'fit' with corporate culture is a valid criterion; it just isn't purely objective."

"Point taken."

"You make your arguments similar to the ones my son Joel makes. He just started his second year of law school."

"You're the second person to mention that," I replied.

"Trial lawyers have to be very analytical, have to be expert communicators, have to think fast on their feet, and have to be able to counter just about any argument. You haven't taken any philosophy or logic classes, have you?"

"No. I've focused on math and finance."

"Given the direction you're heading, I'd suggest some management classes, as well as other humanities. It will help you with your communication and analysis, though it seems to come naturally for you."

"Baseball players, including the best hitters, all take batting practice before games," I said.

"Then you understand."

"May I ask what kind of lawyer your son wants to be?"

"Criminal defense. My daughter Leah just started her last year as an undergrad and is hoping to go to medical school."

"A lawyer and a doctor," I said. "That's pretty good."

"We think so! Anything else?"

"I sense some tension with Joel, which really doesn't surprise me, given I think all the analysts have inferred layoffs are in the offing. I don't know how others are responding because I don't interact with them on a daily basis."

"There isn't anything you can do at this point. Don't reveal anything to anyone beyond what you already have. From what you said, that's Tony and Scott, right?"

"Yes, I let both of them know the roles they would have but said nothing about anyone else and swore them to secrecy. I had permission for both of those. And Bianca obviously knows given I asked her for a job specification for a *second* analyst."

"I wasn't trying to imply you did anything wrong, just acknowledging they knew. Say nothing to anyone else until Friday. Even telling one other person they're in could cause others to react badly before Friday."

"I have no intention of saying anything. I just wanted to let you know the tension was there. I suspect some of them are already looking for jobs."

"I'd say once the organizational change was announced, many of them did. Given the short timeframe, you should be able to head off losing anyone key. If, by some chance, someone gives notice before Friday afternoon, I'll let you know, and you can discuss with Noel Spurgeon how to respond."

"OK."

"Anything else?"

"No."

I left her office and returned to my desk to continue my usual work. As usual for a Monday, I had lunch with Bianca, and we worked out in the gym, though her workouts were low-impact due to her pregnancy. After lunch, the two of us went to talk to Phil in Information Systems.

"We'll need PCs on every desk with IBM 3278 capabilities, along with at least one additional Bloomberg terminal, which I'll ask Mr. Spurgeon for later. Bianca wants a Sun-1 workstation to share between her and a new data analyst who is being hired."

"I'm going to have to do some research," Phil said. "I don't know anything about those."

"I called this morning for specification sheets and spoke to a pre-sales analyst," Bianca said. "The pre-sales analyst is bringing them by on Wednesday, and I'll make sure I have complete information for you."

"OK. What price range are we talking?" Phil asked.

"Under \$10K complete," Bianca said. "Jonathan will speak to Mr. Spurgeon, but we wanted to make sure you weren't blindsided."

"First time for everything!" Phil said with a wry smile. "Usually, I find out when someone calls to say they're coming to install something new."

"I promise I won't pull that kind of shit," I said. "I make no guarantees about anyone else. I should be able to keep Mr. Matheson onside as well. Should."

Phil nodded, "He's been much better since you went to work for him."

"One big advantage," Bianca said, "is that I won't need any cycles on the mainframe overnight beyond the one program that runs to build my data file. No more analysis routines. Daytime runs will be the same, at least at first, but in the end, we'll figure out a way to get the real-time data to the Sun-1, and that will get you all those cycles back."

"Which will save far more than \$10 grand in IBM licensing fees if we need more capacity," he said. "Jonathan, I need to ask you a private question."

"I'll go back to 29," Bianca said, getting up.

She left the office, closing the door behind her.

"Jack Nelson mentioned some moves next Monday, and I can infer things from that. I need to ask what your headcount will be in the new space to know about equipment. I can't plan if I don't know."

I considered whether I should tell him now or wait and decided I could tell him the headcount, so long as I didn't reveal any details, and swore him to secrecy.

"This cannot be revealed to anyone," I said. "Twelve total spots, ten of which will be occupied immediately, with the eleventh as soon as we hire the second data analyst."

"OK. There are enough IBM PCs, but I'll need to buy some cards to connect them to the mainframe. I assume you don't want any 3278 terminals?"

"On the twelfth desk, I'd like to have an IBM PC and a 3278 terminal. That way, I have both a spare PC and a straight-up terminal in case there's a problem with the PC connections to the mainframe."

"OK. That lets me recover at least twelve 3278 terminals, which I expect we're going to need based on past history. When we've been this successful, there's always expansion."

"Our AUM has gone up significantly, so that wouldn't surprise me. Anything else you need?"

"Not at the moment. I'll work with Bianca to get comfortable with her request, so I'd appreciate it if you wait to ask Noel Spurgeon about that until after I can answer his questions."

"Of course."

We shook hands, and I headed back to 29. The rest of the afternoon went quickly, and at 3:30pm, I left to head to the hospital to see Keiko.

"How are you doing," I asked when I entered her room.

"The first day is always the easiest," she replied.

"Any new information?"

"My white count was somewhat elevated despite the antibiotics, but not high enough to not do the chemo. They're giving me IV antibiotics as well. Doctor Morrison suggested I stay in the hospital until the white count comes down. That will allow continual IV antibiotics."

"I know how much you want to be at home and how much I want you at home, but I think you need to listen to Doctor Morrison on this. Did he say anything else?"

"No. It's still just an abundance of caution. If the white count doesn't come down by Wednesday afternoon, he'll run blood and sputum cultures to check for infection."

"Is there anything else that needs to be done?"

"Not right now. I just don't like staying in the hospital."

"I know, Keiko-chan, but Doctor Morrison is doing his utmost to ensure you're healthy enough for chemo and eventually a bone marrow transplant."

"I'm afraid, Jonathan," she said quietly.

I took her hand despite the usual rule against skin-to-skin contact.

"Did Doctor Morrison say anything you haven't told me?"

"No, but you know what he's said about opportunistic infections."

"I remember, but he initiated this round of chemo, so I think he's just being cautious. And he wants you to stay here because your immune system is compromised. If you want, I can stay with you tonight."

"No, you should get a good night's sleep."

I knew arguing with Keiko was unlikely to change her mind, but I could do two things.

"OK, but then I'm coming to see you in the morning, and at lunch, and then again after work. I don't want you to be alone, Keiko-chan."

"My grandmother will visit tomorrow morning and stay for a few hours, and I'm sure my parents will visit, too."

"Even so, I'm going to come see you before work, for lunch, then after work."

"What about the ceremony at Chicago Botanic Garden?"

"Let's worry about that next week," I said. "Right now, do as Doctor Morrison tells you, please."

"I will. I love you, Jonathan."

"I love you, too, Keiko-chan."

I stayed with her until it was time to head home for dinner.

"No Keiko?" Bianca asked.

"Her white count is elevated, and they have her on IV antibiotics to fight whatever it is that is raising her white count."

"That doesn't sound good," Bianca observed.

"Privately, and only to you, I agree. But I have to keep a positive outlook, both for Keiko and for me."

"I hate to ask this, but what are her odds?"

"Without a marrow transplant, they're effectively zero," I admitted.

"Fundamentally, the goal is to keep her alive and healthy enough for a transplant, but every day that passes without a donor brings us closer to the point of no return."

"Now, turn off 'analytical Jonathan' and tell me how you feel?"

"Helpless."

"This is where, for most people, the suggestion would be to speak to a spiritual advisor. I'm positive that the Christian answer wouldn't work for you, but maybe you should consider speaking to a Buddhist monk. That fits with Keiko's worldview, right?"

"Yes. A mix of Zen Buddhism and Shinto, which are intrinsically linked in Japanese culture. But I'm not sure what a monk could say to me at this point that will change anything."

"It's not about changing the circumstances, just dealing with them."

"I just don't see it," I said. "Nothing anyone says or does can change what I feel are immutable properties of the universe -- you're born, you live, and you die. You find meaning in this life because there is nothing beyond it."

"Playing a bit of the Devil's Advocate, but are you *sure* that's true?"

"Sure enough to have no need for preachers, priests, rabbis, imams, or monks."

"Then maybe someone who counsels people with cancer and their families?"

"Again, what can they say that will change anything? I love Keiko, and there's a very good chance she's going to die, and there's not a damn thing I can do about it, and nobody is going to be able to make me feel good about it, or be at peace, or whatever it is they'll say. It sucks. I hate it. The only thing I can do is fight tooth and nail for Keiko and encourage her to do the same thing. Or, as I said, fight until we can't."

"What about your friend Anala?"

"Here we are, two months after she promised to keep in touch, and I haven't heard anything from her. I've tried, but for whatever reason, she's chosen this other guy over me."

"I'm concerned about you."

"I'm concerned about Keiko," I said.

"Yes, I know, but she's made a point of insisting you care for yourself, too. If you won't do it for me or for you, do it for her."

"I'll think about it," I said. "Tomorrow, I'm leaving early so I can visit with her before work, then going to the hospital at lunch, then going there after work. I'll work my normal hours."

"OK. I was already planning to drive in this week and give Jack a ride because you were going to change your schedule."

"I'm going go upstairs and change for dinner."

"Jonathan, you should go out on Friday night; it's what Keiko would want you to do."

"I'll think about that, too."

We hugged, and I went upstairs to change.



September 27, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Hi, Keiko-chan," I said when I walked into her room on Tuesday morning.

"Hi," she replied, sounding a bit down.

"Chemo effects setting in?"

"Yes, and I didn't sleep very well last night."

"What can I do for you?"

"Just hold my hand, please. Doctor Morrison should be in soon."

We sat quietly, and about fifteen minutes later, Doctor Morrison came into the room for his morning rounds, accompanied by two other doctors and two medical students. He examined Keiko, they discussed the case, then asked if we had any questions.

"Could I speak to you privately?" I asked after Keiko said she didn't have anything she wanted to ask.

"We can step into the corridor," he said.

I lowered my mask and kissed Keiko's forehead, then went to the hallway.

"You know that's risky, right?" he asked.

"A risk I'm willing to take to keep Keiko's spirits up."

"Do you need complete privacy, or is it OK for my Residents and their medical students to stay?"

"It's OK," I said. "Where are we, please? No punches pulled, no dithering?"

"Not in a good place," he said grimly. "Her fever hasn't come down, and her white count is still increasing."

"What do you think is wrong?"

"A systemic infection of some kind. While her overall white count is high, she appears to be suffering from febrile neutropenia, that is, a low number of

neutrophil granulocytes. In her case, she also has hypereosinophilia, which is a high level of a different type of white blood cell. That combination suggests some kind of systemic infection, which could be just about anything. We're treating her with cefoxitin, a strong IV antibiotic. We'll know more tomorrow when she's been on it for forty-eight hours."

"Tell me what you aren't saying, please."

"If nothing changes by the end of the day tomorrow, we'll have to stop the chemo and not restart it until we get the infection under control."

"Would that preclude a marrow transplant?"

"In the sense that systemically she couldn't handle it, yes."

"What are the chances she's going to be able to leave the hospital on Friday?"

"Honestly? Close to zero. If everything goes perfectly, she'll need to be here through early next week so we can continue the IV antibiotics."

"Does she know?"

"Yes. I told her yesterday."

That explained what she'd said about being scared.

"OK. Is there *anything* else we can do?"

"Pray," he said grimly. "If that's something you do."

It wasn't, but I didn't feel I needed to reveal that.

"I'll be here every morning this week," I said. "I'm going back to see Keiko."

"If you need to speak to someone, the hospital has a chaplain and a secular counselor."

"Thanks," I said.

"I'm sorry I don't have better news."

I nodded and went back into Keiko's room.

"What did he say?"

"I suspect just what he told you. He's concerned about your white count and that he expects you to have to stay in the hospital until at least early next week."

"Will you promise me something?" she asked quietly.

"What?" I inquired apprehensively.

"I don't want to die here. If it comes to that, take me home, please. Promise me?"

"I will do everything in my power, Keiko-chan. Right now, that means doing whatever I can to help you beat the leukemia."

"Do you really think that's possible?"

I nodded, "I do. So long as there's a chance, we have to keep fighting. I love you too much to do anything else."

I stayed with her until I had to leave for work, promising to return at lunchtime. As I walked to my car and drove to the Hancock Center, I contemplated

everything Doctor Morrison had said and Keiko's request. I agreed with her completely that if the situation became hopeless, there was no point in staying in the hospital.

I wasn't sure how it would work to try to care for her at home, but I decided I needed to look into it so I was prepared if that were to happen. Unfortunately, based on what Doctor Morrison had said, that was likely to happen. And that meant I had to face what I'd been avoiding, or at least pushing aside -- Keiko was, in all likelihood, going to die.

I didn't say anything to Bianca at work because I wasn't ready to discuss it, and I simply completed my tasks. I spent thirty minutes with Keiko at lunch, then saw her again after work, though I could only stay for about an hour because I had to go to class. I'd called Violet and apologized in advance for missing dinner, but I knew Keiko needed me. After class, Violet and I went to the diner, but this time, I ordered a meal as I hadn't had time for dinner.

"Is something wrong?" Violet asked. "You seem out of sorts."

"Keiko isn't doing well," I said. "Not well at all."

"You mean..."

I nodded, "I'd say that's the probable outcome. There's a chance, still, but not a very good one, and each day that progresses without a marrow transplant reduces her chances of beating the leukemia."

"I'm so sorry," Violet said. "I know how much you love her. Can I help?"

"You are, by being my friend."

"But is there anything I can do? Anything at all?"

"Doctor Morrison's last suggestion was 'pray'."

"Oh," Violet said. "It's really that bad."

"It is. I'll know more tomorrow evening, but Keiko asked me to take her home if she's going to die so that she doesn't have to die in the hospital."

"Wow," Violet breathed. "I don't even know what to say."

"Me either, really. I need to find out how I would care for her at home."

"Uhm, check into something called a 'private duty nurse'. They come to your house and can administer medication prescribed by a doctor, check IVs, change catheters, and that kind of thing."

"That is exactly the information I needed," I said. "I'll check into that tomorrow."

"And I think you would need someone to stay with her all the time."

"I'll speak to her parents and grandparents about that," I said. "And I'm sure everyone who lives at the house will help."

"This is so terrible," Violet said.

"I know."

"What will you do? You know, if..."

"I'm not thinking that far in the future," I replied. "She still has a chance, and as I've said, I'm going to fight tooth and nail and help her fight tooth and nail to beat the leukemia. We'll fight until we can't."

"I'll do anything you need me to do to help," Violet said. "I mean that. Anything at all."

"I know. And I very much appreciate it."



September 28, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"What are you thinking?" Bianca asked at breakfast on Wednesday morning.

"No different from what I said last night. One way or the other, we'll have the ceremony at Chicago Botanical Garden."

"People aren't going to want to celebrate," Bianca counseled.

"I don't intend to reveal anything about Keiko's situation except to you and Violet. Everyone knows she's having chemo this week, so her being weak or tired or whatever would be expected."

"But the risk?"

"Of what? I read between the lines of what Doctor Morrison said. Think about his last piece of advice and what it means."

"You mean advising you to pray?"

"Yes. What is he saying?"

Bianca sighed, "That she's out of time."

"Yes. And only a miracle could save her, and you know my take on *that*."

"There are no miracles, only unexplained or misunderstood phenomena. The conversation we had a few months ago where you quoted Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov."

"Yes. As I said, fundamentally, miracles are things which we cannot explain via current scientific knowledge, not the work of some mythical all-powerful being. Could Keiko recover? Yes. But that won't be at the hands of some god or mystical force of the universe; it'll be because her body and the drugs beat the infection and the leukemia."

"I agree with you. You'll know more tonight, right?"

"Yes. They'll draw blood around noon and have the results sometime later, but I don't know how long. If things go the way I think they will, I'll bring her home Friday."

"That sucks," Bianca said. "That totally sucks. It's not fair."

"No, it's not. And while people say 'life is not fair', this goes far beyond that."

"You know I'm here for you, and so is everyone who lives in the house."

"I know," I replied.

I left the house with a heavy heart and a sense of foreboding and headed to the hospital to see Keiko.

"How are you?" I asked after I greeted her with a kiss on the forehead.

"I feel horrible from the chemo," she said. "And I still have a fever."

"Are you OK with me asking Doctor Morrison to come back at 5:15pm so I can hear what he has to say?"

"Yes. And you remember what you promised, right?"

"I do."

Doctor Morrison and his team came in and examined Keiko and discussed her case. I listened and read between the lines that nothing had changed. They had drawn blood earlier in the morning, as well as taken a sputum sample, and the results would take until Friday afternoon. That meant having the conversation with Doctor Morrison had to wait, so we didn't ask him to come at 5:15pm.

At the office, I completed my usual morning routine, then began making phone calls to get information about private duty nurses. The first thing I discovered was that it was expensive; the second thing was that each of the services I spoke to recommended renting a 'hospital bed', which would make IVs and nursing procedures much easier to manage. I set aside the cost concerns, as I'd made a promise to Keiko.

I made copious notes, and after speaking to a third agency, I made a list in order of my preference for which agency provided the best services. When I finished, I put the list into a desk drawer, as I couldn't make any commitments until Keiko and I heard from Doctor Morrison and then discussed what she wanted to do.

I visited Keiko at lunch, and when I returned to the office, Mia handed me two messages -- one from a police and firefighter's union in Wisconsin and one from an attorney who was a trustee for several trusts. I called the attorney, Mark Ness, first.

"I was referred to you by Pete Mueller at Continental Illinois," he said. "He said you're managing a trust fund and earning returns of better than twenty percent."

"That's true. How much are you responsible for, and how is it being managed?"

"Three trusts totaling just under \$27 million. The beneficiaries are all under age five, so this is a long-term proposition. The funds are currently invested in a mix of treasuries and municipal bonds. With interest rates trending down, the returns are dropping. According to Pete, you can achieve the kind of returns I've been earning."

"Yes, though they aren't guaranteed. I can, of course, manage in such a way as to minimize downside risk, but there is a risk to every investment, and past returns are no guarantee of future returns."

"Understood, but given the timeframe, which is twenty years for the oldest beneficiary, there won't be a need to withdraw funds for quite some time. Could we sit down and discuss this over lunch?"

"Absolutely. What are you free?"

"Any day next week is fine."

"Let's shoot for Tuesday, then," I said. "You name the place."

"I'm a pretty casual guy, so how about Maxim's? And would 11:30am work for you?"

"It would. I'll see you at Maxim's on Tuesday. I'm six-two with brown hair and brown eyes. I'll be wearing a suit, and I'll make sure to wear a blue tie."

"I'm five-ten, blonde hair, and will be wearing khakis and a polo and carrying a leather satchel."

"Sounds good. I'll see you on Tuesday."

We said 'goodbye' and hung up, then I dialed the other number. I spoke to the union pension manager, Chris Roth, who had been in contact with the unions in Overland Park and asked to arrange a presentation. We agreed I'd come up to Kenosha on October 10th, and when I finished the call, I went to speak to Mr. Matheson.

"How much?" he asked.

"Just under \$4 million," I replied. "Are you going with me?"

"I think you can handle this yourself."

"Thanks. I'm also meeting with an attorney who is the trustee for three trusts and is looking for market-beating returns. I'm having lunch with him on Tuesday.'

"Good work, Kane!"

"Thanks."

XIV. The Most Difficult Friday of My Life

September 28, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Doctor Morrison said it will take about forty-eight hours to have all the test results because some of the cultures take time," Keiko said when I arrived at the hospital on Wednesday evening.

"And the chemo?"

"We completed today's infusion; he'll evaluate in the morning. If he has to stop the chemo, I want you to take me home."

"Are you sure, Keiko-chan?"

"If they stop the chemo, that means I'm not healthy enough for a transplant, even if they find a donor. The process basically destroys your marrow, and you can't do that if you have an infection because there would be nothing to fight it. The antibiotic I'm receiving is the strongest non-experimental one available, and it doesn't appear to be working."

"What about a clinical trial?"

"Doctor Weiss looked into one new drug, but I don't qualify for their very limited first human trial."

"Why?"

"Because of the chemo."

"Don't you need to finish the course of antibiotics?"

"Yes, but I spoke to the psychologist who specializes in helping cancer patients, and she said it's possible to do that at home."

"Private duty nursing care," I replied. "Violet mentioned that as a possibility, and I checked into it."

"Really?"

"Yes. You told me what you wanted, so I checked into it. We'd need to get a hospital-style bed, which we could put in the Japanese room to facilitate your IVs and nursing care. We'd also need to figure out a solution for a shower, but I think it's possible to convert the half-bath somehow. I'll look into that tomorrow."

"That would be expensive," Keiko said.

"Maybe, but we need to make sure you have everything you need on the ground floor so you don't have to navigate the stairs. We don't have an elevator like a house Dustin photographed a few months ago! Anyway, I'll call the agency first thing tomorrow. The one I think is best can actually provide the bed and everything else we'll need, in addition to having a nurse visit on whatever schedule we need. Will your grandmother be able to stay with you during the day while I'm at work?"

"I'm sure between my grandparents and parents, we can work it out. My mom is going to be impossible."

"I'll deal with her," I said. "We're married, and that means it is up to us, not her. And in the end, it's what you want, Keiko-chan."

"I'm sorry," she said, a tear dripping down her face.

"For what?" I asked.

"Everything. It's..."

She began sobbing, and there was only one thing to do. The restrictions be damned, and the rules be damned, I climbed into the bed with Keiko on the side away from her IV and monitors, and pulled her to me.

"You did nothing wrong," I soothed, gently rubbing her back while avoiding the wires and tubes. "Whatever happens, you're my wife, and that makes me very happy. I love you, Keiko-chan. Nothing can change that."

I held her while she cried, my own emotions welling up and threatening to overwhelm me. I knew, though, that no matter what happened, Keiko needed me to be strong, and I was determined to do that. I held her for about ten minutes before a nurse came in and reprimanded me. I thought about arguing, but in the end, I knew they could kick me out of the hospital, and I wasn't about to let that happen.

"I'm sorry," I said to the nurse. "But Keiko needed me."

"I understand, but it's dangerous for both of you."

I almost asked just how much additional danger it could cause my wife, who was, all things considered, likely terminal, but I held my tongue. There was simply no point in starting a debate that I couldn't win. The nurse checked Keiko's IV and monitors and took her temperature, reporting what I could tell from holding Keiko -- her temperature was above normal and had actually risen a quarter of a degree.

"When will you take me home?" Keiko asked.

"No later than Friday evening," I said. "Let's see what Doctor Morrison says in the morning."

"OK."

"No matter what, we're going to have our ceremony at Chicago Botanic Garden a week from Saturday."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive, unless you absolutely refuse."

"No, but...what will people think?"

"I do not intend to tell anyone about your decision. That can wait until after the ceremony on the 8th."

"But won't people know if I'm home?"

"You can simply tell them that you preferred to be at home rather than in the hospital, and we arranged for that. I would, if you agree, tell Bianca."

"You should, and you should tell Violet if you want. I'd tell my grandparents, but they'll insist I tell my parents. The fiction you proposed will work for a week, especially if you take me home on Friday."

"I want to ask one more time -- are you sure about this?"

"If I have to stop the chemo, yes. If not, then I'll complete that and decide."

"OK. I'm going to stay with you tonight. I'll get something to eat from the cafeteria and call Bianca to bring me some fresh clothes for tomorrow."

"Jonathan..."

"I love you, Keiko; I want to stay. I will go to work and to class, but otherwise, I'm going to stay with you. This time, I'm putting my foot down, something I don't ever do with you."

She smiled, "I love you, and I won't fight you."

"Thank you."

I used the room phone to call Bianca, who agreed to bring me clothes and toiletries. I asked her to meet me in the cafeteria, and once the call was complete, I went down to have my dinner and wait for Bianca, who showed up about five minutes after I finished eating.

"I know you didn't want to speak in front of Keiko, so I didn't ask when you called, but..."

I took a deep breath and let it out before answering her, which I was sure telegraphed my answer.

"If Doctor Morrison discontinues the chemo, I'd say it's over. I just don't see any possible path to recovery because she can't have chemo until the infection clears, and the IV antibiotic does not appear to be knocking it out."

"I hate to ask this, but what happens?"

"The highest odds are pneumonia or organ failure. What Keiko absolutely does not want is to go on a ventilator, as she feels she'd never get off and never leave

the hospital. I think that's an accurate assessment. We'll keep her home and use what the nursing agency called 'palliative' care to keep her as comfortable as possible."

"What about the wedding ceremony?"

"We're doing that if I have to carry her," I said. "And we're not saying anything to anyone about Keiko's decision until after the ceremony. We agreed I could tell you, and Keiko also said I could tell Violet, but that's it until after the 8th. We want people to enjoy themselves, and they will if they believe Keiko has hope."

"This totally sucks," Bianca said.

"It does, but I have absolutely no regrets about my choices and decisions. None. I love her, and she's my wife, and I'm happy about that. I wish things were different, but this is where we find ourselves."

"Don't bottle it in, Jonathan; that's not healthy."

"Healthy or not, I have to be strong for Keiko. I know it might sound bad, but there will be time to mourn after..."

"Yeah," Bianca said. "You know I'll be there for you."

I smiled, "I understand the sentiment, and I hope that's true, but what happened to Keiko has driven home the fact that there are no guarantees."

"It has," Bianca agreed. "OK to come up and see her?"

"Yes. It's still visiting hours."

We headed up to Keiko's room and I hung my clean suit in the closet, then sat down away from the bed so Bianca could sit close and speak with Keiko. About twenty minutes later, Bianca got up, so I stood, and we hugged.

"See you at work tomorrow," Bianca said.

"Yes."

She left, I changed into the sweatsuit Bianca had brought, and settled down in the easy chair near the bed.



September 29, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Keiko and I discussed it, and I'm taking her home on Friday evening," I said to Doctor Morrison in the corridor outside Keiko's room on Thursday morning.

"That's not a good idea, Jonathan," he countered. "She has some kind of systemic infection."

"Doc, please don't try to spin what you said to me the other day."

"Spin?"

"When I asked you what else we could do, you said 'pray', which means you are out of options. Keiko does not want to die in the hospital, and she absolutely does not want to be on a ventilator."

"She could recover."

"And what are the odds that she'll ever be healthy enough for a marrow transplant? And what are the odds of finding one, given more than a thousand

people have been tested in Chicago, California, and Japan? Not to mention all the people on the registry?"

"It's not certain that she will die, Jonathan."

"Tell me, please, what *you* would do in her situation? I know my answer."

He nodded grimly, "Let's wait to see what the blood test results show tomorrow afternoon, OK?"

"She wants to go home no matter what," I said. "May I speak bluntly?"

"Yes, of course."

"At this point, given what I know, and what I've heard from you and from Doctor Weiss, there are no options, and it's literally only a question of when, not if. Barring a miracle, that is. Keiko and I both deal with science, not wishful thinking. We hope you do as well. At some point, and we feel this is it, the chances of success do not justify what amounts to torture. I know that sounds harsh, but I've seen what Keiko has gone through, and, frankly, enough is enough. Well, unless you know of something else that can be tried that has a reasonable chance of success."

"I don't," he admitted. "Have you arranged for nursing care?"

"I spoke to three different agencies, and I'll engage one of them later this morning. There's one that provides full service, including a hospital-style bed, monitors, and supplies, in addition to nursing. They can start tomorrow, so long as I call them by 9:00am today, which I will."

"You'll need to sign her out AMA -- Against Medical Advice. Officially, I cannot condone what you're doing."

"Whatever you need to do to keep the bureaucrats happy," I said. "I have to deal with regulators, and I'm sure the medical licensing board is equally fastidious, not to mention the hospital administration and legal team. We'll sign whatever papers you need us to sign."

"Are you still planning your ceremony on the 8th?"

"Yes, and we hope you'll be there."

"My wife and I wouldn't miss it."

"Thank you, Doctor. We both appreciate everything you've done."

"Sadly, it wasn't enough."

"Not through any fault of yours, or the hospital's, or anyone else. That said, I will do everything in my power to aid research."

"The Leukemia Society of America is a charitable organization with the goal of finding a cure and also with improving treatment for leukemia."

"I'll get in touch with them. I have both personal resources and friends and co-workers with resources. I'll see you tomorrow. I will be staying the night again."

"Do me a favor, and please do not get into bed with Keiko."

"I'll do my best, but I reserve the right to do whatever my wife tells me to do."

The three doctors and two medical students all laughed, I shook hands with Doctor Morrison, then went back into Keiko's room.

"May I ask what caused everyone to laugh?"

"Doctor Morrison asked me not to get into bed with you again, and I agreed, though I said I reserved the right to do whatever my wife told me to do!"

Keiko laughed softly, "It's never been like that."

"I know, but I made them laugh after a pretty grim conversation. They're going to make us sign some forms that say we're leaving against medical advice, but Doctor Morrison won't cause any trouble."

"What did you say to him?"

"In my usual direct way, I asked if he had any alternative treatments and what he would do in your situation. That got my point across. He did promise to be at Chicago Botanic Garden a week from Saturday. I'm sorry, but I need to leave for work. I'll see you at lunch, then again before class."

"I understand. My grandmother is coming later, and my parents will come by at some point. Are you skipping dinner with Violet?"

"Yes. We discussed it on Tuesday."

I kissed Keiko and left, heading to the Hancock Center. Once I arrived, I performed my usual morning tasks, and as soon as I had placed my daily analyst report on Mr. Matheson's desk, I went to the small conference room so I could make my phone calls in private. My first was to Horizon Hospice, where I made all the necessary arrangements to have a nurse visit once a day and to have the bed and monitors delivered. We coordinated the time for when I knew Kristy would be home and promised she'd have a check for the initial payment.

Once that was completed, I called Brown Construction to speak to Marcus Washington about options for the half-bath on the ground floor of the house.

"If I recall correctly," he said, 'the house has a full basement."

"It does, and the bathroom is directly over the laundry room."

"That makes it fairly easy. What I would suggest is that you install a drain in the floor, and install a handheld shower. You'd also need to tile the entire room -- the floor and to above shoulder height on the walls. Any other option would require a custom bathtub, and that would be an expensive proposition."

"Is that work you do?"

"We could, but given your timeframe, I'll refer you to a guy to whom we subcontract small jobs. If you go directly to him, it'll be much cheaper. You can also avoid any...Imperial entanglements. If you go the official route, you're talking a month. If you do it yourself, you don't need permits or inspections, if you get my drift."

"Got it. Do you know if the guy is available?"

"I'll call him and see if I can get him out to your place first thing Saturday to scope it out, but if what you say is true, it's cutting a hole in the floor, installing the drain, plumbing the drain, and shower, and tiling the walls and floor, which should take no more than two days, and he'll work any hours you need, though there's a bit of extra charge for weekends."

"Call him, please, and let me know. How are things going with the job here?"

"All the applications are in, so we wait for the gears to turn. We'll make mid-November. Do you want me to update you?"

"No. I only asked because I had you on the phone. I'll get updates from Jack Clinton."

We said 'goodbye', I flashed the switchhook and called Will Waterston at Goldman Sachs to confirm that everything was set with the mortgages. He'd received the inspection reports and their underwriting team and received the appraisal. He promised to have a commitment letter with instructions for closing to me on Monday. After my call with him, I called Bill Wyatt to confirm there were no additional things I needed to do and then went back to work. While I was working, the contractor Marcus had recommended called and we arranged for him to come to the house at 8:00am on Saturday.

I saw Keiko at lunch and after work, then went to class. When Violet and I were at the diner, I broke the news.

"Oh no!" she exclaimed, tears forming in her eyes.

"We're still going to have our wedding ceremony," I said. "But beyond that, who knows?"

"What can I do for you, Jonathan?"

"You're doing it by being my friend," I said.

"But you've done so much for me."

"That's what friends do," I replied.

"If you need anything, anything at all, you'll ask?"

"I promise I will."

I finished my meal, Violet finished her pie and coffee, and after I walked her home, I drove to Rush-Presbyterian Hospital to spend the night with Keiko.



September 30, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Today is going to be a difficult day at work," I said to Keiko just before Doctor Morrison was due for morning rounds.

"I know you can handle it, Jonathan and Mr. Spurgeon obviously does, or he wouldn't have assigned it to you."

"Oh, I know," I agreed. "But telling people they're losing their jobs is not something I ever envisioned doing."

"But when you run your own company someday, it's very possible you'll need to do those things. This is very good practice."

"That doesn't mean I have to like it."

"No, of course not, but you did say it was about doing what's best for the company."

"I did."

"Then go be the successful man I love and handle it!"

I smiled, "Is this where I say 'Yes, Dear' like a henpecked husband?"

"No!" Keiko replied with a smile of her own. "Because you know you aren't!"

I smirked, "I like being pecked by YOU!"

Keiko laughed, "Uh-huh. Like one of those birds that dips its beak in water and goes up and down and up and down?"

"I was thinking kisses, but I won't deny I like what you suggested!"

"Well, kiss me and go to work!"

I lowered my mask, kissed her, then left her room so I could head to the Hancock Center. There wasn't anything major going on in the world, though my daily analysis of the Philippine economy pushed my indicator into the red, meaning a devaluation or interest rate hike was very likely in the next two weeks.

Their third-quarter balance of payments numbers were projected to be north of \$700 million in outflow, which meant their foreign currency reserves were being depleted at an alarming rate. I was also seeing signs of capital flight, and word on the street was that the IMF had insisted on austerity measures before additional drawing rights would be approved.

The Marcos government was, in non-technical terms, screwed. I didn't write that in my report; instead, writing that they had their backs against the wall and had limited options, and devaluation was the most likely. My November put options would pay off handsomely, probably around 20%. I wasn't surprised when Mr. Matheson called me in to discuss it.

"How sure are you on the two weeks?" he asked.

"I am not uncertain," I replied.

"Then I'm going all-in," he said. "If you're right, I can make 10% on a very short-term move. You're standing pat?"

"I am," I replied. "I'm not in a position to make any moves other than the put options I've already sold. But even so, I'm looking at a total fund return north of 25%, possibly as high as 30%."

"Fuck you, Kane!" Mr. Matheson said with a huge grin on his face. "Now I have to find a way to beat your return. Can't have a snot-nosed kid showing me up!"

"Your return on the trading portfolio is in that range; it's the currency management side that's dragging you down. Why is that counted in overall performance? It's not even remotely the same thing!"

"You know that. I know that. And yet, that's how Noel Spurgeon analyzes the FX desk -- total return on AUM. If you think about it, you'll figure out why."

I thought for a few seconds, then nodded.

"To prevent you from gaming the system by dumping your less profitable trades into the currency management portfolio."

"Bingo. You'll have the same thing with the trust fund money lumped together with the Cincinnatus Fund. You haven't made as much on that money because of the asset restrictions. Sure, your fund will be in the range you gave, but what's the return on the Lundgren trust?"

"Around 20%," I replied. "That fund is about five percent of my current assets under management, so it's not as bad as the overall FX desk situation where more than a quarter of our AUM is currency management accounts where we mostly collect trading commissions and management fees. That said, that income pays the bills and lets us retain more carried interest in the main FX fund."

"All true; you understand how it works. Is everything set for today?"

"Yes. My first meeting is at 1:00pm, then every fifteen minutes after that. That will take until around 3:00pm, and I have an analyst meeting scheduled at 3:30pm."

"Any reservations?"

"No, I'm completely confident in my choices for the team. If I was at all unsure, I'd have had further meetings."

"How is your wife?"

"It's tough, but we're still planning our ceremony on the 8th. We hope you'll be there."

"My wife and I will be there, and Noel told me he'll be there as well, though I don't know if he's bringing Valerie or not."

"I really appreciate you both being there. If you'll excuse me..."

"Dismissed, Kane. Keep up the good work."

"I will."

I left and returned to my desk. I spent the rest of the morning reviewing global currencies and spent some time with Bianca on improving our model for the financial stability of countries. I left the office at 11:30am to visit Keiko, grabbing a sub from a deli near the Hancock Center before driving to the hospital. I spent about thirty minutes with her, then returned to Spurgeon for the first official tasks of my new role.

"You have two messages," Anna said when I walked into the FX office. "The first one was from Kristy Benton to let you know the delivery had been made."

"Great. Thanks. And the second one?"

"Mr. Enderlee called. He said it was extremely urgent and that you should call him before you did anything else."

I suppressed a sigh because Noel Spurgeon had revealed the names of the individuals who were being laid off to the heads of the desks at noon, and those names included Mark Burton and Keith Fowler, both of whom worked for Enderlee. I wondered if I should discuss it with Mr. Spurgeon or Mr. Matheson, but I decided that I needed to at least hear Enderlee out before doing that. It was also very likely Enderlee had already approached one or both of them.

I checked my watch, and I had thirteen minutes before I was supposed to be in the Personnel office, so I rode the elevator up to 32, going over in my mind what I would say. When the elevator doors opened, the receptionist buzzed me in, and I walked to Vickie's desk. I let her know Mr. Enderlee had asked to see me, and she instructed me to go right in, which I did, closing the door behind me.

"What the fuck, Kane?!" he growled.

"I analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of all the analysts and built the strongest team," I said.

"Bullshit! Fowler and Burton do a good job! You need to reconsider."

"I analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of all the analysts and built the strongest team," I repeated.

"Don't give me that bullshit canned line."

"Mr. Spurgeon approved my analysis of the analysts and approved the composition of the strongest possible team. I don't know what he will say if you appeal my decision."

"He told me he'd back your decision. Change it."

I shook my head, "I can't do that. I analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of all the analysts and built the strongest team."

"You don't want me as an enemy, Kane!"

"This is business, not personal. Please take it up with Noel Spurgeon."

"You little shit! You're dead! You're fucking dead!"

"Is there anything else?" I asked.

"GET! THE! FUCK! OUT!"

I was tempted to say 'Have a nice day', but decided that twisting the knife was a very bad move, so I simply left without another word. As I made my way to 30, I contemplated if I should say anything and decided that it was better to leave the next move to Enderlee. That approach followed the maxim I'd read in the Spurgeon trading guide -- 'when the enemy is making a false movement we must take good care not to interrupt him'.

I also felt it important to remember something Sun Tzu had written in *The Art of War*.

There are five dangerous faults which may affect a general: (1) Recklessness, which leads to destruction; (2) cowardice, which leads to capture; (3) a hasty temper,

which can be provoked by insults; (4) a delicacy of honor which is sensitive to shame; (5) over-solicitude for his men, which exposes him to worry and trouble.

I needed to avoid those faults at all costs, lest I find myself in a losing position.

I made my way to the Personnel office, and as was the norm, Mrs. Peterson and I sat down in her office. At 12:57pm, Leslie called Mark Burton and asked him to come to the Personnel office.

Everyone knew what a call on Friday afternoon meant, so I wasn't surprised that he looked angry when he came into the room. I wondered if Enderlee had tipped him off, but in the end, that was irrelevant.

"Good afternoon, Mark," I said. "Spurgeon Capital is changing the composition of the Research Department to match business needs, and your position has been eliminated."

"Eat shit, Kane!" he growled.

"Mr. Burton," Mrs. Peterson said, "please maintain a professional attitude in this office. Leslie is in Meeting Room 2, next door, and has your severance information. You'll be asked to sign a release and, in exchange, will receive four months' pay. You'll need to turn over any Spurgeon material to her or indicate it's on or in your desk. Let me take you to her."

Burton glared at me but got up and followed Mrs. Peterson to the small meeting room next door where Leslie was waiting, then returned to her office, closing the door behind him.

"People often get very emotional," Mrs. Peterson said.

"Mr. Enderlee gave me an earful right before I came to your office."

"Mr. Spurgeon had to advise them before the layoffs, so they weren't surprised."

"I understand."

"How did you handle it?"

"I simply stated that I had analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of all the analysts and built the strongest team. I made the point that Mr. Spurgeon had approved the plan. Enderlee berated me, and I simply repeated what I'd said and suggested he take it up with Noel Spurgeon. My assumption is he'd already done that, and Mr. Spurgeon said it was up to me. Mr. Enderlee used invective, not logic, so no change was warranted."

Mrs. Peterson made a face and slightly rolled her eyes, I was sure at my avoidance of using the language Enderlee had used, though it could also be about Enderlee in general.

"Most people won't stand up to him," she said. "He's a bully and gets away with it because people cower."

"The day Noel Spurgeon cowers is the day the firm closes down," I said. "He would never recover."

"I'd say that's right. What threats did Mr. Enderlee make?"

I smiled, "Nothing specific, and frankly, I like my odds head-to-head against him at the moment."

Mrs. Peterson laughed softly, "I agree -- at the moment."

"I remember everything you've said."

"Good. Let me make the next call."

The remaining analysts who were being laid off -- Keith Fowler, Jake Anderson, Jim Kowalski, Lee Dodge, Rob Levinson, and Frank Birch, were all resigned to their fate, and none of them seemed as upset as Mark Burton. I wondered, when we finished, if Mark Burton had any idea that Noel Spurgeon wanted him gone. And that made me wonder if Enderlee knew that tidbit.

At 3:25pm, Bianca, Tony, Joel, and I left 29 and headed for the conference room on 31 for the analyst meeting.

"Good afternoon," I said. "As you're all undoubtedly aware, some personnel changes were made today. We made those changes to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and ensure we have a strong team going forward. With two exceptions, each of you has responsibility for the same asset class as before. The two who do not are Tony Kirov, who will be Assistant Head of Research, and Scott Moreland, who will be responsible for FX. And, of course, Bianca Pérez will continue in her role, and we'll be hiring a second data analyst.

"The other teams are as follows -- Fixed Income: Joel Stein and Mark Sinclair; Equities: John Peters and Bill Young; Commodities: Steve Mansour and Ken Parker. On Monday, Joel will move to the desk next to Mark, John will move next to Bill, Ken will move next to Steve, and Scott will move to the vacant desk in FX. This is temporary, of course, until the space on 29 is built out.

"Each team should work out the best division of labor for creating their unified report, which will be distributed to all desks. If there is a divergence of opinions, I want to see both in the report, with justification for each. The desks will have to decide which to follow. The last thing I want is to lose the diversity of opinion we have, as none of us can be right a hundred percent of the time.

"Tony will act in my stead when I'm out of the office for any reason. He'll be responsible for any special requests from the desks. This will be outlined in a memo going out on Monday, so if you receive research requests from the desks, please forward them to him, and he'll determine priorities. In addition, I'm going to ask him to develop a thorough computer industry analysis, though from a technology view, not a financial or investment view. We need to know what technology is coming down the pike. Are there any questions?"

I looked around the room, and nobody said anything nor made any signal, so I thanked them and said I'd see them at our weekly analyst meeting on Monday afternoon at 2:00pm. Everyone filed out of the conference room and headed back to their desks. When we reached 29, there was a message for Tony to visit the Personnel office, and I assured him there wasn't a problem.

He returned ten minutes later, all smiles, and asked to speak privately, so we went into the conference room.

"Thanks for trusting me with the new role," he said. "And while I can't disclose anything, I have to thank you for the salary bump as well."

"That's all on Noel Spurgeon," I said.

"Oh, I know, but without the new role, it wouldn't have happened. Can I buy you a beer after work?"

"I hope you'll allow me a raincheck," I replied. "I have to get Keiko from the hospital."

"That absolutely has to take priority. Thanks again."

"You're welcome."

We shook hands, and I returned to my desk, only to have Julie call to say Noel Spurgeon wanted to see me. I acknowledged her request, then headed upstairs and was sent right into Mr. Spurgeon's office.

"Enderlee just tore into me," he said without any preamble. "Whatever you said really pissed him off."

I shrugged, "I simply said that I had analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of all the analysts and built the strongest team. I made the point that you had approved the plan. When he pressed, I repeated what I'd said and suggested he speak to you."

"You stared him down?"

"I stood my ground," I replied. "There was no point in arguing with him because he was acting emotionally and out of anger. Had he presented a logical argument, I would have entertained it. I'm not saying I would have changed my mind, but I would have given him a fair hearing. That's how you and Mr. Matheson operate, and you two are who I seek to emulate. May I say something completely out of line?"

"NOW, you ask?" Mr. Spurgeon replied with a wry smile. "What?"

"If there is disturbance in the camp, the general's authority is weak."

"Nice countermove, Kane! He insisted I fire you, and you turn around and say I should fire him!"

"You could draw that inference from what I said, but you could also achieve the same thing by quashing the dissent in some other way."

"You know his numbers as well as anyone. He's the low man on the league table this year. And I'm sure you remembered that when you heard my suggestion and when you went to his office."

"That did cross my mind, yes. Positive dissent is good; negative dissent is a recipe for trouble."

"You've paid attention to everything since the first day you arrived here."

"I had one shot, and I wasn't about to blow it."

"You haven't. Keep up the good work, and don't let Enderlee bother you."

I grinned, "I didn't, and I won't. That would give him power over me. I felt the safest course of action was to listen to him rant, then just do what I'd already planned to do."

"God damn, Kane! You're a cool customer."

"As I said, I'm watching you and Mr. Matheson and handling things the way I think you would handle them. And while that is generally true, I'm not following slavishly."

"Nor should you. If you were a clone of either of us, I wouldn't need you. Are you and your wife going to be able to take a trip to Saint Martin?"

"She's not healthy enough for that."

"When she is, let me know, and we'll get you there."

"Thank you."

"Have a good weekend, Kane."

"You too, Mr. Spurgeon."

I left his office and returned to my desk to finish the day. Right at 5:00pm, I left the office and drove to the hospital so I could bring Keiko home. Doctor Morrison was in her room when I walked in. He greeted me, I greeted Keiko, and then he and I stepped into the corridor.

"I can't talk you out of this?" he asked.

"It's what Keiko wants," I said.

"She'll listen to you," he countered.

"Yes, she will, but I can't think of anything more personal than the decision she's making, and honestly, I can't argue with it except emotionally, and that's not fair to her. Nothing has changed since we last spoke, has it?"

"No. Keiko has all the signs of an infection, but none of the tests identified anything specific. If it's viral, all we can do is palliative care; if it's bacterial, whatever it is, it's resisting the antibiotics."

"You just answered your own objection," I said. "What can you do here that can't be done at home?"

"Honestly? Not much. If she's going to beat the infection, it's her body that's going to do it."

"And what are the chances of that?"

"I can't give you odds because there are no odds to give. This is the territory the average person says calls for a miracle, and you don't believe in miracles."

"Neither do you, Doc, or you wouldn't be a doctor. You rely on science and technology and the hard-won results of extensive research, and centuries of practical experience.

"Your logic is impeccable, even if I wish you'd reconsider."

"Will you answer a question man-to-man and completely off the record?"

Doctor Morrison smiled, "Yes, you're doing the right thing."

"I will *never* repeat that to anyone except Keiko. Let's have her sign the forms, and I'll take her home."

"I assumed I wouldn't be able to talk you out of it, so I prepared all the paperwork, including care instructions for you, as well as for the nursing service. I'll continue to serve as Keiko's Attending physician, so the nurses will be able to call me to discuss any changes in her condition and to confirm any changes to her care. That will include the necessary pain medication, if and when that time comes."

"Thank you. We both appreciate everything you've done."

"You're welcome. I wish I could have done more."

"Did you leave any stone unturned or any step undone?"

"No."

"Then you've fulfilled your role as a physician."

"Keiko is very lucky to have you," Doctor Morrison said.

"And I'm even luckier to have her. Shall we have her sign the papers?"

"Yes," he agreed, and we went back into the room.

XV. Difficult Discussions

September 30, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Jonathan Kane," I said to the nurse, who I guessed was about my mom's age and who was waiting at the house when Keiko and I arrived on Friday evening. "And this is Keiko."

"Hi, Keiko," the nurse said. "I'm Jennifer, a Registered Nurse. Let's get you settled. Did you bring the paperwork from Doctor Morrison?"

I handed her a manila envelope with his written instructions and pages for whatever chart the nurse would keep at the house. We went to the Japanese room, where I saw the bed that had been delivered, along with a portable IV stand and a monitor similar to the one at the hospital. Keiko and I sat in one of the Mamasan chairs while Jennifer reviewed the paperwork.

"You have the antibiotics?" she asked.

"Yes. In the Styrofoam cooler."

"We'll use one and put the other four in the refrigerator. That will be the full course. Keiko, you had a transfusion today, and the antibiotics, plus acetaminophen as an antipyretic?"

"Yes," Keiko replied.

"May I ask about that last term?" I inquired.

"It means the drug controls a fever," Jennifer replied.

"Thanks."

"Keiko, the doctor's orders do not require you to stay in bed, but you need to minimize your exertion. He didn't write anything about masks."

"We have both a whole-house and room UV and electrostatic air purifiers," I said.

"OK. Just limit your interactions, and if anyone has even a cough or a slightly runny nose, they should wear a mask around you. For now, you're mobile enough to not need a catheter; just be careful going to and from the bathroom while you have your IV. No baths or showers until Tuesday, after you've had the full course. Jonathan, let me show you how to use and read the monitor."

"OK."

"Every hour, you clip this plastic unit on one of Keiko's fingers, preferably index or middle, then turn on the power. You'll see three numbers displayed - pulse, temperature, and oxygen level, or pulse ox. Write down the numbers on the chart. There's a card on the machine with guidance of when to call us or, if necessary, the paramedics, though I understand Keiko has refused hospitalization."

"She has."

"OK. Then just call us if her temperature goes about 102°F, her pulse is over 110 for more than brief periods, or her oxygen level is below 90% while she's awake. Doctor Morrison's orders already include oxygen by nasal cannula, so I'll show you what to do to put that on, which you should do before you place the call. I'll check Keiko's blood pressure each day on my visit. Let me show you how to use the oxygen."

"Let me call two of my housemates to watch as well," I said.

I went to get Bianca and Kristy, and they joined us in the Japanese room so they could see how to administer oxygen to Keiko if it became necessary.

"The last thing I have in my notes is that you're having a wedding ceremony a week from tomorrow?"

"Yes," Keiko said.

"I strongly recommend you have someone from Horizon Hospice in attendance. They can dress in regular clothes so it's not obvious, but given the stress of the day, I'd advise it. And you should wear a mask for as much of the ceremony as possible."

"We'll do that," I said. "I assume that with visits seven days a week, we'll see a different nurse two days?"

"Yes. Maria will be your nurse on Saturdays and Sundays. Our usual visit times will be about 1:00pm. Someone will call if we're delayed. For that Saturday at Chicago Botanic Garden, another nurse will be assigned because it's for several hours. Will someone be with Keiko all the time?"

"My grandmother will be here during the day," she said.

"OK. Then I think we have everything in order. Maria will see you tomorrow and will change the IV bag. Keiko, if you need to use the restroom or want to change, do that now, and I'll hook up your IV."

Fifteen minutes later, Nurse Jennifer had left, and Keiko and I were sitting together in a Papasan chair with her IV on the portable stand.

"Promise you won't call the paramedics or let them take me to the hospital," she said.

"I promise, Keiko-chan."

"And when the time comes, you'll hold me?"

"Yes," I replied with a very heavy heart.

We sat together until dinner was ready, then we ate with Bianca and Juliette. I helped them clean up, then they left, leaving Keiko and me alone for the evening.

"There is something I want to do," Keiko said.

"What's that?"

"On Saturday night, we sleep in our bed and make love."

"Whatever you want, Keiko-chan. I love you."

"I love you, too, Jonathan."



October 1, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

The contractor arrived at 8:00am as Marcus had promised, and introduced himself as Bob Woods, a retired firefighter. I explained what I wanted, then showed him the bathroom and the basement.

"This is really straightforward," he said. "The drain will connect to the same branch line that the toilet and sink connect to. The water feed can come off the same feeds as the sink. You'll need a new sink, of course, given the current one

has a wooden cabinet as its base. I can do all the work, and I'd have two days -- one to do the plumbing work and install the sink and shower. The second would be for the tile and grout. It would need to set for forty-eight hours after I finish."

"That sounds right. I'd want you to provide all the materials.

"I can do that; I'll get them at Handy Andy and simply charge you what I pay for them, plus my hourly rate. What color tile?"

I thought about it for a moment.

"For the floor, black and white checkerboard. For the walls, black."

"White sink?"

"Yes. What about the light fixture?"

"I recommend you replace the old combination fan and light fixture now, given it appears to be at least twenty years old. I'll get one that's suitable for a damp environment."

"Sounds good. Anything else?"

He smiled, "I offer a ten percent discount for cash on work that doesn't involve permits."

It was clear he wasn't going to claim it on his income tax, but that was between him and the government.

"I'll pay cash," I said. "When can you start?"

"Tuesday, 6:00am."

"Write up your estimate, and I'll sign it," I said. "I can give you \$300 now, so you aren't out of pocket too much for materials."

"You don't want to know what it's going to cost before you agree?"

"I believe you'll give me a fair price because the last thing you want would be for me to complain to Marcus Washington at Brown Construction."

"You got that right!" he declared.

He wrote out an estimate, which I felt was fair. I signed it, then peeled six fifties from my money clip and handed them to him.

"OK, maybe I should have priced it a bit higher!" he grinned. "But I'll take referrals."

"I'm buying a pair of two-flats," I said. "If the work is as good as I expect it to be, I'll recommend you to the management company I'm using."

"Thanks."

We shook, I showed him out, then went to hang out with Keiko until I had to leave with Bianca for her pre-natal checkup.

"I hate to ask this," Bianca said once we were in my car. "But how long?"

I shrugged, "No clue. It really depends on how her body deals with the infection she has, which the doctors couldn't identify, and how long it takes for her blast count to rise high enough to crowd out the healthy cells. Doctor Morrison refused to speculate, and nothing in my research provided anything other than generalities. Days, weeks, or months, but not years.

"She made me promise not to call the paramedics and not to allow anyone to take her to the hospital. She signed a 'Do Not Resuscitate' order, along with a healthcare power of attorney and a living will. Those aren't strictly necessary because we're married, but the hospital paralegal who she spoke with suggested them in case Keiko's parents try to fight us on her care."

"You're awfully calm, even for you."

"What do you want me to do? Wail and weep and be an emotional wreck? Rage in anger? Deny reality? I need to stay strong for Keiko; as I said, there will be time after..."

"And I'll be here for you in whatever way you need."

"I appreciate it. Violet effectively made the same promise."

Bianca smirked, "I bet not!"

"OK, yes, of course, but I don't think that's a solution to being depressed."

"No, of course not, but I had to make the joke. And I promise I will NOT try to take advantage of your emotional state, but you have to promise you'll see a counselor at the appropriate time."

I considered what she said and nodded.

"I will," I said.

"Not to be insensitive, but what does she want in the way of a ceremony?"

"A Buddhist funeral. The saying is that Japanese are 'born Shinto but die Buddhist' because Shinto has an aversion to physical contact with the deceased. If I understand correctly, the ceremony would be at the Buddhist temple, and then she'd be cremated. An urn with her ashes would go in the Japanese room for forty-nine days, then it will be buried in the family crypt at Montrose Cemetery. There are more details, but Keiko didn't actually know all of them. I'll discuss it with Ichirō-san and the Buddhist priest when the time comes.

"I know I can ask you this -- what do people wear?"

"Men wear black suits, and women wear black dresses or kimono. Keiko will wear her white wedding kimono."

"You may not have thought about it, or maybe you have, but you?"

"I have no idea. For right now, if something were to happen to me, I'd want to be buried next to Keiko, which I'm sure her family would permit. I'd count on you to make that happen."

"Cremation?"

"I think that's required because the plot they have is designed for the interment of urns with ashes."

"Do you want a ceremony of any kind?"

"Throw the biggest fucking party you can imagine!" I declared.

"Seriously?"

"Seriously. The last thing I want is everyone moping around! Get drunk and party!"

"Your mom might object."

"So, have the party with my close friends. And if you want to do a memorial service of some kind, that's fine; just promise you won't let any clergyman come anywhere near me."

"That I can absolutely promise! I take it we agree we're not christening our baby?"

"To what end? It's not even an effective bath!"

"I agree, but I wanted to make sure. I wouldn't object to baptism, but I'm not going to suggest it unless it was something you wanted, which I know you don't. But I had to ask."

"And I appreciate it."

"Circumcision?"

"Someone convinced my mom that it was 'normal' and necessary for health and cleanliness. Given I wouldn't willingly allow someone to chop off part of my dick, I can't imagine agreeing to do that to my kid."

"I agree. On the topic of the baby, I think we'll need to start looking for a nanny or whatever you want to call it in March so I can go back to work in May. Well, assuming the little tyke is born mid-April. According to Violet, the daycare where she used to work will accept one-year-olds if we want to go that route."

"Between the two of us, we can easily afford a nanny," I said. "The only concern would be if they were sick or on vacation or whatever."

"There are services that supply nannies, similar to the nursing service, where you have a regular person during the week, and they provide a backup for sick days or whatever."

"OK. I'll leave that to you to arrange."

"You'll want a veto, right?"

"I think anyone you approve will be fine."

"You know, we never talked about parenting style."

"I have zero experience with either being a dad or having a dad, so I'm going to have to make it up as I go along."

"I think pretty much everyone does," Bianca observed. "What's the saying? No battle plan survives contact with the enemy?"

"Helmuth von Moltke. Another one of the quotes in Spurgeon's training guide. That's the one I ran up against with KAL 007 because my plan *did* survive."

"I was surprised at how little actually happened because of that."

"To tell you the truth, so was I, but I was positive that the right thing to do was stand pat and hold fire, given we weren't immediately at war. Of course, if we HAD been immediately at war, none of it would have mattered as we'd all have disappeared in a blink of light."

"A scary thought."

"In that conflict, those killed immediately would be the lucky ones."

"For sure."

I pulled into the parking lot of Loyola Medical Center, and after I parked, Bianca and I went inside. We had to wait about ten minutes for Bianca's name to be called. A nurse took her vitals, weighed her, and drew blood, and about five minutes after that, Doctor Wisniewski came in. She performed a basic exam and pronounced Bianca healthy, pending the results of the blood tests.

"You're scheduled for an ultrasound, which we'll do, but there isn't much to see at this point. Mainly, I'll check for placement of the placenta and good amniotic fluid volume. I can give you a more specific due date based on measurements. Let me tell you what you'll see so you won't be surprised. Your baby's face will be broad, with his or her eyes widely separated and eyelids fused. You might see buds for teeth as well.

"What you won't see is that red blood cells are beginning to form and circulate. Another thing you might or might not see is the initial formation of his or her external genitalia, but it won't be discernible as male or female at this point. At your next ultrasound in about two months, we'll be able to determine if you're having a boy or girl, but it's up to you if you want to know."

"I'll leave that to Bianca to decide," I said.

"Right now, I don't think so," Bianca said.

"You have plenty of time to change your mind, Doctor Wisniewski said.

"How big is the baby?" I asked.

"At this stage of fetal development, about two inches long from the crown of the head to the rump. He or she weighs around a third of an ounce."

"Only seven or eight pounds to go!" Bianca declared.

Doctor Wisniewski performed the ultrasound, and I was awestruck by the life I had helped create which was now growing in Bianca's womb. Doctor Wisniewski took measurements and consulted a chart and a calendar.

"I'm going to give you April 8th as your due date," she said. "That lines up with what you told me about your last period. Just remember, it's an estimate, and a week, either way, is normal, with a slight preference for being 'late', though we won't call you 'late' until April 15th, given the chart I used is about averages. Any questions?"

"No," Bianca said.

"Keep taking your vitamins and folic acid, and avoid alcohol and tobacco. I'll call you if there are any concerns with your blood work, but given what I saw last time, I don't expect any. See you in two months unless you feel a need to see me. If you spot, call and make an appointment to come in."

"Spot?" I asked.

"Drops of blood from the vagina that spot panties or a pad. Mostly, it's benign, that is, not a sign of anything wrong, but we'll want to check."

We thanked her, Bianca got dressed, and we left the room. We stopped at the reception desk so Bianca could make her next appointment for December 11th, which was slightly more than eight weeks, but not a problem, according to the young woman at the reception desk. Once that was done, Bianca and I left to do the weekly grocery shopping and make a stop at the dry cleaner.

When we arrived home, Maria, the weekend nurse, was with Keiko. Maria was a Hispanic woman who looked to be in her mid-twenties. She had replaced Keiko's

IV bag, checked her vitals, and was just about to leave. Keiko introduced me, and then I went to help Bianca put away the groceries. Once that was done, I went up to Deanna's loft studio.

"I need a favor," I said.

"Anything!" she replied.

"On Tuesday and Wednesday, a contractor will be here to remodel the powder room as we discussed. Would you supervise for me?"

"Of course. I'm here all day Tuesday, and Wednesday afternoon."

"OK. I think Keiko can manage on Wednesday morning."

"Do I need to watch the guy work?"

"No. Just check on him occasionally and let him know you're available for questions or whatever. I'll be here on Tuesday morning when he arrives."

"What is being done, exactly?"

"The sink will be replaced, the floor and walls tiled, and a shower and drain installed. He'll also replace the old light fixture."

"Sounds simple enough. How is Keiko?"

"Happy to be home, but otherwise, well, you know."

"Yeah. Can I ask you an unrelated question?"

"Of course. What?"

"Did you arrange to buy any of my paintings?" Deanna asked.

"No. Why?"

"Curiosity. Selling four paintings for at least the reserve price surprised me. And the gallery owner exercised her right to buy one. I received a check today."

"That's awesome. I promise I didn't buy any of them."

"OK. She called today and I agreed to sell her the other two for my minimum."

"Congratulations! Make sure you keep track of the income."

"I will! This is all new to me, but after the article ran in the *Trib*, someone obviously took enough interest that four sold outright."

"Do you know who bought them?"

"No. That's never revealed unless the purchasers do it themselves. Often, what happens is they simply ask the show coördinator or gallery owner when more paintings will be available. In some rare instances, there is direct contact. Well, there's a good chance I met the buyers on Friday; I just didn't know they bought."

"Could I commission something?"

"What?"

"I know it's not your usual style, but a portrait of Keiko; before?"

"You have photos, right?"

"Yes, a few. I believe a few of them are appropriate for a portrait."

"What size?"

"I'll leave that to you, but I plan to hang it in the Japanese room."

"Then I think 11" by 14" would be most appropriate. It won't overwhelm the room."

"Keep it to yourself, if you would."

"I will. Do you have a timeframe?"

"I wish I could tell you," I replied.

"Ah, OK. Let me see what I can do. I won't rush it, but I won't dawdle, either."

"Don't neglect your school work or your creative work."

"The creative work comes in fits and starts. You've seen me in that mode where I'm painting twenty or more hours a day."

"I have."

"How did Bianca's checkup go?"

"Mom and baby are healthy and doing fine. She's due on or about April 8th."

"Cool!"

I left the loft and returned to the Japanese room where Bianca was sitting with Keiko.

"My plan is to go into the office early every day but Tuesday so I can be home by 3:30pm," I said. "Bianca won't need to leave before your grandmother arrives, and Deanna will be here except when she's in class."

"My parents called and are coming to visit tomorrow. I hope that's OK."

"Of course. What are you going to say?"

"Just that I'm on antibiotics for an infection, and Doctor Morrison agreed I could come home. I don't plan to say anything until after next Saturday, as we discussed."

"OK."

"What are you doing about class?" Keiko asked.

"I'll come home, spend some time with you, then when Bianca gets home, I'll go to class. Violet knows I have to skip dinner for the foreseeable future, but we'll still have our time at the diner after class. You're still OK with Bev and Glen coming for dinner today?"

"Yes, of course!"

I spent the afternoon with Keiko, and Bev and Glen arrived with Heather just before 5:00pm. The temperature was unseasonably warm, with the temperature approaching 80°F, and I'd bought steaks and baking potatoes at Dominick's. Bianca had put the potatoes in the oven, and when they had about thirty minutes to go, I fired up the grill, and Glen joined me in the backyard.

"Thanks for accepting my relationship with Bev," he said. "There are quite a few people who don't."

"If Bev is happy, I'm happy, and you shouldn't give a damn what anyone else thinks. Heather needs her dad, and that's you, and I have no room to object. May I ask a question?"

"Sure."

"What was said by the school district?"

"Nothing. I resigned, simply saying it was for personal reasons. The district office confirmed my employment for Lane Tech, and Ohio confirmed my license. I have a temporary license, which is good for two years while I complete the official process, but there are no impediments."

"Besides my mom, who knows?"

"You, obviously, and anyone you might have told. I believe Bev told your mutual friend Violet."

"I believe I told her with Bev's approval," I said. "But six of one, half a dozen of the other. Bianca knows because she knows everything."

"Your confidante?"

"And a key member of my staff."

"Bev tells me you were promoted and run the entire Research Department."

"That's true."

"Impressive for someone who's not even twenty-one!"

"Thanks. Part of it was knowing the right person -- my uncle; part of it was the right place and time; part of it was hard work and determination."

"You certainly didn't apply yourself that way in High School."

"No, I didn't. My priorities then were food, shelter, clothing, and Bev."

"That last one is the one that gave me serious pause when things came to a head."

"And if Bev told you the truth, I abandoned her, and that was all my doing. But, she has Heather, and she wouldn't trade her for anything, and I wouldn't want her to."

"Most guys in your position wouldn't take it that way."

"The flippant response is that I'm not 'most guys'. The real response is I love Bev and want the best for her, even if I treated her like crap towards the end of my Senior year."

"I don't think she sees it that way," Glen countered.

"She did," I said. "And she was right. We're where we are now because I asked her forgiveness, and she gave it. Back to you, how is the teaching gig?"

"It's a very different environment from Goshen, but I enjoy it."

"Good!"

The steaks were done, and I carried them inside, and we called everyone to the table, which included Bianca, Juliette, Deanna, and CeCi, but not Kristy and Jack, who were at her parents' house. After dinner, Bev offered to help with dishes, and when I protested, she countered by saying she wanted to talk.

"Keiko isn't going to recover, is she?" Bev asked quietly.

"What makes you say that?"

"Come on, Jonny! Don't be coy with me."

"No, she's not," I said. "The question remains -- what made you say that?"

"Just little things she said, and the fact that you brought her home and have a hospital bed. Do you remember Emily Burke?"

"The girl who died of cancer when you were a Freshman?"

"Yes. She had a setup like that when her parents brought her home because she didn't want to spend her last days in the hospital."

"Officially, she's home because she can continue the antibiotics here and doesn't need to stay in the hospital. That's the story until after next Saturday."

"I wondered. You're still going through with that?"

"Yes. We both want to, and it's the right thing to do."

"I agree. How are you?"

"Unhappy, resigned, and wishing I had a way off the path."

"You're strong, Jonny; you always were. Even when things went badly between us, you were strong. I'm not comparing the two, but you know what I mean."

"I do."

"Even strong people need help."

"You're not the first person to say that to me, and when the time is right, I'll speak to someone."

"Good. You know I have a friendly ear; I always have."

"I don't think that was the friendly part in the barn!" I grinned.

"You are SO bad!" Bev said with a laugh. "And again, you know what I meant."

"I do, of course."

We finished the dishes, then went to join the others in the great room.



October 2, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday, after lunch, Bianca, CeCi, and I prepared tea and cookies, and then Jack and I moved the hospital bed to the back hallway. That gave us more room in the Japanese room to entertain Keiko's parents, Itsurō and Hanako, who arrived at 1:00pm.

"You have an IV?" Itsurō asked Keiko when I showed him to the Japanese room.

"Yes, «お父さん» (*Otōsan*); it's antibiotics to help fight infections which are common with chemotherapy." ("Father")

"What has the doctor said?" he asked.

"He gave permission for me to come home rather than stay in the hospital. I have a nurse who comes to check on me every day, and of course, 祖母 (*Sobo*) will be here weekdays." ("Grandmother")

"Is it safe for you to be out of the hospital?" Hanako asked.

"Yes," Keiko replied. "The house has special air cleaners to ensure it's safe. In fact, it's actually safer than the hospital, which is full of sick people!"

I almost laughed, but managed not to, because Keiko was exactly right. Just then, Bianca came to the door with the tray that had the teapot on a warmer and plates of cookies. Keiko poured tea for her parents, then me, then herself. She'd been adamant that she needed to do it as a hostess, and not doing so would make her parents suspicious.

"Jonathan received a promotion and more responsibility at work," Keiko said, hoping, I was sure, to change the subject.

"What is your new role?" Itsurō asked.

"Head of the Research Department, with eleven researchers reporting to me."

"Congratulations! I am pleased to have a successful son-in-law!"

"Thank you."

"Speaking of that, will Keiko be healthy enough for next Saturday?"

"Yes. Her IV antibiotics will be finished on Tuesday, and she had a transfusion to replace her red blood cells. She's tired, but not as bad as following the previous rounds of chemo."

"That seems like a good sign," Hanako said.

"What's more important are the blood test results," Keiko said. "Because of the treatment, I have to wait two weeks to know what they say."

Which was technically accurate, as Nurse Jennifer would draw blood for a complete set of tests on the Monday following the wedding ceremony at Chicago Botanic Garden.

Fortunately, the conversation turned back to work and other topics, and about two hours after they'd arrived, Keiko's parents left. Jack and I moved the bed back to the Japanese room, then Keiko and I spent the rest of the afternoon together.



October 3, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Monday was the first day of operation of the newly configured team. Because I had arrived early, I finished the FX report before any of the other analysts arrived, something I would continue to do for a week while Scott came up to speed. Finishing early allowed me to visit with each of the other teams to ensure they were working in pairs on their reports and had them distributed in time.

Of course, that was the one thing I'd failed to take into account, as historically, analysts had simply handed their reports to the head of their desk. I went to talk to Jack, as Mailroom Supervisor, about a solution.

"There's no way to distribute them electronically, is there?" he asked.

"As if the Suits would read them on their screens?" I asked. "Good luck with that!"

"Yeah, I figured," Jack said. "What is the process?"

"Right now, we're distributing five reports," I said. "Once we work out the format for the consolidated report, there will be just one longer report."

"We can make the copies and distribute them. It has to be before the opening bell in New York, right?"

"Yes."

"OK. I'll assign it to Naomi. What time should she collect them?"

"7:45am will work, I think. She should be able to have them to each desk head by 8:05am."

"That works"

"Thanks, Jack."

We shook hands, and I headed back to 29, where I discussed the challenge with Tony and Bianca.

"Why not send them to the secretaries or assistants and have them print them?" Bianca asked. "Everyone else writes their reports on the mainframe; you're the only one who writes his on a PC. I can work with Phil to get that set up, then Naomi only needs to copy and distribute your 'State of the World' analysis."

"That'll work," Tony confirmed. "Bianca, is there any way to connect the IBM PCs together?"

"It's possible," she said. "There's a combination hardware and software system called *NetWare* from a company named Novell. I suspect it'll be expensive, but I'll

look into it. The value would be that we could share spreadsheets between us without having to carry floppy disks around, and we could easily see each other's work."

"Look into it, please," I said. "And Tony, this seems like a good place to start your analysis. Connecting different makes and models of computers is going to be a big thing, I suspect."

"I'm positive it will be," he agreed.

"On that note," Bianca said, "Phil had a conversation with the pre-sales engineer from Sun, and he'll support a request."

"Then get the formal quote, write up the justification, I'll sign it, and forward it to Mr. Matheson for approval. I'm positive it'll land on Mr. Spurgeon's desk, but we have to follow protocol. And now we all have stuff to do!"

For me, my next task was to speak with Steve Markman from Pencom Systems, the recruiting company who would help us find another data analyst. I called his office in Brooklyn and was put through by his secretary. He confirmed he'd received the job description and salary range, and we discussed the new team and the work environment at Spurgeon. We spent about twenty minutes on the phone before he said he had a very good feel for what we were looking for and promised to present candidates within a week. I thanked him, then spent the rest of the morning with Scott.

Bianca and I had lunch together as usual, then went to the gym for our workout. After lunch, I worked until it was time for the weekly research meeting I had scheduled. We discussed the challenges presented by the new organization and how best to address them. There was complete agreement that the best approach was to have the secretaries print out the reports, and I promised to get that approved.

I had enough time after the meeting to discuss that with Mr. Matheson, who agreed and promised to speak to Mr. Spurgeon about it. I returned to my desk and reviewed the analyst reports from that morning before heading home at 3:00pm to relieve Keiko's grandmother.

"How are you doing?" I asked after Atsuko left.

"I feel about the same," Keiko replied. "Jennifer said my fever was down half a degree, and my pulse and blood oxygen were good each time we checked."

"That's good. Maybe the antibiotics and your body are finally beating down the infection."

"Maybe. It's one day, so we'll see. How as your first day as Head of Research?"

"A few hiccups, but nothing major. One thing I failed to think through properly is how to distribute the reports. In the past, we'd simply printed them and handed them to the head of our desk or simply left them in his 'In' box. That won't work for a dozen desks. Tony, Bianca, and I discussed solutions, and we came up with one that will work in the short term while we explore the long-term solution."

"Will that cause you any problems?"

"No. We had to scramble a bit this morning, but we'll be OK tomorrow with the short term solution."

"Good!"

"I'm going to change, and I'll be back down shortly."



October 4, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Tuesday, Bob Woods arrived as agreed, and after a brief conversation, which included Deanna, I headed to the office. The morning was busy, and at 11:15am, I left my desk to head to Maxim's to meet with Mark Ness, the trustee whom I'd spoken to the previous week. We easily recognized each other based on our mutual descriptions and headed to the basement for the more casual experience.

"Pete Mueller had very good things to say about you," Mark said as soon as the waitress had taken our drink orders. "He didn't mention how young you were!"

"It's true I'm the youngest fund manager at Spurgeon Capital and also the youngest person ever to earn both a Series 3 and a Series 7 license, but I'm very good at what I do, and I have the best possible mentors in Noel Spurgeon and Murray Matheson. I have about \$70 million currently under management and am in the process of bringing on other clients. That \$70 million was brought in or earned over the last year."

"My concern would be your track record," Mark said.

"And while it's limited, I was responsible for the single largest profit on a trade in Spurgeon history."

"Mind if I ask?"

"A currency trade," I replied. "So far this year, I've predicted, and profited from, the devaluation of the Bolivar, the Zaire, and other currencies. I've also made significant profits from gold and silver trades, and my stock portfolio is up nearly 22%, beating the market year to date. I can provide you with a list of my trades over the past two years, and You'll see I'm very good at what I do."

"You're managing Jeri Lundgren's trust, right?"

"Yes. Also union pension funds, and retirement funds for a major law firm, and so on."

"Was your old man a broker?"

I shook my head, "Greeting card salesman in the early 60s. He died before I was born. I don't believe my mom even had a chance to tell him she was pregnant."

"Rough. How'd you end up at Spurgeon?"

"My uncle knows Noel Spurgeon and got me into Spurgeon in an entry-level position. I worked my way up from there to Head of Research, and, as I said, I hold two securities licenses. I'll start working on my third license next year, which will let me manage other licensed professionals. Mind if I ask where you went to law school?"

"Kent, here in Chicago. I worked as an associate for a firm that was run by my grandfather's best friend, then hung out my own shingle. I practice in pretty much anything to do with finances, from bankruptcy to trusteeships to conservatorships to estate planning and tax law. In addition to my JD, I have an MBA, and I'm a licensed CPA."

"Do you have other lawyers in your firm?"

"Two associates."

We were interrupted by the waitress who took our food orders.

"I take it you deal with high net worth individuals," I said.

"I do."

"I'm sure we can work out a referral fee if you send them my way. I know that can't happen with the trusts, given your responsibility as trustee, but other referrals can be compensated. We'd just need to sign an agreement to keep it kosher with the SEC."

"You're aggressive," Mark noted. "I like that. The question is, are you too aggressive?"

"I think the answer to that is that I am aggressive, but I'm smart about it and use options contracts to limit my downside and protect against big losses. That concedes a few percent on the upside for insurance, as it were. If you trust me with your clients' money, I will not let you down, and my trading books will be open to you at any and all times, though I'd need a confidentiality agreement."

"I'd be shocked if that weren't the case. What's the minimum buy-in?"

"\$100,000, with a one-year lockup; our fees are standard 'two and twenty'. Are you familiar with that system?"

"Yes. What's the hurdle?"

"8%. Are there restrictions on asset classes or types of investments?"

"Only those I set. You trade your own money, too, right?"

"Yes, though only a tiny percentage of that \$70 million is mine so far. But all of my investments, except for two properties I'm buying, are in my fund or the main Spurgeon fund. I'm required to invest in the main Spurgeon Fund, as are all employees. We all have skin in the game, from guys in the mailroom to Mr. Spurgeon."

"What do we need to do?" he asked.

I opened my satchel, extracted a folder, and handed it to him.

"These are the application and disclosure documents. You'll need one for each trust. Return them to me with a copy of the trust documents, and I'll start the process. Legal and Compliance will review, then the onboarding team will take over. The entire process can be completed in ten business days, plus however long it takes your current investment firm to execute the transfer."

He accepted the folder and put it in his briefcase just as the waitress brought our food.

XVI. «神前結婚» (Shinzen Kekkon) Marriage Before the Kami

October 4, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

When I arrived home on Tuesday, I checked the remodeling first, as I had to walk past the bathroom when I entered the house. The plumbing was done, and some kind of spackle or paste had been spread on the floor. The wallpaper had been stripped, and the walls sanded. From my perspective, all that was left was the tile and the ceiling fixture. Happy with the progress, I went to the Japanese room to greet Keiko and Atsuko. I thanked Atsuko for her help, and she bade us 'goodbye'. I kissed Keiko, went upstairs to change, then returned to the Japanese room.

"How are you today?" I asked Keiko.

"Same as yesterday," she replied. "How was your day?"

"I met with an attorney who is also a CPA who manages several trusts. It's very likely I'll bring them on board, which will take my AUM to about \$100 million."

"Halfway to what you need; well, assuming they would all follow you."

"I think they would, but again, right now, and for the foreseeable future, I'm right where I need to be. I have a lot to learn, and I think, over time, things will improve in the areas where I have concerns. But, yes, that is a significant milestone."

"That means our net worth is over a million, right?"

"It's close," I replied. "But remember, the total tax rate if I were to take out the retained interest would be around 40%, so that number is somewhat misleading. Our income for this year will be around \$180,000 after taxes."

"Unbelievable!"

"Remember, Mr. Matheson makes more than ten times that! And he gets a taste of everything I bring in because my fund is technically run through his desk. And, of course, Noel Spurgeon gets his cut, too, which is bigger than mine, but he pays all corporate expenses from his share."

"So if you ran your own company, you'd keep a lot more."

"Yes, *but*, a good chunk of the new business I'm bringing on board wouldn't come to me, if it were just me. I don't have the reputation or credibility. Right now, I use Noel Spurgeon's reputation and credibility to boost mine. I'll very likely need to do that for some time. Eventually, I'll have the rep and cred, but by then, I'll be earning a million bucks a year without having to worry about running a firm."

"I know you'll do it," Keiko said quietly. "I just wish I'd be here to see it."

"I know the situation is dire, but it's not hopeless," I replied.

"It's OK to tell the truth, Jonathan," Keiko replied.

"I am," I said. "I know that a number of things would have to align and that odds are against us, but they are not zero, not yet. I want every day possible with you, but I will keep all the promises I made."

"Thank you," she said softly, with a nod.

Bianca arrived home, I ate some leftovers, then headed to class. After class, I met Violet, and we walked to the diner.

"Keiko is home now, right?" Violet asked.

"Yes."

"How is she?"

"I think all I can say is that she's happier to be at home than she was in the hospital."

"And everything is still set for Saturday?"

"Yes. My mom is driving up on Friday after school. Is it still OK for her to stay with you?"

"Yes, of course! She doesn't know, does she?"

"No. The only people we've told are you and Bianca. We want to get through Saturday and not ruin the day for everyone. Doctor Morrison gave Keiko a transfusion, so she's feeling better, and her fever dropped a bit."

"Is there any chance she could make it?"

"I think until her last breath, there's a chance, it's just a very small one. If she beats the infection and doesn't develop a new one, and they find a compatible donor, and she's healthy enough for the chemo and radiation necessary to complete the transfusion, then, yes, she could make it. But the odds are very long."

"I'm so sorry."

"Me, too. But I haven't given up, and I'm encouraging Keiko not to give up until there is literally no hope."

"How are you doing?"

"As I said to Bianca, I need to be strong for Keiko, but I also know I'll need someone to help me through this when the time comes."

"You should speak to Nancy Jane Moore, my counselor. You liked her, and she's really helped me."

"When the time comes, I'll worry about that. Right now, I have to focus on Keiko."

"I understand."

Violet slipped her hand into mine for the rest of the walk to the diner. It was comforting, and I knew I could count on her for support when the time came. It would be a reversal of our roles, but one that seemed fitting for our relationship.



October 5, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Wednesday, I went in early as planned and was happy to find that Mark Ness had sent the application materials via courier at the end of Tuesday. I set them aside to work on my daily report, and once it was complete, I took the documents to Compliance for vetting, then returned to my desk.

I reviewed the daily reports from the other analysts, making notes about style and format, as I wanted to eventually have every report in the same basic format

and style. Once I'd done that, I sat with Scott to review my daily FX report, and when we had finished, I was comfortable that he'd be able to write Thursday's report. We agreed he'd come in early to work on it so we could review it together before it was sent to the desks.

Just after 10:00am, Mr. Matheson called me into his office and had me shut the door.

"Enderlee blew his stack about his secretary having to print out the analyst reports."

"Of course he did," I said. "I mean, it takes a whole five minutes to select the documents on the screen, press the correct set of keys, and then get them from the printer. He could lose MILLIONS during those minutes! And it's not his secretary's job! And I should be fired for even suggesting it!"

Mr. Matheson laughed, "Pretty much spot on. But don't worry about it. I believe he's dug his own grave."

"How so?"

"He put in orders for a huge position opposite you on the Philippine peso."

"I hope that was his own money, not client money."

"Client money. Compliance flagged the trade because he's never traded currency in those amounts before, and Noel canceled the trade before it was executed. He and Spurgeon are having it out now, and you know how that ends."

"Enderlee's year-to-date returns are about half the firm median, and he's dragging us all down, so he has nothing to save him."

"You could have his desk if you asked."

"First, I don't have a Series 30 license, so I couldn't supervise Langdon. Second, I am not ready to run a desk. Third, I provide more value to Spurgeon Capital by establishing the Research Department."

"Your AUM has gone from a couple million to a hundred million in nine months. What could you do if you were full-time?"

"I could bring in more, potentially, but right now, the Research Department is more important than another hundred mil in AUM. When the Research Department is up and running, and the data analysts develop the new programs, and I have more experience, then I'll be ready."

"That is exactly what Noel Spurgeon said when I suggested giving you the desk. I agree, by the way, but I wanted to see your reaction."

"A meteoric rise often leads to the same fate as the meteor -- it burns up on re-entry. I've probably come up too fast as it is."

"Says the guy who was demanding the training manuals basically from the moment he started!"

"But that was logical," I replied. "Giving me a desk at this point is not. It's like betting the streak at the roulette table -- it's great betting the streak while it lasts, but it can't last forever. At this point, I need to bank my winnings, as it were, and consolidate. Not to mention, I have a personal issue which is going to take significant amounts of my time."

"How is Keiko?"

"Resting comfortably at home. Her fever is down, and we'll see what the blood tests they'll run next week say."

"No donor?"

"Not yet," I replied. "But we're hopeful."

"It's a shitty hand you were dealt, Kane. You seem to be playing it as best you can."

"Thanks."

"Enderlee will be gone by lunch; Noel will take over his desk temporarily and probably bring in someone from the outside to run it. Go make some money!"

"Yes, Sir!"

I left his office, returned to my desk, and worked on developing the standard format for the daily reports until lunch. I ate with Bianca, then went to the gym. After our workout, I spent the afternoon with Scott researching S&Ls and banks, and at 3:00pm, I headed home.

When I arrived, Bob Woods had just finished remodeling the bathroom.

"Please don't use this until Friday evening or even Saturday. You want the grout and cement to set properly before you get them wet. I did test everything, but you can run water in the sink if you wish, and I have a bucket to test the hand-held showerhead."

"If you tested everything, I'm happy."

We shook hands, and I paid him the remaining balance in cash. He left, I went upstairs to change, then went to spend time with Keiko so we could visit Rush-Presbyterian's outpatient clinic to have her IV port removed. If she needed an IV in the future, they'd use the standard method. Once it had been removed, they gave us care instructions, and we headed back home for dinner and a quiet evening.



October 6, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Kane, you fucking witch!" Mr. Matheson exclaimed when he walked into the office just before 8:00am on Thursday.

"You saw?" I asked.

"I saw. Devalued from 11 to the buck to 14, or about 21%! And you nailed the cause exactly right!"

I nodded, "The Central Bank said the move was necessary because of an \$800 million balance-of-payments deficit in the third quarter, the dollar, the potential erosion of international reserves, IMF pressure in exchange for rescheduling loans, and," I smirked, "increased speculation against the peso!"

"Yeah, we and the banks in London, Tokyo, Singapore, and Hong Kong all dogpiled on them, so they were screwed. Great call, Kane! Go find another!"

"Australia, but I don't have the information I need."

Mr. Matheson nodded, "I'm working on that, but you know it has to be done correctly."

"Understood."

"How do I do that?" Scott asked.

"Crunch the numbers," I said. "I've been working with Bianca on a spreadsheet and other programs to be able to quickly analyze a currency and an economy. It took a lot of manual work before; now, you just need to do the research the way I've shown you, plug in the numbers, and then interpret what you see. You should pull my analyses on the Bolivar and Zaire and compare the reports and figures to the Philippine peso reports and figures. I think it'll be instructive."

"What's the bit about the Australian dollar?"

"They're going to come under increasing pressure to float, but if we get in too soon, they can defend, and nobody else will go with us. If we get in too late, everyone else beats us to the best positions. What we need to do is watch carefully and read statements by their Prime Minister, Finance Minister, and especially the mid-level people in the Finance Ministry. The clues will be there, but only if you're looking for them."

"Sure, but isn't everyone looking for them?"

"Yes; we just have to be more diligent and agile and pull the trigger as soon as we're sure enough that Mr. Matheson can convince his banker friends to dogpile, the way he did with the Philippine peso, though only after he takes his positions."

"And you?"

"I've sold some January put options on Australian dollars, which I'll cover as soon as they move. That trade to acquire the put options won't even be noticed because I'm a small fish in a big ocean."

"That makes sense because it'll take a hit."

"An immediate hit, but it will recover because Australia is actually in a good position. Their problem is trying to maintain the peg, which chews up significant amounts of their foreign reserves. Floating the currency frees a good chunk of that, and also relieves pressure on the Central Bank."

"What's your overall strategy?"

"It depends on what they do. We have to watch for the signs."

"Which are?"

"Changes in capital flows, changes to the currency peg, the options market, and anything the government says. I'll work with you on it, but you'll get the hang. Look back at the previous analyses."

"Will do."

When all was said and done, I'd made about 18% on my investment, but my total was limited by the fund guidelines I'd established. But, it was enough that the fund would easily make 30% for the year, barring any significant errors. One thing that held me back was the amounts I had to keep in US government securities, but given the terms for the pension fund and charitable fund, I had to be in a position to handle redemptions. The flip side was those government securities also protected against huge losses, as they would retain their value and, in fact, would increase in value as interest rates dropped.

My phone rang at about 10:00am.

"Kane."

"Noel Spurgeon. Fantastic call on the peso, Kane. Keep it up!"

"Thank you! And you can count on it."

"I'll see you on Saturday at Chicago Botanic Garden."

"Keiko and I appreciate it."

He disconnected the call, and I returned to my usual analysis. At lunch, I left the office to meet Marcia, who had started her new role working for Congressman Charles Hayes. We had a good lunch, and she let me know she was bringing a date to the wedding -- a guy who worked in the same office with whom she'd hit it off right away. From everything she said, it seemed like she'd found someone who might well be 'the one', but only time would tell.

After our lunch, I returned to the office and found that Steve Markman had faxed me three résumés, so Bianca and I went into the conference room to discuss them. We liked two of the three and agreed she would do telephone interviews. I called Steve Markman to arrange that, and once all the details were settled, I transferred him to Bianca to work out the times.



October 8, 1983, Glencoe, Illinois

On Saturday, Keiko and I drove to Glencoe, arriving at Chicago Botanic Garden about ninety minutes before our wedding ceremony was planned to start. The nurse assigned by Horizon Hospice arrived at about the same time, and Keiko was pleasantly surprised that she was a Japanese-American named Aiko. I felt that was a very nice touch by the agency, and it meant that Keiko's nurse was completely familiar with the ceremony.

Keiko's grandmother and grandfather arrived a few minutes later and assisted both of us with donning our formal kimono. Once we'd done that, Dustin took photos of the two of us in front of a large floral display, then we went to a small lounge to wait for the ceremony to start. My uncle arrived, and Keiko, her father, and her grandmother reviewed the steps with Uncle Alec and me so we knew exactly what we were expected to do at each stage of the ceremony. They also guided Dustin as to where he ought to stand to get the best pictures as well as stay out of the way of the ceremony.

The Marriage Before the Kami

1. «参進の儀» (*sanshin-no-gi*) The Procession Ceremony

In a typical Shinto wedding, everyone would have made a procession into the shrine, but as we were at the Botanic Garden, only the immediate wedding party made the procession, led by Keiko's young cousin, Ailea, from the building to the edge of the garden where we were to be married.

2. «入場» (*nyujo*) Entrance to the Shrine

At the edge of the garden, we were joined by the rest of our families, which on my side was my mom, my Uncle Alec, and my Aunt Wendy, and on Keiko's side, her parents, grandparents, and aunt and uncle. Ailea led us all to where the Shinto priest was waiting for us, away from the altar.

3. «修祓の儀» (*shubatsu-no-gi*) The Purification Ceremony

Koichi, the priest, ritually washed Keiko's and my hands and faces with salt and water, then did the same with the table, which would serve as the altar. Once that was completed, he shook an «大幣» (*ōnusa*), which looked like a large pom-

pom and was meant to ward off evil spirits. Finally, he sprinkled the assembled guests with water. He then prayed:

This purification will be like the strong wind that blows down from high mountains, which can blow away the clouds that have piled up thick, and like the way that the morning and evening wind can blow away the morning and evening mist, and like the way the wind can blow a large ship, berthed in a large harbor, breaking its chains, pulling up its anchor and blow it out into the ocean, and like the way we can clear mountains of trees and bushes by burning them and through the work of our sharpened hoes cultivate mountain sides, in this way, our sins will be gone, purely purified, and cleanly cleaned.

The sins and impurities thus swept away, will fall from high and low mountains, with a thunderous sound into the water, the Spirit of rivers, Princess Seoritsu, who lives in the upper reaches of rivers that flow fast like the flow of a waterfall, will take them out into the ocean. And if they are taken out in this way, the Spirit called Princess Hayaaki, who lives in the whirlpools where hot and cold flows meet and collide, will gobble them all up.

And if the sins and impurities are all gobbled up in this way, The Spirit, Ibukidonushi, who is the origin of the breath of life, will breathe and blow them out to the world at the origin of the world. And if they are blown out in this way, The Spirit, Princess Hayasasura, who lives in the world at the origin of the world, will take them off into the distance so that even these sins and impurities will be lost forever and completely.

And if they are lost in this way, wherever one searches for them, we will allow ourselves to say, before the myriad Spirits, before the spirits of Heaven and the Spirits of the Earth, to whom we dedicate this purification, this cleansing prayer, that sins that can be called sins, will completely cease to exist.

I was thankful he prayed in English, despite the formal tradition being Japanese, but very few of the assembled guests spoke Japanese. Once this was complete, Keiko, her father, my uncle, and I followed Koichi to the altar.

4. «祝詞奏上» (*norito-sojo*) Shinto Ritual Prayer Reading

Next, Koichi recited the ritual wedding prayer, again, thankfully, in English.

Spirits of purification created for order of and the mother that they inhabit the Sky, exactly as when The God Izanagi no Mikoto bathed in the narrow estuary of a covered river with trees permanently leafy in the South region.

With all the respect from the depth of our hearts, We ask that they hear us, such as the Spirit that hears our intent, with sharpened ears, together with Spirits of the Sky and the Land, Take the badnesses, disasters, and sins and purify all.

Miroku Oomikami, You bless us and protect us.

Meishu Sama, You bless us and protect us.

For the expansion of our soul And the fulfillment of your will.

5. «三献の儀» (*sankon-no-gi*) The Exchange of the Cups

The next step was what Keiko's grandfather had emphasized was the core of the ceremony -- the ritual drinking of 酒 (*sake*). We'd purchased the «omiki», or ritual saké, with the money we'd been given for that purpose at the «yuino». The ritual involved taking three sips from three cups of increasing size. The smallest cup, which was first, was poured for me, and I sipped three times from it before offering it to Keiko, who did the same. The second cup, the medium-sized one, went first to Keiko and then to me. And the third, the largest, went to me, then Keiko.

6. «神楽奉納» (*kagura hōnō*) Dedication to the Sacred Dance

Once the cups of saké had been drunk, a group of young women in floral kimono performed a ritual dance to traditional Japanese music as an offering to the gods. Of course, neither Keiko nor I believed in any gods, but we felt it was appropriate to honor the tradition.

7. «誓詞奏上» (*seishi sojo*) The Reading of the Vows

Traditionally, the vows at a Japanese wedding were made by the groom, with the bride adding her name as he spoke them. Keiko and I chose to write our own vows, loosely following the Japanese tradition.

"Keiko, I marry you, no matter what your health; I will love you, respect you, console you, help you until death, with complete fidelity. This I promise before the «kami» and those assembled here."

"Jonathan, I marry you, no matter what your health; I will love you, respect you, console you, help you, until death, with complete fidelity. This I promise before the «kami» and those assembled here."

Koichi then confirmed our vows.

Jonathan, you marry Keiko and become her partner. Do you promise that in peaceful times, during sickness or health, to love her, respect her, comfort her, and help her, with complete fidelity, until death?"

«はい、誓(ちか)います。» (*Hai, chikai imasu*)," I said firmly. ("Yes, I promise!")

"Keiko, you marry Jonathan and become his partner. Do you promise that in peaceful times, during sickness or health, to love him, respect him, comfort him, and help him, with complete fidelity, until death?"

«はい、誓(ちか)います。» (*Hai, chikai imasu*)," Keiko said equally firmly. ("Yes, I promise!")

Following this, Keiko, I, her father, and my uncle all drank saké to shouts of «乾杯» (*kampai*) from our Japanese guests, which included Keiko's relatives from California. ("Drink up")

8. «玉串奉奠» (*tamagushi hoten*) The Tamagushi Offerings

Koichi then offered a vase with wands of «榊» (*sakaki*), a Japanese evergreen. Once he'd placed it on the altar, Keiko and I picked up branches of *sakaki* and placed them on the altar, and then Itsurō and Uncle Alec did the same.

Once that was complete, Itsurō announced, first in Japanese, then in English, that Keiko and I were married.

9. «指輪の交換» (*yubiwa-no-gi*) Exchange of the Rings

Keiko and I had chosen to remove our rings before the ceremony and now exchanged them symbolically.

10. «親族杯の儀» (*shinzokusakazuki-no-gi*)

The Drinking of Sacred Wine With the Wedding Participants

Following the exchange of rings, each guest then moved to a table, picked up a small glass of saké, and everyone drank together, using three sips to drain the glasses, once again with shouts of *kampai*.

11. «齋主挨拶» (*saishu aisatsu*) Greetings by the Shinto Priest

Koichi moved to face our gathered friends and families and bowed to them, then they bowed in return. Keiko's much larger group of relatives then congratulated my mom and my aunt and uncle, and those congratulations were returned.

12. «退場» (*taijyo*) The Exit

Following that, Ailea led Koichi, Keiko, and me towards the banquet room, which had been set up, and the congregation followed.

Keiko and I went to the small lounge, and she changed into an informal kimono, as it would have been impossible to sit and eat in her formal kimono. Once she'd changed, we went to the head table, where we sat with Koichi, Keiko's parents, my mom, and my uncle and aunt.

The reception was traditionally Western, though toasts were done with saké rather than champagne. The only minor concern was when Keiko's mom asked about the nurse being in attendance, but Keiko was able to mollify her with it being part of her home care, and only out of an abundance of caution. Of course, Keiko wasn't wearing a mask, something we'd discussed, and she'd decided that, given the totality of the circumstances, she didn't want to interfere with our wedding ceremony in any way.

The meal provided by Chicago Botanic Garden was excellent, and after everyone had eaten, it was time for our first dance. The DJ put on *Truly* by Lionel Richie, and we moved to the center of the dance floor. As planned, the following song was *Making Love Out of Nothing at All* by Air Supply, and we broke tradition by dancing the second dance together.

When it finished, Keiko and her dad danced to *Isn't She Lovely* by Stevie Wonder, and then my mom and I danced to one of my mom's favorite songs, *What a Wonderful World* by Louis Armstrong.

Following that, Keiko and I cut the wedding cake, then returned to our seats as she was exhausted from the exertion of the day. We stayed for about an hour, receiving greetings, and Keiko introduced me to her family and friends whom I had not met. Just before 7:00pm, we bade our guests goodbye and headed for the limo, which would take us back to the house.

Unbeknownst to Keiko, I'd arranged with Bianca and CeCi to decorate our bedroom with a huge variety of flowers and *sakaki* branches. In addition, the bed was strewn with rose petals, and dozens of candles lit the room, Bianca having left the wedding just before Keiko and me so she could light them.

"This is wonderful!" Keiko gushed. "Make love to me?"

I helped her from her informal kimono, and she helped me from my formal one, and we got into bed. We made love gently, neither of us in any rush for release. When we finished, we cuddled together.

"I love you, Jonathan. Thank you so much for today."

"I love you, too, Keiko-chan! I'm very happy you're my wife!"

"I'm happy you're my husband!"

We cuddled for about thirty minutes when, at Keiko's urging, we made love once again, then cuddled together to fall asleep in each other's arms.



October 9, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

We slept in on Sunday, and at 11:00am, my mom came to have lunch with us before heading back to Ohio. Keiko and I had discussed how we were going to reveal her status, and while we weren't ready to do so generally, I felt it was something I had to tell my mom face to face, so after we ate, I asked my mom to take a walk in the cool Autumn afternoon.

"What's bothering you?" Mom said.

"That obvious?" I asked.

"To me, anyway. I could tell something wasn't quite right yesterday."

"They haven't found a marrow donor for Keiko, and they had to cut her chemo short because she had some kind of infection."

"Oh, no! Now what?"

"We are, as Doctor Morrison said, out of options. She'll have blood drawn tomorrow, and if the results are what we all expect, there is nothing left to do."

"Nothing at all?"

"Doctor Morrison suggested prayer, which should tell you everything you need to know."

"How long?" Mom asked, a tear running down her cheek.

"We don't know. Her fever is down a bit but not gone. It's some kind of systemic infection that wasn't cured with the best antibiotic available. Even if her body fights it off, which is questionable because her immune system is basically shot, she'll be susceptible to another one. And, so long as she has a high fever, that is,

over 101.5°F, she can't have further chemo. That means her blast cells - the bad ones -- will increase uncontrollably and eventually crowd out the good cells.

"She looked as good as she did today because she had a transfusion last Friday. That's not something that can be repeated indefinitely, either, and it's possible that the fever is related to the blood transfusions she's had due to something called Transfusion-associated graft-versus-host disease, which has no cure and is, according to my research, often fatal."

"I don't know what to say," Mom said.

"There isn't much *too* say," I replied. "We haven't told anyone except Bianca and Violet so far, but I felt I had to tell you face-to-face, not over the phone."

"How long have you known?"

"Officially? Since last Wednesday they stopped the chemo, but the writing was on the wall when the chemo failed to reduce her blast count to below 5%, which is the threshold for remission, and we couldn't find a compatible marrow donor. I used contacts at work to arrange testing of people in Japan, and even that didn't help."

"You haven't told her parents?"

"No. We didn't want to spoil yesterday, and despite my comment about 'officially', that's me reading the signs. The blood tests tomorrow will confirm what Keiko and I both know to be true -- that her blast count is increasing, and she can't have chemo to control it."

"Is there a reason you told Violet and Bianca?"

"Violet and I are very close, like Bev and I were before she turned sixteen, and there's no chance I can see that will ever change. Bianca, well, this also is not public, but you're going to be a grandmother."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, Jonathan!" my mom said, sounding exasperated. "Did you learn NOTHING growing up?"

"First of all, it was planned; second, it had Keiko's blessing; third, my income this year will be more than sufficient to raise a child together with Bianca."

"Just when I thought you'd revealed the biggest surprise, you hit me with that bombshell. Why would Keiko agree to that?"

"Because chemo made it unlikely she could have children, and a marrow transplant, which was required to save her life, would make childbearing impossible. She knew I wanted a biological child, and Bianca is, well, involved with Juliette, if you get my drift."

"How many more bombs are you going to drop on me, Jonathan?!"

"I think that's it," I replied. "Well, unless buying a pair of apartment buildings and having a million dollars in carried interest are 'bombs'."

"A. Million. Dollars. You. Are you joking?"

"No. But that's before taxes, so my net worth isn't quite that high. I'm managing over a hundred million dollars, or will be as of the end of this month."

"That's an unbelievable amount of money!"

"My boss will make \$2,000,000 this year, at least. I might make a tenth of that."

"I don't think I earned that much in the first fifteen years you were alive combined! Is it all legal?"

"Perfectly. We're closely scrutinized by the SEC, CFTC, and a bunch of other alphabet-soup agencies. I'll buy you a Mercedes, if you want."

Mom laughed, "What the heck would I do with a Mercedes in Gosen?!"

"Drive it?" I chuckled. "I will if you want one, but I can't imagine you do."

"I'm happy, Jonathan, and I'm very comfortable now."

"Did you speak to Glen at the reception?"

"Just to say 'hello'. Bev seems very happy."

"She is. She enjoys her job, Heather is a wonderful little girl, and Glen is good for Bev."

"That's a very mature attitude, given your relationship with her."

"One I completely messed up by not including her in my plans for coming to Chicago. I was so determined to escape that I didn't consider taking my fellow prisoner with me."

"Escape? Prisoner?"

"Could I have ever been this successful in Goshen?"

"I think you were always destined for success, Jonathan. And I'm sure you understand that money isn't everything."

"I do. It's a tool. And despite the assertions of some of the people at Spurgeon, it can't buy happiness, something to which I can testify."

"I did meet your boss and Mr. Spurgeon. Was that Mr. Spurgeon's wife?"

I chuckled, "No. Valerie is about your age. That was one of his girlfriends. An older one, if all the rumors are true."

"What is it with middle-aged men and teenage girls?" Mom asked, exasperated.

"I dunno, I like teenage girls!" I teased.

"And you're twenty, so a seventeen-year-old girl would not be inappropriate. But if you were forty-five?"

I shrugged, "So long as it's consensual. It's the same thing I said about Bev and Glen. I'm not the morality police, and I don't want to be. Ohio says teens are able to consent at sixteen, and at that point it's up to them. Bev was seventeen when she was with Glen."

"We'll have to agree to disagree. I don't think it's appropriate."

"You and Dad?" I asked with a smirk.

"Oh, shut up!" Mom said, laughing, then she became serious. "What will you do?"

"Play the hand I've been dealt. I love Keiko, and there is literally nothing else I could do. She and I will cross each bridge when we come to it."

"I'm so sorry, Jonathan. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Not now, but I'm sure there will be in the future. Well, unless you want to move to Chicago."

"Oh, heavens no! I like living in a rural area where I don't have to lock my door at night, and everyone knows each other and helps each other!"

"I love the big city; I could never live in Goshen again."

"I noticed your grandparents weren't at the wedding," Mom said. "Did you invite them?"

"Of course, they were the sole 'declines'. Everyone else we invited was there."

"Thirty-six years later, and I still do not understand my dad."

"Our 'pagan' ceremonies offended him, and I guess he takes the Bible verse that says Jesus intended to break up families and make them treat each other like dirt as instructions."

"That's not quite what it says, but I understand your point."

"Well, assuming he said the stuff attributed to him, it's the typical cult leader behavior -- convince people you are the only one who loves them, and then they'll do anything for you, including die. Ask Jim Jones."

"I hope you didn't say those things to your grandfather."

"Of course not! I did my best to stay away from that topic, but I won't pull any punches with you because I don't need to."

"And the references to gods today?"

I smiled, "Neither Keiko nor I believe they are real, but we honored her parents and grandparents' tradition."

"You looked very handsome in that kimono," Mom said with a smile.

"Thank you."

We made our way back to the house, and after Mom used the bathroom, I walked her out to her car. We hugged, she offered any help she could provide, then got into her car. I waved as she pulled away, then went back into the house to join Keiko in the Japanese room.

"What did she say?"

"That she'd help in any way she could. She was a bit concerned about the baby, but I explained the situation as best I could."

"That's going to be difficult for my parents and grandparents.

"I know," I said. "My plan was not to say anything about it until we have to."

"I think it would be better if I told my parents and grandparents somehow, but I'm not sure yet how to do it."

"Whatever you think is best. Should we open our gifts?"

"Yes, though I feel bad about taking them."

"You shouldn't," I replied. "Nobody will be upset, and for all we know, you could live for years."

"You know that's not going to be the case," Keiko said quietly.

I nodded, "Is there anything you want to do?"

"About?"

"Anything? Go somewhere? Do something?"

"Not really," Keiko replied. "I just want spend time with you."

"Then that's what we'll do."

XVII. Stress

October 11, 1983, Kenosha, Wisconsin

On Tuesday, I went to the office to write my daily report, and at 9:00am, I left for my appointment in Kenosha, where I'd present to the police and firefighters' unions, then have lunch with the union leaders. I met Chris Roth, the pension manager who handled both unions' accounts in his office.

"You'll be meeting with the union leadership of both unions," he said. "In addition, the Police Chief and Fire Chief will be in attendance. They don't have a vote, but their influence could easily affect the unions' decision. Someone is sure to raise your age as a concern."

I nodded, "I've answered those questions several times, and my response is that I hold two securities licenses and have about a hundred million in assets under management, with a projected annual return of just over 30%. Obviously, I can't guarantee that, but I will happily provide a list of trades in addition to the prospectus."

"How did you achieve that return in your first year?"

"My main job is as an analyst, and together with some other analysts, we developed proprietary computer programs to help analyze currencies and national economies. I obviously can't disclose the formulas we use, but I can say we are innovative, and our innovation in data analysis helps us stay a step ahead of other firms."

"Won't they figure it out, too?"

"Yes, they will; our advantage is having the strongest research team in the industry, and having Noel Spurgeon leading the firm gives us advantages a larger company does not have, including agility and speed to act."

"My counterpart in Overland Park sang your praises. The chiefs will certainly speak to their counterparts as well."

"I'm not at all concerned about that," I said. "I think the numbers speak for themselves, especially when combined with Spurgeon Capital's track record and reputation. There is nobody better on Wall Street. Of course, as our prospectus says, and we are required to remind you, past performance is not a guarantee of future performance. That said, I believe my investment strategy will continue to be successful, including in a down market."

"I'm curious about that. How do you make money in a down market? Usually, we look to move to bonds or Treasuries."

"Which made perfect sense once Volcker ratcheted up interest rates. My strategy in a down market is to find counter-cyclical investments, be they currencies, precious metals, or securities, and use a range of trading tools to produce market-beating returns, both in an up or down market. In addition, with the hurdle set at 8%, I have a strong incentive to beat that! And I believe I will. I can't tell you upfront exactly what I will do because it's highly dependent on market conditions."

"What are the minimums for individuals?"

"A hundred grand," I replied. "And that needs to be investible assets because there is a one-year lockup period."

"There won't be many individuals with that much to invest," he said.

"For anyone with less, a no-load S&P fund would be their best bet. It'll return the market rate minus fees and expenses. It has similar risks to investing with me, but because it maintains a ratio of investments that matches the S&P 500, you get the dogs with the outstanding performers. You pay me two and twenty to avoid the dogs."

"You'll need to explain that to the union leaders and be prepared for some pushback."

I nodded, "I understand."

I took the opportunity to use the restroom, then got a glass of ice water. We walked to the conference room where I'd make my presentation. Chris introduced the ten people in the room, and I repeated their names silently to help me recall them. Once the introductions were complete, I began my presentation, which lasted fourteen minutes, just over the guideline that after twelve, you began to lose the attention of the audience.

"Any questions?"

"Let me get this straight," Bill Fowler, a firefighters' union rep, said, "You skim 2% of the money we give you, then take 20% of the profits?"

"20% of the profits over the hurdle rate of 8%. In the packets I've handed out, there is a printout of a spreadsheet that provides a concrete example. If you would take that out, I'll go over it."

They did as I'd asked.

"As you can see, it assumes you have \$100,000 to invest, which means you would be charged \$2000 the first year by Spurgeon to manage the fund, no matter how

well or how poorly the fund performs. That money is deducted from your investment, beginning with the initial investment and then each year following.

"As you can see, with a hurdle of 8%, Spurgeon Capital retains 20% of the annual gains in excess of 8%, after the fund is 'marked to market', that is, the value is calculated at the closing price on a fixed date. If we can't 'beat the street', as it's called, we make no profit, as the 2% management fee covers expenses, including salaries, leases, and equipment, as well as trading fees.

"Putting real numbers behind it, if we use Spurgeon's annualized return last year across all funds of 32%, if you invested \$100,000, the value of your investment at the end of the year would be about \$131,500, after allowing for the initial 2% management fee. Of the \$31,500 gain, the first \$7800 or so is yours, free and clear. Of the remaining \$23,500 gain, about \$4700 would be retained by Spurgeon, yielding around \$19,000 in gains, for a net total gain of \$26,000, or about 26% on your initial investment. That's about double the return you'd earn in a Dow or S&P fund, assuming typical annualized returns.

"And that difference adds up. The 'Rule of 72' says that you divide 72 by the rate of return using the hurdle rate, which is 8%. The result shows that your money doubles roughly every nine years. Let's make it ten to allow for the fees, and that means your money doubles five times -- \$200,000 in ten years, \$400,000 in twenty years, \$800,000 in thirty years, and \$1.6 million in forty years. And that's if I only make the hurdle rate or slightly above.

"Now, consider a return of 20%. The way to calculate the length of time it takes to double is a bit different but works out to about four years. In other words, you would double your money two and a half times over each ten-year period. In thirty-two years, that hundred grand would be worth something on the order of \$12 million after accounting for our fees. Those calculations are in Table 2 on the same page."

"And you can do this every single year?" Al Crowe asked.

"That's the goal, yes. I can't guarantee it, but I have a vested interest in beating the hurdle rate, which is slightly more than the long-term Dow Industrial annual gain. I only make money if I do that. In addition, my money is right next to yours. All of my investable funds are in either the Cincinnatus Fund or the Spurgeon Select Fund.

"Those funds have different trading parameters, with the Cincinnatus Fund being more conservative. I use a set of strategies that trades a small portion of potential gains for protection from losses. It's not perfect, of course, but it ensures that I can unwind a bad position with as little harm as possible. Given this is pension money, you want that slightly lower return in exchange for significantly lower risk. Not no risk, mind you, but lower."

"Yes or no," Jack Colton said. "We could lose all of our money."

"Yes. Just as you could in your current investment portfolio. Granted, it's mostly in treasuries and bonds, but with interest rates trending down, those bonds are going to be called and replaced with ones which pay less, and no matter how highly rated they are, there is always a risk of default.

"As for Treasuries, those are as safe an investment as you can find, but they have no real upside in terms of capital gains, and every new treasury you buy yields less than the previous one. In general, in the long run, you'll barely keep up with inflation with that strategy; I do use government securities to generate income to prevent forced liquidation for redemptions or pension fund payouts. And they provide a firm base for the remainder of my trading without interfering with my total gains in a significant way."

"I have to ask," Chief Brock said. "How old are you?"

"Twenty," I replied. "I've been working for Spurgeon for two years, and as Mr. Roth said when he introduced me, I hold two securities licenses and am working towards a third. The two licenses I have allow me to broker anything other than real estate and insurance, though I can purchase those products for my fund. The license I'm working on will allow me to manage other licensed individuals. What Mr. Roth didn't mention is that I'm the youngest double-licensed professional at Spurgeon, and I oversee all firm research."

"Were you one of those prodigies who went to college at sixteen?"

"No. I have a High School Diploma, and I'm taking night classes at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle campus. Degrees aren't required for my job; being an expert analyst is. And I am an expert analyst, as my track record clearly demonstrates."

"That's some serious chutzpah!" Josh Green, a police captain, said.

"Not to be impertinent, but the numbers back that up. And the value of my youth is that I have new ideas and new ways of looking at things. One of our major innovations is using personal computers to aid us in our analysis and modeling, and we're the first firm of our size to actively employ full-time data analysts. I helped develop the first spreadsheets and models, then turned that work over to a computer expert because I have to focus on the markets."

"In your packet is a daily analyst report I wrote about four months ago. My team produces a comprehensive report across all sectors and investment vehicles, along with a 'state of the world' analysis, which you see in the sample report I provided. A small portion of the report has been redacted to protect Spurgeon's trade secrets, but you can see the quality of my analysis."

There were a few more questions, mainly about the details of the spreadsheets I had provided, and I reviewed the math in more detail, ending about forty-five

minutes after I'd begun. We had lunch together, then I headed back to Chicago, reasonably confident I had another \$5 million in the bag.



October 11, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"How did it go?" Murray Matheson asked when I stopped in his office just after returning to the Hancock Center.

"I'm reasonably confident I have them," I said. "The pension fund manager said he expected a decision from the two boards by the end of the month."

"Good. How are things working with the researchers?"

'OK. We'll gel once we're all in the same area. Right now, with everyone spread around, collaboration is limited. But the reports are being distributed, and the quality has improved from before the change."

"That's good. Shut the door."

I did as he instructed.

"Nothing will come of this, but Enderlee flagged you to the SEC for insider trading and front-running."

"Seriously?!" I asked, suddenly nervous, which I was sure showed.

"Seriously," Mr. Matheson said. "Don't sweat it. You document things better than anyone here, and your analysis will hold up. Compliance sent them your trades and your analyst reports. You are squeaky clean. Hell, they might not even bother to interview you."

"So what happens to him?"

"They'll treat it as a whistleblower who had bad information. It won't hurt him with the SEC or the CFTC. That said, you can imagine Noel Spurgeon's reaction."

"Enderlee is now toxic and will be lucky to find a job flipping burgers."

"And his funds will remain locked up for the entire redemption period."

That meant he couldn't have them for a year. And that was all part of the employee handbook and had been expressly noted in my employment contract, which I had signed and agreed to. And I was sure that was the case for everyone else.

"Ouch," I replied. "That's going to hurt."

"It will. One does not cross Noel Spurgeon without paying the price."

"No kidding."

And that right there was a reason that despite some people pushing me to think about starting my own firm, Noel Spurgeon could block it and ruin me. It also meant I needed to have sufficient resources outside Spurgeon so that if something terrible happened, I wasn't completely screwed. The income-producing properties would help, as would the savings account I was building. In my mind, I needed to have enough liquidity to survive the entire one-year lockup period.

And that was why Enderlee was so severely screwed. He, like many of the traders, was cash-poor, and he lived above his current means based on his trading record over the past year. He could, in theory, lose everything if he didn't have sufficient assets outside of Spurgeon, which I suspected he did not.

"Just keep doing your job, Kane. This will blow over, and Noel took it personally because it impugns the whole firm. You were just a target of opportunity for a disgruntled ex-employee. Dismissed."

I left his office and returned to my desk to review the day's reports, once again making notes about format improvements and content I thought could be improved or added. Just after 3:00pm, I left the office and headed home to spend time with Keiko before class.

"Doctor Morrison called," she said after her grandmother left. "My blast count is 8%, which fits with the circumstances. What will matter is the next test, which will be done on the 31st."

"What about the rest of the numbers?"

"My white count is elevated, as expected. He prescribed an oral antibiotic to see if it has any effect and also to help with any secondary infection that I might have. Jennifer will pick it up on her way here tomorrow."

"What did you say to your grandmother?"

"Just that the tests showed no real change. I wanted to talk to you before I said anything."

"You tell me what you want to do," I said.

"I think we wait until the next tests or something else changes."

"That's fine."

"I received a call from Loyola, and they'll allow me to enroll in the correspondence courses they have that are used for prisoners. What do you think?"

"My first response is that it's up to you, but I know you want my opinion, so I'll say you should do it. It gives you something productive to do, and if things don't go the way we're expecting, you'll have those credits."

Keiko smiled, "Always the optimist."

"I don't know if that's the case, but I'm not a defeatist."

"You do always look for the positive outcome in every situation."

"And do my best to protect against the negative outcomes. Unfortunately, sometimes there is no way to do that."

"You know it's not your fault, right?"

"Neither is it yours," I said. "It's one of those random things that happen, and all we can ever do is deal with them as best we can."

"How did your meeting go today?"

"I'm reasonably confident they'll come onboard. It's a smaller deal than the trust funds that are coming on board, but every bit counts. Oh, and today there was an object lesson about what happens if you cross Noel Spurgeon."

"Oh?"

"The trader I told you about, Enderlee? In addition to being fired, Mr. Spurgeon is going to hold all of his investments for the entire one-year lockup period."

Enderlee is basically screwed, as he's one of those people who was living right up to his income, and by that I mean previous years'. He was having a bad year, so his income was far less, and now he can't touch his money for a year. Add in the fact that he'll never get a job in the industry, and he's likely to lose his house if he doesn't have enough money outside Spurgeon."

"Whoa!"

"Yeah, and that confirms my plans to buy income-generating properties and to plow as much cash into savings as possible so we have at least a year of expenses available. That would take us past any lockup period."

"So there's no way you could go, then?"

"If my investors came with me, it would just be my money that was locked up. But obviously, all of this means leaving isn't something to contemplate doing casually, and not even in a considered way unless things were untenable *and* I was positive I could make it work and had written commitments from my investors. Even then, I feel I'd have to negotiate, and Noel Spurgeon would be in a position of strength and would know he had the ability to crush me."

"It almost sounds like you're being held hostage."

I chuckled, "Because I am being held hostage! But it's a pretty nice captivity, wouldn't you say? And remember, I can leave anytime, and within a year, have all my money, minus what hasn't vested. I can find something else to do at that point because so long as I don't screw over Mr. Spurgeon or try to go to another firm, he won't blackball me. There are no bars on the prison, and I can walk away."

"Would you?"

"If I had a good enough reason, yes. And before you ask, I have no idea what that might be! I do need to eat so I can leave for class when Bianca arrives home."

We went to the kitchen, and I ate leftovers, and when Bianca came into the house, I kissed Keiko and headed to class.



October 14, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

The closing on my properties was set for 10:00am on Friday, and I arrived ten minutes early at Chicago Title. Nelson met me there and verified I had the necessary documents from Goldman, as well as a cashier's check in the proper amount. I confirmed I did and refrained from pointing out he'd asked me those questions when I'd called him on Thursday morning after Chicago Title had provided the amount for the check.

"Mr. Kane?" the receptionist said right at 10:00am. "I'm sorry, but the team is running behind."

"How far behind?" I asked.

"They didn't say, but I'd expect at least thirty minutes."

I was supremely annoyed, as they had to have known they were delayed before I had made the eight-minute walk to their office. I picked up a copy of *US News & World Report* from the table and thumbed through it while Nelson read legal briefs. At 10:40am, we still hadn't been called.

"Excuse me," I said to the receptionist, "but it's forty minutes past my appointment time. How long is it going to be?"

"I can ask," she replied.

"Please do."

She made a call, asked the question, then replaced the handset in the cradle.

"They aren't sure. There was some kind of problem with the documents they're trying to sort out."

"Excuse me, but if *that's* the case, they should have known that yesterday, but someone called to confirm they had all the documents and that everything was in order."

"I don't know what to say," she said.

I went back to sit down, and Nelson leaned over.

"This is not uncommon," he said quietly. "They don't actually put everything together until right before the closing."

"Why? They've had everything for weeks!"

"Because they can," he said. "They have you over a barrel, and they know you can't walk, and they also are effectively immune to any lawsuits."

"That's BS," I said quietly.

"If you're going to make a stink, do it *after* the closing. If you do it now, they'll decide something isn't right and give you a date in a week or two."

"If I did business that way, I'd be out on the street!"

"Me, too," Nelson commiserated.

We were finally called at 10:55am, nearly an hour after the appointment. I followed Nelson's advice and said nothing about the delay, while the closing officer handed documents to Nelson, who confirmed them and then handed them to me to sign. After signing my name about two dozen times, I handed over the cashier's check and, in return, received three sets of master keys for each building. Once I had those safely in my hands, I could speak my mind.

"I intend to have my attorney bill you for an hour of his time," I said. "And I intend to press to collect that amount in full."

"Excuse me?"

"You heard me," I said. "You were nearly an hour late after confirming by phone and fax that all of the documents were in order. If that was true at 10:30am yesterday, it was true at 10:00am today. If it *wasn't* true at 10:30am yesterday, then you lied to me. In addition, given you were an hour late, you had to know this morning, with sufficient time to notify us, that you were running late. Instead, you wasted an hour of my time and of my attorney's time. I can't bill you for mine, but Mr. Burke *will* invoice you for a full hour of his time."

"You'll never make it stick."

"Try me," I said flatly. "Do you know what wire fraud is?"

"What?!"

"You lied over the phone and via fax and induced me to act on information you knew to be false."

"Jonathan..." Nelson warned, though he had a slight smile on his face.

"I'm simply repeating what I was taught in my securities class -- if I were to make a misrepresentation via telephone, telex, or fax, it would be considered wire fraud. If they don't pay your invoice, I will lodge a complaint with the FBI and US Attorney."

I had a tough time keeping a straight face because the closer, who was probably only a few years older than I was, turned pale and looked like he might toss his cookies on the table.

"I, uhm, need to talk to someone. Wait here, please."

He got up and left.

"You'll never make it stick," Nelson said quietly. "The Feds won't act on something like this."

"I suspect that's the case, but I put the fear of God into him."

"Trust me, it won't help. Sure, he's panicked, but I have fifty bucks in my pocket that says his manager comes in and politely, or perhaps even impolitely, tells you to pound sand. I'm positive they'll be able to point to something 'beyond their control' that was only discovered a minute before we arrived, even if they have to gin up the cause."

"Then Plan B," I replied. "I simply say that I'll ask Mr. Wyatt and my uncle to never do business with Chicago Title and to spread the word about them. I certainly will."

"Be careful because they could bring a civil case against you. And even if you win, it'll cost you time, money, and your reputation."

"Nobody should be able to get away with the crap that I hear title companies get away with and have just witnessed."

"Oh, it gets worse. I had one where they gave the purchaser the wrong amount for the check for a 4:00pm closing. Guess what you can't do after 4:00pm?"

"Get a cashier's check."

"Correct. It delayed the closing for two weeks. And there was no recourse because it was an 'honest error' in their view, and no way was it worth fighting. And, if anyone had a claim, it was the seller who had cascading problems from it. It only set the buyer back two weeks on their possession and remodeling, but they had enough slack time built into their schedule that they made their move-in date despite the delay."

"Hi," a man of about fifty said, coming into the room. "What is this about threatening us with wire fraud charges for a mistake YOU made?"

Nelson gave me a look, and I considered my response.

"I'd be very curious to know what that was," I said.

"The fax transmission didn't come through properly."

"I have a confirmation sheet," I said smoothly. "That means your fax machine acknowledged receipt of a properly transmitted document. I can provide the original if you wish. I have it in my satchel."

"It's your responsibility to ensure we have all the documents."

"And, in addition to having the paper confirmation, I have a fax from you with the closing amount, which contains the statement that all documents were received and were in order."

"And at the bottom of the page, it says 'no representation is made by any statement that does not bear an original signature.'"

"Nice," I said. "No worries. I'll simply subpoena the original. I know enough to know that if you've destroyed it, my copy will suffice."

"Get the fuck out of here. Sue us. I dare you."

Nelson put his hand on my arm, so I said nothing, and we got up and left the room. He waited until we had exited the lobby to speak.

"Trust me," Nelson said, "that's *exactly* the kind of games they play. Your chances of winning are slim to none; it'll cost you money, and they'll simply laugh. And, what damages, other than \$200, could you demand? It'll cost you a few thousand to collect \$200, if you even do. And you might get attorney's fees, but you might not. You're usually easygoing. What happened?"

I took a deep breath and let it out, "Stress, I suspect."

"Spurgeon or at home?"

"At home. Keiko isn't doing well."

"Isn't doing well as in..."

"Yeah."

"Shit, man. I don't know what to say. If I can do anything..."

"Just be my friend. And next time, tell me to shut up, please."

Nelson laughed, "Normally, my caution would have been enough. I know this is going to sound wrong, but you need to find a way to reduce your stress."

"I know, but I'm not sure how to do that."

"Have you thought about seeing a counselor?"

"You aren't the first one to mention that, but mostly, it's with regard to grief. And, please, keep that information to yourself for now."

"I'm your attorney. I won't share a thing you tell me unless you tell me it's OK. When did you find out?"

"It's more understanding the progression given we haven't been able to find a marrow donor, and time is running out for that. Her latest blood test results confirm the trajectory."

"Call me any time, day or night. See you at Jeri's next Wednesday?"

"Yes."

We shook hands, and I returned to the Hancock Center.

I read the day's reports, noting that the FCC had recently approved Motorola's mobile telephone, the DynaTAC 8000x, and almost laughed at the projected retail price -- \$3,995. That was more than my previous month's take-home pay! That said, given the usefulness of the device, assuming it worked as advertised upon release, it meant Noel Spurgeon would buy one, and probably Murray Matheson as well.

The projected monthly cost was around \$100, with the ability to call any phone number in the world from anywhere in Chicagoland without using a pay phone. According to the research report, the first-ever call using a commercial wireless system had been placed the day before from Solider Field. The caller was in his Mercedes and he called someone who then called the grandson of Alexander Graham Bell, who was in Germany.

The analysis, with which I agreed, said Motorola was a 'strong buy' based on their plan to bring the cost of the phone down dramatically and to eventually make monthly service available for around \$25 per month. That would make the phones indispensable for business and would make Motorola stock even more attractive.

Based on everything in the report, I decided to take a position in Motorola, knowing that it was a long-term play. I had a few stocks in my portfolio which were speculative and which would have a long-term payoff. Motorola would join Apple Computer, General Foods, and Proctor & Gamble. I limited those long-term plays to no more than 5% of my portfolio, as they would drag down my annual gains until they hit, and I had to be careful not to overweight stocks, which would take years to show significant gains.

The same report also discussed the pending AT&T breakup and how the market would price the 'when issued' shares of what was being called the 'Baby Bells.' The consensus in the report was that there would not be immediate significant gains, and taking a position in AT&T made no sense. I agreed and chose not to take a position, especially given I'd sold off the AT&T stock that had been held by the Overland Park Union pension fund.

In the commodities report, I read that Getty Oil was in play, and after a brief analysis, I took a position on the expectation that they would be acquired. The stock was already up due to the rumors, but Steve Mansour was confident that a

bidding war would break out and the shares would climb significantly from their current value in early 1984. That was a timeframe I liked, so I entered buy orders for shares.

I finished my review just in time to have lunch with Bianca. I described what had happened at Chicago Title and my reaction, and she agreed with Nelson that I was showing signs of stress. Her solution, though, was one I couldn't act on, though I knew it was offered in jest.

"Baseball was a pretty good stress reliever," Bianca teased. "And I am sure a team would make themselves available for a game!"

I chuckled, "And I would predecease Keiko at that point, and she wouldn't even end up in prison given her condition! Not that I'd do it, of course."

"No, you wouldn't because cheating is very much not you. So, the nine virgins aside, what's your plan?"

"Wait! Nine virgins?! Hmm..." I teased.

Bianca laughed, "I bet you dollars to doughnuts you like experienced girls."

"You'd win that bet for sure, though I remember a pair of inexperienced girls who were VERY good!"

Bianca laughed, "Guilty as charged, as is Shelly! And a few others, or so I hear! So, seriously?"

"I'm going to call Nancy Jane Moore, Violet's counselor. If she can't, or won't, see me, I'm sure she'll recommend someone good."

"I think that's good. I can't imagine the stress you're experiencing now with Keiko, work, and our baby. Not to mention buying two buildings. You might ask Tim Anderson for a tougher workout. Exercise supposedly relieves stress."

"I'll talk to him when we go downstairs."

We finished our lunch, then headed to the gym. After I changed, I asked Tim if we could speak. He agreed, and I explained my situation.

"I think a mix of aerobics, breathing, and progressive muscular relaxation would be what you're looking for. Both yoga and martial arts combine all three of those in some way or another. For martial arts, I'd say Aikidō or Tai Chi would be good choices, and I can point you to instructors. We offer yoga classes here at 6:30am and 5:00pm, with each class lasting about fifty minutes. If you don't want to do either of those, then add jumping rope to your exercise rotation and set aside time for meditation."

"Let me think about it," I said.

"I'm here anytime!"

I completed my usual exercise routine, showered, and dressed, then Bianca and I headed back upstairs. I explained the options Tim had suggested and that I felt adding jumping rope and finding time for meditation was probably the best I could do at the moment, as I didn't want to commit to several more hours out of the house each day. Bianca agreed so that's what I decided to do. I also placed a call to Nancy Jane Moore and arranged to see her on Saturday afternoon, and once I explained about Keiko, she agreed we could meet at my house.

When I left the office, instead of heading home, I drove to Logan Square to meet with Kasia Pucinski. She invited me in, brought me a Coke, and we sat down at her desk. I handed her one set of master keys for each building, along with

copies of the leases, then signed a contract for property management, which Nelson had reviewed and approved.

"I'll send a letter to each tenant instructing them where to send the rent checks. Did the previous owner send his letters?"

"Yes. They were sent and acknowledged. The security deposits were also transferred to an account in the name of Yuusuke Holdings. Nelson made sure it conforms to Illinois law with regard to what amounts to escrow."

"Good. If someone does move out, I'll send you a full accounting of the move-out inspection and any associated charges. You'll cut the check directly to the former lessee. If a balance is due, they'll pay me and I'll coordinate any repairs. Rents will come to me, and once the reserve amount is reached, I'll send you the balance, less any fees, made out to Yuusuke Holdings."

"Perfect," I replied. "Do you need anything else from me?"

"No, I think we have everything set. Obviously, if anything comes up, I'll call you. I assume you're going to purchase additional properties?"

"Probably about this time next year," I replied. "My long-term goal is ten income-producing properties."

"That's a good number and will provide you with some nice income once the mortgages are paid off."

"That's the plan."

"If you know anyone else in the market for property management services, please send them my way."

"Will do."

She walked me to the door, we exchanged a light platonic hug, and then I walked to my car. Twenty minutes later, I parked in the garage of the house and went inside.

"We own two buildings!" I said to Keiko after greeting her with a hug and a kiss.

"You know, I haven't even seen them!"

"We could do that tomorrow if you wanted. I do have something new tomorrow -- I'm seeing a counselor because I realized I'm really stressed."

"I know," Keiko said. "And I had a visit from a counselor every day each time I was in the hospital. I'm glad you're doing something about it. I'm also glad you're going out tonight."

"Why don't you come along? CeCi, Jack, and Kristy won't mind. You can wear your mask in the theatre."

"I'd probably fall asleep even in the James Bond movie! Go out, have a good time, and we'll go out tomorrow to see the buildings. I'll be in bed when you get home."

"Ours or the hospital bed?"

"Ours for as long as I can go up and down the stairs. I don't have the IV, and I'm still strong enough. And you can wake me if you want."

"Do you want me to wake you?"

Keiko smiled, "Yes."

I kissed her, then went upstairs to change. Once I had changed, I sat with Keiko until Jack arrived home, then he, Kristy, CeCi, and I left to have dinner at The Berghoff, after which we went to see Sean Connery in *Never Say Never Again*. The movie was a typical Bond movie, though with some changes necessitated by the fact that it wasn't part of the usual series produced by Eon.

"I missed the *James Bond Theme*," Jack grouched. "But I guess they couldn't use it because it wasn't an official movie."

"There was a lawsuit that led to the making of the movie," CeCi said. "I don't know the full details, but my film professor mentioned it had to do with appropriation of story ideas by Ian Flemming. The settlement of the lawsuit was in 1964, and it took nearly twenty years to capitalize on it."

"Ice cream?" Kristy suggested.

Everyone agreed, so we walked to Oberweis, and after we had our ice cream, we headed home. Keiko woke up when I slipped into bed, and at her urging, we made love once before snuggling together to fall asleep.

XVIII. Stress, Part II

October 15, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday morning, Bianca and I did the grocery shopping and stopped at the dry cleaner. We returned home, and after lunch, I waited with Keiko until Nancy Jane Moore arrived. Keiko had arranged her day so that she'd nap in our bed while I met with Nancy Jane Moore.

"It's good to see you again, Jonathan," she said. "I wish it were under different circumstances."

"You and me both," I said. "What should I call you?"

"Nancy, please. Why don't we start with you telling me about the incident or incidents that caused your friends to suggest you were showing signs of stress?"

I explained what had happened at Chicago Title, as well as my series of conversations with Violet and Bianca, and covered everything that was going on at work.

"Is it OK to go far afield?"

"As far as you think necessary," I replied. "The women closest to me and a close male friend all think I'm suffering from severe stress, though I also think I mostly hide it."

"You have a 'Type A' personality. People with that personality type tend to be outgoing, ambitious, rigidly organized, highly status-conscious, impatient, anxious, proactive, and concerned with time management. More importantly,

perhaps, they are very often high-achieving workaholics who push themselves and set high expectations for themselves."

"I'd counter that I don't care about status," I said.

Nancy smiled, "Tend to, and let me ask you a few questions -- do you wear tailored suits and fitted shirts?"

"That is the uniform," I replied.

"And do you tell people about your securities licenses? And the amount of money you manage?"

"Yes," I said with a smile.

"And those things give you status at work, and with potential clients, and with your wife and friends?"

"Yes," I chuckled. "Never mind."

"It's not about being egotistical, which is how I think you might have understood it."

"Yes. I'd also say that my concern for status is a means to an end and doesn't define me as a person."

"What does?"

"I think I'd have to say my relationships with my wife, my mom, and my friends."

"A reasonable answer. You're very successful, according to Violet. How does that matter to you?"

"My goal was to have a comfortable life, to marry, have kids, and to be able to do that things I couldn't do growing up."

"Tell me about that, please."

"May I ask how that matters?"

"The more I know about you, the better advice I can give you. It also helps for me to understand your underlying motivations."

"I was born November 3, 1962, to a seventeen-year-old single mom. I never knew my dad, and according to my mom, my dad died before she could tell him she was pregnant. My grandparents kicked my mom out of the house, and a friend took her in, which allowed my mom to finish High School. She worked two jobs for my entire childhood, and I started working odd jobs as a young teen -- mowing lawns and shoveling snow, and then held one or two jobs once I turned fifteen until I moved to Chicago to work in the mailroom at Spurgeon Capital."

"How did your father die?"

"He was about ten years older than my mom and was a salesman for Hallmark. He died when Continental Airlines Flight 11 crashed on May 22, 1962, after a passenger set off a bomb in a lavatory in an insurance scheme."

"Was he from Cincinnati?"

"No. They met when he was there on a business trip, and at some point later, Mom snuck out to meet him. I was the result of that meeting. He was in Chicago on business a few months later and was flying home to Kansas City, Missouri."

"Did your mom ever reconcile with her parents?"

"No. They actually moved to Naperville. I've been in touch and invited them to my engagement celebration and wedding, but they refused to attend for religious reasons."

"Are they evangelical Christians?"

"Yes. My grandfather objected to what he called our pagan rituals. I think my grandmother is a bit more tolerant, but my grandfather is intransigent. What's especially galling is that my mom's sister also got pregnant out of wedlock but was accepted because she married the man. My mom never had that chance, though I don't know much about my dad, so who knows if he would, or even could, have married my mom."

"You think he might have been married?"

"Evidence suggests he wasn't, but I have no proof either way, and I'm not really interested enough to find out."

"How is your relationship with your mom's sister and her husband?"

"Her husband is the one who I asked for help, and he got me the mailroom job at Spurgeon. They were at both ceremonies, and my uncle stood in for my dad at the wedding."

"Your dad?"

"It was a Shinto ceremony, and both fathers have a role in solemnizing the marriage."

"Ah, OK. Does Keiko practice Shinto? This room seems to indicate she does."

"She keeps many of the traditions, but neither she nor I believe in any gods, or spirits, or anything like that. We did a few things to honor her family, including picking so-called 'lucky' days for our engagement and wedding. Neither of us put any stock in it, but her mom, who is Issei, does."

"Born in Japan?"

"Yes. Keiko's paternal grandparents are Nisei, born in Hawai'i to Japanese immigrants. They moved to California, then to Chicago to avoid internment."

"Going back to growing up, from the sound of it, you had struggles making ends meet."

"We did. Mom kept a garden, and I occasionally hunted to supplement our food, but we always had a place to stay, clothes, and a used car. Mom made absolutely sure I attended school and taught me to save as soon as I received my first pay for mowing a lawn. I had to save from each paycheck and kept a small amount for myself, but gave the rest to my mom to help cover our living expenses."

"Did you ever go hungry?"

"No. We always had enough food, though things like fresh fruit and vegetables were limited, as was anything but the cheapest cuts of beef. I had a subsidized school lunch, which helped as well."

"Did that bother you?"

"It depends on what you mean. It was fairly common in our rural county, so there was no stigma. On the other hand, everything I just described is what drove me to find a way to live a comfortable life where I didn't have to pinch

pennies or worry about where my next meal would come from or what would happen if the car broke down."

"When did you start worrying about those things?"

"I don't remember a time when I didn't. Mom never hid things from me, and it was a team effort, if you will."

"Do you hold any resentment?"

"No. I never once resented anyone or anything, though now, as an adult, I do point a finger squarely at my grandparents, who could easily have helped my mom and me."

"Did you ever attend church?"

"No. The local church kicked my mom out at the same time her parents effectively disowned her. Mom read Bible stories to me when I was little but stopped doing so by the time I started kindergarten. That was basically the last time I had anything you could remotely call religious instruction. I've been to a funeral and several weddings, but otherwise, I've never been in a church and have no desire to be in one."

"Tell me more about how you ended up in Chicago."

"I knew college wasn't a real possibility, mainly because of finances. And I don't just mean affording it; I mean the hours I had to work to help Mom, which led to only average grades. As several teachers pointed out after I graduated, I didn't apply myself, but it was more out of necessity than anything. I did consider going to vocational school, but I would have had to make that decision as a Sophomore, and I decided to get a traditional High School diploma rather than a

vocational certificate because I felt that gave me more options, and I could always try for an apprentice job in a trade with the diploma.

"Late in my Junior year, I decided I wanted to get out of Goshen because it felt, at least to me, that I would end up struggling similar to how my mom had. That's probably not accurate, but it's much easier to see that now than at sixteen or seventeen. That led me, early in my Senior year, to call my uncle and ask for his help. He spoke to his friend, Noel Spurgeon, and arranged for me to start in the mailroom as a clerk.

"But even in that, I messed up badly. I didn't tell Bev, my best friend from the time I was a toddler, about it. We had become lovers when I was seventeen, and she was sixteen, and I foolishly made my plans and simply told her about them. I didn't ask her to come with me, or suggest she move when she graduated from High School, or anything like that. It sundered the relationship and precipitated a series of negative events, though, ultimately, some good came out of it."

"This is the friend who briefly stayed with Violet, right?"

"Yes. In a weird twist, her mental breakdown led to me gaining a very important client."

"That came later, right?"

"Yes."

"Then let's go back to you coming to Chicago. Tell me about that, please."

I described moving to Chicago, starting with living with my uncle through buying my house and marrying Keiko. That, unfortunately, used up the allotted time.

"I am sorry," Nancy said. "Our time is almost up. We're at a good stopping point, and next Saturday, we'll pick it up. For this week, I want you to spend at least fifteen minutes each day simply sitting or lying down, with soft instrumental music playing, and trying to relax by regulating your breathing. Just take deep breaths, let them out slowly, and try to relax your muscles."

"OK. My trainer suggested aerobic exercises."

"Those would be good, for sure, but you also need quiet time, too. Do your best to clear your mind, though I understand the challenge of doing so. I'll see you next Saturday."

"Thank you."

I walked her to the door, then, as Keiko was still sleeping, I returned to the Japanese room, put on soft instrumental Japanese music, sat in one of the Papasan chairs, and did my best to follow Nancy's advice. I actually spent twenty minutes trying to relax but had difficulty not thinking about Keiko, so I wasn't sure if I was as relaxed as Nancy had hoped I would be.

"How did it go, Jonathan?" Keiko asked when she came downstairs just after I finished my first attempt at relaxation.

"It was mostly Nancy listening to my story and discussing my life growing up. She suggested something similar to what my trainer, Tim, suggested. I spent about twenty minutes trying to relax and clear my mind using breathing and soft music."

"Did it help?"

"A bit, I suppose, but I'm not sure how I can clear my mind."

"Meditation usually involves some kind of mantra or some other thing to help you do that. You might ask Koichi about it or the Buddhist monk Kaito. Both of them can give you strategies that don't invoke any deity."

"I'll discuss it with Nancy first, OK?"

"Yes, of course," Keiko replied. "It was just a suggestion."

"How was your nap?"

"OK. I need to check my vitals."

She turned on the machine and put the sensor on her finger, then sat quietly for a minute.

"My temperature is up half a degree," she said. "And my pulse is up a bit. Jennifer said not to worry about it too much if it varies day to day unless it's a big swing."

"What were the numbers this morning when Maria checked them?"

"About the same as now," she said, writing the numbers onto the chart.

"And how do you feel?"

"About the same as I did a week after the other times I had a transfusion. Tired and weak, but not terribly so."

"It's 70°F outside; do you feel up to a walk?"

"Yes. Just a few blocks, though. I don't want to become overtired, but fresh air and sunshine will be nice. We won't have too many more days like this before Winter sets in."

We left the house and walked hand-in-hand about a mile total before returning to the house.



October 19, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"How are things going?" Jeri asked when I arrived at her house on Wednesday for our monthly dinner.

"Work is busy, and I've brought in more funds in the last month. On the personal side, they haven't found a marrow donor for Keiko, and she's running a low-grade fever."

"So what's next?"

"The marrow transplant is the last option," I said. "She's feeling OK, other than the usual fatigue."

"How long can this go on?"

"I honestly don't know," I replied.

"OK to ask about the new money?"

"I was contacted by a trustee who manages a number of trusts and brought him on board. I pitched a pair of unions, and I think I'll get them. I've had other inquiries but no presentations as yet. What I could use are some high net-worth individuals. Any referrals would help."

"Most of the people in my mom's circles are with Spurgeon or don't use investment managers."

"What about friends with trust funds?"

"There are a few, though most of them don't have any say in who manages their money. I can give you their names, and you can try."

"I'd appreciate it."

Allyson arrived just then, followed almost immediately by Marcia and Nelson. Gary and Pete were shown in a few minutes later, and after Karl served drinks, he announced dinner was ready.

"Jonathan," Pete said. "Have you considered applying for a CFA charter?"

"I don't have a Bachelor's degree, and that appears to be a non-negotiable requirement."

"Actually," Pete said, "they will allow you to substitute relevant work experience, and based on what I've seen at the bank, I think you'd qualify in another year or two, especially if you focus on finance and accounting classes, and continue your advancement at work. You should start studying for the Level I CFA Exam as soon as possible."

"That'll be after the Series 30 licensure exam," I replied. "That's the one for Branch Managers, which would allow me to supervise other licensed professionals and run my own desk. And I do plan to continue working on a degree, but it's slow going with one course per semester."

"Every relevant course will help," Pete said. "Just work on the requirements for a degree in finance and keep your electives for last."

"That makes sense. How are things at the bank?"

"Having to write off \$300 million in bad loans by Penn Square hurt us pretty badly, obviously. The biggest problem at the moment is that dealers are demanding much higher rates on CDs from us, which exacerbates the situation. We're trying to consolidate all the bad loans in our Special Industries Department."

"Can you share the problem loan risk?" I asked.

"Nearly \$2 billion," he said. "That's public, by the way, as it was in a report released this morning."

"What's your opinion on the S&L industry in general?"

"Penn Square is the tip of the iceberg," Pete said.

"Are you at any risk?" Marcia asked.

"There is significant cost-cutting going on, so you know how it is."

"Pete, if it comes to that," I said. "Call me. I have an open spot for an analyst. You're an underwriter, so you have the correct basic skill set. And the more I think about it, a banking specialist would make a lot of sense."

"I think I'm OK so far," Pete said. "But if things change, you'll be my first call. Hang on a sec! You can hire?"

"I was promoted to the new position of Head of Research. I have eleven staff positions, of which nine are filled, and we're recruiting for one -- a computer programmer who'll work with Bianca on data analysis. We aren't actively recruiting for the other position, but I could do so at any point."

"Congrats!" Pete said.

The others added their congratulations as well.

"When did that happen?" Allyson asked.

"It was effective, September 30th. I knew before, but I couldn't say anything, and then I was busy with Keiko. Nelson knows because he's my attorney."

"Pretty amazing progress for two years," Gary observed. "And the statement I received last week showed impressive returns."

"This month will show excellent returns as well; we did really well on the Philippine peso devaluation."

"How do you know?" Allyson asked.

"It's all about comprehensive research and understanding how exchange rates work. It doesn't work with currencies which float, that is, where the market determines the exchange rate; it only works with currencies with fixed exchange rates or 'pegs'. To maintain a peg, a country has to have good internal economics, a good balance of trade, and good foreign currency reserves. It also needs a strong central bank able to use those reserves along with interest rates to defend the exchange rate."

"And Jonathan appears to have figured out how to discern that is going to happen before it does," Pete observed. "But, in the long run, he's going to run out of targets."

"There will always be countries that have pegs," I said. "Mainly ones the IMF has bailed out. If they mismanage their economies, they provide the opportunity to speculate against their currency. But there are plenty of other areas where we can achieve similar gains -- commodities, undervalued stocks, and so on. I'm on the FX desk, so I mostly deal with currencies and precious metals, but we also trade international bonds and stocks on foreign exchanges. In addition, manage funds for international businesses that regularly need to convert currencies as part of their international sales. In the long run, I'll also look into IPOs, venture capital, and other strategies to gain maximum returns."

"I just wish I could get in on this now," Allyson said. "Six more years, and then I'll have student loans to pay off!"

"How bad?" Marcia asked.

"I figure around \$40,000 for medical school," Allyson said. "And with interest rates being what they are, it's going to suck. Fortunately, college is covered."

"Maybe Jonathan needs a personal doctor!" Marcia teased.

Allyson laughed, "He's already had the full exam! But that was before he was married. Speaking of which, how is Keiko, Jonathan?"

"About the same," I replied. "We really need to find a marrow donor, and we've pulled out all the stops, including getting help from someone at Goldman Sachs in Tokyo. We're much more likely to find a match in Japan than in the US."

"So she's doing OK? I mean, given the circumstances?"

"A low-grade fever, but she's on antibiotics for that, and she's fatigued. We'll know more after the next set of blood tests at the end of the month."

We had a good conversation, dessert was wonderful, and after dinner, we adjourned to the great room to have coffee and drinks. The gathering broke up just before 10:00pm, and as usual, I gave Allyson a lift to Loyola. After I dropped her off, I headed home.



October 21, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Jonathan, this is Kendall Roy; can you come to my office, please?"

It was just before lunch, so I let Bianca know I might be late, then headed upstairs to Compliance.

"Have a seat," Kendall Roy said when I walked into his office.

I sat down in a chair across from his desk and waited to see what he would say.

"First, Legal and Compliance have signed off on your new trust client, and everything was sent to the onboarding team."

"That's great! Thanks."

"Murray let you know about the allegations leveled by Enderlee as his parting gift, right?"

"Yes."

"Good. First, the front-running allegation is literally impossible and laughable. Well, unless you've set up an unmonitored account of which we're not aware."

"Not a chance," I replied. "I only trade my fund, and all of my investments are either in that fund or the Spurgeon Select Fund. Every trade I make is for the clients and myself simultaneously."

"Oh, I agree. I just needed to mention the scheme some people try to use. Just for completeness, does your wife have any individual accounts? Even checking?"

"No. We combined our assets. We have checking, savings, and CDs, and some real estate."

"What about your parents?"

"My dad died before I was born, and my mom does not have any investments at all beyond a passbook savings account, and she has a checking account. We basically lived hand-to-mouth until I came to work here."

"Grandparents? Siblings?"

"No siblings," I replied. "Well, none I'm aware of. It's possible my dad had other kids, but I don't think so. If he did, I know nothing about them. As for my grandparents, I don't know my dad's parents. My mom's parents live in Naperville, though she's estranged from them since 1963.

"I tried to begin a relationship with them when I moved to Chicago, but they objected to my Shinto wedding ceremony. I couldn't tell you a thing about their financial situation except my grandfather is an executive at Caterpillar. My mom's sister and her husband are real estate investors here in Chicago and friends with Mr. Spurgeon. They mostly deal in REITs, and they're both licensed."

"Good. Friends and housemates?"

"Basic checking accounts except for Jack, who is splitting his money between my fund and the Select Fund. I'm not sure what Kristy does."

"I have that information from her dad."

"Will the SEC contact any of those people?"

"It's unlikely. The usual suspects would be siblings, parents, or grandparents, and it sounds to me as if there is nothing there. I'm positive they'll clear you on that without anything other than a letter from me, as they can't possibly have any evidence."

"And the insider trading allegations?"

"Routine. The SEC is always taking a proctoscope to our trades, and they never find anything. Every single trade you've made conforms to your fund guidelines, and your analyst reports and analyst notes back every trade you make with sufficient documentation. The currency trades will be scrutinized, but you are squeaky clean there because you were writing about them for months before you pulled the trigger.

"There might be further inquiries, but I'm confident we can send them away happy simply based on the paper trail. That is what they want to see, and given you documented where you found the information, there's literally nothing there. Enderlee's theory was that you were too good to not be cheating, and he said that to both Noel Spurgeon and the SEC and CFTC.

"The other thing I did was a churn analysis, and other than moves to balance your portfolio when you bring on new money, your trading patterns do not

support any allegations of churn. They weren't made, mind you, but I'm covering all bases. I don't think you have anything to worry about. Have you heard anything from the IRS?"

"No. Should I?"

"Nuisance complaints like this almost always involve the IRS because you know that the complexities of the tax law are such that it's nearly impossible to not make some kind of mistake. If they do send you a letter, it'll be to your home. Bring me a copy, and then turn it over to your CPA and tax attorney. Don't speak to the IRS under any circumstances without either your personal team or, if you prefer, Legal and Compliance."

"I'm going to assume it wouldn't *really* be personal."

"A good assumption. They'll point to the carried interest to implicate your fund and, by extension, Spurgeon and potentially anyone invested in your fund. Mostly, we can head that off. We've only ever had one audit that spread beyond the trader to his clients, and that was Jack Gilham because he was trading out of his parents' accounts, among other stupidity."

"Which earned him time in Club Fed," I replied. "No thanks. Is there anything I need to do?"

"No. Just keep the paper trail as you have been, and none of these inquiries will amount to a hill of beans. Happens all the time. It is, in effect, a cost of doing business."

"And why Mr. Spurgeon insists on everyone staying within the regs."

"It's simply not worth coloring outside the lines when we can make the kind of money we do legally. I don't have anything else. The onboarding team will let you know when the transfers are complete."

"Thanks. Anything else?"

"No. I'll let you know when the investigation is closed."

"Thanks again."

I left his office and returned to 29, where Bianca and I had lunch, then went to the gym for our workouts. The afternoon was routine, and I left just after 3:00pm to head home. Atsuko left just after I arrived, and Keiko and I sat together in the Japanese room.

"Why don't you come out with us?" I said to Keiko. "We're going to Giordano's, then going to see *The Right Stuff* with the boys."

"That's pretty long, right?"

"About three hours and fifteen minutes," I replied.

"I'll fall asleep halfway through," Keiko said. "You could take me to see *All the Right Moves* or *Under Fire* tomorrow afternoon after you meet with your counselor. We can come home for dinner."

"Whatever you want," I said.

"If only that were true..." Keiko sighed.

"What can I do for you?" I asked.

"You're doing it, Jonathan -- loving me and taking care of me. Neither of us can fix what's wrong."

"I know," I agreed, "but as I said the other day, if there's something you want to do, someplace you want to go, or something you want to experience, just ask, and I'll arrange it."

"Nothing I can think of, really. I get too tired during the day to really think about traveling anywhere, and you know, things could change very quickly. So, just time together, though I still don't want you to stop spending time with your friends."

"I do listen to you, Keiko-chan," I said lightly and with a smile. "I'm having lunch with Beth on Tuesday, and I saw my friends Wednesday night. And, of course, I'm going out tonight, too. OK to change the subject?"

"Yes."

"My new client was approved by Legal and Compliance, so the three trusts will come on board. I also spoke with Mr. Roy in Compliance about the complaint Enderlee made, and nothing will come of it."

"That's good. What could happen?"

"If I were found in violation of regulations, I could be reprimanded, fined, or even lose my licenses. But of the two allegations, one is laughable because it was for 'front-running', that is, trading in my account before I trade for a client, but given I only trade in my Cincinnatus Fund, that's not even possible unless I was trading in unmonitored secret accounts, which I'm not.

"The other allegation was for insider trading, but Compliance confirmed that I have all the necessary documentation for my trades, both in terms of projections

and in terms of analysis. Basically, Enderlee made the claims as retaliation against me and Spurgeon, but they'll go nowhere."

"Do the allegations hurt you?"

"Not really, because despite being shown in the records of the SEC and CFTC, they'll be adjudicated as untrue, which actually helps. Mr. Spurgeon makes a point that he's been investigated dozens of times and has never been sanctioned in any way -- not even a letter advisory. That's almost unheard of in our industry."

"Given how much money you've made, I can't imagine why anyone would consider cheating."

"Ego is a big one," I replied. "Thinking they're smarter than the government. And they probably are, but the government has, in effect, limitless resources and infinite time. That means you have to be perfect in your violation of the regulations. And that is basically impossible. The guy who was fired right after I started was caught because the unmonitored account he used was noticed by the IRS when auditing his parents, and that blew the scheme wide open."

"Insider trading is easier to pull off, and you can get away with it longer, but the government looks for trades that do not make sense based on current market conditions or are significant variations of past trades. I've had several inquiries in that regard, and I'm sure I'd have one on the Philippine peso even without Enderlee's allegations. But I have all the documentation to prove that I based my decisions on public information."

"So everyone gets caught?"

"No, but most do, eventually. And the penalties are real, unlike with banks where even the most crooked banks usually walk away with no more than a slap

on the wrist. As far as I'm aware, despite obvious criminal activity at Penn Square Bank, nobody has been indicted in the fifteen months since the bank was declared insolvent. Maybe it will happen, but I wouldn't hold my breath. That's not to say that the SEC or CFTC are perfect, but they seem to be more on the spot than the banking regulators."

"I know you would never do anything wrong!"

Kristy came into the room and let me know she, Jack, and CeCi were ready to go, so I kissed Keiko goodbye and headed out for dinner and a movie with my friends.



October 22, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"How was your week?" Nancy asked as we began our session in the Japanese room on Saturday after lunch.

"Busy with work, school, and a monthly dinner with a group of friends.

"How have you been doing with your quiet time?"

"A bit better, but I'm having trouble clearing my mind. I can do it for maybe thirty seconds, then either work or Keiko come to mind, and I have to start all over."

"That's normal. It takes some time to develop the skill of not thinking, especially for someone who is so analytical. One thing you can try is counting. Just start at one and count up. You give your mind something to do besides thinking. Think about the idea of counting sheep to fall asleep -- it's about clearing your mind and calming it."

"I'll give that a try."

"Good. How is Keiko?"

"She still has the low-grade fever but otherwise is holding her own. She has blood tests a week from Monday, which will give us a better idea of how things stand."

"Was there anything out of the ordinary that happened this week?"

"No. It was, for the most part, a typical week. I did bring on a new client officially, but that's not out of the ordinary, just not something that happens every week."

"Then let's pick up where we left off last Saturday. How did you deal with stress growing up?"

"I never felt stressed," I replied. "I suspect I was, but I simply didn't realize it."

"What did you do to relax?"

"I spent time with Bev in the hayloft of a barn on some farmland near our houses. We started going up there when I was around seven or eight, and the farmer didn't give us grief so long as we didn't annoy the horses or damage anything."

"What did you do up there?"

"Mostly just laid on blankets and talked. At night, we would sometimes watch the stars or the moon through a window or the hayloft door. The night she turned sixteen, things changed."

"Is it OK to delve into that a bit?"

"Sure."

"Who initiated the intimate contact?"

"It's not that simple," I replied. "Bev and I had wrestled and goofed around quite a bit, and it hadn't crossed my mind, except in an oblique sort of way. I obviously noticed she had developed, but she was always my best friend, not an object of sexual desire, or whatever you want to call it.

"Everything changed that night when she kissed me after I'd pinned her. It was as if a switch was flipped, and we went from our first kiss to losing our virginity together in less than five minutes. Much, much later, I found out she basically wanted that to happen, though she didn't plan very well if you catch my drift. We were lucky."

"No birth control?"

"No. We did every time after that."

"Did that put any strain on your friendship?"

"I don't believe so, and I believe Bev would agree. We enjoyed having sex, but we spent way more time talking and doing other stuff than having sex. In fact, after that first night, it was several weeks before it happened again, despite being in the barn several times. The strain on the relationship was from my foolish decision not to discuss my plans with her until they were *fait accompli*."

"Do you know what your motivations were?"

"Not with any clarity, but when pressed, I've said it was that I was afraid she'd object and tell me not to go, and the way our relationship worked, that would have been the final word."

"She was in control?"

"Completely. I was, and am, submissive with women."

"Do you mean personality or sexual practice?"

"Personality, I think. I'm not up on the meanings of 'submissive' or whatever, with regards to sexual preference."

"Have you had girlfriends other than Keiko and Bev?"

"Yes. I dated a girl named Lily, who called me her 'starter boyfriend', and that relationship went about as well as you would expect a first romantic relationship to go. I also dated a girl named Huifen, but she broke up with me because I wasn't ready to commit to her. Then, I started dating Keiko. In between, there were other girls who I went out with but with whom I didn't form any kind of exclusive relationship."

"Were you sexually active?"

"Very. Extensively. And to answer your next question, I had a VD test before Keiko and I became engaged."

"Back home, it was only Bev?"

"Yes. I kind of went a bit crazy after I moved to Chicago, and I allowed some adventurous girls to lead me places I never, ever thought I might go."

"I don't want to delve too much into that, but is there anything that bothers you?"

"No. The only concerns were for a couple of girls who wanted an exclusive relationship who I turned down, including Huifen."

"Your original job at Spurgeon wasn't stressful, was it?"

"Not really, no. I was used to working hard for demanding bosses, and it was a heck of a lot easier than lugging bags of seed or fertilizer for four to eight hours a day and doing other manual labor. The same was true with my promotion to supervisor and, I think, to analyst. But then I was put in charge of the newly created Research Department, and my first job was to terminate a third of the staff. I also took on responsibility for all research for the entire firm. And that was after Keiko's diagnosis, as we discussed."

"In terms of levels of stress," Nancy said, "if I evaluate you with the Holmes and Rahe stress scale, you certainly have a moderate to high risk of suffering some kind of physical or mental breakdown. Scores above 150 are considered 'moderate risk', while scores above 300 are considered 'high risk'. Using what I feel are the best measurements, you score around 250, with the highest scores being for Keiko's illness, your marriage, and your increased responsibility at work."

"Those are things I can't really change," I countered.

"I wasn't suggesting you change," Nancy said. "That was simply identifying the causes of your stress. And they can go higher."

"You mean if Keiko dies?"

"Yes. That would certainly put you in the high-risk category. Given you have no control over that and don't want to leave your job, we need to find ways to help

you limit the negative effects of stress. Exercise is a good one, and that is probably what has kept you on a relatively even keel. Another is socializing and spending time with friends, which I believe has helped as well."

"Keiko has insisted."

"That's wise on her part, as it helps you not obsess. Keeping busy is a double-edged sword, as it can cause stress. But if you're busy doing things you enjoy and which help you relax, they can reduce stress. At this point, I have two suggestions for you. First, continue your exercise, continue socializing, and continue using the relaxation techniques.

"Second, have a complete physical and explain to your physician that a clinical psychologist referred you because of stress. He or she will have you sign a release, and I can send my assessment. Fundamentally, the goal is to ensure you remain in good health and detect any signs of problems at the earliest possible time. Stress can lead to hypertension, heart attacks, and other serious health problems.

"You should discuss your diet with your doctor as well. He or she will very likely suggest avoiding stimulants such as caffeine and sugar. I'm not a physician, so I can't say for sure, but even moderate intake of caffeine and sugar increases the adverse effects of stress.

"I also strongly suggest limiting alcohol consumption because it's far too easy to use it to ameliorate the effects of stress, but all that does is substitute other problems with your health, relationships, and work. The same is true for drugs. I never asked, but have you ever experimented with drugs?"

"No. As I said to someone when I first moved here, I knew where to get them, but I certainly didn't have the money for them, even if I'd wanted to try them. The same was true for cigarettes and sweets."

"Another thing I didn't ask -- how is your weight?"

"Stable," I replied. "I weigh a few pounds more than I did when I moved here, but I think I get enough exercise."

"Good. I honestly don't think you need to see me again unless you have some kind of crisis."

"That will be sooner than you might think," I said.

"Is Keiko's situation worse than you've let on?"

"Only a few people know," I said. "We're waiting for the next set of blood tests, but without a marrow donor, we're out of options."

"I'm very sorry," Nancy said. "Obviously, I won't reveal anything, and if you want to talk about that, we can set something up."

"Let's wait until we have the test results," I said. "That's when we'll tell our closest friends."

"OK. Call me if you need to talk or, as I said, have some kind of crisis. See your doctor."

"I will. Thanks."

I showed her out, then worked on statistics homework until Keiko got up from her nap.

"Football love story or Nicaraguan Civil War?" I asked when she came into the Japanese room.

"Football love story!" she declared. "I wasn't sure if you'd want to see it, which is why I offered the other movie. There's also *The Dead Zone* based on the Stephen King novel."

"I'm OK with *All the Right Moves*," I said.

Keiko smirked, "Because you heard Lea Thompson takes off her clothes?"

"I hadn't heard that, but that is certainly a bonus!"

Keiko laughed softly, "Because you're a guy! I hear Tom Cruise gets HIS clothes off, too!"

"Among the things that hold NO interest for me, that's right up there at the top!"

"You watched a pornographic movie, right?"

"Yes. I've seen two -- *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* and *Insatiable*. Neither of them was particularly good, even allowing for the genre. I mean, I'd rather participate, and it's much more exciting to see in person than on the TV!"

Keiko laughed, "I would hope you thought that! Was there anything in those movies that you want to do that you haven't done?"

"No. Neither of those movies is unconventional, minus one scene in *Misty Beethoven* where a girl does a guy in the butt using a strap-on dildo while he's having sex with another girl. Other than that, it was all conventional, at least for me, given I'd had threesomes."

"And more than three!" Keiko giggled.

"Yes, and I willingly and happily gave ALL of that up for you!"

"So your fetish for Oriental girls is stronger than your desire to play baseball?"

"Absolutely! And that's over and above the REAL reason -- I love you."

"I love you, too!"

"Shall we go?" I suggested.

"Let me grab a mask, and then I'm ready."

I enjoyed the movie, which actually was more about life in a small town, with people struggling to get by, something with which I was very familiar. Stef's way out had been football, while mine was a job in Chicago. Lea Thompson not only had her clothes off, but you could see pubic hair in addition to her breasts, and Tom Cruise was shown from the front, something VERY rare in movies without an 'X' rating.

"Did you like the movie?" I asked.

"Yes! Was that what it was like for you?"

"The struggles? Yes, though I didn't play sports and was never in any trouble with the law or teachers. I identified with Stef trying to find a way out. That said, the economy in Clermont County wasn't nearly as bad as it was in that fictional town in Pennsylvania. I had options, but they were limited. Stef really had no options. Want to get some ice cream?"

"Sure!"

We went to Oberweis and had ice cream, then headed home.

XIX. Cry

October 25, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"You called it," Mr. Matheson said on Tuesday morning. "Stand pat, per your analysis?"

"Yes. The barracks bombing on Sunday caused a small blip in oil and precious metals but no long-term effects. Invading Grenada this morning won't change anything, and counterintuitively reduces overall tensions."

"How do you figure?"

"Consider it a relief valve," I said. "It allows Reagan to blow off some steam without actually risking a broader war. Cuban involvement won't matter, and we won't attack them. Castro will whine to Moscow and the UN, but the UN is toothless. The only reason the UN was able to intervene in Korea was that the Soviets were boycotting the Security Council because the UN recognized Taiwan. Had they not done that, they could have vetoed any involvement. That's what will happen if Castro asks the UN to intervene."

"Then, consider the propaganda value for Reagan, especially following the barracks bombing. It also provides a way to say that we 'did something' to counter Soviet moves following KAL 007. So, in the end, no real effect on global markets. It does tell me that Reagan is going to be reelected, though."

"A bold prediction when the first primaries are four months away."

"I have Tony working on a political analysis. It's not ready for prime time yet, but everything points to Reagan winning fairly easily. The only Democrats who

might challenge Reagan seriously are John Glenn and Gary Hart. Former Vice President Mondale, who everyone thinks is the frontrunner, would lose in a landslide based on our projections. I think he has enough superdelegates sewn up that he'd have to make a major misstep to lose the Democratic primary."

"House and Senate?"

"It's WAY too early to predict anything reliably, but the Republicans have more seats up for election. In the House, I can't imagine the Democrats losing control, given they have a hundred more seats. You'll start seeing poll amalgamations in our reports in January or February."

"OK. Are you ready to hire the second data analyst?"

"Yes. I arranged with Julie for Mr. Spurgeon to interview our top candidate on Thursday. I'd also like to hire for the open analyst position. Based on the research Tony has done into S&Ls, I think we need a full-time banking analyst."

"You're predicting a shitstorm with the thrifts."

"I believe the word we used was 'catastrophic collapse'," I replied with a grin.

"Legal frowns on profanity in analyst reports!"

"The SEC is a bunch of pearl-clutchers with fainting couches!"

"I don't know that one," I said.

"Think old ladies clutching their pearl necklaces in shock at some vulgarity and fainting onto a sofa with its back raised and wrapping around one end with the other one open."

"There weren't too many women with pearl necklaces in Goshen," I chuckled.

"It's usually the prudish society set; think Margaret and Jeri Lundgren."

I suppressed my reaction because Jeri was anything *but* prudish. That said, she did give off that vibe with everyone except me.

"What's your thought on hiring?" I asked.

"You have the open requisition, so it's up to you. Do you have someone in mind?"

"Pete Mueller, an underwriter at Continental Illinois."

"The bank you say is toxic?"

"He's a good guy. He's been part of my contact group for about eighteen months."

"How sure are you on this S&L thing?"

"I am not uncertain," I replied.

"OK. Get his résumé for me, and have Tony talk to him. If you guys both agree, then arrange things with Noel."

"Will do."

I left his office and returned to my desk. Just before noon, Keiko called.

"Jonathan, there's a letter for you from the IRS," she said.

"Go ahead and open it, please."

She did.

"It's a request for an interview. It says you can bring an advisor with you. You're supposed to call a specific number and make arrangements. Is something wrong?"

"No. This is all part of the false accusations by Enderlee. I've done nothing wrong, and last year's tax return was actually very simple. This year's will be far more complicated."

"What should I do?"

"Read me the number, then set it aside. I'll call Nancy King at Hart-Lincoln and have her call them to set up a meeting with the two of us and Robert Black."

Keiko read me the number, I thanked her, said I loved her, then we ended the call. I immediately called Nancy King and was put through to her by her assistant.

"What can I do for you, Jonathan?" Nancy asked.

"I received an interview letter from the IRS," I said.

"Do you know what they're looking for?"

"Nothing specific," I replied. "I'm positive it's related to a bogus complaint filed by a disgruntled former Spurgeon employee. The SEC is conducting an investigation which, according to Compliance, will not turn up even a hint of a rules violation. He actually suggested the IRS might talk to me."

"I should probably speak with him before I call the IRS. What's his name, please."

"Kendall Roy. I'll let him know to expect your call."

"Thanks. Once I speak with him, I'll call the IRS and see what they have to say. I'll have a good idea from what documents they request."

"What kinds of things?" I asked.

"Pay stubs, bank statements, investment statements, mortgage documents, and so on. I assume you can account for the origin of all of the money in any accounts?"

"Absolutely. I keep meticulous records, and Robert Black completed my taxes for 1982."

"OK. I'll give you ten minutes to let Compliance know I'll be calling."

"Thanks."

We ended the call, and I dialed Mr. Roy's number and let him know that Nancy King would be calling him.

"Don't sweat this at all, Jonathan," He said. "It's routine, and I'm positive it'll go away fairly quickly. We've seen it before."

"Thanks."

At 11:30am, I met Beth Schoenburg at a kosher deli. After lunch, the rest of the day went along as usual. Just before 3:00am, Nancy King called to let me know we had an appointment with an IRS examiner on November 7, at 3:00pm. They had asked for the documents Nancy had suggested, and I promised to have Robert Black send everything to her.

Because I'd come in early, as was my usual practice now, once the call ended, I headed home to relieve Keiko's grandmother.

"You're sure you aren't in any trouble?" Keiko asked as soon as Atsuko had left.

"Positive. I keep meticulous records, and I don't use any tax shelters. Well, OK, the carried interest exemption, but that's not a shelter; it's considered unrealized gains until I take it out, and I haven't touched those funds, and they actually don't accrue to me until January. We do have to pay taxes on my part of the management fee because that's actual realized income. But, rest assured, Robert Black and Nancy King have every i dotted and every t crossed."

"You're not worried at all?"

"Not one bit," I said. "How was your day?"

"OK. No real changes, so other than feeling typically weak and tired, it was fine. I'm able to complete the work for my correspondence courses, and Ellie stopped by for a few hours around lunch. My friend Niki from High School is coming over Friday afternoon and will stay with me while you go out."

"Good."

I spent about ninety minutes with Keiko, we ate dinner, and then I called Pete Mueller.

"I know you feel safe," I said after we greeted each other, "but I need a banking analyst, and I'd like you to come for an interview. The ship you're on is sinking."

"You're not wrong. Sure, why not? The worst that can happen is the status quo."

"Get me your résumé, please," I said.

"I should ask the salary."

"I actually can't tell you, as all of that is confidential and up to Mr. Spurgeon. He may or may not tell me, but the usual way is for me not to know. I do have an idea of the range, and from your application for my fund, I know your current salary, and I can't imagine a situation where your base pay and bonus wouldn't be significantly higher."

"OK. I'll fax over my résumé. Should I use the number on your card?"

"Yes, please."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, and after I kissed Keiko, I headed to Circle for my stats class and my pie and coffee with Violet.



October 27, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Thursday, I skipped class, as did Violet, and she, Jack, Kristy, and I went to Chicago Stadium to see the Hawks play the Pittsburgh Penguins. It should have been an easy game for the Hawks, given the Penguins were having a terrible season at 2-8. But it wasn't a hockey game, it was a street fight with twenty-three penalties, including a game misconduct for Al Secord of the Hawks.

The Penguins had scored first and built a 3-0 lead before the Hawks came back with two goals. The Hawks pulled Murray Bannerman to try to tie the game, but Bob Errey scored an empty-netter with thirty-four seconds remaining to give the Penguins a 4-2 win.

"That STUNK!" Violet groused as we walked to my car so I could drive her home.

"It didn't help the Hawks to take twelve penalties and for Al Secord to be ejected. He was in two fights and tried to start a third one when they ejected him! Later, Denis Savard was ejected along with Dave Hannan from the Penguins. The Hawks lost two of their best players, and that hurt them badly."

"I haven't seen a game that nasty except against the Flyers," Violet observed. "The teams seemed to hate each other!"

"It's like the old joke -- 'I went to a boxing match, and a hockey game broke out!'"

"I really appreciate you bringing me to the games. Have you thought more about season tickets?"

"Yes, but there's a long waiting list. I added my name to it, but it could take as long as ten years. With my new position, I'm allowed more tickets next year. I assume we're still on for Hawks and Bears games?"

"Yes! Absolutely! I really enjoy going and I'm happy Keiko is OK with it."

I drove Violet home, then headed to my house, where I quietly climbed into bed with Keiko.



October 28, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"The pressure on the Aussie dollar is building," I said to Scott when he came to my desk on Friday morning. "What does your analysis say will happen?"

"I don't think I can draw any firm conclusions," Scott said. "The futures contracts are all in a range that predicts stability, which makes zero sense given we know they have to devalue."

"All things being equal, I agree, but something is bugging me, and I can't quite place it. I wish Mr. Matheson had information for us, but his friend in the Finance Ministry is mum, which, after today's news, I think we can understand."

"So what's the play?" Scott asked.

"That's the \$64 question," I replied. "All indicators we have, and our rudimentary model say short the currency. I think we go with the model. It hasn't been wrong yet. What confidence factor?"

"It's a toss-up as to how much and when."

"And if we write that, I'll have Noel Spurgeon on the phone before the ink is dry on the report bitching about wanting a one-handed researcher!"

"OK, but it really *is* a tossup!" Scott protested.

"I agree, so let's go with the model. Just say that, and give our confidence factor at 60% for shorting the currency now and starting to apply pressure. I'm going to use an actual short but cover it with call options. The spread from our predicted exchange rate is such that it's cheap insurance."

"Let me go write it up."

"Thanks."

He left my desk, and I used my trading terminal to double-check the current exchange rate for the Australian dollar and the price of call options, then called Mr. Steinem to place the orders.

"Short a million AUD and cover with December call options for the full amount, right?" He asked.

"Yes. You can expect Mr. Matheson to begin the dogpile soon."

"How the hell do you sniff this stuff out?" Mr. Steinem said. "It's uncanny."

"Good research. I have the analyst reports and the computer model to back it up."

"No doubt, but you get it right every time!"

"Until I don't," I replied.

"Yeah, that is always the risk! Which, of course, is why you cover with options. Your orders are in. You'll see confirmations on your screen as soon as they're filled."

"Thanks."

A few minutes later, John Peters, the lead equities analyst, came to my desk.

"I want to check on a recommendation to go long on the Nikkei 225. Every sign points to a rapid increase in stock prices."

"How much and over what timeframe?" I asked.

"Based on property values and corporate earnings, it'll double in two to three years, and I think there's upside beyond that."

"You're the equities expert," I said. "If that's your recommendation, I'll back it."

"Thanks."

He left, and I looked over my asset allocations in my main fund, as well as the segregated fund for Jeri's trust, and decided to shift some money from S&P Index options to Nikkei Index options. I entered those trades directly, as they were within my trading limits and the asset mix guidelines for both my fund and Jeri's trust. Because it was a straight trade with no options, my limits were far higher, as it placed no risk beyond the invested capital.

If John was right, and the trend was what he believed it to be, I'd move more funds into the Nikkei, but to do that, I'd need to modify the asset allocation guidelines for the Cincinnatus Fund. I made a note to do that and then began reviewing the analyst reports which appeared on my screen on the IBM system.

After the reports were delivered, I met with Bianca to finalize the proposal for the Novell network and the Sun-1 workstation.

Later that morning, my phone rang.

"Research, Kane."

"Jonathan, this is Stan Jakes from the *Trib*. We met at the art show in Evanston. I'd like to buy you lunch and pick your brain. Off the record, of course."

"Sure. Tuesdays and Thursdays are best for me."

"How about next Tuesday, the 1st. You pick the place, but I don't have your kind of money!"

"How about Billy Goat Tavern?" I asked.

"Perfect! See you at 11:45am on Tuesday."

"Sounds good."

I had just hung up when Julie called me to say that Mr. Spurgeon wanted to see me. I let her know I'd be right up, then headed up to 32. When I arrived, Julie sent me directly in.

"You're authorized to hire Steve Smith," he said. "He'll have the same base and bonus structure as Pérez, and she'll receive a nice bump as of January 1st."

"Thank you."

"Murray tells me you want to fill the final position with someone you know."

"Yes. Pete Mueller from Continental Illinois. He's an underwriter, and I'm sure you read our analyst report, which says that there is no chance the bank survives."

"The Feds will bail them out; they always do!"

"Are you *sure* about that?" I asked. "FDIC did not make Penn Square depositors whole. That had never been the case before, but nobody would assume the deposits, so the uninsured portions were wiped from the books. If the Feds were willing to force Chase Manhattan to take a haircut, all bets are off."

"Continental Illinois is orders of magnitude larger than Penn Square."

"Yes, it is, and my team thinks the Feds would be forced to guarantee deposits beyond the insurance limits to prevent cascading failures, but Penn Square says that cannot be a sure bet."

"You're just full of good news, Kane," Mr. Spurgeon said.

"I only report the news," I said with a grin. "I don't make it!"

"Smart ass! Set up an interview for me with your friend. I'm going to ask Jackson to move our accounts from Continental Illinois. The last thing I want is to wait on the Feds to give me access to my money or, worse, take a haircut."

"I didn't know we had accounts with them."

"Cash accounts for settlement at the CFTC and CBOT. Not a lot, but enough, and overnight paper for the same purpose."

"Ah, that's why I didn't know. I have zero to do with trade settlement!"

"I want to see a risk analysis of all the major banks as soon as you can produce one."

"We'll get on that," I said. "We can start with the non-performing loan percentage as a rough indicator until Pérez and Smith develop the new model. Speaking of them, I have a proposal for a computer network and a data analysis computer."

"Murray primed me. I'll approve them. We have a real edge and need to double down on that."

"Thanks."

"Go make some money!"

"On it!" I declared.

I left his office and went down to 30 to speak to Mrs. Peterson about arranging for an interview for Pete, and once I'd filled out and signed the necessary forms. I went to my desk to get his résumé and brought it to her. She promised to take care of it right away and let me know that Steve Smith would start on December 1st. I had hoped it would be sooner, but given he was moving from California, there wasn't much that could be done.

Things were coming together really well, though I was having less success with raising capital than I would have liked. The problem was that I didn't have enough time to dedicate to it, and my other duties had to be a priority. And that wasn't a bad thing, really, in that AUM wasn't the key factor for me at the moment. What was key was being able to take the Series 30 exam, which I would do in March.

While I didn't foresee leaving Spurgeon, no matter the size of my AUM, I couldn't run my own shop with other licensed professionals without the Series 30 license. In addition, I was interested in the Chartered Financial Analyst accreditation, as those credentials would have a serious impact on my ability to attract new money. And that required I continue working on my degree in night school.

The rest of the day was typical, and I was home at 3:30pm to be with Keiko.

"Jonathan, this is my friend Niki," Keiko said, introducing a tall, thin girl with thick glasses. "She's pre-law at Northwestern."

"Nice to meet you, Niki," I said. "Do you need anything, Keiko?"

"No."

"Then I'll leave you two alone. I'll come kiss you before I leave for dinner and the movie."

"OK!" she agreed.

I went to my room and read until it was time to go out with Jack, Kristy, and CeCi. The four of us went to Star of Siam, then saw *The Dead Zone*, which was based on a Stephen King novel of the same name.



October 31, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday, I sent the computer purchase proposal to Mr. Spurgeon and was surprised when Julie called me just before noon to say that it had been signed. I went up to Julie's desk and hand-carried it to Phil, the head of Information Systems.

"That was fast," he said. "It usually takes forever to get spending approved."

"The key is showing how the money we spend makes us more money in the long run," I said. "I learned from the whole redundant equipment fiasco that arguments about fewer or shorter outages weren't cutting it, even with the claims of 'losing millions' which couldn't be quantified. I could show better results for the FX desk once we began using data analysis, compared to the other desks, and that's what sealed the deal. It also didn't hurt to have Murray Matheson onside, and more importantly, able to take the credit."

"That's your true ace in the hole," Phil said. "Jack Nelson doesn't have a P&L and isn't in a position to take credit for things with the Suits. And I don't include you in that, because you aren't an asshole."

I chuckled, "So far as YOU know!"

"All I care about is that you aren't a jerk when it comes to computers and phones! Anyway, how is your wife?"

"She had blood drawn this morning, so we'll know more on Wednesday."

"They haven't found a compatible donor?"

"No. We've had a few hundred people tested in Tokyo, but her family on both sides is from rural areas far from Tokyo. There's been an attempt to find other relatives there, but so far, no matches."

"That sucks, man. Sorry."

"Thanks."

"I'll get these orders placed. I'm going to have Ned shadow the *Novell* consultant so we can do our own support."

"That's a good idea."

"I also need to talk to Jack Clinton and ensure the proper cables are installed. They're not quite to the point, so it won't be a problem."

"Thanks."

We shook hands, and I headed back to 29 to have lunch with Bianca and then go to the gym for our workout. After lunch, Bianca and I sat down with Tony to discuss the requests she had from the team and to prioritize them.

"We're still going to have more work than we can do even after Steve Smith comes aboard," Bianca observed.

"Which is why we're prioritizing," I said. "And I think some of the requests can be consolidated as well. I think the banking analysis is the most important right now, but I don't think we can start on it until Pete comes on board."

"Is that a sure thing?" Bianca asked.

"So long as he doesn't blow his meeting with Mr. Spurgeon tomorrow," I said. "He'll start December 1st along with Steve Smith. Until then, we'll use the simple risk analysis based on non-performing loan percentages. It's rough, but it does flag potentially troublesome banks. But what we really need is to know their exposure to S&Ls and smaller banks like the former Penn Square."

"I'm both surprised and not surprised we haven't seen any indictments," Tony said. "There's clear criminal activity, but bankers skate on things that would have the three of us locked up."

"The FDIC is more interested in the stability of the banking system than they are in bringing criminal charges," I replied. "I do see their point, but all that does is encourage bad behavior."

"Moral hazard," Bianca observed. "They're socializing the losses and privatizing the profits. That guarantees risky behavior on the part of the banks. Things we'd *never* get away with."

"I have a concern about FSLIC if this goes the way things are looking," Tony said. "They won't have the reserves to cover the losses."

"They have printing presses in DC and Fort Worth," Bianca observed. "That's the solution."

"Plus the Fed's discount window," I added. "We'll know their plan when Continental Illinois goes under, which we think will be late Spring or early Summer. Mr. Spurgeon is sure enough that he moved some clearing accounts and overnight paper services from Continental Illinois to First Chicago."

"How do you have the timing down?"

"Conversations with Pete and reading Continental Illinois' public disclosures. We have no positions in Continental Illinois, so there are no concerns about insider trading, and Pete has been scrupulous about not naming any S&Ls or banks other than Penn Square, and all the information about them is public. Remember the rule -- if we can source it from public information or a third party who is not an insider, we're covered. And we have to be meticulous about it."

We finished our analysis, and each of us went back to our desks to complete our day.



November 1, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Close out all my gold and silver contracts, please," I said to Mr. Steinem first thing on Tuesday morning.

"Matheson is still sticking to the end of the year?"

"Yes. I hit my numbers, and I'm going to lock it in."

"It'll take me about fifteen minutes to unwind everything. The cash will be available on Thursday."

"Put it all in Nikkei 225 Index options with December '84 maturity."

"All of it?" he questioned.

"All of it."

"Your wish is my command!"

"Thanks, Mr. Steinem."

"Joel, please."

"Thanks, Joel."

"You're welcome!"

I hung up and began my usual morning review of world events. Things were relatively calm, as military operations on Grenada had concluded earlier in the morning with the capture of the island of Carriacou, about 15 miles off the coast. The lack of response by the Soviets, besides what amounted to whining at the UN, had been muted.

It was a busy morning, and at about 11:20, I left the office to meet Stan Jakes at Billy Goat Tavern. He bought our cheeseburgers, chips, and soft drinks, and we sat down at a table in the noisy tavern.

"How does this work?" I asked.

"Unless I specifically say otherwise, everything you say is off the record," he replied. "That means your name and where you work will never be mentioned and won't appear in my notes. The only person besides me who will know your identity is my editor. Not even a court order will work to reveal your identity."

"How is that possible?" I asked.

"Because reporters are generally shielded by the First Amendment, and when judges try to circumvent that, we keep our mouths shut and go to jail. That's rare, and in every case, the reporter is released without revealing his or her sources. We simply can't ever violate that rule without making news-gathering impossible. My calendar shows only an entry for lunch, with no name or location."

"Couldn't someone see us here?"

"Yes, that's possible, and if someone asks, we're discussing your relationship with Miss Haight and your support for her artwork. And we will. I've never once had a confidential source revealed, and I've never been asked to reveal one. And, to be honest, unless you have 'whistleblower' information about Spurgeon, there's nothing to worry about."

"As Gertrude Stein wrote, '*there is no there there*'," I replied.

"No offense intended, but that is not a quote I'd expect you to know, or at least who wrote it! I'm impressed."

I laughed, "Don't be. It's from Noel Spurgeon's training manuals referring to SEC and CFTC investigations of the firm. I memorized it, along with a number of other relevant quotes. I was not a fan of literature in High School, and most of my reading now is news or research material."

"Research is the lifeblood of journalism, so I'd like to hear about your methods. Again, remember, this is all off the record."

"I hear you, but there are some things which we do I simply can't talk about because even if you write unattributed, it would reveal information to our competitors."

"Something proprietary?"

"Yes. And our employment contracts contain non-disclosure agreements."

"What can you tell me?"

I described the structure of the research team and *some* of the tools we used, including Bloomberg, Nexis, and Dow Jones, but I was careful to not even hint at the work Bianca was doing.

"All of that," I concluded, "is considered public information."

"How would an insider trading scheme work, if you know?"

"I do because the Spurgeon training material, the licensure exams, and SEC regulations basically spell it out, and anyone familiar with all of those can piece together how to violate the regulations. That's a termination offense at Spurgeon, and I've seen it happen. We're investigated all the time, but no violations have been found. Heck, I've been investigated several times."

"Why is that?"

"Spurgeon, like other similar investment firms, often trades counter to conventional wisdom and, in many cases, trades before the rest of the market. That attracts scrutiny from the regulators, who see that as a sign of cheating. The usual way is to have a contact inside a company or a government, obtain material information that is not publicly available, and make trading decisions based on that."

"How do you defend yourself from those accusations?"

"That is a core component of my team's work -- to provide analysis to back up any trade that is made. So long as that exists and is drawn from public sources or inferred or deduced from public information, there is no violation. The key to success, if you want to stay on the right side of the law, is to find the clues before others do or before the information is reported in a way that reveals the information to the general public."

"OK. I think we should start at the beginning if you don't mind. Would you tell me how a stock trade works? I mean, behind the scenes."

I nodded and took him through the steps, including order routing, fulfillment, and clearing. He asked a number of questions and took copious notes, and by the time we finished eating, he had a very good picture of the process.

"Back to the insider trading question -- what would happen if I discovered something in the course of my job and told you about it?"

"It would depend on the original source," I replied. "First of all, an 'insider' is, generally speaking, a company's officer, director, or a beneficial owner of more than 10% of a class of the company's stock. Anyone in those positions must file reports with the SEC when they trade.

"If they communicate material, non-public information to someone, that second party cannot trade based on that information without violating the law. A third party might or might not be in violation, and that's where what we call Analyst Notes become important. Those are our defense against claims of insider trading."

"Could I see one of those?"

"They're all proprietary, unfortunately. I could be fired for showing you. The SEC has copies, but I don't believe they're available via a Freedom of Information Act request because they are proprietary."

"OK. I won't ask you to break the rules. Before we leave, could you give me an example of a legal way to trade on inside information? You implied there is."

I nodded, "Yes. Let's say Company A produces a widget, and widget sales have fallen off dramatically. If I talk to an insider at Company A before that becomes public knowledge and make a trade, I've acted illegally. If I know who the suppliers for parts or raw materials are for Company A and find out from them that orders are down, I can trade on that information in almost every case."

"Interesting. So, you analyze the supply chain?"

"Among other things, yes. So, for example, I could know that Company A is going to have a down quarter because Company B reports lower sales of some component of Company A's widget. A concrete example -- if GM orders fewer car stereos for a quarter, that tells me they project to sell fewer cars. Or, to put it closer to home, if the *Tribune's* ink and paper suppliers report lower sales, I could reasonably project the *Trib* believes circulation is going to fall, advertising revenues are going to fall, or both."

"I think I see how this works now," Stan said, "at least at a basic level. I'd like to digest all of this then come back to you with more questions about the process. I'd also like to be able to ask you questions, *ex post facto*, about major events and how they affect the market beyond the headline numbers from Dow Jones."

"Once the information is public, I can discuss it," I said.

"Good. Last question before we go -- how many paintings did your friend sell?"

"All of the ones she displayed -- four to collectors, three to the gallery owner."

"I'd like to do a further piece on her, if she's willing."

"I'm positive she'll be willing. May I ask a question?"

"Sure."

"You write for the Entertainment section; why the interest in the financial markets?"

"I want to develop a rep as an investigative reporter. So long as I file my human interest stories on time, my editor allows me to work on serious topics. One last thing -- if there is legal action against anyone in your industry, I'd like to call you for background information."

"Sure. So long as you understand the limits of what I can say."

"I'll push the limits, but I won't be upset if you push back."

We shook hands, left the tavern, and he headed for Tribune Tower while I headed to the Hancock Center. I completed my workday and then headed home to relieve Atsuko. I had dinner with Keiko, then headed to class.

"How are you doing?" Violet asked when we met at the diner after class.

"Hanging in there."

"The test results are back tomorrow, right?"

"Yes."

"You don't expect them to be positive, do you?"

"I don't see how they can be," I sighed. "The best we could hope for is the infection is gone. But that doesn't solve the larger problem of not having found a marrow donor."

"And there's nothing else you can do?"

"No," I replied. "Nothing."

"That stinks."

"Yes, it does," I replied. "Yes, it does."



November 2, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"An IV?" I asked Keiko when I arrived home on Wednesday afternoon.

"My white count was up significantly, and Doctor Morrison suggested an antibiotic cocktail -- three separate strong antibiotics. He's hoping to eliminate the infection because my blast count is up."

"How high?"

"13%," she said. "Almost back to when I was initially diagnosed."

"I take it Doctor Morrison would like to try another round of chemo?"

"If possible," she said. "I'm not sure."

"What's your temp?"

"101.5°F," she replied. "My white count has to return to a semblance of normal, and my fever has to go down before it's even a possibility. He did suggest one more transfusion, but if the antibiotics don't work..."

"Tell me what you want to do, Keiko-chan."

"I'm tired of fighting a losing battle," she said. "Mentally, physically, and emotionally. But I don't want to die."

I held out my arms, and she stepped into them, and I hugged her tightly because, from all evidence, nothing was going to stop her from dying, barring what most people would describe as a miracle -- finding a marrow donor and beating the infection so she could have the procedure.

"You know I love you," I said. "And I don't want you to die, either. What happens next has to be your decision, though I would suggest having the transfusion to give you more energy to do whatever it is you want to do before...before you can't. If there's one special thing you want to do, tell me, and I'll make it happen. I have vacation time, and I trust Tony and Bianca to keep things running if I take time off. I'm positive Mr. Spurgeon will be accommodating."

"I can't really travel anywhere," she said.

"Actually," I said. "You can. Finish the course of antibiotics and have the transfusion. We'll go wherever you want because a few days without the checkups won't change anything."

"Someplace quiet and peaceful," Keiko suggested. "Perhaps The American Club in Kohler, Wisconsin? Kristy had suggested it for our honeymoon."

"Where is Kohler?"

"North of Milwaukee, near Sheboygan. She said it's hard to get a reservation."

"I think I know someone who could solve that problem," I replied. "How long is this course of antibiotics?"

"Ten days."

"Then, if I may, I'll suggest having the transfusion around day eight, and then on day eleven, we'll go away for a few days."

"And you'll make love to me?"

"As much as you need me to. We'll just be together, with no distractions and no interruptions, save allowing housekeeping to make up the room."

"That's what I want to do," Keiko said.

"Then I'll make the necessary arrangements tomorrow. If, for some reason, Mr. Spurgeon can't call in a favor or pull strings, is it OK to find another place we can go?"

"Yes, so long as we can be alone together. I'm so sorry, Jonathan."

"You have nothing to apologize for, Keiko-chan. You've done nothing wrong."

"I know, but...I'm leaving you."

"Not by choice, and not without having put up a fight."

"What will you do? You know, after?"

"Cry."

XX. When the Time Comes

November 3, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I need a favor," I said to Noel Spurgeon on Thursday morning.

"It has to be about your wife, otherwise you wouldn't ask."

"It is. We've basically reached the end game."

"I'm sorry to hear that. What favor?"

"Keiko would like to spend some time together, and she'd like it to be at the American Club in Kohler, Wisconsin. She indicated that the resort is always booked solid."

"What dates?"

"Based on her medical appointments, November 14th to November 17th."

"Let me make some phone calls; I should be able to make that happen."

"Thank you."

"Keep up the good work, Kane. And let me know if there is anything you need."

"I will. Thanks again."

I left his office and returned to 29, where I saw Jack going into the new space. I decided to check on the progress, as we hadn't spoken about it in a week, so I followed him.

"Morning, Jonathan," Marcus Washington said when I walked in.

"Morning. Just having a look; don't mind me."

I looked at the space and listened as Jack and Marcus discussed the minor delay related to the wiring for the network, but because they had built a few extra days into the schedule, they still planned to make the target completion date.

"The only tricky part," Marcus said, "is the additional inspection required for low-power wiring. I think we can get the same inspector to do both when he's here, but this being Chicago, you can never be sure."

"Jonathan, would a delay cause you any problems?" Jack asked.

"None that I can think of. And I'll cover things with Mr. Spurgeon if that happens. I changed the specs part way through the job."

"Thanks," Jack said. "I appreciate it."

"You're welcome," I said, then left to return to my desk.

I checked the news and actually laughed out loud when I saw President Reagan's response to the UN statement on Grenada. The UN General Assembly had, by a lopsided 108 to 9 vote, stated that the invasion was 'a flagrant violation of international law', to which Reagan, when asked about the vote, had replied, *'it didn't upset my breakfast at all'*.

That more or less put the cherry on top of the analysis that my team and I had provided, saying that, literally, nothing would come of the invasion. Reagan had, in effect, 'gotten away with it' in a fashion similar to how the Soviets had 'gotten away' with shooting down KAL 007. There were deeper ramifications, of course, but in the scheme of things, neither mattered with regard to the financial markets and had been, as John Peters had jokingly stated, 'a fart in a hurricane'.

That said, the world was on a hair-trigger, and a wrong move by either side could lead to nuclear war, something I didn't want to countenance. On the plus side, *that* result would render all of our work and projections meaningless, and it was unlikely any of us would survive the MIRVs targeted on Chicago, which hosted two important Navy facilities -- Glenview Naval Air Station and Naval Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes. Those, plus the important financial markets - CBOT, CME, and CBOE -- plus major banking and retail interests, along with the government research facilities in the western Suburbs, guaranteed we'd be taken out in the first strike.

What mattered, in the end, was just how close we could come to 'DEFCON 1' without destroying the world and what that might look like for foreign exchange, precious metals, equities, and fixed-income securities. Each level of risk created a different set of relationships, with higher risk increasing precious metals prices and reduced risk being best for equities. It was the nuances of those calculations that would make us real money, as everyone knew the general idea.

I made some notes about additional factors to include in my global stability analysis, tweaked a few parameters in the spreadsheet, and then ran a regression, which showed my new model was slightly more accurate but still off. And it was in those 'off' areas that most of our profits would lie -- when the market didn't follow the obvious factors. If we could find *any* correlation, that would give us a huge advantage over our competitors or help us maintain it as they began to catch up.

One thing I'd noticed was that because the vast majority of our trades went out 'over the wire', as it were, several smaller funds had done their best to track our moves, relying on that public information. The only way to stop that was to trade privately, in what had been referred to as 'dark pools', where public reporting was not necessary unless we took a controlling interest in a publicly traded company.

SEC Regulation 19c3, promulgated in 1979, had allowed for listed securities to be traded 'off exchange', and thus away from prying eyes. By keeping the transaction private, it had no direct market impact and also disguised moves being made by financial services firms such as Spurgeon and large banks.

Spurgeon occasionally conducted trades via those so-called 'dark pools', but the FX desk generally could not use them, nor did it have much need for them, as currency transactions could be kept completely dark by simply trading directly with the counterparty rather than going through an exchange or dealer. That was the norm, though, in the case of attacks on currencies, where we wanted it known to create the 'dogpile' effect, which was starting with regard to the Australian dollar, and which we had used to good effect against the Philippine Peso and the Zaïre.

I spent the entire morning and part of the afternoon tweaking my global risk model, with most of the tweaks resulting in worse results. Per Bianca's instructions, I kept careful track of what I changed and the results, including the regressions, so that we could analyze them to see if we could find a correlation between the failures, not just the successes, as that could provide further insight.

At about 2:15pm, my phone rang.

"Research, Kane."

"Mr. Spurgeon would like to see you now," Julie said.

"Be right up."

I disconnected the call and headed to 32, where Julie sent me directly into Mr. Spurgeon's office.

"You have the Presidential Suite at The American Club for the dates you asked. I'm covering it."

"That's not necessary," I said.

"Say 'Thank you', Kane."

"Thank you."

"Other than tips, everything will be charged to me. I've already cleared the days off with Murray for you."

"Thank you."

"By the way, today was the first time I've seen the word 'laughable' in a political analysis."

"It fit," I replied. "I mean, the UN General Assembly has no actual power, and nothing they say actually matters. Despite claims to the contrary, all power vests in the Security Council, and with the US and USSR nearly always on opposite sides, the UN is, in fact, a laughingstock. From what I can see, their only success is avoiding paying parking fines around UN headquarters!"

Mr. Spurgeon laughed, "They milk that diplomatic immunity for all it's worth! What about peacekeepers?"

"What about them? India and Pakistan are still at odds over Kashmir and find ways to kill each other despite the UN being there since 1949. Ditto the Middle East. And let's not even discuss Africa!"

"Point taken."

"Fundamentally, the US and USSR, and to a lesser extent Red China, can do as they please, and nobody can stop them except each other. And even they can't really stop each other because it comes down to one side or the other blinking rather than opting for nuclear annihilation. Mutual Assured Destruction is an insane idea, but it works. Both sides stop short of a general shooting war because they know where it has to lead."

"All true. Who wins the Cold War?"

"In the end, the economic power of the West will defeat the East Bloc. The question is, do they go down with a whimper or a bang? And then, does China somehow fill that power vacuum to become a superpower."

"What's your take?"

"Watch their economy. China could develop a strong economy, which is possible after the demise of Mao and the 'Gang of Four'. The reforms instituted so far by Deng Xiaoping seem to be on target for creating what I think we would call a mercantilist economy, and if he can succeed, then China will fill the power vacuum created by the collapse of the East Bloc. Downsizing the Peoples Liberation Army tells me Deng is serious about economic improvement."

"Who's your China expert?"

"Tony, really, mostly because of his own interests -- his wife is a Chinese ex-pat who escaped via Thailand in the mid-70s."

"Did anything come of your contacts with the Soviet Trade Ministry?"

"No. I've kept in touch, but I don't see anything there, and as I noted, their economy is likely to collapse sometime in the next decade."

"Peer into your crystal ball -- when?"

"Early 90s, I'd say. It could happen sooner, but they have enough natural resources to stave off the inevitable for a decade or so, or even perhaps two. By the turn of the millennium, though, it's a sure thing. They simply don't have enough hard currency or precious metals to conduct international trade except as a supplier of raw materials, and as we know, it's manufactured goods where the profits are made. Russia has no real manufacturing capacity for exports, the exception being the tractors they're selling here and whatever they can foist on client states."

"How solid is your information and analysis on the Nikkei 225?"

"I am not uncertain," I said.

Mr. Spurgeon laughed, "Your stock phrase for when you're sure."

"At least as sure as I can be about anything that is a purely chaotic system -- financial products and weather being the two main ones."

"Double in two or three years, and further upside?"

"Yes."

"OK. I trust your analysis, but I want to look someone in the eye when they give me what amounts to new, contrary information."

"I'm sure you read the analysis, but it comes down to the fact that real estate prices are going to force the issue. There is so much available capital for building owners to borrow against, and interest rates are so low, they're going to do it and pour money into the stock market. And those increasing property values pump up the balance sheets of companies as well, making the fundamentals look good to the casual observer, and when combined with a strong Yen, will drive retail investors into the market."

"Which is why you think, eventually, the house of cards collapses."

"I think even a slight drop in property values could cause a cascading effect as could a reduction of their trade surplus. Scott and I believe the warning sign will be a weakening of the Yen. When we see that, we pull out of the market, short the Yen, and ride it down."

"If your team is right, we could see returns north of 50% for the next few years."

"I am not uncertain."

"Dismissed, Kane. Keep up the good work."

"Yes, Sir. And thank you again."

I left his office and returned to 29 to complete my day, then headed home to see Keiko.

"We have the Presidential Suite at The American Club for the 14th through the 17th," I said. "Mr. Spurgeon made it happen, and he's covering the cost."

"Really?"

"Really. He knows the situation, given his involvement with trying to find a donor in Japan."

"I'll call Doctor Morrison tomorrow and request the transfusion for the 12th. That should help me have more energy for our vacation."

"Is there anything else I can do for you, Keiko-chan?"

"You're doing the most important thing," she said. "Loving me. Happy birthday!"

"Thank you. Bianca has cake and ice cream for dessert."

"How does it feel to be twenty-one?"

"No different from yesterday, but at least now if I'm carded, I can still drink!"



November 4, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Research, Kane," I said when I answered the phone just after 9:00am on Friday morning.

"Jonathan, it's Chris Roth from Kenosha."

"Good morning, Chris. How are you?"

"Good. I'm calling to say that we're ready to pull the trigger. What do we need to do?"

"Sign the forms I left you and send them, along with the application packet, to my attention. If you want to courier it, I'll arrange that. Once we have the documents, Legal and Compliance will review everything, and then New

Accounts will handle transferring the assets. Just make sure the signatures on the application are notarized, please."

"I'll take care of that this morning. And yes, we'd like to move as quickly as possible."

"I'll call the courier. What time should they pick up the documents?"

"I'll have everything ready by 10:30am."

"I'll take care of it. Welcome aboard!"

We said 'goodbye' and I ended the call, then called Jack to let him know I needed documents picked up in Kenosha, with the charges allocated to the Cincinnatus Fund.

Five hours later, I hand carried the documents to Legal and Compliance, then returned to my desk. I completed my workday then headed home.

"Jonathan, you remember my cousin Ailea, right?" Keiko asked.

"I do. Hi, Ailea."

"Hi, Jonathan!" the bubbly seven-year-old exclaimed.

"How long are you here?"

"My mom dropped me off about ten minutes ago and will pick me up when she's done shopping; around 5:00pm."

"OK. Keiko, I'll be upstairs, but I'll spend some time with you before I go out."

"OK," Keiko agreed.

About ninety minutes later, Ailea left, and I went to the Japanese room to sit with Keiko.

"Given what we're facing," I said, "I think this is the last Friday I'm going to go out. I want to spend every moment possible with you."

"You know I want you to spend time with your friends," Keiko said.

"I do, but if I can be direct..."

"Yes."

"We don't have a lot of time left, and I want to make the most of that time. With you."

"I know," Keiko sighed. "I want...want things to be different, but..."

She began crying softly, and I took her in my arms and held her. I had read the same literature that she had, and once treatment stopped, it was usually a matter of months before the end, which meant there was a good chance that Keiko and I had only weeks before her symptoms would confine her to bed. She was already showing the first signs of what was called 'End-Stage AML' -- weakness, loss of appetite, and low blood pressure.

None of those were severe, but it was only a matter of time. Fortunately, she was not in pain, something that often happened at this stage and which would require painkillers. I hoped that continued for at least the next two weeks so that we could enjoy our time at The American Club. The transfusion would help, and the IV antibiotics were holding back the infection, though how long that would last was anyone's guess.

"I can stay home if you want," I said about ten minutes later.

"No, I'm going to eat something, then go to bed so I can have energy tomorrow when you're home."

"If you're sure."

"I am."

We went to the kitchen, I made her a light dinner, and after she ate, she went to bed and I went out to dinner with Jack, Kristy, and CeCi.



November 5, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday, Bianca and I went grocery shopping, stopped by the dry cleaner, and then headed home. Keiko, Bianca, Juliette, and I had lunch together, then Keiko and I went to the Japanese room.

"Can we talk about something?" Keiko asked quietly.

"Whatever you want," I replied with a bit of trepidation, given the likely topic.

"When the time comes, I want my grandparents and parents here."

"I will speak with your dad and grandfather and make that happen. What about your aunt, uncle, and cousin?"

"Yes. There are certain things which are done traditionally, and I'm not sure if my grandparents will want to do them; I am sure my mom will."

"What do *you* want, Keiko-chan? I will absolutely ensure *your* wishes are fulfilled."

"Well, in one sense, it won't matter, if you know what I mean."

"I understand, but it matters to me that your wishes are honored."

"I'm OK with the usual rituals, including the «通夜» (*tsuya*), which is similar to a wake, and a «告別式» (*kokubetsu-shiki*), or funeral is fine, but please do not give me a new name."

"A new name?"

"Traditional Japanese, which would include my mom, believe you should give the deceased a new name to prevent their «神» (*kami*) from being summoned at the mention of their name. It's a bit silly, especially given our beliefs, and the temples charge for it, sometimes millions of Yen to have a rare name. I promise not to haunt you if you say my name!"

I smiled, "Thank you. How much grief will we get from your mom on that?"

"She'll complain, but you can ignore her. Following the funeral, I want to be cremated, as we discussed. You may keep some of the ashes if you wish, but they do not go on the «神棚» (*kamidana*). The rest go to the crypt at Montrose Cemetery, as we discussed." ("Spirit Shelf")

"What about your parents or grandparents?"

"Traditionally, the ashes aren't kept, but being American, I felt you might want them. There are other traditions, but I looked into how it works here, and the ashes are ground, so the «骨揚げ» (*kotsuage*), or the 'picking the bones' ceremony, is not necessary. My mom may object, but things are different here."

"As for the crypt, my grandfather will arrange to have my name engraved on the stone tablet. If you want, your name can be engraved as well, but it would be painted red to signify you are still living. I'm not sure what you want to do, because you might marry again; I think you should."

"I don't want to think about that at the moment," I said. "I have no idea what will happen in the future, but I promised to love you until my last breath, so yes, please, have my Japanese name engraved on the tablet. Someday, I will join you."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive. What about waiting forty-nine days to inter the ashes?"

"I'm OK either way. I'm sure my mom will pay for the priest to say prayers the first seven days, but I'm OK with just the «初七日» (*shonanoka*), the prayers on the seventh day. If you want to wait, then the forty-ninth-day prayers called «四十九日» (*shijūkunichi*), and on the same day, the «納骨» (*nōkotsu*), or interment ceremony. At that point, you place my picture next to the altar on the «神棚» (*kamidana*)."

"What am I supposed to wear for these ceremonies?"

"Your kimono or a black suit with a white shirt. Women should wear a black kimono or a black dress. If you want, you can carry my «数珠» (*juzu*), which are prayer beads. They're in my jewelry box."

"I've never seen you with them."

"They were a gift from my mom when I turned thirteen, but you know I don't practice Buddhism in any ritualistic way. It would be a nice touch, and my mom

would appreciate it. She'll have hers, as will my dad and grandmother. My grandfather doesn't ever use them, so I'm not sure what he'll do."

"So, like a rosary?"

"Something like that, yes, and a mantra is repeated."

"Is there a tradition surrounding them?"

"You can carry them, wrap them around your wrist, or wear them suspended from a belt."

"So it would be OK to wear them to remember you?"

"Yes, if you wanted. If you take them off, you should place them on the «神棚» (*kamidana*) next to my picture."

"Is there anything else?" I asked.

"No. Well, actually, the day matters. To avoid trouble with my mom, you should avoid «友引» (*tomobiki*) because the Kanji imply pulling one's friends along. Otherwise, it's not nearly as important as the choice of a day for a wedding. The calendar is in my drawer, but it's in Japanese. You'll need help to read it."

"Could you write the translation of the seven sets of Kanji characters?" I asked.

Keiko laughed softly, "Yes, and then you could use it, even if you can't read it."

"If we're done with this, what would you like to do?"

"Just listen to music and cuddle, if that's OK."

"It is."

That's what we did for the rest of the afternoon, interrupted only by Maria, who came to check Keiko's vitals and change her IV bag. Keiko's vitals hadn't changed much, which, given where we were, was a good thing. She and I had a quiet dinner together, spent more time cuddling in the Japanese room, and then went to bed early.



November 6, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I have something to show you," Deanna said on Sunday while Keiko was napping.

I followed her to her loft studio, where she removed a cloth from an easel, revealing a stunning portrait of Keiko.

"Amazing," I breathed. "It's perfect."

"I'm not sure I'd go that far!" Deanna declared. "But I am happy with how it turned out."

"Would you frame it, please? Pick something elegant which complements the portrait. Obviously, I'll reimburse you for it. And this portrait is easily worth what «La petite mort» was worth. I'll write you a check."

"You don't have to; please accept this as a gift."

Remembering what Noel Spurgeon had said, I replied, "Thank you."

"Do you plan to display it right away?" Deanna asked.

"No, but I'll show it to Keiko. I'll put it up after..."

"How long do you think?"

"It's hard to say, but a few months, at the most."

"I'm so sorry."

"Thanks."

"If I can borrow your car, I can get the frame this afternoon. I have a pretty good idea of what will work."

"Thanks. And yes, of course. The keys are on the hook in the kitchen."

I left her loft and went downstairs to wait for Keiko to get up from her nap, which she did about an hour later. We spent the afternoon together, and after dinner, we went up to our room, and Deanna brought in the portrait, framed in a simple but elegant black frame.

"Oh, my!" Keiko gasped. "That's amazing!"

"That's exactly what Jonathan said," Deanna replied. "I'm glad you like it."

"Where do you plan to hang it, Jonathan?" Keiko asked.

"In the Japanese room."

"After, right?"

"Yes, unless you think otherwise."

"No, I think that's right. Thank you so much, Deanna."

"You're welcome."

"Would you keep it in your studio for now?" I requested.

"Absolutely," Deanna agreed.



November 7, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday afternoon, with Mr. Matheson's blessing, I left the office at 2:30 so that I could attend the meeting with the IRS examiner. I met Nancy King, my tax attorney, and Robert Black, my CPA, in the lobby of the Kluczynski Federal Building at 230 South Dearborn.

"Remember, other than factual demographic questions, you allow either Bob or me to respond," Nancy said. "They may insist you answer personally, but you should, if possible, simply state that you stand by your returns as filed. If, for some reason, Bob or I don't know the answer, we'll take down the question and commit to answering in writing."

"What am I missing?" I asked.

"It's a felony to make a materially false statement, even if inadvertently, or say anything that is an 'artifice' to covering up a crime. Most things with the IRS are civil, but some things can be criminal."

"You're full of good news. I thought only fraud or failure to file were criminal."

"Generally speaking, an honest mistake or a disagreement about the meaning of a provision of the tax code results in a civil fine, but the IRS *could* refer you to the

US Attorney. That's why you want Bob or me to do all the talking. If we sense any serious concern on their part, we'll ask for all questions to be submitted in writing so we can answer in writing after conferring. Neither Bob nor I think there's any real concern, but with the IRS, you never know."

"Shall we go up?" Bob asked.

We walked over to the elevator bank and waited for a car that would take us to the correct floor. Two minutes later, we were waiting in the lobby of the IRS offices, waiting for Terrence Jacoby, the examiner, to call us. Five minutes later, we were seated in a small conference room.

"Mr. Kane, who are your representatives?" Mr. Jacoby asked.

"My tax attorney, Ms. Nancy King, and my CPA, Mr. Robert Black."

"And which one is your official representative?"

"I am," Robert said. "I'm an Enrolled Agent, and Ms. King is here to advise both Mr. Kane and me. She is a Federally Authorized Tax Practitioner and is admitted to practice in Tax Court."

"Mr. Kane, would you confirm your full legal name, your birthdate, your Social Security number, and your current address?"

I recited the factual biographical data as Nancy had directed.

"How long have you lived at that address?"

"Since March," I replied.

"What other addresses have you had in the past two years?"

I provided my previous addresses -- the rental house, the Andros' garage, and my mom's house in Goshen.

"When did you file your first tax return?"

"1978, for the 1977 tax year."

"Who is your current employer, and what is your role?"

I answered those questions, explaining my somewhat complicated role and adding that I had two SEC licenses.

"Are you married or single?"

"Married."

"Do you have any dependents other than your wife?"

"No."

"And her occupation?"

"Full-time student until June; part-time since then."

"Do you have your records with you?"

"I have them," Bob said. "I'll need you to sign a receipt which lists each document you requested and a statement that we've provided the requested documents."

Handing over the documents and obtaining the receipt and the statement took nearly forty minutes, as it included nearly every financial document imaginable, including the incorporation papers for Yuusuke Holdings.

"I don't see any records relating to the investment fund Mr. Kane manages."

"None of those documents are responsive for tax years 1978 through 1982," Bob said.

"I'd like to see them," Mr. Jacoby said.

"They are not due until April 15th of next year, and important documents have not been prepared, as Mr. Kane's gains and income are unrealized and do not accrue until December 31st. As such, they are not, at this time, subject to IRS examinations. The statutes clearly give April 15th as the date when that income must be reported and when those documents must be available for IRS examination."

"I'm entitled to ask for any relevant documents," Mr. Jacoby declared.

"Yes, as to filed tax returns. Nancy?"

"Bob is correct," she said. "The US Federal Courts have routinely ruled against IRS requests for current tax year documents unless the IRS can specifically identify material fraud on past returns or attempts to conceal current income through illegal means. If you have made such a finding, I require you to present it in writing immediately."

"I'm not prepared to do that," Mr. Jacoby said. "Moving along, I'd like to ask about the mortgage on Mr. Kane's home."

"A proper note was executed," Bob said. "But again, no tax filings are or have been required; they will be made with Mr. Kane's 1983 tax return."

Mr. Jacoby frowned, and I had the distinct impression he was working based on some theory Enderlee had put forward. The problem he had was that he could only really look into things that had occurred in years for which I'd filed a tax return. The SEC, on the other hand, had a much freer hand and could look at anything up to and including the present moment.

"On last year's tax return, there is a gift of a car. Tell me about that, please."

"Mr. Kane was rewarded for success at work," Bob said. "As such, the car is considered taxable income, and Mr. Kane declared it and paid the tax due, in accordance with 26 U.S.C. § 102(c)."

That had, at the time I filed my tax returns -- or rather, Bob had filed them -- surprised me, but he'd made the point that the law expressly exempted gifts from employers because they were not given with detached and disinterested generosity. The underlying premise was an attempt to avoid employers 'gifting' their employees their salary to avoid taxation. It was a bit tricky, as there were exemptions for legitimate achievement awards, and Mr. Matheson had personally given me the car, but Bob had, after a thorough review and discussion with Nancy, decided to take the conservative approach.

"I don't have any further questions at this time," Mr. Jacoby said. "I'll review all the submitted documents and compare them with Mr. Kane's return. I'll be in touch with any questions."

Bob stood, so I followed suit, as did Nancy. Bob turned and left the conference room, and I followed him. He signaled not to say anything, and the three of us made our way to the elevator and rode down to the lobby.

"I'd say your former co-worker made some claims about tax fraud," Bob said once we had moved away from the elevators to a spot where we could have some privacy.

"I had that picture as well," I said. "What will happen?"

"He'll beat his head on his desk at the end of his examination because there is literally nothing on which he can hang his hat. That said, you can be absolutely sure you'll have a full audit next year. The questions about the Cincinnatus Fund telegraphed that quite clearly. I assume you agree, Nancy?"

"Yes," she replied. "That is exactly what he'll go after. Bob and I will ensure your return is as accurate as humanly possible. I say that because there are areas of the tax code that are as clear as mud, and no letter rulings or court cases have clarified them."

"Then I'd like you both, so far as is reasonable, to approach it as conservatively as possible. I'd rather pay a bit more than legally required than have them find something on which to hang their hat."

"That's our usual approach," Bob said. "Some CPAs look to absolutely minimize taxes; I prefer to minimize audits. Those will cost you far more in time and money than most tax liability you could incur. That said, if there is a major discrepancy, Nancy will apply for a Private Letter Ruling. Nancy?"

"PLRs are official IRS responses to inquiries about the tax code," Nancy said. "We provide them with a specific set of facts and our preferred interpretation of the tax code. They respond with a PLR, which binds both the IRS and us, thus generally protecting against an audit or fines. They're only applicable to the specific taxpayer with the specific set of circumstances, though the IRS can release a redacted version as a Revenue Ruling, making them generally applicable."

"So what do I do?"

"Go home, go to work, and otherwise go about your business, and don't worry," Bob said. "On the plus side, when you get through this and next year's audit, they'll likely leave you alone for a time. That said, someone in your position is always going to be under scrutiny. I'm sure the Spurgeon Legal and Compliance team has spoken to you."

"Yes. So far, the SEC hasn't turned up anything, either. Enderlee may have made a huge mistake there, though, because he provided them materially false information."

"If only it worked that way," Nancy said. "Whistleblowers generally get a free pass even if they lie through their teeth. The government has no interest in prosecuting snitches -- that would limit who might snitch."

"Wonderful."

"Just relax," Bob said. "You're in good shape."

"Thanks to both of you."

"You're welcome," Bob said.

Nancy echoed him, we said 'goodbye' to each other, and I headed back to the Hancock Center to retrieve my car.

At home, I reassured Keiko there was nothing to worry about, and we had a quiet evening together.



November 8, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Tuesday morning, I woke to the news that a bomb had exploded in the US Senate portion of the Capitol Building. Nobody had been killed or injured, and the damage was mostly superficial. According to WBBM radio, which I listened to on the way to work, a bomb threat had been called in to the *Washington Post* a few minutes before the explosion. A group that identified itself as the Armed Resistance Unit claimed the bombing was retaliation for recent U.S. military involvement in Grenada and Lebanon.

WBBM mentioned that in April, there had been an explosion at the National War College at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C, with the claim to the UPI that it was in response to 'US imperialism' and speculated that the bombs might be related. The news report also mentioned previous bombs in 1971 and 1975, neither of which I remembered hearing about at the time.

When I arrived at the office, I went straight to Rich's office.

"Anything from the bombing last night?"

"Not even a blip in Asia or on the precious metals market. No deaths and no real damage, so nobody much cares."

"Thanks. I need to do some research on the previous bombings."

"The ones in the 70s, right?"

"Yes. I was twelve or thirteen when the second one happened, but I don't recall even hearing about it."

"Both were by the Weather Underground, but you might know them as the 'Weathermen', who were an offshoot of the SDS -- the Students for Democratic

Society. Basically, a revolutionary group dedicated to the overthrow of the US government, which they felt was imperialist."

"I wonder if they're related."

"If so, it would have to be a rump splinter group because the Weather Underground basically disintegrated after the Paris Peace Accords ended the US involvement in the war in Southeast Asia."

"OK. I'm going to do some research because I'll need a summary analysis for our morning report."

I left Rich's office, made a fresh pot of coffee, and sat down at my desk to begin researching the Weather Underground and the Armed Resistance Unit. In the process, I learned a lot that hadn't been taught in High School about revolutionary movements in the US that used terror tactics in an attempt to bring down the US government.

That led me to make notes to discuss with the team how we could account for 'domestic unrest' and terrorism, especially given the activities of the Red Brigades, the Baader-Meinhof Gang, Action Directe, ETA, the Irish Republican Army, and the PLO. We did have a factor for 'global terrorism' but the domestic terror and revolutionary groups could easily affect the markets, especially highly organized groups like the IRA.

I wrote my daily summary and updated the global risk spreadsheet, slightly increasing the terrorism factor, but in the end, the change from the previous day was in the insignificant digits we didn't report. I had just finished when my phone rang.

"Research, Kane."

"Jonathan, it's Kendall Roy. How did things go yesterday?"

"According to my CPA and tax attorney, just fine. They speculate, and I agree, that Enderlee fed the IRS a bunch of bullshit similar to what he fed the SEC."

"That's what I figured. What's the next step?"

"The examiner is going to review my returns from '78 through '82. My CPA did warn me that I'll likely be subject to a full audit next year."

"I wouldn't dispute that. Most of our licensed staff are audited every few years because the government thinks we have to cheat to make the kind of money we do."

"Too bad we can't simply exempt ourselves from the laws the way Congress does!"

"You're more likely to have a foursome with the girls from *Charlie's Angels* than have THAT fantasy fulfilled!"

I chuckled, "Now there's a thought, though I doubt my wife would approve."

"Mine, either, but I can have whatever fantasy I want so long as she doesn't know about it!"

"Good point! Any more from the SEC?"

"No," Mr. Roy said. "With no additional document requests and no further inquiries, I'd say they'll close the investigation in the next week or two. There's nothing for them to find, and as we discussed, some of Enderlee's claims are ludicrous."

"I'm curious, but is there any recourse?"

"Not really. But you know what happens when you cross Noel Spurgeon."

"Nothing good, that's for sure," I said.

"So the karmic balance is there. Enderlee can't hurt you, and he's dead to the world. And you know his funds are locked up. No need to make it personal when you have Noel Spurgeon on your side."

"True."

"Keep me posted on any developments with the IRS."

"Will do. Thanks."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, then went to speak with Tony.

XXI. What Happens Now?

November 9, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Got a minute?" John Peters, the lead equities analyst, asked on Wednesday morning.

"Sure, what's up?"

"On Monday, the FDA is going to approve a new drug, cyclosporin, for Sandoz GmbH."

I knew about cyclosporin, as it had been mentioned during our trip to Mayo Clinic, as a drug Keiko would receive to prevent her immune system from trying to attack the transplanted marrow cells. They'd said it was undergoing trials and awaiting FDA approval but had made the point that the information they'd provided was confidential.

I had looked into the drug to see if I could find any public sources, but nothing was available except to say that it was an experimental drug and that it was pending FDA approval. That might or might not have been enough to make the trade, but it was highly speculative, so I hadn't made any additional trades over and above the basket of pharmaceutical stocks in the Cincinnatus Fund.

"We can't act on inside information; what's your source?"

"My cousin who's a K Street lobbyist."

"For the pharmaceutical industry?"

"Yes."

"I don't think it'll fly. Run it by Kendall Roy in Compliance. If he says it's kosher, put it in your report."

"Compliance is way too conservative," John countered.

"Only Mr. Spurgeon can change the guidelines. Run it by Compliance and see what they say."

"OK," John agreed.

I made a note of the conversation in my log, which was required by Compliance when there was any risk of a violation of any regulations. About twenty minutes later, Kendall Roy called and asked me to come to his office.

"John Peters?" I asked.

"Yes. Make sure you document the conversation in your log."

"Already done. I noted that he felt you were too conservative in your rulings."

"He said that?" Mr. Roy asked.

I nodded, "He did. I reminded him that Mr. Spurgeon set the guidelines, and he's the only one who can change them."

"And your thoughts?"

"Spurgeon Capital's reputation and all our jobs depend on not violating any regulations. Given our track record, both in terms of compliance and profits, I'd

say Mr. Spurgeon has it exactly right. There's no need to push the envelope and take on reputational risk."

"Good answer. And your analysis is correct -- a lobbyist working with a pharmaceutical company who has access to the FDA is absolutely an insider for purposes of SEC regulations. Not to mention, whoever leaked that information very likely committed a felony. Of course, the SEC can only bring civil enforcement actions, but they could refer this misconduct to the US Attorney."

"I'm curious about the internal process. None of my trades has ever been flagged by Compliance."

"I can't divulge the criteria, but when the executing traders process your orders, a set of rules is applied by the computer, and the order is either flagged or approved. If it's flagged, someone from our department reviews the trade and, if necessary, asks for backup."

I nodded, "That makes sense. How often are those rules updated?"

"As necessary. I think you can work out for yourself the basic criteria. I suspect you understand why the exact criteria are closely held."

"Because it would be fairly easy to game the system if I knew the exact rules."

"Exactly right. Anyone who has studied the regulations could easily skirt them, as we've seen with individuals trading in unmonitored accounts. But you also know how they're caught."

"The SEC will look at every trade in Sandoz GmbH for some period before the announcement and flag anything that seems suspicious. A retail investor buying a hundred shares won't attract scrutiny, but an institution buying a million shares will. Similar for shorts before major bad news."

"Yes, and that's why we are required to file our large trader reports at the end of every trading day, including off-market trades. And why publicly traded companies are required to file reports of trades by insiders. Anyway, that's all, and I'm sure you understand that now that we're aware, any trades in Sandoz will be flagged and likely blocked."

"I assumed that would be the case. Thanks."

I left his office and as I was getting into the elevator, I realized that ANY trade in any pharmaceutical company would be scrutinized, as a newly approved drug could affect the stocks of competitors. I didn't think I needed to change my allocation in that sector as, in the long run, it would be highly lucrative.

"Trouble?" Tony asked when I reached my desk.

"No. Just confirming we aren't able to trade on some information that found its way to us."

"Is everything cool with Enderlee's BS?"

"Yes. The IRS examiner is still working, but my CPA and tax attorney are confident I'm clean, though with the complexities of the tax code, you never know."

"How is the space next door?"

"Getting there. Our target move date is December 3rd. With Thanksgiving, Jack Nelson decided to schedule it for that date because we're not sure we'll have the occupancy permit by the end of next week."

"You're out all next week, right?"

"Yes. We should probably sit down and coordinate our time off for next year because you'll need to cover for me during my sensitive leave."

"Any idea when you'll want to take it?"

"That's a very good question," I replied. "Let's talk about it when I'm back on the 21st."

"Sounds good."



November 12, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday morning, I took Keiko to Rush-Presbyterian so she could have her transfusion, as well as have blood drawn for testing. Her temperature had, finally, dropped below 99.5°F, which Doctor Morrison said was a good sign, though her white count would determine if the infection had been resolved by the antibiotic cocktail. He wrote a prescription for oral antibiotics that he instructed Keiko to take prophylactically.

"Have you thought about what's next?" I inquired after we got into the car just after 11:00am.

"You mean if my white count is down?"

"Yes."

"Do you want me to try another round of chemo?" Keiko asked.

That was a tricky question to answer, as without a marrow donor, nothing would prevent Keiko from dying. Was the suffering she'd undergo with chemo

worth the extra month or two? And would the chemo weaken her system to allow the infection to return or a new one to develop? I wasn't one to give up, but I also didn't want Keiko to suffer needlessly.

"I think it all depends on whether you believe we'll find a marrow donor and if you'll be healthy enough to undergo the procedure."

"You're the analytical one," Keiko said. "What do you think the chances are of finding a compatible donor?"

I took a deep breath and let it out, then answered.

"Not very good," I admitted. "The National Bone Marrow Donor Registry created four years ago consists mostly of Caucasians. And you know the challenges we've had with testing in Japan. Whatever decision you make, I'll support. The last thing I want you to do is suffer needlessly. That said, let's see the results of the tests, then decide. For now, let's focus on our trip to Wisconsin starting Monday morning. I probably should have waited to ask until after."

"No, it's OK. It's always on my mind, and I really do want to know what you think."

"Is there anything you want to do next week besides what you already requested?"

"What?" Keiko asked with a smile. "We can't make love non-stop the entire time?"

"Food? Water?" I asked.

"Practical as always! But no, just time together because I fear we won't have very long."

I suspected she was right, as even another round of chemo wasn't a guarantee of more time and could hasten the end rather than prolong it.

"Whatever you want, Keiko. I mean that."

When we arrived home, we ate lunch, then Keiko went upstairs for a nap, and Bianca and I went out to do our usual Saturday tasks -- grocery shopping and the dry cleaners.

"No updates, right?" Bianca asked.

"Correct. We'll receive the blood test results next week, though unless there is some emergency need, they won't call us. Keiko will call on Friday."

"You'll be home on Friday, right?"

"Yes. We'll be gone from Monday afternoon through Thursday afternoon. You know from our staff meeting on Monday that Tony is covering for me. I haven't asked in a week or so -- how are you feeling?"

"Other than my clothes not fitting properly, pretty good. I plan to talk to Mrs. Peterson on Monday about maternity leave."

"Have you done your research into a nanny?"

"Yes. I spoke to two companies, and they agreed that early March is the right time. We discussed our situation, and they said we could interview as many candidates as we needed to find the right one. I think someone around our age, because that way she'll fit in with other moms of very young kids. They have playgroups and that kind of thing when the kid gets older."

"In that regard, whatever you think is best. Obviously, I'll want to have a say, but I'm happy if you set the criteria."

"I meant to ask earlier, but what about class next week?"

"I'm only missing Tuesday, and I explained the situation to the professor, so he's cutting me a lot of slack. Of course, I have a 101% in the class, so it's not like I'm struggling."

"Extra credit?"

"Yes. I do every extra credit problem or assignment. I've missed a few points in quizzes and homework, but the extra credit covers that and then some. Basically, it's a way for him to give students who are poor test takers a chance at a better grade."

"Back to the nanny, the usual schedule is for twelve hours a day, weekdays. I think 7:30am to 5:30pm is about right. Also, my grandma is willing to help. She didn't freak out when I explained about the baby."

"And your parents?"

"Aren't talking to me, but my grandmother is positive that will change as soon as the baby is born. They're upset about me having a baby out of wedlock and having Juliette as my girlfriend. You can guess which of those is a bigger problem."

"Actually, I can't, given they're Catholic. Both are fairly big no-no's for Catholics!"

Bianca laughed, "So true, but you know it's Juliette."

"Of course, because it's anyone's business other than yours who you sleep with. Or if you decide to have a baby without getting married. Honestly, the ideas put forth in the 60s were spot on, but reactionary forces have done their damndest to turn back the clock."

"It's those idiots Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson and their followers who helped elect Reagan. Granted, we both preferred Reagan to Carter, but sadly, that empowered the Evangelicals. Fortunately, Reagan is only paying lip service to banning abortion."

"Wouldn't that require amending the Constitution?" I asked. "The Supreme Court made it clear that it's a right, at least during the first trimester."

"Oh, I agree, but those whack jobs would do that in a heartbeat! And that disease that mostly infects the gay community -- AIDS -- is providing them ammunition."

"That's a scary one," I replied, "but reports say it's only found in the gay community and in IV drug users."

"The thing is, and perhaps you haven't considered it, that men can be bisexual as well as women."

"You're right; I hadn't considered that. We need to look out for any mention of AIDS treatment or cure research by any pharmaceutical company."

"I don't mean this as a jab, but pretty much your first thought about everything is how you can use it to your advantage."

"Not quite everything."

"Sorry, I didn't mean to imply anything about Keiko, me, the baby, or your friends. Sometimes, you can be a bit too literal."

"I don't deny that, but it serves me well at work and, honestly, in my private life. Do you think anyone has any misconceptions about me?"

"No," Bianca replied. "I see you with Keiko, and it's obvious you love her. And you truly care for your friends."

"Have you thought about the future?"

"Keiko basically asked the same thing, and I'm going to give you the same answer -- cry."



November 13, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday, Violet and I went to Chicago Stadium to see the Hawks play the Edmonton Oilers. The game was a sellout, with standing-room tickets sold to pack the arena to capacity. The Hawks were suffering through a five-game losing streak, and having to play Wayne Gretzky, Grant Fuhr, Jari Kurri, Glenn Anderson, and Paul Coffey did not bode well.

"Will you join us for Thanksgiving?" I asked Violet as we walked towards the stadium.

"Of course! Thank you!"

"You can show up anytime during the day; just take the L. I'll drive you home."

"Perfect!" she agreed.

We handed our tickets to the ticket-taker at the gate and entered the stadium.

"How bad do you think this will be for the Hawks?" Violet asked as we made our way to the concession stand.

"They lost 6-1 to the Whalers yesterday, so I don't hold out a lot of hope."

"Do you know who's starting in goal? Esposito or Bannerman?"

"Bannerman has given up thirty-five goals in five games, so I hope they start Esposito, even though he's at the end of his career. I mean, how much worse could it get?"

"Don't ask!" Violet exclaimed.

We got hot dogs, nachos, and drinks, then headed for our seats, sitting down just as the teams left the ice after warmups. A few minutes later, they returned for the US and Canadian Anthems, then the starters took their spots. I saw Tony Esposito skate to the net and was happy.

"Maybe we'll see some of the old Esposito magic," Violet said hopefully. "And goals by Savard and Larmer."

"We can hope!"

The puck dropped, and just thirty-one seconds in, the Hawks went on a powerplay on a tripping penalty called on Pat Hughes. Sadly, the Hawks couldn't score, and just four minutes later, Troy Murray of the Hawks was called for charging. Edmonton took immediate advantage, with Willy Lindström scoring at twenty-six seconds into the man advantage to take a 1-0 lead.

"Well, crap!" Violet exclaimed. "We needed a goal on our powerplay!"

"Esposito has made some great saves, so let's see if he can hold them."

He did, but the Hawks couldn't score on Grant Fuhr, and the period ended 1-0 in favor of the Oilers, but Lee Fogolin of the Oilers had been called for interference, meaning the Hawks would start the second period on the powerplay. They took full advantage, and just over a minute in, Denis Savard scored the tying goal. Ten minutes later, the Hawks went ahead 2-1 on a Bill Garner goal.

"That's more like it!" Violet exclaimed happily.

Her joy was short-lived, as Ken Yaremchuk of the Hawks was called for hooking, and just fifteen seconds into the powerplay, the Oilers tied the game on a Jari Kurri goal. Less than four minutes later, Violet and I jumped to our feet with the rest of the crowd when Rick Patterson put the Hawks ahead.

From there on, the Hawks never lost the lead, scoring twice in the third period, including an empty net, while the Oilers only scored one, resulting in a Hawks 5-3 win to snap their losing streak.

"Esposito looks beat," Violet said, pointing to him sitting on the bench, trying to catch his breath following the game.

"He gave it his all and made some great saves," I observed.

It took a long time to get out of the stadium and longer than usual to get out of the parking lot because of the size of the crowd.

"You're gone until Thursday, right?" Violet asked when I pulled up in front of her house.

"Yes. I'll be in class on Thursday, and we can have our usual homework session."

"Did you sign up for your class for next semester like you planned?"

"Yes. International finance, on Saturday mornings. I'm sorry about that, but given the circumstances, I felt one day a week was a better choice."

"I totally understand. Could we have breakfast on Saturdays?"

"I think so, but let's see what happens."

"She's going to die soon, isn't she?" Violet asked quietly.

"Nobody can say how long," I replied. "and the research I've done doesn't shed much light. We'll know a bit more when we see the test results on Friday."

"If there's anything I can do for you, anything at all, I want you to ask."

I nodded, "I will. I appreciate the offer."

"You know how much I care for you."

"And I care for you, too."

We got out of the car, I walked Violet to the door, she gave me a quick hug, and then went into the house. Once she'd closed the door, I headed back to my car for the drive home.

"My grandfather called while you were out," Keiko said after I greeted her. "He has very good news -- his friend, Fred Korematsu, had his conviction overturned."

"Wow! What happened?"

"Korematsu-san challenged the conviction, and the judge vacated his conviction due to prosecutorial misconduct because the government had withheld relevant information from the courts at the time. Sadly, it left in place the decision that it was OK to issue those vile orders."

"Withheld documents?"

"Yes, they deliberately suppressed reports from the FBI and the military which concluded that Japanese-American citizens posed no security risk. The military lied to the Supreme Court, and that government lawyers willingly made false arguments."

"Wow! I'd say that's a good result, even if it's not a complete rejection of that law."

"Yes, that's true. Perhaps someday. Come sit with me, please."

I walked over and sat down next to her, and she snuggled close, sighing contentedly.



November 14, 1983, The American Club, Kohler, Wisconsin

"This is amazing!" Keiko exclaimed once the bellboy had left the Presidential Suite.

The transfusion had, as we had hoped, increased Keiko's energy, and if the past was any indication, she'd have about a week before the effects began to wear off.

"What would you like to do?" I asked as she walked through the suite.

"How about a bubble bath?" she asked. "And then spend the afternoon cuddling and making love?"

"That sounds like a grand idea!" I agreed.

I turned on the stereo, tuned to a jazz station, and ten minutes later we were soaking in a tub full of warm water and bubbles. We sat quietly, with Keiko reclining against me until the water cooled. We got out, I opened the drain, then Keiko and I showered in the large stall shower. When we finished, we dried off, and I carried her to the king-size bed, and we made love, then cuddled.

That was the pattern for the afternoon, and for dinner, we drove into Sheboygan and ate dinner at a family-style restaurant. We found a local ice cream shop for dessert, then returned to the American Club.

"Is there something you'd like to do tomorrow?" I asked Keiko, handing her a list of local attractions I'd found on the desk in our room.

"How about the carriage ride?" Keiko asked. "It says they have lots of blankets and can pick us up here."

She handed me the list and I went to the phone and dialed the number for Bulitz Farm and arranged for the carriage ride during the afternoon.

"All set for tomorrow afternoon," I confirmed. "For Wednesday, I'd like to visit the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan."

"Deanna really has you hooked on art! Did you have any exposure growing up?"

"Not beyond seventh-grade art class. It's something that fascinates me."

"If the weather is nice enough on Thursday morning, could we go to the lake and see the lighthouse?"

"That sounds good. If we time it properly, we can do that, then head directly home from there."

We got into bed, made love, then cuddled close and fell asleep.



November 17, 1983, The American Club, Kohler, Wisconsin

"Thank you for bringing me here," Keiko said as we packed our things on Thursday morning after breakfast.

"You're welcome," I replied. "You know I'll do anything in my power for you."

"I love you, Jonathan," Keiko said, stepping into my arms.

I love you, too, Keiko-chan," I replied, hugging her tightly.

"Will you promise me something?" she asked.

"What?"

"That after you mourn, you'll find someone with whom you can share your life."

"I'll have my son or daughter," I said.

"Yes, of course, but you should have someone special."

"Keiko-chan, I can't promise how I'll feel or how I'll respond."

"I know, but please don't think it diminishes what we had together."

"Nothing could ever do that," I countered. "Will you accept my promise to do what's in my best interests and listen to advice from Bianca and Jack?"

"Yes, I'm just concerned for you."

"I promise to get help if I need it, but I will never, ever, stop loving you."

We stood, hugging, for several minutes, then left the room. We checked out, got into my car, and headed for Lake Michigan. At the lake, we found a parking spot and walked to the end of the jetty and saw that it was possible to walk out to the lighthouse itself. As we came closer, I noticed the light was missing. When we walked back to the sidewalk, I saw a sign and walked over to read it. It noted that the lighthouse had been deactivated, the light removed, and what remained was the tower itself.

We took a short walk along the lake, but given Keiko's health, we stopped and returned to the car, then headed home to Chicago so I could make it to my statistics class.



November 18, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday morning, Keiko called for the results of her tests. Her white count was still elevated, indicating she had some kind of infection, and more worryingly but not unexpectedly, her blast count was 19%, up significantly. Unfortunately, with a high white count, another round of chemo was out of the question, and that meant we were in the final stages. Keiko sat in my lap and cried softly, and I contemplated a future without her, which might begin very soon.

I knew, from my research and from our conversations with Doctor Morrison, that at some point in the near future, Keiko would become too weak to climb the stairs and then be basically bedridden. At some point, she'd require a catheter and the nurse would make multiple visits each day, and then, eventually, Keiko would likely need some kind of painkillers before finally succumbing to her disease.

The biggest challenge would be near the end when she'd need continuous care, something I would need to work out, most likely a combination of nursing, her grandparents, her parents, and me. Those arrangements would likely need to be made soon as if her blast count continued to rise at the same rate, she might not even make it to Christmas, which was just over five weeks away.

Keiko and I cuddled in one of the Papasan chairs until lunch, getting up only to visit the bathroom. After lunch, we took a brief walk on the cool mid-November day. With the temperature around 55°F, we could walk for about twenty minutes before Keiko became fatigued, and when we returned to the house, I lay down in bed with her and cuddled her while she napped.

We got out of bed just after Deanna and CeCi arrived home from class and had tea with them. Juliette arrived home a short time later and joined us. Keiko and I spent the rest of the time before dinner in the Japanese room, then, when our friends had gone out, had Chinese food delivered. After we ate, we watched TV, then headed up to bed.



November 19, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"You were very subdued last night," Bianca observed on Saturday when we left to run our usual errands. "How bad?"

"It couldn't be much worse," I replied. "Her blast count is rising quickly, and her white count indicates she has some kind of infection that the IV antibiotics kept in check but didn't resolve, so chemo isn't possible."

"How long?"

"Weeks," I replied with a hitch in my voice, feeling tears well up in my eyes.

"Shit," Bianca said softly. "I'm sorry. What can I do for you?"

"The same as you've always done -- be my friend and confidante."

"I hate to ask, but what happens?"

"The short version is organ failure due to the good blood cells being overwhelmed by the bad ones. There's no way to predict exactly, but she'll become weaker, and her body will begin to shut down. I'd say sometime in the next two weeks, she'll likely be too weak to climb the stairs, and sometime before Christmas, she'll basically be confined to her bed, most likely with a catheter. At some point, IV painkillers, and then, the end."

"Won't someone need to be with her full-time?"

"Yes. I'll work that out between Horizon Hospice, her family, and myself. When it's close, I'll stay with her until the end."

"You're going to need someone to help you."

"I know. I'm sure Deanna will help, and she has a completely flexible schedule."

"I want to help, too."

"I appreciate that, but you need to take care of yourself and our baby."

"I won't do anything that would put either the baby or me at risk," Bianca said.
"But I do want to help. I'm sure the others will as well. Has she told her family?"

"We're going to her grandparents' house for dinner tomorrow, and she'll tell them then. I'll work things out with her grandfather and dad."

"Are we putting up a Christmas tree?" Bianca asked.

"Yes. I'm happy to celebrate the solstice with evergreens and lights!"

Bianca laughed, "Cute, but I was concerned about Keiko."

"I think she'd be very upset if we didn't follow that tradition. As much as she doesn't go in for the religious aspects of Japanese culture, she follows the forms, similar to the way I do for the forms of American culture."

"Real or artificial?"

"I think we have to go with artificial, given Keiko's situation. Who knows how she'd react to bringing a live tree of that size into the house. We have time, so why don't we go to Venture and see what they have in the way of artificial trees. We can get lights, ornaments, and other decorations as well."

"That sounds like a good plan," Bianca agreed. "Fortunately, you have a car with a huge trunk because we're going to need a tree that's at least six feet. What about lights for outside the house?"

"I've never done that, but I'm open to hanging them if you want."

"I do. We should do that before grocery shopping."

"Obviously!" I agreed, making a turn to head to Venture rather than Jewel.

We ended up buying a seven-foot artificial spruce, several boxes of ornaments, and strings of lights for both the tree and the house. We fit everything into the car, and there was still plenty of room for groceries, so we went to Jewel, where we bought our usual groceries, and what we would need for Thanksgiving. After Jewel, we stopped at the dry cleaners to pick up my suits and shirts, though we had nothing to drop off because I hadn't been to work during the week.

At home, Bianca carried in the groceries while I brought in the tree, lights, and ornaments, stashing everything in the basement until we'd need it, most likely the Saturday following Thanksgiving. I helped Bianca put away the groceries, then went to the Japanese room to wait for Keiko to wake up from her nap. When she did, I let her know about the Christmas decorations.

"I was going to ask," she said. "I'm glad you're doing that."

"Is there anything special you want to do for Christmas? I'm sure it isn't celebrated in Japan."

Keiko laughed, "You would be wrong! It's not a national holiday, but Japanese often decorate and celebrate, and you can see «サンタさん» (*Santa-san*) in many places!"

"Santa-san'? Seriously?"

"Seriously! And since the early 70s, it's very popular to eat Kentucky Fried Chicken on Christmas Eve!"

"No way!"

"Yes!" Keiko said mirthfully. "It's called «クリスマスはケンタッキー» (*Kurisumasu wa kentakkī*), literally, 'Kentucky for Christmas'. It started as a promotion by Kentucky Fried Chicken, and it became VERY popular."

"Is that something your family does?" I asked.

"No, because everyone was here by then. My mom came over in 1962, and of course, my grandparents were here before World War II. I know about it from our relatives in Japan. We should just do the usual American things."

"I think because we're having turkey for Thanksgiving, we'll have ham at Christmas. Would you be OK with inviting Violet to Christmas as well?"

"Yes, of course! She has nobody else to be with. Are you planning to see your mom?"

"We haven't discussed it. I'll ask when I talk to her tomorrow. She's having Thanksgiving with her friend who took her in as a teenager, and she's taking a date."

"That's good, right?"

"If she's happy, I'm happy. I don't know anything about him except he's divorced and a judge of the Clermont County Court of Common Pleas."

"What about Bev?"

"I'm positive she and Glen want Christmas with Heather," I replied.

"Did she ever speak to her parents?"

"No."

"Did they ever set a wedding date?"

"Not one of which I'm aware," I said. "I actually haven't spoken to her in about a month because I've been so busy with you and with work. I'll call her this week and see about having lunch next week. Before I forget, we should talk about the Spurgeon Christmas party."

"I saw it on the calendar," Keiko replied. "If what we think is true, I don't think I'm going to be able to make it. Do you want to take someone?"

"No. I'll go without a date; I really don't want people to talk. They're already going to because of Bianca, but that can't really be helped."

"I don't think I'll live long enough to see your baby," Keiko said as tears began rolling down her cheeks.

I took her in my arms and held her, but there was literally nothing I could say to make her feel better.



November 20, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Did you want to come to visit at Christmas?" I asked my mom when I spoke to her early on Sunday afternoon. "I could plan something with your sister and Alec, too."

"I'd like that. If it's OK with you, I'll drive up on Friday. Do I need to make reservations?"

"No. I checked with Violet right before I called you, and she's happy to have you stay with her. She'll be joining us for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day."

"OK. How is Keiko?"

"It's not good; not good at all."

"I'm so sorry, Jonathan. Is there anything else they can do? Anything at all?"

"No."

"How long?" Mom asked.

"Weeks," I replied. "She might not make it to Christmas, and if she does, she might well be confined to bed."

"I don't know what to say."

"Me neither, because there is nothing to say."

"Does everyone know?"

"Only Bianca, Violet, and you so far," I replied. "We're having dinner with her parents and grandparents tonight, and she'll tell them. Once we've told them, we'll tell a few select others, mainly our housemates and my boss."

"There's truly nothing that can be done?"

"Truly."

"I'll see you at Christmas, but please call and keep me updated."

"I will. Thanks, Mom."

"You're welcome. I love you, Jonathan. Give my best to Keiko, please."

"I will. I love you, too, Mom."

We said 'goodbye' and I ended the call, then went to the Japanese room to sit with Keiko. I let her know what my mom had said, and then she went up to nap before our dinner with her family. She slept for about two hours, and then we headed to her grandparents' house. They greeted us, and Atsuko served us green tea, which we sipped while we waited for Keiko's parents, who arrived about fifteen minutes after us.

"You should say it," Keiko said quietly.

I nodded, took a deep breath, and let it out slowly.

"I have something to share with you," I said. "Keiko received test results on Friday, which showed a significant increase in blast cells. That, combined with a high white count, which indicates an infection, means chemotherapy is no longer an option."

Ichirō's face turned grim, "Please be direct, Jonathan-san."

"There are no further treatments available; Keiko is going to die."

Both Atsuko and Hanako gasped, and Itsurō looked as grim as Ichirō. Keiko began crying, and I helped her into my lap and held her while she sobbed.

"Is there no one else we can consult?" Itsurō asked.

"Both Doctor Morrison and I have been in touch with the doctors at Mayo Clinic, and Doctor Morrison also consulted with an oncologist at Johns Hopkins. None of them offered any possible treatments, not even experimental ones."

"But if they find a marrow donor..." Itsurō began.

"Would not help," I said. "The process completely wipes out the immune system, and the infection Keiko has would rapidly spread out of control and could not be controlled. According to the protocols, she's not healthy enough to have the procedure, which might even hasten the end."

"What happens now?" Ichirō asked.

"We care for her at our house," I said. "Horizon Hospice will arrange for additional nursing visits, but sometime in the next month or so, Keiko will need round-the-clock help. I've already discussed it with one of my housemates, and I'm hoping Atsuko will continue to help during the day. Obviously, we welcome any help any of you could provide."

"Jonathan," Ichirō said, "after dinner, I would like to speak privately with you. Itsurō, you should join us."

I nodded, confident I knew what he wanted to discuss. When Keiko stopped sobbing, Atsuko invited us to dinner, and I was happy to see that Keiko had a decent appetite, though I knew that wouldn't last. Once we'd eaten, " Ichirō, Itsurō, and I went to a small room with a low table and cushions. We sat down, and Atsuko brought tea, cakes, a pipe, and tobacco.

"Jonathan, it's traditional for Japanese men to smoke ceremonially," Ichirō said. "I will understand if you don't inhale, but please, at least, puff outward."

I nodded, and he lit the pipe, puffing twice, then inhaling. He passed the pipe to me, and despite my complete aversion to smoking, I copied him, managing not to choke or cough, then passed the pipe to Itsurō. He did the same and returned it to Ichirō, who set it aside.

"Have you and Keiko discussed her wishes?" he asked.

I nodded, "She would like a traditional Buddhist ceremony to honor her parents and grandparents, and I concur. She requested cremation and agreed that if her mother would prefer the traditional forty-nine days, that would be fine. She also asked that both our names be engraved on the stone at your crypt, and when the time comes, it's my wish to be with her."

"Do you have any idea how long it will be?" Itsurō asked.

"Weeks," I said. "At the outside, mid-February, but most likely sooner, even as soon as mid-December."

"With your permission, I will speak to the Buddhist monk, Kaito, and make the necessary arrangements. I will cover the honorarium."

"Keiko asked that any gifts be given to the Leukemia Society of America."

"Normally, gifts would be given to you, which is the Japanese tradition. You may make the donation as you wish. For non-Japanese, I think you can simply inform them of your wishes."

"I want to honor your family traditions," I said.

"We're grateful," Ichirō said. "Besides what my wife and daughter-in-law will do, is there anything we can do to help?"

"Making the arrangements is a big help, but otherwise, visit Keiko. She's likely to not be able to walk and be bedridden by Christmas, if not sooner. I'm sure visits will help her. Eventually, she'll need a catheter for urine and likely IV painkillers to keep her comfortable at the end."

"And you can take proper care of her at home?" Itsurō asked.

"We can. Between what is covered by health insurance and my income, there are no problems. And remember, Keiko does not wish to die in a hospital connected to machines. She'll accept the catheter, the IV, and oxygen, but that's it. All of you should be there at the end, if at all possible. And we'll accommodate you any time, day or night, between now and then."

"You truly exemplify the traits of the Kanji we chose to represent your name," Ichirō said. "Courage and protection."

"Thank you."

"Those will appear on the engraved stone, and later, when the time comes, your name in Latin characters may be added on a small plaque."

"Thank you," I replied.

"I will be in touch soon," Ichirō said. "Once I speak with the monk."

I nodded, we stood, I bowed, and Ichirō and Itsurō returned the bow, then we returned to the living room where the women were waiting.

XXII. Global Thermonuclear War

November 20, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Gruesome," Deanna observed when *The Day After* finished.

"As gruesome as that was, I suspect reality would be far worse," I replied

I got up to stop the tape that I'd used to record the TV movie so that Keiko could see it. She had been too tired to stay up but had insisted I could stay up to watch.

"I read they had to cut scenes because it was too graphic and disturbing," Kristy interjected.

"I bet!" Deanna exclaimed. "There were no commercials after the nuclear bombs went off because could you imagine ANY business wanting to associate themselves with that?"

"Good point!" Kristy agreed. "Jonathan, I know you've done some analysis, but how realistic was the build-up?"

"I'd say that if we're going to blow ourselves to smithereens, that's a very likely way for it to start -- something to do with Berlin, and things escalate, leading to the Soviet invasion of West Germany through the Fulda gap by the 1st Guards Tank Army and supporting units from the 8th Guards Combined Arms Army. NATO would, in all likelihood, need to use chemical or nuclear weapons to stop that invasion. And if the Soviets used chemical weapons, we'd retaliate with nukes because we've declared chemical weapons to be 'weapons of mass destruction' on par with hydrogen bombs."

"You know the unit?" CeCi asked.

"The 1st Guards are the primary Russian assault force in East Germany, and they led the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. I can't imagine they wouldn't be the spearhead. I can tell you that it's commanded by Guard Lieutenant General Boris Petrovich Shein. As for the location, the Fulda Gap is well-known for providing good access for armor to cross the Inner German Border. As a piece of trivia, it's the route Napoleon used to retreat after his defeat at the Battle of Leipzig."

"Why do you know all of that?" CeCi inquired.

"As part of my analysis of world tensions. Fundamentally, if that unit leaves its barracks except for planned training maneuvers, what played out in the movie we just saw is very likely to happen."

"Jesus."

"Yeah. My analysis is that if that comes to pass, you want a Soviet MIRV to go off directly above you. You'll be dead before your synapses can report that anything happened and your brain can process it. The survivors would be the unlucky ones."

"Do you think this will have any real effect?" Jack asked.

"Short term? Probably not. Long term? Possibly. It might drive the Arms talks to further reductions, but I'm not sure going from moving the rubble ten times to only five times makes much difference, but it's a start. SALT II was intended to impose limits, but Carter used Afghanistan as an excuse for withdrawing the treaty from the ratification process."

"Do you think KAL 007 or Grenada could have led to nuclear war?" Deanna asked.

"Could have? Sure. But in both cases, neither side felt it was worth the risk of escalation. Sure, it sucks for the people on the Korean Air flight, but I'm personally happy we decided not to risk blowing up the world over that."

"On THAT happy note, we're heading to bed," Jack said.

That was the consensus, so I shut off the projection TV, and when everyone had gone upstairs, I turned off the lights in the basement. I headed up to the master bedroom, quietly completed my bedtime routine, and slipped into bed next to Keiko.



November 21, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I'm not going to be able to commit to any specific days off next year," I said to Tony when we sat down before our staff meeting.

"Keiko?"

"Yes. We're out of options, but nobody can say how long she has, nor do I know how much time I'll need to take off to care for her. Mr. Spurgeon is accommodating, but I could easily burn all my time for next year early in the year."

"Shit, man. That sucks."

"It does. Please keep that to yourself for now. Work out what time you want off, and I'll work around it. Just do me a favor and don't plan anything for January or February."

"The kids are in school, so it's tough to get away then. I'll probably schedule two weeks in July, but let me discuss it with my wife. Is there anything I can do?"

"There isn't much anyone can do except try to keep her comfortable. Anything from last week I need to know before our staff meeting?"

"I assume Jack let you know the inspection of the new space is scheduled for next Monday."

"He did. That'll give Brown Construction a few days to resolve any deficiencies and still make our December 3rd move date."

"OK. Is there anything I need to do for our new staff who start on the 1st?"

"No. I spoke with Phil about equipment, and that's covered. They'll be set up in the new space, assuming everything goes well with the inspection. If not, we'll use some of the empty research desks. Bianca's new computer system will be installed on the 5th."

"OK. Anything else?"

"That's it."

The staff meeting was uneventful, and at the end of the day, I headed to Jeri's house for our monthly group dinner. I'd confirmed with Keiko that I could share her situation with my group and friends, and she'd agreed. I decided to reveal our news after dinner so as not to spoil the evening completely. As with everyone we had told, they expressed sympathy and offered to help in any way they could, but there was literally nothing that could be done.



November 24, 1983, Thanksgiving Day, Chicago, Illinois

On Thursday, Violet arrived just after 9:00am, and she, Bianca, and I prepared the Thanksgiving feast, though Jack and Kristy were heading to her dad's house for their meal. Neither Violet nor I had much experience with cooking a Thanksgiving meal, but Bianca was well-versed, and CeCi provided some tips as well. I took breaks every half hour to spend a few minutes with Keiko in the Japanese room.

We had a wonderful meal at 2:00pm -- turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, buttered corn, homemade bread, and gravy. Dessert was pumpkin and apple pie with vanilla ice cream and coffee. When we finished everyone pitched in to clean up the dining room and kitchen, then we went to the basement to watch the second football game of the day.

The game between the Packers and Falcons was an offensive show, with a total of eighty-eight points scored. The game had been tied, 41-41, at the end of regulation, and the Falcons won in overtime when Kenny Johnson intercepted a pass from Lynn Dickey and returned it thirty-one yards for a touchdown, making the final score 47-41 in favor of the Falcons.

"Do you work tomorrow, Jonathan?" Deanna asked when we went upstairs for a post-game snack.

"A half-day," I replied. "The market is open until noon. About half my staff took the day off, which is fine because more than half the traders are off as well. The report my team owes tomorrow is abbreviated, not a full analysis. I'll put on CNN Headline news after our snack and see if anything important happened today."

About fifteen minutes later, I did that, and CNN was not reporting anything momentous or even particularly interesting, as it had been a typical 'slow news'

day. After the news, I drove Violet home, and when I returned to the house, Keiko and I spent time together in the Japanese room before we went up to bed.

"When do you plan to put up the tree?" Keiko asked as we got into bed.

"Tomorrow, after I arrive home. It's only a half day, so I can put up the outside lights first before it gets dark, then we'll put up the tree."

"In the great room, right?"

"Yes. The corner to the right of the fireplace seems perfect."

"I agree."

We got into bed, Keiko snuggled close, and we fell asleep.



November 29, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Tuesday morning, I went to see Murray Matheson about five minutes after he'd arrived.

"The fundamentals are right to move on the AUD," I said. "I believe a concerted effort now will force a float within two weeks. They're out of tools to reasonably defend, and the currency is far too strong for the underlying numbers."

"I'm sure it'll be in your morning report, but what's the play?"

"Short the currency and sell December puts. If you move today, you'll be in ahead of the herd, and you'll have takers on your puts. Once they float, the currency will drop like a stone, buy as much as possible at the bottom, and sell when it recovers."

"A dead-cat bounce?"

I shook my head, "No. As soon as they announce the float, there will be a huge wave of selling, but the currency is actually strong; it's just not as strong as the current overbid exchange rate."

"How sure are you?"

"I am not uncertain."

He nodded, and I left his office and returned to my desk, where I continued working on my daily global risk analysis. The main flashpoint was Afghanistan, where the Soviets were fighting a war that looked to be their Viet Nam. The Reagan administration was supplying the Mujahideen with money and weapons, and the Pakistanis were training them.

The Soviets were on the receiving end of a lesson about Afghanistan that had been learned by the British. What the journalist Alexander Cockburn called an *'unspeakable country filled with unspeakable people, sheepshaggers and smugglers'* held the winning hand and would, in my estimation, force a Soviet withdrawal much like Nixon's from Viet Nam.

The real question, which I couldn't answer, was when it would happen and what would happen afterwards. Afghanistan wasn't important in the larger scheme of things, but whether Yuri Andropov would survive the humiliation of a military defeat. That led me back to the idea of talking to the Soviet Trade Attaché. I wondered if I could glean even a slight amount of information from him, but if I could, it could be extremely valuable in understanding the future.

When I completed my analysis, I called Joel Steinem to place my initial currency trades.

"Joel, it's Kane. Sell 2000 December AUD puts, immediately at market."

"Cover them with call options?"

"No."

"Current quote on those puts is 0.921."

"Do that immediately, please."

Keys clicked, and about thirty seconds later, he said, "Done."

"Thanks. Enter a corresponding good-until-canceled limit buy order for a corresponding amount of AUD at a maximum of 0.885."

I heard his keys click.

"Your order for AUD 20,000,000 is in but flagged for Murray Matheson's review."

"He'll approve, and there's no rush because it'll be days or even weeks before it could fill. You'll hear from the FX desk later this morning, and they'll have some big orders."

"You're a witch, Jonathan! Anything else?"

"If I had more, I'd buy more," I replied.

"You'll clear roughly \$2,000,000 when all is said and done, if you're right, that is."

"I am not uncertain!"

"I'm sure I'll speak to you again soon!"

"Absolutely!"

We hung up, and a few minutes later, I had my trade confirmation on the puts I'd sold, as well as a confirmation of my limit order, though it was flagged, as Joel had said. I went to see Mr. Matheson to let him know, and he authorized the order.

"That's a big move for you," he observed. About two percent of your holdings."

"I'm confident in our analysis, but I also have to guard my overall return. Even if I have to fill at the current price, I'll still have beaten thirty percent this year."

"How are you going to cover the trade?"

"I kept about five million in cash from the latest clients, and the rest will be from treasuries that mature this month. I also have bond income, so I have some margin. I'll be cash tight for December, but that won't be a problem."

"If you run into a true cash crunch, let me know. I can cover from the main fund for a point. That's SOP, and to our prime brokers, cash is cash in the settlement accounts."

"Thanks. How big are you going?"

"Big. I'm coordinating with traders in London, Singapore, and Hong Kong. We're going to hit them with something like a billion dollars over the next ten days. That'll get their attention."

"No kidding! The tipping point, as Moreland wrote in our report, is somewhere in that range, and once others pile on, they'll be stuck. Their banking system can't

absorb that amount of capital, and the exchange rate is going to choke off exports."

"We'll hold their feet to the fire and see how long it is before they beg for mercy. Keep up the good work, Kane."

"Thanks."

I left his office and returned to my desk, and began researching something I'd seen in a Bloomberg news feed -- the formation of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, from the remnants of the «Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional», or FLN. From what I could glean, without being able to read Spanish, they were a Marxist agrarian revolutionary movement. What that might portend for the future was unknown, but it could lead to the destabilization of Mexico, which could have a major impact on the US.

To solve my lack of Spanish, I asked Bianca to read some articles from Mexican sources, and she confirmed what I knew but said the articles offered no additional information beyond what I'd found in English-language sources.

The rest of the day was routine, and at 3:00pm, I headed home to spend time with Keiko before class. She was still feeling reasonably good, but I knew that was short-lived, as the positive effects of the transfusion were slowly waning. We had dinner together, then I headed to class. After class, Violet and I had our time homework time while eating pie and drinking coffee, and after walking her to her house, I headed home.



December 1, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Thursday, Pete Mueller and Steve Smith joined the Research Department, though not until their orientation had been completed. Fortunately, our

occupancy permit had been granted on Wednesday, and they could sit at their desks in our new space. The rest of us would move to that space on Monday, though Jack, the mailroom team, and the Information Technology team would move our phones and computer equipment over the weekend.

We had a team lunch on Friday, approved by Mr. Matheson so that everyone could get to know our two new team members. Steve Smith turned out to have a quirky, dry sense of humor, and I felt he'd fit right in with the team, especially Bianca. Pete was, for me, a known quantity -- bookish and conservative -- consistent with the reputation bankers had for being straitlaced. That made sense, given banks interacted with the general public far more than a firm like Spurgeon Capital ever would.

After lunch, Tony and I sat down with Bianca and Steve to go over the data analysis requests and prioritize them. Rather than simply deciding based on importance, we also placed some easy tasks, which Steve referred to as 'gimmies' near the top of the list. His logic, with which I agreed, was that it would allow us to show progress while working on the more complex and complicated requests.

I finished my day at 3:00pm, as usual, and after dinner at home with Keiko, I headed to class.



December 2, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Friday was a typical day at work, but when I arrived home, I found Keiko sitting in the Japanese room wearing an oxygen tube, or as the nurse had called it, a 'nasal cannula'.

"What happened?" I asked after greeting her with a kiss.

"My blood oxygen level was only 90%. Jennifer spoke to Doctor Morrison, and he suggested using low-flow oxygen. That brought it up to 93% in the past ninety minutes."

"Is that good or bad?"

"As with just about everything, neutral. He'd prefer 95%, but 93% isn't dangerous; oxygen is indicated at 92%."

Doctor Morrison might call it neutral, but to me, it was the beginning of the end. At some point, the blast cells would crowd out all other cells, and even supplemental oxygen wouldn't help.

"You need to wear that while you sleep, right?"

"Yes. All the time, though I can take it off to shower and eat, for now. Maria will bring spare bottles tomorrow, and they'll ensure I have enough."

"You're still OK to climb the stairs?"

"Yes. No restrictions other than needing the oxygen."

"Did Doctor Morrison say anything else?"

"No. No other changes. He did prescribe Percocet for when Advil doesn't work for the basic aches and pains. I'm not taking it yet because the Advil still works."

"OK. Let me go change, then I'll come sit with you."

"Both CeCi and Deanna said they'll be home for dinner."

"Bianca and Juliette are going out with Jack and Kristy. Do you mind if I invite the boys for Sunday to watch football?"

"Not at all; you need to see your friends."

I kissed Keiko, went upstairs, and then went to the kitchen to call Dustin and Costas. Both had answering machines, and I invited them for pizza, beer, and football on Sunday. After leaving the messages, I went to the Japanese room, and Keiko and I sat together in a Mamasan chair.

"How are you feeling?"

"Better, actually," she replied. "The oxygen helps similar to how the transfusions helped, but you know it's only temporary."

"I know," I replied. "But anything that makes you feel better is good."

"Sorry, I wasn't saying it wasn't good, just...well, you know."

"I do. What would you like to do tonight?"

"Could we rent a movie?"

"Sure. What would you like to see?"

"How about *Raiders of the Lost Ark*? I've seen it, but I'd like to see it again."

"I'll ask CeCi to go to the video store. You're OK with ordering Chinese for dinner?"

"Yes."

I went to find CeCi, and she agreed to go to the video store. When she left, I ordered Chinese food for the four of us who were eating at home, then went back to the Japanese room to be with Keiko. We had a nice meal with Deanna and Ceci, watched the movie with them, and then Keiko and I went up to bed. In order to accommodate Keiko's oxygen tank. I retrieved an extra pillow and slid the cylinder between the two pillows and the headboard.

"Is that comfortable?" I asked when Keiko lay back.

"Yes. I can't really tell it's there. Thank you. I want to try to snuggle if that's OK."

"It is."

She managed, and I wrapped my arms around her and held her as she fell asleep. Sleep didn't come easily for me, but thankfully, I eventually dozed off.



December 3, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday, while Keiko was napping, Bianca and I ran our errands, accompanied by CeCi. Earlier in the day, I'd heard from Costas and Dustin, and both had accepted my invitation to watch football on Sunday. I'd added burgers and brats to our shopping list, but we had plenty of charcoal. The temperatures were expected to be just above freezing, but I could grill in the garage to protect from the wind, and it sure beat using the stove.

"Are you doing OK, Jonathan?" CeCi asked.

"In one sense, yes; in another sense, no."

"Is there anything we can do for you?" she asked.

"You're helping out at home, being my friend, and, more importantly, being Keiko's friend. There isn't much else anyone can do, including the doctors."

"I feel helpless," CeCi said. "I can't even imagine what you feel."

"I'm focusing on loving Keiko and caring for her. The time to be emotional will be after..."

"We'll be here for you, Jonathan," Bianca said reassuringly. "All of us, along with your other friends."

"And I'll need you all," I replied. "I know I look like the picture of stoicism, but I also told you what will happen."

"That you'll cry."

"Probably a lot, but mostly in private."

"I'm, uh, not sure if I should ask," CeCi said, "but a Shinto funeral?"

"From my understanding, there is no such thing. Traditional Japanese have Buddhist funerals. It has something to do with Shinto taboos surrounding death that I don't understand, and I'm not sure Keiko understands because she's not religious. We had a Shinto wedding because it was traditional, not because either of us believes in any gods or spirits or whatever.

"That said, the idea of the «kami», when thought about in the right way, does work. Think about in the US how we speak of doing things in the spirit of the Founders or the references to the 'Tree of Liberty' or 'Lady Liberty'. Those things are, for all intents and purposes, «kami». Granted, Shinto takes that further and imbues animating spirits to all things, but then again, so do we when we refer to 'Mother Nature' or 'Father Time'."

"That's really deep thinking," CeCi observed.

"Thanks. We could also compare their ancestor worship with the way we revere people like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King Junior. Heck, there's a statute of Washington that models him as a Greek god."

"Remember who you're talking to!" CeCi declared mirthfully. "You're referring to *Enthroned Washington*, a marble sculpture by Horatio Greenough. He based his work on Phidias' *Statue of Zeus at Olympia*, which was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. At one point, it was disassembled and re-assembled in Constantinople. Unfortunately, it was eventually destroyed in a fire, likely sometime in the late 5th century."

"Leave it to an art major!" Bianca teased.

"Many buildings in DC are built in the style of Greek, Roman, or Egyptian temples," CeCi commented. "Think about the Lincoln Memorial or Jefferson Memorial and the Washington Monument. Not to mention the back of the dollar bill having a pyramid on the reverse with the 'all seeing eye' in the capstone. It's all secular and fits with Jonathan's worldview, and I guess Keiko's as well."

I nodded, "Yes. I think you can compare it to the secular and religious aspects of Christmas. Nobody in the house celebrates Christmas religiously, except perhaps as a nod to their parents by going to church. That said, we all celebrate it secularly. I mean, I know the religious point, but I give it no more weight than I do Santa Claus."

"You know he was based on an actual Saint, right?"

"Sure. Saint Nicholas, but I don't know much about him beyond that he was a religious leader."

"Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, Bishop of Myra, which was in Lycea, or what is now modern-day Turkey. The name Santa Claus is actually derived from the Dutch 'Sinterklaas', which was a contraction of 'Sint-Nicolaas'. He was portrayed as a stately, reserved elderly man. The current image is more or less based on the one created by Thomas Nast, and later used by Coca-Cola in the 1930s to promote their soft drink."

"And the whole elves and reindeer and North Pole bit?" I inquired.

"Also Nast; he drew a cartoon of a sleigh pulled by reindeer in 1863 for *Harper's Weekly*. And that's the basic source of the Rankin/Bass collection of animated Christmas stories -- *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, *Frosty the Snowman*, AND *Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town*. They had a number of other productions as well."

"interesting," I observed.

"You know, there's one thing we haven't discussed," Bianca said. "Are we exchanging gifts?"

"I've been struggling with that question. One side of the argument says that I should buy Keiko whatever I would have bought her if she didn't have leukemia. The other side says that makes no logical or practical sense."

"Go with your emotional side on this one, Jonathan," Bianca advised.

"I agree," I said as I turned into the Jewel parking lot. "I just haven't figured out what."

"What about a locket with both your names?" CeCi suggested. "Not to sound morbid, but she could be buried with it."

"Cremation is traditional for Japanese," I replied. "So that won't work. Fundamentally, anything I give her reverts to me after she dies. It just all seems so wrong."

"Did you ask her?" Bianca inquired. "I mean, she's as practical and logical as you are. In fact, she might even suggest you shouldn't exchange gifts."

"That just feels wrong, as I said. But I do think I have to ask her. For the rest, I did plan to buy small gifts, but I absolutely don't expect anything in return."

"If you did, it wouldn't be a gift!" Bianca declared as we got out of the car.

I couldn't help but laugh because I was usually the literalist.

"Nice!" I exclaimed. "Turn my own typical response right back on me!"

"I'm glad you can laugh, Jonathan," CeCi observed. "I was concerned about you being depressed."

"I am, but I have obligations, so I push through. And my primary obligation is to love and support Keiko in any way I can."

We entered the store, and the girls let the conversation drop. We completed our shopping, getting our usual supplies as well as what we needed for the party. After we left Jewel, we headed to the dry cleaners and then headed home. Once we'd put away the groceries, I went to sit in the Japanese room until Keiko got up from her nap, which she did about fifteen minutes later. She came to sit next to me and cuddled close.

"What do you want to do about Christmas?" I asked.

"You mean gifts?"

"Yes."

"I don't think it makes sense for you to give me anything," Keiko said. "Well, your love, but I already have that."

"It just feels wrong for you to give me something if I don't give you anything."

"You do realize that gifts are only gifts if nothing is expected in return, right?" Keiko asked.

"OK, OK!" I said with a smile. "Bianca said the same thing when I asked her advice earlier."

"I do have an idea if you're willing?"

"Name it," I said.

"There's a store at the Woodfield Mall in Schaumburg that will make a custom etched crystal ornament. You could put our names and the year on it, then hang it on the tree each year."

"I think that's a wonderful idea. Do you know how long it takes?"

"No. You might want to go out there today to make sure. I suspect three weeks is plenty of time. I don't think I should go with you, though."

"Sadly, I agree. Let me see if one of the girls wants to go along."

I thought about who to ask and decided Deanna was the best choice, as she had an eye for design that I certainly didn't have, and if there were choices such as

the type of script or images, she'd be much better at helping me decide what to select than anyone other than Keiko.

I went up to Deanna's loft/studio and asked her. She quickly agreed, pulled a drape over the canvas on which she had been painting, took off her smock, and followed me downstairs. I let Keiko know Deanna was accompanying me, and Deanna and I left.

The trip would allow me to purchase gifts I needed for my mom, Violet, my housemates, and the members of Jeri's group. The only tricky part would be Deanna, given she'd be with me.

"May I make a suggestion?" Deanna asked.

"Sure."

"Let me pick out some art supplies and then you wrap them and give them to me."

I chuckled, "Neatly solving the challenge I was just considering. I'm OK with that."

"My gift to you is being available twenty-four by seven for Keiko and you. I already spoke to the Art Institute about taking extended time away from class if necessary."

"I appreciate it, but you really shouldn't miss class."

"Classes end on the 19th, and if I don't take an interim class, they start on the 23rd of January. If things go the way you've hinted, I won't miss any class."

I sighed, "Sadly, I think you're right. Her oxygen levels were holding at 93%, but everything I've read says it's only a matter of time before they drop and can't be maintained."

"How long?"

"A month at the most, I'd guess. But the last week, she'll basically be incoherent from a combination of oxygen deprivation, pain medication, and other effects of end-stage AML."

"Can I say that really sucks?"

"You can, because it does. Changing subjects, when is your next show?"

"Presidents' Day Weekend at the gallery in Oak Park."

"How many pieces?"

"She asked for six; I think I'll be able to finish them."

"Is it OK to ask how you get inspiration?"

"I look at the world around me and paint what I feel. At least one of the new works will be about you and Keiko."

"I want a red dot on that before the show opens," I said.

"Sight unseen?"

"Sight unseen. I'll pay whatever price Elizabeth Pastor sets, though please don't let her know that."

Deanna laughed, "Obviously! You know I could just give it to you."

"No, either way, I'll pay for it."

"You realize that selling all my pieces in Evanston was an aberration, right? It's usually one, if any."

"I'd say you have at least two fans," I replied. "The one who bought «La petite mort» and me. And the article by Stan Jakes certainly helped. Actually, I'll call him after the New Year and see if he'll mention the show in one of his columns."

"Why would he do that for you?"

"I had lunch with him," I said. "I'm developing a mutually beneficial relationship with him."

"How does that help you make money?" Deanna asked.

"Directly? It doesn't. But he can put me in touch with other people who can. And He can put people with investible assets in touch with me. It's a win-win relationship, and he initiated it because right now, I'm more valuable to him than he is to me. I'm banking favors, if you will."

"That makes sense. It would be like me donating a painting for display."

"You know, you might want to consider that. The lobby of the Hancock Center has paintings from local artists. I have no idea how they select them, but it can't hurt for you to call them. Actually, now that I think about it, I'd like to commission several paintings for the Research Department at Spurgeon. That will get you exposure to people who have money to buy art. But they should be done when you don't have obligations to galleries. And speaking of that, how does it work?"

"The gallery owners hold ALL the cards. They decide."

"So you can't call and ask?"

"Oh, sure, I *could*, but it won't do any good in most cases. Elizabeth Pastor asked to include my paintings. I have no idea why or how. I suspect one of my professors spoke to her and suggested my work for the Evanston show."

"So, how does someone get into a gallery without a recommendation?"

"Word of mouth, community art shows, school art shows, collectors, or publicity like the newspaper article. Now that I've sold some paintings, Elizabeth Pastor is interested, but if my paintings don't sell, *'I'll get put in the back in the discount rack like another can of beans'*."

"Where do they sell 'discount rack' paintings?"

"They don't. Mostly, an artist would give away their paintings or store them, and someone would dispose of them when the artist died. Or they might sell them for a song to buy food or pay the rent. Most artists do not have patrons. I am very, very lucky to have run into you. I owe Sophie and Ivy big time!"

"I'd say I do, too. I value your friendship."

"I'm here for you in any way you need,"

"Thanks."

At the mall, we found the shop Keiko had mentioned, and Deanna and I spoke with the clerk about a crystal globe that would have Keiko's and my names and their Kanji representations, along with 'December 25, 1983'. I paid for it, and they

promised to have it ready by the following Saturday. Deanna and I completed most of our Christmas shopping, then headed home.



December 4, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I'm sorry I haven't been available," I said to Costas as he helped me with the grill.

We were in the garage during halftime of the Bears game against the Packers, and they were down 21-14, scoring their points on an 87-yard pass from Jim McMahon to Willie Gault and a Matt Suhey run from the one-yard line.

"You have to take care of your wife," he replied. "We totally understand. I noticed, obviously, that she is on oxygen. Is that temporary?"

"No. She's in end-stage AML, and there are no more options."

"Shit," he said softly. "How long?"

"Weeks," I replied.

"Do the other guys know?"

"Not yet. I planned to tell you guys when Keiko naps during the second game."

"Does my sister know?"

"I haven't spoken to Lily since the wedding. How is she doing?"

"She's pretty serious with Jim. I think they might marry when she graduates in a couple years."

"That's good to hear. You can let her know, please. I'll try to call her, but I'm a bit preoccupied."

"Understandable."

We finished grilling the brats and burgers and took them into the house. Jack and Kristy had prepared lettuce, tomatoes, and onions, and Bianca and Juliette had set out chips and drinks, so everyone filled plates, and we went to the basement to watch the second half of the game.

Keiko's appetite was waning, but she did eat, though not as much as I would have liked her to. The combination of effects of her disease were starting to pile on, and I wondered if weeks was being optimistic. I felt almost like I was watching a slow-motion accident, knowing what was coming, but it was unfolding frame by frame over time rather than in the blink of an eye.

The Bears tied the game at 28-28 late in the 4th quarter but ended up losing on a last-minute field goal by Jan Stenerud. When the game ended, I walked Keiko up to our bedroom for her nap, then returned to the basement for the second game -- the Cowboys against the Seahawks. I let Dustin, Trevor, and Archie know what I'd said to Costas, and they all expressed sympathy and offered to help in any way they could. I thanked them and promised I'd ask if there was.

"Did you guys watch the nuclear war movie last Sunday?" Dustin asked.

"We did," I confirmed. "Horrific is an understatement."

"For sure," Dustin agreed. "I hear the movie was heavily censored, and there was even a scene cut because it showed a case for a diaphragm."

"You're joking!" Kristy exclaimed. "Showing the world ending, that's fine, but God forbid we show a diaphragm case!"

"There were other cuts according to an article I read," I interjected. "There were several graphic scenes the network refused to allow to be run, which was even more intense than what they showed."

"Typical," Trevor observed. "It should have been as grotesque and frightening as possible because then maybe, just maybe, we could get rid of the damned things."

"Do you think the Rusksies would actually ever give up their nukes?" Jack asked. "Or Reagan?"

"Both sides would have to do it," Trevor replied, "and maybe, just maybe, we should be talking about reduction, not limitation, of nuclear weapons. Why do we need to be able to destroy the world ten times over?"

"Jonathan commented that after the first wave, you're just moving the rubble."

"And if you consider how many missiles and warheads each side has," I said, "even cutting in half only takes us from destroying the world ten times to five. The ones who died in the initial strike would be the lucky ones."

"Supposedly, some of the graphic scenes they cut showed the actual effects of a nuclear blast," Dustin said. "Including melting flesh."

"I think I can see why they didn't put that on TV," Juliette observed.

The rest of us agreed and enjoyed the football game, with Dallas beating the Seahawks 35-10. The guys left after the game, and I spent a few hours with Keiko in the Japanese room before we headed to bed.

XXIII. The Future Will Have to Worry About Itself

December 5, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday, when I arrived at the office, I stopped in to check with Rich and Mark about any events overnight, then went to the new Research Department offices. I was the first in, and saw, as Jack had said, everything was moved and set up, ready for the team to begin work.

I walked into the break room, put my lunch in the empty fridge, started a pot of coffee, and then went to my new office. I hung my suit coat on a hanger behind the door, sat down, turned on my IBM PC and Bloomberg terminal, and got to work. Tony arrived about twenty minutes later and came to the door.

"Nice," he said, surveying the office. "We just need some artwork. I'm not sure if you're aware, but Mr. Spurgeon has a large selection of art from which you could choose."

"I commissioned five paintings from Deanna Haight," I said. "She's the artist renting the loft at my house. It'll be a few months, but they'll go up on the walls here. All abstract."

"That's cool. I didn't realize one of your housemates was an artist."

"You must have missed the article in the 'Tempo' section of the *Trib* where my name was mentioned as her patron."

"I don't pay much attention to anything other than the comics in the 'Tempo' section. How did that come about?"

"Let's get some coffee, and I'll tell you."

We went to the break room, and I poured coffee for each of us into new Spurgeon Capital Research mugs that Mr. Matheson had purchased for us, and I explained meeting Deanna, the art show, and the article by Stan Jakes.

"You have a very interesting setup," he observed. "Married, Bianca's having your baby, and you have another female housemate!"

"Two, actually, not to mention Jack Clinton and his fiancée Kristy Benton."

"Mark Benton's daughter and the mailroom guy?"

"Yes."

"Things are sure changing, because a few years ago, no trader would be caught dead with their daughter marrying a mailroom guy!"

"I don't buy any of the classist crap," I replied. "And neither does Kristy. Jack is actually studying for his securities license. He'll follow a more traditional path and be a runner at one of the exchanges in a few years."

"How's your wife?"

"About the same," I replied. "But you know the score."

"Sucks, man."

"It does."

"Morning!" Steve Smith said, coming into the break room.

"Morning," I replied. "Everything good with your setup?"

"Excellent. Bianca really thought it through. I have a question for you."

"Sure. What?"

"What's your take on the Black-Scholes model for hedging?"

"I think it's one possible input into the mix of analyses," I replied. "I absolutely think we should use it, though, as with all formulae, tempered with other methods."

"I'd like to work it into currency hedges to start with."

"That makes sense," I replied. "Did you discuss it with Bianca?"

"Yes. She asked me to run it by you."

"Do it, and use a thirty-day testing period where you generate the numbers and make paper trades. Bring me that analysis, and if it provides an advantage, we'll incorporate it into the FX analysis."

"Great! On it!"

"Thanks. I know it's only your second day, but what do you think?"

"I get paid to think?" he asked with a grin. "Who knew?!"

"I take it your old job was 'write this program', and you had little input."

"Effectively zero. It's one reason I was interested in this job -- I get to have real input into what I'm doing and write elegant, efficient code of my own design. Well, with Bianca's blessing."

I chuckled, "Story of my life in Chicago so far! Not much happens without Bianca's blessing!"

"But you're not married to her, right?"

"Right. It's a complex situation."

"The best ones are!" he grinned. "Off to the salt mines!"

He poured coffee and left the break room.

"He's a real character," Tony said. "I spoke with him for about fifteen minutes on Friday, and he can be a real smart ass. I think he toned it down because you're the boss."

"Someone has to be in charge, but we're a team," I countered. "We sink or swim together. And you know Noel Spurgeon could wipe the team out as quickly as he created it."

"The desks are all on board now that Enderlee is gone, right?"

"There's some low-level bitching, but we're turning out better work product as a department than we did as individual analysts, so it's muted. You know a few of the traders think their dick size is directly affected by the number of staff they have."

"Well," Tony smirked, "you have the largest staff..."

I laughed, "On that note..."

"Yeah!"

We left the break room, he went to his desk, which was right outside my office, and I stopped to talk to Scott, who had just arrived. Two minutes later, I went to my office, and I had just sat down when Bianca stuck her head in to say 'Hello'.

"I need some time with you to show you how to work with the shared files on the Novell server and the two shared printers."

"After lunch?" I suggested.

"Sounds good."

"I'll set time with the rest of the team, so for now, everyone will just save their reports to the library on the mainframe where the secretaries can access them. Once the entire department is up to speed, all of it will be saved on the Novell server, and we'll upload a single consolidated report."

"Thanks. Steve Smith talked to me about incorporating the Black-Scholes model into our analysis. I agreed though we'll run it in parallel for thirty days before we incorporate it. That'll let us iron out any glitches. I didn't ask, but how long to set that up?"

"The equation and formulae are well defined," Bianca replied. "We just need to add Delta and Gamma into the analysis we already do with Alpha and Beta. There are a pair of financial journal articles from 1973 that give the equations and technical explanation, which Steve has. Those are sufficient to program the model; it should take no more than a day or two to have a working model. Could I suggest we plan to go live on the first trading day of next year? That's less than thirty days, but it would be a good breaking point."

I thought about it for a minute before answering.

"I think so. It's only one component, and we're only going to use it for hedging FX to begin with."

"Thanks. I'll run regression models every Monday to cover the previous week, as well as some historical regressions."

"Can I say I'm very glad I'm taking this stats class, so I have a clue what you're talking about?"

Bianca laughed, "You can. Did you cover anything like this in class?"

"Which?"

"Partial differential equations."

"No. The math class was basically remedial algebra and a basic introduction to calculus. I'll need to actually take two semesters of calculus before I could even begin to understand the math behind the complex models. The cool thing is, I don't have to! That's what I have you and Steve for and why we rely on the work of mathematicians! I'll probably take those courses."

"Are you signed up for next semester?"

"International finance on Saturday mornings," I replied. "I think I'll skip the Summer, then take first-semester calculus in the Fall. What about you?"

"Probably a year from January; the baby should be sleeping through the night by then."

"Our next pre-natal visit is on Saturday morning, right?"

"Yes, at 9:00am. I figure we just go straight from Doctor Wisniewski's office to Jewel and the dry cleaners. I checked, and Deanna will be home with Keiko."

"Did Keiko tell you Ellie and some of the girls were coming over for dinner tonight?"

"Yes."

"She's ordering Chinese, and enough for everyone."

"She let me know. I need to get some coffee and get to work!"

She left, and I began updating my global stability report. The world was, all things being equal, comparatively calm now that the operations in Grenada had concluded, and nothing much had come of the Soviet downing of KAL 007. The usual low-intensity conflicts were continuing, but none of them appeared to be spreading, and the Soviets were, as best I could tell, trying desperately to find a face-saving way out of Afghanistan.

The biggest concern was terrorism, but things on that front were at a relative lull since the Beirut barracks bombing. The best analysis said the lull would not last, but it was impossible to predict how or where any of the innumerable terror groups might strike. Given that impossibility, I could only account for the risk of terror attacks, which, from what I could discern, I rated as moderate.

Perhaps the most interesting item was the upcoming transition from rule by military junta to democracy in Argentina. Raúl Alfonsín was set to begin a term as President on Saturday, and that, to me, increased the notional risk for instability in Argentina and certainly warranted keeping a very close eye on their currency and economy. I couldn't judge the chances of success with any

certainty, but if Argentina's history meant anything, financial and political instability would continue for quite some time.

Volumes on the exchanges were dropping as December progressed, a normal event, as many traders began taking vacations and had configured their portfolios to more or less operate on autopilot, barring some major world event which would call them back to their desks. December options expiry was also one of the calmest, as many of those positions were closed out before the traders went on vacation.

I completed my analysis, and as my teams filed their reports, I reviewed them, making notes both for constructive criticism, but also items to review for my Cincinnatus Fund. If my call on AUD was even close to accurate, my total return for the year would be 35%, against the S&P and DJIA, which were predicted to return around 20%.

Barring some bizarre occurrences in the markets, I was going to beat Murray Matheson, as his projected return was around 30%, though he was somewhat hamstrung by the money he managed for international trade counting against his total return. As for Noel Spurgeon, I was neck-and-neck with the Spurgeon Select Fund, and it would be interesting to see his reaction if I beat him.

I was reasonably sure I'd be paid my full bonus for the year, and with my salary, commissions, special bonus, and carried interest, I'd make north of \$200,000 for the year. While that number was staggering, it was a tenth of what Mr. Matheson was likely to earn, and Noel Spurgeon would make at least five times what Mr. Matheson did, not counting the returns he earned on his personal capital.

Despite the staggering number, I'd give it all up if it meant Keiko could be cured. Sadly, even all of Noel Spurgeon's money wouldn't help without a matching donor, which we hadn't found despite the assistance of his friend in Japan. There were, simply, plenty of things money could not buy.

I had lunch with Bianca in the break room, we worked out, and then she spent thirty minutes with me showing me how to save my work on the Novell server and how to use the shared printers. At 2:00pm, we all gathered for our weekly staff meeting, and then at 3:00pm, I headed home.

Not long after I arrived, Ellie, Meg, Kasey, and Josie arrived to spend the evening with Keiko. I ate with them but then hung out with Deanna and CeCi so the girls could have some time together. They stayed until just before 9:00pm, and after they left, Keiko and I went up to bed, with me helping her with her oxygen cylinder.

"Did you have a good time with your friends?" I asked once I'd helped her settle into bed.

"I did. Thank you for understanding."

"I think you're the one who deserves the thanks, given how much time I spend with Violet."

"She's going to need you for the rest of her life," Keiko said quietly.

"I suspect you're right," I said, getting into bed next to Keiko.

"Do you think it's possible for her to get past what happened to her?"

"Possible? Yes. I have no idea what the probability might be."

"If she could, you'd be a perfect couple."

"Keiko-chan," I said gently. "Please don't."

"You know I worry about you."

"I do. And I appreciate that."

"I love you very much, Jonathan, and I want what's best for you in the future."

"I know," I replied. "I love you very much, and, for now, the future will have to worry about itself."



December 7, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

When I arrived home on Wednesday, Keiko was sitting in one of the Papasan chairs and was wearing an oxygen mask. I thanked Atsuko, who left, then walked over to Keiko, who moved the oxygen mask so we could share a kiss.

"How bad?" I asked.

"My blood oxygen levels, what Jennifer called PO₂, were down to 89% on the cannula, so she spoke to Doctor Morrison, who said to switch from the cannula to the mask. That brought my oxygen level up to 93%."

"How are you feeling?"

"A bit better. I was feeling very weak and tired after you left for work. I took my nap in the bed here because I simply didn't feel I had the energy to climb the stairs."

"Have you eaten properly today?"

"Yes. I don't have much of an appetite, but my grandmother makes sure I eat my small meals every few hours. And makes sure I drink enough water and herbal tea."

"OK. Let me go change, then I'll come sit with you."

I went upstairs to change, and while I was undressing, I decided to place a call to Doctor Morrison. Once I had on my sweatpants and rugby shirt, I picked up the Slimline phone and dialed his number. I was fortunate to catch him in his office.

"Morrison; Oncology."

"Hi, Doctor Morrison; it's Jonathan Kane."

"Hi, Jonathan. I assume you're calling about Keiko's blood oxygen?"

"Yes. I remember you mentioned this was likely, but I'd like to know what to expect next."

"In all honesty, I cannot give you an answer with any certainty."

"Speculate, please. And please be direct and don't pull any punches."

"Let me answer this way," he said. "As her blood oxygen levels decrease, she'll have less and less energy. At some point, she'll need a catheter because she simply won't be able to get out of bed to use the toilet. When that happens, we'll switch her to what amounts to a liquid diet - a drink made with protein powder in addition to the pediatric solution she drinks to maintain her electrolyte balance."

"Over the next few weeks, her kidneys and liver will function less effectively, and unless she agrees to dialysis, it will lead to decreased mental acuity, to the

point where she becomes incoherent. That's when she'd need a nasogastric tube for nourishment -- a feeding tube which goes into her nose. She could refuse that, which I suspect she will, and we'd sustain her with a glucose IV.

"Eventually, fluid and toxins will build up in her system, and she'll likely suffer from pulmonary edema -- fluid in her lungs. In addition, fluid will build up in the sac around her heart. We'll give her Lasix, a diuretic, but eventually her organs will fail, and it's very likely she'll suffer cardiac arrest."

"There's no way she's going to accept dialysis."

"I know. It was something I discussed with her."

"How long?"

"She refused any additional blood tests, which I understand, but that makes it hard to judge."

"Just a range, please," I requested.

"Weeks. I do not see how she could make it past mid-January, and even that long would be out of the ordinary."

"So, six weeks at the outside, but if I hear what you're saying, three or four is more likely."

"Yes. But, as I said, I can't really give you a specific answer."

"Thanks, Doctor. Is there anything I can do to make her more comfortable?"

"You have everything you need, and I've written the prescriptions. We can't give her many of the usual pain drugs, as they would suppress her respiration, which

is already poor to start with, or they induce edema -- the build-up of fluids. My choice, given all the possibilities, is IV ibuprofen and IV acetaminophen, basically a mix of Advil and Tylenol, in layman's terms. If those become ineffective, we'll give her Dilaudid because, at that point, the risk of depressed respiratory effects won't matter much. We'll also give her Versed to help her sleep."

"From what you're saying, if I can read between the lines, she could be incoherent before Christmas."

"I'd say that's entirely possible and perhaps even likely. I'm sorry, Jonathan."

"You've done everything possible, Doctor," I said. "If there's a fist to shake, it's at the universe, not at you."

"Thank you."

"How do I handle the end?" I asked.

"You have her signed and notarized Do Not Resuscitate order, along with a handwritten letter declining hospitalization and declining an autopsy, right?"

"Yes."

"The best thing is to arrange with Horizon Hospice for twenty-four-hour care at the end. The nurses will know the signs. I'll give you a number to call, and either I or one of the other oncologists will come at the end and sign the certificate. At that point, the funeral home you're using can take over. There is no need to call the police or for an ambulance if a physician is in attendance."

"OK. I'll make those arrangements."

"May I give you a phone number? It's a support group for people who have lost a loved one to cancer."

"I'm not sure that's my thing," I said. "But I'll take the number."

He read it to me, I thanked him for everything, and we ended the call. I replaced the receiver in the cradle, then went downstairs to be with Keiko.

"What took so long?" she asked.

"I called Doctor Morrison," I said. "I wanted to ask a few questions."

"I suspect they were the same ones I asked. Did he tell you I rejected dialysis?"

"Yes. As much as I want more time with you, I can't argue with you refusing treatment that will, in the end, only prolong your suffering. What about the feeding tube?"

"No. If I live to see New Year's, it'll be a small miracle. There's just no point. I will accept the catheter because there is literally no other option but a diaper."

"Speaking of which..."

Keiko smiled, "I'm going to eat less solid food, so that won't be a problem when I can no longer get out of bed. But there is one very important thing I want to do."

"What's that?"

"Make love," she said. "Once I have the catheter, we can't. Once a day until then. Will you?"

"Of course."

"Then shut the door and make love to me. I figure we need to be sitting up."

I nodded, walked over, and shut the door. Keiko took off the oxygen mask, then carefully undressed. I did the same and pulled her into my lap.

"Oxygen?" I asked.

She shook her head, "I want to kiss, and fifteen minutes without oxygen won't make a difference in the end."

We kissed, Keiko stroked me until I was hard, then, with my help, carefully impaled herself on me. She sighed deeply and rested her head on my shoulder.

"I love you so much, Jonathan," she said quietly.

"I love you, too, Keiko-chan.



December 10, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Called it!" I declared happily when I saw a report on CNN on Saturday about Australia floating its currency overnight.

"Totally not surprised!" Bianca declared. "Is there anything you need to do?"

"No. My orders are in, and if everything goes as planned, my limit orders should be executed the moment the market opens on Sunday, our time. I'll call Rich tomorrow evening to confirm."

"How much did you make?"

"Around \$2 million for the Cincinnatus fund off the original float. How much I make on the limit orders depends on the bounce. I'd guess about a \$500 grand."

"Jesus. You just made at least \$50 grand, personally."

"Yes, but in carried interest, so it stays in the fund. Between my salary and the cash portion of my bonus, I absolutely don't need it."

"What's your fund value?"

"Including these gains, and the stock gains, around a \$120 million."

"Which means you clear a hundred grand simply from the management fees!"

"Closer to around \$70 grand because a good chunk of that is 'one and ten'."

"Which is in addition to your salary and bonus!"

"Yes."

"Plus the special bonus, so this year you'll clear a quarter mil, including carried interest."

"A bit more than that. My problem is not having much luck in raising capital beyond what I have. Remember, about \$7.5 mil is Noel Spurgeon's money."

"What can we do to raise more capital?" Bianca asked.

"We?" I asked with a grin and an arched eyebrow.

"We! You, me, and Jack -- our own firm. I suspect Ellie, too, once you finish teaching her!"

"I hear you, but there is literally nothing that has happened that gives me any reason to do it. I also have quite a few reasons not to, starting with needing my Series 30 license, which requires a sponsor."

"Sure, but a quarter bil is going to take some time to raise. And until you have that, you are tied down."

"True. Right now, though, I need to focus on Keiko and on our baby. Everything except running the Research Department has to take a complete backseat to those things."

"Sorry."

"There's nothing to apologize for. Are you ready to go?"

"Yes."

I went to the Japanese room where Keiko was sitting with Deanna and Kristy, kissed Keiko, then left the house with Bianca.

"Is there anything special about this checkup?" I asked.

"No. Doctor Wisniewski will perform an ultrasound, and we can have a picture of our baby. I'm far enough along that the doctor could probably tell us if we're having a boy or girl. Do you want to know?"

"The practical side of me says it makes sense because we know what kind of clothes to buy in advance."

Bianca laughed softly, "All infant clothes are basically the same -- onesies over diapers. And most people buy them in yellow, green, orange, purple, or red, so

you don't have to worry about pink or blue. And diapers are the same for boys and girls."

"The sum-total of my experience was a few hours with Heather, but either Bev always took care of her. That's why I took Violet with me to Kansas City! So, I think, in the end, it's up to you."

"Unless you had some serious objection, I think I want to know."

"Then, by all means, ask. I'm going to assume the ultrasound pictures are good enough for that?"

"Yes, though according to my aunt, it's only a hundred percent certain if it's a boy because angles and the position of the baby may not reveal a penis, and it might look as if it's a girl. Hopefully, our little one isn't camera shy."

"What specifically do we need before April?"

"A crib, blankets, basic clothes, bottles, and diapers," Bianca replied.

"Basic clothes are those all-in-one things you mentioned?"

"Yes. I'm sure you saw Heather in them."

"What about a stroller?"

"Yes, though it needs to be the kind where he or she can lay flat, at least at first. Oh, and we'll need a car seat."

"Make a list, please, and we'll start buying the things we need. Did you want to decorate the nursery?"

"Yes, but I thought we should..."

"I think I get your point, but it hasn't been Keiko's room since we married. Yes, she slept in there after chemo, but our bedroom is ours, and all of her things are in our room or in the Japanese room."

"OK. Let me think about what I want to do, but bright colors, for sure. I assume you intend to keep the front room the way it is?"

"Yes. I like it that way, and not just as a memorial. I'll need to figure out what to do when we eventually move. Actually, I shouldn't assume. What's your plan?"

"At the moment? I'm happy with Juliette, and I don't see the need to try to bring a guy into the relationship. That would seriously complicate things no matter what the future holds."

"Complicate things? How so?"

"You and I raising a child together, calling me mom and you dad, and having another guy around."

"As opposed to another girl? I mean, isn't it the same? Almost like a step relationship?"

"I've discussed it with Juliette, and she's OK with not having any say in how our baby is raised; I'm not sure a guy would deal well with that."

I shrugged, "I think it just means finding the right guy. You do have a nice enticement!"

Bianca laughed, "Two for the price of one, as it were?"

"Yes."

"YOU resisted that offer."

I nodded, "I did because, in my mind, a monogamous relationship was the correct path. I'm positive I made the right choice despite what happened."

"Not to be indelicate, but after?"

"I have no idea," I replied. "Keiko made a point that I should find someone to spend my life with, but I am not ready to think about that, and I don't know when I will be. She wanted me to promise, but I only promised to do what was in my best interests and those of my son or daughter and to listen to advice from you and Jack."

"On that, I have a potentially touchy question -- a New Year's Eve party?"

"I have no objection if you want to plan one," I replied. "Remember what I said about the house -- treat it as if it were yours. You don't need my permission."

"I know, but..."

"Let me worry about Keiko, please."

"I worry about you," Bianca replied. "For what I hope are obvious reasons."

"We love each other, and we're having a baby together."

"Yes. I think I'll plan something for New Year's Eve. Our housemates, the boys, Violet, and then each of us invites one or two others."

"I think that's OK," I replied.

"How long is your mom staying?"

"I think it depends," I replied. "At least until the 27th because we're having dinner with my aunt and uncle on the 26th."

"At the house?"

"Yes. I didn't want to go out because of Keiko. I spoke to my uncle, and one of his friends is a chef who'll come here and prepare a meal, bringing all the ingredients. That way, if Keiko is able, she could join us. If not, I'm still there for her."

"I honestly don't know how you do it."

"I don't either, but I have to do it for Keiko."

A few minutes later, we arrived at Loyola, and about ten minutes after I'd parked, we were in an exam room waiting for Doctor Wisniewski. A nurse had taken Bianca's vitals, drawn blood, and had her urinate into a cup, and now we were sitting alone.

"Good morning!" Doctor Wisniewski said, coming into the exam room.

"Good morning," Bianca replied.

"How are we feeling this morning, Mom-to-be?"

"Good," Bianca said. "Well, other than my clothes not fitting!"

"It'll get worse before it gets better! If you'd get onto the exam table, please, I'll examine you, then perform an ultrasound."

Just over five minutes later, Doctor Wisniewski pronounced everything looked good, then set up the ultrasound.

"If I can determine your baby's sex, do you want to know?"

"Yes, please," Bianca replied.

"OK! Let's see what we have!"

She put gel on Bianca's stomach and then moved the wand around, using the controls on the machine to take measurements.

"Everything looks good," she said as she pressed a button to print the image.

"What names?"

"Sofía Angélica or Nicolás Santiago," Bianca replied.

Doctor Wisniewski nodded and moved the trackball to a spot on the screen.

"Meet Sofía Angélica!" Doctor Wisniewski declared. "She's not shy at all!"

Bianca and I both laughed because our daughter had her legs apart, and it was very obvious she was a girl.

"When we're at the mall to pick up Keiko's present, we should stop in a sporting goods store," I said.

"Why?" Bianca asked.

"So I can buy my shotgun!" I chuckled.

Both Doctor Wisniewski and Bianca laughed.

"I can't imagine you ever doing anything like that!" Bianca said.

"You're right, of course, but where I'm from, Dads with shotguns were a constant joke amongst all the guys at school!"

"Where is that, if I may ask," Doctor Wisniewski inquired.

"Goshen, Ohio, which is about forty minutes east of Cincinnati."

"I'm from Hamilton, originally, but came to Chicago for college and medical school."

"Small world," I observed.

"Very! Bianca, we'll see you again in February. Obviously, if there are any concerns at all, please call."

"Thank you, Doctor," Bianca said,

"Thanks, Doctor," I added.

She left, and when Bianca was dressed, we left the exam room. We stopped at the reception desk so Bianca could schedule her appointment, then left the medical building.

"Are you happy?" Bianca asked after we got into the car.

"Why wouldn't I be?"

"I thought maybe you wanted a boy."

"I'm perfectly happy with a girl," I replied. "Besides, Heather will need friends!"

We headed straight to Woodfield Mall in Schaumburg to pick up Keiko's present, then drove back to Rogers Park to do our weekly shopping and stop at the dry cleaners. When we arrived home, Nurse Maria was at the house checking on Keiko. I had spoken to Horizon Hospice on Friday and made the necessary arrangements, including four visits per day instead of the current two, starting on Monday. That meant two additional nurses -- Kelly and Brooke -- would assist Jennifer and Maria.

"How is the baby?" Keiko asked once Bianca and I had put away the groceries.

"Just fine," I replied. "I have a picture of Sofía Angélica."

"A girl?!"

"A girl."

I handed Keiko the picture, and she smiled.

"This may sound weird, but she's beautiful."

I nodded, "I agree! How are you?"

"About the same. My blood oxygen is 90%, and I'm tired, but that's pretty much all the time now."

"What can I do for you?"

"Carry me upstairs so we I can nap in your arms and make love. It might be the last time."

I nodded, scooped her in my arms, and carried her upstairs.



December 11, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday, the boys arrived just before the noon kickoff of the Bears away game against the Vikings. I'd called Stuart, but he was on shift, and I'd left a message for Tom but hadn't heard back from him. When Dustin arrived, he brought bad but not unexpected news.

"Tom and Maria are separated," he said when I mentioned Tom hadn't called me back. "He's not living in the house."

"Stuart told me; do you know what happened?"

"If Stuart knows, he's not saying. I haven't been able to get hold of Tom for two weeks, which is why I asked Stuart. How is Keiko?"

"Using oxygen by mask. She's resting so she can watch the Bears with us. Please don't take notice of me having to carry her to the basement TV room."

"Should I read into that what I think I should?"

"Yes."

"Fuck, man."

"Yeah."

The temperature outside was just above freezing, so our plan for the day was pizza rather than grilling, and it would be delivered between games. Everyone

went to the basement where Bianca had the projection TV on and tuned to the game, and I carried Keiko downstairs and settled her in a rocking chair Kristy had purchased, then sat on the couch near her.

The game didn't start well for the Bears, with the Vikings kicking two field goals in the first eight minutes. Things got significantly better from there, with the Bears scoring a touchdown and kicking a field goal less than three minutes apart. The first period ended with the Bears ahead 10-6, and a second-period touchdown gave the Bears a 16-6 halftime lead as they missed the extra point attempt.

The second half was a defensive struggle, with only two scores -- a touchdown for the Vikings in the third period and a field goal for the Bears in the fourth. That gave the Bears a solid 19--13 victory, taking them to 7-8 on the season. They wouldn't make the playoffs, but they certainly were improving. The consensus was that in two years, they'd contend for the Super Bowl.

The pizza was delivered about ten minutes after the game ended, and all of us ate our fill, though Keiko ate beef broth rather than pizza. When we finished eating, I carried her to the hospital bed in the Japanese room for her nap, then returned to the basement to watch the Cardinals defeat the Raiders 34-24. When the game ended, our friends left, and I went to the Japanese room to spend the evening with Keiko.

I took a brief break to call Rich to ensure my currency trade had been executed, which it had, and I asked him to put in a limit sell order at 0.900, which, given my average cost, would result in around 5% profit. He confirmed the order was in, and I returned to the Japanese room. We spent another hour before I carried Keiko up to bed, knowing that any day, that would no longer be possible.



December 12, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday, once my morning research work was completed, I began a year-end review of my portfolio. I closed out my positions in International Rectifier, Bally Manufacturing, and Wieboldt stores and used the proceeds, plus some available cash, to buy shares in Gulf Oil and Texaco on the basis of potential acquisitions and a proxy fight for Gulf Oil by T. Boone Pickens, a corporate raider who owned Mesa Petroleum.

I also shorted Continental Illinois, along with the five S&Ls with the worst loan performance rating and biggest exposure. Those shorts would likely need to be held for a year, or even longer, but being in first meant that when the collapse Pete was predicting occurred, I'd make a significant amount of money.

On a far more positive note, I bought additional shares in Apple, and rebalanced my treasury holdings to ensure I had sufficient cash on hand to make the required pension payments. With the remaining cash, I bought shares in General Foods, and all my remaining available cash went to futures index options on the Nikkei 225.

I ran a preliminary total gain report, and based on the trades in the AUD and the expected returns on the long position I'd taken, together with the current market values, my gains for the year were just under 37%. I checked the FX overall return, and it was just over 31%, with Mr. Matheson at 30%. My fund pulled the overall FX desk up that extra percentage point. I was still neck-and-neck with Noel Spurgeon, and it could go either way, though I was basically locked into my year-end positions except for the limit sell orders on AUD.

The big challenge for me would be in 1984 when our economic and stock market models showed a stagnant or possibly declining market. How I did under those conditions would tell the tale -- if I could beat the street and earn positive gains in a down market, I'd have a real shot at following in Noel Spurgeon's and Murray Matheson's footsteps.

The final thing I did before lunch was call to schedule my Series 30 licensure course. Fortunately, this one was offered in the Loop on Saturday afternoons. That would make for long days with my finance class in the morning, but having that license was absolutely necessary if I was going to move up the ladder.

XXIV. A Courageous Protector

December 15, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Thursday was a relatively quiet day in the office, as was typical of days in December at Spurgeon. About a third of the traders were already on vacation, and after Friday, nearly all of them would be away, with only skeleton crews manning the desks. That was almost always the most junior licensed individual, which for the FX desk was Larry Howell, one of the assistant brokers.

Time off for my team was staggered, and Tony or I could cover for anyone except the fixed-income analysts. That wasn't a big deal at this time of year because the bond market was essentially static for most of December. Currency markets were a bit more active, as global trade actually increased in December, but settlement for most of that activity was in January.

I used my lunch hour to review my notes for my statistics final. I had studied the night before, and felt confident I would do well enough on the final to have an A for the class. After lunch, I sat with Bianca and Steve to review the regression testing they'd done with their new model and was pleased with the results.

"I think we'll be able to incorporate this starting on January 3rd," I said. "Great work!"

"Thanks," Bianca said. "The new Sun workstation really makes all the difference in the world. We can run our analysis at least ten times faster than on the IBM PC, and overnight, we have full use of the system, unlike the mainframe, which has to run reconciliation overnight."

"So long as we show positive results and continue to provide value, you'll be able to have more cool toys!"

"I have a wish list," Steve said. "It's long and detailed!"

"And starts with a date with Anna?" Bianca asked with a smirk.

"Yeah, well," he said with a grin.

"There's no problem with that from my perspective," I said. "Different teams, and you aren't support staff, so the rules against fraternization don't apply."

"Go for it!" Bianca encouraged.

"Maybe I will," Steve replied.

I left their office, completed some paperwork, then headed to Violet's house, where I completed my final review before we had dinner. The test was challenging but not overly difficult, and I was positive I'd scored enough points to have an A for the semester. As usual, I met Violet after class, and we headed to the diner for pie and coffee.

"I didn't want to ask before your exam -- how is Keiko?"

"Her blood oxygen levels are low, even with what Doctor Morrison calls 'supplemental oxygen by mask'. She's weak and tired and sleeps about fifteen hours a day. Very soon, she'll need a catheter, and they'll begin giving her drugs to make her comfortable."

"Bianca invited me to a New Year's party. I wasn't sure it was a good idea."

"Me, either, but I spoke with Keiko about it, and she encouraged us to do it."

"But if..."

I nodded, "I know. There is literally nothing anyone can do for her except try to make her as comfortable as possible. Obviously, I'm going to spend a lot of time with her, but I will see you on Sunday for the Hawks game. I also hope you'll join us on Christmas.

"Yes, of course! Your mom will arrive next Friday evening, right?"

"That's the plan. If anything changes, I'll let you know."

"OK. What are we doing next semester?"

"Lunch on Saturdays," I replied. "I will be taking a class for my next securities license in February and March, but it's in the Loop from 1:00pm to 4:00pm for five weeks. Given my finance class ends at 11:00am, we'll still have enough time. We have tickets for one more Hawks game in March, and, of course, baseball starts in April. I did promise I'd have time for you, and I will."

"Sorry," Violet said. "I didn't mean to sound needy."

"I didn't take it that way," I replied. "I simply took it as you asking what we'd do with my change of schedule, the same as you've asked at the end of each semester. You're still hanging out with Lily and her friends, right?"

"Yes, and I saw Bev earlier this week. She didn't seem to know what was going on in your life, so I was careful about what I said."

"I've kept details fairly limited for most people. Bev and I just aren't close at this point. Lily doesn't know any details, either."

"I noticed that, but I wasn't too surprised, given you guys aren't close at this point."

"True. How are things going at work?"

"Great! I really like the people I work with, and everyone is so nice. They've given me more duties, and I'm basically the office manager now, and I'll receive a nice raise starting in January. How did the investments you made recently turn out?"

"Very well. Your money was in early, and you've had the full benefit. Your yearly statement should show about \$120,000, marked to market."

"Really? Is that before or after your fees?"

"After. Next year will be tougher, so I don't think you'll see the same returns, but you should have a million bucks in less than ten years. Remember, you'll receive a Schedule K form, and you'll need to report your gains on your income tax forms. It's passive, pass-through income, so you only pay income taxes on the realized gains. There is no Social Security or Medicare tax."

"Uhm, that's going to be a lot of money!"

"Yes, but some of the gains aren't realized, so there is no tax on that portion. There are no early redemption fees to withdraw money to pay the taxes. That's why I indicted a million bucks in ten years -- allowing for paying taxes. Everything will be clearly stated on the tax form, and all you'll need to do is report it on your Form 1040, though you can't use the EZ version. If you have any questions or are confused at all, I'll pay my CPA, Robert Black, to help you."

"You can't help me?"

"No. Weirdly, if I didn't have securities licenses, I could. I'm expressly prohibited from providing tax advice. I also don't have permission to act as a real estate agent or insurance broker."

"Is it OK to ask about your taxes?"

"I pay taxes on the 1% management fee and gains on my money, as well as on my salary and bonuses. I don't pay taxes on the 20% I take from your gains over 8%. That's called 'carried interest' and it isn't taxed until I withdraw it."

"Then, if I understand correctly, you'll pay taxes on about \$1,000 I pay you to manage the money?"

"Yes. Overall, given the size of the fund, I'll pay taxes on about \$16,000 in management fees, plus my salary and bonuses."

"I know it's none of my business, but is it OK to ask your salary?"

"So long as you promise never to say anything to anyone about it."

"No way! Never!"

"My base is \$90,000 with a bonus potential of \$45,000, which I should earn. I've also received special bonuses totaling about \$75,000."

"WHOA! You're going to make over \$200,000?! Not counting investments?"

"Correct."

"That's crazy!"

"Is it? Think about how much money I made for you and others -- the total return for the Cincinnatus Fund is close to 40% for the year. And don't forget more than a third of that figure I gave you will go to pay my federal and state taxes."

"Your taxes will be more than I make at my job!"

I nodded, "Yes, that's true. I don't complain about taxes or even the fact that I'll pay at a higher rate. People who have more should pay more, including at a higher percentage. Taking a few thousand dollars from me is much fairer than taking it from you, don't you think?"

"Yes, of course."

"Baseball players make a minimum of \$35,000 a year, and the average salary is around \$300,000. If I remember correctly, Mike Schmidt of the Phillies will make about \$1.6 million, or about eight times what I do. For playing a game!"

Violet laughed, "Good point!"

"NFL salaries aren't as high, but they're going up with competition from the USFL. Joe Montana should earn around a million next year."

"Baseball players make more?"

"Yes. Gretzky only makes about \$400,000, so a quarter of what Mike Schmidt earned."

"That just seems so wrong!"

"It's about revenue. If you think about it, a baseball or football stadium holds between 35,000 and 50,000 fans, and both the NFL and MLB have lucrative TV

contracts. Remember, too, each MLB team plays a hundred-sixty-two games, while NFL teams only play sixteen if they don't make the playoffs.

By comparison, hockey arenas hold 18,000 to 20,000 and trying to watch hockey on TV is beyond bad. They play eighty games. There's also the saying I've heard that the fastest way to turn a big fortune into a small fortune is to buy a hockey team. Many, if not most, of the teams lose money, unlike baseball or football teams."

"Going back to your pay, what happens if you lose money?"

"I'd receive my salary and the management fee, but I'd also very likely lose many of my clients and possibly even my job."

"But if the market goes down, that's not your fault!"

"I agree, but there are strategies to make money in what's called a 'bear market' -- that is, when the overall market is trending lower for an extended period. There are a number of things that can be done, such as finding stocks which go against the market trend, or betting on which stocks will have the biggest losses. But it's also the case that I invest in other things than the US stock market, which you know if you read my quarterly report."

"I do. You mean foreign exchange, bonds, and other stock markets?"

"Exactly. I could make the 8% hurdle by simply parking the money in fixed-income products, but anyone could do that, and they don't need to pay me. They pay me for beating the S&P and DJIA, both of which are up about 20% compared to my returns of close to 40%."

"What would you do if you lost your job?"

"Find another one. One bad year wouldn't ruin my career, but two or three certainly would. And I'm doing my best to diversify without violating the expected norms that most of my assets are in my own fund. That's why I bought the two-flats, and why I'll keep my current house as a rental property once I'm in a position to buy or build a bigger one. I'll also buy some art, some gold and silver coins, and keep a significant part of my salary and paid-out bonus in CDs."

"Your bonus isn't fully paid out?" Violet asked, sounding surprised.

"A portion goes into the main Spurgeon fund so that I have 'skin in the game' as it's called. I also put a portion in my own fund as well, for the same reason. If people see me managing my own money, that engenders trust."

"That totally makes sense. You wouldn't happen to need a secretary or assistant, would you?"

I was doing just fine without one, but I did have the option of having one if I chose. That wouldn't require special approval, as it was included in the approved plan, though deferred for the future.

"It's possible. Is that something that would interest you?"

"It would mean I could see you basically every day, right?"

"Yes, but it's a much different work environment from where you are now."

"I'm positive that you don't treat people the way the other bosses there do."

"No, I don't. Let's talk about it in January, OK?"

"Sure!" Violet exclaimed.

We finished our coffee and pie, and after walking Violet to her house, I headed home. Keiko was sleeping in the hospital bed in the Japanese room, so I quietly checked the chart and saw that her blood oxygen levels were down and that she had an IV with ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and Versed. That made it very clear that she'd likely have a catheter in the next few days.

I carefully kissed her forehead, then went upstairs to change. Once I was in sweatpants and a rugby shirt, I joined the others in the basement to watch TV. After the 10:00pm news, I headed to bed.



December 16, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I think I should put in the catheter," Jennifer said to Keiko on her early Friday morning visit. "You're too weak to even walk to the bathroom."

"OK," Keiko sighed. "Go ahead."

I held Keiko's hand while Jennifer inserted the catheter, something I was sure was very uncomfortable.

"We want to avoid what are colloquially called 'bed sores'," Jennifer said.

"Jonathan, if you or someone could lift Keiko out of bed a few times a day and let her sit in one of the basket chairs, that would be good. You just need to be careful of the IV and catheter. Move the IV bag to the portable stand, carefully pick Keiko up and set her down, then move the urine collection bag to the floor next to her."

"How long should she sit up?" I asked.

"For as long as she can tolerate. It's absolutely OK if she sleeps in the chair; it's about changing where the pressure is applied to her body. That also allows for the linens to be changed on the bed. She's on a purely liquid diet, right?"

"Yes. Just the protein mix and the electrolyte fluid, plus whatever is in the IV."

"Just the analgesics and sedatives, though when I switch the bag, it'll be just the analgesics. When Kelly comes at 9:00pm tonight, she'll add the Versed. We'll keep an eye on Keiko's urine output, and when it drops, we'll give her Lasix."

"Jonathan," Keiko said. "I think we should exchange our gifts tonight."

"I think that's a good idea," Jennifer interjected.

Jennifer's comment indicated she didn't think Keiko would be coherent for much longer, and as Doctor Morrison had said, at this point, things were predictable, but not the timing of those things.

"Yes," I agreed. "We should."

I made sure Keiko had everything she needed, including the remote for the portable TV Bianca had purchased for her at the end of November, then went to speak to Deanna, who was having breakfast. I explained what Jennifer had said, and Deanna agreed she'd be able to lift Keiko from the bed to the chair and back. I asked her to call me if anything at all changed, then went to say 'goodbye' to Keiko. We kissed, and I left the house for the office.

As I drove, I considered which days I should request off, knowing that any inferences I could draw were provisional. Taking the days from Christmas to New Year's seemed to be the best plan, given everything that had been said. That would actually give me from December 23rd to January 2nd, and if I needed

more time, I was positive Mr. Matheson and Mr. Spurgeon would grant it. Tony had committed to not taking those days off, for which I was grateful.

As usual, I was the first one in, and after starting a pot of coffee, I went to speak to Rich about overnight activity and checked the AUD exchange rate and trade volume. On hearing them, I was confident the exchange rate would recover to my limit sell, so I decided to leave those orders unchanged. I thanked Rich, returned to my office, and began my daily evaluation of the world. An hour later, with my daily report completed, I went to see Mr. Matheson.

"I think I need to take the week between Christmas and New Year's," I said.

"Because of your wife?"

I nodded, "Yes. The doctor's best estimate of the timeline is before New Year's."

"Noel authorized as much time off as you need."

"Thank you. Tony will be here when I'm out, so Research is covered."

"That's good, but you know almost nothing happens in late December. Even the terrorists take the holidays off!"

"I'm not sure I'd bet on that, given how many people travel."

"Anything of note today?"

"Not really. The government transitions from military rule to elected leaders in Argentina and Turkey went about as smoothly as we could expect. The real question is how long they'll last. Both currencies are a mess, and nobody can predict what the governments will do. In fact, I think the big scores on currencies are probably done."

"For good?"

"There will be opportunities with some weaker currencies, but they tend to not have enough float to do much with. Remember the trouble we had finding Zaïre? It's a similar problem with Turkish lira, Greek drachma, and so on. Not to mention, they usually go for shock devaluations as soon as they see the handwriting on the wall. That was the mistake Venezuela and the Philippines made. Australia was different because there was a huge float, and they thought they could manage it right up until they couldn't."

"Back to arbitrage, then," Mr. Matheson observed.

"An eighth of a percent per day means roughly twenty-five percent for the year, minus costs."

"Which is why you could beat me so handily. That said, I appreciate the boost! Find me something."

"We're on it. There will be some serious short strategies for S&Ls, but it might be '85 before that comes to a head. I'm sure you saw my short on Continental Illinois."

"I did. I took a position as well, but it's tough to find shares to borrow at this point. The short interest is so large that we risk a squeeze."

"That's true," I agreed. "But we have the margins to ride it out. Hell, if it's squeezed higher, we find shares to borrow and extend our short."

"You're really down on them."

"\$300,000,000 down," I said. "And that's just from Penn Square and doesn't include other non-performing loans. They are, to put it bluntly -- fucked. They're trying to buy their way out of it by offering bonus rates on jumbo CDs and other large deposits, but Pete says that's a losing proposition like paying one credit card with another and allowing the interest to ride."

"Good analogy. I also saw you extended your position in Nikkei Index options."

"Nowhere to go but up," I said. "And given Tony's take on next year's market returns and our economic projections, combined with the reports we receive from the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan, it's the only play that will show positive returns without resorting to bear-market strategies."

"What's going to happen with the oil companies?"

"Hell if I know," I replied with a grin. "Well, that's not true -- there will be a bidding war and a proxy fight. We can go along for the ride and stick it out until a merger or acquisition happens. The upside is around 50%."

"How sure are you?"

"Reasonably," I replied.

"Interesting."

"There is a non-zero chance that Pickens says 'fuck it' if he can't force terms he likes. The fact that it's him makes me more confident than, say, what's going to happen with Royal Dutch deciding to try to buy up the outstanding shares of Shell it doesn't own. I think they'll do it, but if they can't get the price they want, they'll abandon, while Pickens might decide to do it simply because of who he is."

"We're closing in on the Iowa caucuses. I know you said you'll include analysis starting in January, but who wins?"

"Mondale, for sure. He has the organization. The real question is who finishes second. Ask me again in January if you want anything other than an off-the-cuff analysis."

"I'll take that."

"Gary Hart," I replied. "But I wouldn't bank on that. One thing I'll say for sure -- it won't be Jesse Jackson. Cranston and McGovern will collect the left-wing votes, and there aren't enough blacks in Iowa to give him more than a few percent, even if we assume they all vote for him, which isn't a sure thing."

"You still think Mondale has it sewn up?"

"He'd need some kind of major meltdown to lose, given he's the candidate of the Democratic establishment."

"OK. Send me a memo with your time off request, and I'll approve it and send it to Mandy Peterson."

"Thank you."

I left his office and returned to mine, where I typed up the memo requesting the time off, then filled out the form for Personnel. I took the memo to Mr. Matheson who signed it, then took it to Personnel.

"Does this imply what I think it implies?" Leslie asked quietly.

I wasn't surprised that Mrs. Peterson had shared that information with Leslie, as Leslie would need to cover for Mrs. Peterson if Mrs. Peterson was out.

I nodded, "It does."

"I'm so sorry, Jonathan. This request doesn't need anything from Mrs. Peterson as Mr. Spurgeon spoke to her already."

"Thanks."

I returned to my desk and worked until 11:30am when I had lunch with Bianca.

"How much longer can you work out?" I asked.

"Through the middle of February, when I start the third trimester. I'll still come to the gym because I can use the treadmill at walking speed because if I sit on my butt all day, I'll gain even more weight than I should. I can do that right up until the baby is born, so long as I don't push myself."

"OK. I'm taking the time between Christmas and New Year's."

"I figured. Do you want me to cancel the New Year's party?"

"Keiko insisted we should have it, no matter what. I'm not sure, but I don't want to upset her."

"May I make a suggestion?"

"Sure."

"Reduce the guest list -- the boys, Violet, and our housemates. That way, if something happens, it's easier to handle. And you can truthfully tell Keiko we're having the party."

"Did you invite people yet?"

"Other than the ones I just mentioned, no. I was waiting to see what happened. The reason I asked is I spoke to Keiko this morning before I left, and then you basically confirmed what she said."

"Yeah," I sighed.

"Remember, we're all here for you," Bianca said. "I know it's going to hurt, but you have friends who'll help you."

"I appreciate it."

"Keiko's mom brought a small table with an incense bowl, a candle, and a vase with flowers this morning. Those make sense. Why did she bring white construction paper?"

"For the «kamidana-fūji». It's used to cover the shrine to protect it from impure spirits which surround death. The «kamidana» is the shrine."

"I thought Keiko agreed with us on that."

"She does, but she also wants to honor her parents and grandparents. When it's close to time, they'll sit vigil with her and moisten her lips with water from a cotton ball, a tradition called «matsugo-no-mizu» or 'water of the last moment'. The wake is supposed to be held as soon as possible."

"At the house?"

"I thought about that, but we won't be able to do it immediately because some relatives will want to come from California. I thought about the Buddhist temple, but in the end, I think having it at the house makes the most sense. Keiko's

grandfather agrees. The funeral is the following day, or perhaps two days after, depending, and then she'll be cremated, as we discussed. They'll give me a small urn, but the bulk of the ashes will be placed in the family crypt on the 49th day. The one caveat on the three days is it can't be on a «tomobiki» day, or the day before it, because it's a bad omen."

"That's the Japanese calendar, right?"

"Yes. And the reason for not being on that day is that the Kanji mean 'pulling your friends with you', which is an inauspicious day for a funeral, but an auspicious day for a wedding. I'm positive Keiko's grandfather will take that into account."

"If you need me to do anything, just say so."

"Jack offered the same thing. I promise to ask, but Ichirō promised to handle everything with the temple and the Buddhist priest."

"Any idea about how many relatives she has in California?"

"No, and I don't know how many will be able to attend, but I'm positive Ichirō will keep them informed."

We finished our lunch and went to the gym. The afternoon was quiet, and at 3:00pm, I left to head home. When I arrived, I found Keiko's aunt, uncle, and cousin with her, so after a quick kiss, I went upstairs to change. When I arrived back downstairs, they had left, and I went to sit with Keiko.

"What can I do for you?" I asked.

"Let me sit in your lap and cuddle me in one of the Mamasan chairs."

I carefully moved the IV to the portable stand, then gently lifted Keiko in my arms and sat down. She sighed deeply, snuggled close, and began sobbing softly.

"I don't want to die," she said.

"And I don't want you to die," I replied. "I love you very much, Keiko-chan."

She cried for about ten minutes, then asked for a tissue, which I handed her. She dabbed her eyes and cheeks and blew her nose.

"Would you get the gifts, please? CeCi wrapped them for us."

I moved Keiko to the cushion of the Mamasan chair, then got up and went to the great room and retrieved the two packages from under the tree. Keiko opened hers first.

"It's perfect," she said.

"I'll put it on the tree every year until it's time for me to join you."

"I hope that's a very long time," she said. "And I wonder if there is something after..."

The last thing Keiko needed was for me to give my usual response to that, so instead, I gave the best answer I could while being honest.

"If there is, then I'll see you there," I replied.

I opened my gift from Keiko -- black silk pajamas and a blue happi -- a Japanese robe.

"Thank you," I said. "I very much appreciate the gifts, and I like them a lot."

"I'm glad you like them," Keiko said. "Would you get my protein drink, please?"

"Yes, of course. Do you need the electrolyte one?"

"In a bit; I'm supposed to space them out so the fluid doesn't overwhelm my kidneys. I'm already getting extra fluid because of the analgesics."

I set the gifts on the low table, then went to the kitchen to get a pre-mixed bottle of protein drink from the fridge and took it to the Japanese room, where Keiko drank it through a straw hole in her oxygen mask.

"I arranged to have the week between Christmas and New Year's off work to spend with you," I said. "I can take more time if needed."

"You'll be here every evening, plus the weekends," Keiko said. "I'm sleeping most of the time you're at work, and my family is probably going to visit every afternoon from now on. What are you going to do for dinner?"

"There are leftovers in the fridge," I said. "Is there anything you need?"

"Not right now. Would you put in the cassette with the Japanese instrumental Music?"

"Of course."

I got up, put the cassette in the boom box, then sat down next to Keiko. We cuddled and listened to music until it was time for me to make my dinner. I heated the leftovers in the microwave, then ate in the Japanese room. After dinner, I stayed with Keiko until Kelly arrived at 9:00pm. I helped Keiko get situated in the bed, and then Kelly administered the Versed. I stayed with Keiko until she fell asleep, then went up to my room.



December 17, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

I woke on Saturday morning to the news that a bomb had gone off in central London, near Harrod's, the famous department store. Reports were sketchy, and it had happened less than forty-five minutes before I'd turned on CNN Headline News. The IRA had called in a warning just before the bomb had gone off, making it fairly clear who was responsible. There were fatalities and injuries, but the number wasn't available to CNN.

I considered whether any moves were necessary and decided most likely they were not, as this was part of a bombing campaign that a week earlier had seen a bomb go off at the Royal Artillery Barracks in London, injuring three soldiers. That said, there was an important difference -- this appeared from the reports to be a completely civilian target, which would likely cause an overwhelming response by the Thatcher government. Ultimately, it was a domestic British problem and might affect the British economy, but I didn't think the effects would be severe.

Maria arrived for her first visit of the day, and unsurprisingly, Keiko's blood oxygen levels were at 89%, which was just below the level considered 'hypoxic'. Maria increased the oxygen flow to the maximum, which long-term could damage Keiko's lungs, but in Keiko's case, it wouldn't really matter.

After consultation with Doctor Morrison, she administered an injection of vitamin B₁₂ to stimulate the production of red blood cells. Keiko had been taking oral B₁₂, but her body could apparently no longer properly process it via her digestive system. Maria also added an iron solution to the IV bag. In the end, all those could do was keep Keiko lucid for a longer period, as, in the end, her body was making too many blasts, and they were crowding out normal blood cells.

When Maria left, I carefully moved Keiko to one of the Papasan chairs, then went to make my breakfast, which I ate in the Japanese room while Keiko drank her protein drink. Once we both finished, I took her bottle and my plate to the kitchen, then returned to the Japanese room.

"A few more percent on the blood oxygen, and I'll begin to suffer from hypoxia," Keiko said. "And the analgesics are less effective each day, meaning I'll need Dilaudid soon. I want to say things now because I may never get a chance."

"OK," I agreed.

"I knew from the moment I met you that you were the man for me," Keiko said. "That first night when you said 'hello', I knew you were the perfect man for me and that I belonged with you."

"Just from 'hello'?" I asked.

"Yes. I saw it in your eyes. I knew a little about you because Ellie had told me, but seeing you was enough. I was determined then to find a way to be with you, and when you asked me to move in, I was ecstatic. It was my fervent hope that we'd become a couple, have kids together, and grow old together. The things that make me the saddest are that we won't have children and won't grow old together.

"I mean this -- the time I've had with you has been the best time of my life, though obviously with the caveat of having leukemia. Fate or «kami» or whatever you want to call it, brought you into my life to walk with me down this terrible path. I don't think anyone else could have done it the way you have. You truly lived up to the Kanji which I chose for your name -- «勇祐» (*Yuusuke*) -- which mean courageous protection. Thank you."

"You're welcome, Keiko-chan. I love you very much."

"I love you, too, Jonathan. When my mom comes on Monday, she's going to bring the things she'll need at the end. Please let her follow her rituals and traditions."

"I intended to," I replied. "I saw the white construction paper, and despite both our feelings on the matter, I see no point in disrespecting your parents or grandparents."

"Remember, too, never to put the urn on the «神棚» (*kamidana*), so you don't give offense to my family, though I'm not sure they'll come here after."

"I spoke to your grandfather about the correct procedures," I said. "I'll keep the urn in my room, next to the photo CeCi took of us in our kimono. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

Keiko smiled, "Live a long, happy life. I know you'll be sad, but please don't let that overwhelm you and change you."

"I don't think I can help being changed by what's happening," I said.

"Mourn me, yes, but please don't change who you are. And never, ever forget how much I love you."

"I could never forget that, not how much I love you. Are you OK with me going shopping? Bianca offered to take Juliette or Deanna with her."

"Go. I'll nap while you're going. And I want you to go to the hockey game tomorrow."

"If you're sure."

"I am."



December 18, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday, I spent the morning with Keiko, with her parents and cousin stopping in to see her before I left the house to pick up Violet for the Hawks game against the Bruins. We followed our usual pattern of getting food right before the puck dropped and were treated to a Hawks goal just seven minutes into the game. Sadly, that was the last time the Hawks would light the red lamp, giving up a goal in the first and four in the second, resulting in a 5-1 loss to the Bruins.

"I think you should come to the house," I said to Violet as we left Chicago Stadium.

"Christmas is only a week away..." Violet said.

"I know. We exchanged our gifts on Friday evening. You should come say 'goodbye' today."

"I...I'm not sure I can without crying."

"That's OK. Keiko will understand, and so will I."

"How long?"

"As I've said, nobody can say for sure. If Doctor Morrison's speculation is correct, before New Year's."

"I suppose I'll come with you," she said.

"I'll ask one of the girls to drive you home so I can stay with Keiko."

"You should."

"I did ask for time off between Christmas and New Year's, which I think is when it will happen."

"How are you so calm?"

"I'm not, really; I just need to be strong for Keiko."

"I know it's a bad time to ask, but can you get baseball tickets?"

"In January," I replied. "I absolutely want to see the Reds, even though they're not very good. What teams for you?"

"Any teams are fine, but the Angels for the American League and the Dodgers for the National League. But, as I said, any games are fine if you can't get those. You'll get football and hockey tickets again, right?"

"Yes."

It took some time to get out of the stadium parking lot, but then the drive to my house was typical for a Sunday. When we arrived, Keiko's parents and cousin had left, and her grandparents were there, along with Ellie. I greeted everyone and kissed Keiko on the forehead so she didn't have to take off her oxygen mask. Violet gave Keiko a careful hug, then sat down in one of the Papasan chairs facing Keiko.

"Jonathan, may I speak with you?" Ichirō inquired.

"Yes, of course."

We left the Japanese room and went to the kitchen, where I offered him green tea, which was being kept warm in the pot. He accepted, and I poured for both of us.

"My daughter asked me to speak to you about how much time she can spend here."

"I don't have a problem with her being here," I said, "though I do want some time with Keiko. Given everything, I'd say I want to reserve the time from 3:30pm to 6:00pm. Other than that, your family is welcome at any time. When the nurses say the time is close, then you'll all be welcome here any time of the day or night."

"Thank you. I've arranged for a black belt to cover classes as needed. My dōjō is closed the week from Christmas to New Year's. All of the arrangements are made."

"Thank you."

"I very much appreciate how you've cared for Keiko and stayed by her side. You are truly a 'courageous protector'."

XXV. A New Client

December 19, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Late on Monday morning, I went to see Mr. Matheson.

"There's a good chance I'll need to start my time off this week," I said. "I can't predict when, but it's close."

"Just call me and let me know. Nobody will say a word."

"Thank you."

I returned to the Research Department, picked up the telephone handset, and dialed Hart-Lincoln. I asked for Nelson and was transferred to his assistant, who put me through right away.

"It's Jonathan. Do you have a few minutes?"

"Yes. What can I do for you?"

"Is there anything I need to do with regard to Keiko?"

"Before I answer, how close?"

"Nobody can say for sure, but I'd say a week to ten days. Her blood oxygen levels are barely OK, and that's with high-flow oxygen via mask."

"I know I've said it before, but I'm sorry."

"Thanks."

"Does Keiko have a will?"

"No."

"Because you're married, intestate estates automatically go to the surviving spouse. Does she have any assets of her own besides personal belongings?"

"Her car."

"It will be your property, so you'll need to take a copy of her death certificate to the Secretary of State's office and have the car retitled in your name. You should also take her driver's license with you and fill out the form to cancel it. For your joint bank account, you'll take the death certificate to the bank. More than likely, they'll create a new account in just your name with a new account number. You'll need to make sure Spurgeon knows the new number. I'll handle the paperwork for Yuusuke Holdings, but I'll need a copy of the death certificate before I can do that. You should also give one to Robert Black."

"There's no probate or anything like that?"

"Generally speaking, not for a spouse. Does she have any debt?"

"No. Her parents were paying for school, including room and board, and the car was paid off as of July."

"You'll also need to cancel any credit cards in her name. Did she work at all?"

"No."

"I'll send a letter to the Social Security Administration with a copy of the death certificate so that nobody can reuse her Social Security Number. I think that covers it, but obviously, things can come up. If they do, call, and we'll solve them."

"Thanks. I appreciate the help. One more thing -- I'd like to draw up a will and various powers of attorney."

"Who?"

"I think, at this point, it has to be Bianca Pérez. Like Keiko, I don't want what Doctor Morrison called 'heroic measures'. I also want to be cremated and interred next to Keiko in her family's crypt at Montrose Cemetery."

"Beneficiaries?"

"A hundred grand to my mom, and the rest in a trust for my daughter. All my assets can be liquidated for cash. You'd be the trustee, and the money should be invested in the Spurgeon Select Fund."

"How do you want it dispersed?"

"I'm not up to speed on that part. What do you recommend?"

"Given your assets and the fact that Bianca works, \$1000 a month to her for the benefit of your daughter. When your daughter...what's her name going to be?"

"Sofía."

"When Sofía turns eighteen, the payments would go to her. She could use the trust for tuition and other college expenses, and then at age twenty-five, the balance is paid to her, and the trust would terminate."

"That sounds good."

"Last question -- executor and power of attorney?"

I thought for a moment.

"Make my Uncle Alec the executor, and Jack Clinton should have power of attorney."

"Only on incapacity or death, right?"

"Yes."

"I'll run it by someone in trusts and estates, then draw all of that up. You can sign everything after the first of the year."

"Thanks."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, then sat quietly for about ten minutes thinking about Keiko.

My phone rang, interrupting my thoughts.

"Research, Kane."

"Jonathan, it's Joel Steinem. Your AUD sell executed in full at 0.901."

"Thanks."

I pulled up my spreadsheet, entered the trade, and saw that my overall gain on the AUD trades was just under \$2.5 million. I logged onto the mainframe, ran a

portfolio analysis, and was very happy with the result -- a total return for the year of 39.2%, with only five full trading days remaining, plus two half days. There was little chance of a major market move, so my final number would be very close to that number. Of course, that total return was on dollars invested on the first day the fund was active, so the adjusted return was quite a bit lower, given significant capital had flowed in later in the year.

I checked the Nikkei closing, and the 225 had closed at ¥9484.17, up from ¥7291.47 when I'd purchased my first index options. If that trend continued, I'd be in very good shape for what was shaping up to be a rough year for the US economy, something that might actually cause Reagan to lose to the Democratic nominee, most likely former Vice President Walter Mondale.

In looking at the Nikkei futures, I decided to make additional changes in my portfolio, selling bonds and buying shares in a Nikkei 225 index fund rather than futures options, as the options were pricey and would mean forgoing a good percentage of the potential increase, as some of that was built into the options, which was the norm. I moved what would be the maximum for my fund, given the investment strategy documents.

It was late December, but I still had an opportunity to modify my strategy document for 1984, so I changed it to specify 'overweight' for stocks in the Nikkei 225, as well as for both index shares and index options. That would give me a much freer hand in the percentage of my fund that could be invested in Japanese securities.

When I was satisfied with the changes, I printed it out and hand-carried the printout to Kendall Roy in Compliance. He promised to review it immediately so that it could go out with the annual report in January. I thanked him, wished him 'Merry Christmas', and then returned to my desk. I spent some time reviewing the day's *Wall Street Journal* via Dow Jones News, then had lunch with Bianca. After lunch, we went to the gym, then returned to the office.

The afternoon was fairly quiet, and at 3:00pm I left the office, but rather than going straight home, I walked to a coin dealer and bought five one-ounce silver coins which would be used during Keiko's funeral. I walked down the street to a jewelry store and bought a fairly heavy silver chain so I could eventually wear Keiko's wedding band. That accomplished, I headed home.

Keiko's blood oxygen levels were still hovering around 89%, but her urine production was down, which meant she was being given Lasix. That was one of the signs Doctor Morrison had pointed to -- reduced urine output and was a portent of potentially rapid decline. Both Keiko and I knew it, and nothing specific was said between us. We cuddled both before and after dinner, and when Kelly arrived, she administered Versed. Once Keiko had fallen asleep, I went to sit with Jack in the great room.

"Where's Kristy?" I asked.

"Last-minute Christmas shopping with her little sister. How are you doing?"

"Hanging in there," I replied. "We haven't talked enough recently."

"You have to focus on Keiko," Jack said. "I totally get that."

"How are things in the mailroom?"

"All good. Did you hear that Al Frost quit?"

"Mark Benton's runner? No, I didn't."

"He gave notice today," Jack said. "I'm going to ask Mr. Benton for the job at Christmas dinner."

I nodded, "A smart move. I'll back you, obviously, but I can't imagine Mark turning down a request from his son-in-law!"

"Me, either, but you never know. Kristy is confident."

"The only way that wouldn't happen is if Noel Spurgeon said 'no', and I can't see that happening."

"Jack Nelson is going to be pissed because he'll have to replace me."

"O'Day?"

"He could do it, but Kasparov is better. You know the problem there. Other than Mandy Peterson, there are no women in supervisory positions. Heck, the one female trader quit four months ago because she couldn't stand the corporate culture."

"If you think Naomi is the best choice, tell Jack Nelson clearly and firmly why you think so. In the end, he'll have to decide, but every interaction I've had with Naomi has been positive, and she's not anything like Paige Jennings."

"I'll think about it and decide once I speak to Mark Benton. How did your currency trades work out?"

"Very well. I covered my calls at the bottom, then bought more, which I sold today. I cleared around \$2.5 million. My rough estimate for the FX desk was about ten times that."

"Did you beat Matheson?"

"Yes, but it's not really a fair fight because he has to include all his currency trades made on behalf of clients, which don't have the margins of the speculative

trades. Without those, he'd have beaten me. I might beat Noel Spurgeon, but it's a close thing."

"Pretty fucking amazing! You really do need to run your own shop so you can keep ALL the management fees and capital gains instead of sharing them with Spurgeon!"

"One step at a time," I replied. "As we discussed, I need to raise more capital, and that's been a struggle. I had some initial success with the law firms and the unions in Wisconsin and the trust manager, but so far, no other takers."

I heard the phone ring, and Juliette came into the great room.

"Jonathan," she said, "your mom is on the phone."

"Thanks."

I got up and went to the kitchen to take the call.

"Hi, Mom. What's up?"

"First, how is Keiko?"

"Sleeping most of the time. I'd say a week to ten days."

"I'm so sorry. Please let me know the arrangements when it's time."

"I will."

"Would you mind if I brought Mitchell to Chicago?"

"I'm going to assume that's your judge?"

"Yes. Mitchell Pierce. We'd stay at a hotel instead of with Violet so as not to impose on her."

"One room or two?" I asked mirthfully. "Or connecting rooms, to keep up appearances?"

"That's none of your business, Nosy Nate!" Mom said, laughing.

"I'll take that as either one room or connecting rooms," I chuckled. "He's more than welcome. We're having ham for dinner, so please tell me he's not Jewish."

"He was raised Presbyterian but doesn't go to church except occasionally."

"More than I needed to know, but that's probably a good thing. I did arrange things with Uncle Alec and Aunt Wendy for the 26th. It's unlikely Keiko will be able to participate."

"Have you been in touch with your grandparents?"

"No. I felt the ball was in Grandpa's court, and I wasn't going to press the issue. Keiko's going to have a Japanese funeral, which is Buddhist, so inviting your dad is a pointless exercise. He boycotted the wedding, and I doubt he even knows Keiko is ill. Well, it's possible Alec told him, but I don't know."

"How is Bev?"

"I haven't spoken to her in a few weeks, but last I did, she and Glen seem happy and Heather is healthy."

"And work?"

"Making money hand over fist, as the saying goes. Do you still plan to arrive on the 23rd?"

"Yes."

"That evening is the Spurgeon Christmas party, though I'm not sure I'll go, and if I do, I'll leave as soon as the meal is over and bonus checks are distributed. You're welcome at the house anytime on the 24th, and we'll start Christmas morning with breakfast at 8:00am. Are you going to call Violet?"

"Yes, as soon as we hang up. I'll see you on Saturday."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, then went back to the great room.

"My mom is bringing her boyfriend," I said.

"Is that a good thing or a bad thing?" Jack asked with a grin.

"He's a judge, so you tell me!" I replied.

"How did she meet him?"

I shrugged, "However people meet people. Maybe he has a kid in High School and she met him there. I know she wasn't in court for any reason. I'm actually happy for her."

"Back to our discussion about starting your own firm -- what options do you have for raising capital?"

"Right now, it's cold calls or letters, plus word of mouth."

"Only Chicago?"

"And Wisconsin."

"Perhaps there's too much competition in Chicagoland. I can't imagine there are firms like Spurgeon in places like where you're from."

I laughed, "And no money, either! Well, OK, Indian Hill and a few other places around Cincinnati, sure, but not Goshen. I'll do something in January; I'm just not sure what."

"What about talking to athletes? There are plenty of guys on the Bears, Bulls, Hawks, Cubs, and Sox. I think the key is not contacting them directly."

"You've lost me," I said.

"You want to find their agents and attorneys. That's who'll be managing their money. I bet your lawyer friends might know, too."

"That's a very interesting idea," I replied. "Thanks. If you have other ideas, I want to hear them, please. If you do get the runner's position, are you going to move out?"

"Please don't take this personally, but a baby is really going to change things here."

"True. And you and Kristy are at least five years from that, given she's always said she intends to finish law school before she has kids. Bianca is due in April, so you have time to find a place."

"All four of your apartments are rented, right?"

"Yes, though obviously anyone could give notice at any time. You should speak with Kasia Pucinski. She manages several dozen properties, including mine."

"I'll do that after the holidays," Jack said.

"Cool. I think I'm going to turn in."

I said 'goodnight' and headed up to my room, got ready for bed. I read *Crain's* and *The Economist* for about an hour, then turned off the lights and fell asleep."



December 20, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Research, Kane," I said when I answered my phone early on Tuesday afternoon.

"Mr. Kane, my name is Brandon Littleton. I was referred to you by Thomas Hart of Hart-Lincoln. I'm an attorney, and I represent a group of investors who have, collectively, \$9 million to invest. Would you have some time to talk?"

"Absolutely. Would this be as individuals?"

"No. The funds are held in a trust, and I am the trustee."

"What financial products are owned by the trust?"

"All of the assets are in an S&P Index fund at T. Rowe Price. I understand you effectively doubled the S&P gains this year."

"Very close," I replied. "You do understand that past performance is no guarantee of future gains."

"Yes, of course," Mr. Littleton agreed. "What is your fee structure?"

"Standard 'two and twenty' with an 8% hurdle."

"What's the process?"

"I'll send you a prospectus, along with the application forms and the forms to transfer assets. Review the materials, and if you're happy, fill out the forms and return them, and we'll get started."

"I've read the prospectus -- Hart-Lincoln provided me with a copy. I'd like to get this done quickly. Would you have time to meet later this afternoon?"

"What time did you have in mind?"

"I could be there at 3:30pm."

I hated the idea of staying late because of Keiko, but I didn't want to take any risks with the chance at another \$9 million in capital to invest. That was especially true as it would come in as pure cash when the shares in the mutual fund were redeemed.

"I'll fax over the paperwork, and you can fill it out in advance."

"How long does the transfer take?"

"About ten business days from start to finish. Our Legal and Compliance teams need to perform their due diligence. You can save them time if you bring copies of the trust documents with you."

"I'll do that. My fax number is 312-555-7744. See you at 3:30pm."

He hung up without saying 'goodbye', something which was common amongst the licensed professionals at Spurgeon but which I felt was rude. I left the Research Department, went to the FX desk office, got the forms from the shelf, then returned to Research. I faxed the documents, then called Kendall Roy in Compliance.

"I'm not sure it'll be possible to get this done before January," he said once I explained what I needed. "Everyone but Clark in Compliance is out next week, and the entire legal team is out. I'm fairly certain most of the onboarding team is taking time off as well."

"I'll let Mr. Littleton know. If there is any way to expedite it, I'd appreciate it and consider it a personal favor."

That was internal code for being willing to compensate anyone who assisted with my request. It couldn't be cash, but I could certainly provide gift certificates, bottles of wine or liquor, or other gifts.

"Got something hot?" Mr. Roy asked.

"The Nikkei 225," I replied. "You should have my revised asset allocation guidelines in your inbox."

"I do. I haven't looked at it yet. What's the skinny?"

"Increasing the percentage of assets I can invest in Japanese securities, either individually or in a Nikkei Index Fund, either long or with futures options."

"I don't see any problems with that. I'll read it over, sign off, and you'll have it by Friday."

"Thanks. I'll bring the application, transfer authorization, and trust documents to you before I leave today."

"Sounds good."

We said 'goodbye', and I hung up, then called home to let Deanna know I'd be late. I asked about Keiko, and Deanna said there hadn't been any change and that Ellie and some of the girls had visited. She said Keiko had fallen asleep right after they had left. When I finished the call, I spent about ninety minutes on research before my meeting with Brandon Littleton.

When he arrived, I was called up to Reception. He was my height, had sandy blonde hair, and was wearing a tailored suit that I was positive had come from Beth's grandfather's tailor shop.

"Jonathan Kane," I said, extending my hand.

"Brandon Littleton," he answered, shaking my hand firmly.

"I remember reading your name in relation to a wrongfully accused suspect in February of last year."

"You have an amazing memory," he observed.

"Normally, I wouldn't remember, but the young woman who was raped and murdered was a friend of mine. I'm glad they eventually got the right guy."

"As am I. I believe all the paperwork is in order."

He handed it to me, I scanned it, saw that it had been properly filled out, and both documents had been notarized.

"I'll take these to Compliance right now," I said. "They'll get started, but I'd expect the funds transfer to occur during the first week in January."

"Please do anything you can to expedite it."

"I've already asked them."

We shook hands again, and once he was in the elevator, I went to Compliance and handed the forms and trust documents directly to Kendall Roy.

"\$9.37 mil?"

"Yes. Anything you can do to expedite it would be greatly appreciated. If you can find a way to get it done by December 30th, there's a dinner for two at any restaurant you can name with any bottle of wine you want to drink."

He laughed, "You're learning the game. Let me work."

"Thanks."

I left and returned to 29, stopping in to see Mr. Matheson before I left.

"I just signed up close to \$10 million," I said.

"Union?"

"No. An investment trust. Compliance has all the paperwork."

"You're at about \$110,000,000 AUM, right?"

"Yes."

"Once you go over \$100 mil, it changes your compensation and bonus structure. Did Noel talk to you about that?"

"No."

"The short version is your salary is offset against your management fees, and your monthly draw is half a percent of your fund's annual management fee. Expenses are charged pro-rata, so even though it's just you, you'll cover a share consistent with your AUM. Any excess above your draw is paid quarterly, and any overdraft has to be repaid by January 15th of the following year. Your bonus is purely discretionary, and will reflect your fund's performance."

The 'capital contribution' was the portion of the management fee that was transferred to the Spurgeon Select Fund in Mr. Spurgeon's name. That would be a straight 25%. Knowing the expense ratios from the monthly reports, and doing a rough calculation indicated I would net somewhere around \$220,000 in direct compensation in 1984, not counting any bonuses. If I made no gains or even lost money, I'd still have income ten times the average worker. Of course, if that happened, I wouldn't have a job!

My 'draw' was the portion of the management fee that would be automatically paid each month, charged against the fees collected on the first business day of January. I could take out more, if I wanted, or, simply wait for the quarterly payment. To me, waiting made perfect sense, as I'd draw about \$10,000 per month.

The reason I wasn't paid the full amount was that expenses fluctuated month-to-month, and were heavily dependent on the types of trades executed by the firm, estimated quarterly tax payments, staffing changes, and every other bit of 'overhead' or 'expense', which had to be accounted for and drawn from the management fees.

"How does carried interest work in that case?" I asked.

"You retain twelve points of the 'twenty' in your name, with the remainder assigned to Noel Spurgeon, but left in your fund. I suspect Noel will speak to you after the 1st."

If my returns were anything like the previous year, that would mean I'd have carried interest of around \$800,000 just for 1984. The numbers were mind-boggling. Barring some kind of major setback, I was well on my way to making tens of millions of dollars.

"OK. I'll wait to hear from him."

"Did you sign up for the Series 30 course?"

"It's in February. There's an exam date in May, for which I'll register once I complete the course. They want to see the course grade."

"Bring me the sponsorship form, and I'll sign it."

"I will. And thanks."

"Keep making money for us, Kane, and you'll be rich beyond your wildest dreams. Dismissed."

I left his office, went back to mine, put on my coat, grabbed my bag, and headed for the elevator. Just over thirty minutes later, I was home and sitting with Keiko. Jennifer had added Dilaudid to the IV on Doctor Morrison's instructions, which made Keiko lightheaded. It also didn't help her breathing. Unfortunately, there really were no good options to relieve her pain without affecting her breathing.

"I think we need to say 'goodbye'," Keiko said, her voice muffled by the oxygen mask.

I feared she was right because of the progression of symptoms Doctor Morrison had explained.

"I love you, Keiko-chan, and I want you to know that I treasure every minute of every day we've had together. I'll always love you and always remember you."

Keiko removed her oxygen mask and smiled.

"I love you very much, Jonathan, and I am so happy to be your wife. I just wish we had more time together. Kiss me, please."

We exchanged a soft French kiss, then Keiko put her mask back on. There really wasn't much I could do at this point except be with Keiko and provide comfort. There were still three days until I began my vacation, and I decided the best option was to work half-days the rest of the week. That would allow me to do the most important part of my job but also be home by noon to spend time with Keiko.

"I'm going to speak to Mr. Matheson in the morning and only work half-days the rest of the week," I said. "That will allow me to spend more time with you while getting the most important part of my work done."

"OK," Keiko replied. "Could you get me some of the electrolyte drink?"

I nodded and went to the kitchen, poured some from the bottle into a cup with a straw, and took it back to Keiko. Watching her, I felt helpless for the first time in my life.



December 21, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"I'd like to work half days for the next three days," I said to Mr. Matheson early on Wednesday morning. "I'm in by 6:00am, so I'd leave at 11:30am. That will allow me to complete my portion of the analyst report. Tony will take over next week."

"That's approved. Noel called me at home last night, and I let him know about the new client. He's pleased, obviously, and confirmed what I said about the change in compensation. He'll discuss it with you once he returns in January."

"He's not going to be at the party on Friday?"

"He is, but he'll fly in that afternoon and fly out after the party."

"I may miss it," I said. "Right now, it looks as if I'll be there, but things could change."

"Understood. Noel knows the score, so you'll be excused. I'll let Mrs. Peterson know to give your Christmas bonus envelope to Pérez, if that's OK."

"It is."

"Is she carrying your kid?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And your wife knows that?"

"She does. It was a unique situation."

Mr. Matheson nodded, "I know chemo can make you sterile."

That was true, but not the overriding reason. Of course, Mr. Matheson did not know Bianca was bisexual, and that was not something she wanted generally known outside our circle of friends. Revealing that would create all manner of problems for her at Spurgeon, where anti-gay feelings were strong. The truly crazy part was I was positive at least two of the traders were gay, and I was equally certain about Ken Parker, the commodities analyst on my team.

I didn't care, but almost everyone I'd previously referred to as 'Suits' would demand he be fired if it became known. The news stories about GRID -- Gay-Related Immune Deficiency -- or what I'd seen recently referred to as AIDS -- Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome -- would lead to claims that they could infect others. As I understood it, that could only happen via sex or sharing needles, and the drug of choice at Spurgeon was snorted cocaine, not injected heroin.

I was actually on the lookout for a treatment for AIDS, as whichever pharmaceutical company developed it would likely profit massively from it, given the disease was, in effect, a death sentence. Of course, so was Keiko's, but at least there were treatments which could cure it or send it into remission. So far, there was nothing like that for AIDS.

"And," I said, "bone marrow transplants are guaranteed to make you sterile because they use high doses of radiation to destroy your bone marrow before replacing it."

"The other thing Noel said was to let you know you've earned your full bonus potential for this year. It'll be paid on February 15th, with the usual 25% holdback added to your investment in the Spurgeon Select Fund."

"How does that work with contributions via payroll deduction?"

"You'll need to give Personnel a dollar amount before January 10th to be withheld from each paycheck. Mandy Peterson will explain it all once Noel notifies her in early January."

"Thanks."

"Noel will want to talk to you about your position; I know he'd strongly prefer you continue to run Research for at least another year, but with a Series 30 license, firm rules permit you to run your own trading desk."

"I'm happy with my current position," I said. "I enjoy research, and it isn't interfering with anything, except perhaps being able to raise more capital. But with over a hundred mil in AUM, I don't think that's a priority for me, such that I'd want the hassle of running a desk and having a P&L."

"Noel won't object, given there's a lower capital contribution if you run your own desk to compensate for paying the people who staff your trading desk."

"Speaking of staff, I'd like to hire a secretary for Research, though I'd prefer calling him or her an administrative assistant."

"Him?" Mr. Matheson asked with a raised eyebrow.

"I don't think you need ovaries to do administrative work! In fact, YOU don't think so, given your position on hiring for Support Services!"

Mr. Matheson laughed, "I hear you, but every single time we hire a woman for anything other than Personnel or as a secretary, it always goes to shit! Paige Jennings was just the most recent example."

I felt that the firm's culture had a lot to do with that, but I also felt it would be a bad thing to say. That said, I had an approach I could take.

"Naomi Kasparov seems to have worked out well in the mailroom, and I'm positive you agree that Pérez is doing an excellent job as a data analyst."

"One positive data point - Pérez -- and one anecdotal report -- Kasparov -- against a dozen problematic ones since Noel hired me, and the amount of money we make says we're doing the right thing."

"You're the boss," I said.

"Do you have someone in mind? And is it a woman?"

"Yes."

"It's up to you, and you can hire at your discretion, so long as Mandy Peterson signs off. Just remember, it's pure cost."

"I actually disagree," I replied. "While nobody in the Research Department generates direct profits, we all generate indirect profits. Setting aside my fund, the analysis we've done is what made you money on the Bolivar, the Zaire, and the AUD, not to mention gold and silver plays. It's also the case for any staff without securities licenses -- the opportunity cost of having to do it yourself rather than focusing on the markets and clients means they, too, create indirect profit."

"Did some idiot business professor who failed in the real world put that idea into your head?"

"No. It's simply something I observed here. May I give you an example?"

"Oh, sure, why not?"

"When you yell at Phil that you'll lose millions because the IBM terminals are down, that means that the fact they're working allows you to make those millions. Get rid of Phil, and who is going to keep the systems running? I know they're all classified as 'overhead' in the expenses that are charged to each fund, but we couldn't make the kind of money we do without them. Therefore, they contribute to the bottom line in a positive way, not a negative one."

"It's an interesting take, but in the end, the licensed guys make the money, including you."

"Then you'll have no problem if the entire Research Department decides to take the month of January off, right?"

"Get the fuck out of here!" Mr. Matheson ordered, but he had a grin on his face. "You are a real pain in the ass! Lucky for you, you're the best analyst we have!"

"Proving my point!" I declared with a grin as I backed out of the office.

"Jackass!" Mr. Matheson said, turning back to his quotation terminal.

I left the FX desk offices and went up to 30 to see Mandy Peterson and let her know I intended to fill the 'secretary' role, and asked about the title.

"Mr. Spurgeon will have to approve a different title, but I don't see a problem. It's equivalent to the girls who work for me being called 'Personnel Assistants' as opposed to secretaries. We'd put your new hire on the same salary schedule as the current secretaries. They start at \$21,000 per year and are eligible for overtime at time-and-a-half."

That salary was right at the household median income, and close to what college graduates with engineering degrees would earn starting out, and significantly

more than starting teacher's salaries. Violet was currently making \$7.00 an hour, more than double the \$3.35 minimum wage.

Of course, I was going to make something like fifty times the minimum wage, and that reminded me I needed to start contributing to charities. The first would be to the Leukemia Society of America in Keiko's name. I'd do that as soon as my bonus was paid in January.

"OK. I have someone in mind. What's the process?"

"You interview her, I interview her, and I check her references. Generally speaking, you have broad discretion to hire someone for that position, just as the other heads of desks have."

"OK. I'll get back to you on this in January."

"Let me know if you need anything with regard to your wife," Mrs. Peterson said.

"I just spoke to Mr. Matheson about my schedule. I'm working half days the rest of the week."

"OK. You're also entitled to two days of bereavement leave, which doesn't count against your days off. That's intended for a wake and funeral, but you have discretion to use them as you see fit. Will there be a service?"

"A Buddhist wake and funeral, which Keiko's grandfather is arranging."

"Get word to me, as Mr. Spurgeon will want to send flowers in addition to attending."

"I'll do that. Thanks."

I left her office and returned to 29. I decided to wait to talk to Violet until I saw her on Christmas Eve. I worked until 11:30am, then headed home to be with Keiko.

"You should go to the company party on Friday," Keiko said.

"I'll see how things are on Friday," I countered.

"I want you to go," she said. "Please promise me."

I didn't want to upset her, so I agreed, but I would decide at the last minute if I felt I could leave her for a few hours.



December 22, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Thursday, Keiko's blood oxygen level had dropped to 87%, and her urine output had decreased, mainly due to not drinking enough. She was going to be sleeping more and eventually not wake up from a nap. That meant we were at a point where she'd need a feeding tube, and she'd expressly rejected the idea when Jennifer offered it. After consulting with Doctor Morrison, Jennifer set up an IV with Ringer's Lactate and 5% dextrose and reduced the Lasix.

When she finished, Jennifer asked me to step out of the room.

"Keiko should keep the pulse oximeter on her finger," she said. "Keep an eye on the readings. You'll see decreased pulse, increased temperature, and decreased PO₂. If her PO₂ drops below 85%, or her temperature goes above 103°F, call the emergency number on the chart, and one of us will come over right away. The same is true if her pulse drops below 45 for a sustained period of time."

"How long?"

"I'd say five minutes. All of those are signs that her time is near."

"Do you have an idea?"

"I'd say no more than a week, maybe a bit less. But it could also be tomorrow. Once she's no longer coherent, she can't tell us if anything feels wrong, and we don't have a full set of monitors on her."

"What else would you have?"

"Blood pressure, EKG, and respiration, including CO₂ in her exhaled breath. But we're not going to intervene, so doing those things makes no sense."

"What about taking her out of bed?"

"If she's aware, it's fine, but we're close enough to the end that bed sores won't be a problem. Do you have a counselor?"

"There's one I've spoken to about stress."

"Good."

"Is there anything else I can do for her?"

"Hold her hand and talk to her, even if she doesn't seem to be aware you're there. There is evidence that people in comas are aware of things like that, and it will comfort her emotionally."

"I'll do that."

"See you around 6:00pm."

I walked her out, then returned to the Japanese room, and because Keiko was awake, lifted her from the bed and held her while sitting in a Papasan chair. When she fell asleep, I put her back in the bed, covered her, then held her hand for about twenty minutes. I sat with Keiko the rest of the day, sometimes cuddling her, sometimes holding her hand, and other times simply sitting quietly reading while she slept. A few of her friends visited during the day, but they only stayed a few minutes, as Keiko was extremely tired.



December 23, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday, at Keiko's insistence, I attended the Spurgeon Christmas Party. She'd only been awake for a few minutes during the afternoon, and the first thing she'd said was I should go to the party. I'd agreed, and Bianca and I had left the house at 6:30pm to drive back to the Hancock Center in time for dinner. We'd agreed to skip cocktail hour because Bianca couldn't drink due to her pregnancy, and I wanted an additional hour with Keiko.

"What are these things like?" Bianca asked.

"The food is good, the booze is good if you can drink it, and Noel's speech isn't too long. The highlight is the Christmas bonus."

"How does that work?"

I shrugged, "I have no idea how Mr. Spurgeon decides. For all I know, he throws darts at a dartboard!"

"You don't believe that for a second!"

"No, of course not! But it's true that I don't know how he makes decisions about bonuses. All of them are at his discretion, and the number in your contract is a target, but it's neither a guarantee nor a cap. That said, Christmas bonuses are separate from performance bonuses. I have no idea what you should expect, either. The same goes for your annual bonus, which is paid in January."

"Well," Bianca said, "no matter what, it's found money, and I'm already making more than I would have if I'd finished my degree."

"You're starting school again in August, right?"

"Yes. I'll take a CS class and a stats class. Are you planning for evening or weekend classes next Fall?"

"It'll depend on what I want to take, though, at this point, it seems less important. If you're going to take two classes, someone will need to stay with Sofía."

"I know this is a taboo question at Spurgeon, but given we're having a baby together, what's your total compensation likely to be next year?"

"Rough guess? \$300 grand, including bonus."

"We are SO getting a live-in nanny!" Bianca declared.

"The problem with that is one of space," I replied.

"May I make a radical suggestion?" Bianca inquired.

"Of course," I agreed as I pulled into the parking garage at the Hancock Center.

"There are really nice condos in this building, including some with four, five, or six bedrooms. With your salary, you could easily afford something like that. Obviously, I'd contribute, and we'd have enough room for Deanna's studio."

"I'm not sure I'm ready to move or to make that kind of investment."

"The commute would be awesome!"

I laughed, "Sure, but don't you think a kid needs a yard?"

"There are parks, and, honestly, do you see yourself as a suburban dad commuting in by car or train every day from Oak Brook or wherever?"

"Not really. Can we defer this conversation until after...New Year's?"

"Sorry, I should have been more sensitive."

"It's OK. I'm just a bit preoccupied right now."

"As you should be! We have plenty of time to sort things out."

It was true that Bianca and I did have plenty of time, but that was not the case for Keiko and me. I parked, and Bianca and I got out of the car and rode the elevator to the lobby, then took the express elevator to the 95th floor. As soon as we stepped off the elevator, Samantha, Noel's daughter, came up to us. She was dressed in a formal gown and looked very cute.

"Welcome!" she exclaimed. "The bar is still open, and dinner will be served in fifteen minutes."

"Thank you," I said.

"Dad said you have a new job!"

"I do. How is school?"

She rolled her eyes, "The nuns are a pain in the butt!"

"You go to Catholic school?"

"It's a good private school. Enjoy your dinner!"

"Thank you."

We walked away and once we were in the restaurant, Bianca leaned close.

"Seven going on twenty-seven?"

"Pretty much. Jack Nelson calls her 'Pipsqueak' and says she's the queen bee, but I just don't see Noel Spurgeon willingly turning over his empire to a *girl*."

Bianca laughed, "You got THAT right!"

We got Cokes, then found our table and sat down. As I'd predicted, the food was good, though I passed on drinking anything, and Mr. Spurgeon's speech reflected the extremely profitable year we'd had.

As was the case at the previous two parties, bonus checks were distributed, and I simply pocketed mine without looking. Bianca saw me do that and slipped hers into her purse. Once dessert was finished, Bianca and I made our way to the elevators, joined by a few others. It wasn't until we were in the car that we opened the envelopes.

"\$2500," Bianca said, looking at hers. "Well, before taxes."

"\$10,000," I replied.

"Is that good?"

I shrugged, "As you said, it's 'found money', and my previous bonuses were \$800 and \$4000."

"It's hard to believe how much money is thrown around here."

"I can't be sure, but a rough estimate is that Mr. Spurgeon made \$5 million in salary and probably \$100,000,000 in personal gains across all the funds. It was a VERY good year for the firm."

"And your daily reports say next year is going to be tough."

"It is, and part of that is that Volcker's hands are somewhat tied -- if he cuts interest rates, it looks as if he's helping Reagan; if he raises them, he looks as if he's helping the Democrats. That shouldn't matter, but it does. Tony thinks it'll be a down year for the Dow, and I can't argue with that. On the other hand, I think the Nikkei will continue to climb."

"Given Matheson deals mostly in currencies, how does that affect him?"

"The more trade, the more opportunities to make money. In a stagnant economy or worse, a recession, or even worse, with 'stagflation', his job is difficult. That said, even in down years, there is plenty of foreign trade, so he'll be able to make money."

"What would you do as a retail investor?"

"Buy a Nikkei Index fund! Short of that, and if I were conservative, a treasury fund. You'll beat inflation, and it's the safest investment that pays a return. I could put my entire fund into Treasuries and beat the hurdle, but that's not what earns me my fees."

"You use those to generate cash for the pension funds, right?"

"Yes. A mix of varying maturities so that I always have cash on hand, but cash that is earning a real return. As interest rates come down, that strategy won't beat the hurdle, and I'll need to think about ways to improve those returns. The problem is that high-grade corporate bonds and triple-tax-free municipal bonds have long maturities. But the analysis Joel and Mark completed last week predicts interest rates over 8% for at least another year, and probably longer, so it's not an immediate concern."

"I'm amazed at how much you keep in your head."

"It's one of the keys to being successful in this business. Mr. Matheson has an encyclopedic knowledge of FX. I can write something in a report, and he'll remember it weeks later, almost verbatim. I've seen that with Noel Spurgeon about stocks. Another key skill is being able to digest huge amounts of information and synthesize a response in a short amount of time."

"You're extremely good at that."

"Which is why I'm running the Research Department, not a desk, though I'm an outlier because I'm running my own fund."

"All because a certain underage rich girl offered pussy and rewarded you for an over-the-top deflowering with managing her trust fund!"

"I'm not even going to ask how you know that, but I am going to ask you to not say that aloud ever again."

"It's just the two of us here unless you think Matheson has the car bugged!"

I chuckled, "I doubt it, but being with Jeri was an indiscretion which cannot ever be repeated. It's why I put off Clara until she was seventeen. And before you ask, I haven't given any serious thought to the future. Right now, it has to be about Keiko."

"I know."

When we arrived home, Keiko was sleeping, and after considering my options, I decided to sleep in one of the Papasan chairs in the Japanese room so I could be near her.

XXVI. I Love You, Keiko-chan

December 24, 1983, Christmas Eve, Chicago, Illinois

My mom and her boyfriend arrived at the house just before 9:00am on Saturday, which was Christmas Eve.

"Jonathan, this is Mitchell Pierce, my boyfriend, who is a judge of the Clermont County Court of Common Pleas. Mitchell, this is my son, Jonathan, who is Head of Research for Spurgeon Capital."

"Nice to meet you, Your Honor," I said, extending my hand.

He took it, and we shook.

"Nice to meet you as well. Please use my given name, as we're not in court, and I think the fact I'm dating your mom gives you the right to be informal."

"Thanks."

"Got any hot stock tips?" he asked with a smile.

"I hear doctors and lawyers get the same type of questions in social situations."

He laughed, "When I was in private practice, all the time."

"In all seriousness, if you have money to invest, I'm happy to offer my services."

"I have a small portfolio," he replied. "We can discuss it in the future."

"How is Keiko?" Mom asked.

"Asleep. She sleeps at least twenty hours a day now, and fairly soon, she simply won't wake up from a nap. How long after that, nobody can say."

"I was sad to hear about the situation from Linda," Mitchell said. "I doubt there is, but if there is anything I can do, please let me know."

"Thank you. Can I get you some coffee?"

"Yes, please," both my mom and Mitchell said.

I led them to the kitchen, where I introduced Jack and Kristy who were having breakfast, then poured coffee for my mom and her boyfriend. I refilled my cup, and we went to the Japanese room, but Keiko was still sleeping. I suggested we sit in the great room, and my mom agreed. Bianca and Juliette came downstairs a few minutes later, and just after them, Deanna and CeCi came down as well.

"An interesting arrangement," Mitchell observed after I introduced everyone.

"Fortunately, I don't have to pretend to be gay!" I chuckled. "I'm my own landlord."

"The art on the walls, is that your friend's work?" he asked.

"Yes, except for the Japanese prints, which came from a store at the Art Institute."

"How is Bev?" Mom asked.

"I haven't spoken to her since I spoke to you on the phone. She doesn't call, and honestly, at this point, I think it's best just to allow her to decide how often we're in touch."

"Are she and Glen going to marry?"

"That was my understanding, but I'm not aware of any specific plans."

"Jim and Julie were hoping you might convince her to get in touch with them."

"I tried, Mom. Bev is far more stubborn than I realized, and on that topic, I'd have more luck talking to a brick wall. At this point, if Jim Newton hired a PI, I think she'd be found fairly quickly, given she's working full-time. She still receives some mail here, and I believe her car and driver's license still have this address, but I can't say for sure. Honestly, at this point, Bev and I are barely friends."

"That's just so sad, given what you had."

"Yes, but that's in the past, and I have to focus on the future, including your granddaughter!"

"You found out the sex?"

"Yes. Her name will be Sofía Angélica Kane-Pérez."

"I'm very happy, Jonathan, though I can't say I expected it to be the way it is."

"It wasn't the original plan," I replied.

"May I interject with a piece of lawyerly advice?" Mitchell asked.

"Yes."

"Make sure you draw up a custody and support agreement. Even if things are rosy now, there are no guarantees they will be forever."

"Tell me about it," I said, shaking my head.

"You need to do it for your own protection," Mitchell said. "First, at least in Ohio, the mother of a child born out of wedlock automatically has full custody, and the biological father would need to go to court to enforce his rights if there were to be a disagreement. From my experience, the mother has all the power and often gets her way. I'm not sure about Illinois law with regard to child support and alimony or 'separate maintenance'."

"There is no alimony for unmarried women," I replied. "According to my attorney, when Illinois abolished common law marriages ages ago, there was no provision for any kind of support except child support. And that's a fixed percentage of income, and, as far as my attorney is aware, it's statutorily established and can't be modified by a court."

"That's very different from Ohio, where judges have significant leeway and 'separate maintenance' is available for cohabiting couples. I'm no expert, but that's my understanding."

"That's what I understand from Stefan Chojnicki, Bev's attorney in Ohio. Anyway, I'll discuss it with Bianca. She's practical and reasonable, so I'm sure we can work it out between us."

I heard Keiko stirring, so I excused myself and went to the Japanese room to see her. I asked if it was OK for my mom to come in and say 'hello' and Keiko agreed, and said it was OK to bring Mom's boyfriend as well. I adjusted Keiko's covers, then went to get my mom and Mitchell. I brought them to the Japanese room and went to Keiko's side.

"Keiko, you remember my mom, of course," I said. "And this is her boyfriend, Judge Mitchell Pierce."

"Hi, Keiko," Mom said.

Keiko moved her mask and said, "Hi, Mom. I'm glad you're here."

The doorbell rang, and I excused myself to answer it.

"Hi!" Violet exclaimed.

I greeted her and we exchanged a quick hug.

"Did your mom make it safely?"

"Yes. She and her boyfriend are in with Keiko."

Violet took off her shoes and followed me to the Japanese room, where I introduced her. She gave Keiko a very light hug, then stepped away from the bed. Keiko and my mom chatted for a bit, then Keiko asked for a drink. I went to the kitchen and poured some of the pediatric electrolyte drink into her cup. I put the lid on the cup, inserted the straw, and brought it to her. She only drank a few sips, then handed it to me. I had just set it down when the doorbell rang again.

"Good morning," Jennifer said when I opened the door.

I greeted her, he stepped in, and I closed the door.

"How is Keiko this morning?"

"About the same. She woke up about five minutes ago and is visiting with my mom, my mom's boyfriend, and Violet, who I know you've met."

"I have. I'll quickly examine Keiko, then get out of your hair. I'll be back after lunch, then Maria will make the next two checks. Tomorrow, Aiko and Sarah, a nurse you haven't met, will visit. Neither are Christian, so working Christmas isn't a problem."

"I appreciate it."

"Has Keiko eaten or drunk anything?"

"A small amount of protein drink last night, and I mean a few ounces. And a few ounces of the pediatric drink a few minutes ago. I'm sure you're aware she's sleeping at least twenty hours a day."

"Yes."

We went into the Japanese room, and Violet suggested to my mom and Mitchell that they go to the great room while Jennifer examined Keiko. They agreed, and Jennifer quickly performed an exam. Once she'd completed that, we stepped out of the room.

"Fluid is starting to build up in Keiko's lungs, so I'm going to increase the Lasix, per Doctor Morrison's instructions. Given everything else, I'd say sometime in the next twenty-four hours, she'll slip into a coma."

"And?" I asked.

"I can't predict, but a few days, at most. Her temperature is rising, her pulse is weakening, her PO₂ is dropping, and fluid is accumulating in her lungs. She's suffering from systemic organ failure, and there is nothing we can do except keep her as comfortable as possible, but the increased Dilaudid and Versed will make her sleep even more, and, as I said, she'll drift into a coma from the

accumulation of toxins and limited oxygen in her blood. I'm surprised she's as coherent as she is."

"OK. I'll see you just after lunch. Thank you for everything you've done."

"You're welcome. Remember, if her vitals drop, call the emergency number."

"I will."

I walked her out, then went to the great room. I let my mom know I was going to spend some time with Keiko, then went to the Japanese room.

"What did she say?" Keiko asked, her voice muffled by the oxygen mask.

In keeping with our agreement, I simply gave a straight answer.

"That you'll very likely slip into a coma in the next twenty-four hours."

Keiko nodded, "Hold me one last time, please."

I smiled, moved the tubes and wires, and sat in a Papasan chair with Keiko in my arms.

"I love you very much, Keiko-chan. I'm sorry I couldn't help you more."

"It's not your fault, Jonathan. You've done everything you could, and so did the doctors."

"I just wish there was something else," I said with a sigh.

"Live a long, fulfilling life," Keijo said. "And, if my grandfather is correct, our «kami» will be together somehow in the future."

We sat quietly for about ten minutes, then Keiko moved her mask.

"Kiss me, please," she said weakly.

We shared a soft kiss, and when we broke it, Keiko sighed deeply.

"I love you..." she said as her eyes closed.

I carefully put her back into the hospital bed, wondering if those would be the last words she spoke. I sat with her for about ten minutes, then joined my mom, Mitchell, Violet, Bianca, Juliette, Deanna, and CeCi in the great room.

"What did the nurse say?" Violet asked.

"That it's probably no more than a few days, and that Keiko might not wake up again."

"Shit," Bianca said quietly.

"Yeah," I agreed. "I cuddled her for about ten minutes, she said 'I love you', then fell asleep."

"Can we do anything for you, Jonathan?" Mom asked.

"No. Just so you know, her family will visit this afternoon -- her parents, grandparents, aunt, uncle, and cousin."

"It's your house!" Mom said.

We spent the rest of the morning talking and had lunch at noon. Jennifer arrived for another exam, and nothing had changed. Keiko hadn't woken up, but that

wasn't out of the ordinary, given she'd been awake for about thirty minutes earlier, and if she was going to wake up, it would be mid-afternoon. Jennifer updated the chart, then left. I once again sat with Keiko for about twenty minutes, holding her hand, but she didn't wake up.

Keiko's extended family arrived just after 3:00pm, but she didn't wake despite her mother calling her name several times. Once it was clear Keiko wouldn't wake up, Ichirō and Itsurō asked me to step out of the Japanese room.

"Does this mean what I fear it means?" her dad, Itsurō, asked.

I nodded, "Yes, A day or two, perhaps three."

"How sure is that?" Ichirō asked.

"Nobody can say, but I think it'll be Monday or Tuesday."

"May I use your phone? I want to call my brother in California. He and his family will want to be here for the ceremonies."

"Of course. Just dial direct and don't worry about the costs."

"Thank you."

I led him to the kitchen, and he placed the call, which lasted five minutes, though it was in Japanese, so I didn't understand a word.

"They are going to book a flight for first thing Monday," he said. "We don't want to interfere with your family, but will you allow us to follow Japanese tradition and stay with her until her time comes?"

"Of course. Starting today?"

"Just her parents for now, but on Monday, all of us."

"Keiko's old room is available for your family's use."

"Thank you, Jonathan," Itsurō said. "Dad, we should call the temple."

Ichirō nodded, "I think so, too."

Ichirō called the temple and discussed the situation, with no specific plans made, just contingencies discussed. When Ichirō finished the call, the three of us returned to the Japanese room, and Ichirō explained the plan to everyone. After spending another ten minutes, everyone except Keiko's parents left.

Bianca, Deanna, and CeCi made dinner, which we shared with Keiko's parents. After dinner, Violet, my mom, and Mitchell left, and I went back to the Japanese room to be with Keiko. She hadn't woken up and didn't wake up when Maria examined her nor for the rest of the evening. Maria returned at about 10:00pm, and Keiko still hadn't woken up.

"I don't think she'll regain consciousness," Maria said when she finished her exam. "Would you like me to contact our on-call physician to examine her?"

I shook my head, "It won't change anything, and I'd prefer not to disturb anyone on Christmas Eve for a futile exercise."

"OK. I'm off tomorrow, so I'll see you on Monday if Keiko is still with us."

"Thanks."

I walked her out, then sat with Keiko and held her hand for fifteen minutes before I sat down in a Papasan chair, pulled a blanket over me, and fell asleep while Keiko's mom sang quietly to her.



December 25, 1983, Christmas Day, Chicago, Illinois

"Did she wake up at all?" Bianca asked early on Christmas morning.

"No. Her oxygen level is down to 85%, so I doubt she'll wake up again. Her mom was up with her most of the night, and just went up to take a nap. Her dad is with her now."

"I'm going to start breakfast. Your mom and her boyfriend should be here momentarily, and they were going to pick up Violet."

"I'll help," I said. "I'll sit with Keiko after we open presents."

"Doesn't it feel wrong?"

"Yes, but Keiko was adamant that we keep our plans. The same is true for our family dinner tomorrow."

Bianca and I went to the kitchen, where I used Bisquick to make waffle batter while she put bacon on baking trays, which she put in the oven. Once she'd done that, she began making eggs while I poured batter onto the waffle iron. Juliette came in a few minutes later and began setting the table, finishing just as my mom, Mitchell, and Violet arrived.

Once we had breakfast ready, we invited Keiko's parents to join us. We had just finished when Aiko arrived to check on Keiko. After the exam, Hanako, Keiko's

mom, spent ten minutes talking to Aiko in Japanese. When they finished, I walked Aiko to the front door.

"May I ask what Keiko's mom said?"

"She was simply confirming everything you told her was accurate. It wasn't accusatory, if that is what concerns you."

"A bit," I replied. "She and I aren't on the best of terms. Thank you for coming today."

"You're welcome. I'll see you after lunch."

She left, and I joined my mom, Mitchell, Violet, Bianca, Juliette, Deanna, and CeCi in the great room so we could open presents. Mom and Mitchell had brought presents for each other, and Bianca and I had bought presents for Violet, so everyone had at least one package to open.

The gifts we had for Jack and Kristy remained under the tree and would be opened when they returned from her parents' house late in the day. They'd spent Christmas Eve with his family, doing their best to divide their time. Keiko's parents, who didn't celebrate Christmas, stayed in the Japanese room with Keiko.

After presents were opened, Bianca and I excused ourselves and went to the kitchen to begin preparing our mid-afternoon meal. I split my time between the kitchen and the Japanese room, and Juliette pitched in to help Bianca when I was with Keiko. Aiko arrived after lunch, noting that Keiko's breathing was labored and that her PO₂ was down another point. She spoke to a doctor by phone and increased the Lasix.

Not long after she left, Keiko's grandparents arrived, and I left the Japanese room while they and her parents sat with Keiko. Violet got up when I walked into the great room, touched my arm, and indicated she wanted to speak privately.

"How are you?" she asked.

"OK, I guess. Having my friends and my mom here helps, but..."

"I'll do anything I can to help you, Jonathan. That's what you would do for me."

"Right now, just being here is helpful."

"But you'll ask if you need something?"

"I promise."

Despite my dour mood because of Keiko, we had an enjoyable dinner, sharing with Keiko's parents and grandparents, as the ham was big enough to easily feed everyone. Ichirō confirmed that his brother, his brother's wife, and their daughter would arrive early on Monday, as they had booked a redeye flight from California. Her husband and teenage daughter would arrive late on Monday afternoon.

"I think maybe you should cancel tomorrow evening's dinner," Mom said as she helped me carry dishes to the kitchen after the meal. "With Keiko's extended family here, we'd seem very rude."

"I think you're right," I said. "I'll call Uncle Alec and ask him to cancel the chef and invite them to visit during the afternoon."

"I think that's for the best."

I excused myself and went up to my room to make the call. My aunt answered and I explained the situation, and she quickly agreed. She relayed the request to Alec, and he, too, agreed.

"We'll come about 3:00pm," she said. "We'll stop at Poppin' Fresh and pick up a couple of pies and also get some ice cream."

"Thanks."

"Did you want me to say anything to your grandparents?"

"It's up to you," I replied. "I doubt they'll deign to come to a Buddhist funeral, given they boycotted the wedding."

"Your grandmother was unhappy about that, but she won't cross your grandfather."

"I'd be curious to know their reaction to having a great-granddaughter."

Aunt Wendy laughed softly, "Continuing the family tradition of children born out of wedlock! So far, it's 100%! I don't see them changing their opinion on that unless you were to marry Bianca. Oh! Sorry."

"It's OK. I know you didn't mean anything by that, and I didn't take it that way. What you said *is* true about grandma and grandpa."

"One of his friends is similarly estranged from his son because his son decided to attend a different church."

"Seriously?!"

"Seriously. My dad's friend's son married a Russian Orthodox woman and converted. My dad's friend had a conniption fit about it."

"Are the different Christian denominations so different?"

"Wildly so. Dad would have nothing to do with any Catholic, either, if he could help it."

"I can safely say I'm not at all bothered by not seeing him. We'll see you and Alec tomorrow afternoon. Lisa is invited, though I suspect she'd rather visit hell than come here."

Aunt Wendy laughed, "A place you don't believe exists."

"A turn of phrase," I replied lightly. "I take it you agree?"

"I do. She's still holding a grudge over your relationship with Jeri Lundgren."

"Lisa needs to take a chill pill!"

"I agree. See you tomorrow!"

We said 'goodbye', and I hung up. I went back downstairs and went to spend some time with Keiko before Sarah arrived for the dinnertime check. Nothing much had changed in the four hours since Aiko had been at the house, so after a brief discussion, Sarah left, promising to return around 10:00pm.

We spent the rest of the day socializing, and I alternated between sitting with Keiko and in the great room with my friends. Violet, Mitchell, and my mom left about 8:00pm, and I spent the rest of the evening sitting with Keiko, with her parents there the entire time. After Sarah visited for her late evening check of Keiko, I went to the kitchen to make some tea.

"You doing OK?" CeCi asked, coming into the kitchen after me.

"Hanging in there," I said. "Thanks for helping with meals and dishes."

"It's the least I can do. You'll let me know if there's anything else I can do?"

"Yes."

"OK to give you a hug?"

I nodded and we exchanged a tight hug, and CeCi kissed my cheek.

"I'm really sorry, Jonathan."

"Thanks."

I took my tea to the Japanese room and read for about an hour, then held Keiko's hand for about fifteen minutes before settling into a Papasan chair to sleep.



December 26, 1983, Boxing Day, Chicago, Illinois

Ichirō's brother, Akihiro, his wife, Kokoro, and his daughter, Akira, arrived just after 8:00am, having taken the redeye and checked into the O'Hare Marriott. Per Ichirō, they were all going to sit vigil, to be with Keiko when her time came. After a discussion, we agreed to order Chinese food for lunch, and I invited them to join us for pie and coffee mid-afternoon with my aunt and uncle.

The morning was busy, as Bianca and I ensured we had tea and coffee available for all our guests. The only downside of the situation was that I had no time alone with Keiko. After Jennifer checked on Keiko early in the afternoon, I

expressed my concern to Ichirō. He was sympathetic and, with the help of Itsurō, convinced Keiko's mom to leave the Japanese room so I could have quiet time with Keiko.

I put on a tape of her favorite instrumental Japanese music and sat next to her, taking her hand in mine.

"I don't know if you can hear me, Keiko-chan, but I love you very much, and I'm going to miss you. You're very special, and I was lucky to find you. Whatever happens in the future, I will never forget you, and I will never stop loving you. You'll always be with me in spirit and always in my heart."

Tears welled up in my eyes and began flowing freely down my cheeks, and I silently cursed the universe that would do this to Keiko. I cried for a few minutes, then wiped my eyes and blew my nose. I leaned down and kissed Keiko's forehead, and I thought I saw a brief smile on her face, though I couldn't be sure.

Aunt Wendy and Uncle Alec arrived as planned, and we shared pie and coffee with my housemates and all our guests. Mom and Wendy spent some time speaking privately, and just before dinner, my aunt and uncle left. About ten minutes later, the doorbell rang, and I went to answer it.

"Hi," I said to the Japanese man after letting him and his daughter into the house. "You'll forgive me that I don't remember your names. The wedding was a whirlwind."

"It's OK! I'm Atsushi Yamaguchi, and this is my daughter Yoshiko."

"Welcome. There are slippers here for you."

He bowed slightly, and his daughter, who I remembered was seventeen, rolled her eyes when I returned the bow. At one point, Keiko had mentioned that she was completely American and didn't follow any Japanese traditions, much to her parents' chagrin.

They changed their shoes, and I led them to the Japanese room, where Keiko's extended family was now gathered. The room was crowded with twelve people, but I understood why they all felt they needed to be with Keiko. I went back to see my mom and Mitchell, who were getting ready to leave.

"Do you think we should stay in Chicago?" Mom asked.

"I'd say, after my chat with Jennifer, that the wake is very likely going to be on Wednesday or Thursday and the funeral on Friday."

"Mitchell, your court is closed until after the first, right?"

"Yes, except for emergency applications and bail hearings, but Judge Maxwell is handling those. And my son and daughter are in New York with their mom until the 2nd. We can stay if you think that's best."

"I think so. I want to be here for Jonathan."

"Thanks, Mom," I said. "Feel free to come to the house anytime tomorrow. We'll be making breakfast for everyone, so if you want to come early, that's fine."

"I think we will."

"If I call Violet, would you pick her up? She's alone."

"Of course."

They left, and I once again split my time between the Japanese room and the great room, but given how many people were in the Japanese room, I elected to sleep in my room. CeCi stopped me at the top of the stairs.

"I know it's a painful subject, but what happens..."

"A wake here at the house within twenty-four hours, at least according to tradition. We'll need to call as many of her friends as we can reach. I asked Keiko's mom for names, and I also have Keiko's address book."

"I can make those calls for you," CeCi offered. "I'm sure Deanna will help."

"Thanks. After that, there's a funeral service at the Buddhist temple, then Keiko will be cremated. By tradition, it'll be forty-nine days before her ashes are interred in the family crypt, though I'll receive some to keep here."

"Do they go on the shelf in the Japanese room?"

"No. That's expressly forbidden. You'll see her mother cover the shrine and other items with white construction paper to protect them from impure spirits."

"You're OK with that?"

"Keiko asked me to honor her parents' and grandparents' traditions, and I see no reason to give offense because Keiko and I had somewhat different views from them."

Not to mention, the last thing I would ever do is behave the way my grandfather was behaving.

"OK. If you give me the names and numbers, I'll take care of calling as soon as the time comes."

I went into my bedroom, got Keiko's address book and the list of names and numbers Hanako had provided, and gave them to CeCi. She offered a hug, which I accepted, then she left. I closed the door, quickly took care of my bedtime routine, set my alarm for 5:00am, and then got into bed.



December 27, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Tuesday was a cold, bleak, and cloudy day, with the temperature hovering around 18°F. The trees were bare, as was the ground, as we'd had no measurable snow during December. I was out of bed with my alarm, took a quick shower, then went downstairs. I checked on Keiko, then started a pot of coffee.

Ten minutes later, I took a steaming mug into the Japanese room, sat in a chair close to Keiko's bed, and held her hand. Her breathing was labored, her oxygen levels were at 83%, and her heart was beating fast, at about 110 beats a minute, clearly trying to compensate for the lack of oxygen.

After ten minutes, I got up, went to the kitchen, and picked up the phone. I dialed Doctor Morrison's pager number, entered my number, and then hung up. He called back about five minutes later.

"Kane."

"Jonathan, it's Doctor Morrison. What can I do for you?"

I explained Keiko's vitals and my feeling that she was very close to the end.

"Would you like me to come there?" he asked. "I could do that."

"I think that would be good, and her family would appreciate it."

"Then I'll see you in about forty minutes."

I thanked him and ended the call.

"Who was on the phone?" Bianca asked, coming into the kitchen.

"I paged Doctor Morrison. He's on his way over."

"She's not..."

"Not yet, but I can't imagine she'll make it through the day. I'm no physician, but all the signs Doctor Morrison and Jennifer said to look for are there."

"Life sucks," Bianca sighed.

"Tell me about it," I agreed with a heavy sigh.

"I'm going to get started on breakfast. Juliette will be down shortly, and she'll help. You go be with Keiko."

"Thanks," I said.

I refilled my coffee cup and went to the Japanese room to join Keiko's extended family. I sat down in the chair next to the bed and held her hand. I watched as Hanako moved the mask aside and used rolled-up gauze to moisten Keiko's lips, part of the end-of-life traditions.

"Would it be OK to burn incense?" Hanako asked.

"Yes. Nothing you can do now will change the outcome."

"Today?"

I nodded.

Hanako lit some incense in the bowl next to the bed, then set about covering the Spirit Shelf with white construction paper. Violet, my mom, and Mitchell arrived and joined us briefly, but then went to the great room as the Japanese room was crowded.

"May I use the phone?" Ichirō asked.

"Yes."

He left and went to the kitchen and returned about five minutes later and took me aside.

"I ordered dry ice so Keiko can remain here for the wake. The mortuary will pick her up afterwards and take her to the temple for the funeral. There is no embalming or any other services, as she'll be cremated."

"OK," I replied, my heart heavy.

I sat down again and took Keiko's hand. I stayed with her until Doctor Morrison arrived. Bianca let him in and brought him to the Japanese room. I introduced everyone, and he examined Keiko.

"It won't be long," he said when he finished the exam. "I'll stay."

"Thanks."

"There's breakfast for anyone who wants to eat," Bianca announced. "I also have green tea and coffee."

I wasn't hungry, so I simply ate a piece of toast with jam, then returned to sit with Keiko. Just before 11:00am, there was a hitch in her breath, and her pulse dropped to 45. A few seconds later, it jumped to 120. I knew in my heart of hearts this was the end, so I removed Keiko's mask and kissed her softly on the lips.

"Goodbye, Keiko-chan," I said. "I love you."

I held her hand tightly, and about ten seconds later, she exhaled, and the monitor showed no pulse. Doctor Morrison came over and checked her wrist and neck, then listened to her heart. Finally, he checked her eyes, then looked at me.

"I'm sorry, Jonathan."

I nodded but didn't release Keiko's hand. Doctor Morrison removed the IV, the oxygen mask, and the pulse oximeter, then without moving the sheet and blanket, removed the catheter.

"May I wash and dress her, please?" Hanako asked.

"Yes," Doctor Morrison replied.

"All the men should leave," Hanako said. "Jonathan, could you have someone bring me Keiko's kimono?"

"Yes," I replied, barely able to say the word.

All the men left the room, and Doctor Morrison touched my arm.

"I'll fill out the death certificate," he said. "I'll leave you the mortuary copy. I'll file the document later today at the hospital, and in three business days, you can get a confirmed copy."

"Thank you," I whispered, trying hard not to cry.

I walked over to where my mom, Violet, Bianca, and others were sitting.

"She's gone," I said, as tears began streaming down my face.

Mom hopped up and hugged me as I struggled to get control.

"Bianca," I said, my voice raspy, "Hanako needs Keiko's kimono. It's folded and in the top drawer of her dresser."

"OK," she agreed and hurried towards the stairs.

My mom released the hug and stepped back, then Violet came to hug me. CeCi came over and put her hand on my shoulder.

"When?" she asked.

"Ask Ichirō."

"What?" Violet asked.

"The wake," CeCi replied. "I'm calling Keiko's friends."

Ceci left, and I sat down on the couch to wait for Hanako to finish her ritual. Doctor Morrison came over a few minutes later and handed me a yellow sheet which was marked 'Mortuary Copy'.

"Just give this to the mortuary when they pick her up," he said. "Call if you need anything at all. We have support groups for people who have lost loved ones to cancer."

"Thank you," I said.

We shook hands, and Deanna walked him out as Bianca returned and sat down next to me.

"What happens now?" Mom asked.

Bianca put her hand on my arm and indicated she'd explain, which she did. While she was speaking, Ichirō approached.

"The wake will be here tomorrow at 3:00pm. The Funeral will be at 1:00pm on Friday at the temple. Forty-nine days takes us to February 14th."

"Thank you," I said.

About thirty minutes later, Hanako came in to let us know that she had finished, and I went to the Japanese room to see Keiko in the beautiful kimono she'd worn for our wedding. I noticed it was crossed opposite to how she usually wore it -- right over left rather than left over right. I sat down next to her but said nothing because there was nothing to say.

About an hour later, the dry ice was delivered, and Ichirō, Itsurō, and Hanako carefully packed it under and around Keiko, then covered her with a floral print silk cloth. CeCi came in as they finished and let me know she'd reached about two-thirds of Keiko's friends and would keep trying the others. I thanked her, and she left.

"There's not enough room in this room," I said to Ichirō.

"Can we move the bed to the great room?"

I nodded, "Yes, it can be broken down, and we can move it. We'll do that tomorrow just before the wake. She belongs in this room."

"My wife and daughter-in-law will buy fresh flowers and candles for tomorrow," he said.

I nodded, then remembered something. I excused myself and went to find Deanna.

"Would you be OK with putting the painting you did of Keiko on an easel in the great room?"

"Yes, of course. I'll do that now, if you want."

"Yes, please."

She did that, and I returned to the Japanese room. Bianca, Juliette, Violet, and my mom made soup and sandwiches, and people ate as they were hungry, though I didn't feel like eating. At Violet's insistence, I had a cup of soup, but I struggled to eat even that small amount. I had never felt this way before, and I hoped to never feel this way again. It was as if the universe had broken, and my insides had been torn apart.

I didn't sleep very much that night, spending most of my time sitting in the Japanese room, looking at Keiko, my love and my wife, but no longer an active part of my life.



December 28, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Early on Wednesday afternoon, with help from my uncle and Jack, we moved Keiko to the great room. Jack and my uncle broke down the bed, and I carried Keiko. When the bed was reassembled, I laid her in it, and then her family added fresh dry ice, which had been delivered that morning. Keiko's grandmother, mother, and her cousins put fresh flowers all around the room, along with candles. They moved the table with the incense as well and lit it.

When all of that was completed, I went up to my room to put on my kimono. I had some difficulty, so I summoned Ichirō and requested his help, which he gave. I returned to the great room with him, and stood with the other men in Keiko's family, who were also clad in kimono. Our guests began arriving just after 2:00pm, and I and her father and grandfather greeted each of them.

Both Murray Matheson and Noel Spurgeon arrived just before 3:00pm, and much to my surprise, they had their wives with them. I thanked them for coming, and a few minutes later, the Buddhist priest, Kaito, arrived. Before he started, each of Keiko's relatives handed me a black and silver envelope -- »不祝儀袋» (*bushūgibukuro*), which roughly translated to 'packet for anti-celebration'. They contained some amount of money which was dictated by tradition and which I would donate in full to the Leukemia Society of America.

We didn't have enough chairs, so rather than sitting as was customary, we all stood for the ceremony, with her family closest to the front of the room where Keiko lay. Kaito chanted several Buddhist prayers in Japanese, and each family member, starting with me, offered three pinches of incense in the incense bowl next to Keiko. A second bowl had been set up further back, and others offered incense there if they wished, which many did.

The actual ceremony was relatively short, and when it ended, food which Hanako had arranged from a Japanese restaurant was shared by all, and I received condolences from both Keiko's and my friends. Everyone I was at all

close to was there, including Jeri and the others from my dinner group and all of Keiko's friends from Loyola, except a few who were out of state and couldn't return.

By the end of the wake, which was at 7:00pm, I was exhausted, and Bianca and Deanna worked with Keiko's grandfather and father when the mortuary people arrived. Once Keiko had been taken away, I went upstairs, removed my kimono, and crawled into bed.

XXVII. «三途の川» - The River of Three Crossings

December 29, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"What can I do for you?" Bianca asked on Thursday morning.

The house felt empty, with only my housemates home. Nobody would come to visit today, at my request, because I just wanted time alone.

I shrugged, "I'm not sure."

"You need to eat. You've barely eaten anything the past two days."

"I don't feel like eating," I countered.

"I know, but you need nourishment. Let me make breakfast for you. A couple of strips of bacon, scrambled eggs, juice, and toast."

"You should eat," CeCi interjected, coming into the great room. "Otherwise, you're going to pass out from low blood sugar."

"She's right," Deanna chimed in.

I took a deep breath and let it out.

"OK," I agreed, mostly to stop them from badgering me.

CeCi and Deanna sat down in the great room but were quiet, which I appreciated because I was thinking about Keiko. About fifteen minutes later, Bianca let me know my breakfast was ready, so I went to the kitchen to eat at the small table. She poured coffee for both of us, then sat down with a plate of her own.

"What needs to be done?" she asked.

"Nothing, really. Horizon Hospice will pick up the bed and equipment later this morning. Keiko's grandfather made all the other arrangements, and you heard him announce the plans for tomorrow at the end of the wake."

"Is it OK to ask what those black and silver envelopes represent?"

"A Japanese custom. Each one contains some traditional amount of money, determined by some formula that seems to be embedded in Japanese DNA because Keiko couldn't explain it, even though she knew how to do it. I'm going to donate all of it to the Leukemia Society of America, along with some money from my bonus each year."

"That's a good idea," Bianca said. "And may I ask why each of Keiko's relatives was given a small, wrapped gift?"

"Also part of the tradition. Keiko arranged that with her aunt, who made the purchases for her. Keiko wrapped the gifts. They were all small tokens, which, again, fit some cultural model I don't understand. They were from me, in return for the gifts, and set at approximately a quarter of the value of the expected gift. Again, don't ask me how Keiko knew; she just did."

"Are you going to be OK?"

"I have to," I replied. "I'm just out of sorts, even though I knew this was going to happen."

"Are you going back to work on the 3rd?"

"I don't really have a choice, but even if I did, what else would I do? Sit at home? It's not as if I feel like doing anything or going anywhere."

"What about the party on New Year's Eve? Dustin asked if we still planned to have it."

"Keiko was adamant," I said. "I understand, too. She was afraid I'd withdraw, and to be honest, she was right about that being a risk."

"Because you were naturally a loner growing up, except for Bev and your mom."

"Yes."

"Violet is really worried about you."

"Then she's in good company because I'm worried about me. I've never dealt with anything like this before, and I'm not sure how to deal with it."

"At the risk of being...actually, I don't know what it would be, but you should see a counselor. Maybe the one you saw to help you deal with stress?"

"Let me think about it," I said.

"Don't think too long, Jonathan. That's a recipe for depression."

"I hear you," I said. "I just need some time."

"May I point out you objected when Bev said that to you?"

"Can we drop this, please? I'm really not in the mood right now."

"Sorry," Bianca replied. "I should be more sensitive. I'm just concerned because I've never seen you like this before."

"I know," I sighed. "I know."

I finished eating, though I had to force myself to do so, then went up to my room, turned on the radio, and got into bed. I was lost in my thoughts when I heard a knock at the door.

I sighed deeply, then called out, "Come in!"

I was surprised when Costas walked into the room.

"Get up," he said. "Throw on some clothes; I'm buying you a beer."

"It's 10:00am," I protested.

"And this is Chicago! Bars open early and close late. Get up."

"Who called you?" I asked, not moving.

"My sister. She was really worried about you yesterday, and it seems she was right. Get up."

"I don't really feel like going out," I said.

"And if you don't, you'll end up *never* going out. Get up."

"What if I just want to be left alone?" I asked.

"That's the problem. Get up."

"You do realize that no matter how many beers I have, I'm not switching teams, right?"

Costas laughed, "Your loss. Get up."

"You're not going to leave me alone no matter what I say, are you?"

"No. Get up."

I sighed and resigned myself to the fact that nothing I could say or do, short of throwing my friend out of my house, was going to deter him. I briefly considered telling him to get out, but I was positive that would only result in Bianca and others getting on my case and making spending time alone with my thoughts impossible.

"Fine," I said reluctantly, getting out of bed.

I quickly changed from my sweats to jeans and a polo shirt, then followed Costas downstairs, where we both put on our shoes, coats, hats, and gloves.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"The Glenwood Bar. It's a fifteen-minute walk, and the cold air will help clear your head."

"It's -1F°," I protested.

"Yes, and you're a Chicagoan now. It's not windy, so it's bracing, not frigid."

"So you say!"

We walked in silence for a couple of minutes east along Morse, crossing the UP-North tracks, before Costas spoke again.

"I suspect you feel as if the world has ended," he said.

"I'm not sure what I feel except a deep sense of loss," I said. "And I can't even describe that."

"I think that's normal," Costas replied. "I'm obviously not an expert, but even someone as coldly analytical as you can't avoid the emotions that come with the death of someone so close. Lily suggested that you've never been emotional and might have no idea how to even begin dealing with it."

I was quiet for a moment while I considered what he had said, and if I was honest with myself, I had to acknowledge that it was likely true. I wasn't emotional; in fact, I was anti-emotional, if there was such a word. That quality had served me well at work, as I could dispassionately analyze investment strategies without consideration of anything other than potential gains.

"In the past, I've said that I don't do emotion, but that obviously is no longer true."

"What's the most emotional thing that happened before you met Keiko?"

I thought for a minute and answered as we crossed North Ashland.

"I'm not sure I can actually identify anything that I would call emotional. Even with everything that happened with Bev, my approach was analytical and practical."

"Have you ever been angry?"

"Not that I can recall."

"Sad?"

"Not until Keiko's diagnosis."

"Happy?"

"I'd use the word 'content' more than 'happy'," I said. "You know my life growing up."

"But there had to be things that made you happy."

"Sure, but I pretty much always maintained an even keel."

"If you weren't happy the first time you got laid, you're weirder than I thought!"

"OK, I was happy about that, yes. But probably not the way you mean."

"It made you feel good, and you were...content."

"Yes."

"What my sister and your housemates are worried about is clinical depression. And if you have no experience dealing with setbacks, those concerns are warranted."

"I do have plenty of experience dealing with setbacks growing up, but Mom and I always analyzed the situation and found a way forward, even if it was a struggle. There wasn't time to be upset or have a pity party or whatever. It was about food, clothing, and shelter."

"It was really that bad?"

"Yes. Somehow, we always found a way, and it taught me valuable lessons about dispassionate evaluation of my circumstances. It also taught me to be happy with what I had but also to strive to improve my situation. My goal was to have a comfortable, secure, middle-class life."

"I'd say you nailed that one, given what I understand about your success at work," Costas said as we turned north on Greenwood Avenue. "What's your new goal?"

"Not new, but kids and grandkids were part of that original goal."

"From the looks of Bianca, you have that one nailed...so to speak."

"I always envisioned a traditional family, with my wife and I being married for life."

"And, in your mind, you failed and can't recover."

"I'm not sure that's the case," I said as we reached the bar.

We went in, sat down, and Costas ordered us each Old Style from the tap.

"I think, at least subconsciously, it might be," Costas said once the waitress had brought us our beer.

"I know I'm not thinking clearly right now," I said. "So I don't know."

"I suspect that's more worrisome than depression, at least at the moment, given what you do for a living. Clarity of thought seems to be the primary trait

necessary for success. You managed to hold it together until this last week, though there were signs of stress."

"I know," I replied. "I actually spoke to a counselor about how to reduce stress. It worked somewhat, but the ratchet kept moving."

"And the last week really kicked it into high gear."

"It did."

"And your answer was to lie in your bed and stay there?"

"I just wanted to be left alone."

"Now is the *worst* time to be alone. I am not suggesting you didn't suffer a terrible loss or that Keiko no longer matters, but cutting yourself off from your friends is not the way to pick up the pieces and move forward."

"It's only been two days," I protested.

"And if I hadn't insisted you come to have a beer, it would have turned into three, then four, then five, and so on."

"I'd have gone to work on the 3rd."

"Are you *sure* about that?" Costas challenged.

I sipped my beer as I considered his question, realizing that there might be some truth to it.

"No, I'm not sure," I admitted.

"What you need to figure out, and only you can figure it out, is how you mourn, honor Keiko, and keep your other commitments. You *can* do all three; in fact, you have to."

I took a deep breath and let it out, then took a drink of my beer.

"I know."

"I'm not saying you should pretend like nothing happened or go on exactly as you did before, but you need to find a way to move forward that meets all your goals. You've been doing that since I met you, and according to Lily, since she met you."

"May I point out that taking some time to be alone is part of doing that?"

"It is, to a point. I totally get if you don't want to do *some* things; it's doing *nothing* that is the problem. And that's the picture Lily had from seeing you yesterday and what Bianca has said."

"Color me not surprised she's involved."

"Dude, she's the mother of your baby! Don't you think that gives her the right to look out for your best interests and be deeply involved in your life? If not, then I've totally missed something."

"No, you're right. Bianca has her own agenda."

"And so does everyone else on the planet! You, of all people, should know that, and I'm positive you do. You analyze literally every single thing that happens in your life and account for the fact that there are competing agendas. The difference is, and I don't mean this as an insult or anything like it, you aren't

behaving that way now -- you're operating on emotion. That's out of character, and *that* is what has everyone concerned.

"Yes, we need to make an allowance for what happened, but a radical change in behavior is a warning sign. For most people, I think we'd give them space if something like this happened and let the emotions play out. But you don't know how to deal with them. I'm no expert, and neither is my sister, but we do recognize how different you are. We both like you a lot and are both concerned about you."

"I'm still not changing teams!" I said with a wry smile.

Costas laughed again, "The more you say that, the more likely you're covering for latent attraction!"

"Bullshit," I replied.

"What's the Shakespeare line about protesting too much? That!"

"You just go on thinking that!"

"Don't look now, but you're snapping out of your funk. Mourn, of course, but don't spiral down into depression. Your friends are here for you, and will support you, but that only works if you'll let us."

Which was exactly the problem with Bev -- I had been ready, willing, and able to help, and she had flat-out refused and even run away. If I was honest with myself, retreating to my room and from my friends was functionally equivalent, without my running to St. Louis or Overland Park.

"I believe my own logic insists that has to be the case."

"I won't argue with you, but logic does not rule every aspect of our lives."

"I don't agree, but that's not the point right now. If you want to challenge that, ask me again in a few weeks."

"Count on it. Now, finish your beer and figure out what you need to do to get on with life. From everything I've heard, that's what Keiko insisted you should do."

"It was."

"Then," Costas said with a smile, "that's how you honor her."



December 30, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

Keiko Suzuki Kane

Keiko Suzuki Kane, beloved wife of Jonathan Edward Kane, beloved daughter of Itsurō and Hanako Suzuki, beloved granddaughter of Ichirō and Atsuko Suzuki, beloved niece of Robert and Yukiko Palmer, beloved cousin of Ailea Palmer, passed away on December 27 from leukemia.

Keiko was born in Downers Grove, then moved to Chicago, where she resided until her death. The only child of Itsurō and Hanako, Keiko graduated from Downers Grove High School and was a student at Loyola at the time of her passing. Keiko married Jonathan Kane, originally from Goshen, Ohio, in a civil ceremony on August 13 of this year and celebrated a Shinto wedding ceremony on October 8th.

A Buddhist funeral service will be conducted on December 30 at The Buddhist Temple of Chicago in Uptown. Interment will be at Montrose Cemetery after a traditional forty-nine-day waiting period.

Donations to The Leukemia Society of America are requested in lieu of flowers.

"Did you write that?" Bianca asked when she finished reading the obituary from the *Chicago Tribune* on Friday morning.

I shook my head, "No. I didn't even know it was going to appear. It had to be either her parents or grandparents. I suspect her grandparents, as I don't recall discussing my preferences for donations with her parents, only with Ichirō. I usually skip that section of the *Trib*, so I'm glad you saw it."

"It's a typical thing to do, so I was looking for it. I'll clip it for you, if you want."

"Please do."

"Are you wearing your kimono today?"

I nodded, "That is traditional, and I want to honor and respect her family."

"Her cousin from California dressed like a typical American teenager."

"And Bob Palmer, her uncle, dressed in a black suit. I get the impression her cousin Ailea would have preferred not to wear the kimono."

"That's normal, I think. I mean, most Italian, Greek, Irish, and Polish immigrants basically assimilate after a few generations but keep some of the cultural trappings, and with the Greeks, their churches. Mexicans are kind of in between what Keiko's family does and, say, Teri's or Kasia's."

"Do you keep any traditions besides food?" I asked.

"I want our daughter to have a «quince» when she turns fifteen, but otherwise? Not really. My grandmother will celebrate «el Día de Muertos», or 'Day of the

Dead'. It's related to All Hallows' Eve, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day - all Catholic religious observances. None of my family celebrates «Cinco de Mayo» because that's mostly a California thing. It's actually mostly ignored in Mexico and not really important here in Chicago, though some people have started to celebrate it."

"You'll have to remind me about that one."

"It celebrates Mexico's victory over the Second French Empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862. Weirdly, Mexico lost the second battle the following year, and Mexico City was occupied. To me, if I were going to celebrate something, it would be Mexican Independence Day, which is September 16 and happened in 1810. But I'm American, and to me, July 4th is far more important than «Grito de Dolores» -- the ringing of a bell that called Mexicans to arms to fight for independence."

"I have no clue about my family history. My mom never spoke about it, and our family name could be just about anything, given how immigrants dealt with last names. On my dad's side, I can speculate maybe German, given the fake name Marcus Brand gave my mom was very German, but I don't know."

"We're basically Spanish all the way back," Bianca said. "Our daughter will be the first Anglo in the family. I have plenty of relatives with indigenous American blood, but none with European until you. Well, minus the original Spaniards."

"That's not something that ever really concerned me. Keiko's family was that way until her aunt married an...what term did you use?"

"Anglo. For Mexicans, it basically means whites who don't speak Spanish natively. Technically, it means English. But I think it fits, given Keiko's Japanese ancestry. You were, to put it the way some black friends would put it, 'the white boy'."

"You're just as 'white' as I am," I chuckled. "You just have a lovely brown hue to your skin."

"That's a HUGE debate in the Mexican-American community, similar to the one in the black community about being able to 'pass'. The fact that I don't dress or act Mexican, and I speak English like a suburban Chicagoan would bug some Chicano activists."

"Is Chicano a substitute for Hispanic?"

"It's Mexican-Americans specifically. But I have to apologize for taking us down this path."

"No need," I replied. "I've found myself obsessing over the past forty-eight hours. Costas basically beat me with a baseball bat about not allowing it to overwhelm me, even though it feels like it might at any moment."

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

"You're doing it," I replied with a smile. "Helping me to stay on an even keel. Can I ask you about Costas' visit?"

"That was all on Lily. I mean, she approached me, as did Violet, about the fact that you were so withdrawn. I felt it was OK, but then, when you started spending all your time in your room, I changed my mind. Lily called yesterday morning to check on you, and I let her know what I was thinking. She said she was going to ask Costas to come speak to you because she felt none of the girls who had been with you could do it and that Violet wasn't the right person."

"He was a good choice, though Jack might have been better."

"May I say something blunt?"

"That's pretty much my only mode of operation, so I can hardly say 'no'."

"You're Jack's meal ticket. He has a vested interest in you succeeding but also in not taking any big risks with your relationship. He is emulating you in the sense that he's evaluated the situation, decided on a course of action that benefits him, and he's following it. That means he might pull his punches, which Costas won't."

"Or you."

"Yes, but our relationship is such that it risked you reacting badly if you thought I had ulterior motives."

"Sitting here, now, I can't imagine feeling that way, but I was so out of sorts yesterday, that might well have happened."

"The only other option was your mom, but I felt a guy was a better choice."

"Probably," I replied. "I have a practical question that dawned on me last night -- what do I do with Keiko's things?"

"I think that depends on you, more than anything. Obviously, anything that has sentimental value, you keep. Anything that doesn't, you donate, or maybe offer to Keiko's cousin Ailea or her parents. It's mostly just clothes, right?"

"Mostly, but she has some photo albums and scrapbooks, mostly of things from before I met her. I almost feel as if those have to go to her parents. They won't mean anything to our daughter or any kids I might have in the future. And that, I think, is my biggest regret -- that Keiko and I couldn't have a baby together."

"Because in your mind, that is, for want of a better term, 'eternal life' -- you live on through your descendants."

"Yes," I agreed. "Will you do something for me?"

"Anything. What?"

"Accompany me to the crematorium after the funeral. I found out from her grandfather that it's traditional in Japan to observe the casket being placed in the cremator."

"Yes, of course. Do you know how long the process is?"

"About two hours, start to finish. Keiko's grandfather selected three urns, so we'll be given a small one, which I'll keep here, and one which I'll keep until the interment ceremony in February. I believe both her parents and grandparents will also each receive a small urn, but I'm not sure."

"When do we remove the construction paper from the shrine in the Japanese room?"

"After the funeral service. I'm not actually sure of the tradition, but that's what I planned to do. It's meant to protect the shrine from impure spirits."

"I know you don't believe that."

"No, of course not, and neither did Keiko. It's superstition, plain and simple, but why give needless offense to her parents or grandparents? It's one more thing my grandfather would object to, which, in and of itself, is a good reason to do it."

"Honestly, if our daughter became a Satan worshiper, I wouldn't cut her off that way."

"At least THAT would be intellectually honest," I chuckled. "Everything I've read about Anton LaVey indicates strongly he doesn't think Satan is real, but instead is a symbol of defiance of Abrahamic faiths. I'm right there with him, though I don't think I'd go so far as to practice *his* religion any more than I would any other!"

Bianca laughed and shook her head, "Only Jonathan!"

"That said, Keiko did express a hope that what her parents and grandparents believe might be true so that she and I could be together in the future. I totally understand the feeling, and a part of me hopes that somehow that's possible. I doubt it, obviously, because it seems like wish fulfillment, but I can't argue with Keiko's desire for it to be true. Anyway, I'm going to go lie down for a few hours. I'll be up for lunch."

"If you aren't, I'll come get you."

"I'll set my alarm," I replied.

I went upstairs, set my alarm, turned the radio on, and got into bed. I had never been emotional and had no understanding of just how exhausting it was. Normally, I could function OK on five hours of sleep, but for the past few days, I felt tired if I didn't sleep twelve hours or even more. Sleep only came with difficulty, exacerbating the problem because my thoughts always flowed to Keiko.

I did manage about ninety minutes of sleep before the alarm went off. I got up, went to the bathroom to empty my bladder, then went downstairs to have lunch with my housemates. After lunch, I went back upstairs to shower and dress and managed to put on my kimono on my own, remembering the guidance I'd received from Ichirō.

When I was dressed, I went downstairs to wait for Bianca, CeCi, Deanna, and Juliette, who were riding in my car, though Bianca was driving. Jack and Kristy were driving in Kristy's car and would meet us at the temple. I went out to the garage and started the car, then went back inside. About ten minutes later, the girls, all wearing either black dresses or black skirts and black sweaters, came downstairs, and the five of us walked out into the frigid January air.

"Thanks for warming up the car," CeCi said. "It's COLD!"

"It's actually not as bad now as it was this morning," Juliette observed. "It was -5°F when I got up, and it's about 8°F now."

"We really should switch to the metric system," Bianca said. "Freezing is 0° and boiling is 100°. How dumb is it that in the US system, freezing is 32° and boiling is 212°?"

"Don't look at me," I said. "The stock market trades in eighths."

"But it's priced in dollars, right?" CeCi asked.

"Yes, but quotes are always an even dollar amount or an eighth, a quarter, or a half. That's because the original stock traders during Colonial times based it on Spanish silver 'pieces of eight'. That's also where we get the phrase 'two bits' to refer to a quarter -- it's two bits of a piece of eight."

"How does that work if you buy a single share of stock?" Juliette asked. "You can't pay a half-cent."

"Normal lots are a hundred shares," I replied, "so that's not a problem. If you buy an 'odd lot', you'll pay a higher commission, and the price won't be quite as good

and will be adjusted, so you pay the full cent. It's similar to buying a gallon of gas, which is priced in 'mills' -- '\$1.09 9/10'. If you buy a gallon, you pay \$1.10."

"Why is that? I mean, that seems a bit silly."

"It goes back to a depression-era tax that was supposed to expire. Gas was priced in pennies, so a tax of a fraction of a cent made sense. Before the 70s, the fractional price fluctuated but then settled on 9/10 because our brains read 99¢ even though the price is only a tenth of a cent from a full dollar. It also eliminated the unfairness of rounding up a tenth of a cent if you bought, say, four gallons. And the gas tax is still around because Congress not only didn't let it expire, they increased the tax rate."

"Of course they did!" CeCi declared, then said, "Sorry, I didn't mean to start talking politics."

"It's OK," I said. "Talking numbers and markets helps me keep my mind from wandering too far."

"How are you doing?" Deanna asked.

"Hanging in there. I'm having trouble falling asleep, and I'm constantly tired because I'm emotionally drained."

"Maybe see a doctor and get some sleeping pills?" Juliette suggested.

"I'd prefer not to do that," I said. "I've never taken anything stronger than aspirin, and I really don't want to take something that can be addictive. Not to mention, I need to be clear of thought."

"But are you, being so tired?"

"Mostly, yes. That's why I'm taking naps during the day. I honestly think I just need to get back to work so I have something on which to focus."

"Jonathan," Bianca said, "how are we handling your request?"

"We have enough time to drive back to the house and drop them off. It's only fifteen minutes home and about twenty from there to the funeral home."

"What are you talking about?" Deanna inquired.

"It's traditional for the family to attend the cremation. Bianca is going to drive me."

"Is that a private thing?" Deanna asked. "I mean, family only?"

"I honestly don't know; both Keiko and her grandfather mentioned that it was traditional for the family but didn't say anything else. I'm OK if you want to come. We'll be there about two hours."

"Is it tacky or morbid to ask how it works?" CeCe inquired.

"I honestly don't know the exact details," I replied. "The only thing Keiko's grandfather mentioned is that the remains are ground, so the traditional Japanese 'bone picking' doesn't occur. I didn't ask for details beyond that. At the end of the process, I'll receive two urns -- a small one to keep at the house, then the larger one, which will be interred at the cemetery. Her parents and grandparents will each receive a small urn as well."

"And the interment is after forty-nine days, right?"

"Yes, so February 14th. And just so all of you know, it's my intention to sign a will and other documents in January, and when the time comes, I want to be cremated and interred next to Keiko."

"What kind of ceremony?" Bianca asked.

"Throw the biggest blowout party you can imagine!"

"An Irish wake!" Deanna exclaimed. "You know the difference between an Irish wedding and an Irish wake, right?"

"I haven't heard that one," I said.

"At the wake, there's one less drunk!"

"Nice," I chuckled. "Actually, Bianca, I'm OK with whatever Buddhist graveside ceremony is appropriate so as not to disrespect Keiko's family."

"Why Buddhist and not Shinto?" Juliette asked.

"Keiko once told me that Japanese are born Shinto but die Buddhist. Shinto has all manner of taboos around death, so funerals are Buddhist. Those taboos are why Keiko's mom covered the Shinto shrine and the «神棚» (*kamidana*), or 'Spirit Shelf', with white construction paper to protect them from impure spirits."

"I thought neither you nor Keiko believed in those superstitions!" Juliette protested.

"We don't, or didn't, or however I'm supposed to say that. But her parents and grandparents do, at least to some extent. Keiko and I agreed to honor their traditions as traditions, without the religious ideas behind them."

We arrived at the temple, and after Bianca parked, we all walked in together. About fifteen minutes after we arrived, Kaito began the ceremony, which was similar to the one that had been performed at the wake. When the chanted prayers were finished and everyone had offered incense, members of Keiko's family placed fresh flowers in her coffin.

I went last, and in addition to flowers, I placed a small bag with five one-ounce silver coins in Keiko's folded hands. Those coins represented the toll for crossing the mythical «三途の川» (*Sanzu-no-Kawa*), or "River of Three Crossings", which was similar to the Greek myth of the River Styx.

"I love you, Keiko-chan," I said.

When I stepped away, the men from the funeral home closed the coffin lid, and then Ichirō and Itsurō moved next to me. Itsurō handed me a nail along with a heavy, flat stone. I drove the nail into the coffin with four sharp raps, then handed the stone to Itsurō, who did the same, followed by Ichirō. We stepped back, and the men from the funeral home moved Keiko's coffin to a casket trolley and rolled it away.

Keiko's family and I received condolences from those in attendance, which, once again, included Noel and Valerie Spurgeon and Murray and Suzanna Matheson. Tom was with Stuart and Melinda, but Maria wasn't with him, which sadly didn't surprise me. Jeri, who had missed the wake because of a family obligation, gave me a hug and a kiss on the cheek, as did Anala. Among the last to come up to me were my mom and Mitchell. She hugged me tightly, then stepped back.

"Call me if you need anything," Mom said. "Or if you need to get away, you're welcome to use your old room."

"Thanks, Mom," I said, then turned to her boyfriend. "Mitchell, it was good to meet you."

"My condolences, Jonathan."

"Take good care of my mom."

"I will," he said, and we shook hands.

Once I'd shaken hands, hugged, or spoke with everyone, Bianca, Deanna, CeCi, Juliette, and I walked to my car. Bianca drove, as she had before, and just under twenty minutes later, we were at the funeral home.

Everything was prepared, and we, along with Keiko's parents and grandparents, were ushered into an industrial room. The funeral director handed me a velvet bag with Keiko's ring and necklace, which he'd removed before the funeral ceremony. I removed the ring, put it on the silver chain I had in my pocket, then put the chain around my neck. The necklace would go on the Spirit Shelf.

"What happens to the silver coins?" I asked. "Won't they melt?"

"The temperature of the cremator will be set about fifty degrees lower than silver's melting point. That's still hot enough to complete the process. At the end, we'll remove the coins before the remains are ground. We'll place them in the large urn, as Keiko's grandfather requested."

"Thanks."

Once the coffin was in the cremator, all of us went to a waiting room where coffee and cookies were available. We sat, mostly quietly, until just under two hours later, the funeral director and three assistants came into the room with four identical urns -- one large and three small. The urns were deep blue with lighter streaks, and each lid had Keiko's name in Kanji. I accepted the larger urn and a

smaller one, which I handed to Bianca to carry so I could hold the larger urn with both hands.

"Are you doing OK?" Deanna asked as the five of us left the funeral home.

"Hanging in there," I said. "I'm just not sure what to make of all this."

"Intellectually? Emotionally?"

"And spiritually," I replied. "I don't mean in a religious sense, but whatever it means to be a person and what our true essence might be. This all seems so final, and intellectually, I know it is, but part of me wonders if I'm oversimplifying the universe. Anala seemed to think so."

"Did she say something to you today or at the wake?" Bianca asked.

"No, but we talked about what she felt was my limited, overly simplistic view of the universe. She argued, in a sense, that the sum was greater than the parts, and there is more to it than we can understand with our limited knowledge and limited abilities. But the intellectual part of me says this is the source of religious belief -- the desire for something more."

"A happy eschaton," CeCi interjected. "All the bad stuff is OK because you have eternal life in bliss in heaven. What's eighty years of suffering, give or take, compared to an eternity of blissful existence?"

"Trying to assign meaning to natural events is illogical," I observed.

"And yet..." Deanna offered.

"I know. I can see how it happens, and it does make me wonder, but I'm not going to start believing in a god or gods to try to make sense of what happened.

From one perspective, it can never make sense; from another, it's how the universe works. It sucks, it makes me sad, and I wish things were different, but wishing doesn't change anything."

We got into my car, with Bianca driving and with me holding both urns. About twenty minutes later, we walked into the house, and Bianca and I took the urns up to my room. I put the smaller one on my dresser and the larger one on Keiko's, where it would remain until the interment service in February.

As Keiko had suggested, I took a 5x7 framed photo of her to the Japanese room, and after removing the construction paper, I put the photo on the Spirit Shelf, then placed her necklace next to the small Buddhist shrine. With Deanna's assistance, I hung the painting she'd done of Keiko on the far wall. When we finished, I went back upstairs, put Keiko's wedding band on the chain I'd purchased, and put it around my neck. I'd never worn any jewelry except my wedding band, and it felt strange, but I was sure I'd get used to it.

I went downstairs, and Bianca handed me a mug of green tea, and all of us sat in the great room.

"I need to do some shopping for the party," Bianca said. "I plan to do that tomorrow."

"I'll go along," I said. "The more I sit doing nothing, the worse I feel."

"What can we do for you?" Deanna asked.

"Just what you're doing -- making sure I stay on a relatively even keel and being my friend."

"What did you want to do for dinner?" Bianca asked. "I hadn't planned anything because I wasn't sure how today would go."

"Let's just order Chinese," I suggested. "Six or seven dishes to share?"

"I'll take care of it," Bianca said. "I know what everyone likes."

"Thanks."

She placed the order, and ninety minutes later, when we had finished eating, I decided to go up to bed. Bianca followed me but stopped at the door.

"Are you OK?" she asked.

"Yes. Just exhausted."

"OK. Remember, all of us love you, and tomorrow is another day."

XXVIII. Suffocating

December 31, 1983, Chicago, Illinois

"Jonathan," CeCi said through my closed door. "You have a phone call on your line."

I had turned off the ringer while I was napping after grocery shopping with Bianca and Deanna.

"Thanks," I said.

I rolled to the side of the bed and picked up the phone, which was on the nightstand.

"Kane," I said.

"Jonathan? It's Teri Maguire. Troy saw the obituary in the paper yesterday and showed it to me. I'm so sorry."

"Thanks."

"That's all I wanted to say. I won't disturb you further."

"It's OK. How have you been?"

"Fine. I've finished my first semester. Are you taking classes?"

"International finance on Saturday mornings."

"And work is going OK?"

"I was promoted to Head of Research."

"Congratulations. I should let you go."

"Thanks for calling."

We said 'goodbye', and I hung up. I went to the sink in my bathroom, splashed some water on my face, then went downstairs.

"What do you want for lunch?" Bianca asked when I walked into the kitchen.

"I was going to make some chicken noodle soup."

"I can do it for you," she said.

"Thanks, but I think I can manage to open the can of Campbell's and add water to it in the pot."

"Obviously," Bianca replied. "CeCi said Teri called."

"Troy saw the obituary and told her. She called to offer condolences."

"Pretty much everyone else was either at the wake, the funeral, or both. The only one of note I didn't see was Maria."

"She and Tom separated. I have no idea what happened because Stuart didn't say, and I didn't feel it was my place to ask. You're right about attendance; the only people missing were a few girls from Loyola who don't live in Chicagoland, like Izzy and Meg. I don't know if I ever asked -- who'll be here tonight?"

"Pretty much everyone responded positively. The only major exceptions were Stuart, who is working, and some of the out-of-town girls who I didn't actually expect to show up but who I felt I should invite."

"How many?"

"About eighty-five, total. There's plenty of room in the house."

"Obviously. I was just wondering. You won't get on my case if I take a break at some point during the evening, will you?"

"No. But please be with us at midnight."

"I will."

"Violet called while you were napping to make sure it was still OK to sleep in the spare bedroom tonight. I told her it was, but I can call her back if that's a problem."

"No problem for me," I replied. "I never had a chance to teach her to drive, so someone would have had to drive her home after midnight."

I made my soup, ate it, then went to the Japanese room to read the *Tribune*, which I hadn't read before going shopping. I put on a tape of instrumental Japanese music and picked up the front section of the paper. About five minutes after I'd sat down, CeCi came to the door of the room.

"Mind if I come in and read?" she asked.

"Not at all," I replied.

It was rare for CeCi to come into the Japanese room, and I wondered if the girls had decided I needed someone with me or if it was just the fact that the room had been dedicated to Keiko for a few months. I decided not to say anything and to wait to see if I was actually able to have time alone other than in my room. I knew they meant well, but if that was their plan, it would quickly grow oppressive.

I read the paper, which took about forty minutes, then let CeCi know I was going upstairs. I put the paper on the kitchen table where we always left it, then went up to my room to do something I knew I needed to do and felt I shouldn't put off. I went over to Keiko's dresser and opened the top drawer. I was surprised to see an envelope with my name on it in Keiko's handwriting, along with the Kanji representing my name. With a bit of trepidation, I picked it up, carefully opened it, and extracted a folded sheet of paper.

Dear Jonathan 勇祐

If you're reading this, it means the end has come.

Nothing I could write could ever express how much I love you and how grateful I am for the time we had together, even if it was very short. I know you loved me with every fibre of your being, and you showed me that love every minute of every day we had together. There was no luckier girl in the world than Keiko Suzuki Kane.

Remember me always, but do not wear my memory as a straitjacket. You have the rest of your life ahead of you, and you honor me by being successful and achieving your goals. Think of me, but do not allow that to hold you back from being the man I love who is confident and successful.

Please do not despair, for I know you will find happiness in the future. And someday, perhaps, we will meet again.

All my love,

Keiko 圭子

I put the paper on the dresser and sat down on the edge of the bed as tears dripped down my cheeks.

"Jonathan?" Deanna said from the door to my room.

"I'm OK," I replied. "I found a letter Keiko left for me."

"OK to come in and hug you?"

I nodded, and Deanna came to stand next to me. She took my hand and gently encouraged me to stand, and we hugged for a couple of minutes while I got control of my emotions.

"Thanks," I said. "I'll be fine now."

"Are you sure?"

"As sure as I can be."

"OK. Just let me know if you need anything."

"Thanks."

She left, and I began going through Keiko's things, drawer by drawer. I found a diary, which I wasn't sure what to do with, so I set it aside, along with the few pieces of jewelry she had. Her clothes, except for a pair of scarves which I

decided to keep, I placed in neat piles on the bed. I did the same with her clothes from the closet, including shoes and belts.

I went through her books, and those which had been purchased from the Loyola bookstore went into a pile to be sold back. The other books -- a few novels and a book of Japanese poetry, I put on my bookshelf. Her photo albums and scrapbooks went into a box which I'd give to her parents, along with the framed pictures of her family from the top of her dresser. I put her car keys, her purse, and an envelope with her birth certificate on my desk.

Keiko had a suitcase and a travel bag, and I managed to pack most of her clothes into them. When I finished doing that, I remembered her coat, hat, and gloves were downstairs, so I went down to get them and brought them back to my room. I hung them in the closet, moved the suitcase and travel bag into the closet, and put the box for her parents on the shelf. Sometime in January, I'd offer the clothes to Keiko's cousin Ailea and deliver the box to Keiko's parents.

I sat down at the desk and began going through Keiko's purse. It felt strange, almost as if I was violating sacred space, but it had to be done. I put her house key in my desk drawer with the other spares. I put her driver's license and Social Security card in the envelope with her birth certificate and placed the plastic insert with photos in the box with her photo albums and scrapbooks. Her address book I put in my desk, in case I might need it at some point in the future.

I cut up her credit cards and made a note to call American Express and the bank to cancel those cards. The small amount of currency in her billfold I added to my wallet, and put the few coins in the tray in my desk drawer. A cherry Chapstick I put in the trash, and a brush and mirror I set on the desk, as I was unsure what to do with them.

I put the purse on the shelf in the closet, then went to the bathroom and collected her things, though I deposited her soap, toothbrush, and deodorant in the trash.

The other items -- a brush, some hair ribbons, and ponytail holders I put on the desk with the brush and mirror.

"Jonathan?" Bianca said from the door of my bedroom.

"Yes?"

"Violet is here."

"Tell her I'll be down in a minute, please. I just need to finish organizing Keiko's things."

"Are you doing OK?"

"Yes. I'm sure CeCi and Deanna both gave you a full report."

"We're just looking out for you."

"I know," I replied. "I promise I won't seclude myself, but I do need some time alone. Please."

"Sorry," Bianca said.

"I totally get it, and I say this advisedly -- I need some space. Not like Bev when she ran away, but just time for myself."

"OK."

She went back downstairs, I put the letter from Keiko in my locked drawer, then put all the things on my desk into a small box, which I put on the shelf in the closet. As I closed the closet, my eyes went to a charcoal drawing of Keiko and

me Deanna had done that was hanging on the wall, and I fondly remembered the very first time I'd seen Keiko when she'd brought Ellie to the house.

I left my room and headed downstairs, where Violet gave me a quick hug, and we went to sit in the great room with my housemates except Jack and Kristy, who were out but would return for the New Year's party. Violet asked the question that basically everyone asked as soon as they saw me -- how was I doing? I was really getting tired of the question, but I also knew it was better not to say anything other than that I was doing OK or 'hanging in there'.

"Do you plan to start a fire in the fire pit?" Bianca asked about ten minutes later. "It's not as cold as it was, and I have ingredients for S'mores."

"I'll do that after dinner. Who's cooking?"

"Nobody. Jack and Kristy are bringing Brown's chicken. They'll be home about 5:30pm."

"OK. Is there anything that needs to be done?"

"The girls have it all under control!"

The phone rang, and I got up to answer it.

"Kane."

"Jonathan, it's Mom. I wanted to let you know I'm home safely. How are you doing?"

"OK," I replied. "My friends are here."

"Call me if you need anything or just want to talk."

"Thanks, Mom."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, then returned to the great room. I hung out with the girls until Jack and Kristy arrived with chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, and biscuits from Brown's Chicken. We ate, then began setting up for the New Year's party. I wasn't in a festive mood, but I knew the girls would get on my case if I tried to sit it out.

I built a fire in the fire pit with Violet's assistance and contemplated filling the hot tub. I suspected I could escape there and not get grief. The only concern would be that I'd need to either leave the heat on all night or drain it, as the temperature was well below freezing.

What made the decision was that I realized that nobody who didn't live in the house would have a bathing suit, and, as such, I could actually have some time to myself in the middle of the party without retreating to my room. I opened the valve for the water feed, and once the water began to flow, I turned on the heating unit.

"Will people have bathing suits?" Violet asked, seemingly reading my mind.

"No," I replied.

"So why fill the hot tub and turn it on?"

"Because I have a bathing suit."

Violet was quiet for a few seconds, then smiled, "And that lets you have some time to yourself."

"Yes. It'll be too cold to stand anywhere except by the fire pit, and other than my housemates, nobody will have a bathing suit."

"May I make a suggestion?"

"Sure."

"You could come to my house if you wanted to get away. You know I have two spare rooms, and I won't bother you. Or you could do your homework at my house after your classes on Saturdays."

"I appreciate the offer. Let's see what happens in the next week, but we'll absolutely have breakfast together, as I promised. Remember that in February, I'll be taking classes for my next securities license. It's from 1:00pm to 5:00pm in the Loop, so breakfast works better than lunch.

"That's the class that allows you to manage other people with licenses? And then you could run your own company if you want to."

"Yes, and while that's a distinct possibility for the future, I still have a lot to learn, and the golden handcuffs are pretty difficult to slip."

"You mean because you make so much money?"

"Yes, but also because a good chunk of that is tied up in Spurgeon's funds, he has a lot of sway over clients. There's no guarantee that any clients I've found would go with me, though some are fairly likely. And in the end, that's the key -- having enough funds under management. I have just over \$100 million now, but almost 10% of that is Noel Spurgeon's personal money."

"Is that legal? I mean for him to trap you?"

"If it's a trap, then it's a trap I willingly walked into with my eyes wide open. But it's better to say that he makes staying so enticing and so profitable that it's difficult to leave. Let's say, for example, the plumbing company paid you \$100,000 a year to do your job. Any other job at your level only pays \$18,000. Should it be illegal for them to pay you that much on the grounds that nobody else would offer a salary that high?"

"As if!" Violet said with a soft laugh.

"But you see my point, right?"

"Yes. I could leave for another job, but it wouldn't make sense to do so."

"Exactly. And speaking of leaving, are you still interested in working as my administrative assistant?"

"Yes! Is that possible?"

"It is. I'll need a copy of your résumé."

"What about references?"

"I'm your main reference. You could use whoever supervised you at the daycare or someone familiar with the work you do now. Don't worry too much about it because, for secretaries and administrative assistants, the person doing the hiring has basically a free hand to choose who they want."

"Girls who will..."

"That would seem to be the primary criterion for most of them. And that is one of the things about Spurgeon Capital I find seriously problematic."

"It seems wrong."

"Because it is wrong. Something radical will have to happen to change the culture there. Hopefully, it will, and girls like Anna Bergdahl and you are the harbingers of change."

"That's the Swedish girl who works for your boss, right?"

"Yes. And who flat-out refused to participate in any shenanigans. And you know Bianca would never do that, either."

"She's not a secretary!"

"No, but she's female."

"Obviously! Especially given she's six months pregnant! Can I ask you something about that?"

"Yes, the baby is mine, and yes, Keiko knew and approved. And the timing is such that you should be able to work out that Bianca was pregnant before Keiko and I married."

"I wasn't accusing you of anything because I know you'd never, ever break your vows. Who knows you're the baby's father?"

"All our housemates, obviously, and a few others, such as my mom. Mrs. Peterson in personnel knows, but we're keeping it quiet for what I think are obvious reasons."

"Yes. Anyway, back to the job, I can give you a résumé right away. I prepared a new one when you mentioned the possibility. You're driving me home tomorrow, right?"

"Yes."

"I'll give it to you then. How much does the job pay?"

"\$21,000 per year, plus bonus."

"Whoa! That's basically double what I was making at the daycare and twenty-five percent more than I'm making now. How much is the bonus?"

"Only Noel Spurgeon knows. It's closely guarded information. I honestly have no idea what bonus amounts anyone else receives, including people who work for me. The one exception is I know how much Bianca's Christmas bonus was because she told me, but that's not something that's normally discussed."

The tub was full, so I closed the valve, then put the canvas cover over it to retain as much heat as possible. I walked over to the fire pit, put another log on the fire, and then Violet and I went back into the house.

Guests began arriving just after 8:00pm, and nearly every one of them asked me how I was doing. By the time most had arrived, I was ready to try to hide in my room just to avoid the constant 'Are you doing OK?' questions. I understood everyone cared, but the caring was beginning to feel oppressive. I was tempted to take my mom up on her offer, but a six-hour drive each way when I had to be at work on Tuesday morning didn't make sense.

For the moment, I could take refuge in the hot tub, so I went upstairs, changed into my bathing suit, put on a robe and flip-flops, then walked out to the hot tub with numerous stares and questioning looks. Outside, I removed the cover of the hot tub, shed my robe and flip-flops, and climbed into the warm water. Enough heat rose from the water so that my head, which was above water, wasn't cold.

"And I didn't bring my bathing suit!" Katy exclaimed, coming over to the tub from the fire pit. "Of course, it's dark enough. I probably don't need one!"

"Please don't," I said, as that was the *last* thing I needed at the moment.

"Sorry," Katy replied. "I'll, uhm, leave you alone."

She walked away, and I realized the tone of my voice had been fairly harsh. A few other girls came by, and I was very careful to not sound annoyed or harsh. Fortunately, I was mostly left alone and had about ten minutes of complete peace until Deanna and CeCi came onto the deck in robes. A minute later, they were in the hot tub but were both careful to basically sit directly across from me.

"I hope you don't mind," Deanna said. "We'll be quiet so we don't disturb you, but the tub has been drained for months."

"All you had to do was ask," I replied.

"We didn't want to bother you."

I almost said 'You mean like now?' but managed to not say it. I closed my eyes, and they took the hint and simply sat quietly in the swirling hot water. I stayed in the tub for about thirty minutes total, then got out and went up to my room to dress. I took my time and actually lay on my bed for about ten minutes before resigning myself to going back downstairs.

Our guests were in the great room, the basement, or by the fire pit, so I got myself a bottle of beer and went to sit in the Japanese room. A few minutes later, Violet came in to sit with me.

"Are you thinking about Keiko?" she asked.

"Constantly. But I came in here because it's relatively quiet."

"Mind if I come in?" Jeri asked from the door to the Japanese room.

I once again suppressed a sigh because saying 'yes' would encourage more people to come in, but saying 'no' was likely to result in someone getting on my case. I'd likely lose no matter what I did, so I decided to go up to my room.

"Sure," I said. "But I'm going upstairs."

I got up and walked past Jeri and went up the stairs, went into my room, and shut and locked the door. I knew it was only a matter of time before someone, most likely Bianca, came looking for me, but I simply needed time alone, and I absolutely did not feel like being at a party. In hindsight, I should probably have either canceled it or found someplace else to be, but it was too late at this point.

I had about fifteen minutes of reprieve before there was a knock at the door, and I heard Costas call out my name. I sighed deeply, got out of bed, went over to the door, and opened it.

"Come in," I said.

He stepped into the room, and I closed and re-locked the door.

"Violet and Lily are concerned," he said.

"And they deputized you to come talk to me?"

"More or less," he admitted.

"I think you can imagine I'm not in a particularly festive mood. I promised Bianca I'd join everyone at midnight but didn't make any other commitments. I

do remember what we talked about the other day, and if the house weren't full of people, I wouldn't be in my room. I just can't deal with another person asking me how I'm doing."

"You know it's because we all care."

"I do, but at some point, it's just too much. It was probably a mistake to have the party, but Keiko was adamant with me before she slipped into the coma that we not cancel it. I totally get her point and yours, but I think it would have been better for me to cancel. That said, everyone seems to be having a good time, and I don't begrudge them."

"I have the distinct impression that if I ask what I can do for you, your response will be 'leave me alone'."

"I'd say that impression is accurate. I promise I'm going to go to work on Tuesday, and I won't hide out in my room, but I do need some time, and you have to admit, going to a party four days after my wife died and the day after her funeral is a bit much."

"True."

"You did the right thing getting me out of the house on Thursday. Today, just let it go, please."

"OK. I'll go back downstairs. See you around midnight."

"Thanks."

Costas left and I locked the door behind him, set my alarm in case I fell asleep, then lay on the bed. I was sad, and I missed Keiko, but I didn't feel like crying. I tried to assess my emotions but struggled to do so because they simply defied

analysis. I was sure that was part of what bothered me, and trying to make sense of something senseless was an exercise in futility.

I was pleasantly surprised that nobody else knocked on my door, and at 11:45pm, I went downstairs to keep my promise to Bianca. When I reached the bottom of the stairs, Beth came over to me.

"You look like you need a hug," she said.

She was right, but it felt wrong for some reason, which I couldn't identify. Rather than give another person cause to give me grief, I accepted it. Beth hugged me tightly, and I squeezed my arms around her briefly.

"Thanks," I said when she released me about thirty seconds later.

"Did the rituals help?" she asked.

"To an extent,"

"They'll never be a cure or remedy, but they can provide comfort and closure."

"Which is what you were trying to tell me, and yes, they did, but as you say, that only goes so far."

"Do you know your biggest challenge?"

"No, but I'm sure you're going to tell me."

"Yes, but not tonight. How about lunch later in the week? Thursday, perhaps?"

"Tentatively, OK?"

"Yes."

We each got a plastic flute of champagne and joined the throng moving into the backyard. Bianca had determined, correctly, that was the only place where everyone could gather. Jack had his wristwatch, which had a sweep second hand, and he started the countdown at fifteen seconds, with everyone joining in at ten. At midnight, as distant fireworks erupted and the sounds of celebration erupted in the neighborhood, everyone cheered and we drank our champagne. Couples kissed, and then we all sang *Auld Lang Syne*. When we finished, I opened the drain valve on the hot tub and covered it. When I finished, I said 'good night' to a few people, then went inside and upstairs to my bedroom. I quickly completed my bedtime routine and got into bed.



January 1, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday morning, Violet made breakfast for me, and after we ate, I drove her home.

"Are you going to stay?" she asked when I walked her to the door.

"At least for a few hours, if it's OK."

"Yes, of course."

She unlocked the door and let us in.

"If you want to be alone, go up to the spare room you used before. If there's anything you need, anything at all, just ask."

"Thanks. All I really want is peace and quiet and nobody bothering me. I brought Keiko's copy of *Les Misérables*. She said it was the best book written in the nineteenth century, so I felt I should read it. Have you read it?"

"No. Mostly, I only read the required books in High School. Since I graduated, I've read *Nancy Drew Mystery Stories* and Agatha Christie books. I've read about half of her books; they're really good. Did you tell Bianca where you'd be?"

"No. I went to bed right after midnight, and all of them were still asleep when we left this morning. I'm sure she'll guess, and if she calls, tell her I'm here, but if she asks to speak to me, just tell her I'm reading and asked not to be disturbed except in an emergency."

"I think you're disturbed all the time!" Violet smirked.

I laughed, "Yeah, well, but you know what I meant!"

"I do, and I don't really think that."

"I also knew you were teasing, though I will say I don't conform to social norms or what I'd call normative thinking. And that limitation doesn't apply to you."

"I knew that, too! But I'll mostly leave you alone because I totally understand needing time to deal with emotional distress, and talking isn't always the answer. Feel free to sit wherever you're comfortable."

"Thanks."

I decided the best place was the front room, which was smaller than mine, which I'd connected to the Japanese room. That would keep me out of Violet's way, and she could go about whatever she needed to do without disturbing me. I sat in an easy chair, and opened the novel to begin to read, starting with the foreword.

So long as there shall exist, by reason of law and custom, a social condemnation, which, in the face of civilisation, artificially creates hells on earth, and complicates a destiny that is divine, with human fatality; so long as the three problems of the age -- the degradation of man by poverty, the ruin of woman by starvation, and the dwarfing of childhood by physical and spiritual night -- are not yet solved; as long as, in certain regions, social asphyxia shall be possible; in other words, and from a yet more extended point of view, so long as ignorance and misery remain on earth, books like this cannot be useless.

At 650,000 words and over 1400 pages, that foreword seemed appropriate. I couldn't imagine writing a story that long. I'd need about two years of analysis documents to reach that word count, and even then, those had quite a bit of repeated text that I simply copied from one to the next, replacing figures or names as appropriate. Under normal circumstances, I wouldn't have even attempted to read the novel, but Keiko's statement that it was the greatest novel of the nineteenth century was too strong a recommendation to ignore.

Four hours later, when Violet called me for lunch, I had read many pages, but my bookmark appeared to have barely dented the book. I closed it, put it on the table next to the easy chair, and joined Violet for lunch in the kitchen.

"How is the book?"

"Difficult," I replied. "I'm used to reading news and analysis all day, and I've never read much fiction."

"You had to read some in High School, right?"

"Sure, but that was literally it. I had a library card, but I only ever used it if I needed a book for an assignment. I simply didn't have time to read."

"Are you enjoying the book?"

"It's interesting, but I'm used to short, pithy articles, so I'm reading slower than I might otherwise so I can absorb what he's trying to convey."

"Are you staying for dinner?"

"If you'll have me."

"Always! You can spend the night if you want. There's plenty of room."

"I appreciate the offer, but I think I'll go home. If I don't, it's likely to worry my housemates."

"Because all of us care about you."

"I know, and I appreciate it, but at times it's felt...suffocating. You and Lily weren't wrong to send Costas to speak to me. I totally understand the points he was making, and I don't disagree, but I also know I simply need peace and quiet. I'm sad but not depressed."

"Are you going to see Nancy Jane Moore?"

"Maybe. Right now, I think I'm doing OK. Fundamentally, the more people ask about it, the more it causes me to...fixate, I guess, is the best word. While I was reading, I was concentrating on the book. I'll be fine at work, too, because I have something on which to focus. What I need to do is figure out how to remember Keiko without those memories controlling everything I do."

"That's actually something she said to me about recovering from what my parents did -- to get to a point where it doesn't control everything I do. Mostly, I'm there, except for..." she took a deep breath, then let it out, "making love."

"You've made tremendous progress since I met you," I said. "Doctor Lochner may have helped you at first, but you had to get out from under her thumb to blossom into the vibrant, fun young woman you've become. And despite what some segments of society think, you can have a fulfilling life without a husband or kids. I think you've proved that to yourself."

"Is it OK to talk about my hangup?"

"If you want to," I replied.

"What you said about people in general seems right to me. Girls ask about boyfriends and talk about theirs, or about being married, as if it's the only valid option."

"And that right there is why I reject those normative social ideas - my mom never married, and other than whatever you want to call what she did with my dad, never dated until recently."

"I guess 'dating' isn't what happened."

"They met, she snuck out to see him on at least two occasions, and I resulted. That certainly didn't qualify for what passed for 'dating' or 'proper behavior' in 1961 and 1962. And Bev was on the receiving end of similar comments and thinking when she had Heather."

"She told me last night she and Glen are getting married, but they're going to a judge like you and Keiko did originally."

"That doesn't surprise me in the least. Bev's family rarely went to church. I don't know about Glen, but it strikes me math and science teachers should be the least religious of anyone. I know it probably doesn't work that way, but it should. I

mean, sure, I have my own set of questions about the universe that came up in talking to Keiko, but to me, it seems like wishful thinking."

"You mean basically explaining everything bad that happens is really OK because you end up in heaven?"

"Pretty much. It just seems too convenient - 'Oh, you poor suffering person! But your suffering is only temporary; there is no suffering or pain in heaven!'. The problem, from my perspective, is that it makes the Abrahamic god out to be evil because I cannot imagine how a perfect, god, all-powerful being could allow that kind of suffering. To what end? To get his jollies? That's hardly the behavior of a good god. May I make a comment that might hit a bit close to home?"

"Sure."

"A parent who tortured their kid for years with the promise of everything being perfect in the future would be locked in prison and declared evil. If we won't accept that behavior from a parent, how the heck can we accept it from a god?"

"I once told Doctor Lochner that what happened to my sister and me proved that if there were any gods, they were evil."

"I'd say that's accurate. We never discussed it, but did you go to church when you were little?"

"Episcopalian, and it was 'high church' which means the services were similar to Roman Catholic ones. We stopped going when I was twelve, which I think is when they first started abusing Rose, but I can't be sure because Rose was never able to tell anyone anything. But they found, uhm, evidence that my dad had done stuff to her. With what I told the police detective and social worker, that was enough to convict them. Well, my dad, 'cause based on what we know now, my mom made a plea agreement."

"They didn't make you testify?"

"No. They allowed the women police officer and social worker to tell them what I said, and they also played a tape recording of what I said. Somebody told me my dad appealed based on what's called the 'confrontation clause', meaning he could cross-examine me. Supposedly, the judge ruled he couldn't, and when my dad ran out of appeals, my mom could be released, so long as she had served eight years or whatever the exact deal was."

"How does that work? I mean, with his sentence?"

"He can apply for parole, and I'll be notified, and I can write a statement or appear before the parole board. Because I was a minor, I could do that in a private meeting with them, with nobody except the parole board and my dad's attorney present. And the Public Guardian will speak on behalf of my sister, but that will be public."

"So there's a chance he'll get out?"

"My social worker said that initial applications are nearly always denied for people who commit crimes such as the ones my dad was convicted of, and if they do succeed, it's often after four or five attempts, which would mean around thirty years total. And even then, he'd be on long-term mandatory supervised release, possibly for life, because the sentence was twenty-to-life."

"And trying to contact you would be a violation?"

"That's what the social worker said; basically the same as the rules my mom has to follow."

"How do you feel about that?"

"That he should never, ever get out of prison."

"I agree."

When we finished lunch, I helped Violet clean up, then went back to the front room to continue reading. I read until dinner, taking a break only to get a drink and use the bathroom.

"Don't forget I need your résumé before I leave," I said.

"I'll put it in an envelope when we finish dinner. I also thought about who I could use as a reference, and I'll use my supervisor at the daycare and one of my professors."

"That should work, especially with my endorsement."

"What would I do day-to-day?"

"Pretty much whatever is necessary to support us while learning the business. We do have invoices to process, phones to answer, and meetings to schedule, but that's not going to take a lot of time. And there will be other traditional administrative or secretarial work, such as keeping the department calendar and so on.

"The most important thing you'll do, at least at first, is act as our archivist. There's a ton of paperwork that has to be archived and catalogued. Right now, all of us do it ourselves, but that takes away valuable research time. You'll take over filing and retrieving documents when Legal or Compliance ask, and keeping a ledger of all the reports and references.

"Right now, there's no way for us to find a specific reference to a stock or bond or currency, so one thing we'll have you do is create an index. Bianca created a program where you enter the symbols for the securities or currencies, the date, and who wrote the report. There are years worth of reports, but we're not going to try to do that for all of them. We'll start with new ones and go back perhaps a year. Searching for things from before a year ago will rely on someone's memory, at least for the time being."

"Learning the business?"

"Yes. The more you know, the more valuable you are, and it's possible to move up. It's also true that if Bianca and Jack ever manage to convince me to start my own firm, you'd be integral to that."

"Seriously?"

"Seriously."

When we finished eating, I helped Violet clean up, then decided I should head home. Violet walked me to the door and gave me a tight hug and a kiss on the cheek. I hugged her back, then headed to my car for the drive to Rogers Park.

XXIX. Reconsidering a Relationship

January 1, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Did it work?" Jack asked when I arrived home.

"If you mean did I achieve my goal of peace and quiet without feeling smothered, then yes, it did."

"This probably sounds like a broken record, but all of us care about you."

"I know, and I really do appreciate that, but in the same way Keiko occasionally sent me away from the hospital, I need to send everyone away. The thing is, I can't do that because you all live here, and I want you to continue to live here. That meant for today, I simply had to escape, and Violet's house was the perfect refuge because I could sit alone in her front room and read."

"We could probably move out sooner," Jack offered.

I shook my head, "That's not my point at all. I just need to spend some time by myself because, on Tuesday, I have to hit the ground running. One of the last things Keiko said to me was not to let mourning overwhelm me and change who I am. She also asked me to promise to be the successful man she knew me to be. So, as sad as I am, I won't disappoint her, even if the odds are she'll have no way of knowing."

"That sounds as if you think there's some possibility."

"What did I teach you about the difference between possible and probable?"

"Just because something is possible doesn't mean it's probable or that it will ever occur. It's possible to win the lottery, but not probable."

"Exactly. Is it possible that existence continues somehow? Yes. But I haven't seen any evidence, and those who assert it as a certainty haven't provided a shred. At best, it's a subtle shift to allow for the possibility Anala is right, but I'm not changing anything I do based on it."

"That makes sense. While you were out, your mom called. She asked for you to call. You also had calls from Jeri and Shelly, as well as Tony from Spurgeon. Tony said there's no need to call unless you don't plan to be in on Tuesday. The others asked for you to call them back."

"Thanks. I'm going up to my room to call my mom. I'll come back down after, so please head off the posse if they start looking for me."

"The *posse* or the *pussy*?" Jack smirked.

I laughed, "Same thing in this house, present company excepted."

"It's good to see you laugh."

"Just give me a few days, OK?"

"Yes."

I went upstairs to my room, changed into sweats, then called my mom.

"I just wanted to check on you," she said.

'You and half the planet', I wanted to say, but I couldn't say that to my mom.

"I understand. I was at Violet's so I could have some time to myself."

"Be careful, Jonathan."

"Of all the people on the planet of whom I might need to be careful, Violet is not one of them. She gave me space, and her history is such that there is basically no chance we'll ever be anything but close friends. Not to mention, I am absolutely not in a state of mind to go on a date, let alone do what you're implying."

"Our family behavior in that regard is not always rational, as we both well know!"

"Three for three on out-of-wedlock pregnancies?" I asked. "Your father will lose his mind when he finds out about Bianca. Not that I'm going to tell him, but at some point, something will be said, likely by Aunt Wendy."

"True. Anyway, I won't keep you. You know you're welcome here if you need to get away."

"I think staying three hundred miles away from Jim Newton is wise."

"Julie told me they know where she is."

"Chicago," I replied.

"She implied they know an address."

"I suppose it's possible at this point. I take it from what you said they don't know Glen is here?"

"I certainly haven't told them, and I would expect Julie to say something if they knew that was the case."

"Probably. I'll call next weekend, OK?"

"Or if you need anything."

"Or if I need anything," I agreed.

We said 'goodbye' and I contemplated if I should call Jeri or Shelly, and decided to call Shelly. We had a brief conversation, and she invited me to join them for dinner. I promised I would, but that it would need to be in a few weeks. She didn't push back, which I appreciated, then we promised to keep in touch and ended the call.

I debated calling Jeri, but, in the end, I was managing her money, and she had the right to know I was thinking clearly and in a proper frame of mind to continue that management. Karl answered the phone and let Jeri know I was calling.

"Hi," Jeri said.

"Hi," I replied. "I'll be ready to go back to work on Tuesday," I said. "I promise your money is in good hands."

"OK, I might be a mercenary bitch at times, but I do actually care! You know if you need anything, all you have to do is call, right?"

"I do. And I appreciate it."

"Why don't you come for dinner one night?"

"Let's just stick to our planned dinner on the 17th, please. As I've said to my housemates and others, I just need some time."

"OK. The offer is there. Just call anytime."

"Thanks," I replied.

After we said 'goodbye', I hung up and went downstairs. I wasn't particularly interested in doing anything, so I picked up my book, which I'd left on the kitchen counter, and went to the Japanese room to read. I wasn't surprised when both CeCi and Deanna came in, but they said nothing and simply sat down with books to read. I didn't mind them being in the same room, and I was happy they simply read quietly.

I read for about an hour, then let Deanna and CeCi know I was going to bed. As I left the Japanese room, Bianca came over to me and offered me a hug, which I accepted. We both said 'good night', and I went up to my room.



January 3, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

I was happy to return to work on Tuesday, having divided my time on Monday between Violet's house and my house. The only downside of going to the office was that every person I spoke to offered condolences and asked how I was doing. I hoped that would taper off, as I wanted to focus on work when I was in the office. When I sat down at my desk, I picked up a small sheaf of pink telephone message slips.

There was nothing pressing, so I picked up a folder that was in my 'IN' box and saw that Brandon Littleton's trust account had been approved and the wire transfer had occurred on December 30th. That was good news, and I made a note to call and speak to him. I also made a note to speak with Kendall Roy about the meal I'd offered for them to get that done despite the holidays.

Before I began working on my portion of the morning analyst report, I read over the ones Tony had created in my absence. I was pleased with the quality and analysis and made a few notes for further research. Once I'd done that, I began my usual review of the news, as well as the closing prices for currencies and precious metals from the previous trading session.

I completed the report, copied it to the proper storage location on the computer so the secretaries could access it, then took Violet's résumé to Mrs. Peterson in Personnel.

"She's a friend of yours?" Mrs. Peterson asked.

"Yes. I've known her for just over two years."

"OK. I'll have her come in for an interview, then check her references. If there are no problems, you can extend the offer right away. I believe I provided the salary information."

"Yes. The only question I have is bonuses for assistants."

"There are no target amounts the way there are for other positions. Basically, all secretaries receive equal amounts. Heads of desks often compensate them as well."

I heard 'for services rendered' even though Mrs. Peterson didn't say that.

"But that's not via Spurgeon, right?"

"Correct. It's similar to the car Murray Matheson comped you."

"Thanks."

"Call Janet and make an appointment to see Noel Spurgeon to discuss your compensation for this year, please."

"I'll do that right away. Is he in today?"

"Not until Thursday. He's reachable, of course, if you need something urgently."

"No, it was just a question of when the meeting might be."

When I returned to my office, I immediately placed a call to Janet and set up my meeting with Noel Spurgeon for Thursday afternoon at 2:00pm. That accomplished, I set about returning calls, one of which was to Stan Jakes, the reporter from the *Trib*.

"I'd like to introduce you to a friend of mine," he said. "Len Walter."

"The business reporter from WBBM?"

"Yes. He'd be a good contact for you to have, and you'd be a good source for him."

That was, in my mind, a no-brainer, as Len Walter was *the* business reporter in Chicago who broadcast from the Midwest Stock Exchange.

"I'd be happy to have the introduction," I said. "If you pick a day next week, I'll buy lunch at any place you can name."

Stan laughed, "Someday, I'll take you up on that in a serious way, but I think we'll shoot for Venice Café. The tables in the back are out of the way, and with the dim lighting, we won't attract any attention. How about Thursday, January 12th at 11:30am to beat the lunch rush?"

"I'll put it on my calendar," I said. "See you then."

After we said 'goodbye', I returned a call from Brandon Littleton. He wasn't in the office, but his secretary relayed the message that he had called to thank me for expediting the transfer of his trust. I expressed my gratitude, and she promised he'd call by the end of the day once he was out of court.

The rest of the morning was busy, and I calculated my actual return on the first dollars in, and it was 39.7%, though given much of the money had come in later in the year, and Littleton's literally on the last day, that lowered the overall annual gains. That was why what Mr. Matheson called the 'league table' would show returns on the first dollar in, as that would better reflect my performance.

Of course, the 'twenty' was calculated on the total return for the fund, and that meant zero from Littleton's money, though we'd collect the management fee today. Ultimately, the numbers didn't mean much with regard to my income, as I had been salaried for all of 1983.

That said, I did have carried interest in excess of a million dollars, though about half of that would go to Uncle Sam and Governor Thompson when I withdrew it. That in and of itself was enough reason to let it ride so as to benefit from the compounding effects. My thought process was interrupted by the phone ringing.

"Research, Kane."

"Jonathan Kane?"

"Yes."

"This is Sargent Matt Callahan of the Clermont County, Ohio, Sheriff's Department. I'd like to ask you a few questions, if I might."

"Concerning?"

"Miss Beverly Newton."

I had an immediate sinking feeling, but I really had no choice but to answer his questions.

"What did you want to know?"

"How long have you known her?"

"Since we were toddlers."

"And your relationship was romantic?"

"It depends on what you mean. She was my best friend, in fact, my only close friend. We never really discussed our relationship in those terms. If you're asking if we had sex, yes, we did."

"Is the child yours?"

"No. There were no blood tests or anything because she became pregnant long after I moved to Chicago, and I wasn't in Ohio again until she was several months pregnant."

"But you were with her during the delivery of the child?"

"Yes."

"Did she reveal to you the name of the baby's father?"

"Not at that time."

"But later?"

"Yes."

"Who is the baby's father?"

"I'm sorry, Sargent, but you'll need to ask Bev that question. I can give you her phone number if you'd like."

"I could have the County Prosecutor subpoena you."

"Yes, you could. And then you'll need to serve it in Illinois, which will require you to go to court here to enforce the subpoena, which I'll oppose. I've been down this road before, so I know how it works. Call Bev. Ask her."

"I tried to speak to Miss Newton, but she refused to speak to me."

"There's something you're not telling me, Sergeant. If you put your cards on the table, I'd be more inclined to answer further questions."

"Do you know a former teacher at Goshen High School, Glen Rodgers?"

The sinking feeling turned to dread, and I suddenly wondered if there was some aspect of Ohio law that made Glen having sex with Bev illegal.

"He arrived in the Fall of 1981 after I graduated. He dated my mom for a time."

"And are you aware of his current whereabouts?"

Given Glen had an Illinois teaching license, and would certainly have had to give an address, there was no doubt in my mind that Sergeant Callahan knew where

Glen and Bev were living. Denying I knew he was in Illinois was a nasty trap because, in the end, he'd find both of them in government records.

"Yes," I replied warily. "He's in Illinois, teaching in Oak Park, just outside the Chicago city limits."

"Does Miss Newton reside at 1840 West Morse Avenue in Chicago?"

"No," I replied. "That's my house, and it's where she has her car registered."

"Where does she live?"

"734 South Dearborn Street in Chicago."

"That's the same address I have for Glen Rodgers."

"Yes."

"Is he the baby's father?"

"You'll need to ask Bev or Glen that question," I replied.

"I'm going take that as a 'yes', because if it weren't true, I believe you would deny it."

"Whatever you want to assume is OK by me," I replied. "But I do want to point out Bev was seventeen when she became pregnant, and I'm positive Ohio's age of consent is sixteen."

"There is an allegation of another relationship," Sargent Callahan said.

I suppressed a groan because the implication was that Glen had slept with *another* student and one who was underage.

"I'd have absolutely no knowledge of that," I said.

"No rumors?"

"None. There were rumors about another teacher, Mr. Kingman, I graduated before Mr. Rodgers started teaching at Goshen High."

"What were the rumors about the other teacher?"

"That he and his wife had been together while she was still a student and he was a teacher, but those were only rumors. They married not long after she graduated in 1978. May I ask a question?"

"What?"

"How did you get Bev's phone number? It's not listed in her name."

"I called the phone number that was on the teaching certificate application filed by Mr. Rodgers, and Miss Newton answered."

And that was, as they say, that.

"Are you aware she's estranged from her parents and does not want them to know where she is?"

"Yes. We had that information from the FBI and the police in St. Louis. We're also aware you drove her from Overland Park, Kansas, to Chicago."

"I did."

"Jonathan, if I may call you that..."

"You may."

"Jonathan, it's obvious to me what the answer to my question is, and you know for a fact I'm going to find out."

He was right, and, in the end, I couldn't prevent what was going to happen.

"Yes, Heather is Glen's child."

"So, putting two and two together, they had an affair while she was his student."

"Technically, that's not correct. She was *a* student at Goshen High, but she wasn't in his class when Heather was conceived."

"You speak like an attorney."

"I'm a securities analyst. Precision is just as important for me as it is for a lawyer, or a doctor, for that matter."

"That's all I have for you," Sergeant Callahan said. "You may hear from someone in the County Prosecutor's office. Thank you for your assistance."

"You're welcome."

We ended the call, and I contemplated who I should call first. I debated with myself and decided to call my mom.

"Goshen High School; Linda Kane speaking."

"Hi, Mom."

"Hi, Jonathan! Is everything OK?"

"I'd say things are pretty far from OK, and I'm not talking about Keiko."

"What happened?"

"I just had an interesting conversation with Sergeant Matt Callahan of the Clermont County Sheriff's Department. He asked me about Bev and Glen and implied that he was investigating Glen for having sex with an underage girl."

"Bev was seventeen when she got pregnant."

"Yes..."

"Oh, my! Does Bev know?"

"I'm going to surmise she knows something, but what she knows, I can't say for sure. Sergeant Callahan tracked her down more or less by accident. He was looking for Glen, called the number on Glen's application for an Illinois teaching license, and Bev answered."

"What are you going to do?"

"I have no idea. I think I have to call Bev and talk to her."

"Do you know if Jim and Julie discovered where she's living?"

"I'm got to guess the answer is 'no', given I'm positive Sergeant Callahan called them, in addition to speaking to the McGills and likely the police in Overland Park, Kansas."

"At this point, I almost feel as if I have to tell them."

"That thought crossed my mind, but Bev will run if they try to contact her, so I'd hold off on that, at least for now."

"This is an unholy mess."

"I know," I said. "Of course, the allegation could be false."

"But you don't think so, do you?" Mom asked.

"No. For some reason, it rings true. And the way Bev is behaving makes me suspicious. The question is, do I call Bev and tell her, or just wait for the chips to fall."

"At this point, I think I'd let the chips fall. I hate to say this, but with her erratic behavior, you can't trust her."

"No," I agreed. "I don't think I can."

"I know you're probably tired of this question," Mom said, "but how are you doing?"

"Better now that I'm back at work. Obviously, I was prepared for what was coming, which also helps."

"I'll let you get back to work then. Speak to you soon."

We said 'goodbye', and I hung up. I considered calling Bev but decided that it couldn't possibly do any good, and there was no way I wanted to be involved in whatever mess was brewing. I was concerned about Heather, though, and

wondered if there was anything I could do. Given the circumstances and given what I felt was likely to happen, there was one thing I could do, even though I had just said I would hold off. I picked up the phone and dialed.

"Newton residence."

"Mrs. Newton, it's Jonathan."

"Hi, Jonathan. Your mom told us what happened. I'm so sorry."

"Thank you. Do you have a pencil and paper?"

"Yes, of course; you know we keep the pad by the phone."

"Bev is living at 734 South Dearborn Street in Chicago. Her phone number is 312-555-0672. She's living with Glen Rodgers."

"WHAT?!" Mrs. Newton gasped. "The teacher?"

"Yes."

"Is he..."

"Yes, he's Heather's biological father."

"Oh my Lord!"

"I'm at work," I said. "So I need to keep this brief. I'd appreciate you not telling Bev I gave you that information."

"I'm not sure what Jim will say about that."

"I understand, and that's why I didn't ask for a promise before I gave you the information."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome."

"Does your mom know?"

There would be recriminations no matter which way the Newtons found out, so I felt it was best to just rip the Band-Aid off completely in one swift motion.

"He confessed to her before he moved to Chicago," I said. "That's why they broke up."

"Jim is going to be livid."

"That won't surprise me. Now, I do need to go."

After we said 'goodbye', I hung up and contemplated the complete sundering of my relationship with Bev. That didn't make me happy, but I simply could no longer deal with the drama. I went back to work and, about ninety minutes later, joined Bianca for lunch in the break room.

"I called Bev's mom and gave her Bev's address and phone number," I said.

"WHOA!" Bianca exclaimed. "What possessed you to do that?"

"A call from the Clermont County Sheriff's department looking for information on Glen. Between what they said and what they inferred, they're investigating Glen for having sex with an underage student. Not Bev."

"Holy shit!" Bianca exclaimed but kept her voice low.

"Yeah. And putting all the pieces together in my mind, Bev knows about whatever it is. If the allegation is accurate, all hell is going to break loose, and I can't be part of the drama. That's why I called Julie Newton after I discussed everything with my mom."

"Jesus," Bianca breathed. "You broke your word to Bev?"

"I did, and I did it consciously. Her behavior has been so erratic since she became pregnant, and she's hidden so many things from me at various times that I can no longer trust her. I decided my sole concern was Heather's well-being, and that meant telling the Newtons where Bev was living. If things go the way I think they will, I'm not sure Bev will be in any condition to care for Heather, and this time, I can't rescue her. I did that once, but given everything that's happened, I won't do it again."

"Are you sure you're not reacting emotionally because of Keiko?"

"No, I'm not sure, but tell me, please, what I can do for Bev if she won't help herself? And what will happen once Glen discovers he's suspected of statutory rape?"

"Nothing good, that's for sure."

"Exactly. And I can't be part of that mess."

"And the surefire way of ensuring Bev didn't try to involve you was to do the one thing you knew would destroy the relationship for good."

"Sadly, I saw no other option because I really do care about Heather, even if she's not my daughter."

"Being with Bev when Heather was delivered had a profound effect on you."

"It did. She was never mine, but I felt as if she was, if that makes sense."

"In Jonathan-land, it does!"

"It also means there was some truth to Anna's analysis, and I was in denial. The phone call from the Sheriff's Department following the events of the last week finally snapped me out of it."

"Do you think you made a mistake going to Kansas?"

"No. It was the right thing to do, both for Bev and Heather. But I also laid a trap for myself. I think Anna took it a bit too far, but not as far as I had thought. I had to break the cycle, and it had to stop before the shit hit the fan, so to speak."

"I don't disagree. I know you hate this question, but are you OK?"

"My feelings at the moment are severely muddled, and the one thing I couldn't do was have any extra drama in my life. I know it's going to take time to come to terms with everything, but I also know it's changed me in some ways, though I don't think I can articulate what that means right now."

"I think that actually makes sense. What happened with Keiko hurt me, but nowhere near as much as it hurt you. What happened with Bev hurt you as well, but the difference between the two is Keiko never, ever betrayed you or took advantage of you."

"And Bev did both," I admitted.

"I don't think anyone who betrays you in any way could ever hope to continue a relationship beyond basic cordiality. If there's one overriding feature of your personality, it's integrity. In your case, that means honesty over everything, along with consistent adherence to your ethical code."

"With the understanding that some situations call for deviation, yes."

"You're talking about keeping your word, right?"

"Yes."

"But isn't that at least somewhat contingent on the other person keeping their word and their commitments? If an investor broke their commitment, wouldn't that free you to modify the relationship, including terminating it?"

"Yes, so long as I was consistent with the contractual agreement and the regulations."

"So in Bev's case, when she violated your trust and pushed you away, your obligations to her changed, right?"

"Yes," I admitted.

"So, in the end, you were consistent and kept your word until Bev acted in a way that provided just cause to go back on it. In other words, you were faithful until she wasn't. And I'm not talking about sex because your idea of fidelity is based on your agreement with your partner, not on the opinion of society.

"You didn't have a problem with Bev being with other men because you had no agreement. Your concern about Noel Spurgeon is reputational risk, along with legal risk, not that he and Valerie appear to tolerate each other having lovers.

And you certainly never cared about who else any of the girls were sleeping with, so long as nobody was cheating."

"All true."

"So, what happens now?"

"With Bev?"

"In general."

"I don't know. The most important thing right now is staying on an even keel and not making any major decisions until my emotions are less muddled."

"That makes a lot of sense."

We finished our lunch, then headed to the gym to work out. I pushed harder than usual, as I hadn't exercised in several weeks, while Bianca did light resistance work due to her rapidly growing belly. Our baby was due in about three months, and it was something to which I was really looking forward.

Later that afternoon, Brandon Littleton called and thanked me for expediting his account setup and promised to refer others to me. I thanked him, hung up, and went back to work.



January 4, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"You bastard!" Bev growled when I answered the phone at home on Wednesday evening.

"Literally true," I replied. "My parents were not married when I was born."

"Don't be an even bigger jerk, Jonathan!"

Bev calling me by my proper name, rather than 'Jonny', conveyed that our close relationship was completely sundered. Even at the lowest points, she'd never called me anything other than 'Jonny' except when referring to me or, in those rare instances, she had to give my name to someone. I considered how to proceed and decided to simply cut to the chase.

"What do you know about Glen Rodgers having a relationship with another student?" I asked.

"What are you talking about?" she asked.

She had hesitated just enough that I knew she knew, despite her words implying otherwise.

"I believe you know what I'm talking about, but I'll say it directly -- Glen had an affair with an underage student at some point. How do I know that? Because Sergeant Matt Callahan of the Clermont County Sheriff's Department called me yesterday. Among other things, he said he spoke to you when he called the number Glen put on his application for his teaching certificate. When I pointed out you were seventeen when Heather was born, he said there was another allegation about an underage girl."

I heard a click as the call disconnected without another word from Bev. That confirmed for me that the allegation was true AND that Bev knew about it. In my mind, it also meant the two of them were likely to flee and try to disappear. I almost laughed when my mind went directly to Bonnie and Clyde, though I couldn't see either Bev or Glen using a machine gun.

The question was what I should do next, and the clear answer was 'nothing'. Calling DCFS or local law enforcement wouldn't help, given so far as I was aware, no charges had been filed against Glen, and Bev had a job, a place to live, and could properly support herself and Heather. I was positive I'd receive a visit from some law enforcement in the not-too-distant future when the Clermont County Sheriff's Department brought charges against Glen, which I felt had to be imminent.

What I didn't expect, but in hindsight probably should have, was Jim Newton appearing on my doorstep forty minutes later.

"Hi, Jonathan," he said. "Can I come in?"

I could feel the tension and decided a small joke was the best way to reduce it.

"So long as you don't have a gun," I replied. "Handguns are illegal in Chicago!"

He laughed, which was what I had hoped would happen.

"Shotguns are usually the father's choice of firearms," he said. "I'm not carrying."

I invited him in, and we went to the Japanese room.

"My condolences on your loss," he said.

"Thanks. Have a seat on the couch. Can I get you something to drink?"

"You wouldn't have a beer, would you?"

"Old Style in bottles and cans of Bud."

"Old Style?"

"A Chicago mainstay. It's not bad for an inexpensive lager."

"I'll try one of those."

I went to the kitchen, got a bottle of Old Style for Jim Newton and an Orange Crush for me, and returned to the Japanese room. I handed him the bottle of beer, then sat down in one of the Papasan chairs.

"Did you come to Chicago alone?" I asked.

"No. Julie is at the hotel. We tried to see Bev, but she refused to open the door."

"She called about an hour ago, called me a bastard, and when I tried to talk to her about the situation, she hung up on me."

"You steadfastly refused to tell us where she was, but yesterday, you called Julie and gave her the address and phone number. Why?"

"Did you receive a call from someone at the Clermont County Sheriff's Department?"

"No. Why would I? The last thing I heard from them was that they wouldn't give me Bev's location. Was she here?"

"No, she was in St. Louis and, later, in Overland Park, Kansas. I brought Bev and Heather from Kansas to Chicago, and helped her find a place to live and to get a job."

"When did you find out Glen Rodgers was Heather's father?"

"Bev told me right before she left for St. Louis. I asked -- no, actually, I begged -- her to come here instead, and she refused. I don't know if it was embarrassment or fear or what Mr. Chojnicki called 'postpartum depression', which people refer to as the 'baby blues'. When you sent the investigators to find her, she fled from St. Louis to Overland Park, Kansas.

"In Overland Park, she had a confrontation with some police officers who were checking on her because the motel clerk was worried about her erratic behavior. A detective from the Overland Park Police Department called me because he found my name and number in Bev's purse. A friend and I went to Kansas to help her, and using a bit of subterfuge, I prevented Heather from going into temporary foster care."

"Subterfuge?"

"I said Heather was mine, and because my blood type matched and because of other things they found in Bev's purse, they believed me. They let me and my friend take Heather while Bev stayed in the hospital. The next day, Bev was released, and we drove back to Chicago. She stayed with a friend of mine while I helped her with a place to live and a job. At that point, my mom knew about Glen and Bev because Glen confessed.

"Because of that, I finally convinced Bev to accept child support from Glen, which I facilitated through Mr. Chojnicki. Once that was arranged, Bev agreed, at my urging, to get in contact with Glen. I pushed her to do that because I felt Heather needed to know who her dad was, irrespective of the circumstances of her conception. Glen came to visit, he and Bev reconciled, and that's when he moved here.

"Your investigator couldn't find her because she used this address and I refused to say anything, and I was careful not to lead him to Bev. When the Sheriff's Department started looking for Glen, they found the phone number and address

on his application for an Illinois teaching certificate. They called, and Bev answered. She wouldn't speak to them, so they called me."

"Why?"

"They're investigating Glen for violating age of consent laws."

"OK, as much as I want to do the whole shotgun thing with Glen right now, unless you and Bev lied to me, which I don't believe, she first had sex on her sixteenth birthday."

"We didn't lie," I replied. "The allegations aren't about him and Bev."

"Wait! You mean he's done this before?"

"That is the inference I drew from what Detective Callahan said. He didn't come right out and say it, but I'm positive Glen had an affair with a student who hadn't turned sixteen."

"Son of a bitch!"

"I'm also reasonably certain Bev knows about the allegation and might have known for some time. It would help explain her behavior."

"I should go see the police," Jim Newton said.

"If you mean here in Chicago, I don't think they could do anything. Bev is over eighteen, and has been since before she moved here. Anything that happened between her and Glen before she turned eighteen happened in Ohio. I'm no expert, but I'm pretty sure I remember from American Government class that Illinois can't prosecute a crime committed in Ohio by two Ohio residents."

"Who was the Deputy who called you again?"

"Sergeant Matt Callahan."

"I think I'll call him tomorrow. I'm unhappy with you, Jonathan. You did the right thing, eventually, but you should have told us immediately what you knew when you knew it."

"I was keeping faith with Bev," I replied. "My faith was probably misplaced, but given our history, I had to do that."

"What do you think she'll do?"

"If history is any indicator, she'll run and, this time, try to disappear for good. I suspect Glen will go with her, but I have no idea. And I doubt she'll talk to me now that she knows I gave you her address and phone number. That was the problem all along -- had I done that before, she'd have disappeared, and none of us would ever have heard from her unless someone tracked us down because she was hurt or dead."

"I take it this room is in honor of your wife?"

"Yes, though we began working on it before we were engaged."

"Your mom says you've been very successful, and I think this house demonstrates that. I respect that, though I have to say I'm not pleased with your behavior over the past two and a half years."

"I only ever did what I felt was right and what I felt was in Bev's and Heather's best interests. And, in the end, it's because of Heather that I called your wife yesterday."

"If Bev does disappear again and contacts you, will you call us?"

"I suspect her hanging up on me was the very end of our relationship. The chances she'll call me for help are pretty much zero at this point."

"But if she does, will you?"

"Yes."

He downed the rest of his beer and stood up.

"I should be going. I do appreciate you calling yesterday, and I'm sorry for your loss."

"Thanks."

I walked him to the door and wasn't surprised when he didn't extend his hand to shake. Once he was down the steps, I shut the door and went back to the Japanese room to collect the empty bottles.

"Mind if I ask who that was?" Bianca inquired.

"Bev's dad. They drove up today to try to see Bev and Heather. My phone call before was from Bev, who called me names, then hung up on me when I asked her about Glen."

"Uh-oh."

"Yeah," I sighed.

XXX. A Shocking Revelation

January 5, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Thursday, I met Beth for lunch at a kosher deli near her grandfather's tailor shop. We got our sandwiches, chips, and pickles and sat down at the table that afforded the most privacy.

"Is work going OK? You're able to focus and be effective?"

"Yes."

"And you're eating properly and exercising."

"Yes, Mom!" I chuckled.

"It's a biological imperative for Jewish women! I have to become my grandmother! Are you sleeping enough?"

"The same amount as usual, though I go to bed earlier because it takes longer to fall asleep."

"Thinking about Keiko?"

"Yes."

"Are you taking a class this semester?"

"International finance on Saturdays. Next month, I have a licensure course. That's on Saturday afternoons for four weeks. I'll take the exam in early May."

"What's that license?"

"A Series 30 license, also called the Branch Manager's License. It allows me to supervise other licensed professionals."

"So you could start your own firm?"

"In theory, yes, but that isn't the plan. My goal is to run my own trading team at Spurgeon. But that's some time in the future because I'm enjoying my job as Head of Research. I can run my fund with a limited set of clients and continue to slowly add clients."

"One more question about your mood -- if I asked Bianca or Jack, how would they describe you?"

I thought for a moment before I answered.

"Withdrawn, I think. Mostly, I've just wanted to be left alone. It felt like every time I turned around, someone was asking me how I was doing. I know they meant well, but it was suffocating. I spent most of Sunday and Monday at Violet's house so I could be alone."

"What did you do?"

"I read a novel, which is something I rarely ever did in the past."

"What novel and why?"

"*Les Misérables*. Keiko read it while she was in the hospital and mentioned it was probably the best book written in the nineteenth century. I find it tough going, but then again, my usual reading is news and analysis."

"That actually is a good segue to what I wanted to discuss with you."

"My biggest challenge?"

"Yes. I'm just going to say it bluntly because that's your usual style. Your biggest challenge is to not allow Keiko's memory to straitjacket you."

I nodded, "Keiko was concerned about the same thing. She said, once she had what amounted to a terminal diagnosis, that she wanted me to find someone to love after I'd mourned. I pushed back, contending that I couldn't say what might happen, and she countered by saying that it wouldn't diminish what we had together."

"How did you respond?"

"The way you would expect -- that I'd consider it. She pushed me to seek advice from Bianca and Jack and to get help if I needed it. I promised to do those things and to continue striving for professional success, but nothing else."

"And how do you feel now?"

"Being back to work has helped because I enjoy research and analysis, and it allows me to focus my thoughts. As for what Keiko asked, I haven't changed my answer. It's only been a week."

"I wasn't suggesting you rush out and get into another relationship, only that you don't close off that possibility or set some impossible-to-fulfill requirement."

"Will you accept me saying what I said to Keiko? That I have no idea how I'll feel next week, next month, or next year, and that I'll seek advice and counseling if I need it?"

"It's not about me accepting or not," Beth replied. "It's about you being able to move forward. And that comes down to who is in control."

"May I ask a pointed question?"

"Yes."

"How do you know all of that?"

"From my grandfather. He married young, and his wife died in childbirth after they had been married for about two years. It took him ten years before he even asked another girl out. I actually didn't know the story. I only knew that my grandfather was thirteen years older than my grandmother. He never spoke about his first wife until I mentioned Keiko's diagnosis, and then he told me the story and how difficult it was to even consider a romantic relationship."

"I'm not sure how to respond except to say that I didn't allow my notion that I should be in my mid-twenties before I began a committed, monogamous relationship to prevent me from moving forward with Keiko. And that was before her diagnosis, though we hadn't actually made the commitment at that point. I guess I'm wondering why you're raising this now, only a week later?"

"Because you can handle it," Beth replied with a smile. "And raising the issue now will cause you to consider it. I know how your mind works, and you won't be able to analyze your situation without taking into consideration what I've said."

"A bit of judo?" I asked with a wry smile. "Using my strength against me, as it were."

"For you, actually, but I think you understand it that way despite using 'against'."

"Yes. Changing focus slightly, how are you and Joshua doing?"

"He passed the Bar, so at this point, he could actually support a family."

"We never discussed it, but kids?"

"Two, probably."

"Have you discussed it?"

"Obliquely. I'd say he's ready to ask, but I'm not ready to say 'yes'."

"Keeping your options open for the doctor?" I asked with a slight smile.

"I still see Jeremey as well, though not as often as Joshua because Jeremey is so busy with his clinical rotations."

"Perry Nielson explained those, though he said being an Intern is worse, something Allyson has mentioned."

"Jeremey has three twenty-four-hour shifts and a twelve-hour shift each week. His current rotation is a Clerkship in Cardiology."

"Clerkship?"

"It's what they call the rotations for Third Year medical students. The Fourth Year rotations are called Sub-Internships. Medical training follows a pattern similar to the trades -- apprentice, journeyman, master, though they call them student, Resident, and Attending. Lawyers have something similar, too. They work as law clerks during law school, then become associates and finally partners."

"Both lawyers and doctors have to pass what amounts to an entrance exam. For lawyers, it's the Bar Exam; for doctors, the Medical Licensing Exam, though it's taken in stages, unlike the Bar, which is a single test. If I understand correctly, it's not all that different from your field, with what amounts to apprenticeship and licensing."

"I hadn't considered that."

"It makes sense, given the history of how legal and medical training was conducted. Or education before formal universities. Prospective students associated themselves with respected practitioners who trained them. In any event, my point about Jeremey was that he has very little time, and will have less time the next three years, and will make a pittance his first year as a doctor."

"I was surprised to hear that from Perry," I said. "He and Shelly have a small apartment, which is not what you expect when you think 'doctor'. Shelly pointed out that Perry will make less than I did last year."

"The 'big bucks' only come once you're an Attending, and even then, it depends on your specialty. He's in emergency medicine, right?"

"Yes."

"So he'll make decent money, but nothing like a top cardiac surgeon or, disgustingly, a plastic surgeon who does vanity cosmetic surgeries."

"Facelifts?"

"And breast enhancement, and so on, that are done because people are vain, not because they suffered some grievous injury. I put them in the same class as ambulance chasers!"

"What kind of law does Joshua practice?"

"He's a business attorney like Nelson."

"Where does he work?"

"Allen & Baker."

"I know someone who works there in Personnel," I replied. "A young woman who used to work for Spurgeon. So, what's your plan?"

"I don't have one just yet," Beth replied. "Except to continue to see them both and decide which one best suits my vision of the future."

We finished our meal, and I walked Beth back to the tailor shop. We hugged, and I decided to walk down the alley before catching a cab back to the Hancock Center. I didn't see Bev's car in the parking spot, which was out of the ordinary, given she used the L to get to work if the weather wasn't nice enough to walk. That might or might not mean anything, and, in the end, what Bev did was up to her.

I continued down the alley, and when I came to the intersection, I stepped onto the sidewalk to the right and raised my hand to flag a cab. Twelve minutes later, I was at my desk. I had contemplated what Beth had said and, as she'd expected, analyzed the situation and decided that, for the moment, I was doing the right thing. I had a productive afternoon, with no interruptions, until the phone rang at 3:45pm.

"Research, Kane."

"Jonathan, this is Sergeant Callahan from the Clermont County Sheriff's Department. Do you have a moment?"

"Yes."

"Do you know where Beverly Newton or Glen Rodgers are? Neither of them showed up for work today."

"No, I don't," I replied. "I had lunch with a friend today and happened to walk by Bev's apartment, and her car wasn't there. I found that odd because she takes the L -- our elevated trains -- to work when the weather isn't nice enough to walk about twelve blocks."

"When did you last see or speak to her?"

"She called me yesterday evening."

"Did she say anything about leaving?"

"No. She read me off for telling her parents where she was, then hung up. Her dad showed up at my house less than an hour later."

"You're sure you have no idea where they are?"

"Positive."

"If you hear from them, you need to call me immediately. I have an arrest warrant for Glen Rodgers, and providing them with any assistance would be a violation of the law."

"Understood," I replied. "I assume you checked with the daycare where Heather goes?"

"No. Do you have that number?"

I looked up Violet's old employer's phone number and gave it to him.

"You may hear from the FBI or the US Marshals," Sergeant Callahan said. "Or possibly local law enforcement."

"I'll cooperate, of course, though as I said, I don't know anything more than I've told you."

"One question -- was there someone or something that caused her to go to Overland Park, Kansas?"

"No. It was simply far enough away from St. Louis to avoid the private investigator her parents hired. She said it was a waypoint, if you will, and she was trying to decide where to go next."

"Did she ever talk about anyplace she'd like to go or live?"

"No. Until I received the job offer in Chicago, both of us expected to live in the Cincinnati area for our entire lives."

"What about other friends?"

"The two girls she was close to, besides Tammy McGill, are both at UC."

"Did she have any credit cards?"

"Not to my knowledge, and given her situation, I seriously doubt it. I can't say anything about Glen Rodgers because I don't know. May I ask what the charges against him are?"

"Two counts of statutory rape, two counts of indecent liberties with a minor, and two counts of oral sodomy on a minor."

"There are *two* girls?" I asked, incredulous.

"Yes. Both Freshman at the time."

If I had needed any further reinforcement of my decision about girls under the age of consent, that certainly would do it. I'd made a very bad judgment call with regard to Jeri, though that was mitigated by the fact she'd never reveal that to anyone, and it was against her best interests to do so. Noel Spurgeon might be able to get away with it because of what Jeri had said about different rules for the very wealthy, but those didn't apply to me or to Glen Rodgers.

"If I hear anything at all, I'll call you right away."

"Thank you. Sorry, one more thing -- do you know how to get in touch with her landlord?"

"I actually had lunch with his granddaughter today. I assume you want access to the apartment?"

"It'll be easier if they coöperate so local law enforcement doesn't have to break down the door."

"Actually, it doesn't matter, though I'm sure they'll coöperate. The reason it doesn't matter is that I have a legally executed power of attorney document, and I'll let whomever you send into the apartment if they just show me the warrant."

"Thank you very much."

"One other thing: I have an assignment of guardianship for Bev's daughter."

"Even though you're not the father?"

"It's complicated. She and her parents were estranged, and she wanted to ensure Heather didn't go to her parents. That was before Bev reconciled with Glen."

"I'll let the Feds know. Do you have the capacity to care for a child?"

"Yes. I have a house with a room designated for a nursery."

"OK."

We said 'goodbye', and I hung up. I stared at the phone for a moment wondering what Bev was thinking, but realized there was no way to know. I pressed the intercom button on the phone, dialed Bianca's extension, and asked her to come to my office.

"What's up?"

"Shut the door, please."

She did and then sat down across from me.

"I just had a call from that Sheriff's Deputy," I said. "They issued an arrest warrant for Glen, and he and Bev appear to have fled."

"Holy shit!" Bianca gasped. "Statutory?"

"*Two* counts each of statutory rape, indecent liberties with a minor, and oral sodomy on a minor. There were *two* girls, both Freshmen."

"Jesus," Bianca breathed. "Not to be flip, but seriously? 'Oral sodomy'? They charged him with statutory AND with getting blowjobs? Or eating pussy?"

"So it would seem. I'm not sure what 'indecent liberties' would cover that the other two wouldn't."

"Beats me, but maybe it's playing with their boobs?"

"No clue. In any event, they were reported to the FBI and US Marshals."

"They?"

"I'm no expert, and I haven't talked to Nelson, but I'm pretty sure it's always illegal to help someone run from the law."

"It is. And you think she's willingly helping him?"

"If she were in danger, wouldn't you think she'd have asked for my help rather than call me a bastard?"

"No, actually, I don't. She only asked for your help to *run*, never to stay. To put it bluntly, you *forced* her to accept your help. You spent the last year basically badgering her and cajoling her, and she only grudgingly agreed because you were persistent and, please forgive this, she needed to placate you so you'd help her run again."

"Cynical," I replied. "But I can't refute the logic or analysis, even if I don't like it."

"From you, that's the highest praise."

"The only hole I can attempt to poke in that is Glen."

"I'm speculating, but I'd say once the cat was out of the bag with your mom, and she and Glen had broken up, Bev relented because she was in love with Glen."

"Something she admitted to me. And that does make sense."

"She's going to lose Heather, you know that, right?"

"Yes," I sighed. "And guess who gets her?"

"Whoa! The documents Bev signed!"

"Yes. Glen won't be in any position to challenge them and if Bev goes to prison, I'm pretty sure those documents stay in force. Mr. Chojnicki has copies, so it's not as if they won't be found, either."

"What would you do?"

"My first thought is that I'd arrange for Heather to go to her grandparents. Nothing else makes sense."

"An interesting change of opinion from even a few days ago, where Heather was your primary concern, and you'd have taken her in a heartbeat to ensure Bev kept her."

"I'm not exactly sure what I would have done in the long term," I said.

"Tried to honor her request, if it were possible. Now, you are only thinking about Heather, not Bev. And I agree Heather going to her grandparents would be the correct solution."

"In any event, to prevent any problems, we need to accelerate changing over the spare room to a nursery. I don't want Heather going into even temporary foster care."

"You might want to call Bev's parents and let them know so they don't do something that causes problems with your plan."

"Actually, I think I'll call Mr. Chojnicki."

"Then I'll go back to my programming!"

She left the office, and I dialed the number for Barnes and Walden, where Mr. Chojnicki worked.

"Barnes and Walden," a peppy woman declared. "How may I direct your call?"

"Stefan Chojnicki, please."

She transferred the call and another woman answered, and she put me through to Mr. Chojnicki.

"Good afternoon, Jonathan. How can I help you?"

"Did anyone from the Clermont County Sheriff's Department speak to you?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"Glen Rodgers was charged with multiple counts of statutory rape and other offenses."

"Lord have mercy!" he exclaimed. "Sorry."

"No need to apologize."

"Related to Bev?"

"No. According to Sergeant Matt Callahan, two Freshman girls at Goshen High."

"So why are you calling me?"

"Because of Heather. Glen and Bev appear to have disappeared. The reason I'm calling you is the assignment of guardianship document. If I understand correctly, if Bev were to be arrested, Heather would come to me."

"Eventually, yes. First, the local Family Services agency in whichever state would take her into their custody. They'd ask Bev if she had a preferred caretaker and, barring any impediments, very likely place Heather with whomever Bev specified. If Bev won't, then they would look for a relative or, if they had the documents, contact you. Would you take Heather?"

"Only to prevent her from going into foster care. Despite Bev's objections, I think Heather belongs with her grandparents. I don't want to create an adversarial situation with them, and I would be happy to take whatever legal steps are necessary to allow them to care for Heather while Bev is unable to."

"I can facilitate that. I'll speak to them as soon as possible. What makes you think Bev would be arrested?"

"Isn't it the case that helping a...fugitive from justice is a crime?"

"It's not quite as cut and dried as TV, the police, and prosecutors would like you to believe," Mr. Chojnicki said. "I'm not a criminal defense attorney, but in my opinion, Bev simply being with him is probably not enough to sustain a charge of aiding or abetting a fugitive from justice. Of course, that doesn't prevent her

from being arrested or charged. That said, in cases like this, most likely, she'd simply be questioned and released. May I ask a very personal question?"

"Yes," I replied, fairly certain what he was about to ask.

"You and Bev were together on her sixteenth birthday, right?"

"Yes."

"Please don't be offended by this question, but are you sure she was a virgin?"

"What are you getting at?" I asked, slightly offended. "That she was with Glen before she was sixteen?"

"That is what I'm asking. That would make her a victim rather than an accomplice, despite the fact that she's reached the age of majority. That would almost certainly guarantee her release rather than her arrest."

"For that to be true, Bev would have had to have lied to me, which is obviously possible, but I don't think so. I mean, I have nothing but her word, but at that point, we were telling each other literally everything, and nothing was kept back."

"That statement, while likely true, isn't necessarily true."

"In that, is it possible she lied to me? Sure. Is it probable or even likely? No."

It was, I realized, possible that Mr. Chojnicki was giving me advice to give to Bev, if I spoke to her about how to stay out of trouble. He couldn't advise her to lie without risking his law license, and had found a way to comply with the letter of the law but also convey to me what to say to Bev, should I choose to do so. Then something dawned on me.

"Hang on a sec," I said before he answered. "Glen Rodgers didn't come to Goshen until the Fall of 1981, and Bev turned sixteen the previous year."

"Then that will not work," Mr. Chojnicki replied. "Let me call Jim and Julie and relay your offer. If anyone contacts you about Heather, please call me right away. I'm still the attorney of record based on the previous proceedings."

"I will. Thanks."

"Have a good afternoon, Jonathan."

"Thanks."

After we ended the call, I worked until it was time for my meeting with Noel Spurgeon. I appeared at his office door and was immediately invited in.

"Murray explained everything to you, right?" he asked.

"Yes. The only thing he didn't cover was the bonus because he said it's purely discretionary for licensed professionals. Of course, that's the case for all bonuses."

"Yes, that's true, but most people make their targeted bonus so long as the firm meets its overall goals for the year. If it doesn't, then there are adjustments. That's also true if someone is performing poorly. We'll just have your 1983 bonus conversation now. I'm sure Murray let you know I authorized your full bonus of \$45,000."

"He did, and thank you for that, as well as the nice Christmas bonus."

"It's all well-earned. Your first dollar return was second -- and only by about three-quarters of a percentage point -- to mine."

"I'll try harder this year," I said.

Mr. Spurgeon laughed, "That is the attitude I need around here! But haven't you heard the adage about never beating your boss at golf?"

"If I'm better, I'm not going to let him win!" I declared.

"I should throw you out of the office on your ass for that comment, but you sound like me when I first started, and that's a good thing. Your bonus this year will depend on a combination of overall firm performance and personal performance, along with the performance of the Research Department.

"I'd like you to stay in that role after you earn your Series 30 license. It won't affect you negatively except in the sense of having less time to raise capital. If you agree to do that for two years, ensuring the department is firing on all cylinders and that the data analysis team is properly developed and expanded, I'll adjust your bonus to compensate you for the lost AUM."

"I actually enjoy the research, and I'm slowly growing my AUM, so I agree."

"You have tapped a market we have never investigated, mainly because it takes a ridiculous amount of time and effort, but it's paid off for you."

"I can be patient," I replied. "I made more money last year than my mom made in the previous fifteen years combined."

"And there's more if you continue to be successful. I'm sure I don't have to remind you about burnout or flashes in the pan."

"It's always good to be reminded."

"Nicely answered. Any questions about how the complex compensation works?"

"No. Mr. Matheson was clear enough."

"At this point, it should be Murray and Noel in private."

"Thank you."

"Tell me about the Nikkei."

"The fundamentals are such that the sky is the limit until someone decides they no longer want to play chicken with Tokyo real estate prices. I don't see that happening anytime soon because it would be national suicide when all those buildings were devalued, and all the equity vanished overnight. The banks would instantly be insolvent, and nearly every corporation would be bankrupt.

"I invested in a mix of index funds and index options, more weighted towards funds. I have some downside protection on the index fund with put options, but I expect those to expire unexercised. If I have to exercise them, the global economy is going to be in the tank. I'd dispense with them, but the investment guidelines for the Clermont Fund require risk mitigation."

"I'll back removing those restrictions. You've proven your ability to my satisfaction, and I don't see a problem with you working without a net."

"Thank you. Those rules would still apply to Jeri Lundgren's trust fund but not to anything else."

"I'll call Kendall Roy and let him know I've authorized that."

"Thank you."

"Now that business is out of the way, how are you doing personally?"

"OK. Coming to work helps, and my friends are watching out for me."

"Good. If there is anything I can do for you, please let me know. And don't forget the week in Saint Martin if you need to get away."

"I haven't forgotten, thank you."

"Keep up the good work."

"I will."



January 6, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

The call I'd been expecting came at 10:30am on Friday from someone I knew - Agent Johnson of the FBI. He asked me to meet him at Bev's apartment and we agreed on 11:30am, so I could safely be away from work for an hour. I let Bianca know I'd have to skip lunch and the gym. I asked her to apologize to Violet for me, as she was coming for her interview on her lunch break. That accomplished, I called Beth to warn her about the impending visit by the FBI.

"You didn't say anything yesterday!" she protested.

"Because I didn't know until yesterday afternoon," I replied. "And I was focused on ensuring that Heather won't end up in foster care when the manure hits the rotating air circulation device!"

"You can say 'when the shit hits the fan' to me!" Beth laughed. "I suppose I'll see you in about an hour."

"Yes, and I'll need you to unlock the door. I'm not sure if they have a warrant, but I have full power of attorney, and I authorized them to search the apartment."

"That's a turn of events I would never have expected."

"My primary concern is Heather's safety and well-being. Bev is going to have to take care of herself."

"I can't disagree. That poor little girl is caught up in a real mess."

"Tell me about it!"

We ended the call, and just under an hour later, I arrived at the tailor shop. FBI Agents Johnson and Feldman were waiting inside while two Chicago Cops stood watch in the alley. They did have a warrant and gave me a copy. Beth handed me the key, and the agents and I went outside and up the stairs. I unlocked the door and stepped inside, followed by the two agents.

"Please just stand by the door," Agent Feldman said. "We're just looking for anything which might indicate where they've gone, not doing a top-to-bottom search."

"If it's like St. Louis, I doubt you'll find anything. When she was there, she was careful to not leave a trace."

It took them about twenty minutes to conclude that my surmise was correct, and there was nothing that indicated where they might have gone. It was obvious they were gone, as all Bev's clothes were missing.

"Do you see anything obviously missing?" Agent Feldman asked.

"Other than clothes, which I assume you noticed because the closet is empty, just the portable crib that Heather sleeps in. You can see the photos on the dresser. As for anything else, I can't say."

"Do you have any idea where they might go? Perhaps back to St. Louis?"

"No chance of that," I replied. "You can call the McGills, but I'm positive she won't be there, nor will she have spoken to them."

"She spoke to you on Wednesday evening, right?" Agent Johnson asked.

"Yes, but only to call me names and hang up on me. About an hour later, Bev's dad came to my house after having tried to see her. She had refused, and it was the visit from her parents that generated the name-calling."

"She's still estranged from them?" Agent Feldman asked.

"Yes."

"Do you have any thoughts at all about where they might go?"

"No, because I don't know Glen Rodgers well enough. I also can't say if they're together or not, but I suspect they are."

"Will you call us if you hear from her or think of anything that might help?"

"Yes. Also, if you aren't aware, in addition to power of attorney, I have a document which assigns me guardianship of Heather if Bev is unable to care for her."

"Do you have a copy of that with you?"

"Yes," I said.

I handed over copies of the three documents I had to Agent Feldman. With nothing else to do, we left the apartment. I went back inside to return the key to Beth.

"What do you want me to do with the apartment?"

"The rent is paid through the end of the month, right?"

"Yes."

"We should know more by the end of the month," I said. "So just leave it as is, if you would."

"Of course. Have you given any thought to our conversation?"

I had, and agreed she was basically correct, just as Keiko was, but I wasn't ready to even consider anything like that at this point. That said, I felt teasing a bit would show I wasn't in bad shape.

"And this isn't just you angling to get into my bed?" I asked with a smirk.

Beth laughed, "No, it's not, but the fact that you could make that joke is a positive sign. That said, you did promise to tie me up!"

"I'm not ready for anything remotely like that at this point."

"I know," she said gently. "I was simply going along with your teasing. I won't press. Lunch again in the next few weeks?"

"Let me call you."

We hugged, and I left the tailor shop. I hailed a cab back to the Hancock Center, and once I was in my office, I ate my lunch at my desk.

Just after 2:00pm, Leslie called and said she had hiring forms for Violet prepared, and I could sign them at any time. I thanked her and went straight to Personnel to sign them. I took the offer letter back to my desk so I could hand-deliver it to Violet on Saturday.

At 4:00, Jack came to my office.

"Would you go out with us tonight?" he asked. "Kristy and I are going to Star of Siam, then we're going to see *Sudden Impact*, the new Dirty Harry movie."

I thought about it and decided doing that would likely help with the constant concern I found suffocating, not to mention liking Dirty Harry movies.

"Sure," I said.

"OK. CeCi is available, and Kristy could bring her, but I wasn't sure you'd be OK with that."

"It's no different from before," I replied. "I'm OK with that."

"I'll call Kristy and have her bring CeCi with her."

"Thanks. If Kristy will bring us back to the house, I'll let Bianca take my car home."

"That makes sense."

He left, and I used the intercom to ask Bianca to come to my office.

"What's up?"

"Jack asked me to go out with him and Kristy, so I'll give you my car keys so you can drive home."

"Did you agree that CeCi could join you?"

"Why am I not surprised this was a conspiracy?" I asked with a wry smile.

"Because you're smart! And because you're smart, you know we're just trying to look out for you. I get you need quiet time, and I hope you've noticed we've given you some space."

"Minus the KGB minders," I replied with a grin.

"Somehow, I don't see the KGB having 'minders' who look like Deanna and CeCi! But they just sit with you; they don't bother you, right?"

"They don't bother me, though they could be what's called a 'honey trap'!"

"You and James Bond?"

"I don't own a tux. Maybe I should get one and start drinking martinis, 'shaken, not stirred'."

"Well, you did have 'pussy galore' before Keiko."

"I did. In any event, thanks for taking the car home."

"What are you doing with Keiko's car?"

"For now, just retitle it in my name. I haven't really thought about what to do with it. I suppose what makes the most sense is to keep it so Deanna or CeCi could use it or maybe sell it to Violet after I teach her to drive later this year. It's in good condition and is less than four years old."

"I'll take the keys, obviously."

I handed her my keys, and she left my office. I went back to work, and at 5:00pm, I went down to the lobby to meet Jack, Kristy, and CeCi. The four of us had a nice meal at Star of Siam, then saw *Sudden Impact*. Harry's great sixty-five-word soliloquy from the original movie was boiled down to five words -- '*Go ahead, make my day*'. We all enjoyed the movie, went to Oberweis for ice cream, and then headed home.



January 7, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday morning, I was up early and left the house to drive to University Village to have breakfast with Violet. When I arrived at her house, she greeted me with a hug and a kiss on the cheek. She had breakfast ready, so we went straight to the kitchen to eat.

"What are you doing after class today?" she asked.

"Today, I plan to go home. I need to do the weekly shopping and take my suits to the dry cleaners. If you want to do something next Saturday, we could plan that."

"I'd like that. Let's have lunch and then figure out what to do."

"That sounds good."

"I also have an offer letter for you from Spurgeon to serve as my administrative assistant in the Research Department."

"That quick?"

"That quick. Mrs. Peterson called your references as soon as your interview was over and called me as soon as I got back to the office."

"I accept, obviously! What was going on?"

I explained what had happened with Glen and Bev, and Violet was shocked and saddened.

"What will happen to Heather?"

"I'll do my best to ensure she ends up with her grandparents, no matter what Bev thinks."

"I think that's for the best. What do I need to do with the offer letter?"

"Sign a copy, which I'll take with me and turn in on Monday. Your start date would be January 30th. You can give notice at the plumbing company whenever you feel appropriate."

"OK," she agreed.

She signed one copy of the offer letter and handed it back to me, and I put it into my satchel. We ate, then I headed to Circle for my class in international finance. I didn't have my textbook, but the bookstore was open until 2:00pm, so I'd be able to purchase it after class. I entered the building and made my way to the lecture hall. I took a seat at the end of a row about halfway back from the lectern.

Other students filtered in, and I stood to allow several students to move to seats in the center of my row. There were enough seats that not all of them were filled, and the one just to my right was empty. Promptly at 8:00am, the professor stepped up to the lectern and introduced himself. As was typical, he had students assist in handing out the syllabus, then began teaching.

The description of the course said that it covered all aspects of international finance, including foreign exchange, banking, and trade, all things with which I was at least somewhat familiar. From what I could tell based on the professor's introduction and the syllabus, the course would nicely flesh out the knowledge I'd gained at Spurgeon.

A quick review of the syllabus indicated I'd need to spend about six hours a week on homework, mostly reading the textbook and writing short papers. I smiled at the revelation that the papers were analytical in nature, as that was right up my alley, and I could absolutely reuse information repurposed from my work at Spurgeon.

The lecture began with the development of money as a means of exchange, something of which I had a very basic knowledge. The lecture was, at least to me, fascinating, but I could tell by body language quite a few of my classmates found it boring. I took meticulous notes and, by the first break, had filled two pages in my notebook.

The break wasn't long enough to get to the coffee shop, and back, so I bought coffee from the machine in the lobby of the building and, after one sip, vowed never to do that again. I made a mental note to buy a thermos I could fill with coffee either at home or at Violet's and carried the very bad cup of coffee back to the lecture hall.

The next fifty-five minutes were more of the same, but at the break, I bought a can of Coke from the machine, even though I tended not to drink soft drinks in

the morning. The final fifty minutes of class involved an interesting discussion of the gold standard, with class participation. I could easily have monopolized the conversation and 'won' the debate, but I was careful not to dominate it.

When class ended, Professor Baum stopped me on the way out of the lecture hall.

"You appear to have some background in foreign exchange. You used terms most people in the course won't use even at the end of May when we finish."

"I'm Head of Research for Spurgeon Capital, a financial services firm, and before I was promoted, my area of focus was foreign exchange, precious metals, and related instruments. I also hold two securities licenses."

"You must be older than you look."

I smiled and shook my head, "No, I'm twenty-one."

"From what I heard today, and based on what you just said, you could teach most of this material. How is it that you're enrolled in an introductory course?"

"It's required for a degree, which I'm working on nights and weekends. This is class number five, so I have a very long way to go. I'm only taking one course per semester."

"There's actually a pilot independent study program for professionals that might be good for you. You take eight classroom courses, then work with a dean in the guidance office and a professor to develop a plan that revolves around your work. Speak to Dean Pullman and let him know I sent you."

"How long does that take?"

"You can complete a Bachelor's degree in two years once you've taken eight courses. What have you taken so far?"

"Financial accounting, computer science, math, statistics, and now this course."

"You'll need two humanities, one of which needs to be a writing course, and you'll need the core English course. You won't need a science course as it's a BA program."

"Thanks for your advice!"

"Any hot stock tips you can share?"

"The Nikkei 225 is poised for significant gains over the next few years."

"How sure are you about that?"

"I am not uncertain."

Professor Baum laughed, "A turn of phrase that can't be taken as a guarantee, but you feel it's a lock, right?"

"You know I can't answer that!" I said with a grin.

"See you next week. Be sure to call Dean Pullman."

"Thanks. I will."

I left the classroom, and when I reached the building lobby, I was surprised to see Teri Maguire, who was obviously waiting for me.

XXXI. Weighing My Options

January 7, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Hi," Teri said when I walked up to her.

"Hi."

"Would you like to have lunch? I know this is probably not the best timing, but I leave for Champaign tomorrow."

My first inclination was to say 'no', but I reconsidered and decided that no real harm could come from having lunch. Whatever Teri's motivation, she would be at UofI until June, except for breaks. In my mind, that made lunch with her 'safe', similar to having CeCi as my companion the previous night for dinner and a movie.

"Sure," I replied. "I'll need to call home to let Bianca know so she doesn't worry because she's expecting me home. I can use the payphone here before we leave."

I walked over to the payphone, dropped in a quarter, and dialed the house. Bianca answered, and I let her know I was going to be late because I had something to do. I suggested that we could do the shopping when I arrived home, and she agreed. I thanked her, then hung up and walked back to Teri.

"All set. Where did you want to go?"

"The diner just off campus where we went that one time is fine; it's not too cold to walk, and that way, you don't have to drive."

"That works for me," I replied.

I pulled on my gloves, put on my wool cap, and we left the building. The temperature was in the upper twenties, which wasn't bad compared to the previous year when it had been downright frigid. It took about five minutes to walk to the diner, and we were seated in a booth about two minutes later. The hostess gave us menus, and the waitress asked for our drink order almost right away.

"How are you holding up?" Teri asked once the waitress left.

"I think the best way to answer that is that I'm not curled up in a little ball crying, but I'm also struggling. It's worse when I'm not working, and I've been somewhat withdrawn. That's actually not as much of a problem as it might seem, given I was mostly a loner growing up, except for having a single close friend. How was your first semester at UofI?"

"I avoided the 'Freshman Fifteen', but otherwise pretty typical for a first semester, I think. Straight A's, practicing violin, taking lessons, and playing in the symphony."

"How is Troy?"

"The same, basically, though he's done a bit more partying than I have. He's dating a girl from Florida and a girl from California."

"Blondes, right?" I asked.

Teri laughed softly, "Right the first time."

The waitress set our drinks on the table and asked if we were ready to order. I knew the menu by heart, so I was ready, and Teri said she was as well. We both ordered, and the waitress left to put our orders in with the kitchen.

"Things at work are OK?" Teri asked.

"Yes. I was promoted to Head of Research a few weeks after you left for UofI."

"Congratulations. That's your third promotion in two years, right?"

"Yes."

"How are your investments doing?"

"I'm happy. I finished second to Noel Spurgeon, the founder of the firm, in total returns."

"That's good, right?"

"Very good. That number is somewhat meaningless except in terms of the competition. Total real returns are lower because new capital flows in all year. I won't bore you with the details of the calculations; suffice it to say it was a very successful year at work."

"From our past conversations, I think it's OK to ask what might be sensitive questions -- did you write the obituary?"

"No. That was written by Keiko's grandfather."

"May I ask about a Shinto wedding but a Buddhist funeral?"

"You may, and I'm OK with talking about it, just not as the focus of our conversation. Japanese are, as the saying goes, born Shinto but die Buddhist. The two religions are intertwined in a way so as to be inseparable in Japan, despite efforts to do so in the past. Shinto has taboos around death, and as such, funerals are conducted by Buddhist priests. Cremation is the norm and is, in fact, mandated by law in Japan."

"How do those ceremonies line up with our disagreement about religion?"

"First, Buddhism isn't theistic and is really more philosophy than religion. As for Shinto, Keiko and I agreed to honor the traditional rituals, though neither of us believed in the deistic aspects. We honored the spirits of our ancestors in the same way we, as Americans, honor George Washington or Thomas Jefferson or Martin Luther King Junior. That was sufficient to respect her family's traditions without binding us to any specific beliefs about gods or spirits or an afterlife."

"I suppose I see the difference, but I don't think that's a productive conversation to have at this point."

"It's probably best we set that particular topic aside. There is one thing I don't believe you know -- Bianca is six months pregnant and is due in early April."

"Was Keiko aware of that?" Teri asked.

"Yes. We had her blessing. Chemo and a potential bone marrow transplant would have almost certainly rendered Keiko permanently unable to conceive, so she agreed Bianca and I could have a baby together, so long as Bianca was pregnant before Keiko and I married, which she was. Bianca and I are going to have a baby girl we'll name Sofía Angélica, and her surname will be Kane-Pérez."

"Your life was always going to be complicated, wasn't it?"

"Actually, not until I came to Chicago. Back home in Ohio, it was pretty simple. It was when I moved here that things became interesting."

"That's a word for it. How is your friend Bev?"

"Don't ask," I said, shaking my head. "That totally spiraled out of control, and my hope is that it won't do any permanent harm to Heather."

"That's her daughter, right?"

"Yes."

"What happened?"

"It appears that Heather's biological father was a bit too free with his affections, including with Freshman girls at the High School where he taught."

"Under seventeen is illegal."

"Under sixteen in Ohio, but same difference, in the end. There's a warrant out for his arrest, and Bev and Heather are ostensibly with him."

"That's just...just wrong."

"Which part?" I asked.

"Seducing your students, especially underage ones! Was Bev underage?"

"That's not possible, given Glen Rodgers moved to Goshen to teach at the High School after she turned sixteen. Bev was seventeen when she got pregnant, which was after I had moved to Chicago."

"Are they on the lam?"

"It would appear they are," I replied. "I spoke to the FBI and a Sergeant from the Clermont County, Ohio Sheriff's Department."

"Wow."

"Yeah."

The waitress brought my double cheeseburger and Teri's French dip, then refilled our soft drinks.

"What happens when they're caught?"

"I'm not exactly sure about Bev, but Glen will be extradited to Ohio to face charges there."

"Isn't she a victim?"

"Not if she went willingly with him. She's nineteen and, as I said, was seventeen when she got pregnant, so she was over the age of consent in Ohio."

"She could be in serious trouble then. What will you do?"

"At this point, given everything that happened, Bev is on her own. I'm concerned about Heather, and at this point, I think she'd be much better off with her grandparents than with Bev."

"Given everything you've said, I have to agree."

When we finished eating, I left a tip, paid the check at the register, and we walked out of the restaurant.

"Did you walk here?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Let's walk to my car, and I'll drop you at home."

"Thanks."

Six minutes later, I pulled up in front of Teri's house.

"Thanks for having lunch," she said.

"You're welcome."

She opened her purse and handed me a 3x5 card.

"My phone number and address at Uofl. Call if you want to talk. If it's OK, I'll call you when I'm home for Spring Break."

I accepted the card and said, "Sure."

"I'm really sorry for what happened with Keiko."

"Thanks."

She got out of the car, and once she was safely inside the house, I headed home. I didn't bother putting the car in the garage, as the weekly shopping needed to be done. I went into the house, greeted Bianca, used the bathroom, then went upstairs. I got my suits and shirts, headed downstairs, and then out to the car with Bianca.

"OK to ask what it was you had to do?" Bianca inquired as I pulled into the alley behind the house.

"Teri Maguire was waiting for me in the lobby of the building where my class was held and asked me to have lunch."

"Seriously?" Bianca asked.

"I know what you're thinking, and while I strongly suspect that is her motive, she was considerate, kind, and didn't even hint at anything like that."

"OK, but what other reason could she have?"

"Human decency?" I suggested. "Compassion?"

"Be careful."

"She gave me her number and address at school and said I could call if I wanted, and then asked if it was OK to call me when she's home on Spring Break."

"She changed tactics," Bianca observed.

"Or, she changed her behavior knowing that how she had behaved in the past was not appropriate because Keiko died."

"You really believe that?"

"I'm giving her the benefit of the doubt. And if you think about it, it was a very smart move. Without doing anything to upset or offend me, she reminded me she's still interested. I'm not about to do anything foolish, and there is no way I'm going to rush into something."

"Beth's concern was that I might never have another relationship like that and that I'd wear my memory of Keiko as a straitjacket. I agree with her that I could do that, but I also pointed out that Keiko said effectively the same thing. I didn't promise Keiko I'd have another relationship like the one I had with her because I couldn't. But, if I was true to Keiko's memory, I would, so Beth's concern is basically self-contradictory."

"Your logic makes my head want to explode at times! I mean, yes, all of that is true, but to synthesize an answer like that? Only Jonathan!"

"The only thing I can do is be true to myself," I replied. "I learned a significant lesson from not being honest with myself about Bev. I want to share something that Mr. Chojnicki said to me."

"Is that her lawyer?"

"Yes, the one who handled the custody dispute and later the child support agreement with Glen. Mr. Chojnicki made the comment that if Bev had been with Glen before she turned sixteen, then she'd be treated as a victim, not an...accomplice, or whatever you would call her right now."

"But she was a virgin when you guys were together on her sixteenth birthday!"

"That is what she said, but I have no proof beyond her word. With all the virgins I've been with, proof in the form of blood is actually rare, which fits what I've been told."

"That's what I've heard, too. You think she lied?"

"Mr. Chojnicki suggested that possibility because it would get Bev off the hook. That's not possible, given when Glen moved to Goshen, but it did make me stop to think about Bev's honesty. In the past, I'd have simply rejected that idea, but

when Mr. Chojnicki said it, my first thought was that it might be true. It took me a minute to remember the timing."

"The fact that you thought it was possible is telling."

"I know," I sighed.

"Not to be a bitch, but if she lied about being a virgin, that would explain her aggressiveness and going six times, or whatever, in a few hours."

"And me doing that?"

Bianca laughed, "Totally different! After our first time, I felt like my insides were scrambled, but two days later, I felt *empty* every time I thought about you. May I ask a very personal, perhaps insensitive question?"

"Do I plan to have sex anytime soon?"

"That's the one."

"I can't say when; now is not the time. Besides, you are VERY pregnant!"

Bianca laughed, "Just wait for another two months! I'll look like I swallowed a watermelon whole! Think about those pictures of snakes that have eaten something recently!"

I laughed, "Nice image."

"I assume you're going to be with me when I have Sofía?"

"Wild horses couldn't keep me away. And don't worry about me! I'm an experienced professional!"

Bianca laughed again, "One time does not make you a pro!"

"Sez you!"

"I'm glad you can joke; I was worried."

"It's only been eleven days," I replied. "That's what I've been trying to tell all of you. "

"Sorry. It's just that we care so much."

"I know. I'm not upset, but I do need to work through this at my pace."

"Yes, you do. I'll try to be less smothering."

"Thanks."



January 8, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday, I took the first concrete steps with regard to Keiko's things, taking the boxes of her clothes to her cousin's house and the photo albums and scrapbooks to her parents. I retained the wedding scrapbook she'd made, as I felt that was appropriate. When I returned home, I sat down with the envelopes from the wake, counted out the crisp bills, then wrote a check to the Leukemia Society of America for triple the amount. I addressed the envelope, added postage, then put it in my satchel so I could mail it from work in the morning.

I was about to leave my room when Deanna came to the door.

"Hey," she said.

"Hi."

"I have two paintings finished for you for work," she said. "The other two will probably be ready by the end of next month. I need to work around my coursework."

"That has to take priority. I assume you want me to come see them?"

"If you want, yes."

I followed her from my room up the pull-down steps to her studio, which, as always, looked like a bomb had gone off in a paint factory. Fortunately, she had drop cloths on the floors to protect them; otherwise, there would have been a thick layer of paint on the wood.

"The Spurgeon logo is purple and white, so I stuck with that motif, though the colors range through every hue of purple."

"Do these have names?" I asked.

Deanna laughed, "Yes, but none of them is 'orgasm'."

"That is still the best work you've done, not to take anything away from these two pieces."

"The one on the left is *Bull Market*, and the one on the right is *Bear Market*."

I nodded and it was immediately obvious that the painting on the left was about upward movement and the one on the right, downward movement. I couldn't explain or describe why, but that was the impression they gave.

"Very cool. How do you convey so much emotion with abstract art?"

"I have no idea," Deanna said. "I just see the emotion in my mind and paint it. With «La petite mort», there were no images that were remotely human shapes, and yet it represented how I saw you, Ceci, and me together in my mind."

"It certainly worked. I love these two. Would you do something else for me?"

"Anything!"

"Two more, in addition to the two we already agreed you would do. The two additional ones would go in my private office and should convey something about me."

Deanna nodded, "I can do that, and I already have an idea for the first one."

"I know how this works, so I won't ask you to share."

"Thanks. I know this might not be a good time, but my drawing class needs a male model."

"How many people are in this class?"

"A dozen. You'd be paid for the sessions."

"Nude?" I asked.

"Not at first. The goal of the class is a portfolio of drawings in various poses and clothing, with one male and one female model."

"How would that work with my schedule?"

"You probably didn't look at the calendar, but this class is on Monday and Wednesday evenings. We need the models starting a week from tomorrow until the end of April."

"I'm not sure I could make that commitment. When would you need to know?"

"Soon. The model we had dropped out. My professor called me today because I'd mentioned I might know someone."

"Do you know why they dropped out?"

"Officially? No. But the word going around is that he has AIDS."

"At least Keiko had a chance..."

"Yeah," Deanna agreed. "I know a number of guys who have AIDS."

"Just out of curiosity, who's the female model?"

"Sophie's younger sister, Alexa."

I couldn't help but laugh.

"Nice. How old is she?"

"Eighteen. She's a communications major at Northwestern."

"Let me think about it. I know the clock is running."

"Thanks. See you at dinner?"

"Yes. It just dawned on me -- I have a conflict with a hockey game on the 25th. Does that make a difference?"

"The professor can work around that."

"OK."

I left the attic and went downstairs to the Japanese room to read.



January 9, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday, I ate at my desk so I could take my lunch hour to go to the Cook County Clerk's office and get a copy of Keiko's death certificate. Unfortunately, that took long enough that I didn't have time to go to the Secretary of State's office to retitile her car and cancel her driver's license.

When I returned to the office, I saw a sign for the leasing and sales office for condos in the building and remembered what Bianca had suggested. I also thought about Jack and Kristy's situation and came up with an idea. The sales and leasing office was open until 7:00pm, so I decided I'd visit them at the end of the day.

When I was back at my desk, I used the intercom to ask Bianca to come to see me.

"I have an idea," I said.

"About?"

"When we discussed needing more space, you suggested a condo in the building. If we were to do that, Jack and Kristy could rent the house from me. I'm going

upstairs to the leasing and sales office after work. You're welcome to come along, and I'll let Jack know we'll be leaving late."

"How would that work with the mortgage you have from Spurgeon?"

"According to the employee manual, I have to refinance the house with a bank because I can only have one low-interest loan. I have the income and capital to refinance all three properties, and I can use my bonus to pay down the principal. And I have about a million in carried interest as of December 31st to back the loan."

"That's just insane!"

"What's insane is about forty percent of that would go to federal and state taxes if I were to withdraw it."

"That's a change of tune!"

"I didn't say I wouldn't pay it! And anything that is long-term capital gains would be around twenty-five percent, which is not insane. Interest rates are unchanged, so all things being equal, if I use my bonus to pay down the principal, my overall mortgage payment would be about the same."

"You won't be over-leveraged?"

"No. The rents cover all my expenses including management fees and taxes. If major repairs are needed, I have enough reserves to cover them, and I'll recoup those expenses in equity increases over time. I'll arrange with Jack and Kristy to do the maintenance and upkeep on the house, so I won't need to pay Kasia to manage it until they're ready to buy, which I figure is around the time Kristy passes the bar."

"A nice solution. Your cash flow isn't negative, which is what matters. Will you receive a raise?"

"No, my salary was actually cut."

"WHAT?!" Bianca gasped in surprise.

I chuckled, "My compensation plan changed, so it's based on the management fee, not a fixed salary. My base income this year will be north of \$200 grand."

"You got me fair and square!" Bianca said. "I was actually worried!"

"Sorry! Anyway, that number doesn't include my bonus or carried interest. And if you're curious about you, Mr. Spurgeon will have a compensation meeting with you this week where you'll find out your raise and bonus."

"Do we receive written reviews?"

"No. Nobody who is underperforming lasts very long. The only way things are written down for professional staff, which includes research, is if it's to document firing. Mr. Spurgeon expects me to speak to Murray Matheson if there are any problems, and so far, there are none."

"I'm still amazed at the amount of money thrown around here."

"And the clients keep far more than we do."

"You're going to make all your friends millionaires."

"That is the plan. See you at 5:00pm."

"OK. Before I forget, did you get a chance to look at the new global risk algorithm?"

"Yes. The regression testing shows that it fits the curve reasonably well, so I don't think we need to go back and adjust anything. A deviation of ten percent is really within my margin of error on that one. In the end, it's simply one piece of information in my overall report. The prose matters more, but the headline number is what everyone looks at as soon as the document hits their desk."

"Then I'll update the production model with the new algorithm. We're still tweaking the exchange rate algorithm, because it deviates too much against historical data. Steve isn't sure yet what's causing that. There's obviously something we're not properly accounting for, or some calculations need to be adjusted."

"OK. You need to be able to justify that -- no fudge factors to make it work. That said, the trend line is more important than the data points."

"The problem is that we're seeing too great a variance in the projected values to yield a reliable trend line. I think we're close; we just haven't cracked it yet. Obviously, it won't be perfect, and it will depend on the assumptions input by the analyst because there is no way for us to predict external events. We can tell you what might happen for a specific type of event, but we can't predict those events."

"If it could, you computer geeks would put the rest of us out of jobs! Would you send Tony in, please?"

"Will do."

Bianca left, and I made a quick call to Jack to let him know I was going to be late and he said he'd take the L home. I hung up just as Tony came into the office.

"Have a seat and tell me more about this rumored computer from Apple."

"What we have is sketchy, but it appears that it's going to have a completely new interface. It's reported to be similar to the Lisa computer, only smaller and far less expensive. It would have what they call a 'graphical user interface' rather than the command line interface of our IBM PC/XT computers or the Apple computers."

"Target price?"

"Around \$2500. I heard from a friend at CBS that Apple bought a minute of Super Bowl commercial time for the new computer."

"How reliable is that source?"

"Very. Before that, I've mostly seen articles and speculation in technology magazines. The main source is John C. Dvorak, a technology analyst. But the ad buy for the Super Bowl means something big is coming."

"Any chance your friend at CBS could get a look at the commercial?"

"No. He wasn't even supposed to know the client. Supposedly, the ad was only seen by a few top people at CBS."

"That seems to me to be enough to overweight Apple stock."

"I agree. It'll go into tomorrow's analyst notes."

"Good. I'll add more Apple shares tomorrow once the analyst note is published."

"What are your plays so far?"

"I'm long Staar Surgical, Sterling Extruder, and Allied Products based on the equities analysis John and Bill provided; I'm short Union Carbide for the same reason. Sadly, there are no big currency plays in the offing, but I'm short gold and silver with December puts. It's going to be a tough year in the US stock market."

"Which is why you have John and Bill looking at the Nikkei now."

"We need to find growth somewhere, and the Nikkei is our meal ticket."

"What's your take on the estimates for the Dow and S&P?"

"Slightly better than what John and Bill are forecasting, but not enough to make much difference. I think the S&P will eke out gains due to technology stocks, but the DOW is very likely to be in negative territory for the year. The Fed is going to tighten, which will hurt the markets and hurt Reagan's reelection chances. But with inflation rearing its ugly head, the Fed doesn't have much choice. On the plus side, that means the money I have to park in various treasury instruments will earn a return better than the S&P and Dow."

"Anything more you need from me?"

"Not at the moment. Keep up the good work!"

He left, and I spent most of the afternoon evaluating currencies, exchange rates, and precious metals, reinforcing what I'd said to Tony -- there simply were no big currency plays. I was still looking for a big score but didn't see anything, and that confirmed the analysis my team had done in forecasting the Dow and S&P for '84.

At 5:00pm, Bianca and I took the elevator down to the lobby and walked to the entrance of the residential space, which had a street address of 175 East Delaware Place. We rode the elevator up to the floor where the sales and leasing office for the condos in the Hancock Center was located and were met by a woman I estimated to be in her early thirties.

"Good afternoon! I'm Anhelina Bondarenko. How may I help you?"

"Jonathan Kane," I said, handing her one of my stockbroker business cards. "This is my friend Bianca Pérez. I'm interested in leasing or purchasing a condo."

"There are a number available for lease, and two just came on the market. How much space are you looking for?"

"Quite a bit, actually," I replied. "We'd need at least four bedrooms as we have housemates who would continue to live with us."

"Do you currently rent or own?"

"Own."

"One of the two condos that are available for sale has six bedrooms in a townhouse configuration -- that is, it spans two floors. There is also a four-bedroom model for lease. The others are one or two bedrooms."

"Is it possible to see those two?"

"Yes, of course. May I get some information first, please?"

She asked basic questions about me, including my current address, and filled out a form. She raised an eyebrow when I said I was pre-qualified for a mortgage in

any amount but didn't ask further questions. Once the form was completed, she called a young man named Andriy to show us the two condos.

The four-bedroom unit had a lake view which was tremendous, but I quickly realized it would not be suitable, given we'd need a room for the baby, along with rooms for Bianca and Juliette, Deanna, and CeCi. The six-bedroom unit, on the other hand, would give us a spare room if Deanna continued with her combination studio/bedroom.

We left the four-bedroom unit and went to the six-bedroom unit. The view was of the city, which, I decided, I actually preferred to the view of Lake Michigan. It had been remodeled in 1981, and it had gorgeous hardwood floors. To my surprise, it had more square footage than my current house, even including the basement. All the appliances had been replaced when the condo had been remodeled, and were stainless, my preferred finish. There were six and a half bathrooms -- one for each bedroom plus a powder room off the entrance.

"Can we have a minute?" I asked Andriy.

"Yes, of course. I'll step out into the elevator lobby and wait for you there."

"What do you think?" I asked Bianca once Andriy was out the door.

"It's fantastic. It's much more convenient for all of us except Juliette, but she can easily take the bus or L to Loyola. But can you afford it?"

"With the Spurgeon low-interest mortgage, absolutely. The reason this has likely been on the market for nearly a year is that interest rates are so high. A regular, thirty-year fixed-rate mortgage would be difficult for even me to afford unless I wanted to be 'house poor' like some of the traders. The real estate loans for the investment properties are balloons, so I only pay interest, and the rents cover those. I plan to pay down the principal with my bonus, as we discussed.

"In the long term, this would be a good investment because once interest rates come down, it'll appreciate quickly. That said, if I decide to do this, it would be to live here for the long term. There's plenty of space, even if everyone stays. Even with a nursery, we still have an extra room. And, in the worst-case scenario, my carried interest would repay the mortgage to Spurgeon, leaving us with a place to live with no mortgage debt."

"I'd want to contribute more, which I can do given my salary."

"And you should build some equity, too. If we do this, I'll work out with Nelson how to make that happen."

"The only downside I see is losing the basement movie theatre and the hot tub."

"That is a downside, along with losing the fire pit. One mitigation of losing the hot tub is that the master bathroom has a whirlpool tub, which, while not the same, is nice. As for the TV, the great room is large enough to easily have both a TV theatre area, a couch area, a pool table, and a dining room table, and still have space left over. The other downside is the one I mentioned -- no backyard, but also no yard with flowers. That said, there's plenty of sun for plants inside."

"There are other benefits," Bianca said. "No lawn mowing, snow shoveling, or other yard work. Did you see the laundry room is bigger than ours with all kinds of extra storage? And the huge walk-in closets and walk-in pantry in the kitchen area?"

"Yes. It has a lot going for it, including an open floor plan, but I'm still concerned about the lack of a backyard. I need to think more about it. I doubt there's any real risk of the condo selling in the next week, and I also suspect that I can get it at below market."

"That makes sense."

"I'm also concerned about making a significant decision like this right now."

"Not to overstate the obvious, but you've been making decisions at work, and those are, in many ways, bigger."

"Dollar-wise? Absolutely. But this is more about...quality of life, I guess you would call it. I can sit down and dispassionately analyze currency markets, precious metals markets, and equities because, in the end, there is nothing emotional about them. The same is true for investment properties, such as where we live now. That was always a short-term solution. This would be long-term and would change how we live fairly significantly."

"My vision for the future was a large house on several acres with plenty of open space and possibly even a swimming pool. And the house would have a hot tub and maybe even a sauna. There would be a large brick grill, and all our friends would hang out outside eating burgers and brats and drinking beer. This condo is more suited to cocktail parties than a place for college students and young professionals to hang out and kick back."

"That's a point I hadn't considered."

"As I said, I want to think about it. Let's go see Anhelina."

We left the condo, and Andriy escorted us back to the sales and leasing office.

"What do you think?" Anhelina asked.

"I'm interested, but I need a bit of time to think about it because it's a significant lifestyle change."

"I believe the sellers are motivated," she said.

I nodded, "OK. Give me until the end of the week, and I'll get back to you with an answer."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Kane!"

"You're welcome."

Bianca and I left the office and headed home, where Deanna and CeCi had prepared dinner. I hadn't said anything to Jack about why I was going to be late and had asked Bianca not to share, as I wanted to think everything through before I broached the idea to the others. After dinner, I relaxed in the Japanese room and went to bed earlier than I had before Keiko's passing because it still took a bit of extra time to fall asleep.



January 11, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Research, Kane," I said when I answered my phone around 10:00am on Tuesday morning.

"Jonathan, it's Nelson."

"Good morning."

"Has Bev been in touch with you?"

"Not since last week. I take it you're calling because she didn't show up for work?"

"Yes. Personnel has tried to call her several times, but her machine picked up."

"I doubt she's coming back," I said. "There is an arrest warrant out for Glen."

"Hang on! She was over the age of consent when she conceived, right?"

"Yes, but they're charging him for allegedly having sex with two Freshman girls."

"God damn!" Nelson exclaimed.

"Tell me about it! The last I heard from Bev was her calling me to read me off for telling her parents where she was, then hanging up on me when I asked her about Glen. I let the FBI into her apartment, but there wasn't a shred of evidence where they might have gone."

"I sure as hell hope they had a warrant."

"They did, but Bev assigned me full power of attorney when she was in St. Louis, and her attorney in Cincinnati confirmed those documents, which also included being assigned as Heather's guardian if something happened to Bev."

"You're going to need an expert in family law if that happens. There's a lawyer in Hyde Park who we use for things like that named Gwen Meyer. She's a specialist in family law, and come to think of it, you should speak to her about the baby you're having with Bianca just to make sure all your bases are covered. I have your will ready to be signed, along with the other documents you asked me to prepare. If you want to come by today, we can take care of that."

"I'll do that at lunch," I replied.

That would mean postponing the DMV, but I had thirty days to complete the change in title.

"I'll give you Gwen Meyer's information then. And Jonathan, if you hear from Bev, make sure you insist she turn herself in and do not help her in any way. If you send her money, you could be charged with a crime. You're not required to, but if she contacts you, I advise you to contact the FBI or whichever agency obtained the warrants as soon as possible."

"OK. See you at about 11:40am."

"Sounds good."

I hung up and got back to work, convinced that the last thing Bev would do would be to contact me. During the morning, about half the research team had their compensation conversations with Noel Spurgeon, and I didn't detect any unhappiness. I'd let the worst performers go during the reorganization, and the current team was producing the best research and analysis in the history of the firm.

I had a productive morning, but it did nothing to allay my concerns about the potential lack of gains in the stock market or 'big wins' in the currency markets. I could easily make the hurdle by buying treasuries, but making the hurdle wasn't enough. Anyone could invest in a treasury fund with lower management fees, and I had to beat those, in addition to beating Wall Street.

Just before I left to meet Nelson, I made some adjustments to my portfolio to unload some stocks which had in my mind peaked, and moved the money into technology and pharmaceutical firms. Even if those dropped in the short term, they'd recover faster than, say, a consumer goods company like Proctor & Gamble. There were some energy plays as well, though if there was an economic downturn, they'd be hit fairly hard and lag after any economic recovery.

At Hart-Lincoln, I was shown to Nelson's office, and we reviewed the documents. Everything appeared correct to me, so he called for a notary to join us.

"Hi, Mr. Kane," Kayleigh O'Connell said when she came into the room. "I'm sorry for your loss."

"Thank you."

I signed each document, and Kayleigh signed and stamped each one with her seal, then recorded it in her log book. When we finished, she took the documents with her, then returned five minutes later with a binder that held my copies.

"I'll file the originals, Mr. Boyd," she said.

"Thank you, Kayleigh."

She left, and Nelson handed me a business card.

"Gwen Meyer is one of the best in the city," he said. "She's used to dealing with situations such as yours and Bianca's where the parents aren't married. She'll also be able to advise you far better than I'm able to about how to handle the situation with Bev.

"I do have to apologize," I said.

"No need. You had no way of knowing about it."

"Even so, I feel responsible because I vouched for her."

"Nobody here will hold that against you. She did excellent work for eight months. I meant to ask -- do you have a copy of Keiko's death certificate for me?"

"Yes," I said.

I reached into my satchel and pulled out a folder which I handed to Nelson.

"I'll take care of the title for your house and the corporation documents. Have you been to the DMV?"

"I had hoped to do it yesterday or today, but more pressing matters arose. I'll do it tomorrow."

"Let me know if there are any problems. I assume Bob Black will be doing your tax return?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll see you on Super Bowl Sunday!"

We shook hands, and I left the office. When I reached the door to the lobby, Kayleigh was there.

"My home number hasn't changed," she said. "When you feel ready, I hope you'll call."

XXXII. Rescue Mission

January 11, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

When I returned to the office, I ate lunch at my desk, then placed a call to Gwen Meyer. Her assistant put me right through.

"Good morning, Mr. Kane," she said when she came on the phone. "How can I assist you?"

"Please, call me Jonathan. I was referred to you by Nelson Boyd of Hart-Lincoln because a close female friend and I are having a baby. He felt we should talk to you to ensure everything is handled properly."

"Are you two living together?"

"In the sense that we share the same house. She has her own room; well, one she shares with her girlfriend."

"Ah, OK. I've handled situations such as this before. Do you plan to raise the child together and share custody?"

"Yes. I've already made the appropriate provisions in my will."

"Very good. The rest is simple if there is nothing contentious. We simply prepare a parenting and custody agreement that ensures your rights, as your friend, being the biological mother, automatically has those rights."

"A biological father doesn't?"

"In a traditional marriage, he does; in Illinois, even living together does not give either partner any rights a single person would not have. Generally, a biological father either needs to reach an agreement with the mother or use the courts to enforce an agreement. You do realize you'll be responsible for child support at the statutory levels, should your friend claim it, no matter what you write in the agreement."

"Interesting. In Ohio, there's all manner of flexibility."

"I take it that's where you're from?"

"Yes."

"I'm no expert on Ohio law, but I suspect they are more in line with what you would traditionally call alimony and child support, and alimony would apply even if you were simply cohabitating. That's not the case in Illinois. You'll need to make provisions if you want your friend to have 'separate maintenance'."

"She's a professional, the same as I am, so I don't believe that will be necessary, and I'm obviously willing to pay child support in the exceedingly unlikely event it's necessary."

"Then, if you provide my assistant with the details, I'll prepare the necessary documents for the two of you to sign. I can courier them to you, and you simply sign them in front of a notary and courier or mail them back."

"Thanks. I do have one more topic I need to discuss."

"What's that?"

I gave a synopsis of the situation with Bev, including our history.

"That could be, to use a non-legal term, a mess. You might well need to deal with three, possibly four, state agencies if what you expect to occur comes to pass."

"Four?"

"Given the documents were prepared in St. Louis, it might be possible under Missouri law that their Family Services agency would have some say. I doubt it, but in complex custody cases, you never know. My advice is, should this come to pass and some other state agency contacts you, simply travel there, gain custody of the child, and then travel immediately to Ohio. Turn the girl over to her grandparents and have them contact a local attorney."

"There's already one involved. There was a child support dispute a few years ago that blew up into the current situation. What I didn't say was that my friend thought someone else was the father."

"Those situations can be very distressing, and taking everything you've said into account, I believe your friend could, if she were to turn herself in, escape any kind of legal consequences and keep her child. If she contacts you, encourage her to do that. You should also consider contacting law enforcement to let them know she was in touch. That shows you're acting responsibly and will help to ensure the young girl ends up with her grandparents through you."

"Thanks. Do you know what it would take for them to gain legal custody?"

"No. Each state has differing laws about such situations, and the rights of grandparents are muddled in many states. Family Services in Ohio or your Ohio attorney could give you a better idea than I could. Here in Illinois, grandparents would be preferable for DCFS to foster care in most cases. Anything else?"

"No. You can transfer me to your assistant, and I'll provide all the details. How do I pay?"

"I'll invoice you unless you think you need me on retainer for some reason?"

"Not that I can think of," I replied. "Thanks."

She transferred me back to her assistant, who took down our names, birthdates, addresses, and other basic data, including where both Bianca and I were born. Once he had all that information, he said he'd prepare the forms for Ms. Meyer to review and have them couriered to me by Friday. I thanked him, hung up, and began my afternoon research.

At the end of the day, Bianca, Jack, and I headed home, and I helped Bianca make dinner.

"Any further thoughts on the condo?" she asked, given we were alone in the kitchen.

"I think my biggest concern is the lifestyle change," I said.

"You do realize you can drink beer in a luxury condo just like in a sixty-year-old house, right?"

I laughed, "Yes, of course. I said that because of the impression I had. That said, there's a difference between sitting in a great room eighty-six floors up and in a backyard. And while parks are nice, Chicago's open bottle law means no beer there."

"Is that your only concern, or just your main one?"

"If you include the hot tub and gardens and call it 'outdoors', I'd say it's my only objection. Everything else argues for it. Our commute is by elevator, which makes things easier with childcare. Deanna and CeCi are much closer to school,

and CeCi is much closer to work. Jack and Kristy would have all the space they needed to start a family. And we'd have plenty of room for Sofía and still have a spare room."

"Here's something to consider, at least in the short term -- if Jack and Kristy are here, I bet you anything you care to wager they'd host on weekends so we could grill and have beers in the backyard."

"I agree with you they would, and that does ameliorate the problem somewhat, at least for the next few years."

"The other thing to consider is that if you need to entertain professionally, which I expect you will, which place is better?"

"The condo, for sure. And as I said, the great room is big enough for a pool table without taking away space from the TV or sitting areas we discussed."

"You saw the wet bar, right?"

"Yes. The condo would be a major upgrade, and we wouldn't lose anything from inside, as we've discussed."

"You're used to having land, right?"

"It wasn't that we had much land back in Ohio. Our house was on a modest lot, but there was a farmer's field behind our house and woods across the street from the front of the house. And when I worked, I spent a significant amount of time outside."

"So what are you going to do?"

"Think about it until Friday when I promised I'd give them an answer."

"I have to ask -- what would you offer?"

"Given it's sat empty for nearly a year, I'd offer \$285,000 against their listing price of \$320,000. I expect we'd settle around \$295,000. That would mean mortgage payments of around \$1700, roughly speaking. That's something I can easily handle. Add in taxes and condo association fees, and it'll be around \$2500 a month. My income, without bonus, and not counting carried interest, should average roughly \$20,000 per month, so it's affordable."

"Those numbers are still staggering. I assume it's OK to share my bonus number and raise with you, right?"

"Technically, no, but unless you tell or I tell, who is going to know?"

"Ten grand bonus and ten percent raise. I'm ecstatic!"

"Congratulations! Spurgeon is swimming in Scrooge McDuck levels of gold and is happy to share a portion of it with anyone who adds to that pile of filthy lucre!"

Bianca laughed, "Who knew that giving up my virginity to what amounted to a random guy with a big dick would turn out to be so profitable!"

I reached over and touched her stomach, "In more ways than one, and not just for you."

"You're going to make a good dad, Jonathan."

"I hope so."



January 12, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Thursday at lunch, I walked to Venice Café to meet the two reporters, and Stan Jakes performed the introductions.

"Jonathan Kane, meet Len Walter; Len, Jonathan Kane of Spurgeon Capital."

We shook hands and then got in line to get our food. Venice did not have table service, and everyone lined up at various stations to get pasta, pizza, calzones, or salads. I went for a calzone, and ten minutes later, the three of us were sitting in the back of the restaurant with the theme from the *Godfather* covering our conversations.

"I've been trying to get in to see Noel Spurgeon for four years," Mr. Walter said. "Most guys like him want to talk to the press."

"Noel Spurgeon is not like most investors," I replied. "And that's why these conversations have to be on deep background."

"Which is why I don't have a recorder or even a pen and paper. Tell me about yourself, Jonathan, if I may call you that."

"Of course," I replied

I gave him a five-minute biography as he and Stan Jakes ate their salads.

"High School to Head of Research in two years, and two licenses to boot?" Len Walter observed. "That's impressive, especially given your family background."

"Thanks. I think growing up the way I did is a key to my success."

"The thing I'm most curious about is what you said about data analysis."

"I can only discuss that in the most general terms, even with a promise of being on deep background. The actual algorithms and programs are proprietary, and discussing the details would cost me my job."

"I understand. I did some research into Bernard Madoff and his computerization of the 'pink sheets', but this seems more interesting, and ultimately more useful, than simply automating human-initiated trades."

"The computers aren't trading, but I could see a time in the future when they have enough processing power to be able to execute certain kinds of pre-programmed trades, especially currency arbitrage. For now, they're simply providing support to the traders who make the actual decisions and initiate the trades."

"Who develops those programs and algorithms?"

"Two members of my team," I replied. "One's like me in that she hasn't finished college. The other has fairly extensive experience with data models and statistics."

We spent the next ten minutes discussing, in a general way, how we made use of the computers, but several times, I had to decline to answer questions that would cross the line of revealing proprietary information.

"What's your outlook on the market?" Len Walter asked.

"A bearish year for the Dow, a slightly positive outlook for the S&P. The real mover will be the Nikkei 225."

"Japan? Interesting."

"The fundamentals are there, and having heard your business reports on WBBM, I'm confident you could look at them and see the same thing."

He smiled and was quiet for a moment, "Real estate, right? All that excess equity just sitting there."

"That is the main driving factor."

"Add in their trade surplus, and it makes perfect sense," he observed.

"Exactly. It sure doesn't hurt their economy that they only spend a tiny percentage of GDP on defense."

"No, it doesn't."

We finished our lunches, and the three of us shook hands.

"I'd like to call you from time to time when something big happens," Len Walter said.

"Please do," I replied.

I left them at the table so as not to be seen walking out together and headed back to the Hancock Center. I spent the afternoon researching and also thinking about what to do about the condo. I was reasonably certain I was going to take the plunge but decided to sleep on it one more night.

As I walked back to the office, I remembered that I owed Deanna an answer about modeling for her art class. Being nude in front of a dozen girls wouldn't have given me pause, given I'd had sex in front of groups of girls; the thought of being nude in front of other *guys*, on the other hand, was uncomfortable. I almost

laughed because, if Deanna was right, at least some of those guys would be gay, which was a weird thought.

I thought about it until I reached the Hancock Center and decided I could do it, and would let Deanna know when I arrived home.



January 13, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"What are you going to do?" Bianca asked, following me into my office on Friday morning.

"Make an offer," I replied.

"So, you'll be movin' on up to a deluxe apartment in the sky?" Bianca asked with a smirk.

"Sorry, I know you're quoting something, but I have no idea what."

"I didn't peg you for a fan of *All in the Family* or *The Jeffersons*. That's from the theme song to *The Jeffersons*."

"I watched one episode of *All in the Family* and didn't like it. At 9:00am, we should go to Personnel to have the papers for Ms. Meyer notarized, then I'll give them to Jack. Any last-minute concerns?"

"Nope! And what are the chances we aren't together for the next eighteen years?"

"Not as good as you might think," I replied.

"OK, sorry, yes, but I meant in a way that these documents would matter?"

"Near zero, I suspect. Back to the condo -- are you going to run it by anyone else?"

"No. You agree, and that's the key. I don't think the others will object."

"Certainly not Deanna, given she offered to be your mistress for life!"

"And, as I said to her, patronage didn't require that."

"You know that she's about the safest person for you to be with now, right?"

"As opposed to Teri or Kayleigh?" I asked.

"You and Dee have a well-established relationship, and it's uncomplicated."

"I know. But right now, it's actually a complication I don't need."

"I apologize for even bringing it up," Bianca said.

"No need," I replied. "You don't need to walk on eggshells around me. You know I'll push back if I don't agree, and I need to hear your opinions."

"Thanks."

Bianca left, and I began working on my portion of the analyst report. I completed it, and then Bianca and I went to Personnel to have our signatures notarized. Once that was accomplished, I took the envelope with the papers to Jack and arranged for them to be couriered to Ms. Meyer's office in Hyde Park.

When I left the mailroom, instead of going back to my office, I took the elevator down to the lobby, walked around to the entrance for the residences, and went to the sales and leasing office to speak to Anhelina.

"I'd like to make an offer on the six-bedroom unit," I said. "\$285,000 with a forty-five-day closing."

"I'm not sure how receptive they're going to be to that offer."

"They need to take into account the fact that the Prime Rate is 11%, and that means mortgages are a few percentage points higher. They also have carrying costs. I'd like to fill out an offer sheet, and I'll write you a check for \$5000 in earnest money."

"Is there a mortgage contingency?"

"No."

She filled out an offer sheet and had me sign it. I wrote a check for the earnest money and handed it to her.

"I'll speak to them as soon as possible. Will you entertain a counter?"

"Yes. I need a copy of the listing, please."

She handed it to me, and I thanked her. I left the sales and leasing office and took two elevators to get to the Spurgeon offices. I got off on 30 and went to Personnel.

"I need a payoff amount on my mortgage," I said to Cheryl, the clerk. "And then I need a form for a new mortgage for this property for which I put in an offer."

I handed her the listing form.

"You should," I continued, "have everything else in the packet for the current mortgage."

"OK. I'll put that together for you. When do you expect to have a contract?"

"Sometime next week," I replied. "I expect them to counter and negotiate."

"OK. Good luck!"

I left Personnel, returned to 29, and picked up the phone.

"Waterston."

"Kane at Spurgeon Capital."

"Good morning. My condolences on the loss of your wife."

"Thanks."

"What can I do for you?"

"I want to roll my current house into the mortgage you have because I put in an offer on a new place."

"I'll need updated income numbers, as well as a year-end statement from your fund. I'm going to assume your carried interest increased."

"Yes. It's about a million, and it's better to use it to secure a loan than give Uncle Sam and Governor Thompson about forty percent so I could pay cash."

"You got that right! This should be a no-brainer. The interest rate will stay the same, and the origination fee will only include the value of the added property."

"Excellent. Thanks. I'll get you everything you need today."

"Your current mortgage is with Spurgeon, right?"

"Yes. The funds would pay off that loan to clear the way to originate a new loan."

"Piece of cake."

"Thanks."

We ended the call, and now all I could do was wait for the payoff number from Personnel and a response to my purchase offer. I still had some minor reservations about giving up the backyard, but all in all, it made perfect sense, especially with the impending arrival of my daughter and Jack and Kristy's desire to have a place of their own.

Just before lunch, Cheryl called me with the payoff number, so I faxed the information to Will Waterston, then joined Bianca for lunch in the break room. After we ate, we headed to the gym, then returned to the office.

Just before 3:00pm, Anhelina Bondarenko from the sales and leasing office called.

"They countered at \$310,000," she said.

"I'll go to \$295,000, but that's firm," I replied.

"I'll relay the revised offer."

"Thank you."

We said 'goodbye', and I had just replaced the receiver in the cradle when the phone rang with an outside call.

"Research, Kane."

"Mr. Kane, this is Agent Feldman with the FBI."

"Good afternoon."

"Glen Rodgers and Beverly Newton were detained in Antler, North Dakota, trying to cross the border into Canada."

"They're in federal custody?"

"Customs and Border Patrol is holding them until the Marshals can transport them. I spoke to the supervisor at the border crossing, and they found the documents you referred to in Ms. Newton's possession."

"What did she say she wanted to happen with Heather.?"

"I honestly don't know because I'm not there. If you're able to go to Antler, the Border Patrol will turn the girl over to you. If you aren't, she'll be turned over to North Dakota Child Protective Services. The Marshals cannot transport an infant."

"How long do I have?"

"The Marshals are scheduled to pick them up tomorrow evening at 7:00pm. Let me give you the contact information for the supervisor at the crossing so you can work out the details."

"Thanks."

He gave me the officer's name and number, and I thanked him. We ended the call, and I dialed the number.

"Antler Border Crossing, Emmerson."

"Officer Emmerson, my name is Jonathan Kane. I was referred to you by Agent Feldman of the FBI."

"Yes, sir. Are you able to pick up your daughter from the Antler Border Crossing before 7:00pm tomorrow?"

I wondered if the 'daughter' reference was a misunderstanding or if Agent Feldman had purposefully done that to make things easier.

"I'm in Chicago. What's the best way to get there?"

"A flight from Chicago to Bismarck, then a flight to Minot Airfield. That's about thirty-five miles from us. There is a field in Antler, but there are no scheduled flights, and the runway isn't big enough for a corporate jet, if that's an option."

It wasn't really, as I knew Noel Spurgeon was flying to Florida, and even if he wasn't doing that, I didn't want to use up my goodwill if I had other options.

"Let me see what arrangements I can make," I said. "I'll call you back within an hour."

"Thank you, Mr. Kane."

I ended the call and dialed Windy City Travel and asked for Barney.

"I have a challenge for you," I said. "I need to be in Antler, North Dakota, no later than 7:00pm tomorrow. It was suggested that I fly from Chicago to Bismarck and from Bismarck to Minot."

"Let me check for you."

I heard keys click for three minutes before he had an answer.

"It can work, but just. The only flight to Bismarck is tomorrow at 1:00pm from O'Hare. You'll change planes in Bismarck after a layover and arrive in Minot at 6:00pm."

"Can you arrange transportation from there to the Antler Border Crossing?"

"Probably, but that will take me some time. What about a return trip?"

"For two, and to Cincinnati."

"There's no way that'll happen on Saturday evening," he said, then was quiet while he tapped keys on his computer. "I can get you to Cincinnati by 6:00pm local time on Sunday -- Minot to Bismarck to St. Louis to Cincinnati. Routing through Chicago won't work because of the flight times. If your goal is to return to Chicago, it would have to be Monday."

"Reserve all of that with an early return on Monday, please. I need to make a few phone calls."

"OK. I'll work on the local transportation for you."

"Thanks, Barney."

I hung up and went to the Research Library and pulled out an atlas. My rough calculations said it would be a fourteen-hour drive, which I could start as soon as I arrived home, stopping along the way for the night, then doing the reverse and arriving back in Chicago on Sunday. That meant I'd miss class, but I was positive Professor Baum would cut me some slack after our talk the previous Saturday. It also meant I'd have to figure out how to get Heather to Ohio.

I went back to my office and dialed the number for the Newtons.

"Newton residence; Julie speaking."

"Mrs. Newton, it's Jonathan."

"Have you heard anything?" she asked.

"Yes. The details don't matter right now, but if you and your husband can be in Chicago on Sunday afternoon, I'll have Heather. You'll need to take her back to Goshen immediately Sunday afternoon."

"What?! How?"

"It's a long story, and I'll share it with you later once I make all the arrangements. Can you be in Chicago on Sunday?"

"Of course! What time?"

"Call it 3:00pm Chicago time. Just come to my house. If I'm not there, I'll be there shortly, and someone will let you in to wait. I promise I'll call you back with the details."

"OK."

I ended that call, then called Violet at work.

"What are you doing this weekend?" I asked.

"Seeing you, of course!"

"I remember! What about tonight and Sunday?"

"I don't have any plans."

"Then I need your help with Heather again, please. This time, a road trip to the Canadian border in North Dakota."

"What?!"

"It's a long story, and I promise to tell you, but I need to make my plans."

"Yes, of course, I'll go with you! When would we leave?"

"Right after work today. I figure we could drive to Minneapolis, which is about six hours, stay the night, then drive seven hours to the border. We'll get Heather, then drive back to Minneapolis, stay the night again, and then drive back to Chicago on Sunday."

"When will you pick me up?"

"Let's say 6:00pm because I need to go to Venture and buy a car seat. I have no idea if I could get the one Bev has."

"OK. I'll see you at 6:00pm. What about dinner?"

"We'll drive through Wendy's, Burger King, or McDonald's, if that's OK."

"It is."

"See you at 6:00pm!"

I ended that call, then pulled my course syllabus from my satchel and dialed the professor's number. He wasn't in his office, but the department secretary promised to get him the message before he went home at 5:00pm. I thanked her, then called Barney.

"Forget all of that air travel and book two adjoining rooms at a hotel in or around Minneapolis for two nights, starting tonight."

"You plan to drive?"

"Yes. I can't miss work on Monday, and If I were to miss any of those connections either way, it would be very, very bad."

He tapped some keys.

"I think your best bet is the InterContinental Hotel near the Saint Paul airport."

"Book that, please."

He tapped more keys.

"Given availability and pricing, the best option is actually a suite with two bedrooms. Will that work? I can book you two rooms if you wish, but it'll cost more."

"I'll take the suite, please."

Keys clicked for a minute or so.

"All set. Two nights, two guests, in a suite at the InterContinental Hotel in Minneapolis-Saint Paul. It's at 5005 Glumack Drive, which is literally just off the freeway. I'll fax you detailed directions."

"Perfect. Thanks. I appreciate the help."

"Any time!"

I ended THAT call, then called Jack to let him know I couldn't join them after work and why, then called CeCi to let her know the same thing. After that call, I used the intercom to ask Bianca to come to my office. She did, and I indicated she should shut the door.

"First, they countered on the condo. I gave my final number, and I'm waiting to hear back."

"How far apart?"

"They came down to \$310 and I offered \$295, but said that's it. I think they have to take it, given how long it's been on the market. They'll spend that much in carrying costs waiting for another offer to come."

"Great! What else?"

"Bev and Glen were detained trying to cross into Canada."

"Holy shit!"

"Yeah. I have to be in a place called Antler, North Dakota, by 7:00pm tomorrow, or Heather will be turned over to Child Protective Services. That's when the

Marshals show up to get Glen and Bev, and according to the FBI, the Marshals cannot transport a toddler."

"That makes sense, if you think about it. What are you going to do?"

"I checked with the travel agent, and flying there and then to Cincinnati is nightmarish, given the timeframe, and I'd miss a day of work. I checked a map, and I'm going to drive, staying overnight in Minneapolis each way. Bev's parents will come to Chicago on Sunday to get Heather and take her right back to Ohio."

"To avoid DCFS, right?"

"Yes. If we can get Heather to Ohio, then it's Family Services there who decide, and I can't imagine they won't let Heather stay with her grandparents."

"Me, either! Are you going alone?"

"No, my personal daycare is coming along."

Bianca laughed, "Violet to the rescue once again! How will you explain that?"

"The same way I did in Overland Park. The Border Patrol seems to think Heather is my daughter. I'm guessing either miscommunication or that was deliberate by the FBI. My bet is miscommunication, but I'll take it."

"I sure would! What did Bev say?"

"The FBI didn't know and I wasn't about to ask questions of the Border Patrol supervisor."

"So you're going to zip in and zip out?" Bianca asked.

"And try to avoid getting the shit kicked out of me!" I chuckled. "But we're talking North Dakota, not Wisconsin."

"Could it get any crazier?"

"Don't ask!" I said, shaking my head. "But once Heather is delivered safely to her grandparents, I think I'm out of this whole thing once and for all."

"Are you going to try to talk to Bev?"

"I think that could only go wrong. It could still go wrong if she tells them not to give Heather to me. The question of what she might have said is nagging me, but I think, in the end, even if she's angry at me, she'd rather I had Heather than Child Protective Services, on the assumption I'd keep Heather. I doubt Bev suspects I intend to turn Heather over to her parents because if she did, I think she'd have opted for Child Protective Services."

"I think you're right. You're leaving right after work?"

"Yes. I'll swing by Venture to get a car seat because I don't want to take any chances."

"That makes total sense. You should probably grab a pack of diapers, some formula, and bottles."

"Things about which I'm clueless and will have to learn, but not today. I'm going to change my plan and pick Violet up first."

"What about a change of clothes?"

"I have clothes in a bag in the trunk of my car. I'm sure the hotel has toiletries. I have both my credit cards and about two hundred in cash, so I'm good in that regard, too."

"What do you need me to do?"

"Be home on Sunday for when the Newtons arrive. I don't know the exact time I'll be back. I suggested no later than 3:00pm to Mrs. Newton, so they could show up any time before that."

"OK."

"I have a few phone calls to make."

"Then I'll get out of here."

She left and I dialed Violet's number to let her know the change of plans, then called Julie Newton and explained what had happened.

"Bev was arrested?!" she gasped.

"They said 'detained', whatever that means," I replied. "I'm not sure where they're going to be taken because I don't know how it works, but it's possible they'll be brought to Ohio. I didn't want to ask too many questions and accidentally say something that caused Heather to be taken by North Dakota Family Services. I want her to get out of Illinois as quickly as possible so that Ohio law applies. I strongly suggest you don't call Mr. Chojnicki until after you get home with Heather. Once you do, we can work out how to make it all legal."

"I'm worried about Bev."

"I understand, but I don't think there's anything any of us can do for her right now. Once Heather is safely with you, then you can call the Sheriff's Department and ask about her."

"That makes sense. What a terrible mess."

"It is," I replied. "See you on Sunday."

"Jim may want to speak to you. I tried to call him at work, but he was away from his desk."

"If it's before 5:00pm in Chicago, that might be possible. I'm leaving the office then and heading straight to Minneapolis to stay the night. Please, please, please don't do anything other than exactly what I've asked you to do. Anything else risks you not having Heather."

"I'll do my best to keep Jim calm."

"That would be good," I replied.

We ended the call, and I took stock of the situation. I had everything lined up as best I could, so I went back to my afternoon research. I was interrupted about twenty minutes later by a call from Professor Baum, who was sympathetic and excused me from class. He reminded me to call Dean Pullman, and I promised to do that.

I left the office as planned and drove to Violet's house. She was ready with a packed bag, and we headed directly to Venture, with me giving Violet all the details I had so far. I bought a car seat, then had Violet pick out the things she thought we might need -- diapers, formula, bottles and liners, pants, and a sweater. I paid for our purchases, and we walked out to the car. We put everything in the trunk, as I wanted to install the car seat when it was light out.

We stopped at Wendy's, then headed for the Dan Ryan, going northbound.



January 13, 1984, Minneapolis, Minnesota

"One room?" Violet asked, visibly nervous, when the clerk handed me the room keys.

"A suite with separate bedrooms," I replied.

She smiled and relaxed. I declined the offer of help from the Bellman, and Violet and I made our way to the elevators, each carrying our bag. Three minutes later, I let us into the nicely appointed suite.

"This is WAY better than the Motel 6!" she exclaimed.

"You think?" I chuckled. "I think the bedrooms are the same size, so pick whichever you want. Are you hungry?"

"I could use a snack," she replied.

I walked over to the desk and looked at the room service menu.

"They have a snack tray that has crackers, cheese, lunch meat, and chips," I replied.

"Sure," Violet agreed.

I picked up the phone and dialed room service to place the order. Once that was done, I took my bag to the right-hand room, as Violet had chosen the one on the

left. I put my bag on the bed, used the bathroom, then returned to the large sitting room.

"What time do we have to be up in the morning?" she asked.

"It's about seven hours, so I figure if we leave by 8:00am, we're fine. That gets us back here before midnight, and we can sleep in tomorrow. I promised Heather's grandparents I'd have her back in Chicago around 3:00pm. We'll have breakfast here at the hotel both days."

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

"A bit, but I'm happy to pay for the convenience of not having to go out."

There was a knock at the door, and I opened it to allow room service to bring in a cart. The young man put the tray of snacks and two bottles of sparkling water on the table. I signed the check after adding a generous tip. He thanked me, then left. We sat down and began eating our snacks.

"I think I could get used to this pretty quickly!" Violet said. "No laundry to do, no cleaning to do, food delivered, and a whirlpool bathtub! My house just has the old-style claw-footed tubs."

"I do have some news I didn't share on the drive up," I said. "I put in an offer on a condo in the Hancock Center."

"Why? Is something wrong with your house?"

"Not at all. I never planned to live there long-term. My initial thought was to build a house, but after discussing it with Bianca, I decided the condo was a good idea. My commute would basically be three elevator rides, and obviously, the same would be true for Bianca. CeCi and Deanna will be much closer to the

School of the Art Institute as well. And Jack and Kristy won't have to move as they planned because they'll have the house to themselves. There will be room for a nursery, as well as a spare room."

"What about Keiko's room? I mean, the Japanese decorated one?"

"There's a study or library or den or whatever you want to call it that's about the same size as the Japanese room, and I could move all the things there, which I would do."

"You'd be a lot closer to me, too."

"Yes, I would. The downside is no yard, but the condo has plenty of space to entertain. It's actually in a townhouse style, with two floors with the bedrooms upstairs and a huge living space downstairs."

"When will you know?"

"Early next week. We're negotiating the price."

"You're just amazing, Jonathan!"

"Thanks."

"So, how are you doing? I mean, really?"

"I'm mostly fine when I'm working and busy, but otherwise, I spend a lot of time thinking about Keiko, and it makes me sad."

"I think that's normal."

"I think so, too."

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

"You're doing it right now! As I said to Bianca, you're my personal daycare!"

"Boys tend to need that!" she teased. "They take a long time to grow up, and some never do!"

"So I've heard! But as Bianca said, you've come to my rescue once again. Or, really, to Heather's rescue. I appreciate it."

"She's such a sweet little girl; she doesn't deserve any of this."

"No, she doesn't."

We finished our snack, and I took the tray and set it outside the door as the room service attendant had suggested. When I turned after closing the door, I saw Violet had moved to the couch.

"Come sit with me," she requested.

I did, making sure there was a couple of inches of space between us out of deference to Violet. I didn't want to send the wrong message, even if it was very unlikely she'd interpret anything I did in that way.

"I just want to make sure you're OK," she said. "I mean, really OK. I don't want anything to happen to you."

"I'm sad but not depressed, at least in the way Nancy Jane Moore would describe it."

"Good. I could sit in your lap and hug you if it would help."

From anyone but Violet, that would be an invitation to at least kiss, but with her, I knew it wasn't.

"I'd like that," I said.

She smiled, moved onto my lap, put her arms around my neck, and snuggled against my chest. I closed my arms lightly around her, and suddenly, I felt tears rolling down my face.

"Jonathan?"

"It's OK," I said. "I'm just a bit emotional at the moment."

"Is that my fault?" she asked.

"No, not at all. I really appreciate you, and I appreciate the cuddling."

"Thanks."

XXXIII. The Fugitive Felon Act

January 14, 1984, Antler, North Dakota

Violet had served as navigator, and we pulled up to the border crossing at 2:14pm on Saturday. I had no idea exactly where to go, so I simply pulled up to the gate and asked. The officer directed me to a parking spot next to the building. I parked, and Violet and I got out of the car. We walked into the building, and I handed my ID to the officer at the desk. He called Agent Emmerson, who came to the desk and escorted us to an interview room.

"May I see your ID, Miss?"

Violet handed over her Illinois ID card.

"And your relation to Mr. Kane or Ms. Newton?"

"A mutual friend," Violet said. "Jonathan brought me along to help with Heather. Bev and Heather lived with me for about a month before she moved into her apartment."

"Do you have a car seat in your car?" Agent Emmerson asked.

"We do," I replied. "We also have diapers, formula, bottles, liners, and clothes."

"I have a fax from the FBI instructing me to release Heather to you. I'll just need you to sign a document that you've accepted custody, and you can be on your way."

He pushed a document to me, and I read through it. Everything was fine except for one thing - under relationship to Heather, it said 'father'. I had a decision to make and felt I could take the risk, as once Heather was with her grandparents, I'd basically be out of the loop. With a small amount of trepidation, I signed and dated the form and pushed it back to Agent Emmerson.

"I'll have the female officer who has your daughter bring her to you. Miss Newton requested to speak to you, and I'm inclined to allow it."

"Given I have no idea what's happened over the last week, I'm not sure that's a good idea. I would hate to have to repeat anything she told me if I was questioned under oath."

"I can't officially say it, but I think that's wise, given she's facing federal charges of aiding and abetting a fugitive and attempting to illegally cross the border in aid of a fugitive."

He got up and returned a minute later with a female agent who handed Heather to me. Once again, I was thankful Heather cooed and smiled, and she smiled at Violet.

"She ate about thirty minutes ago and has a clean diaper," the female agent said.

"Thank you!"

Not wanting to press our luck, I thanked Agent Emmerson, then left the room with Heather. Violet followed me, and we made our way quickly to the car. We got Heather situated in her car seat, then Violet and I got into the car. I carefully navigated out of the parking area and back onto the highway for our drive to Minneapolis. As I accelerated, I let out a long sigh of relief.

"What's wrong?" Violet asked.

"The form had a blank for my relationship to Heather, and it had 'father' written in. I took a big risk signing that document because we all know that's a lie."

"But nobody else knows that, right?"

"Nobody in the government," I replied. "I suspect Glen won't say anything because, at this point, he could only hurt himself by talking to anyone in law enforcement. I have no idea what Bev might say or do, but for right now, she won't risk losing Heather, and despite being upset with me, she sees me as her best hope."

"I'm curious -- where will the Marshals take them?"

"I have no clue how it works when there are federal and state charges. I *think* the charges against Bev are only federal, but I'm not sure. For Glen, I'm sure there are federal charges in addition to the Ohio charges. If I had to guess, both of them would go before a federal judge in North Dakota first.

"At that point, I have no clue what will happen, because I have only a vague memory of how extradition is supposed to work. I think Ohio has to ask for Glen to be returned, and he can fight that, but I seem to recall those fights are always lost. But with federal charges, I think he could be taken to Ohio without extradition. All of that is based on vague memories. In any event, I doubt anything will happen before Monday, and by then, Heather will be in Ohio."

"What happens if they find out you lied?"

"Well, I think I have a legitimate answer in that I wanted to ensure Heather was with her grandparents, and that's where she will be. I also have copies of the documents Bev signed, of which the FBI has copies. So, I think, in the end,

nothing would come of it. If it does, then I'll deal with it. I don't think the risk is that great."

"I was surprised you didn't want to talk to Bev."

"Mainly, it was what I said to the agent -- that I would hate for Bev to say something and be called to testify against her. That might happen as it is. The other reason is I can't be involved with her. She's lied multiple times, run away multiple times, and cut off contact multiple times. She needs serious help, and until she gets it, she's a danger to herself and to Heather.

"I've tried to help her time and time again, and she swats away my extended hand unless I'm in a position to force the issue or she's at risk of losing Heather. I was ready to make a commitment to Bev before all the stuff with paternity went down. I was ready to make a commitment to Bev after that. I offered help, and instead, she ran away to St. Louis. I offered help again, and instead, she ran away to Kansas. I just can't do it any longer."

"I guess I just feel sorry for her, and I think you're the only person who can actually help her."

"That might be true," I replied, "but she has to actually want my help. She's acted erratically. Think about the contradictions -- she runs away from me, doesn't want to talk to me, tells me to leave her alone, and then has a lawyer draw up guardianship papers and a power of attorney. Something is seriously wrong with Bev, and until she admits it and gets help, there really isn't anything more I can do.

"I mean, I basically rescued her in Overland Park, brought her to Chicago, found her a place to live, helped her get a job, and helped her avoid the private investigator. I also did all the legwork to get her child support and more or less forced her to take it. When Glen came to Chicago, I was supportive and

befriended him, though not as a close friend. Then, when all of it goes off the rails due to the accusation, rather than ask me for help right away, I find out from the Clermont County Sheriff, and once again, she runs away.

"It was at that point I realized that the one person who needed my help the most was Heather, even if it wasn't in Bev's best interest. That little girl has been dragged all over the Midwest, all because Bev couldn't deal with her parents. Fine, I get it. My mom and her parents are estranged. But a friend took my mom in and helped her, and my mom accepted it. That's all Bev needed to do.

"And it wasn't just me -- she rejected my mom and the McGills, too. We all tried to help her, and her response was to run away. I honestly think there's more to this, and I have a suspicion that Bev started lying to me before I moved to Illinois. If that's the case, then she played me the entire time."

"I don't believe that!" Violet protested.

I shrugged, "At this point, I don't know what to believe. All I know is Heather needs a stable, loving home. That's the one thing my mom did for me. The only way that's going to happen at this point is if Heather is with her grandparents. If Bev gets help and gets her act together, I am positive her parents would agree to allow her to have Heather again."

"Do you know how bad the charges might be or what might happen?"

"It all depends on what Bev says and what the real circumstances are with regard to Glen."

"What do you mean?"

"That her postpartum depression could be the cause of her erratic behavior, and if so, it might be possible for it to excuse what she's done. She could also claim

that Glen coerced her. I honestly don't know what happened or what she was thinking, but if I were her, that's the approach I would take. The thing is, she's told so many lies at this point that I'm not sure she knows what the truth actually is.

"This is a perfect example of the problem with telling lies -- they pile on each other, and eventually, it becomes impossible to tell the truth. I've lied about exactly one thing -- being Heather's biological dad. And I can justify doing so because, in both instances, it achieved a far better result for Heather and prevented potentially disastrous results. In this specific instance, I don't have to tell any other lies to support that lie."

"I think you were right to do what was necessary to keep her out of foster care, even temporarily."

"Thanks."



January 15, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I can take you home as soon as Heather is with her parents, or you can stay for dinner," I said to Violet as I turned into the alley behind my house.

"I'll stay for dinner. I would like to be home by 8:30pm, if possible."

"That works for me, too, because I'm beat after all the driving, even getting a good night's sleep last night."

I turned into the driveway and parked, deciding not to put the car in the garage as I would be driving Violet home after dinner. I got Heather from her car seat and Violet grabbed our bags and the supplies, and we went into the house. I was not surprised that the Newtons were there despite it only being 2:00pm.

"Heather!" Julie Newton exclaimed happily.

I handed Heather to her, then Jim Newton shook my hand.

"Thank you," he said. "Did you see Bev?"

"No. She's going to need an attorney and counseling. I'm going to guess she'll be taken before a federal judge in North Dakota, but I'm not sure. The Border Patrol officers detained them, but I infer they didn't question them about anything other than trying to cross the border. What the Marshals or FBI will do, I don't know."

"Do you have any idea who we could speak with?" Mr. Newton asked.

"I'd say the FBI agents here or the Clermont County Sheriff's Department. I can give you a business card from Agent Johnson, or you could call the Sheriff's Department and speak to Sergeant Callahan. I think the FBI is your best bet at the moment. They could at least tell you where she is. May I speak to you and Julie privately for a moment?"

"I'll take Heather," Violet offered.

Julie handed Heather to Violet, and she, Jim, and I went to the Japanese room.

"The FBI, Marshals, and Border Patrol all think I'm Heather's father. We know that's not possible, but the documents Bev signed implied that, and given the subterfuge in Overland Park, it wouldn't surprise me if Bev told them I'm Heather's dad. You need to speak to Mr. Chojnicki first thing tomorrow to begin the proceedings for you to have legal custody of Heather."

"How much trouble could you be in?" Jim Newton asked.

"I don't know, but the form I signed wasn't under oath. I never said I was Heather's father -- either the FBI said I was, or they inferred it from the documents Bev had. It's also possible Bev said I was. You can safely say that Bev never told you who the baby's father is. But please don't lie. I'll handle any fallout if the government makes an issue of it. I doubt it, but you never know. The most important thing is to ensure Heather stays with you."

"Does Bev know you're giving Heather to us?" Julie asked.

"No. And I believe if she did, she might have let North Dakota take Heather into temporary care. That's why I want you to get Heather back to Ohio and have Mr. Chojnicki file whatever paperwork he needs to file for that to happen. Honestly, you should get out of Illinois as quickly as you can."

"Good advice," Jim Newton said.

We left the Japanese room, and while they both used the restroom, I retrieved the car seat, diapers, and other supplies I'd bought.

"We'll reimburse you," Julie Newton said.

"It's not necessary," I replied. "I'm in very good financial shape."

"I always knew you would find a way to be successful," Jim Newton said. "Even if I wasn't always happy with you."

"Given the circumstances, I understand your position, even if I didn't agree."

The Newtons, Violet, Heather, and I went out to the Newtons' car. I attached the car seat, then put Heather in it. After shaking hands with Bev's dad and hugging

her mom, they got into the car. Once they had driven away, heading for Ohio, Violet and I went back into the house.

"You really didn't speak to Bev even though she asked?" Bianca inquired as soon as we were inside.

"I didn't see how it could do anything good, and it might have hurt Heather. I have no clue what Bev is thinking or what's going on between her and Glen. The last thing I needed was to have to testify against Bev because of something she said to me. Not to mention, I didn't want to do anything to wreck the subterfuge of them thinking I was Heather's father."

"I know this might sound strange," CeCi said, "but you told an ethical lie. It wasn't about protecting yourself; it was about protecting another person. It harmed nobody and helped an otherwise helpless and defenseless child. I know how strongly you believe in telling the truth, but in this case, you did absolutely the right thing."

"Thanks. Let's hope the government sees that the same way if it comes to light. I think it all comes down to Bev's reaction when she finds out Heather is with her grandparents rather than with me."

"She was adamant about that not happening when we were in Kansas," Violet observed. "In fact, that's the reason she accepted help from Jonathan -- he threatened to turn Heather over to her grandparents unless Bev agreed to counseling and allowed him to help her."

"All true," I replied. "Then, as now, my focus was on helping Heather. Bev doesn't really want my help and hasn't since she left home. Oh, sure, she asked me to assist her with things for which there was no other solution, but if she had truly wanted my help, she'd have come here. If Mr. and Mrs. Newton had showed up, I'd have sent them packing, and given Bev was over eighteen and

had full legal custody of Heather, there isn't a damned thing Mr. and Mrs. Newton could have done about it. Literally, every bad thing that has happened in the past year is the direct result of Bev refusing to come here and allow me to help her."

"That's quite the change in attitude," Deanna observed.

"When I finally quit deceiving myself, it became clear. It just took me time to accept it."

"What happens now?" Jack asked.

"That's really up to Family Services in Ohio, the US Attorney in North Dakota or wherever, and the Sheriff in Clermont County. I'd say Glen is going to prison for a long time if he had sex with two different Freshman girls, not to mention whatever the Feds charge him with for trying to go to Canada."

"How did he think that would work?"

"I'm going to guess Glen figured that an out-of-the-way border crossing might not have received the APB, or whatever they call it. He appears to have been mistaken. Maybe a busy crossing was a better choice, but I bet you anything they all had the license plates of both his and Bev's cars on a list. That would be enough to have them stopped at the border. But all of that is speculation, really."

"She went willingly?" Kristy asked.

"I'd say so. I'm not sure if they were stopped in one car or two, but I bet they find one of the cars somewhere else. I don't know that for a fact, but I'd be surprised if they weren't traveling together. That said, I'm not exactly up on interstate flight! I'd have made a very poor Clyde to Bev's Bonnie!"

"I don't see you with a machine gun!" Bianca teased.

"I don't know that I could ever shoot a human being or even shoot at one," I replied. "Rabbits and deer were my limits."

"You registered for the draft, right?" Jack asked.

"Yes, of course, because it was required. I'd ask for conscientious objector status or ask to be assigned to something like payroll or logistics or some other thing that didn't require killing other human beings. That said, as much of a pacifist as I am, I would take up arms to protect all of you if our country were to be invaded. Anyway, I want to put all of this stuff with Bev in the past. What's for dinner?"

"CeCi is making fried chicken and home fries," Bianca said.

"Sounds great!"

I had a quiet afternoon, which I spent in the Japanese room with Violet, with both of us reading. Dinner was awesome, and once we finished eating, I drove Violet home.

"I don't know how to thank you enough," I said as we approached University Park.

"I'm happy to help," Violet said. "I care about you, and you've been so good to me; it's the least I can do."

"Thanks for letting me cry on Friday night."

"You needed it, and I liked cuddling with you. A lot."

"You are a wonderful young woman, and I'm very happy I got to know you."

"Even with all my problems?"

"They aren't your fault, and it's not as if I don't have my own set of problems. We're close friends, and I honestly don't know what I would have done without you when I needed help."

"Thanks," Violet said. "You're a wonderful guy."

I pulled up in front of Violet's house, double parked, and walked her to the door. She hugged me but surprised me by giving me a quick peck on the lips before turning to unlock the door. She opened the door, turned, and smiled.

"See you on Saturday?" she asked.

"Yes! Don't forget we have tickets for the Hawks on the 25th."

"How could I ever forget a Hawks game!"

We said 'good night', and I walked back to my car. I turned off the emergency flashers, put the car in gear, and headed towards Rogers Park. As I drove, I contemplated three things -- Violet helping me twice with Heather, her cuddling with me on Friday night, and the peck on the lips.

I knew I was in no state of mind to make any decisions in that regard, and I didn't have any idea when I would be. Every time I thought about the future in that way, my mind went to Keiko, which was the very thing about which Beth had cautioned me. The challenge was how to honor Keiko without being 'straitjacketed', as Beth had called it. I didn't know. One thing I did know, though, was that I had to be extremely careful, not just for Violet's sake but for my own.

When I arrived home, I parked in the garage. After closing the door, I walked over to the hot tub, removed the cover, and turned it on. The temperature was around 15°F, but as I'd discovered, the heat from the water made it such that my head didn't get cold. That was especially true as there was no wind at all. I went into the house, fixed myself some jasmine green tea, then sat down in the Japanese room to drink it.

"You turned on the hot tub?" Bianca asked, coming into the room.

"Yes. Once it warms up, I'm going to sit in it and relax. Driving twenty-six hours in less than forty-eight hours was exhausting, given we didn't stop except for gas and food."

"I think you had to do it based on what you said. Heather being with her grandparents makes it pretty much a *fait accompli*. I can't imagine any social worker or judge saying Heather had to come back to you because of that document."

"I'm not sure how it works, but legally, I still have guardianship. That's why I urged Jim Newton to call Mr. Chojnicki tomorrow."

"What will you do if Bev asks you for help?"

"Other than offer to help pay for a lawyer, I'd probably refuse."

"That's a huge change in attitude."

"The same thing Violet said before she kissed me on the lips when I walked her to the door."

"Be careful."

"No shit. Not just for her, but for me, too."

"Are you OK with company in the hot tub?"

"Can Sofía handle that?"

"For a few minutes, but I meant CeCi and Deanna."

"They're welcome to join me. I'm not trying to be a complete recluse. I just need some time by myself from time to time. The balance is probably about right, and I will slowly go back to being myself, as it were. The entire experience changed me, and I need to figure out how to adapt to those changes."

"May I make an observation? I don't want an answer; it's just something to think about."

"Go ahead."

"Keiko used two different approaches -- one when you weren't engaged or married, and one when you were married."

I nodded, "I see your point."

I finished my tea, went upstairs to my bedroom, and changed into my bathing suit. I put on my robe, then went downstairs and out to the porch. I turned on the water jets and got into the tub, which wasn't hot but was warm enough and would continue to heat. Unsurprisingly, Deanna and CeCi joined me about five minutes later.

"I've been preoccupied," I said to Deanna, "how are you doing with the paintings for the art show President's Day weekend?"

"I haven't had a lot of time to work on anything specific, but I have some things I've done for class which I think are OK to display."

"Could you display pieces that are pre-sold?" I asked.

"You mean the two for your office? I could, but the gallery frowns on that because it discourages collectors and casual purchasers. I did come up with an idea for the two additional pieces to go with *Bull Market* and *Bear Market* -- *Silver Market* and *Gold Market*. They'd follow the blue theme but have silver or gold lines and accents that call to mind pricing charts you use."

"I like that."

"I'll tell you about the two for your office because I started on those -- one is *Cherry Blossom*, and the other is 'Rising Sun', both obviously Japanese motifs, but not purple."

"Those are great ideas. I know you have to go with your creative flow, but don't neglect your shows for my pieces."

"Actually, I will probably arrange a show at the Art Institute of those six pieces before we hang them in your office, if that's OK. They'd be displayed as 'From the private collection of Jonathan Edward Kane'. I'll receive graduation credit for doing that because we're required to have six shows before graduation."

"Anything that helps you at school or furthers your career is OK by me. They often display art in the lobby of the Hancock Center. I could ask about that, and perhaps once you've shown it at the Art Institute, you could show them there. Anything that gets you exposure is good, right?"

"Absolutely. That's also something that would count for credit, even if it's the same pieces."

"I'll find out how to go about that," I said. "For tomorrow, where do I need to be and when?"

"6:30pm to 9:00pm at the school."

"That would give us time for diner at Maxim's, if you want?"

"Sure," Deanna agreed. "I'll meet you there tomorrow. What time?"

"5:30pm."

"So, can I get you to model for movies for me?" CeCi asked with a smirk.

I laughed, "I'm not sure I should make the kind of movies that smirk implies!"

"It would be fun, but probably not. Do you think it would be possible to get into one of the exchanges and film?"

"There are rules about what can and can't be filmed; Kristy's dad would be a good resource because I don't work at an exchange. And filming my office would be about as boring as watching paint dry. Eighteen people basically sitting on their butts with their noses glued to computer terminals."

"So, 'still life'?" Deanna teased.

"And less interesting than a vase of flowers or whatever!"

"Is that really what you do all day?" CeCi asked.

"It really is. Research means reading either paper or computerized articles, newsletters, or other analyst reports, then distilling that information into summaries that give the traders the information they need to make reasoned decisions. It really is as boring as it sounds in that regard. It takes a certain mindset to enjoy it. It would drive Bianca nuts, but she does something similar -- sits with her nose at her computer terminal writing programs."

"I'd go stir crazy!"

"In a sense, it's no different from what I do when I'm painting," Deanna observed. "You're the odd one out. Your chosen profession will mean traveling and being on location in addition to being on set."

"Don't directors spend a lot of time editing?" I asked. "You know, sitting in front of an editing machine cutting and splicing film and that kind of thing?"

"Yes," CeCi admitted. "That's part of the job. But Deanna is right about location shoots, and that makes up for it."

"Are you actually filming anything yet?" I asked.

"Some shorts, that is, between thirty seconds and two minutes, of some interesting thing. I shot one of a flag flapping in the breeze. It's all about framing shots right now, something very important for making a film. Those kinds of shots are the building blocks of longer movies. You may not know this, but it can take hours to shoot a few minutes of a scene."

"I know zero about movie-making," I replied. "On the other hand, finance is my game, and I know it takes a lot of money to make a movie."

"*Star Wars* cost \$11,000,000 to make; *Raiders of the Lost Ark* cost \$20,000,000; *The Godfather* cost \$7,000,000 in the early 70s. Of course, they all made it back in

spades, unlike *Reds* which cost \$32,000,000 and barely broke even, or worse, *Heaven's Gate* which cost \$44,000,000 and only made a tenth of that at the box office."

"Ouch," I replied.

"It was one of the worst movies ever made. Well, serious movies, anyway. There are some REALLY bad movies, like *Plan 9 from Outer Space* and *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* but they weren't meant to be serious. *Plan 9* cost around \$60,000 to make in the late 50s and *Santa Claus* cost around \$200,000. Both are near the top of the list of worst films of all time, but they are campy and have something of a cult following."

"I take it film history was one of your courses?"

"Yes."

"What's your favorite movie?"

"It's a toss-up between *Doctor Zhivago* and *Casablanca*, though you can't really compare those two directly. I also really like *12 Angry Men*, which is a character study about jury deliberations, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. My favorite director is Francis Ford Coppola -- *The Godfather*, *The Godfather Part II*, and *Apocalypse Now* are amazing in terms of cinematography. That's why I like *Zhivago* so much -- an awesome storyline but out-of-this-world cinematography. The director, Robert Lean, also directed *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, which also has some great cinematography. It's amazing what you can do with just a camera with limited or no special effects."

"Are there any female directors?"

"They make up a tiny percentage. Alice Guy-Blaché was the first, and in fact, only female director before 1906. She made her first film, a short called *La Fée aux Choux* in 1896."

"Sorry to interrupt, but what is that in English?"

"It translates as 'The Fairy of the Cabbage Patch' or thereabouts. There are no known copies of the film, so we can't be sure what it was like, except from a few contemporary reports. She was followed by Lois Weber in 1908 and a few others, but they really didn't make anything that you would call a success. The most successful early female director was Leni Riefenstahl, but she's seriously problematic."

"Why?" I asked.

"She made Nazi propaganda films, in addition to movies."

"Uh, yeah, I could see how that would be 'problematic'."

"She was a genius, but sadly, like so many other Germans, used her genius to support evil. Wernher von Braun is a name you probably know."

"The NASA rocket guy?"

"Yes. And a Nazi. But he had skills we needed, so he was rehabilitated. Anyway, after the war, there were a number of German, French, and Russian female directors. The first one I know of to make what you would call a mainstream hit is Amy Heckerling, who directed *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* last year."

"I'm both surprised and not surprised it took a hundred years for a woman to direct a mainstream hit. You have a real challenge ahead of you."

"Well, having financial backing will help!"

"I will need to learn a lot more about filmmaking before that happens, but you still have three more years of school, right?"

"Yes. I might go for a Master's because having credentials matters when you're trying to get your foot in the door."

"I'm going to go inside and get ready for bed," I said.

"We'll get out now, too," Deanna said.

We got out, quickly covered the hot tub, and I turned the controls to keep the water around 50°F so that it would warm up faster if anyone wanted to use it. We went into the house and up the stairs.

"Jonathan," CeCi said, touching my arm, "when you're ready...if you want."

I nodded, "I appreciate that. Just give me some time, please."

"Of course. No pressure. I just wanted you to know."

I went into my room, completed my usual routine, then got into bed.



January 16, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Monday morning started out as my days typically did, with the exception that I drove in alone and Jack and Bianca drove in together, as I had plans with Deanna after work. I was first in the office, started a pot of coffee, checked with Rich about overnight activity, and then began working on my portion of the daily analyst report. I completed it and then placed a call to Nelson to let him know

what had happened with Bev, though I left out the details of driving to North Dakota.

"Do you know if she has an attorney?" he asked.

"I have no idea. I'm staying out of it for reasons I'd prefer not to discuss. Heather is safely with Bev's parents in Goshen."

"That's good. Do you know where Bev is being taken?"

"Not for sure."

"OK. Keep me posted."

"Will do."

I ended that call, then placed a call to Mr. Chojnicki, which had two purposes.

"I spoke with Jim Newton about thirty minutes ago," he said. "I'm simply going to file a petition for temporary emergency custody this afternoon without revealing any of the circumstances of how Heather came to be with her grandparents. Given Bev's arrest, the court will grant that. Once that happens, Family Court here in Ohio has jurisdiction, and unless you file some kind of claim, that will be the end of it until Bev's situation is clarified."

"What about the guardianship documents?"

"They aren't filed with any court anywhere, which means short of you making a claim or Bev objecting, they may as well not exist. I know that sounds strange, but the courts here will default to family members and deal with any contest as it arises. I don't think I'm going out on a limb assuming you won't contest the proceedings."

"I have no intention of doing that. Bev might, once she finds out, but I won't."

"She's in Bismarck, North Dakota, and will appear before a magistrate judge for a bail hearing this afternoon."

"What are the charges?"

"A violation of the Fugitive Felon Act, which covers interstate flight to avoid prosecution. I expect her to make bail or even be released on her own recognizance because charges under that act are routinely dismissed or dropped in favor of state charges. If Bev did nothing else, and they haven't charged her with anything else, they'll likely dismiss the charges within a few months."

"What happens then?"

"She goes on with her life. She won't have a conviction of any kind on her record. She will, though, have an arrest record, and Family Court here will take that into account, especially because she had Heather with her. The usual disposition in cases such as this one is that Bev would have visitation and have to convince Family Services she was a fit mother. She could do that by staying out of trouble, going to school, and getting a job."

"You may not know, but what about Glen?"

"He's facing six felony charges here, along with a violation of the Fugitive Felon Act. In his case, Ohio will apply for extradition, and he'll be sent back. They'll keep the federal charges over his head until he either completes a plea deal or a trial concludes. Facing six felony charges, any defense attorney will advise him to take a plea, and he'll serve less than ten years. If he fights it and is convicted on all charges, it would be thirty to life."

"What an idiot."

"I don't disagree."

"While I have you on the phone, may I ask a completely unrelated question?"

"Absolutely."

"Do you know any attorneys who represent athletes?"

"Here in Cincinnati? Marvin McCafferty. Why?"

"I'd appreciate an introduction so I could pitch him on managing investments for his clients."

"I'll call him and see if he's interested in speaking to you."

"I appreciate it. Let me know if there's anything I need to do with regard to Heather."

"I will."

We said 'goodbye' and I hung up, then called Dean Pullman at Circle. He was in, and I explained the purpose of my call. We discussed the program, and he asked when I could come in to fill out the application. We agreed on Thursday at lunch, and I noted that on my calendar.

At 10:00am, we had our weekly team meeting, and afterwards, I had lunch with Bianca. We went to the gym, and when I returned to my desk, there was a message from Anhelina Bondarenko. I returned her call immediately.

"I know you said \$295,000 was firm, but they asked me to say that they'll accept \$300,000."

"I'm pretty sure 'firm' means 'firm'," I said.

"You're willing to walk away over \$5000?"

"They are, obviously."

"Touché. No chance of meeting that price? At all?"

There was always a chance; it was a question of whether or not I would. At \$300,000, I'd be paying about 15% under the assessed value and about 7% under their asking price, which was not unreasonable. So long as interest rates came down, which I expected them to over the next few years, the condo would likely double in value by 1990. That was a very good investment, no matter how I looked at it. But given I'd said my price was firm, I couldn't accept their counter. I also wanted the condo and decided a small bump in my offer was worth it. But if I was going to move, it had to be on my terms.

"I'll tell you what," I said. "It's 1:05pm. I'll offer \$297,500, but that offer expires today at 5:00pm sharp, and after 5:00pm, I won't pay a dime over \$285,000 no matter what happens."

"Let me call them back."

We ended the call, and as I expected, she called back less than ten minutes later to say that they had accepted the offer. She faxed me an offer form, which I filled out, signed, and faxed back to save four elevator trips. She promised to draw up the sales contract by 5:00pm, and I agreed to sign it after work. At 5:00pm, I left the office and made the elevator trips to get to the residential floors. I signed the contract, and Anhelina gave me a copy.

"I've already started the process for the mortgage," I said. "I should have a commitment by the end of the week."

"Great! Do you have an attorney?"

I gave her Nelson's information, then left the office so I could meet Deanna and begin my career as a male model!

XXXIV. Break the Cycle?

January 16, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I bought a condo today," I said to Deanna when we sat down in a booth in the downstairs dining room at Maxim's.

"Why?! Are you moving out of the house?"

"We're all moving; well, not Jack and Kristy. I bought a six-bedroom townhouse-style condo on the 91st and 92nd floors of the Hancock Center."

"Holy shit!" she gasped. "I can't even imagine what THAT cost!"

"A lot less than it's worth because interest rates are so high. I have access to a very low-rate mortgage through Spurgeon, so my monthly payment will be half of what someone who had to go to a bank to obtain a loan would pay. The monthly payment is about three times what I'm paying on the house but with far more space and a FAR better address."

"A commute that is counted in minutes by elevator, right?"

"Yes, for both Bianca and me. And it'll make things so much easier after Sofía is born. Jack and Kristy will rent the house from me, so we'll have room for the rest of us, a nursery, and a spare bedroom. All of the bedrooms are bigger than those in the house, and each one has its own private full bath and walk-in closet. The challenge for you is a studio, but there are empty storefronts in Streeterville that I could rent. Haight Studios or something like that?"

"It has to be something avant-garde or out of the ordinary. Maybe Ateljé Haight?"

"I don't know that word. Is it French?"

"It's the Swedish word for an art studio. I've never seen it used in the US before, so that makes it edgy and cool, and it'll attract attention."

"Which is what we want."

"Can you afford a separate studio?"

"Yes, though we'll need to figure out the finances. Maybe you could rent space to other art students? Or turn it into a private gallery?"

"That might work. There's always tough competition for studio space at school. And the idea of a gallery is good, but I have to be careful not to upset the gallery owner in Oak Park."

"I understand the point, but being able to sell without commission and being in what the *Trib* calls a 'tony' neighborhood would counteract any negatives. Nothing says you can't show in Oak Park as well as your own gallery."

"I like that, and I want to explore the idea with you. Back to the house -- what about the hot tub?"

"That's a loss, but four of the bathrooms have Jacuzzis. The one we'll use for the nursery and the one that will be the spare room wouldn't. From what I could tell, a Jacuzzi could be installed in each of those if we wanted."

The waitress came and took our orders and returned with our drinks and salads right away.

"When would we move?"

"I expect to close around the end of February, and we could move at any time after that. There's no rush, though I'd want to be in and settled before Sofía is born. You could stay at the house until we sort out your studio situation, but your room would be available right away.."

"I'm curious, but do all the bedrooms have windows?"

"Four of the six. The bedrooms are on the second floor, and the condo is in the corner of the building. Two bedrooms along one side and two along the other have windows; the two interior ones don't. We'll use those for the nursery and spare room.

"Downstairs, there's a huge great room, a large open-plan kitchen, and a study or den, which would become the new Japanese room. There are hookups for a washer and dryer, too. The building has an indoor swimming pool for tenants, as well as a gym. There's also a sauna, an on-site grocery, an on-site dry cleaners, and a twenty-four-hour concierge with doorman service."

"Unreal. I don't want to pry, but will you share how much you'll make this year?"

"My compensation is no longer a fixed salary but is based on the management fees we collect. For this year, it should be roughly \$220,000 plus bonus."

"You can definitely afford it!" Deanna said with a soft laugh. "And me!"

"Yes, I can, though I have to be smart about it. It would be very easy to burn through that money. So many of the guys at Spurgeon do."

"How much do the top guys make?"

"A million or more in base compensation, plus bonuses."

"How big are bonuses?"

"They can be more than the total base compensation, but the amounts are purely at Noel Spurgeon's discretion. There's also something called 'carried interest', which is money that is mine but which I don't want to touch because of the tax implications. That's around a million bucks, though I'd lose at least forty percent to taxes if I tried to take it out."

"So you're a millionaire already?"

"On paper."

"I chose the right patron!" Deanna exclaimed. "That's just a crazy amount of money."

"It is, but I'd give up every cent if it could have saved Keiko."

"Sorry. I didn't mean to make you melancholy."

"I already was; I just hide it well. Please don't feel you need to walk on eggshells around me."

"Bottling it up completely is a bad idea."

"I know, and I'm not doing that. I have let it out, just in private."

"You know I'm here for you, right?"

"I do," I replied, "and I appreciate that."

We finished our salads just as the waitress brought our meals.

"Changing subjects," I said after the waitress left, "how does this work tonight?"

"You just sit on a stool, holding a pose. The basic gist is that the sketchbooks will tell the story of a romantic relationship with its ups and downs. Tonight, you'll meet in a bar, and it'll progress to physical contact, but there will also be conflict. One pose, for example, is the two of you standing back-to-back with your arms crossed. When it progresses to a love affair, the clothes start to come off."

"And Sophie's little sister is OK with that?"

"She is Sophie's little sister, so I can't imagine she's anything less than enthusiastic!"

I chuckled, "That's one way to describe Ivy and Sophie. What's the makeup of the class?"

"Seven women and four men, plus the female professor."

"Will everyone be sketching?"

"Yes, and we'll use a mix of graphite, charcoal, pastel, and pencil."

"Will I be able to see the finished works?"

"Yes. They'll be displayed at the school once the class is finished, then go into each student's portfolio. And yes, that display is open to the public. I probably should have mentioned that."

"You should have, but I also should have asked. I gave my word, so I'll do it, of course."

"You have nothing of which to be ashamed!"

I chuckled, "It wasn't that; it was the potential for damage to my reputation."

"I doubt that would happen," Deanna said. "It's not pornographic, and I think people expect someone like you to have sexual prowess and be well-endowed."

"I'm not sure I'd want to verify that empirically," I said with a goofy smile.

Deanna laughed, "Three of the four guys are gay or bi."

"Are you trying to convince me to bail?" I asked lightly.

"Well, one of the girls is a lesbian and a hardcore feminist. I'll wager anything you care to lose that she doesn't draw certain parts of your anatomy to scale when we get to that point!"

"Then I'll be in good company, given what you explained about Michaelangelo's *David*!"

"One day, we have to go to The Louvre!"

"What other art museums would you visit?"

"All of them!" Deanna declared.

"OK, top five?"

"I think it's easier to just list the cities -- London, Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, and New York. Honorable mention to Leningrad, the former Saint Petersburg, in Russia. There are multiple museums in those cities that could be visited on a trip."

"You've been to Paris and Amsterdam, right?"

"Yes, but I absolutely want to go again!"

"Decide how many days you'd need in each city, and we'll see about taking a trip next year."

"Seriously?"

"Seriously. Russia might be tough, but I could look into it."

"I'm going to hold you to that!"

We finished eating, and after I paid the bill, we headed to the School of the Art Institute. We stopped at the restroom, then Deanna led me to the studio. Just outside the door, I saw a young woman with blonde hair, a slim figure, and sparkling blue eyes who looked enough like Sophie, I was sure they were sisters. Deanna proved me correct almost immediately.

"Alexa, meet Jonathan; Jonathan, meet Alexa!"

"I've heard *all* about you!" Alexa smirked.

"Sophie does like to talk," I replied with a smile.

"I heard about your wife; my condolences."

"Thanks."

"Hi, Deanna," a woman of about thirty said, coming up to the three of us.

"Hi, Claire! Jonathan, this is Claire, our professor; Claire Dawson, Jonathan Kane, our male model."

"Nice to meet you! You being tall, dark, and handsome, both complements and contrasts our female model, who I see you've met."

"Just enough to say 'hello'," I said. "Nice to meet you as well."

"Deanna, I need ten minutes alone with Jonathan before we start."

"You'll need WAY more time!" Deanna teased.

"I meant to go over the release! Go set up, please. Alexa, you can go into the room. Jonathan, come with me, please."

The other two girls left, and I followed Claire into a small office, where she handed me the release.

"I'd apologize for Deanna, but given you're her patron, I suspect you're used to her by now."

"Very!"

"Read the form and sign it. Basically, it allows us to display and sell any art with your likeness, and you agree your only compensation is the \$15 fee for each session."

I read over the release and didn't see anything that concerned me, so I filled out the blanks for my personal information, signed and dated it, and handed it to Claire.

"Deanna tells me you're a stockbroker."

"I have two licenses, but my main job is running the Research Department."

"At age twenty-one? Impressive."

"Thanks."

"I also heard about your tragic loss. My condolences."

"Thank you."

"Deanna said you'll be completely comfortable being nude."

"I'm not sure that's true, but I did agree to do it."

"Most people are a bit self-conscious the first time they model, even clothed. You'll get used to it."

"Has Alexa modeled before?"

"No. This is her first time as well. You appear to be in good shape, at least as far as I can tell with you wearing a suit. Is that your normal attire? Suit and suspenders with a tie?"

"Yes."

"Do you work out?"

"Three days a week at the gym in the building where I work."

"Take off your jacket and turn slowly, please," Claire requested.

I did as she asked.

"Is this how you'll usually be dressed?"

"Yes."

"Would you bring a change of clothes with you each time? Blue jeans and a polo or rugby shirt?"

"I can do that."

"Do you have a bathrobe?" Claire inquired.

"Black, knee-length; I also have black silk pajamas and a blue happi."

"Those would be perfect for future classes," Claire said. "Just bring a change of clothes for now. We have five minutes. Any questions before we go to the studio?"

"None that I can think of."

I followed Claire to the studio, where she had me put on my jacket and sit on a stool next to Alexa. Claire suggested poses, and once she was satisfied, she addressed the eleven students. It was actually boring, as I couldn't do anything but hold the pose until we took a five-minute break, where I used the restroom and got a drink. I returned to the same basic pose after the break and held it until

the second break. The cycle repeated itself until the class ended two and a half hours after it began, though it seemed longer.

"I take it that's how it's going to be for the rest of the semester?" I asked Deanna as we left the School of the Art Institute.

"With variations in poses, yes. It's not the most exciting work, but Claire really appreciates you helping us out."

"What poses, if you know."

"In a general way. Wednesday will be similar to today, then you standing face-to-face, you with your arms around each other's waists, and so on. Claire will talk to you both about what you're comfortable with once your clothes start to come off. But it'll all be tasteful; we're not creating porn!"

"I've heard people describe nude paintings as 'pornographic'."

"Clueless morons!" Deanna declared. "They clearly don't know the difference between art and porn."

"I actually think they do," I countered. "They draw the line in a different place than you do. Think about the difference between pornography and obscenity. Can you give me a clear definition of where the line goes with which everyone will agree?"

"Obviously not."

"The same is true for the difference between art and pornography."

"So what do you think?" Deanna asked.

"I think it's complicated because it appears that for many, if not most, the medium matters. A nude painting is art, and a nude photo is pornography even if they depict the exact same image."

"I hadn't considered that."

"As I said, it's a complicated problem, and the First Amendment offers exactly zero guidance beyond 'free speech' and 'free press'. My American government teacher said the original intent was about political speech and that it only applied to the federal government. But I think we're way off topic."

"True. Want to get ice cream before we go home?"

"Sounds good."



January 17, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I bought a condo," I said to Jack as he, Bianca, and I drove to work on Tuesday morning.

"Where?"

"In the Hancock Center," I replied. "My plan is for the girls and me to move there, and you and Kristy could rent the house until you're ready to buy."

"What brought this on?" he asked.

"Our discussion about the baby and you and Kristy talking about moving out. Bianca suggested a condo in the building, and after I thought about it, we looked into it, and I put in a successful bid on a six-bedroom, townhouse-style condo on the 91st and 92nd floors with a city view."

"Holy shit, Dude! Talk about a deluxe apartment in the sky!"

Bianca and I both laughed.

"That's what I said!" Bianca declared. "Jonathan didn't know the reference to *The Jeffersons*."

"He watches the least amount of TV of anyone I know!"

"So, what do you say, Jack?" I asked.

"I say 'yes', of course! I'll speak to Kristy tonight, but I can't imagine her saying 'no'. Now I just need Noel Spurgeon to approve my job as a runner."

"When are you supposed to know?"

"By Friday. When will you move?"

"Sometime in March, I suspect. I need to work out the details."

"Pretty cool."

"I think so."

The morning was routine, but I received a surprise call early in the afternoon.

"Jonny, it's Bev."

"Where are you?"

"Chicago. I was released on my own recognizance yesterday. When can I pick up Heather?"

"You'll have to go to Goshen to do that. She's with your parents."

"YOU BASTARD!" she screeched. "HOW COULD YOU?!"

"I had no idea what was going to happen with you, and Heather needs stability. I felt that was what was in her best interests. If you want my advice, go home and reconcile with your parents. Call Mr. Chojnicki right away, as he filed to give your parents emergency custody yesterday."

"I HATE YOU!" she growled, and I was positive she had slammed down the phone to disconnect the call.

I flashed the switchhook and dialed the Newtons' number.

"Newton residence; Jim speaking."

"Mr. Newton, it's Jonathan. Bev just called me. She was released on her own recognizance. She asked about Heather, and when I told her Heather was with you, she became irate and hung up on me."

"I'll get in touch with Mr. Chojnicki. Do you know if Bev is at her apartment?"

"I don't know for sure, but I'd assume so. If you let me put you on hold, I can call the tailor shop and ask."

"Yes, of course."

I did that, and Beth confirmed that Bev had shown up. I thanked Beth and promised to call her later in the day, then pressed the button to bring Jim Newton back on the line.

"Yes, she's there. I have no idea what she's going to do, though."

"Thanks, Jonathan. We really appreciate what you did over the weekend, looking out for Heather's best interests."

"Bev needs psychological help," I said.

"We agree, of course."

We ended the call, and I thought about what to do next, and the answer was 'nothing'. At this point, Bev had to get counseling and get her act together. That was up to her, and as much as I hated the state of our relationship, I didn't see any way forward for us, even as friends, until she completed counseling.

I completed the day, then headed to Jeri's house for our monthly dinner.

"Are you doing OK?" she asked when I arrived.

"I'm hanging in there," I replied.

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Just be my friend."

"I received the year-end statement today. 25.6%, even with the restrictive covenants in the trust. I'm very, very happy."

"Me, too! Unfortunately, I don't think we'll be able to hit those same numbers this year. We can discuss it at dinner so I don't have to go through it twice."

Nelson arrived just then, and I took him aside to let him know about the condo.

"I don't even know what to say!" he said, shaking his head. "Obviously, I'll handle the purchase for you."

"Thanks. I heard from Bev today. She was released on her own recognizance and is in Chicago."

"Her job is still there if she wants it, but she needs to get in touch soon."

"Maybe have someone call her because she's not speaking to me."

"Then how do you know she's here?"

"She called, and when she found out I'd facilitated Heather going to her parents, she became very upset with me and hung up."

"I'm not sure what she expected you to do other than that. In situations like Bev's, it's almost always the grandparents or an aunt or uncle."

"I know. Anyway, we should rejoin the others."

Five minutes later, the entire gang had arrived, and Karl called us to dinner.

"I was telling Jeri earlier that this year's returns are likely to be lower than last year's," I said. "The big scores on the currency devaluations made up a good chunk of our gains, and I don't see any potential in that area in the near term. Our guidance for the market is a bear market for the Dow and modest gains for

the S&P. That said, I have a number of ideas to ensure we beat not just those numbers but Treasury yields as well."

"Can you give us an idea?" Gary asked.

"Forward-looking statements aren't guaranteed, but I believe I can approach 20%, which will be more than triple our S&P forecast. Obviously, I'll look for opportunities to beat that. The problem for this year is inflation is picking up, which means the Fed is going to have to tighten despite it being an election year. But they won't raise rates more than a couple of points.

"That's enough to suck the life out of stocks and also create weakness in the real estate market. Once they wring the excess inflation out, they'll loosen, probably late this year, after the election, and continue to loosen, looking for the 'soft landing'. Pete is predicting the Prime Rate to be around 10% in June of next year, but that's a forecast with a high margin of error."

"Who's going to win the election?" Jeri asked.

"Our model says it's going to be tight, but that Reagan should eke out a victory so long as interest rates don't climb above 13%. If they do, the Democratic nominee, most likely Walter Mondale, will win, potentially in a landslide."

"I don't buy it!" Jeri declared.

"Reagan is weak right now because of the economy. He's strong on foreign policy, but if you're having trouble making ends meet, you're more likely to vote for 'change' as Jesse Jackson is promising. He's going nowhere, but that is the lesson of history. That said, a lot can happen between now, and November and Reagan could be reelected in a landslide. Ask us again in June. Either way, we'll develop a strategy to maximize returns."

"Jonathan," Marcia said, "I'm sorry if this is out of line, but when is Keiko's service?"

"Valentine's Day at Montrose Cemetery, but per her parents' request, it's family only. Sorry about that."

"It's OK. How is Bianca?"

"Getting big," I said with a smile. "We're expecting Sofía Angélica in early April."

"A girl?" Jeri asked. "That's news!"

"We found out at our last prenatal checkup. Our next appointment is in early February."

"That's cool!"

"So, what else is going on in everyone's lives?" I asked.

We chatted for the rest of the meal, with each of my friends giving an update since we last met in December. After dessert and coffee, I said 'good night' and left the house to head home.



January 18, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Wednesday morning, just after 9:00am, my phone rang.

"Research, Kane."

"Mr. Kane, this is Marvin McCafferty with MTB Sports Management in Cincinnati."

"Good morning, Mr. McCafferty. Thank you for calling."

"Stefan Chojnicki seems to think you're a financial *wunderkind*."

"My fund returned 39.7% on the first dollar in for calendar year 1983. The Dow returned 20.27%, and the S&P 500 returned 22.34%. I have about \$110,000,000 in AUM, and I'd like to send you a prospectus for any athletes you represent."

"What's your fee structure?"

"Two and twenty with an 8% hurdle."

"Steep."

"Show me consistent returns at that level with lower management fees, and I'll advise you to go with that firm. Spurgeon Capital has a ten-year track record of beating the market after fees, expenses, and transfer of carried interest."

"I'd like to see a prospectus. Let me give you an address where to send it."

He gave the information, and I repeated it back.

"You'll have it tomorrow morning," I said. "It'll come by Federal Express overnight."

"I'll look it over and get back to you by the end of next week."

"Please call with any questions."

We ended the call, and I updated my pipeline sheet to include his firm in the 'new prospects' list. I got a copy of the prospectus, along with a printout of the

1983 statement, wrote a short note, and took everything to the mailroom. I handed the stack of paper to Naomi, who was covering for Jack, then returned to 29. I went back to work, and at 11:30, I met Bianca for lunch in the break room. After we ate, we went to the gym and then completed our workday. She and Jack headed home while Deanna and I met for dinner at Bacino's.

"I want to ask you something," she said.

"Go ahead."

"I won't be upset or anything if you say 'no', but would you like some company tonight? No pressure."

"OK to just say what I'm thinking and feeling?"

"I wouldn't expect you to do anything else."

"I don't know the answer to that question, and I don't know when I'll know. I know I appear to be on a completely even keel, but I'm not sure that's the case. In fact, I'm sure it's not the case, but things are slowly getting better. It's obviously something I've thought about, but something just feels off. If I had to speculate, it's devotion to Keiko, which I know is illogical."

The waiter arrived to take our order and immediately brought back our drinks and small salads.

"OK to explore that?" Deanna asked.

"Yes, because I do have to sort out the future."

"First, I think you'll agree that our situation -- you and me -- is different from pretty much anyone else because you're my patron."

I nodded, "Yes."

"And you would agree that we care for each other but have no particular romantic interest, and we're both OK with that?"

"More than one person has indicated that they believe you're in love with me."

"People believe all sorts of things, including invisible sky gods who grant wishes, and UFOs! Maybe it appears that way to them, but appearances can be deceiving."

"This sounds very much like a conversation with Haley where I pointed out that it wasn't possible to know someone else's emotions or thoughts, and there would be no way to distinguish between being in love and not being in love if the actions were what she thought indicated love. She rejected that, saying that she would know."

"I call BS!" Deanna declared. "I don't even understand my own emotions, which we discussed when you asked about my painting, so I'm not sure how she could say she'd know if you behaved in the same way as someone who was 'in love'. I hope it's OK to say this, but I'm reasonably sure you loved Keiko with all your heart, but you weren't 'in love' with her. Do you know about the various words for love in Greek?"

"No."

"They have like eight words, with varying meanings, and what's interesting is there really isn't a word for romantic love because that's actually a concept from feudal times. The three main ones are: self-giving, self-sacrificing love; erotic love; and brotherly love. I think the first one best describes you and Keiko."

"Of those three, I'd say that's probably right. I would have done anything for her."

"And she for you. Part of our problem is that, as a society, we've determined that there must be some relationship between romantic love and sex. Anyone who has sex just for fun is looked down on, and society actively discourages it. But the reality is that without the externally imposed system, there is no direct relationship between a desire to fuck and being in love. And the physical pleasure derived has zero to do with love and everything to do with learning proper technique.

"Where it gets tricky is psychological or emotional fulfillment, which is a very different thing. As I see it, it has zero to do with how good the sex is and more to do with how you feel about your partner. I don't think I'm going out on a limb when I say that the limitations brought on by Keiko's illness limited the physical satisfaction but probably increased the emotional satisfaction."

"I can't dispute that," I said. "It certainly matches my experience over the past six months."

"Keiko knew that you weren't a romantic, but I also saw you make romantic gestures, which she appreciated. She wasn't a romantic, either. In fact, none of the girls at the house are. If I can delve a bit deeper, the girls who bailed all expected and needed romance; the girls who kept seeing you didn't. Well, there's one exception, but she's such a special case I'm not sure how to describe it."

"Violet?"

"Yes. She's clearly in love with you, but she can't escape her traumatic childhood. She's the one girl you know with whom going to bed together, if it were possible, would be a lifetime, monogamous commitment."

"I agree."

The waiter brought our pizza, and we dug in.

"I think what I'm trying to say is that neither of us is going to assign inappropriate meaning to spending the night together, if you're ready for that."

"That is the real question," I replied. "I think I'm still in the 'if' stage, not the 'when' stage, and I'm not sure about how to make the transition or if I even should."

"Setting aside my request, you are not a monk, and I think you'll do yourself grave psychological harm trying to be one. I know it's only been three weeks, but you need to figure out how to move from 'if' to 'when'. Unfortunately, I'm not sure how to break the cycle because I've never known you to act contrary to your nature."

"If I can read between the lines," I said thoughtfully, "you're saying that going to bed together won't solve the problem because I can't go to bed with you until I solve the problem."

"Bingo," Deanna replied.

"Let me think about it, and I'll give you an answer after my modeling session."

"OK."

Having a conundrum to mull over made the modeling session seem so much shorter than the one on Monday night. The posing was more comfortable, as Alex and I were sitting on a small sofa rather than stools. I had still worn my suit, and Claire had explained the 'storyline' such that Alexa and I had met in a bar and were now back at my place. It was up to each of the students to sketch the

details of my mythical apartment, which would give real variety to their collective work.

"Give me some more time to think about it," I said to Deanna when we left the studio just after 9:00pm.

"No pressure."



January 19, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Thursday, I met Dean Pullman in his office at 11:40am, as we had agreed. After introductions, I handed him my job description, and he explained the program.

"We're piloting a BA degree in business that is operated as an independent study program. You complete eight core courses, then work with a faculty advisor to develop goals and criteria for work that is equivalent to coursework. After an evaluation, there may be additional course requirements to cover areas where your work experience does not give you the equivalent knowledge you would need.

"I have your transcript, and so far you've received A's in Financial Accounting, Computer Science 100, Math 101, and Statistics 200. You're currently enrolled in International Finance 310, and according to Professor Baum, you could probably teach the class, though I suspect there would be some weaknesses in areas where you don't focus in the course of doing your job.

"To complete your core courses, you need to take English 101 and a second humanities course with a writing component. The best options are history or sociology. Once you complete those, the independent study program will begin. It's structured such that you could graduate two years after you complete the

core courses, assuming your work qualifies, which Professor Baum believes it does."

"How does tuition work?"

"According to your records, your tuition is reimbursed by your employer. Does that benefit include two classes per semester?"

"Yes."

"Then you won't have any trouble. The tuition for the independent study program is two courses per semester over six semesters. You'll receive grade reports, and your tuition bill will list sequential course numbers so as not to cause a problem with your personnel department."

"How much time outside work would be involved?"

"In terms of coming to campus, whatever schedule you work out with your advisor. There will be assignments, often simply writing reports on some aspect of your job. One example might be an analysis of the effects of changes in nominal interest rates on the stock and bond markets. I believe you would have little trouble producing something like that, assuming Professor Baum's assessment is correct."

"That's a large part of what I do for a living," I said. "What do I need to do?"

"Complete the English core course and a humanities course, then come back to see me, and we'll assign you a faculty advisor."

"I'll check with the Registrar about those two courses and, if possible, complete them during the summer."

"If you have trouble getting into either course, let me know, and I'll fix it with the Registrar so you can begin the independent study during the Fall semester."

"Thank you, Dean Pullman."

We shook hands, and I left his office, heading back to the office where I was at lunch at my desk while continuing my research. Late in the afternoon, Will Waterston called to let me know he was faxing the paperwork to roll my current mortgage into the one for my investment properties to Nelson. I thanked him, then called Nelson.

"There's a minor complication," Nelson said once I let him know about the paperwork. "The title to your house is currently in your name, and we'll need to transfer it to Yuusuke Holdings. That's not difficult; I just need to file the necessary paperwork with the Recorder of Deeds. Given you're the sole partner in the corporation, and you take passthrough income, it's just a matter of changing the title."

"OK. What about the condo?"

"There are some advantages of having it owned by the corporation, though you'll need to speak to Nancy King and Robert Black to get the details. When do you expect to close on the condo?"

"February 29th," I replied. "I already ordered the inspection using the same inspector I used for my investment properties."

"Do you have the loan commitment letter?"

"I'll have it tomorrow, most likely. I have a meeting with Noel Spurgeon in the morning to discuss it. That's basically a formality, but as with everything, you never know."

"Are you going to add the house to the management deal you have with Kasia Pucinski?"

"No. Jack and Kristy are going to rent it, and I see no point in paying her to manage it. When they eventually move out, then I'll do that."

"OK. Once I have the paperwork, I'll review it. I suspect it will be substantially the same, but I'll review it for any changes in terms or provisions."

"Thanks."

I ended the call and turned back to my Bloomberg terminal but was interrupted by Tony, John Peters, and Bill Young coming into my office.

"Hawaiian Airlines," Tony said.

"What about it?" I inquired.

"It's trading at about five bucks, and Bill thinks it's a breakout stock next quarter. John isn't sure, and neither am I, so we came to you to decide if we add it to tomorrow's analyst report."

"Break it down for me, please, Bill."

"They've lost money the past two years but just implemented a significant cost-cutting program."

"What market?"

"Interisland only at the moment, but if they can get their finances in order, they'll begin charter services in the South Pacific. My assessment is that the cost-cutting will succeed, and I have a price target of between \$9 and \$10 by the end of June."

"John?"

"Airlines are risky, and deregulation is hurting the major carriers as smaller competitors eat into their profitable routes. Could they turn it around? Sure. Will they? I think that's a long shot."

"Tony?"

"The one difference here is that they don't have much competition for interisland routes, so they have time to get their financial house in order. And those charter flights will be very lucrative. That said, John is right about the sector in general."

I considered for a minute before answering.

"This is shaping up to be a bad year for stocks, so if we can find a stock that will double in a quarter, that would be a huge win. Write it up with Bill's view as the lead and John's as the counter."

"What weight do you want to assign to each opinion?" Tony asked.

"Given the division and uncertainty, call it 50/50, but lead with Bill's opinion. The traders will bitch, but sometimes it really is a coin flip. Bill, continue to follow Hawaiian and update your analysis on a daily basis, but listen to John's counterpoint. The traders will have to make their own call unless we can firm it up."

"Thanks," Tony said.

Bill and John left, but Tony stayed.

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

I held up my finger and typed 'HA' into Bloomberg to get the current price. I checked the volume and float, then dialed Joel Steinem's number.

"I need 500,000 shares of Hawaiian Airlines at no more than $5\frac{3}{8}$ a share without moving the market. If you can't find a large block, then do what you can to mitigate driving up the price."

"That's awfully thinly traded," he said.

"I know, which is why I'm not looking for more shares."

"What do you know?"

"I'm placing a bet," I said. "You'll see the full details in tomorrow's analyst report."

"Let me work," he said. "I'll see if I can find someone with a block they want to unload in the $5\frac{1}{4}$ range."

"Thanks."

I hung up and looked up at Tony, "Does that answer your question?"

He laughed, "Yeah. You're that sure?"

"No, but if Bill is right, I clear a million on that trade; if not, I can unload it without losing much, so long as Joel Steinem can find me the block of shares. I'm offering a 25¢ premium over the last ask, so there's a good chance."

"Still a gutsy call."

"This is a year where gutsy calls are going to be the difference between winners and losers. Last year, it was position on the performance chart; this year it's finding a way to make money in what looks to be shaping up as a bad year. Reagan is going to jaw the Fed, but there is no chance Volcker is going to cut rates in the face of inflation unless the Republicans offer significant spending reductions, and that's an electoral loser, even if it makes financial sense."

"Tech stocks are not looking so hot, either. I know you bought a block of Apple on speculation about the new computer being introduced, but everyone is sour on the entire sector."

"I think that's shortsighted. What Bianca and Steve are doing could be applied to just about every industry, and every job is going to involve working with computers except the manual trades. And even they'll use them for things like inventory control."

"You're repeating my analysis to me!"

"Because it's accurate! And you know what happens when you follow the herd!"

"You end up walking through shit!"

"Exactly. You know as well as I do we make most of our money when we're doing the opposite of the herd or are far enough in front that we can't be trampled by it."

Tony left my office, and I went back to analyzing the latest global trade and foreign exchange numbers, trying to find something -- anything -- to give us an edge.

XXXV. Respect Not Fear

January 19, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Just before 5:00pm on Thursday, Joel Steinem called me.

"I found a block of stock," he said, "but I don't think you're going to like it."

"Tell me."

"Half a million shares at a $\frac{1}{2}$ over the last ask; the entire block, take it or leave it. There are no other large blocks, and further calls are likely to move the market or require an even higher premium."

That would use up all my cash reserves, though I could get the extra cash from Murray Matheson just by asking for it. The question was, did I want to take that large of a position? My rough calculation based on the 52-week high and low was that I would put about \$500,000 at risk to make \$2 million. In my mind, that was a reasonable bet, and losing half a mil wouldn't cripple me. It was also a 'now or never' situation, as once others started buying, the price would go up.

"Go big or go home," I said. "I'll take it."

"I'll call and confirm. It'll be a private trade, so nothing on the ticker."

"Which is exactly what I want. Call me back, please."

"Ten minutes."

He actually called back six minutes later to confirm the trade.

"What will you take for those shares when someone comes begging?" he asked.

"9½, and that's firm for now."

"Compliance wants your documentation."

"They'll have it in tomorrow's analyst report," I replied. "It's a straight trade based on public information -- announced cost-cutting and minimal competition on interisland routes. Thanks for the assist."

"You're welcome."

I hung up, and about sixty seconds later, Murray Matheson appeared at my door.

"What the fuck?" he asked. "Hawaiian fucking Airlines? Half a million at a 10% premium? Based on?"

"Cost-cutting and lack of competition. It's a slightly better than fifty / fifty shot, but the downside is somewhat limited. You'll see our guidance in tomorrow's analyst report."

"Frontrunning the entire firm?"

"It's a private trade, so it won't move the market, and I didn't suck up any excess shares. You'd have done the same thing."

"Fuck you, Kane!" he growled, but he clearly wasn't angry. "You fight dirty!"

"I warned Noel that I was going to try harder this year."

"Oh, so it's 'Noel' now, is it?"

"Per his instructions, I'm to use 'Murray' and 'Noel' in private."

"Just what I need! A punk kid gunning for me!"

"Would either you or Mr. Spurgeon have it any other way?"

"Hell, no! Keep up the good work! Is it true you bought a condo in the building?"

"Yes. About 15% below assessed value. I really like the commute."

He laughed, "I bet! You're moving up in the world, Kane. Keep it up, and the sky's the limit!"

He left, and I shut down my computers and trading terminal. I moved all the papers from my desk into a drawer and locked it. Bianca and I left the office together and took the elevator down to the lobby, where we met Jack. Thirty minutes later, we walked into the house, and I changed into comfortable clothes.

Later, after dinner, I asked Bianca to join me in the Japanese room for a private chat.

"What's up?"

"Something Deanna said last night, and I've been mulling it over and want your opinion."

"Of course."

"She asked to spend the night last night, though with no pressure and with an admission that it had only been a short time since Keiko died."

"You slept alone unless she joined you later and left before morning."

"I slept alone. When Deanna and I discussed it, she made a point which I can distill into the idea that to move forward, I need to go to bed with someone, but I can't go to bed with someone until I move forward. Or, even shorter, I need to figure out how to move from 'if' to 'when' when I'm not sure I should."

"First, I'm not surprised Deanna offered. Second, I can't imagine anyone safer at the moment because the terms of your relationship are clearly defined and have been since you became her patron. Sex is, in effect, immaterial. Third, it has only been about three weeks, so I'm totally not surprised you demurred last night. I think that was probably wise. Have you given much thought to how the future might look?"

"Not really. The confusing thing is Keiko expressly told me what she felt I should do, but for some reason, it feels wrong to do that. I believe we discussed it, but when Keiko tried to get me to promise to find someone to be with, I pushed back, saying that I, in effect, had to keep my own counsel."

"I recall the discussion afterwards, and I totally get why you said that, and, honestly, given it has only been three weeks, I'm not surprised. I think there's a key question you need to answer that will be instructive."

"What's that?"

"Would you feel like you were cheating on Keiko if you and Deanna slept together? And would where it happened matter?"

"You mean 'our bed' versus, say, on Deanna's futon?"

"Yes."

"I don't know," I replied. "In fact, I think those three words sum things up nicely -- I don't know the best way forward."

"The key is to not allow that to paralyze you in the long term. If it were six months from now, I'd say sleep with Deanna and get back in the saddle, so to speak. Now? I wouldn't be too concerned. On the other hand, maybe you need that kind of closeness. Perhaps Deanna detected that need and is offering a solution. And, as I said, Deanna couldn't be any safer given the parameters of your relationship."

"I hear you," I replied. "Let me think about it."

"Of course. What did Mr. Matheson want today?"

"To give me grief about a big play I made. You've seen the forecasts -- what am I saying? You ran the scenarios! I found a play that should double my money, and I got into it before it hits the analyst report tomorrow."

"Is he pissed?"

"No, of course not! It's good for the firm. I expect to get similar grief from Noel Spurgeon in the morning."

"What's the upside?"

"Two mil."

"And if you're wrong?"

"The downside is around five hundred grand. I can absorb that. Obviously, I'd like to double my money for the overall 2% gain."

"Your goal is to beat Noel Spurgeon, isn't it?"

"Obviously! I told him during my compensation meeting that I'd try harder this year. Today was me trying harder."



January 20, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Late on Friday morning, Julie called me to let me know Noel Spurgeon wanted to see me. I went right up to his office, and Julie asked me to go right in.

"Your new mortgage is approved," he said. "You negotiated a good deal, considering they paid \$280,000 grand in '80 and spent \$50 grand remodeling."

"Do you know what happened?"

"Divorce and neither could buy the other out."

Which, I felt, explained the negotiations. More than likely, I had been negotiating with a pair of attorneys -- one for 'him' and one for 'her', and at least one of them had felt 'firm' didn't mean 'firm'.

"How do you know the details."

"A former classmate of mine from Wharton who was a senior exec at the CME. He's at NYSE now in New York. Are you vouching for Jack Clinton?"

That was typical of Noel Spurgeon -- no transition, just switching topics, and everyone was expected to keep up.

"Yes," I said firmly. "Both for the runner job and his recommendation for his old job."

"Do I have to say it?" he asked.

I was certain he didn't approve of Naomi taking over the mailroom, and I was also certain he knew I'd stand my ground if pressed.

"Do I have to argue with you?" I replied.

A wry smile spread across Noel Spurgeon's face.

"You really aren't afraid of me anymore, are you?"

"No. I have a lot to learn from you, and I respect you, but I'm not afraid of you."

"Good. Murray came to talk to me earlier about your move on Hawaiian."

I had mulled over the move on the drive to work and had a pretty good idea of what it was he was going to say.

"He's concerned I'm holding back research so that I can, in effect, front-run the other traders."

"First, it was a bold move -- the kind of move Murray or I would make. That's the kind of aggressiveness we need. Did you hold back the research so you could make that play?"

"No. Kirov brought in Peters and Young yesterday afternoon because they had differing opinions, and the three of them could not reach a consensus. You saw my resolution in this morning's report. I was confident enough in Peters'

assessment that I made the trade. I absolutely had the information before anyone else, and there's no way around that based on the role you've assigned to me."

"So it's my fault?" he asked. "Like Eve blaming the snake in the garden?"

"I'm not up on my talking snake mythology, but someone once told me that Adam actually blamed God, not Eve or the snake."

"That is what they taught me in Sunday school."

"It's not about finding blame or fault; it's a feature of my unique position, and right now, being Head of Research is the role that best suits Spurgeon Capital. Who bitched?"

"Direct as always! Chau and Singh. You see their point, I'm sure."

"Yes, but prior to last Fall, they wouldn't have even known about it this morning unless one of their guys found it, and Peters worked for Thiele, not Chau or Singh. It's your call, Noel," I said. "I can wait until the information is published in the future if that will calm them down."

"What happened to bold and aggressive?"

"It does Spurgeon Capital no good to have two highly successful portfolio managers not trust the Research Department to provide timely, accurate analysis. I promised to run Research for you, and that's my main role. In this case, it wouldn't have made much of a difference, and frankly, they wouldn't have moved on this trade. Nobody did, actually, except you. So it's not *this* analysis and trade, it's the principle. Those guys are my clients, and I shouldn't front-run them any more than they should front-run their clients."

"Do you think you were wrong to make the trade?"

"I do not. No firm rule or exchange rule prevented me from doing that. It's a question of trust, and I need to consider that for the overall success of the firm. This is a unique situation in the history of Spurgeon -- a licensed professional who is an analyst rather than a full-time trader, broker, or portfolio manager. You asked me to run research, so that's what I need to do, and I need to do it ethically and in a trustworthy manner. You reinforced that point in our compensation conversation."

"I don't want you to be less aggressive."

"I believe I could resolve situations such as this by simply waiting until the analyst reports are distributed. That won't disadvantage me in any way, and it's how things will be once you're confident Tony can take over Research."

"You know it's more than that, right? You have a real knack for it. It's the difference between people like Murray and me and Thiele, Singh, and Chau. Don't get me wrong -- they are very good. But there is a significant difference between guys who can formulate a strategy based on analyst reports and guys who feel the market."

"The guys who make the real money have what amounts to a sixth sense. I'm not saying they just magically know, but for them, they can see the market, almost as if it were a living, breathing thing, and know what it's going to do most of the time. Do we get it wrong? Yes, of course, but if we never get it wrong, we're being too conservative. Get it wrong too many times, and you prove you don't have that sixth sense, you've just been lucky."

"Take HA, for example. You listened to three opinions and instantly knew the right move, and you made it. You made a call most guys here wouldn't make because it *appears* to be a 50/50 bet. But it's not, really. Your expected value is four times your exposure. You only need to be right once every four times to

break even and twice to make money. On a fifty / fifty bet, if you've calculated the odds correctly, you should be right twice. Do you know the odds on the so-called 'even money' bets at roulette?"

I nodded, "The even-money bets -- odd or even; black or red -- pay two to one, but they aren't *actually* even money bets because the house numbers -- 0 and, in the US, 00 -- reduce the odds from 50% to roughly 47.5%. Your expected value on that so-called 'even-money' bet is actually a loss of about 5¢ on every dollar wagered."

"Draw a parallel."

I thought for a moment and nodded.

"The house numbers are outliers or unexpected events. They reduce your expected value but cannot be predicted any more than you can predict the number on a roulette wheel. They teach us that a truly 50/50 bet isn't really 50/50. The thing is, those events are, by definition, unknowable. If it truly is a 50/50 thing, then you absolutely have to hedge your bets, reducing your upside but protecting against a major loss. Casinos frown on that and do their best to ensure you *can't* do it."

"Exactly. Now, tell me how you decided."

"I calculated the expected value against the risk and acted."

"And you did that in your head instantly, right?"

"Yes."

"And then didn't hesitate to execute the deal. That's the difference between you and Singh or Chau."

"So, do you want me trading or running research?" I asked.

"I need to clone you! I haven't changed my opinion. You make more money overall for Spurgeon as Head of Research. And, as promised, your bonuses will compensate you for the opportunity cost. I assume you're OK with that?"

"I am."

"Thanks for being a team player. I'll talk to Clinton in a few minutes about the new role. You're positive about Kasparov?"

"Does Mandy Peterson do a good job?" I countered. "And is Pérez doing a good job? I get the whole 'swinging dick' culture, as they call traders in London, but Kasparov will be in a support role, not joining the fraternity."

"You don't agree?"

"Let me pose a hypothetical question -- is there, somewhere in the industry, a female trader better than Enderlee?"

"That's a low bar!" Noel Spurgeon retorted.

"I didn't hire him."

"Fuck you, Kane!" he growled. "I should toss you out on your ass!"

"But you won't because, in addition to knowing I'm right, the last thing you want is a 'yes, man'. A 'yes man' with a license is an expense with no value added. You may as well be running a retail brokerage at that point. There's more value added by a mailroom clerk than a 'yes man' with a securities license."

"I'll point out one thing, then I have to make some calls -- no female I've ever met could have said that to me. Go make me some money and think that through."

He moved behind his desk, signaling the meeting was over, so I left and returned to 29 and found a message to call Beth. I picked up the phone and dialed her number.

"Bev packed up and left today," she said. "She returned the key. I have no idea where she's headed."

"I'm not surprised, and I couldn't predict what she's going to do, though I can't imagine she'd give up on Heather so easily. Thanks for letting me know."

"You're welcome. Let's have dinner at our usual place next week, if that works for you."

"How about Tuesday?"

"Sounds good! See you then."

After I said 'goodbye', I ended the call and contemplated what to do with the information Beth had provided. As irrationally as Bev was behaving, I could actually see her driving to Goshen, confronting her mom, and trying to take Heather. That would absolutely not be in Heather's best interests at this point, so I picked up the phone and dialed.

"Newton residence; Julie speaking."

"Hi, Julie. It's Jonathan."

"Hi, Jonathan! Have you heard from Bev?"

"No, but Beth called to let me know Bev packed her things, returned the apartment key, and left. I have no idea where she's headed, but I'm concerned she might try to take Heather."

"You really think that?" Julie asked, sounding worried.

"I think she's behaving irrationally, and given how angry she was with me about giving Heather to you, I think it's possible. I'm at work and busy, so I need to keep this brief, but I wanted to warn you."

"Thank you. I'm not sure if you heard, but the newspaper said Glen had waived extradition and will be returned to Ohio tomorrow."

That might also be a reason for Bev to go to Ohio, but I had no clue what she was thinking.

"Thanks for letting me know."

After saying 'goodbye', I ended the call and began my weekly portfolio analysis, using a new program Steve Smith had created for that purpose. It immediately flagged that I was overweighted in transportation stocks, which made me chuckle because I owned exactly one. That was enough, though, as my investment profile did not include transportation stocks, with the target percentage set to zero. That didn't mean not holding any stocks in the sector, just that they were special circumstances.

The program properly identified HA as a portfolio risk, as it accounted for just under 2% of my AUM. It also flagged my December gold puts as being uncovered, which meant they counted as a liability, as I had no gold to actually deliver. I could cover them with call options, but that would eat up a few percentage points of my profit, and I felt the risk that spot gold in December would be priced higher than my puts was small enough so as not to be worth the

cost of the insurance. If world events took a bad turn, I could buy calls at any point to protect my position from further losses.

I noticed something missing, so I used the intercom to ask Steve Smith to come to my office.

"What's up?" he asked.

"My latest trade depleted my available cash to a critical level, and that should have been flagged," I said. "I think you counted the money used for the rolling treasury reinvestments as available because the money hit this morning, and the treasury purchases won't hit the system until the end of the day today."

"So it appears you have more money than you actually do."

"And the same problem will occur when I have the redemptions so I can transfer funds for the pension plan. They'll sit in the sweep account for a few days before they move."

"All those numbers are variable, and you don't have specific treasuries dedicated to specific purposes, right?"

"Correct."

Steve frowned, "That's going to be a tough nut to crack with the data we receive from the mainframe. You don't know the transfer amounts for the pension plan until a few days beforehand, right?"

"Correct. They send us the transfer request five business days before the money is wired to their account."

"What if we use a rolling average of outbound cash transfers as a floor? That way, it'll be flagged if the current account balance is insufficient to meet the estimated outflows. It's imprecise, but it's better than what we have right now, which doesn't account for it."

"That sounds like a good first step. Discuss it with Bianca and make it happen!"

"Anything else?"

"Not at the moment; that just jumped out at me because I made a very large trade late yesterday afternoon. Keep up the good work!"

"Thanks!"

He left, and I completed my portfolio analysis. I confirmed I would have sufficient funds to transfer without having to sell any of my holdings, then met Bianca for lunch. After lunch, we went to the gym, and after our workouts, we returned to the office and completed our workday. Bianca headed home to go out with Juliette and some of their friends while I met Jack in the lobby to wait for Kristy and CeCi for our usual Friday night outing.

"I got the job," Jack said. "I start Monday."

"Congrats. What about the mailroom?"

"Naomi will take over. Mr. Nelson was on the fence, but your endorsement of her to the Big Boss made it happen."

"Noel and I sort of got into it over that."

"Noel'? Seriously?"

"In private, anyway. If I remember correctly, Spurgeon will pay for your license exam after two years, right?"

"Yes. And lend me the money to buy a seat after five, with Mark Benton's endorsement."

"Is that the way you want to go?"

"I was thinking that it would be a good thing for our future firm to have a seat at the CBOT."

"That's an interesting idea we should explore, but here come the girls."

CeCi and Kristy came up to us, with Kristy giving Jack a kiss and CeCi offering me a hug, which I accepted. We had dinner at Shinnick's Pub in Bridgeport, then went to *Scarface*, starring Al Pacino. We all enjoyed the movie, though none of us particularly cared for the excessive violence, especially the chainsaw dismemberment scene.

"I think that movie used 'fuck' more times than I've heard it in my entire life!" CeCi observed as we headed to Oberweis for ice cream.

"According to a review I read, narcotics officers said the film is pretty accurate," Kristy said.

"It was similar in Chicago during Prohibition, minus the chainsaws but with more machine guns," Jack said. "It was indiscriminate violence that led to the crackdown. Before very public killings, such as the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, the local politicians more or less ignored booze and prostitution."

"Al Capone was a capitalist, providing goods and services for the people of Chicago," I said with a grin.

The other three laughed.

"That is such a Jonathan take on things," CeCi declared.

"If it were up to me, I'd legalize most drugs and tax 'em. The government would be swimming in cash like the drug cartels! Two years ago, cocaine surpassed coffee as the chief export from Colombia. It's a huge international business, and the government is losing the battle. Better to legalize it, regulate it, and tax it. That would massively reduce street violence and the power of US street gangs as well."

"Jonathan Kane for President!" Kristy declared.

"No thanks!" I declared. "That's the last job I'd want! And why would I take a major salary cut to gain all those headaches!"

The other three laughed as we walked into Oberweis. After our ice cream, we headed home, and I went to bed alone.



January 21, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday morning, as I drove towards Violet's house, I thought about the peck on the lips she'd given me after our trip to collect Heather from the Border Patrol in North Dakota. By the time I arrived at her house, I had decided to just let it be unless Violet said something or she repeated it.

"Hi!" she exclaimed, greeting me at the door with a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

"Hi!"

She let me in, and we went straight to the kitchen to eat breakfast.

"Have you heard from Bev?" Violet asked.

"Yes. She called and was very upset when I told her what I'd done. She called me names and hung up. Then, yesterday, Beth called and let me know that Bev had packed her things, turned in the key, and left. I have no idea where she's going or what she's doing. And at this point, given Heather is safe with her grandparents, there's nothing left to do."

"What if Bev were to ask you for help?"

"I seriously doubt she would, but I'd have to decline because I no longer trust her. I've done everything I could possibly do, and there is nothing left to do until she gets help for her problem. And even then, our relationship is sundered."

"If Heather hadn't been with Bev, what would you have done?"

"Nothing, because I have the strong feeling there is more to the story, and I don't believe she'd tell me the truth about it."

"I think that makes sense. How are you doing otherwise?"

"Pretty good overall. Work is great, as are my friends. I miss Keiko, and that's weighing on my heart."

"You seemed better after you cried in Minneapolis."

"It helped to let it out, and your cuddling helped as well."

"I'm glad."

"There is one important thing that happened this week -- I bought a condo in the Hancock Center."

"Why?"

"To move into it! The house was always an investment property. Jack and Kristy will rent it from me, and the rest of us will move into the condo sometime after the end of February."

"I guess I don't understand. Your house is totally awesome!"

"And the condo is...awesomer."

Violet laughed, "I don't think that's a word!"

"And yet, it communicated exactly what I wanted to communicate!"

"I'm glad to see you being goofy again."

"It's a struggle, but I'm working on it."

"What are we doing after your class?"

"Anything you want," I replied.

"Lunch at Mr. Greek, then the Museum of Science and Industry."

"Sounds good. I do need to leave a few minutes early to see my professor because I missed class last week."

"I totally understand."

We finished eating, and Violet offered to clean up by herself so that I could get to my meeting with Professor Baum. Because it was so cold out -- -13°F -- I drove to the campus for my meeting. When I walked into his office, I handed him the assignment from the previous week, and we discussed the assignment I'd missed. I also let him know I'd spoken to Dean Pullman and that I was going to sign up for two classes for Summer semester so that I could begin the independent study program in the Fall.

Four hours later, I was back at Violet's house. It was still extremely cold -- -1F° -- so we drove to Greek Town to have lunch at Mr. Greek Gyros on Halsted. We each had the gyro platter, and after we ate, we headed to Hyde Park to visit the Museum of Science and Industry. We had a nice afternoon, and for dinner, we went to Medici, a coffeehouse that served food near the University of Chicago.

After dinner, I drove her home, double parked, and walked her to the door. I wondered what she would do, but she simply hugged me and kissed my cheek as she usually did, then unlocked the door and went into the house. I said 'good night', then walked back to my car for the drive home.



January 22, 1984, Super Bowl Sunday, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday, Costas, Trevor, Dustin, Archie, Lily, Jim, Violet, and my friends from Jeri's dinner group joined us at the house to watch the defending Super Bowl Champion Redskins take on the Raiders, who were playing in Los Angeles, having moved from Oakland in 1982.

Fortunately, the outdoor temperatures had improved, so while they were still below freezing, they were not brutally cold, and that allowed us to set up the grill in the garage so we could have burgers and brats. Bianca and Juliette had

done the shopping on Saturday, which I appreciated because it had allowed me to spend time with Violet.

The Raiders dominated the first half, taking a 21-3 lead into the locker room. I had, because I didn't want to miss the Apple ad, taken my breaks during play rather than during commercials. The ad finally ran during the third quarter, and it blew me away.

"On January 24th, Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you'll see why 1984 won't be like 1984."

"What do you think?" Jack asked.

"I think my purchase of a big block of Apple stock is going to pay off."

"Will you buy one?" Bianca asked.

"Probably, though, I need to get an IBM PC for the house, something I meant to do a few months ago because I switched."

"I'd say you had good reason to set that aside," Costas said.

"Yes, but as you've made clear, I need to regain my focus while honoring Keiko's memory."

"I'm glad you had everyone over today; I was worried you might cancel."

"I had briefly thought about it, but I figured you wouldn't have let me get away with it."

"For your own good," Costas replied.

"I know, and I appreciate it."

The Raiders continued to dominate, scoring two touchdowns in the third quarter and a field goal in the fourth quarter, against a touchdown for the Redskins, though the extra point attempt was blocked. The final score was 38--9, with the Raiders scoring the most points ever by an AFC team.

Our friends left once the game was over, with Lily and John giving Violet a ride home.



January 24, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Tuesday, after a productive day at work, which included a call to order a new Macintosh computer, I met Beth at Eli's The Place for Steak.

"How have you been?" she asked.

"OK, for the most part. I'm modeling for one of Deanna's art classes."

"Nude?" Beth asked with an arched eyebrow.

"Not so far, but eventually. There's a female model, and we pose together. Last night, it was standing holding hands."

"I'd love to be a fly on the wall when you slip off your briefs the first time!"

"You've seen it!" I grinned.

"Yeah, but *they* haven't! And it's impressive. Did you hear from Bev at all?"

"No, and as I said, I don't expect to. I'm sure my mom will update me when I speak to her next weekend."

"So, like the good Jewish son calling him mom every week!"

"Every other week," I chuckled. "We did discuss that stereotype in the past."

"We did! Anything new in your life?"

"I ordered an Apple Macintosh computer today to go along with the IBM PC I bought yesterday. And I bought a condo in the Hancock Center. We'll move into the condo in March."

"Your year-end bonus must have been ridiculous!"

"It was very good, and this year should be even higher total comp."

"Is it too soon to make a silly comment?"

"No, because I know you would never, ever be malicious."

"You're circumcised, so the big impediment to being Jewish is gone!"

I chuckled, "Except for the bigger one -- believing in a deity."

"There is that. So, getting part of your dick cut off is a lower barrier than believing in G-d?"

"Given I was a newborn and I have no recollection, I'd say the answer has to be 'yes'. If it were now, HELL no!"

Beth laughed, "I hear you on that one! How are you doing with what we discussed?"

"I think the best thing to say is it's a work in progress. I had some fairly deep conversations with Bianca and Deanna, and my conclusion was, in effect, I'm doing what you warned me about, and I'm trying to figure out the way forward."

"It's only been five weeks, so it's understandable. My concern was longer-term, not immediate. Is today too soon? I'd say it is. Is two years too long? Probably."

"How do I break out of a cycle where I can't act because I need to solve a problem that would be solved by acting when I'm in an 'if' stage, not a 'when' stage, and I'm not sure how to change that."

"As convoluted as that sentence is, I actually understand your point. And that is exactly what I was getting at. Have you spoken to a counselor?"

"No, because it's not impacting my work or my friendships, and, as you say, it's probably too soon."

"I can offer a suggestion, if you want to hear it."

"Tie you up and ravish you?" I asked with a grin.

Beth laughed, "In my dreams! But I don't think that would turn out well, at least not now."

"I'd say you're right. What's your suggestion?"

"Is there a girl who is interested in you, with whom you've never gone out? I mean, not even for coffee?"

There was -- Kayleigh at Hart-Lincoln.

"I know of one; why?"

"Pick a day, someday not too far in the future, and call and ask her for coffee. And stick to that -- just coffee."

"I could do that, but how does that help?"

"Because you don't have a pre-existing relationship, and you don't cause any harm by going for coffee and not seeing her again if you're uncomfortable or you don't click or you aren't ready to date. With me, or Deanna, or CeCi, or any of the other girls, if things go badly because of your internal struggles, it could mess up the relationship."

"That actually makes sense, though I think I would need to wait about three weeks before doing something like that."

"Why three weeks?"

"Keiko's interment is February 14th," I replied.

"Which is when you'll experience closure, even if it takes time for it to permeate your psyche. Are you going to do it?"

"I want to think about it, OK?"

"Yes, of course. As I said, no pressure. The physical part of our relationship was fun, and I'm still single enough to do that, but I agree with you that it's too soon."

"Single enough?" I asked.

"I'd say there are strong odds I'll marry either Joshua or Jeremey, but I'm not ready to decide, and you remember what I said about that."

"So you have another outlet?" I asked.

"I believe I mentioned I had other options if I needed them. There's a guy I've seen off and on since we both graduated High School. He's a confirmed bachelor for life -- doesn't want kids and doesn't want to be limited to one girl."

"That sounds like what Bianca and Ellie were suggesting for me."

"And you, like nearly every other person on the planet, rejected it in favor of a traditional, monogamous marriage. Your friend Stuart has that basic idea, right?"

"Yes. I seriously doubt he'll ever marry, and he has a number of girlfriends, though there's one he sees more than the others."

"Back to the condo -- tell me about it, please."

I gave her the details, and she shook her head.

"You SO need to be Jewish!"

"Gold digging?" I asked with a smirk.

"You know what attracted me to you at first!" she said with a soft laugh. "The thing that will eventually be on display in the art class! Good looking, good shape, and hung was the sweet spot! You were attracted to the great bod with awesome tits and my fantastic personality. We get along great, we're really great in the sack, and pretty much see eye to eye on most things."

"But you can no more cross the cultural divide of religion than I could."

"Exactly," Beth agreed. "So we're great friends, past lovers, and might be lovers in the future, if circumstances allow. But in all seriousness, except for the specific

problem of religion, wouldn't you say, with no disrespect to Keiko, that we were about as close as possible to being a perfect couple?"

"Yes," I said with a grin, "despite the negative marketing you did!"

Beth laughed, "And you know full well that while stereotypes contain grains of truth, they aren't universally true! And you know I said many of those things to be silly, which was in part to defuse the religious divide so it didn't interfere with great company and great sex! I'm sure you agree."

"I do."

"Is it OK to tease a bit?"

"Yes; my mood has improved somewhat from two weeks ago."

"When you get to that point in the art class, I'd wager every single straight or bi female is going to offer to have sex with you! And probably the gay or bi guys as well!"

I laughed, "OK, but seriously, does it matter that much?"

"Yes and no. With equal skills, bigger is better, so long as it's not too big, like John Holmes..."

"I saw *Insatiable*. Honestly, it was boring."

"Given the amount of sex you were having, that doesn't surprise me. Anyway, there's also the psychological component, which could work both ways. It might scare a virgin, but an experienced girl will see it as a challenge. Psychology is probably the most important -- knowing how big it is -- given that babies traverse the same passage and nobody, not even John Holmes, is *that* big!"

"In my experience, even the shorter, thinner virgin girls weren't scared. In fact, I haven't run into girls who were scared or even all that nervous."

"I was thinking more about High School girls encountering their first erection and having it be eight thick inches. But you don't have a thing for fifteen-year-old girls, at least from what I can tell."

"Before Keiko, my lower limit was having graduated High School, though if the girl were eighteen and seemed mature, that would have been OK. I know seventeen is legal, but the four-year gap is pretty big, and a six-year gap to fifteen is absolutely too big."

"Yes and no. As you say, it depends on maturity, but there are plenty of guys who would jump at the chance to bang a fifteen-year-old virgin if she was willing, no matter how mature or immature she was."

And I knew at least one -- Noel Spurgeon. There were probably others, too, but I hadn't heard any specifics.

"So long as it's consensual, it's not my business, but I drew a pretty strong line."

"I don't disagree with you, though I think the age of consent should be fifteen as it is in most of Europe, if not lower. It's fourteen in Germany, for example. Germany is way more rational on alcohol laws as well. Teenagers drinking beer is no big deal, whereas here, you'd think the world was ending. And our wonderful Puritans here forced the drinking age to twenty-one. In Europe, the highest is eighteen, and in quite a few places, it's lower, especially for beer."

"So, what's the wager?" I asked with a grin.

Beth laughed, "It was a figure of speech! I'd say the odds would be tilted so heavily in favor of 'they do' that it would be a sucker bet, so to speak!"

She licked her lips and winked.

"Cute," I chuckled.

"I'm glad to see you can laugh. That's a good sign."

"Thanks."

XXXVI. Oxford Comma It Is!

January 25, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Wednesday, after a usual day at work, including a trip to the gym, I drove to Violet's house to pick her up for the game between the Hawks and the North Stars. As was our usual practice, we bought dinner at Chicago Stadium and ate before the game started. The Hawks got on the board twice in the first ten minutes, and things looked good, but then gave up two goals in quick succession so that the first period ended 2-2. The second period didn't go well, as the Hawks gave up two goals and didn't score, with the period ending with the North Stars up 4-2.

The North Stars scored their fifth consecutive goal early in the third period, with the Hawks getting one back about midway through. It wasn't enough, and despite scoring the first two goals, the Hawks lost to Minnesota 5-3.

"Five unanswered goals!" Violet groused on our way out of the stadium. "It was like Bannerman was asleep! Worse, Keith Acton scored shorthanded for Minnesota! Ugh!"

"That was pretty bad," I agreed. "They just don't seem to have it this year. They might make the playoffs, but I don't see them getting past the first round if they do."

"What's our next game? I don't remember. I mean, I have it on my calendar, but I'm drawing a blank."

"March 21st against the Jets. And I'll have playoff tickets for the first two rounds, if the Hawks make it."

"When can you get more games?"

"Next year. I have a shot at going deeper into the playoffs, too. Assuming, of course, they actually play well enough!

"When do you find out about baseball?"

"In another week. I'm going to try for Reds games, obviously. Who do you want to see?"

"BoSox, Tigers, or Brewers for Comiskey; Cards, Braves, or Pirates for Wrigley."

"I'll do my best!"

"Will me working at Spurgeon cause any problems with going to games?"

"Not in the sense that anyone would object, but they will assume we're sleeping together."

"Just because we go to games together?"

"And the general atmosphere, which I told you about."

"Well," Violet smirked, "if everyone is going to assume, then we may as well do it and enjoy it!"

I laughed, "You've said you like my goofiness, and I like it when you're relaxed and can tease."

"Who says I'm teasing?" Violet asked.

Her voice conveyed both that she was teasing and that she wasn't, and I wasn't quite sure how to respond because the last thing I wanted to do was hurt her or create some kind of problem between us. And that was besides my own issues. I was quiet for the twenty seconds it took us to get the car from where we'd been when she'd said that. We got into the car, I started it and pulled out of the parking spot.

"I'm sorry if what I said bothered you," Violet said quietly.

"You didn't," I replied. "I was thinking about what you said and how best to respond because I'm not sure you were just teasing."

Violet sighed, "I don't know, either. You know the problem, obviously."

"I do, and we can discuss it if you want, but I do have to say I'm not ready to do that with anyone, and I'm not sure when I will be."

"Because of Keiko?"

"Yes. With that in mind, do you want to talk about it?"

"I...what did you think when I kissed you on the lips?"

"That you were likely testing yourself again. I decided to wait to see if you said anything or if you did it again."

"I was worried because you had said I should ask you before doing that, but it just felt right because of everything that happened that weekend. You're not upset, are you?"

"No. What I was referring to was what I'd call a real kiss, not a quick peck on the lips. So you didn't go against what I'd requested."

"A real kiss, you mean, like French?"

"That would be, yes, but so would a soft kiss that lingered, if that makes sense. I mostly took that peck to be a sign of close friendship rather than an invitation to kiss you properly."

"I told you it was OK for you to kiss me."

"Yes, and I interpreted that to mean on the cheek, not on the lips."

"Because you're concerned about how I'd react?"

"Yes, and because of what I feel it would mean."

"You think it would mean we were a couple and that we'd...go to bed together."

"A couple? Yes. Going to bed together would happen at some point. May I be honest?"

"Yes, of course!"

"I don't see you having casual sex. I'm not saying you think you have to wait to be married, just that if you decided you could, it would have to be in the context of a committed relationship."

"And you're concerned about if I could and how I'd react."

"Yes, because *you* are."

"True," Violet agreed with a sigh. "Sometimes I wonder if I should just have done it with you to see if I could handle it. I really thought about that, but then you and Keiko became a couple. But now..."

"Setting aside my struggles because of Keiko, I don't want to do anything to mess up our relationship."

"Me, either. It's just...is it wrong to think about it?"

"No, of course not. Forget what society says and absolutely forget anything Doctor Lochner said. Remember what Nancy told you?"

"That it's normal to think about it."

"But it still scares you, doesn't it?"

"Yes," Violet admitted. "But...uhm...isn't one way to get over fears to do the thing that scares you?"

"I've heard that, and I can see the logic, but what would happen if you 'freaked out' as you called it?"

"Nothing good," Violet replied quietly. "It's strange because when I think about it in general, I want to, but then I think about the things that we would do, and that's when I feel a panic attack coming on."

"May I make a suggestion?"

"Of course!"

"Talk to Nancy and get her advice and see what she suggests to help you overcome that."

"And if I do?" Violet asked quietly. "Would you?"

"I can't answer definitively right now because the answer for anyone who asks is 'no'. But I promise to discuss it with you."

"That's all I can ask. Even if it sounds like I'm not, I am super happy that you're doing everything to keep me safe."

"I promised to do that, and I will."

When we reached Violet's house, I walked her to the door. She hugged me, tilted her head, smirked, winked, then kissed my cheek. I kissed her cheek as well, which caused her to smile. She went into the house, and I turned and walked back to my double-parked car.



January 28, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday, I had breakfast with Violet, went to class, then met her for lunch. She didn't bring up the topic of sex, though she did let me know she had made an appointment with Nancy Jane Moore for the following Saturday. When we finished lunch, the two of us walked to the Registrar's office so I could register for English 101 and a humanities course.

I looked through the course catalogue for what was available, and none of the history courses seemed particularly relevant, so I began scanning the other available classes and felt that the two best options were psychology and sociology. After reading the course outlines, I decided Sociology 101 made the most sense, given a good part of my job was about relationships and social interaction, not to mention herd behavior.

I signed up for the classes, and the clerk printed out the confirmation and class schedule. I'd be in class on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:00pm to 9:00pm and on Saturdays from 8:00am to 1:00pm. Violet had chosen not to take courses during the Summer but would begin again in the Fall.

I walked Violet to her house, and we exchanged a hug and kissed each other on the cheek. Once she went inside, I headed home. Bianca was ready to do our weekly shopping, so we left the house almost right away to head to Jewel and the dry cleaners.

"I had an interesting talk with Beth at dinner on Tuesday," I said.

"Let me guess, she wants to fool around."

"That's a given," I chuckled. "But the conversation was about how to break the cycle and turn the 'if' into 'when'. She had a creative idea that, after thinking about it for five days, makes sense."

"What's that?"

"Ask out someone who I've never been out with or had any kind of relationship with. Just a coffee date. She suggested that way, it wouldn't be affected by any shared past, and it wouldn't mess up a relationship if I was uncomfortable and chose not to call the person again."

"Interesting, but you're taking CeCi out on Fridays, and you know she'd sleep with you in a heartbeat; Deanna, too."

"Yes, and if I have my own meltdown, I can't predict what will happen. With a casual coffee date, if I feel at all uncomfortable, I can simply end the date -- no harm, no foul. I suspect you'll object and say that neither Deanna nor CeCi would react badly, and I agree. I'm worried about *me* and how I'll feel."

Bianca was quiet for a moment, then nodded.

"If you feel as if you betrayed Keiko, you might not be able to continue the relationship because, in your mind, it would have been cheating or however you wanted to describe it."

"Something like that, yes. I'm thinking about asking the paralegal at Hart-Lincoln, who gave me her number and then reinforced her interest after Keiko died. She was careful to convey that she was interested when I was ready and that she hoped I would call. That seems the safest thing to do."

"I'm not used to you being this cautious with anyone except Violet, and those are special circumstances."

"Yes, and if you think about it, I've had my own emotional trauma, though I wouldn't put them on the same scale because I think, in the end, it will be easier for me to move forward than it has been for Violet, and by a wide margin."

"I can't argue with that."

"And speaking of Violet, she's struggling again. Or still. Or however you want to put it."

"Did something happen?"

"I think the emotion of the trip to North Dakota and sharing the suite, combined with cuddling me while I cried, pushed her to confront her own feelings. When I dropped her at home on Sunday, she gave me a peck on the lips and then, after the hockey game, initiated a conversation. She actually teased me about being my secretary and said that if everyone was going to assume we were doing it, we might as well do it and enjoy it!"

"NO WAY!" Bianca exclaimed.

"There is a wonderful, vibrant young woman hiding inside that shell. The problem, as she distilled it, is that she has a desire to have sex in a general way, but the moment she thinks about the specifics, she verges on a panic attack. I suggested she see her counselor, and she's going to do that next Saturday while I'm in class."

"And?"

"And one step at a time. I am in no position to act on that desire, if I even had it."

"Your libido has gone to zero, hasn't it?"

"So it appears."

"I suspect that's an effect of your grieving process."

"I suspect so, too."

"I'd have to say, provisionally, that Beth's idea is a good one."

"So I have your blessing?"

Bianca laughed softly, "As if you needed it."

"Actually, with relationships, I need someone to provide counsel, and I can't imagine anyone better than you."

"Thanks."



January 30, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Monday was a big day for me at Spurgeon for two reasons. The most important of the two, at least in my mind, was Violet starting work. That achieved two important goals -- the ability to improve the research department and seeing her more often. Even though we would be working, I was sure she'd appreciate the proximity, and we could have lunch together at least some days.

The other thing, which I knew Noel Spurgeon would consider more important, was that Marvin McCafferty from MTB Sports Management called late in the morning and asked if I would come to Cincinnati and make a pitch to his firm. I immediately agreed, and after we both reviewed our calendars and I checked on the Spurgeon jet, we agreed on Thursday, February 9th. Once I finished with him, I called Cheryl to give her the details for the flight, and five minutes after the call ended, Noel Spurgeon asked to see me.

"How did you manage to set a meeting with Marvin McCafferty?"

"I called an attorney I know in Cincinnati, and he made the introduction. Is there a problem?"

"Not at all. It's a good idea and will be great PR if you're successful. What do you need to make it happen?"

"First, giving credit where credit is due, going after a sports agent was Jack Clinton's idea."

"You need to comp him if you get this deal."

"I will. How much?"

"A quarter of your commission is typical."

That would mean splitting my portion of the first year's management fee with Jack, which was completely appropriate, given the circumstances.

"OK. As for what I need, as much as I want to close this deal myself, I could use some backup."

"Will I do? You'll run it, and I'll have your back."

"That would be perfect."

"How much is on offer?"

"I honestly have no idea and didn't feel it was appropriate to ask because, in the end, we're going to have to pitch each athlete individually. That said, we have to convince Marvin McCafferty to recommend us to all his clients. If we can do that and bring aboard some of his clients, they tell friends, who tell friends, and so on."

"And you think that's a good use of our time? Without knowing how much capital is available?"

"I do. In any business, if you want to expand into a new market, you have to make the necessary investment of time and money to understand the market. Call it a market development program."

"Good answer. Bring your assistant with us. That helps show we're serious."

"I'll do that, but how so?"

"I've found that having three people in meetings like this is optimal, and you bringing your assistant conveys that it's your meeting, not mine."

"That makes sense. Thanks."

"Good job, Kane. Go find more ways to make me some money!"

"On it!" I declared.

I left his office and returned to mine, asking Violet to come in when I passed her desk.

"We're flying to Cincinnati on Thursday, February 9th," I said.

"Bev?"

"No, a potential new client. You, me, and Noel Spurgeon."

"Whoa! Why me?"

"It's about sending the right message to the new client -- that it's my meeting because you're my assistant -- and it demonstrates we think he's valuable by flying three people to see him. We'll be taking the corporate jet."

"Wow! What should I wear?"

"A skirt and blouse would be appropriate -- in other words, how you're dressed now."

"What do I do in this meeting?"

"Mostly sit quietly and take notes. We'll talk more about it before we go. Why don't you have lunch with Bianca and me? You should also come to the gym and set up an exercise program."

"Are you saying I'm fat?" she asked with a silly smile.

"Not at all! But the membership is one of your benefits, and it would be foolish to not make use of it."

She did join Bianca and me for lunch and accompanied us to the gym, where she met with Tim to discuss a fitness program. After lunch, Tony and I spent time with Violet to bring her up to speed and assign her first tasks. Even though she was classified officially as a secretary, her tasks would mostly be supporting the Research Department rather than performing secretarial duties.

At the end of the day, I left the office to meet Deanna for dinner at Venice Café. After we ate, we took a cab to the Art Institute for Deanna's class, where I was modeling. The pose for the evening had Alexa and me on the couch with my arm around her, her legs draped over mine, her head resting on my chest, and her hand on my side.

"You snuggle pretty well," Alexa observed when we took our first break.

"According to Sophie, you do other things very well, too!"

"Sophie talks too much! But thanks for saying I cuddle well. I hear we're having our first 'fight' next week."

Alexa laughed, "Standing back to back with our arms crossed like petulant toddlers."

"What did you do on Monday?"

"I sat on a chair staring at a telephone, waiting for you to call. When I miss one session in a few weeks because of another commitment, you'll sit and read the *Wall Street Journal*."

"Art imitates life," I chuckled.

"It does fit your job!"

We returned to the studio and took up our pose. We had one more break, and when class ended, Deanna and I headed home.



January 31, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Jonathan, Mrs. Peterson would like to see you," Violet said over the intercom mid-morning on Friday.

I acknowledged her and then left my office to go to Personnel on 30. Leslie directed me into Mrs. Peterson's office immediately.

"I wanted to review your monthly pay statement with you and answer any questions. I also have a check for you for the dependent life insurance for Keiko. My condolences, once again."

She handed me the check for \$10,000, which was the standard insurance amount for dependents.

"Thank you."

"As for your pay statement, you'll see that there is a base amount calculated on the fees received by the Cincinnatus Fund, less expenses, capital contribution, and other costs detailed on the income statement for your fund published on January 15th. The total amount is divided by four, which represents your quarterly target pay. That is paid out in \$10,000 increments on the last business day of each month.

"On the 15th day of the first month following the end of a quarter, the balance of the quarterly amount is paid, increased by new fees collected or offset by fees associated with redemptions. I'm going to assume you understand how that works, but if not, please see Noel Spurgeon or Murray Matheson."

"I'm aware of how that works," I said.

"Good. What you'll see on top of the statement is that \$10,000, and then any pre-tax deductions, including your 401K, to which you are contributing the maximum amount. You'll see next to it a match amount, which is deposited by Spurgeon Capital on a quarterly basis. That match vests over five years. Next, you'll see deductions for your income tax withholding, along with Social Security and Medicare. Finally, any after-tax deductions, including your mortgage payment, will be listed."

"That all seems straightforward."

"Good. At the bottom are quarterly and year-to-date summaries. If you find any discrepancies, see me, and I'll follow up with Accounting to verify. If your CPA recommends a change in withholding, we'll need that no later than the 21st of the month for it to go into effect for the current month.

"The last item to discuss is salary advances. You are permitted to request a quarter of pay in advance, with the amount deducted from your next six months' pay in equal amounts. There are no fees or interest associated with that. You're limited to one request per calendar year, but your outstanding balance must be zero before you make a new request. The point of this program is to account for one-time expenses, taxes, or other immediate needs."

"I read that in the employee manual for licensed professionals."

"You're probably the only person in this company with a license who actually read that document!"

"There was one thing that wasn't completely clear. How will health insurance work for the baby Bianca and I are having together?"

"In Illinois, barring a ruling from Family Court, the baby of a single mother is always on her insurance. If you were married, then the baby would be on the plan of whichever parent has their birthday earliest in the calendar year. Bianca will need to add your baby to her insurance plan sometime in the first thirty days. Coverage is automatic for that period. I've let her know about that. Any other questions?"

"None that I can think of at the moment."

I left her office and decided to go to the bank to deposit the check. I went back to my desk, got my checkbook, coat, hat, and gloves, and left the building to walk to the bank. Once I'd deposited the check, I returned to Spurgeon to complete my workday.



February 1, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Wednesday morning, Nelson called to let me know that that closing had been set for February 24th, and we confirmed all the details.

"Chicago Title again?" I asked.

"Unfortunately."

"Is it possible to sign all the documents in advance?"

"Usually, that requires some sort of exigent circumstances."

"Is being out of town on business sufficient?"

"Only if it's a true emergency, and you might be asked to prove that. If you're going to be out of town, you're expected to push the closing date."

"What are my options?"

"Limited."

"What about a power of attorney? There was a note in the textbook from my securities class that some states allow power of attorney for real estate transactions. Will that work in Illinois?"

"So someone else can be annoyed?" Nelson asked with a tone that implied a grin on the other end of the line. "In theory, anyone over eighteen whom you trusted to sign on your behalf."

"What about the corporation? You're the agent."

"You're making the purchase and obtaining the mortgage personally; we're simply titling it in the name of the corporation, so that idea, while good, won't work."

"OK. Is there any restriction on who could serve that role?"

"Only that the individual be eighteen and have a properly drawn up power of attorney document. I do have to warn you that won't prevent any shenanigans. They could, for example, demand proof of the notary and require the notary to appear to prove the signature. They could also request attorney review, and they would be able to charge you for that review."

"How can this be so rigged against real estate purchasers and not attract government scrutiny?"

"Because the political power lies with large property owners who, as corporations, have legal teams who handle this kind of thing, and the title companies take good care of them."

"What a racket," I replied. "Fine. I'll be there."

"No matter what happens, Jonathan, keep your cool. This is probably the last one you'll need to attend for some time. Well, unless you plan to make other investment purchases."

"Unlikely this year," I replied. "Thanks, Nelson. See you on the 21st for dinner at Jeri's."

"See you then. I'll be in touch if anything comes up."

"Thanks."

I had just hung up when my phone rang again.

"Research, Kane."

"Jonathan, it's Stefan Chojnicki."

"Good morning. What can I do for you?"

"I wanted to let you know that all the paperwork for temporary custody has been completed."

"That's good. What about the guardianship documents?"

"Technically, once Bev was released, they were no longer in force. If anyone were to ask you, and it's unlikely they will, you say that as Heather's guardian you determined it was in her best interest to be with her grandparents. That's a legitimate function of guardianship - you'd still have legal responsibility for her but had chosen the most appropriate caregivers. Neither Family Services nor any court is going to find any fault in that regard."

"Do you know if Bev contacted her parents?"

"If she has, they haven't informed me, and I would expect them to do so immediately, given the concern you expressed. I'm going to assume you haven't heard from her?"

"Correct. How does custody work longer term?"

"If Bev doesn't show up to make a claim, then most likely, the court would assign permanent custody to Jim and Julie based on abandonment. That will take at least six months, though, at this point, Bev would have to go to court to regain physical custody."

"What about Glen?"

"He was arraigned yesterday afternoon on a total of eight counts. The Newtons will file to terminate his parental rights if he's convicted, and that writ will almost certainly be granted."

"How much time could he get, if you know?"

"The maximum penalty would be north of thirty years, I think. I'm not a criminal defense attorney, so I'm not up on criminal statutes. That said, I can't imagine a situation where he doesn't negotiate a plea."

"And the federal charges?"

"Will likely be dropped or pled to a fine and probation as part of some kind of overall deal."

"I assume he has an attorney?"

"According to the papers, an attorney from the same firm Bob Leahey retained -- Volstead and Braun."

"What should I do if Bev contacts me?"

"At this point? Whatever you feel is best. There is basically nothing she could do to you, given all the documents were properly executed. If you want reassurance, speak to someone in Illinois who practices family law. My advice would be for you to tell Bev to contact me."

"I'll do that in the unlikely event I hear from her."

We said 'goodbye', and I hung up, then used the intercom to ask Violet to step into my office.

"What do you need?" she asked.

"I had a thought -- you should apply for a commission as a Notary Public. It'll be handy to have, both now and in the future."

"OK. How do I do that?"

"Ask Mrs. Peterson in Personnel. If she needs a memo from me, please type it up for my signature."

"Will do!"

She left, and I returned to reading an analysis article about the Soviet leadership, as there were rumors that Yuri Andropov was near death. As best I could tell, the question was whether or not the Party leadership was ready to turn the reins over to the younger generation. The consensus was 'not yet', and that seemed reasonable to me.

A second article I read discussed the possibility of internecine warfare between factions, with negative implications for world stability. If that happened, all bets would be off, and things could spiral out of control with the USSR breaking into its constituent republics or World War III. Obviously, I'd prefer the instability of a breakup to the end of the world as we knew it, but it wasn't up to me.

When I finished the analysis, I wondered if I should try to get in touch with the Soviet Trade Attaché, but concluded it was unlikely trade between the US and the USSR would improve in the next year or two, and probably not for a decade or more. The only thing that argued for it was the contact, but given the potential scrutiny that would invite from the FBI, I rejected that thought.

The rest of the day was typical, and as was my new routine, I met Deanna for dinner and then had my modeling gig. The pose for the day was Alexa sitting on my lap, snuggled close, with our arms around each other and her head on my chest. It was kind of strange having her in my lap because of the implications, but she didn't do anything I felt was inappropriate or suggestive, which helped.



February 4, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"What do you think after a week?" I asked Violet when we met at her house for breakfast on Saturday morning.

"Everyone in Research is really nice, and I think the work will be interesting. And I already learned a lot. It's very different from the plumbing company but not all that different from the daycare!"

I laughed, "You spoke to some of the other secretaries, right?"

"Yes. I can't believe grown men can be such big babies!"

"Impressive! You haven't even seen them throw a tantrum yet!"

Violet laughed softly, "I'm not sure I want to! I can't imagine you doing that."

"When I worked in the mailroom, I was the voice of calm. But enough about work! We're there five days a week. You have your session with Nancy Jane Moore today, right?"

"Yes. And you have your securities license class today, right?"

"At 1:00pm, so we have time for lunch, but I need to leave here by 12:30pm."

We finished our breakfast, I helped Violet clean up, then I headed to campus for my class. Most of the material was review for me, as I'd learned much of it at Spurgeon. I did take detailed notes from the discussion of the structure of multinational corporations as well as Japanese «keiretsu» and South Korean «chaebol», concepts not covered in any of the Spurgeon training material.

When class ended, I walked back to Violet's house to have lunch.

"How did it go with Nancy?" I asked once we sat down to eat.

"We had a really good talk, but we ran out of time. I'm going to see her again next Saturday. How was class?"

"A good portion was stuff I already knew, but I did actually learn some new stuff."

"That's good," Violet observed. "Are we going to do anything before baseball starts?"

"It'll be tough with both classes, closing on the condo, and moving. Is it OK if we stick to breakfast and lunch on Saturdays? Obviously, we'll see each other at work every day, too."

"I really like that. That's the best part of working there!"

"And I'm happy to have you on my team."

After eating and cleaning up, Violet walked me to the door. She hugged me and kissed my cheek, and I left the house to head to the Loop for my Series 30 class. The first four-hour session covered material that I knew but focused on record keeping and reporting, as well as supervisory responsibilities with regard to orders, positions, and documentation.

The most important thing I took away from the first day's training was the necessity of clearly defined and documented procedures and policies. Spurgeon had some, but they weren't as thorough as the instructor insisted they should be. I made a note to mention that to Kendall Roy in Compliance on Monday because the last thing Spurgeon needed was even a technical violation.

After class, I stopped at the computer store and picked up my new Macintosh, along with the IBM PC/XT. When I arrived home, Bianca met me at the door, wanting to see the new system. As excited as she was, I simply handed her the box and told her to have fun and that she could show me on Sunday what it could do.



February 6, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday morning, I went to see Kendall Roy in Compliance.

"The statutes do require we maintain policy and procedure manuals, but it's enough to have them, even if they aren't as detailed and thorough as your instructor indicates they should be."

"Could it be a problem if we were subjected to an actual SEC investigation, as opposed to a letter inquiry?"

"There was one when Jack Gilham was busted. The only thing they checked was that the policy manual clearly forbade having money in unmonitored investment accounts. You signed a slew of paperwork about that when you started, and it's been in each of the employment contracts you signed when you've been promoted. In addition, now that you're licensed, you'll have a review session with Compliance every year, usually in September, to review the policies and procedures. No license holder is exempt from those, not even Noel Spurgeon."

"OK. From my perspective, the time and effort to update the policies and procedures would be worth it, but if there isn't a risk, then I can't argue we should do it."

"Let me ask you this -- do you know what's legal and what's not?"

"Of course."

"And do you think Jack Gilham knew what he was doing was illegal?"

"There is no way he could pass the licensure exams without knowing those regulations, and, as you say, they're spelled out quite clearly in the employment agreement and employee handbook."

"So, no problem."

"I'd do it differently, but it's not Kane Capital, it's Spurgeon Capital. Thanks for letting me bend your ear."

"No problem. I did receive the closeout letter from the investigations that Enderlee caused. We're in full compliance, which, of course, we already knew."

"I'm sure they'll come sniffing around Hawaiian Airlines along about July," I replied.

"Me, too. Thanks for sending me the notes from the conversation you had with your analysts. Those will be a big help when our friends come calling, and they always do."

"Maybe they should spend less time looking at Spurgeon and more time looking into other firms, including Madoff Investment Securities and his other firm."

"You think Bernie Madoff is dirty?"

"I think he's making promises that are impossible to keep."

"He's so well-connected in New York and DC that you can be sure that won't happen. If the SEC came calling, he'd say everything was in order, and they'd agree and walk away."

"You just reinforced my belief he's doing something wrong," I said. "If you *know* they'll walk away or not even show up in the first place, you can get away with murder."

"I'd say that's true in general, but everyone eventually gets caught. Or as close to everyone as to mean that there are only rare exceptions. I don't care how well you cover your tracks, you will get caught. Gilham did everything right and was tripped up by his relative, who was being audited by the IRS. I once heard it said the violator has to be lucky every single moment of every single day, while the government only has to be lucky once."

"And they have what amounts to infinite manpower and time compared to the companies and individuals being investigated. They can bury just about anyone in investigators and paperwork, and with no real bottom line, they don't have to worry about turning a profit. Which is why nearly everyone settles, even if the charges are questionable."

"True. How was your dinner at Rosebud?"

"Out of this world. My wife thanks you!"

"You're welcome."

I left his office and returned to my desk, then called in Tony and Violet.

"We need to put together a basic policy and procedure manual for the Research Department," I said.

"What brought this on?" Tony asked.

"I started my Series 30 class on Saturday, and it was all about policies and procedures. We all know how to do our jobs, but nothing is documented, and we don't have anything to give a new employee. Also, I think we should develop a style guide so that all of our prose in analyst reports is formatted and punctuated the same.

"Oxford comma or not?" Tony asked.

"I don't know what that means," I replied.

"In a list of things, do you include the comma before the 'and'. That's the Oxford comma."

"I didn't know it was OK to leave it out. I was taught it had to be there. Of course, my seventh- and eighth-grade English teacher was almost seventy! If it's up to me, we use it."

"Oxford comma it is! On that topic, we should make our footnotes consistent as well."

"You mean citations?"

"Exactly. We're all over the map on that one. I'll get a copy of *Strunk & White*, and we can use it as a reference to develop our own style guide. What do you want in the policy and procedure manual?"

"Start with describing the process of creating the analyst report, and we'll go from there."

"Let me put together some ideas," Tony said. "Give me two weeks, so I don't have to take too much time from research."

"Sounds good. Thanks."

XXXVII. Closure

February 6, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

I left work early on Monday afternoon so that I could have my annual physical with Doctor James Darmody.

"Any health changes in the past year?" he asked.

"No," I replied. "I haven't been sick or hurt."

"Are you still involved with multiple sexual partners?"

"No. I'm actually not involved with anyone since my wife died in December."

"Wife? Your chart says you're single."

"I was, a year ago. I was dating a young woman, and we were on a trajectory to marry. She was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia, so we decided to marry. Despite aggressive treatment, she succumbed at the end of December."

"My condolences, Jonathan. Have you sought grief counseling?"

"No. I'm not an emotional person, and I had plenty of time to come to terms with what was happening. My friends have been very supportive."

"Grief is a tricky thing. I strongly recommend you at least speak to a counselor. I won't belabor that point, but I believe you should do it."

"I'll take it into consideration."

"OK. Between your last physical and the time you married, did you have multiple sex partners?"

"Yes."

"Then I'd suggest you be tested for sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS and hepatitis."

"I'm OK with you running those tests along with the other ones you're going to order."

"Good. How are you sleeping?"

"Fine. I had some trouble falling asleep right after Keiko died, but that seems to have passed."

"Diet and exercise?"

"I'm not too careful with what I eat, though I don't eat many sweets. I work out three days a week in the gym."

"Alcohol intake?"

"Moderate. I drink an occasional beer, wine with some meals, and a shot of bourbon now and then. I haven't even been close to being drunk."

"With your size and stature, it would take more than two beers to have any real effect. What about drugs? Illicit or otherwise?"

"None, not even over-the-counter pain relievers."

"Then allow me to examine you, then I'll have Kelly draw blood, and you can be on your way."

The exam took about twenty minutes, then a cute nurse came in to draw blood. She drew four tubes, then walked me to reception, where I paid my \$10 copay. I had about two hours before I had to meet Deanna, but going home would eat up an hour of that time in driving, so I decided to return to the office and work for ninety minutes.

Later, after dinner with Deanna, I had my modeling session. As Alexa had mentioned, our characters were in the midst of a spat, so the pose was with the two of us standing back-to-back with our arms crossed and unhappy looks on our faces.

I almost laughed at the idea of 'make-up sex', though our characters had not progressed to that point in their fictional relationship. But the fact that the idea of sex had entered my mind unbidden signaled that something had changed. I had not, unless prompted by one of the girls, even thought about sex. I'd certainly recognized that Alexa was hot, but I hadn't given it further thought.

That stray thought brought to mind what Beth had said and what I'd discussed with Bianca about a coffee date with Kayleigh, the paralegal from Hart-Lincoln. It made a lot of sense, as did the idea that it had to be after Keiko's interment on February 14th. It also raised the question in my mind of what I should do about my relationship with Deanna.

But it wasn't just Deanna; it was CeCi and, once she gave birth, Bianca. Beth had indicated an interest in resuming the physical part of our relationship as well. I had no idea what I wanted from the future at this point, though having a kid was basically a sure thing. Beyond that, I didn't know, and that urged caution as well.

"What's next?" I asked Deanna after we had left the studio.

"On Wednesday, Alexa won't be there, so you'll sit at the table reading the *Wall Street Journal* with a stack of other newspapers and magazines on the table. It juxtaposes with the one of her staring at the phone."

"So, I'm the jerk for not calling her and reading financial news instead?"

Deanna laughed, "That is one way to interpret it!"

"And likely the only way anyone will understand it!"

"Perhaps," Deanna said with a smirk.

"What happens next week?"

"On that Monday, facing each other with your arms around each other, in a pose that shows you've made up. On Wednesday, shirtless, though she'll have on her bra. You'll stand behind her, but slightly offset, and your arm around her. There's no class on the following Monday, so the following Wednesday, the same pose, but with briefs and panties only."

"And after that?" I asked with an arched eyebrow.

"Yep!" she smirked.

"That's going to be an interesting session."

"It sure is!"



February 9, 1984, Cincinnati, Ohio

On Thursday morning, Violet and I had met Noel Spurgeon at Meigs and boarded the corporate Gulfstream III for the flight to Cincinnati. As Deanna had suggested, the cabin was configured with six seats and a bedroom, indicating it would be possible, at some point, to fulfill her desire to join the Mile-High Club.

We'd landed at Lunken Field at 9:05 local time, and a limo had been waiting to take us into downtown Cincinnati for our meeting with Marvin McCafferty. At 9:22am, we walked into the offices of MTB Sports Management on the 45th floor of the Carew Tower.

"Jonathan Kane and associates to see Mr. McCafferty," I said to the receptionist.

"He's expecting you, Mr. Kane. I'll take you to the conference room, where we have coffee, tea, and muffins."

"Thank you."

She escorted us to a nicely appointed conference room adorned with sports memorabilia and photographs. I recognized a few of the autographed photos, including Johnny Bench behind the plate and one of Ken Anderson throwing a pass to Bob Trumpy, both taken at Riverfront Stadium. The pass being caught by Bob Trumpy was one of the most amazing I'd ever seen -- a flea-flicker with three players touching the ball before it was passed. Ken Anderson had handed off to Archie Griffin, who pitched the ball to John McDaniel, running a reverse. McDaniel caught the ball and handed it back to Anderson, who tossed a twenty-nine-yard touchdown pass to Trumpy.

"Please help yourself to coffee or tea. Mr. McCafferty will be in as soon as he finishes his phone call."

"Thank you," I said.

We were a few minutes early, so I didn't feel we were being snubbed, but I saw the look on Noel Spurgeon's face that showed he was annoyed. From my perspective, a few minutes one way or the other wasn't a big deal, but Noel Spurgeon hated to be kept waiting. I poured coffee for all of us, and Violet and I each selected a blueberry muffin, but Mr. Spurgeon declined. About two minutes later, a good-looking man of about forty-five came into the room with a younger man of about twenty-five.

"Good morning," he said. "I'm Marvin McCafferty, and this is my assistant, Gordon DeLisse."

"Good morning, Mr. McCafferty," I said. "I'm Jonathan Kane, and with me are Noel Spurgeon, Founder and Chief Investment Officer of Spurgeon Capital, and my assistant, Miss Violet Clemmons."

Everyone shook hands.

"I see you have coffee," he said. "Shall we get started?"

Violet handed two copies of my presentation to Mr. McCafferty, and everyone except me took a seat.

"You've had a chance to review the prospectus for the Cincinnatus Fund, and I know your time is valuable, so with your approval, I'll present only a brief summary, then take your questions."

"I have read it, as has Gordon. Go ahead."

I presented a summary, which was a refined and shortened version of the presentations I'd made in Overland Park and Kenosha. That took about fifteen minutes, and I looked to Mr. McCafferty."

"First, why 'Cincinnatus'?" he asked.

"I'm from Goshen," I replied. "I wanted something to reflect that but which would also be recognized."

"You've been with Spurgeon less than three years?"

"Yes, in progressively responsible positions. I have primary responsibility for my fund and oversee the Research Department. My day-to-day tasks are developing trading strategies and researching investment opportunities. In the appendix to the presentation, you'll see a partial list of opportunities I identified and the returns on those individual investments. As I noted, a dollar invested on January 1st of last year would be worth about \$1.35 after fees and expenses. The same amount invested in an S&P fund would be worth about \$1.20."

"And that's after all fees?" he asked. "The two and the twenty?"

"Yes. Obviously, I cannot guarantee those returns, but Spurgeon has a ten-year track record of beating the S&P. All Spurgeon investment funds had positive growth every year, even in years when the overall market declined. As I noted, we use a wide mix of investment strategies to achieve that goal."

"You didn't go to college?"

"No. I am enrolled in a BA program in night school, and I currently hold both a Series 3 and a Series 7 license and will take the Series 30 exam in May."

"Jonathan is the youngest licensed trader at Spurgeon," Mr. Spurgeon interjected. "He's a protégé, and his returns last year were nearly identical statistically to my own."

"Using the same strategies?" Mr. McCafferty asked.

"Differing," I said. "The two funds have different asset allocations, and while there are some trades in common, many are not. The main difference, from your perspective, is that the buy-in for my fund is \$100,000, while the minimum for the Spurgeon Select Fund is \$10,000,000, and there are longer lock-up periods."

"Why is that?"

"Mainly due to the total assets under management and the age of funds."

"Our clients would need complete anonymity. Can you accommodate that?"

"Yes, through multiple avenues. We can handle trusts, limited partnerships, or any other legal structure. To give an example, I have a trust where the trustee represents eight investors. The only name that appears on any reports, government or internal, is the trust, and all communication goes to the trustee.

"You could set up a single shared trust, or individual trust, or a limited partnership for any client who does not want their name revealed. Even I don't need to know the names of the principals, though our Legal and Compliance departments will need the names to ensure we comply with SEC, CFTC, and exchange regulations. All correspondence would pass through the trustee or managing partner. Obviously, any of your clients who wanted to sign directly could do so."

"I have clients who are very involved and others who are hands-off. Some are financially savvy, while others are...less so. I also have some who will need serious hand-holding and want to be able to call you at any time. And some who will bring you investment opportunities."

"None of that is a problem, though my fund's investment parameters limit it to publicly traded securities and governmental instruments. In other words, I cannot provide private equity from my fund. That said, Spurgeon has two venture capital funds, and anyone who invested with me would have access to those fund managers to make their pitch."

"What would be the next step?" Mr. McCafferty asked.

"Applications and authorization for funds transfer," I said. "Violet?"

She handed him a stack of each of the two documents.

"The documents are the same for individuals, trusts, or partnerships; you'll need to submit a copy of the trust documents or partnership agreement for any trusts. How do you propose to proceed?"

"I've spoken to several of my clients who are very interested, and I'm going to recommend they use a limited partnership as their investment vehicle."

"Would you share the total amount that the group would invest?"

"About \$3.2 million. It's a mix of rookie, journeyman, veteran, and retired players."

"Understanding you can't make any commitments, would you share the total investable capital you represent?"

"About \$40 million across all my clients. Some of that is tied up in annuities and other vehicles that can't be immediately converted, and some will never be simply because the individuals prefer guaranteed returns, even if they're smaller. With the caveat that some may elect not to go with you, I'd say we could conservatively bring you around \$20 million, possibly more."

"How many athletes do you represent?"

"About a hundred and fifty across pretty much every major league and another forty prospects, which includes draftees and minor league players."

"Do you have any further questions? If not, we'll get out of your hair, and I'll be available by phone for questions, either from you or any of your clients."

"No further questions for now," he said.

"Violet, would you give Mr. McCafferty a stack of my cards, please?"

She handed his assistant a hundred business cards. We all stood and shook hands, then Mr. McCafferty walked us to reception.

"I'll be in touch very soon," he said.

"Thank you for your time, and I look forward to a profitable future together."

We shook again, and then Mr. Spurgeon, Violet, and I took the elevator to the lobby. The car was waiting, so we got in, and the driver set out for Lunken Field.

"That was really short," Violet said.

"He just wanted to look Jonathan in the eye and shake his hand," Noel Spurgeon interjected. "The numbers speak for themselves, but when you're going to give somebody several million bucks, you need to see them in person. Good job, Jonathan."

"Thanks."

"Do your best to get someone with a name we can put on our client list. Marvin McCafferty is a good one, but we want a name or two that people will recognize. Someone with star power. That will open other doors for us across all our funds."

"Once I hear from Mr. McCafferty, I'll work with him on some names."



February 9, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I still find it strange we flew all that way for a meeting that lasted less than thirty minutes," Violet said as I gave her a ride back to the office from Meigs. "And for Mr. Spurgeon to go along and barely say a word."

"He was the eye candy," I said.

Violet laughed, "Seriously?"

"Yes. Basically, his being there telegraphed that he would take a personal interest, and that helped Mr. McCafferty feel comfortable with the deal. It's all about perception. You were there to hand out the documents and business cards."

"Which you could have done!"

"Yes, but *you* doing it telegraphed that I know how to delegate tasks and that I'm focused on research and investment. It also shows I rate an assistant, which demonstrates Mr. Spurgeon's confidence in me. The three of us flying there on the Spurgeon jet shows how successful we are. I know it might seem extravagant, but it sends the message that we're making so much money we can afford to do that at any time."

"How did you learn all of that?"

"From Mr. Matheson and Mr. Spurgeon. I watch what they do and ask questions."

"If you sign all of them, how much will you make?"

"When all is said and done, if I sign \$20 million in new investors, I'll earn about \$50,000 in commission."

"That's just crazy!"

"What's crazier is I'll make that *every* year. And remember, every dollar I bring in increases the bonus pool."

"I just can't believe how much money I'm going to have!"

"Me, either. It's a bit mind-boggling, but then I remember that Mr. Spurgeon makes over \$10 million a year in salary, plus his portion of our rake on gains. His net worth is probably around \$275,000,000, maybe more."

"Unbelievable."

"And even that's a tiny amount compared to J. D. Rockefeller or Henry Ford, who were billionaires in the 1920s. Given the devaluation of the US dollar, that would be something like five billion today, give or take."

"I knew they were rich, but that's crazy!"

"Henry Ford was the richest man in the world when he died in 1947. J. Paul Getty was the richest man alive in the 70s; his net worth was only about \$6 billion."

"Who is it now?"

"I don't know, but the consensus seems to be Yoshiaki Tsutsumi, a Japanese real estate investor. It makes sense, given the inflated prices of real estate in Japan. Those valuations are what is driving my investment in the Nikkei."

I parked in the garage, and we headed up to the office. The first thing I found out was that Yuri Andropov had died, but the Soviets had yet to announce a new leader. A number of commentators were suggesting Mikhail Gorbachev, but I didn't know enough about the USSR to evaluate that suggestion. There was no news before the end of the day, and at 5:00pm, I headed home.

"I have an idea for my gallery," Deanna said when I arrived at the house. "There's an empty storefront on South Wabash, between Balbo and Harrison. The rent is reasonable, and it has nice windows. There's another gallery across the street, which is a good thing."

That was about a block and a half from the tailor shop and close to the subway stop, which would be very convenient.

"If you write down the address and the contact information, I'll go in early tomorrow so I can check it out late in the afternoon. In fact, why don't you plan to meet me there at 4:00pm?"

"I will! How was Cincinnati?"

"We were there for about eighty minutes, total!"

"That doesn't sound good."

"Actually, it was great. I should get a capital infusion and new clients."

"Awesome!"

"I'm going to go up and change. I'll be back down shortly."



February 10, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday, I had driven in early so that I could leave the office by 3:30pm. Jack and Bianca had driven in together, and he'd come home with me after our usual Friday night out. At 9:00am, I called the leasing agent for the space Deanna had found and arranged to see the space at 4:00pm. The day at work was routine, and I left at 3:30pm and hailed a cab.

"Jonathan, this is Moira Sorenson, the property manager," Deanna said. "Moira, my patron, Jonathan Kane."

"Nice to meet you."

We shook hands, and she let us into the building. It was configured as a restaurant, but in my estimation, that would work because the kitchen could be studio space. The property had sat empty for nearly a year, which made the owners motivated to lease it. I was absolutely positive that Jack and I, with help from Stuart, Tom, and the other guys, could do the renovations, which would make it much more affordable.

I considered trying to negotiate the lease rate, but it had already been reduced and was lower than the price per square foot my uncle had suggested was reasonable when I'd called him earlier in the day. I asked Ms. Sorenson to excuse us, and Deanna and I stepped outside onto the sidewalk.

"If this is what you want, it's yours," I said. "I think the kitchen could be configured as studio space. I'm pretty sure the guys and I could do the necessary renovations, especially if Stuart and Tom can help. Do you want tile or carpet?"

"Tile of some kind," Deanna said. "Something out of the ordinary. I'll stop by Century Tile and see what I can find. How do we do this?"

"Fill out an application with your name as the occupant and Deanna Haight Creations as the lessee. I'll guarantee the lease personally and give you a financial statement and a copy of my pay statement. I'll increase my stipend to you to cover the rent and utilities, and you'll run it all through your corporation. That will help you build credit, and once you're established, we'll adjust the stipend."

"Cool! What about permits and stuff?"

"I'll give you the number of the guy I know at Brown Construction. I'm positive he'll tell you what you need. We're not going to knock down any walls or do any plumbing, though we might need electrical."

"Definitely. I'll need to figure that out. Do I have a budget?"

"Given I have no clue what it should cost, work out what you want and talk to me about it."

"Awesome!"

We went back inside and let Ms. Sorenson know that Deanna wanted to fill out a lease application. They did that, and I wrote a check for the deposit. I promised to fax the necessary documents on Monday morning, and Ms. Sorenson promised to process the application as soon as she received them. We thanked her, then left the building.

"Can I talk you into celebrating later?" Deanna asked as I hailed a cab to take us to the Hancock Center.

"Will you be upset if I ask for a raincheck? I need to get through next Tuesday."

"I'm sorry," Deanna said. "I shouldn't have asked."

"Actually, yes, you should have. I've more or less come to terms with my feelings, and as I see it, I need to honor all of Keiko's wishes. That said, I feel as if I'd be cheating before next Tuesday."

"You have the strangest approach to life of anyone I've ever met, but it's weirdly logical and sensible, even if totally unconventional."

"Thanks."

Deanna laughed softly, "And in true Jonathan fashion, you take something that would have offended many people as a compliment. Can I ask what your plans are?"

"Right now, I don't have any. Keiko wanted me to promise I'd find someone to spend my life with, and I think I'll eventually do that. For now, I'm going to focus on work and the baby Bianca and I are having together."

"I hope you'll at least give consideration to my suggestion."

"At this point, nothing is off the table. I'm simply going to see what life brings my way and do my best to enjoy my success and share it with my friends."

"That sounds great!"

"That was something I did promise Keiko I would do, and I plan to keep that promise."

At the Hancock Center, Deanna met up with Bianca for a ride home while CeCi accompanied me for our evening out with Jack and Kristy. We had dinner at Lou Malnati's, then went to see *Unfaithfully Yours*, a romantic comedy starring Dudley Moore and Nastassja Kinski. The movie was fun, and we had the pleasure of an oblique view of Nastassja Kinski's bare breasts. After the movie, we had ice cream, then headed home.



February 11, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I'm sorry about missing our appointment today," I said to Bianca when she came downstairs on Saturday.

"You apologized as soon as you scheduled your class! It's OK. Everything is good, and today is a routine checkup. We'll have one in March, and I'll schedule it for a weekday afternoon."

"Thanks for understanding."

"The Series 30 license is the ticket to our future, so it's super important!"

"Necessary, but not sufficient. Let's focus on what we need to do to be successful at Spurgeon and worry about the future in the future. Right now, I have no reason to leave, and unless I have a good one, it would turn ugly very quickly, and we could land in a world of hurt."

"You're right, of course. Sorry. Have fun at class, and I'll see you when you get home. Juliette and I will take care of the shopping."

We hugged, and I left the house for the drive to Violet's to have breakfast. We had our usual nice breakfast together, and then I went to class. The class session covered central banking and the IMF and filled in some gaps in the knowledge I

had from working at Spurgeon. When class ended, I walked quickly to Violet's house so we could have lunch before my Series 30 class.

"How did your session go with Nancy?" I asked as we sat down to eat vegetable soup.

"Good. I don't want to rush through the conversation. Will you come back after your class?"

"I don't have any plans. When we finish eating, I'll call Bianca and let her know I won't be home for dinner."

"Thanks."

We ate our lunch, I helped Violet clean up, then called Bianca. I let her know I wouldn't be home, and she let me know there were no problems with her prenatal visit. After I hung up, I hugged Violet, then left her house and headed to the Loop for my Series 30 class.

The topic of the day was money laundering and fraud, and, as I had with my previous license class, I had to struggle to not laugh at the fact that the instructor was describing exactly how to commit those crimes. Of course, that wasn't his intent, but in explaining how to identify illegal activity, he had drawn me a blueprint of how to do it and how to evade detection.

When I left the classroom, I was completely confident I'd be able to answer the test questions, and those were considered the most difficult part of the exam. I walked quickly to my car, got in, drove out of the parking garage, and headed back to Violet's. I had thought about what she might tell me, but I decided the best approach was to simply listen to what she had to say and then decide what to do.

"Hi!" Violet exclaimed when she opened the door.

"Hi!"

She hugged me and let me into the house. I took off my winter gear, and we went to the front room.

"How was your class?" she asked.

"It was about detecting criminal or fraudulent activity. The weird part is that by explaining how to detect it, they basically taught us how to do it, and because they explained how people are caught, they effectively taught us how to evade detection."

"Not that you would, but could you?"

"The short answer is 'yes', but in the end, there are too many possible pitfalls, and eventually, I'd be caught. As has been said, the criminal has to be lucky and right every time, the government only once, and they have effectively infinite resources and infinite time. Anyway, the most important thing is that I'm absolutely confident I'll pass that part of the exam, and it's the hardest part."

"That's great! You know what? I didn't offer you anything to drink. Do you want a Coke or something?"

"Root beer, if you still have it."

"There are two bottles. I'll get them."

She got up and left and returned a minute later with two bottles of Barq's.

"You asked me to come back to talk about what Nancy said."

Violet nodded, "First, I need to tell you something."

"You can say anything you feel a need to say."

"And you should say whatever you need to say, too."

"OK."

"In Minnesota, after you cried, I..." she took a deep breath, "almost came to your room to sleep with you. The only reason I didn't was because I felt I'd be taking advantage of you."

"By 'sleep with me', do you mean actually sleep? Or?"

"Actually sleep; but I would have, if you had needed me to."

"What did Nancy say about that?"

"That I made the right decision and that it could have ruined our relationship, either because you reacted badly, I reacted badly, or we both reacted badly, even if it was just sleeping in the same bed."

"Given what I know about you and my state of mind, I think Nancy's observation is right on target. The question is, and I'm sure you discussed it, is what you want now."

"You know what I want, but you also know the problem. I talked to Nancy about how I could get past it, and I discovered that I'm afraid of being afraid."

"That sounds eerily similar to something I said to Bianca about myself. My struggle is about how to move forward after Keiko, and the difficulty is that to

solve the difficulty, I have to do the thing that I'm having difficulty with. And it's the same struggle you're having, just for different reasons."

"But it's only been seven weeks for you; it's been seven years for me."

"The thing I said to Bianca was that my problem was that I'm still in the 'if' stage, not the 'when' stage, and I'm not sure about how to make the transition or if I even should. I think you get the implication."

"You can just say it directly, Jonathan. Remember what I said about being your secretary!"

I laughed, "I remember."

"So, in order to know how you'll feel about going to bed with someone, you have to risk going to bed with someone. Which is exactly what I said to Nancy. I figured out that the only way I could know how I would feel after going to bed with you was to go to bed with you, but that could end badly because of what happened to me growing up."

"What do you want to do? It's OK to just say it, and then we can talk about it."

"Want or should?" Violet asked.

"Those are two very different things in some cases."

She took a deep breath and let it out, "I can't take the risk. Not now, anyway. I'm going to continue meeting with Nancy twice a month. She can't promise, obviously, but she thinks she can help me get to a point where I can say definitively one way or the other."

"What do you need from me?"

Violet smirked, "Is there where I make a risqué comment?"

"You certainly just implied one."

"Will you do one thing for me?"

"What's that?"

"Promise not to ask anyone to marry you before I figure out if I can take the risk of making love with you?"

"I can safely say marriage is not on the horizon anytime soon. Dating hasn't really been on the horizon, though CeCi has been my companion on Friday nights with Jack and Kristy."

"But you two aren't..."

"I'm not...with anyone!"

Violet laughed softly, "You're teasing me!"

"I am. And you have come a very, very long way since I first met you. I think I can safely say 'yes' to your request."

"And if I ask you to...make love, you will?"

"Doctor Lochner was right about one thing -- that I want to make love with you; she was wrong that it was the *only* thing I wanted. I think I've shown myself to be correct and her to be wrong."

"You have. You know I love you, Jonathan."

"I do, and I love you, too."

"Want to help me make dinner?"

"Yes."



February 12, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I had an interesting conversation with Violet yesterday," I said to Bianca when she came to sit with me in the Japanese room.

"That could go so many different ways, but the fact that you mentioned it means she said she wants to sleep with you."

"That's not news. You know she's said it before. What she said is that she's concerned about how she'll feel if we try to do it or actually do it, but the only way she can know is to do it. Sound familiar?"

"The conversation we had about you and how to move forward."

"Yes. You convinced me to ask Kayleigh out, which I'm going to do later this week. Violet is going to see Nancy Jane Moore twice a month until she has a definitive answer for herself. I agreed I'd say yes if she asked me to go to bed with her, and committed to not marrying anyone before she either asks or says she can never ask."

"So you belong to her?"

"In a sense, I have since I put her gum in my mouth, at least as close friends."

"Given everything she's said to you recently, she's working her way up to it."

"That's been true since before Keiko and I became serious. There's still a bright line that Violet isn't prepared to cross."

"She's working her way towards it."

"Yes, she is. I'm in no rush with anyone. I have the opportunity, and I'm not ready to cross that line, either. Deanna and I discussed it on Friday, and I offered a raincheck, though without a timeframe. What I told her is that I have to get past Tuesday."

"She's still the safest."

"The more I've thought about it, I think that would be Beth because I'm not Jewish. You yourself said that Deanna is in love with me in her own way. Beth isn't."

"She brought a guy with her to the New Year's Party."

"She's still deciding between the lawyer and the doctor, so she's not in an exclusive relationship. But I'm just not ready for that, which is why I agreed to ask Kayleigh for coffee."

"Seeing you confused is disconcerting. "

"Imagine how I feel."

"Good point. So, Violet holds the master trump, so to speak?"

"Possibly. I only promised to make love to her, not marry her."

"You've been adamant for the better part of two years that even French kissing her was tantamount to getting engaged."

"I still believe that's the most likely case, but Violet is a very different person than she was two years ago. All I can do is wait and see."



February 13, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

My phone rang at 3:42pm on Monday afternoon.

"Research, Kane," I said.

"Mr. Kane, this is Gordon DeLisse from MTB Sports Management."

"Good morning, Mr. DeLisse."

"Gordon, please."

"Jonathan."

"Mr. McCafferty asked me to call you and let you know I'll be sending you forms for a limited partnership and three individuals, totaling \$4.1 million. How quickly can you bring them on board?"

"It usually takes about ten business days, but I'll do my best to expedite the process."

"Mr. McCafferty will appreciate that. I'll send the originals by Federal Express, and you'll have them tomorrow."

"Excellent news. Thank you. I'll handle all the correspondence and any details."

"Are you an attorney?"

"Yes. I graduated from Yale two years ago."

"Are you originally from Ohio?"

"Milford. If you're in town, we should have a beer."

"Sounds good."

We ended the call, and his invitation to have a beer made me think about my other major clients. I decided I needed to visit them at least once a year, if not twice, just to keep the relationship going beyond the financial reports. I made a note to ask Violet to schedule something with Overland Park, Kenosha, and my local clients. I'd be able to expense those meetings, as lavish entertainment was something Mr. Spurgeon both did and encouraged.

I finished my work day, then met Deanna for dinner before heading to the School of the Art Institute. Once in the studio, Claire had me sit at a table in the center of the room. The students were located so they could see my profile while I held the *Wall Street Journal* in my normal reading position.

This modeling session was actually more grueling than the others, as holding my arms in that basic position for an extended period of time was much harder than I'd expected. By the time we finished, my muscles were tight, and I had what I suspected was a tension headache, something I resolved by using the hot tub once I arrived home.



February 14, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Tuesday, I worked a half day, and the main news was that Konstantin Chernenko was the new leader of the Soviet Union, though the analysis I read suggested strongly he was simply a caretaker while factions in the Politburo vied for power. That could turn ugly, but at least for the moment, another aging ruler was in place, and I expected him to last no more than two or three years.

At 11:30am, I left the office and drove home to retrieve Keiko's ashes to take them to Montrose Cemetery. I met Ichirō, Itsurō, and their wives, and over the next fifteen minutes, the rest of her family, including the relatives from California, arrived. The last to arrive was Kaito, the Buddhist priest. The ceremony was short, and at the end of the prayer, I placed the urn in a niche in the crypt, which was wide enough for a second urn, which someday would be mine. Next to the niche was a stele with both Keiko's and my names carved into it. As Ichirō had said, my name was painted red to show that I was still alive.

Everyone else left, and I stayed, remembering the time I'd had with Keiko. As I stood there, I recalled everything she'd said, and I knew that whatever else was true, I had to find a way to move forward while honoring my relationship with Keiko. The last thing I did was pour water over the stele from an oak bucket, then clapped my hands.

"I love you, Keiko-chan"

XXXVIII. Aren't We the Pair?

February 15, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Are you OK?" Bianca asked at breakfast on Wednesday morning.

"Yes. I just needed some time alone last night to remember Keiko and order my thoughts."

Jack came into the kitchen just then and unsurprisingly asked the exact same question, and I gave the exact same answer. When we all had finished breakfast, we headed to work.

"I was playing more with the Macintosh," Bianca said not long after we'd left the house. "It has two killer programs -- *MacWrite*, which is a word processor, and *MacPaint* which is a graphics drawing program. I think we could do some interesting things with our analyst reports, including graphs and other things we can't do with the current setup."

"But everyone would have to have a Macintosh then, right?"

"I think there might be a way to transfer files from the IBM PC to the Macintosh, but I'll have to look into it. There is no *Novell* client, so that's off the table. If there is a way, then you would just need one Macintosh for someone to put everything together, print it, and photocopy it for everyone."

"Look into it with Tony, but don't spend a lot of time on it right now. Forecasting and analysis are far more important, and everyone is used to reading the text. I like the idea, but we don't want to slow down on the programming you and

Steve are doing. That's already showing good results with analysis, though it's more limited than I'd hoped."

"That's a problem with both *VisiCalc* and a new program that Steve Smith is championing, *Lotus-1-2-3*, and the PC/XT systems. IBM is releasing a faster system, though DOS has significant memory limitations."

"Are you suggesting we switch spreadsheet programs?" I asked.

"Not yet, but *Lotus-1-2-3* is gaining serious market share. Steve expects it to displace *VisiCalc*."

"OK. Sorry I interrupted."

"It's OK. Anyway, the Sun-1 workstation that Steve and I share would be too expensive to put on half the desks and have analysts share. Fundamentally, we need advances in speed and increases in memory to do what you want. It'll take time, but it will happen. Sun has a new system out, the Sun-2, which is faster and could support more users, but we're not ready for that."

"I trust you, Steve, and Tony to advise me in that regard."

"If you're done with that topic," Jack said, "I have a practical question not related to work."

"Ask away!"

"Are you taking all the furniture with you to the new place?"

That was something I hadn't considered, and I knew Jack and Kristy would have a tough time filling the house with furniture. Closing the deal with MTB Sports Management meant I'd have an additional \$8,000, before taxes and what I would

give to Jack for the idea, over and above the approximately \$25,000 I'd receive in my quarterly check. I could easily furnish the new place with no difficulty.

"I actually hadn't thought about that. This isn't like with the previous move where we had a deadline to be out. Deanna will stay until her new studio is ready, which means likely sometime in April, depending on the permits. Fortunately, what we're doing is minor, except for electrical, so the permits are easier to get. As for the rest of us, probably in stages.

"As I think about it, I'll probably buy new stuff for the condo, except for the Japanese room - all of that will move to the new Japanese room. That means we'll probably all be here until late April, so I can use my quarterly check for new furniture. The only consideration is what Bianca does, given the baby is due in early April."

"Jack, do you think you and Kristy could hack a baby in the house for two weeks?"

"I think we could manage," he replied.

"Then I think the smart move is to stay at the house," Bianca said. "The nursery is ready, and I'm not going to be in any shape to want to move in March! May I make a suggestion?"

"Sure."

"Ask Rich if he has any contacts in Japan who could procure «tatami» mats for the Japanese room. You can certainly afford it, and that would basically finish the room in that style."

"I suspect Keiko's grandfather has some friends who either are in Japan or know someone in Japan. I'll call him today. If that doesn't pan out, I'll ask Rich."

"You should also consider a futon to replace the couch. That's more appropriate to the style and would give us one additional bed if we needed it. Well, unless that would somehow be inappropriate."

"I don't think so," I replied. "The urn with Keiko's ashes will go in my room so it's away from the «kamidana» to avoid giving offense to Keiko's family, should they visit."

"Who all was there yesterday?"

"All her relatives who were at the funeral, including the ones from California. It was a simple ceremony - the same prayer from the funeral, incense, and a small fire in a brazier. The usual thing to do when you visit is pour water on the stele with the person's name, clap your hands, and burn incense."

"Clap your hands?" Jack asked.

"To get the attention of the «kami», or so the story goes. I did it because it was traditional, not because Keiko or I believed «kami» are real, like ghosts or spirits."

"How often are you supposed to visit?"

"There are varying traditions, and I'm going to go with the American one of visiting on December 27th each year. Her parents and grandparents will follow whichever Japanese tradition is followed by their extended families."

"Are you going to keep in touch with them?" Bianca asked.

"I'd like to stay in touch with her grandfather. He and I connected on a level I haven't connected with any male in my life."

"A father figure?"

"Or grandfather, but yeah. You know my situation growing up, and what I have with him is something I missed growing up. Weirdly, I didn't miss it until I met him."

"How could you? You worked for men, had a few male teachers, and Bev's dad, I guess. Your role model, if you will, was your mom. Not having a strong male presence in your life doesn't seem to have harmed you in any way."

"I suppose not, though I don't have any experience with being a dad or relating to a dad."

"If you treat our daughter the way you treat everyone else, she'll be just fine," Bianca said. "I'll be curious to see how you respond to the first boy she brings home."

I chuckled, "What I've heard called the true test of any man's life!"

We arrived at the Hancock Center, parked, and then headed up to the Spurgeon offices. The morning was routine, and just before lunch, I received some good news -- Deanna's lease application had been approved and would begin on March 1st.

I ate lunch with Bianca, went to the gym, and mid-afternoon, placed a call to Ichirō to ask about the Japanese flooring. He asked for the room dimensions and promised to check into it for me, as well as locate someone in the Chicagoland area who could install it properly.

"Would you join us for dinner on Sunday?" Ichirō inquired.

"I'd be honored," I replied.

We agreed on the time, I thanked him again for his help, and we ended the call. About ninety minutes later, I left the office to meet Deanna at Star of Siam for dinner.

"Your lease application was approved and starts March 1st."

"AWESOME!" she exclaimed. "I spoke to your friend at Brown Construction, and there is no way to avoid using a licensed electrician."

"I was sure that was the case. We can do everything else, right?"

"Yes. Laying tile, painting, and so on aren't things that need permits. We're not touching the plumbing or any structural walls, so we don't have to worry about bringing anything up to code."

"What isn't to code?"

"The bathroom. There's no way to get in there with a wheelchair, and given where it's located, I can see how it could be fixed without major reconstruction. I don't intend for it to be for public use, anyway, so it's not a big deal. It would just be me or any artists who worked at the studio. I did come up with a name."

"What's that?"

"Ateljé D, for my first initial. I'll paint it on the front window from the inside so we don't have to spend money on a sign. I plan to leave the kitchen door that swings in and out in place to separate the gallery from the studio."

"It's your space! What's the plan for this weekend?"

"I need you with me at the opening on Friday evening."

"Same schtick as Evanston?"

"I actually was thinking of changing styles. I found a dress at a second-hand shop that is perfect!"

"You?! In a dress?!"

Deanna laughed, "I am NOT going to be Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm or a 1950s housewife! It's black, form-fitting, and has slits and other openings, all tasteful, of course. I'll pull my hair back and not wear any makeup except a bit of eyeliner. It'll have a very avant-garde look."

"And me?"

"One of your suits, of course, but I want you to get purple suspenders and a purple tie. It'll make you look edgy and chic while still being my conservative patron. Can your friend Beth help with that?"

"I'm sure she can. I'll call her first thing tomorrow. Speaking of style, I'm going to purchase all new furniture for the condo. I'd like you to design a look or create a theme if that's something you could do."

"I can, but I'll get some help from my friend Natasha, who is studying interior design. She'd want to photograph it for her portfolio."

"That works for me."

"Excellent!"

When we finished our meal, we headed to the Art Institute, and I pulled Alexa aside.

"I just want to make sure you're OK with my hands on your bare stomach."

Alexa laughed, "You clearly didn't look over ALL the poses! There's one where you cup my bare boobs from behind!"

"OK, then," I replied in amusement. "I just want to make sure before I touch someone that way."

"I appreciate it. It is kind of intimate."

"Kind of?"

"There are more intimate places to touch, but Claire isn't going to push things that far! As liberal as the school is, anything that comes close to pornography is off-limits."

"I thought the First Amendment protected pornography."

"It does, but the School of the Art Institute is a private organization, and they can make whatever rules they want. Tasteful nudes are fine, but *Hustler*-style beaver shots are not!"

"I know about Larry Flynt because he got into it with a prosecutor in Cincinnati, but I don't know what you mean."

"*Playboy* shows pubic hair but is very careful to have the models keep their legs together or keep the angle of the photograph such that it's not too explicit. *Hustler* will have a girl with her legs spread wide and even using her fingers to spread her labia. The first would be OK here, but the second wouldn't. All our

poses will be more like *Playboy*, *Playgirl*, or *Cosmo*, though Burt Reynolds didn't show his equipment in that nude shot."

"Nude shot?"

"*Cosmopolitan* had tasteful nudes; basically centerfolds without genitals on display. Burt Reynolds was gorgeous! I had all kinds of fantasies about him!"

"Jonathan?" Claire said from behind me. "I changed my mind for tonight. Keep your suit on, but Alexa will have her shirt off. I want to play with the power dynamic."

I actually had experienced that with Jeri, and it was an intriguing concept. In a way, it was similar to what Deanna was portraying at her shows, though in that case, the power dynamic was muddled and could be seen either way -- the rich, powerful patron and the poor, starving, disaffected artist; or the desirable, sexy, talented artist who controlled her patron with a combination of art and sex.

"OK," I replied.

"Next week, we'll do the same thing both days, so don't change out of your suit."

"Got it," I said.

Alexa went into the office, and I went to the studio. A minute later, Alexa came in wearing a thin robe, which she took off when the class started. Claire moved us into the pose with me standing slightly left of Alexa. Alexa removed her robe, and Claire positioned my hands on Alexa's stomach.

"Strong, warm hands," Alexa said quietly.

"Soft skin and a firm, toned stomach," I replied.

When the session ended, Deanna and I headed home together.

"Will you pose for me?" she asked.

"I'm curious what an abstract image of me would look like!"

Deanna laughed, "That would be interesting, but my portfolio for my painting class requires multiple styles. This one would be 'realism', so as accurate as possible. The other one can be in any style, and I wondered if you and Bianca would pose, specifically before she gives birth?"

"Nudes?"

"Of you? I could, but I was actually thinking of you in the Japanese room, standing in front of the Spirit Shelf. But the one with Bianca would be awesome if it were a nude, with you behind her, her hands on her baby belly, and your hands on top of hers."

"If Bianca is game, I'm game. When the time comes, I want to buy both of those for my private collection."

"Yes, of course! I prefer to keep my public art abstract. Maybe I'll do something else at some point."

"You're displaying the four paintings for my office at the show, right?"

"Yes. Lizbeth wasn't happy about that because she won't earn any commissions. But there are two I have that are for sale, so it'll work out. How are you doing after yesterday?"

"OK. Just give me a bit of time. I haven't forgotten the raincheck!"



February 16, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Thursday was a routine day at work, and nothing major happened in the world. At lunch, I'd met Beth at the tailor shop, and she'd picked out a bold purple tie and suspenders, which were a shade lighter. I paid for them, we agreed to have lunch the following week, and I returned to the office.

I was a bit frustrated at not being able to find any big plays, but the Nikkei was doing well, so my returns were decent. I had a number of stocks in play, but those might or might not hit by the end of the year. I would make some money on gold and silver, but nothing like the previous years, as the spreads simply weren't as large.

"I have an idea," Tony said, coming into my office just after 4:00pm.

"Let's hear it."

"I ran across a lawsuit filed by Delta Data Systems Corporation against the FBI for improperly awarding a contract to a subsidiary of Burroughs. I'm no lawyer, but in reading their claims, I think they have a good shot at winning. It's an OTC stock trading around $1\frac{3}{4}$, and if they win, it has an upside of around $2\frac{3}{4}$."

"And if they lose?"

"The company fundamentals are good, so I don't see a price lower than around $\$1\frac{1}{2}$."

"Is there enough float that a large OTC trade won't drive the price up?"

"You'd have to buy in small lots over time. The case won't be heard until July, and it usually takes a couple of months to publish the opinion."

"Write it up, but run the brief by Tim Liston in Legal so you have some backup."

"Going to pull the trigger right away?"

"No. We'll have to accumulate over time, and I need to think about how much I want to risk. Good find, even if it doesn't pan out. I like the creativity."

"Thanks! A friend of mine argues before the DC Circuit, and he says the judge in this case, some guy named Scalia, is pro-business and anti-government, so if the FBI didn't follow the rules, he'll nail them. I'll go see Tim now."

"OK."

He left, and I scribbled a note to research DDSC. I finished my day and headed home with Jack and Bianca. We had a nice dinner, which Juliette had prepared, and after dinner, I went up to my room so I could place a phone call.

"Hello?"

"Kayleigh?"

"Yes."

"This is Jonathan Kane. I was wondering if you'd like to meet for coffee on Monday. I believe you have the day off work the same as I do."

"I do. And yes! Absolutely! Where?"

"I live in Rogers Park, so pretty much anything is convenient. You choose."

"I live in Bridgeport. We could meet at Lou Mitchell's'. Maybe for breakfast?"

There wasn't much difference between coffee and breakfast in my mind, in terms of the limits I wanted to set.

"Breakfast it is! What time?"

"8:30am?"

"Sounds good to me."

"I'm really looking forward to it!"

"Then I'll see you there."

"Thanks for calling me! Bye!"

"Bye!"

I hung up, then went downstairs to spend time with my housemates before bed.



February 17, 1984, Oak Park, Illinois

"That dress is out of this world!" I said to Deanna when I picked her up at home for the drive to Oak Park.

"I thought you'd like it! And the tie is perfect!"

"How many artists are showing their work?"

"Nine, including me, in a mix of styles."

"I'm curious, why do you want to only offer abstract paintings for sale?"

"It's my personal style and what really moves me. I can do other stuff, but that often feels like work. It's like the paintings I need to do of you and Bianca, and you by yourself. I'll do them, but I'm not driven to do them. The drawing portfolio for Claire is similar, though I enjoy freehand drawing and like working with pastels. But I'm not inspired by the series of drawings the way I am the art I did for you, for example."

"Anala had to draw every bridge over the Chicago River for an architecture class, so it seems as if that's a thing."

"It is. There are actually artists who created a series of paintings of the same thing, only in different lighting or different seasons or whatever. I think I've mentioned those."

"You have."

"What do you think of modeling?"

"It's boring," I replied.

"It'll be a bit more interesting this coming week!"

I chuckled, "Yes, but weirdly, it's not about sex."

"If you figured that out, you're way ahead of the game for most people. *David*, *Venus*, and other works that feature nudity are not about sex. What you're doing is kind of in between because it implies sex, but modeling isn't about sex, which was my point about it not being pornography."

"There is, other than the medium, no difference between *Playboy* and *The Birth of Venus*. Both are art. Period. You know the painting I'm referring to, right? A nude Venus on a shell painted by Botticelli?"

"Yes."

"So, consider the difference between *Venus* or *Playboy* and *Octopuses and the Amagirl*."

"I see your point; I don't think society agrees."

"Society most definitely does not agree! A hint of female nipple, and it's the end of the world! And it's worse with pubic hair. There are people who think *David* should have a loincloth!"

"That's just stupid!"

"I'd love to see them visit *The Louvre* and see *Sleeping Hermaphroditus*!"

"I don't know that one."

"It's absolutely not seventh-grade art class material! If you approach it from behind, it appears to be a beautiful nude girl lying on her side with a cute, well-formed ass. If you walk around the other side, you see nice boobs but also a penis."

"OK, then," I replied, shaking my head.

"The word 'hermaphrodite' means, generally speaking, having both sets of external genitalia. That's an actual medical condition, which is very rare. The

word derives from Greek mythology, with the god Hermaphroditus, the son of Hermes and Aphrodite in Greek mythology.

"According to the poet Ovid, he fused with the nymph Salmacis, resulting in one individual possessing physical traits of male and female sexes. There's a statue of 'him' in the Lady Lever Art Gallery in England. That one is standing and is basically a beautiful female form, including nice breasts, but with male genitals.

"Okey dokey," I chuckled.

"There's also a nine-part photo series by Nadar from the 19th century that shows an actual human being with both genitalia -- penis, testicles, and vulva. If we go to Paris, we might see them at Musée d'Orsay. When I was there, they were on loan, so I haven't actually seen them."

"Conversations with you are never boring!" I chuckled as I turned into the parking lot.

"Art is, by its very nature, expressive, provocative, controversial, and challenging to the viewer. It evokes emotion in ways that almost nothing else can. Music can do something similar, but the visual arts are very evocative."

"The emotions you express in your abstract work."

"Yes. And they're stronger than realism because they don't conform to any expectation about the natural world."

"An interesting concept. I suppose we need to put on our game faces! Successful stockbroker and disinterested artist!"

We got out of the car and made our way to the gallery, where we were greeted by Joan Baxter, the gallery owner. A waiter in a tux brought us flutes of sparkling wine, and we began to mingle with the other artists and attendees.

About an hour into the show, Joan Baxter introduced all of the artists, and people came to speak to Deanna. I was very pleased that there was significant interest in the four paintings Deanna had done for my office -- *Bull Market*, *Bear Market*, *Silver Market*, and *Gold Market*.

"I'll offer you five times what you were paid for those if you'll sell them to me right now," a guy in his forties said.

He had on a suit as expensive as mine and, in my mind, absolutely had to be a fellow securities professional.

"I'm sorry," Deanna said, "but I can't renege on the sale. They'll be displayed at Spurgeon Capital."

"Shit!" the man grouched. "Beaten to the punch by Noel Spurgeon. Again!"

"Relax, John," a gorgeous blonde in her early twenties counseled. "Don't let him get to you!"

"Miss Haight," he said, "I'd like to preview your work before the next show. I'll write you a check for \$1000 right now if you guarantee access before Noel Spurgeon!"

I was doing my best to not laugh because it wasn't Noel, it was me. I was sure he discounted that idea, given how young I was, despite wearing an expensive tailored suit. I suspected he felt I was a junior guy like Foulks who was just learning the ropes but had to dress the part.

"Let me think about it," Deanna said. "Come see me in twenty minutes."

"I will!"

He and the gorgeous blonde moved away.

"Nice arm candy," Deanna smirked. "But she's the girlfriend, not the wife!"

"That's a sucker bet if I ever heard one!" I chuckled. "I almost burst out laughing because you could take his money, keep your promise, and the paintings could *still* end up at Spurgeon!"

"What do you think?"

"I think you should take the man up on his offer and let him see whatever it is you plan to display on Memorial Day in Skokie. Or, just have a private showing of anything you're willing to sell once you open the gallery, which should be sometime in April."

"I can make the promise and that \$1000 would cover a good part of the renovations."

"Then do that."

About twenty minutes later, after mingling with other attendees, Deanna concluded the deal and put the check for \$1000 in her purse. He handed her a business card, and she promised she'd be in touch.

The rest of the evening was more mingling, and when the show finally closed for the evening, Deanna and I left the gallery and headed home.



February 18, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday morning, I had my usual routine -- breakfast with Violet, where I shared the list of baseball games we'd attend, then went to class. After class, I returned to Violet's house so we could have lunch.

"How did your session with Nancy go?" I asked once Violet had invited me inside.

"Good. I'll see her again in two weeks. I have lunch ready."

We went to the kitchen to eat homemade pizza, which was very good.

"I didn't want to ask you at the office," Violet said. "How did things go on Tuesday?"

"Fine. It was a very short ceremony, with the same prayer from the funeral, and a few graveside practices, including pouring water in the stele that has Keiko's and my name on it."

"Can I ask you something about that?"

"Of course."

"You intend to be cremated and have your ashes next to hers?"

"Yes."

"What if you remarry? Won't that cause a problem with your wife?"

"That wasn't even a consideration when I made the commitment to Keiko, which I do not regret making. As for marrying again, that's a possibility in the future, and, to be honest, if I were to marry, it wouldn't change the promise I made."

"That could cause real contention."

"Which is why I'd bring it up before I asked someone to marry me, if that ever happens."

"You might not?"

I shrugged, "It's the same answer as last Saturday - I'm not sure how to move forward."

"Is this where I say you should spend the night and solve both our problems at once?"

"Please answer honestly -- do you think that's a good idea and that it would work?"

"You know I was teasing, right?"

"I'm going to be me, if that's OK?"

"Yes," Violet agreed.

"You were teasing, but you also weren't. Setting aside the fact that I'm not ready to be involved with anyone that way, if I were to come back and spend the night, you would at least try. The question is, are you sure we should? Which is what we discussed last week."

"It's so confusing," Violet said. "I did discuss it with Nancy today, and she asked me pretty bluntly how I would react if you were to use your mouth on me. I started shaking, and she said that so long as I had that reaction, I shouldn't."

"I think she has a good point, though I can see a problem with that thinking."

"What do you mean?"

"We're approaching this as an 'all-or-nothing' situation, and that's partly my fault. I think taking things slowly, step-by-step, might allow you to become comfortable with the idea. But I told you that wasn't possible because of what it would mean. The problem is I effectively imposed my view of what it would mean on you without asking you."

"You mean what you said about a real kiss, right?"

"Yes. I owe you an apology because I didn't ask you; I told you. And I basically put you in a trap where unless you feel ready to go to bed together, we'll never have a first real kiss, and it's unlikely you'll feel ready to go to bed together without slowly working towards it."

"Which is the same trap you put yourself in because of Keiko, right?"

"So it would seem. Aren't we the pair?"

"What are you saying? That we should work our way up to going to bed together without being boyfriend and girlfriend?"

"I have no idea what I'm saying," I replied. "I just analyzed the situation, I didn't work out a solution."

"Obviously, you aren't now, but before Keiko, you had sex with girls who weren't your girlfriends, right? I mean, you weren't exclusive with them."

"Yes."

"I'm going to say something, but I still want to think about it, OK?"

"Say whatever you need to say, please. That's the only way forward."

"I think the only thing we can do is try. Start with kissing and see how I feel, then more stuff. If we get to the point where I want you to spend the night, then we worry about boyfriend and girlfriend. Obviously, you aren't ready to even kiss at this point, so I have some time to think about it."

"I once said to someone that any kind of physical intimacy with you would feel like a permanent commitment. You gave that impression, too, though I may have imputed that to you, rather than discerned it."

"I don't know," Violet replied. "Nancy pointed out that at the time when I was supposed to be thinking about boys and deciding what my limits were, my parents were abusing my sister and locking me in a cage. That messed me up, not just about sex, but about relationships. Until I met you, I didn't have any close friends, and now I have you and Lily. I have no clue how to have a romantic relationship because I was so scared and didn't do the usual stuff as a teenager."

"Believe it or not, neither did I. Yes, sure, I had sex with Bev, and she was a close friend, but Lily was exactly right when she called me a 'starter boyfriend'. Both of us had a lot to learn, and we made a bunch of mistakes."

"Which is what concerns you, right? That you'll mess up? I feel the same way. But you have experience, and I don't mean sex, I mean relationships. I've never even gone on a date. Well, with you, but those aren't date dates, if that makes sense."

"Yes, because we're going out as very close friends, not as romantic partners or potential romantic partners. That was off limits, so to speak."

"Will you do something for me?"

"Of course."

"When you're ready to kiss someone, ask me for a real kiss, OK? I'll give you a straight 'yes' or 'no' answer."

"I will."

After I left her house I stopped to get the oil changed at B&W, then went to Jewel and the dry cleaner.



February 19, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday, I spent a relaxing morning and afternoon at the house, then headed to Ichirō's house for dinner with him and Atsuko.

"How are you doing, Jonathan?" he asked after we were seated at the low table.

"I'm OK. I miss Keiko, but it helps to be busy at work and with my classes."

"Which classes?"

"One in international finance at Circle, the other so I can obtain my Series 30 license, which allows me to supervise other people with licenses. I also made arrangements to start a program at Circle that will allow me to obtain a Bachelor's degree in business through independent study."

"That's very good. Tell me about the place you're moving to, please."

I described the condo, something I hadn't done when I'd asked Ichirō to find a source for the «tatami» mats.

"Keiko said you were extremely successful, but you were also very 'down to earth', as she called it. She implied that your co-workers look down on others and behave in ways that are completely inappropriate."

"Unfortunately, yes."

"It's important that you not allow that to infect you like a virus. It's very easy to follow the dominant culture or follow the crowd. Mental discipline is very important, and that's something you've shown, but it's also something that must be exercised, just as your body must be exercised. The same is true for your spirit."

I smiled, "Keiko suggested that you would invite me to be a student once we married, but events overtook us."

"I had intended to do that, but the last thing I wanted to do was distract you from your purpose in life -- to love my granddaughter and help her in a way no other person could. You truly were her courageous protector. I am, and always will be, grateful. Would you consider becoming a student?"

"My time is very limited because of work and class. I'm not sure I could commit to the necessary training sessions to perform at a level which would respect you and your dōjō."

"May I give you something to read and study?"

"Yes, of course."

He rose and left the room, returning a minute later. He handed me a small booklet.

"This contains the «Shōtōkan nijū kun» and the «Dōjō kun», which are the basic principles of our form of martial arts. I think you'll find they provide mental and spiritual guidance, and once you've read and studied them, we can discuss them."

"I promise to do that."

"Good. I'd like to have dinner with you once a month or so, if you're willing."

"I am."

I had an enjoyable evening, and around 9:30pm, I headed home.



February 20, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday morning, which was Presidents' Day, I left the house at 7:45am to take the L to meet Kayleigh for breakfast at Lou Mitchell's. I walked in about 8:25am and she was waiting for me by the hostess stand. We greeted each other and were seated about two minutes later.

"I'm really happy you called," she said. "I'm very sorry for your loss."

"Thanks."

The waitress came, poured coffee, and set a small basket of doughnut balls on the table. Kayleigh and I both knew what we wanted to order, so the waitress wrote on her pad, then went to hand in the orders with the kitchen.

"I'm very interested in how you went from High School graduate to stockbroker in two years. Would you tell me?"

I nodded and gave her a two-minute synopsis of how my uncle had secured the mailroom position for me and how I'd worked my way up to Head of Research."

"Wow! I'm amazed at how quickly you could achieve that. And without going to college at all, not even junior college."

"Hard work and determination still pay off," I replied. "My uncle did something similar to become a real estate investor, though he did graduate from college. One of the prominent people in the securities industry started his firm with money he earned as a lifeguard. And, of course, there are the stories of J. D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie, to name two. Have you lived in Bridgeport your entire life?"

"No. My family is from Elmhurst, but when I got the job at Hart-Lincoln, I moved to a two-flat in Bridgeport so I could take the L rather than drive. What do your parents do?"

"My dad was a salesman but died in a plane crash before I was born. My mom is a senior secretary at Goshen High School. How about you?"

"My dad teaches American Government at York High, and my mom is a nurse at Elmhurst Hospital. Do you have siblings?"

"No. I was born when my mom was seventeen, and she never married. You?"

"Two younger sisters - seventeen and fifteen. What sports do you like?"

"Baseball, football, and hockey. You?"

"Baseball. Let me guess, Big Red Machine?"

"A safe bet! Cubs or Sox?"

"Cubs, despite living a stone's throw from Comiskey Park. Do you live in an apartment?"

"No, I own a house which I share with six friends."

"You own a house, too? Wow!"

"I'm surprised you didn't know, given Nelson prepared my will and other documents."

"I actually didn't work on them. I was only there to notarize the documents. I work for two criminal defense lawyers."

"What kind of law does your grandfather practice?"

"Criminal defense, but I don't usually work for him."

"Then I think I need to tell you a bit more about me. You know I was married, obviously, but what you don't know is that a close female friend is pregnant with my baby."

"But..." she started. "Sorry, I'll let you explain."

"The simplest way to convey the situation is that my friend Bianca has a girlfriend and wanted to have a baby. We agreed and had planned for it to be a few years from now. Then, I met Keiko, and because of everything that happened, Bianca and I accelerated our timeline. There's way more to the story, but my daughter will be born in April."

"A girlfriend..."

"Yes. And just to get it out on the table, four of my closest friends are gay."

"I don't have a problem with gays, I was just surprised about you fathering a baby with a girl who wasn't your wife. How is that going to work?"

"We'll raise our daughter together. How that will work exactly remains to be seen."

"Are you and this girl still involved?"

"Not in the way your question implied. Despite fathering a child with Bianca, I honored my commitment to my marriage vows. I was always sure I wanted a committed, monogamous marriage for life, but that didn't preclude having a baby with Bianca. By that time, it was fairly clear Keiko would very likely not be able to conceive because of her chemotherapy and the necessity for a bone marrow transplant. Having a baby with Bianca allowed me to have a biological child. Keiko and I would have adopted, had she survived."

Before Kayleigh could respond, the waitress brought our food, then refilled our coffee cups.

"That's a lot to take in," Kayleigh observed.

"It is," I agreed.

XXXIX. I Smell a Rat!

February 20, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"You've had a complicated life," Kayleigh observed. "Mine has been simple."

"Is that a problem?" I asked.

"I think 'challenge' might be a better word. May I be direct?"

"That is my preferred style. I tend to get right to the point and prefer others to do the same."

"You having a baby with your friend gives me pause," she said.

"Let me ask you this -- if I was a single dad because Keiko and I had a baby before she got sick, would that be a problem?"

"It would be different, I guess. I'm not condemning you, but I'm pretty conservative and traditional."

"I was born to a single mom," I replied.

"Sorry," Kayleigh said. "But that was because your dad died, right?"

"They weren't married. Mom got pregnant at sixteen. My dad didn't live in Ohio. They met, created the necessary conditions for me to be born, and she never saw him again because of his work and the plane crash."

Kayleigh laughed softly, "I've never heard 'created the necessary conditions for a baby to be born' used as a euphemism for having sex!"

"I once teased my mom that she had performed the necessary ritual to invite me into her life without using birth control."

"Wow!" Kayleigh exclaimed.

"I also called it 'sending a message to the stork'."

"Cute. What church do you attend?"

"None. We had a Shinto wedding, and Keiko had a Buddhist funeral. I don't believe in God. I'm going to guess you're Catholic?"

"A safe bet, given I'm Irish-American, despite not having red hair and green eyes! Did you ever go to church?"

"I've been to several weddings and a funeral, and that's it. My mom attended a church she describes as Baptist when she was little, but stopped going when my grandparents kicked her out of the house for getting pregnant."

"Church is going to be a problem, isn't it?"

"I know enough about the Catholic church to say that my views are completely incompatible. I realize I'm jumping the gun, but if going to church as a couple, having a church wedding, and raising kids Catholic are all important to you, we've hit a major roadblock."

"Breakfast to having kids together in less than fifteen minutes? I'd say that's jumping the gun!"

"What I said before about me being direct is absolutely true, and I'm also extremely practical. Doesn't it make sense to address what might be a serious impediment as soon as it's discovered?"

"Maybe, but don't you think getting to know someone is important?"

"Yes, and with most topics, compromises or accommodations could be made that would likely satisfy both parties. Religion is different."

"You sound like the attorneys I work for! 'Satisfy both parties'?"

"I don't write legal briefs, but in a way, what I do is similar, in that I write analysis documents which lay out the case with regard to a specific decision to be made, weighing the pros and cons, and suggesting a course of action. I tend to approach life analytically, analyze risks and rewards, and develop a way forward. The legal advice I receive from Nelson Boyd is like that -- he tells me the pros and cons and suggests a plan, but it's up to me to implement it or not."

"I'm probably jumping into a pool of alligators here, but how does that work in a romantic relationship?"

I saw shades of Haley, Teri, and Rachel Kealty in Kayleigh and decided it was best just to answer similarly to how I did Haley, but with perhaps a bit more tact.

"Even when love or romance, or however you want to phrase it, is involved, we still have to make decisions based on our assessment of the situation. I've heard 'love conquers all', but I'd suggest the divorce rate shows that to be a falsehood. If you fell in love with someone with whom you had nothing in common, how well would that work out?"

"Not very, I suspect."

"So, however important feelings are in your decision, you have to take other factors into consideration. Well, you could ignore them, trust that love does conquer all, and hope for the best. To me, that seems like a surefire way to crash and burn. In fact, I'd posit that you'd be much more successful with someone with whom you had a lot in common, especially a common worldview and common goals, than someone very different with whom you were in love."

"I hadn't thought about that, but you're probably right."

"So, doesn't it make sense to deal with the elephant in the room?"

"I suppose it does."

"How often do you attend mass?"

"Every Sunday morning since I was a baby, plus holy days."

"And you confess, go to communion, and generally agree with the teachings of the Catholic Church?"

"Yes. It would be silly to go if I didn't agree with what they taught."

"I have a friend who goes to church regularly but says she disagrees with quite a bit of what the Catholic Church teaches. I have other friends who disagree with some doctrine or other, as well. So, I don't think it's silly in general. I mean, I'd call myself a Democrat, but I don't agree with everything in the Democratic Party platform, and there's a good chance I'll vote for Reagan in November."

"If I disagreed with what the Catholic Church taught in a significant way, I'd stop going. It sounds like we've hit an impasse because I get the idea that you have zero interest in attending church."

"My ability to compromise is limited, but going to church on occasion and even having my kids baptized are not out of the question. On the other hand, a church wedding is out of the question because I couldn't make the promises required to have one. And being OK with my kids being baptized does not mean I would keep quiet about my beliefs. So I can compromise some, but given what you've said, I'm not sure it's enough."

"Probably not," Kayleigh agreed. "A church wedding is important to me."

We finished our breakfasts, and once I'd paid the check, we walked out of the restaurant.

"Thank you for breakfast," Kayleigh said.

"You're welcome. I enjoyed the conversation even if it didn't lead where I believe you wanted it to lead. Unless I'm totally missing something, I don't think asking you out again will change anything."

"No, I don't think it will," she said.

I walked her to the L, we said 'goodbye' and climbed separate steps as I was going north, and she was going south. Forty minutes later, I walked into the house. I took off my winter gear and went to the kitchen to get a cup of coffee.

"How did it go?" Bianca asked.

"About the way you would expect with a girl who goes to mass every Sunday morning."

"The kiss of death."

"Pretty much. The compromise Teri suggested is basically the hard limit, and I'd really prefer not to have to compromise in that area because I could see it going badly down the road."

"And I think your friends bear that out. Nobody is religious or goes to church except on special occasions, if even then. I think Teri is the exception, but as you say, she offered a compromise that you could accept, if it came down to it. I assume you won't see Kayleigh again?"

"We agreed it would be fruitless. It wasn't wasted time, though, because thinking about a possible romantic relationship helped me order my thoughts further. I'm still not sure what to do, but I feel as if I'm getting closer to at least figuring out a way forward, even if I don't know the destination."

"Before I forget, Esme and Katy are coming home for Spring Break in late March. They want to visit, but I wasn't sure how you felt about that."

"They're welcome to visit, so long as they aren't expecting to pick up where we left off, so to speak."

"I don't think so. I certainly didn't get that vibe from Esme."

"OK. I do know how to say 'no', but I don't want to end up in an uncomfortable situation."

"I totally get it. Deanna said she'd be ready whenever we are."

"Then let's go upstairs and get naked!" I said with a grin.

"In my dreams!" Bianca replied. "Well, maybe not for about six months."

I refilled my coffee mug, and then Bianca and I went up to Deanna's combination studio and bedroom.

"I hear you're ready for us," I said.

"I am! Let me turn on the space heater because otherwise, it'll be a bit chilly. You can get undressed, and I'll help you pose."

Deanna turned on the space heater and moved it so it would keep Bianca and me from getting chilled. The two of us undressed. and Deanna moved us into the position she'd described -- me standing just slightly offset from Bianca, with Bianca's hands on her baby belly and my hands on top of hers.

"Perfect!" Deanna said, stepping back and looking us over.

She moved to her easel, picked up a pencil, and began sketching.

"Do you have a name for this painting?" I asked.

"No. I don't usually name my classwork. I was thinking, though, that I could do a companion piece to this. Would you two agree to pose with your baby? A similar pose with Bianca holding her and you with your arms around both of them? I could call the series 'Nuclear Family' even though it's not, actually. But nobody has to know you aren't married."

"I'm game," I said. "Bianca?"

"Sure."

"And then maybe a third one when she's a year old?"

"Again, I'm fine if Bianca is."

"Where would you display them?" I asked.

"At a show at school, but then if you want to hang them, that's fine."

"There's plenty of room in the condo," Bianca suggested. "We could almost make it a gallery. I don't have a problem with anyone seeing the paintings, though it might make some people uncomfortable. Jonathan, I have an idea if you're game."

"What's that?"

"You plan to display your collection of Deanna Haight originals, which could go in the common areas, but we could turn the spare room into a gallery for more intimate works that would make someone like Keiko's grandfather uncomfortable."

"You've seen the Japanese erotic art, so I'm not sure that's a problem," I chuckled.

Bianca laughed, "I was thinking more of the fact that it's you and me naked and with a baby that was conceived after you and Keiko were basically a couple. And what would your mom say?"

"I actually have no idea what she'd say. We never discussed art or nudity or anything like that. I know her parents would likely have strokes, but I don't know how she'd react. I guess my only concern is giving up the spare room."

"Short term, though, right? CeCi is planning to move to California when she graduates."

"True. Work it out with Deanna because we'll need lighting and maybe a piece of furniture like they have at the Art Museum -- those cushioned benches?"

"Cool," Bianca replied. "Deanna, have you started the design?"

"I spoke to my friend Natasha, the interior design student, and we're working on a theme. I'll have something to show Jonathan, at least in terms of colors and an overall concept, in a week or so."

About an hour later, Deanna said we could get dressed as she didn't need us to pose to begin painting, but would ask us to come back when she was ready to complete the final details.

"Jonathan, given you don't have plans for the afternoon, I could do the initial sketch of you in the Japanese room."

"That's fine with me," I replied. "What should I wear?"

"Your kimono if you're willing."

"I am."

"Then meet me there in about fifteen minutes, OK?"

"Yes."

We did that, and once again, once Deanna had the basic sketch, I changed out of my kimono into sweatpants and a rugby shirt and had lunch with Bianca, Juliette, CeCi, and Deanna. The rest of the day was quiet, and I was able to relax in the Japanese room and continue reading *Les Misérables*.



February 21, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Tuesday started out fairly typical, and after I completed my analyst report, I evaluated what moves I might make. In the end, I decided against investing in Delta Data Systems Corporation, as there simply weren't enough available shares at a price I was willing to pay, and I wasn't able to find any counterparties who would sell me call options. That didn't surprise me for a small OTC stock, and just calling several brokerages in New York to inquire about shares had caused the asking price to go up a few cents.

The only way that play would make any sense was to buy a huge block of shares from an insider, and a brief check by Joel Steinem indicated there wasn't any selling interest by anyone with a large block of shares. What had looked like a good idea simply didn't pan out. I did make a note to follow the lawsuit to see what happened, then continued looking for other opportunities.

The market was in turmoil, and the DJIA was at a nine-month low. Inflation appeared to be rearing its ugly head, and that indicated that the Fed was likely to boost rates, further depressing the stock market. President Reagan was jawboning them to cut rates, but that was unlikely. On the positive side, the budget deficit had decreased, though our analysis was that that decrease was mostly due to accounting tricks and other sleights of hand.

The one sector where there was a lot of activity was petroleum, with Mesa making a bid for Gulf after Gulf had won their proxy battle with T. Boone Pickens, and Texaco was still trying to buy Getty. The problem with investing there was so many deals had fallen apart that it would be easy to lose significant money by making a bad bet, or timing it wrong.

Another interesting battle was Rupert Murdoch bidding for Warner Communications, but that appeared to simply be greenmail, and it was our assessment that Warner would buy back Murdoch's shares at a premium over

what the market was offering. If that happened, it would be a private transaction, so there was no way to cash in on it.

My prediction of a bad year was being reinforced on a daily basis. The one bright spot was the Nikkei 225, though I had gone long on several speculative stocks in January, along with the move on Hawaiian Airlines. If those panned out, I might eke out a 20% gain, which would easily beat the street but not be anywhere near typical Spurgeon returns.

As I browsed news stories, I saw some possible plays - going long on General Foods and shorting Bethlehem Steel. I worked through the numbers and the news stories and decided both were possible plays. I picked up the phone and called Joel Steinem.

"I need 100,000 shares of General Foods at no more than \$45 a share, and I need you to find me a borrow of 100,000 of Bethlehem Steel for a short."

"OK. Let me work."

"Thanks."

About an hour later, he called back.

"All set. You should see both trades on your terminal. Goldman lent you the shares at the usual 10 bips a day."

That was about 0.3% per month, and I expected to be able to cover by the end of June, meaning I'd give up about 1% in fees.

"Perfect. Thanks."

"Which little birdie whispered in your ear on those?"

"Just trading the fundamentals. I could probably short the entire steel industry except for a few specialty steel manufacturers and come out ahead."

"You decided against Delta?"

"It doesn't make any sense. If I was a retail investor, I'd buy a thousand shares and have a tidy return. But I'd need a million shares to make it worth my while, and as you said, they just aren't there at a price I'm willing to pay. Thanks for the legwork, even though it didn't pan out."

"You're welcome. I'm here if you need me."

"Thanks."

I hung up, checked the trades in the system, then continued my research. After lunch, I went to see Murray Matheson.

"Do you know a John Margolis at Lakeview Partners," I asked.

"An M&A guy who does IPO advisory as well. Why?"

"He seems to have some kind of competition with Mr. Spurgeon over art."

Mr. Matheson laughed, "That he does. It all started when Noel bought that series of paintings in the main conference room. Margolis had made an offer, and Noel basically outmaneuvered him to purchase them. About six months later, the same artist had another series of paintings and Noel bought them before the show. Those he has at home. It's been a running thing with Margolis, and I think Noel actually has a dealer letting him know when Margolis is interested. They had a bidding war over a Matisse a few years ago that Noel won. How'd you meet him?"

"He was at an art show on Friday night where my friend Deanna was displaying some of her work. She did four paintings on commission for me that'll be hung in the Research office later this week. He saw they had red dots on them, indicating they were sold. He offered to pay five times what she'd been paid if she'd sell them to him, and she let him know they were going to be displayed here. He assumed Mr. Spurgeon had bought them and offered Deanna a premium to get early access to her next show before Mr. Spurgeon. She accepted because it was an easy promise, given it wasn't Mr. Spurgeon, it was me."

Mr. Matheson laughed again, "Nice. I wondered why you hadn't asked for any art from the firm's collection. What kind of paintings?"

"Abstract, with purple tones similar to our logo color. There are four which she calls *Bull Market*, *Bear Market*, *Gold Market*, and *Silver Market*. They're actually pretty cool. I was going to hang them myself, but Tony pointed out that the building rules require a building engineer to put the fasteners on the walls."

"They're sticklers about that, even though we did the remodeling. I'm sure it's some kind of union deal, like just about everything else in this city."

"That wouldn't surprise me. The fasteners will be installed on Thursday and I'll bring the paintings that morning. There won't be a problem with Deanna offering to sell paintings to this guy, will there?"

"That's something you'll need to take up with Noel. My advice is to invite him to see the paintings in the Research office and mention the offer that was made and see how he reacts."

"Is he going to try to outbid ME for her paintings?"

"If he likes them, he just might."

That would create a very interesting situation, given my patronage and the fact that Deanna would never sell something out from under me. All I could do was wait to see what he said.

That evening, after work, Jeri and I went to dinner at Ruth's Chris. We had a nice meal, followed by dessert, and then I drove her home.

"Come in for a drink," she suggested.

"Between two friends who are in business together? Or did you have some other idea?"

Jeri laughed softly, "I have all kinds of ideas! I'm invoking our old rule of once per meeting -- the offer is still there, and you know I'll do literally anything you want. We still have a chance to be *the* power couple in Chicago."

"My opinion hasn't changed," I replied. "And I'm not ready to be involved with anyone at this point."

"OK to continue? I'll drop it if you want."

"I know what you're going to offer, and I honestly think the deal we have now is the right way forward. See you on Thursday with the group?"

"Yes."

We hugged, then Jeri went into the house, and I headed home.



February 22, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Just after 9:00am on Thursday, I heard from Larry in New Accounts that MTB was approved and that the asset and funds transfer requests had been sent to their current brokerage firms. I thanked him, then called Gordon DeLisse at MTB to let him know. He thanked me, promised to inform Marvin McCafferty and let me know that I would likely receive additional account requests in early March.

Just as the call ended, the building engineer arrived to put fasteners on the walls of the research office, and once he'd finished, Violet helped me hang the four paintings. When I was satisfied, I called Julie and invited Noel Spurgeon to see them. She checked his calendar and said that he'd likely be down after lunch.

True to what she'd said, he appeared in the Research Department just after 1:00pm.

"Who painted these?"

"My housemate, Deanna. She showed them in Oak Park over the weekend, and someone offered her five times what she had been paid for them. When she declined and mentioned they were going to be hung here, he was obviously miffed."

"Who?"

"John Margolis from Lakeview Partners."

Mr. Spurgeon laughed, "He thought I bought them."

"Yes. We didn't disabuse him of that idea, and he offered Dee a thousand bucks if she'd allow him to see what she was going to display at her next show before you saw them."

"Perfect! He's a former classmate from Wharton and was a year ahead of me. I assume your deal with your housemate is that you have an option on everything?"

"Yes, but I'm sponsoring her, so I do want her to get her name out. I'll just have her hold back anything I want, and he won't even know it existed."

"She's very good, and if you didn't have an arrangement with her, I'd ask you to help me mess with the guy."

"I don't think those things are mutually exclusive," I said.

Mr. Spurgeon clapped me on the back, "I like you, Kane! I'm going to call him and give him shit about the paintings and then figure out the best way to fuck with him. All in good fun, of course."

"Of course!"

"On another topic, General Foods and Bethlehem Steel? I didn't see anything in the analyst reports before or after."

"Trades on the fundamentals, not based on any special research. I evaluated their P&Ls and their price-to-earnings ratios, and given current economic conditions, I felt there would be movement."

"OK. So nothing special, just typical moves in a difficult market."

"It sucks being a value investor," I said.

"TELL me about it! Sure, we can make some money, but not what our clients expect and not what you and I demand of ourselves. But we're being dealt a lousy economic hand, and we're verging on a bear market, so we take what we

can get. Keep up the good work, Kane, but find a way to make me some serious money!"

He left, and Bianca came in almost right away.

"How did that go?"

"Fine. He wants to mess with the M&A guy from Lakeview Partners."

"Of course he does, and you know on which side your bread is buttered!"

"Indeed I do!"

She went back to her office, and I sat down at my desk to try to fulfill Mr. Spurgeon's demand that I find a way to make some serious money. By 5:00pm, I hadn't found anything of note and was resigned to more moves similar to the ones I'd made on the two stocks. I put all my notes and papers in my desk drawer, locked it, then left for dinner at Bennigan's with Deanna. After dinner, we took a cab to the Art Institute.

"I know we talked about this," I said to Alexa, "but I want to make sure you're OK with this."

"I knew it was part of the deal when I agreed to this gig. It's cool. And it gets more intimate if you've looked at the list of poses. Reclining on the couch nude with my body basically draped over yours."

"All for the good cause of furthering art!"

Alexa laughed, then went into Claire's office to remove her blouse and bra and came out with her thin robe covering her. We went to the studio, where Alexa removed the robe, showing nice firm breasts about the size of grapefruit with

small light-brown nipples. Claire positioned us similarly to how she'd done the previous time, but now, instead of having my hands on Alexa's stomach, I cupped her breasts lightly in my hands.

"You're allowed to enjoy it," she whispered with a smirk.

"Thanks," I chuckled.

Her breasts did feel really nice, though, as I'd realized before, it was weirdly non-sexual, even though the implication of the pose was sex and power.



February 23, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"How are you doing?" Beth asked when we met at the kosher deli near her grandfather's tailor shop.

"Pretty good," I replied. "I signed some new clients, though the financial markets are tough at the moment. I close on my condo tomorrow, and I'm doing well in my course at Circle. Saturday, I'll finish the final class for my Series 30 license, and I'll be ready for the exam in early May."

"How about your personal life?"

"The interment last Tuesday gave me some closure, but I'm still struggling with the best way forward."

"Which is normal," Beth said. "Remember, my point wasn't that you needed to act now, just that you shouldn't let what happened be a straitjacket. It's OK to take time to deal with the emotions; I just don't want to see them drag you down or hold you back, either at work or in your personal life."

"I appreciate that."

"Have you been on a date? I mean, besides going out to lunch with me or your Friday night thing with your buddy?"

"I had breakfast with a paralegal from Nelson's firm on Monday, but it turns out she's a devout Catholic, so that's a non-starter."

"I know you well enough that it's not because she won't put out, though I know you aren't looking for that at the moment."

"No. It's going to church every Sunday and a church wedding. You know I can't make the promises that would be required."

"I totally get it because I have similar concerns. Well, I don't object to pre-marital sex, obviously, but I do have what amount to non-negotiable religious concerns. How did you feel about the idea of a date?"

"OK, actually."

"You dipped your toe in the water and found it was OK."

"A reasonable analogy. I don't have another one planned, but I won't shy away. I'm just going to be deliberate and take it slow."

"So long as you make progress, there's nothing wrong with that."

"I agree, obviously. How are things going with you?"

"We're busy, almost to the point where we might have to turn down business. My grandfather is thinking of bringing in a younger man, but there are so few who are trained, and he's not sure he wants to take on an apprentice."

"How much can you do?"

"He's taught me everything, and I can help, but I spend a lot of time basically playing fashion consultant, and let's just say a mid-twenties girl with big boobs is much more effective than a sixty-four-year-old man wearing a yarmulke!"

I laughed, "I can see how that would be the case."

"My grandfather has actually asked a friend of his in Tel Aviv to recommend someone, and if he does, we'll see if we can find a way to bring them here. Immigration law can be tricky."

"So I've heard."

"How is Bianca?"

"Good. She's due in about five weeks."

"That will change your life, for sure."

"Absolutely."

We finished our lunches, and I walked Beth back to the tailor shop.

"Call me soon, please," she said. "I enjoy spending time with you."

"And I enjoy spending time with you."

We hugged tightly, and I headed back to the office. About four hours later, I left the office and headed to Jeri's for our monthly dinner with our group. Dinner

was, as it always was, excellent, and the dessert was fantastic. We spent about an hour after dinner chatting, and then I bade everyone 'good night'.

I left with Marcia, as she'd asked me to give her a lift home.

"You seem more like yourself," she observed. "Last time, you were a bit down, which I totally get."

"I feel better, but I have a ways to go. I couldn't ask at Jeri's, but how did your date go on Friday?"

"OK. I'll see him again. You know how the early stages are -- you're trying to decide if the person is worth the effort to make a serious attempt at a relationship. It's too early to tell, though he does seem like a nice guy."

"Good."

"I know I'm probably asking a lot, and it's probably too soon, but would you stay over? I'd really like to be with you again, and if things go a certain way, that won't be possible."

"It has only been two months, and I'm not ready to be with anyone that way at this point."

"Sorry, I just, well, I had to ask."

"I understand, and I'm not upset that you asked."

"I should have been more sensitive to your loss."

"Don't beat yourself up," I said. "You know I value direct, honest conversation. All you did was express your wishes, and then it's up to me to decide what to do."

What I won't do is become angry or upset simply because someone communicates clearly what they want."

"Thanks."

After dropping her at her townhouse, I headed home.



February 24, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Take a couple of deep breaths, please," Nelson said as we walked towards Chicago Title on Friday afternoon.

"I'm calmer than last time," I replied.

"Good. I did call right before I left the office and spoke to the manager, and he confirmed that all documents were in order and that the amount for the cashier's check is the same as the one you were given at 8:30am this morning."

"All of which, according to you, is not worth the paper it's not printed on!"

"I agree, but it does give me a tiny bit of leverage if they screw around."

"We'll see," I chuckled.

"You are in a better mood."

"I was really stressed the last time. I'm not back to normal, if you will, but I'm handling everything OK."

"Did you speak to your insurance company?"

"Yes, plus ComEd and Ameritech. I'm having a new line installed, and I'll have my private line moved when I'm ready. The old general number for the house will be transferred into Jack's name."

We walked into Chicago Title at 2:55pm, five minutes early for our appointment. Promptly at 3:00pm, a young man came out and called for us to come to his office to sign the papers. Everything was in order, and fifteen minutes later, he handed me the keys.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Kane," the fifty-ish man with whom I'd had the run in the previous time said, coming into the office. "I trust everything is in order?"

"It is. On-time and efficient. Thank you."

I reached into my pocket and handed him an envelope.

"Thank you, Mr. Kane. I hope we'll see you again."

We shook hands, and he left, and our facilitator walked us to the lobby. I shook hands with him, thanked him, and the Nelson and I left the office. Once we were on the street, he put his hand on my arm.

"Mind telling me what just happened?"

"You weren't the only one to speak to the manager today," I said with a grin.

"I knew you were way too calm, but please, please, tell me you didn't bribe him!"

"Not at all. I simply suggested that if we were seen on time and all the documents were in order, that I'd express my gratitude for him fulfilling his duty."

"And the envelope?"

"A gift certificate for two to *Les Nomades* on Ontario."

"I have to ask..."

"I asked Noel Spurgeon how to ensure the closing went well. I followed his advice, and it worked to perfection."

"OK to pry into something?"

"Kayleigh?"

"She was extremely upbeat on Friday and completely down on Tuesday."

"She's a devout Catholic," I said. "That creates challenges that I don't think could be overcome. A church wedding is a non-starter, and that's something important for her."

"OK, as a lapsed Presbyterian, you're going to have to fill me in."

"A church wedding would require me to promise to raise my kids Catholic and not ever contradict Church teaching."

"You're sure about that?"

"Yes. I've had this conversation with more than one girl. I don't believe I ever discussed Rachel Kealty with you. She was a devout Catholic, and I tried, I mean really tried, to make it work, but every time it seemed we were making progress, some Catholic doctrine reared its ugly head. Don't get me wrong, I do not object to them following their faith, but I can't sign up for it."

"OK. My wife is UCC, so these kinds of things never came up."

"UCC?"

"United Church of Christ."

"OK. Come along and see the place?"

"Sure! I'm done for the day."

We went back to the Hancock Center so that Bianca and Violet could come with us, then we went downstairs and took the elevator up to the sky lobby, then switched to a local elevator that served the 91st floor. When we exited the elevator, we walked to the door to the condo, I unlocked it, and I let everyone in.

"WOW!" Violet exclaimed.

"What she said!" Nelson said.

I gave them a quick tour, then we all went back to the lobby. Nelson left, and Violet, Bianca, and I returned to the Spurgeon offices. We worked for another hour, then I went downstairs to meet Jack, Kristy, and CeCi for our usual Friday night out. After dinner at Billy Goat Tavern, we saw *Footloose*. After the movie, we had ice cream, then headed home.



February 25, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Do you know what I thought when I saw the view from your new condo?" Violet asked as we sat down to eat breakfast.

"That you want to spend the night with me as soon as I move in?" I asked with a smile.

"Yes! That condo is unbelievable!"

"So," I said with a goofy smile, "you're a gold digger?"

Violet laughed softly, "I think you know that's not the case. And I think you also know that when I thought that, it was just a silly thought."

"The fact that you can joke and tease about something like that is a positive step."

"I'm really comfortable around you, Jonathan. It's like that with Lily, too."

"I smell a rat!" I said.

Violet laughed, "You mean she's giving me advice?"

"Yes. And that does not bother me at all. I can't imagine Lily giving you bad advice."

"Even if she told me to, and I quote, 'suck it up, suck it, and have you...my brains out?'"

"And if I know Lily, she said that in some other context than something she intended you to do."

"She might have prefaced it with 'if it was me'."

"Now that I believe."

"OK to change the subject?"

"Yes."

"When will you move?"

"Probably after the baby is born because I asked Deanna to develop a plan for decorating the condo. She's working on it with a friend of hers who is an interior design student. What that means is we're going to buy all new furniture. That way, Jack and Kristy don't have to buy any. The one thing I will do is move all the things from the Japanese room. But that's another reason to delay -- I'm going to replace the hardwood floor with «tatami» mats, which are traditional Japanese flooring. Those won't arrive for about eight weeks because they're coming from Japan."

"Can you afford that? I mean, I know you're doing really well, but that sounds expensive."

"Closing the new business in Cincinnati means I'll receive an extra \$8,000 before taxes in April. That's over and above the \$10,000 a month and the \$25,000 quarterly payment."

"OK, maybe I *wasn't* kidding before!" Violet exclaimed.

"You've seen your returns."

"I wasn't saying you didn't deserve it! It's just an unbelievable amount of money!"

"Trust me, I agree with you."

We finished our breakfast, and after helping Violet clean up, I headed to class.

XL. Analysis and a Way Forward

February 25, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"When is your test?" Jack asked when I arrived home after my final Series 30 class.

"May 8th," I replied. "It usually takes six to eight weeks to know if you passed. Did you clear your Series 7 license exam with Kristy's dad?"

"Yes. I'm going to take the same class you did, starting in September."

"Good! I'm going to change. Are you and Kristy headed out?"

"We're having dinner at her parents' house."

"Then I'll see you later."

I went upstairs to change, then went back downstairs to make dinner. It would only be Deanna and me, as all the others were out or going out. I made a simple meal of spaghetti and meatballs in meat sauce, along with garlic bread, then called Deanna to join me. As usual, she had paint on her smock, her hands, her arms, and her face.

"What are you working on?" I asked.

"I finished 'Rising Sun' and 'Cherry Blossom'."

"Are you going to show those?"

"No. I decided against that because they're personal for you. I showed the 'Market' series, but these are different."

"How are the paintings for your class coming along?"

"I'll need you to pose again, which we could do tonight, and you and Bianca, which we could do tomorrow. You'll both be home, according to the calendar."

"Ellie will come by for a study session. That kind of lapsed when Keiko got sick."

"Understandable. Would you have time tomorrow to sit with Natasha and me to talk about some design ideas?"

"Ellie is supposed to be here from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, so before or after."

"After is better, I think," Deanna said. "I'll call her when we finish eating. There is one thing I should have mentioned -- in addition to photos, Natasha will want to show the finished space to her professor."

"I'm cool with that. Is that name Russian?"

"Yes. Her great-grandparents left the USSR in 1905, during the First Russian Revolution. Her given name is actually Natalia; Natasha is a diminutive like Bev calling you 'Jonny'. Just think, you'll have a condo decorated by a famous interior designer with art from a famous artist!"

"She has to go to New York, similar to how CeCi has to go to California, right?"

"She's planning on a Master's in Fine Arts, so she could end up in a number of different places, but in the end, New York is where she'd rather stay."

I chuckled, "That one, I know!"

"Natasha actually looks a bit like a young Eva Gabor and dresses similar to her, though not the way she did on *Green Acres*, but in publicity photos. That aside, New York is where the best schools are, too -- The New School, Cornell, and the New York School of Interior Design. That last one would be her top choice. There's also a new school that started six years ago in Savannah, Georgia, but I don't see Natasha moving to Georgia."

"How do interior designers work? Is it like artists? Or for a firm?"

"They can work for an architectural firm, an interior design firm, or be freelancers. It's tough to go freelance without a name and reputation. Think about Dustin's situation -- he chose to open his own photography studio, and you've heard about his initial struggles. Now that he has a positive reputation, word of mouth is helping him build his business.

"For Natasha, it's actually probably more like your situation. You need to work for Spurgeon to develop your clientele. Once you do, you have the option of staying or running your own firm. It would be the same for Natasha. Well, unless she finds a patron similar to how yours truly did!"

"How often does something like that happen?"

"Not very, to tell the truth. I was extremely lucky in that regard. That bottle of Jack Daniel's was the best investment I've ever made, even though I had no idea that it would pay off in anything other than orgasms!"

"You can tell me to mind my own business, but have you been seeing anyone?"

"Nobody serious. I haven't been a nun, but mostly the guys who ask are either full of themselves, full of shit, or married."

"On that last one..."

"There's a difference between what I proposed and sneaking around. Keiko would have known about me and approved. Well, she wouldn't, but you know what I mean."

"So, some kind of 'honest' mistress?"

"Yes, actually. Keiko mentioned how it works in Japan, but what I'm talking about is even more open. There's a phrase in Italian -- «cortigiana onesta». It means 'honest courtesan' and is a woman who is very well-educated and erudite. She's chosen for her conversational skills, intelligence, common sense, and companionship. Sex is part of it, but only part.

"The «cortigiana onesta» is meant to participate actively in the life of the man by whom she's hired. She should be able to converse on any topic and provide good companionship outside of the bedroom. Many of them were quite well-off and had a career, often in the arts. Historically, she was accepted by her benefactor's wife and organized her life around her benefactor's marital obligations."

"Interesting."

"That's a far cry from the mistress John Margolis had on his arm at the show or from what the married guys who hit on me want. You do realize that the check wasn't just for a preview of my art, right? He was paying me to fuck him when I show him my art."

"That was not the impression I had."

Deanna laughed, "Because you're a guy! Do you pay attention to subtle hints from guys about sex?"

"Not particularly, no!"

"And, as a guy, you probably had no clue about his girlfriend's tone and body language, which, in effect, told me not to, but acknowledged it was probably going to happen."

"I completely missed all of that."

"And I'm sure you missed the two other guys who tried to pick me up but had to be careful because you were standing close most of the time."

"Black suit, green tie, mid-fifties, with a woman his same age? Who gave you his business card?"

"That was one of them. His wife is clueless, but it was clear when he touched my arm and looked into my eyes what he wanted. It wouldn't have been any clearer if he'd simply said, 'I want to fuck you!'"

"That was a guess, by the way, because at the time, I had no clue."

"Guys with their wives have to be subtle. Well, most of them. Some are just complete assholes and do it blatantly in front of their wives to show how powerful they are."

"And me?"

"Focused, but not a self-centered jerk. You can be unfeeling at times, but you do a good job of hiding it. May I make an observation?"

"Yes."

"The girls in this house, and I mean to include Keiko, all understood that and could deal with it. So could the girls who just wanted to fuck. The girls with whom you had difficulty couldn't deal with what they saw as unfeeling, uncaring, and stoic. Don't get me wrong -- you do care, and you do have concern for people close to you, but your true nature is, well, to be a cold-hearted bastard."

"A not inaccurate assessment."

"Setting aside the girls who just want to fuck, how many girls have you gone out with or whatever who simply couldn't deal with your true nature?"

"Quite a few," I replied.

Rachel, Phoebe, Huifen, Clara, Anna, and, to some extent, Lily, just to name six.

"Don't get me wrong," Deanna said, "I do not think you were faking it with Keiko, but it took effort because it's not your true nature."

I nodded, "That goes right back to the conversation I had with Haley about loving someone versus being 'in love' and how only actions mattered because nobody could discern the depth of your emotions because all they could go on were externals."

"May I delve further?"

"Of course."

"All of us in the house are basically utilitarian -- we do what works for us, without concern for what other people think. Bianca believes I'm in love with you, and she's both wrong and right. The same is true for CeCi. It's also true for Bianca, but carrying your baby has changed things.

"All of us need you and want you, and we all gain something from the relationship. If we didn't, we wouldn't be here. That is our primary motive; but for the three of us -- CeCi, Bianca, and me -- it's deeper, and there is an emotional attachment, but it doesn't drive us the way it does most people. And none of us feel slighted, diminished, or used because we all have that same basic mindset -- do what works, what helps you achieve your goals, and makes you feel good."

Which very neatly and succinctly described the problem with Haley.

"I feel there's a point you're leading up to."

Deanna laughed, "Because we all have an agenda! That's another thing about the four of us - we're open and honest about our agendas. Bianca was quite clear with you about what she wanted. So was I with regard to finding a patron. Neither of those bothered you at all, and each of us found a compromise path forward to get what we wanted. No disrespect, but that was true for Keiko as well.

"Keiko loved you, and you loved her, but not in the way that most of the romantic idiots in society see it. Your love was unwavering even in the face of the worst possible circumstances. Nothing could shake it because it wasn't emotional the way most people understand that word. It was, like everything else about you, logical, analytical, and goal-oriented.

"The thing is, it was more real than nearly any relationship I've seen or experienced. And it was more real because it made logical sense. Most people would call it fraud, but it was authentic in ways that traditional conceptions of romantic love can never be. Emotions come and go, but logic is forever."

"And interesting analysis. Are you going to share your agenda?"

"I don't have to! You know what it is."

"Because it hasn't changed because it's logical, practical, and achieves your goals."

"Exactly. There is a way out of the circular trap you feel you're in."

"What's that?"

"You're sure you want to hear this?"

"From you? Yes."

"Your struggle is with the idea of not 'replacing' Keiko. There are two ways out, as I see it. The first is to discard that idea. The second is to embrace it."

"Embrace it?"

"Don't remarry. Keiko will always be your wife, and nobody will take her place with that specific title. I'm not saying don't have a long-term relationship; I'm saying just don't try to fill the specific position of 'wife'."

"I'm not sure that makes sense," I said. "I'm having difficulty wrapping my head around that."

"Deep inside you, you believe Keiko is your wife, and I don't think that belief is ever going to go away. That means any future Mrs. Jonathan Kane will have to compete with Keiko, and she will *always* lose. And I can prove that."

"OK, this I have to hear!"

"What is going to happen when you eventually die, Jonathan?"

I took a deep breath and let it out, "Violet pointed out the potential conflict, and I told her I'd made the decision to be interred next to Keiko, and it was not going to change."

"Quod erat demonstrandum."

"That does put a very different spin on things and explains my dilemma and why I'm tied up in knots about a way forward."

"Yes, it does, and you knew it; you just couldn't articulate it."

"I have to reconcile that with my thinking about marriage and family. I'm sure you have something to say about that, too."

"Obviously."

"Before you say it, how long have you been thinking about this?"

"Since it was obvious Keiko was going to die. And to answer your next question, I didn't discuss this with anyone except a friend who is working on her Master's in psychology at Loyola. I purposefully haven't invited her to anything because I felt I'd receive better advice if she didn't know you."

"Interesting. Go on."

"I believe, and this is speculation because, as you say, we can't know each other's interior thoughts, or even truly understand our own, that your desire is based on your family situation growing up. In your mind, whether it's actually true or not, your mom and dad being married would have solved every problem you encountered. That's what had you fixated on a traditional marriage and a traditional family."

"I can't argue with that, at least at the moment, so I'll accept that for the sake of this discussion."

"I think it all flows from there. And I think you know, or will at least admit the possibility, that things could actually have been *worse* having your dad around. And I think you know exactly why that is."

"Violet and her sister."

"A traditional family that makes your childhood look like a dream world. I'm positive Violet and her sister would trade families in a heartbeat."

"You're not wrong."

"And it's not just Violet -- think of the reports we see of DCFS rescuing children from abusive parents. You have no idea what your dad was like beyond being a traveling salesman happy to seduce a pretty sixteen-year-old girl in 1962."

"True."

"It's also the case that you expressly rejected the idea of a traditional family even before Keiko became sick because you agreed to father a baby with Bianca."

"Also true."

"So, in my view, your way forward is to embrace the idea of not replacing Keiko, which resolves the tension you're having, honors what she asked you, and honors the promise you said you made to her to do what was in your own best interest."

"And yours," I replied with a smile.

"So what?" Deanna asked with a similar smile. "That doesn't offend your delicate sensibilities!"

I chuckled, "I'm the last person to have 'delicate sensibilities'."

"Obviously. May I propose a specific course of action?"

"Always. I'm perfectly capable of declining if I don't think it's a good idea."

"After dinner, you pose in your kimono so I can complete that painting, then we go to my room and have sex. I think that will allow you to move forward in a more natural way without the current struggle. It'll be completely private between you and me because everyone else is out, so you can proceed on your own timing."

"Let me think it through while we clean up after dinner and you paint."

"That was, by the way, the main point of this exercise and the one I thought was the most likely outcome. Obviously, I want you, but not at the expense of your psychological health."

"I assume we need to bring your easel and some drop cloths to the Japanese room?"

"Yes. You'll see I've done some rough work, and now I need to add detail. I could do it from memory, but it's much better if I can see you. Tomorrow morning, we'll do the same thing with you and Bianca. I was thinking, too, that the 'Nuclear Family' series could continue, with one painting a year."

"Uhm, once Sofía is older, that could be a problem."

"If you mean legally, no. The First Amendment protects art so long as it isn't sexual in nature. Think about all those pictures of toddlers in bathtubs or that famous picture of 'napalm girl' taken by Nick Ut. It ran on the front page of *The New York Times* and won a Pulitzer Prize despite showing a naked nine-year-old girl.

"I also want you to think of the difference between the pose with Bianca and the poses with Alexa. There is a fundamental difference between your hands on Bianca's stomach and your hands on Alexa's breasts. Only the most prudish members of society would see the image of you and Bianca as having *anything* to do with sex."

"Minus the part where she could only be in that condition if we had sex!" I chuckled.

"Pedantic as always! But is the painting about sex? Or about something else?"

I thought for a moment.

"It's about being human."

"Yes. Do you know the saying from the *Book of Job*? '*Naked I came into the world, naked I go out of the world*'? Well, that's our natural state. Genesis says the same thing -- Adam and Eve were naked in the Garden and were not ashamed; they only became ashamed after they broke one of God's rules. And you don't have to believe in God to understand the concepts being taught there.

"You don't have experience with this yet, but little kids often simply shed their clothes because they are uncomfortable, confining, or too warm. They have to be taught that being naked is socially unacceptable. And compare US and European thinking on topless sunbathing. Americans are so fixated on breasts being about sex when that is absolutely not their primary purpose. Europeans don't

completely lose their shit when they see topless women the way most Americans do."

"Well, that discussion is several years down the road. Obviously, I don't have a concern about a toddler, but I'll have to think it through, and obviously Bianca has to agree."

"Yes, of course."

We finished our meal, cleaned up the kitchen, then went up to Deanna's room to get the easel, paints, drop cloths, and canvas. While she set up, I went to my room and put on my kimono, then joined her in the Japanese room. I stood in the same position with the same pose, and Deanna began to paint, allowing me time to think about the very deep conversation we'd had.

She clearly had an agenda, and the status quo fulfilled every bit of it except her desire for a long-term sexual relationship. I had, by giving her a raincheck, expressed an intent to resume that, though I knew she wouldn't hold me to it if I felt it wasn't in my best interest. If anything could be said about Deanna, it was that, except in relation to her art, she was as logical, practical, and stoic as I was.

What she'd said had merit and was, almost counterintuitively, a way to break out of the circular trap I'd laid for myself. I had thought that the way to move forward was to stop thinking of Keiko as my wife, something I was loath to do. Deanna's suggestion had turned that idea on its head. It would avoid the entire mindset of 'first wife' versus 'second wife', as Keiko would always be 'my wife'.

Both Violet and Deanna had made the point about my plans to be cremated and interred next to Keiko being a definitive statement about my relationship with her. There was no chance I was going to change that commitment, and I'd even had Nelson write it into what he'd called my 'end of life' documents.

As I thought further about it, nothing about Deanna's plan locked me into any specific course of action. It was simply a way forward that didn't diminish Keiko's memory or her role in my life. In effect, it created a situation where all options were on the table, even including marriage, if that best served my interests.

Where the challenge lay was with Violet. If things progressed along the lines I expected, she would, at some point, probably soon, want to have a relationship. But as I considered that, I remembered what I'd said to her about taking things a step at a time and putting off any decisions about the future until we were at a point where she felt she could commit to a physical relationship.

It seemed clear to me that Deanna's idea had merit and, at least at this point, was the best way forward because it neither ordained nor foreclosed any specific future. It made perfect sense to me and left me with only one question -- was I ready to go to bed with Deanna?

Bianca had pointed out that of all the girls I knew, Deanna was the safest, as our relationship was clearly defined, and Deanna had no false notions about it. There was the question of her feelings for me, but she'd done her best to explain the unexplainable. Ultimately, my course of action was clear.

"Yes," I said.

"Oh, sure, say that when I have at least two hours of painting to do!" Deanna groused.

"Sorry," I chuckled.

About two hours later, Deanna called me to look at the painting.

"Fantastic," I said. "The details of the room are awesome!"

"You saw those before! I wondered what you thought of you."

"I like it, and it's great work, but you know this room evokes memories."

"Are you going to be OK with dismantling it?"

"Wherever the «kamidana» -- the Spirit Shelf -- is, that's where Keiko's «kami» is. But it's also with me in all times and all places."

"I've never heard you express a belief like that before."

"Because the way both Keiko and I understood it was not as a literal spirit, but as memories. They exist, even though they aren't tangible. Does that make sense?"

"It does."

"My turn for advice -- you should consider painting in multiple styles and sketching as well. I know you want to have a specific style associated with your name, but didn't some of the greats try their hand at varying styles?"

"Yes. You'll see that at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. Most people know his paintings, but he also sculpted and created other works. The obvious one is Michelangelo, but even more so was Leonardo da Vinci, probably the greatest polymath to ever live."

"Polymath?"

"An individual whose knowledge spans a substantial number of subjects, known to draw on complex bodies of knowledge to solve specific problems. He did so much in so many fields that I don't think anyone comes close. Unfortunately, so

many of his ideas weren't published during his lifetime that nobody could build directly on them."

"What do you think about my idea?"

"I'll think about it," she replied. "A suggestion from my patron carries significant weight."

I helped Deanna move everything back to her studio, having to make two trips. She asked me to wait while she went to the laundry room to remove the paint from her skin and have it run down the laundry sink rather than potentially stain the bathroom sink. She returned about ten minutes later, smelling vaguely of mineral spirits.

Deanna came over to me, put her hands on my hips, and looked into my eyes.

"It's been months, right?"

"Yes."

"Then undress and sit on the futon."

As I undressed, I had a brief concern about the fact that I hadn't had so much as a hint of an erection. That concern vanished instantly as Deanna knelt in front of me, gently grasped me, and took my glans into her mouth. I hardened instantly, and Deanna began sucking gently as she stroked me and swirled her tongue. Less than a minute later, I was intensely aware of why Deanna had asked about how long it had been when I twitched and felt an overwhelming urge. I didn't fight it and groaned deeply as cum pulsed into her mouth.

"You OK?" Deanna asked when she released me after the pulses finally subsided.

"Yeah," I replied. "I'm fine."

She gave me a soft kiss, then climbed into the futon and pulled me to her. We lay together quietly for about ten minutes before Deanna got me hard, mounted me, and gently rode me until she had two releases and I had my own. When my orgasm had passed, she stretched out on top of me and put her head on my shoulder.

"Let's go use the hot tub," she suggested a few minutes later. "I turned it on when I was downstairs cleaning up."

I agreed, and we made our way downstairs and got into the hot tub. Deanna sat close to me, then reached over and turned on the jets.

"You doing OK?" she asked.

"Bianca was right that you were the safest person to do this with."

"When did she suggest that?"

"About six weeks ago. She said we had a well-established relationship, and it was uncomplicated. In her mind, I could be with you, and neither of us would assign a meaning to it beyond our uncomplicated, well-established relationship."

"She's right," Deanna said, "but she's also wrong based on the conversation we had during dinner. Right in that it was safe and uncomplicated, but wrong because our relationship isn't as well-defined as she thought. It was, but things changed on December 27th, even if we didn't know it at the time. In fact, neither of us realized it until we had the conversation at dinner."

"I have a problem, though."

"What's that?"

"Violet."

"Do you think she's in a place to have a deep conversation with you?"

"I'm positive she is because we had one last weekend."

"Then the answer is simple -- tell her what we discussed, how you see your future, and what you can offer. Put the ball in her court. Let her decide. What's the worst-case scenario? That you remain close friends because she can't accept the terms. Best case scenario? Three years of pent-up desire rocks your world."

"You missed the potential she has some kind of meltdown."

"Except you no longer believe that's likely, do you?"

"No, I don't. But how did YOU know?"

"The two trips she took with you changed your mind about who she is, and it was obvious to me from the way you speak about her and the way she behaves around you. Permission to just say something that most people would find offensive?"

"Permission granted."

"Remember those signals I mentioned that made it obvious guys wanted to fuck me? Well, girls send off similar signals. It was muted with Violet because of Keiko, but after that first trip with you, it was clear she wanted to fuck. I don't mean make love or screw, I mean fuck. She understands that, and I bet you anything she's tried to tell you that, maybe couched as teasing."

"She did exactly that last weekend. This is in complete confidence..."

"Of course."

"She said Lily had suggested that she 'suck it up, suck it, and have me fuck her brains out' though she didn't actually say 'fuck'; instead she paused for effect. I suggested that there was more to what Lily had said, and Violet stated that Lily had prefaced it with 'If it were me'.

"That might or might not been the case, but after the conversation I had with you, I'm positive Violet clearly meant it. That's reinforced by the comment she made that when I was ready to kiss someone again, I should ask her, and she'd give me a straight answer. And that was after we discussed potentially taking it step by step until she was comfortable."

"I'd say today was a watershed for you."

"I'd say you're right," I replied. "But I'd still like to keep this on the QT."

"Absolutely. I'm just going to tell you what I want -- we find opportunities to do this again when nobody would know, at least until you're ready to let the world know you're available again."

"And then? Just tell me what you want."

"The same thing I've wanted from the first time I met you -- a patron and a lover. Obviously, everything I've said today works in my favor, but it's not self-serving, even if it achieves my goal."

"I knew that," I replied. "And I would never, ever condemn someone for looking out for their own best interest and doing everything possible to achieve it, so long as they are honest and keep their word."

"And that's something I love about you," Deanna said. "I can just say what I feel and tell you what I want, and you'll do the same."

"That's completely true," I agreed. "Thank you for everything, especially tonight."

"You're welcome."



February 26, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday morning, Bianca and I posed nude for Deanna so she could complete the first painting in what would become the 'Nuclear Family' series. Deanna broached the question she'd asked me.

"I don't see a problem when she's a baby or toddler," Bianca said. "After that, I'm not sure."

"That's the same thing Jonathan said," Deanna replied, then rehashed the points she'd made with me.

"I suggested we wait and see," I said. "There's no reason we can't repeat this every year until Sofía is, say, four years old. We can decide then if it's right or not."

"I can sign up for that," Bianca said.

"Do either of you know about nudism?" Deanna asked.

"No," I said. "What is it?"

"It's a lifestyle that involves spending time in nature without clothing. There's an international group that is made up of various clubs. I first heard about it when I read a newspaper article about their meeting in 1982 at Cypress Cove in Kissimmee, Florida. I mention it because the article said entire families participate."

"I'm missing the point," I said.

"Just that the idea I'm putting forward is something that at least some people follow. They understand that being naked doesn't have to be about sex. Like right now."

"Point taken," I said. "Let's worry about it in a few years."

"Deanna, have you ever thought about painting in the nude?" Bianca asked.

"I've done it more than once!" Deanna said. "I sleep naked during the Summer, and I've woken up in the middle of the night inspired to paint and didn't bother to get dressed. The first time that happened was when I was fourteen, and I thought my mom was going to lose her mind when she came into the spare room I used as a studio at home."

"I think my mom would have flipped if I'd done something like that," Bianca said.

"My mom would have laughed and told me to get dressed," I said.

"Did she know about you and Bev?" Deanna asked.

"She and Bev apparently talked about it not long after it happened, though I didn't know it at the time."

"Have you heard anything more?" Bianca asked.

"No. I'm not asking, either. Heather is with her grandparents and has a safe, stable life for the first time since Bev left home. Remember, the *real* reason I went to Overland Park was for Heather, not for Bev. Anna was dead wrong about my thinking. And you know that's why I went to Antler, North Dakota, and signed a document that could cost me my securities licenses."

"What?!" Deanna exclaimed.

"They put a document in front of me that said I was Heather's father, and I signed it."

"You had a legal document saying you were her guardian, right?"

"Yes, but I was warned in my securities classes that lying to the government is cause for a license suspension or revocation. I think the risk is small, but it's there. I took that risk for Heather, not for Bev. I'd do it again in a heartbeat."

Just before lunch, Deanna put down her brush.

"It's done," she said.

Bianca and I moved over to see the painting.

"You really should do more like this," I said. "I'm not saying give up your abstract work, but damn, Deanna. This is awesome."

"Do you know the difference? Abstract flows; realism is work."

"And yet, you suggested doing a series," I countered. "And I suspect that's because you're inspired to do this particular series, just as you are with your

abstract art. I'm not suggesting you should do anything other than at least consider other styles when the subject inspires you."

"Are you saying that as Jonathan or as my patron?"

I understood what she was asking, and there was no way I could *order* her to paint other styles.

"As Jonathan," I replied. "It's advice from your friend."

"Thanks."

Bianca and I dressed, left the loft, and went to the kitchen to make lunch. Ellie arrived at 1:00pm as we'd agreed.

"Where did we leave off?" I asked. "I honestly don't remember."

"It's OK, Jonathan," Ellie replied. "You had your priorities exactly right."

"Thanks. So?"

"We had just covered the basics of currency markets."

"OK."

For the next two hours, we discussed exchange rates, interest rates, central banking, and currency trading.

"Are we able to go back to our every-other-week schedule?" Ellie asked when we wrapped up at 3:00pm.

"I think so, yes. How are you doing?"

"I miss her," Ellie said. "A lot."

"Me, too," I said.

"I should have said this before, but the painting of Keiko is a nice touch, and it's very good. Did Deanna do that?"

"Yes. Her small, stylized 'D' is in the lower left corner."

I walked Ellie to the door, and she stopped and turned.

"OK to hug you?" she asked.

"Yes."

We exchanged a friendly hug, and I watched from the porch until she got into her friend's car to drive back to Loyola. I went back inside and saw Jack, Kristy, CeCi, Bianca, and Juliette in the great room, but Deanna was in her studio, so I went upstairs.

"OK to come in?" I asked, poking my head through the floor while standing on the pull-down stairs.

"Always!"

I came up and sat down on the futon while Deanna painted a vase with flowers which was sitting on a table.

"What is it with vases with flowers and paintings?" I asked.

"Still lifes are the first things that were done with oil-based paints. Jan van Eyck and a few others began using those oil-based paints to create hyperrealistic paintings of inanimate objects, both natural and man-made. For them, it was completely new; for us, it's learning a style. It's interpretive, even if it's realistic, and the hyperrealism highlights the artist's talent and creativity. The ability to make a vase of flowers interesting is a real skill."

"'Still lifes'?" I asked. "Not 'still lives'?"

"Think about it -- it's not 'life' that is being made plural, but 'still life'. One still life, two still lifes."

"I suppose that no different from 'one mouse, two mice, one house two...houses' not 'hice' or 'one fish, two fish'."

"English plurals are all over the map because English is Germanic, Old Norse, French, Latin, and Greek tossed into a blender with a sprinkling of other languages for garnish!"

I heard the doorbell ring.

"That's probably Natasha," Deanna said. "Why don't you bring her up here?"

"OK."

I went downstairs and saw that Juliette had answered the door and let in a blonde girl with short cropped hair, wearing a black turtleneck and black jeans, along with a bright red scarf and large-framed glasses, and carrying a portfolio.

"You must be Natasha," I said.

"And you must be Jonathan!"

"Deanna is waiting for us in her studio," I said.

"Lead the way!"

I led Natasha up to Deanna's studio.

"He, Dee!"

"Hey, Tasha! Grab a seat on the futon."

We sat down, and Deanna put down her brush and took off her smock. She came to sit on the other side of Natasha.

"What do you have for us, Tasha?"

Natasha unzipped her portfolio and pulled out a sketchbook and some fabric swatches.

"I took the floor plan that Deanna gave me and drew some rough sketches. I'll need to actually see the space to finalize it, but I think I have a basic concept you'll like. I think Scandinavian Modern is the best choice for an open floor plan. Minimalist, functional, and with clean lines.

"We'll make use of light colors with strong accents; for example, this sketch shows a white couch with bright red throw pillows, and in this one, a light blue couch with purple cushions. In this sketch, you see a dining room table made of teak, with matching wooden chairs with bright yellow cushions. And, in this drawing, a bed with a wooden frame, with black sheets and a black and grey striped comforter or duvet."

"How come those are black?" I asked.

"Darker colors for bed furnishings contrast with the white walls."

"OK."

"For the dining room table, I'd suggest several different colored runners so you could change up the accent color for different events. If you look at this last drawing, you'll see an idea for how to set up your TV area, which Deanna said would have some kind of projection TV."

"All of this looks good; what about the windows?"

"Cloth blinds with a weave that allows in some light. You could go with something darker as a contrast. Privacy isn't a concern on the 91st and 92nd floors, so the weave can be as open as you like, and you could even go with a dual system that has a closed weave and an open weave, depending on what you want. For the bedrooms, you'd want blackout material."

"Deanna," I said, "I'll give you the keys, and you can work out a time with Natasha to see the actual space."

"We can do that this week. She's also helping me with Ateljé D."

"Great! The only question I have for Natasha is her fee."

"I actually can't charge because this will be submitted for credit," Natasha said.

"What about covering the cost of your materials?" I inquired.

"That wouldn't cause a problem."

"I know you need to show your professor, but I'll also agree to allow you to bring clients to see it with sufficient advance notice."

"That's fantastic! Thanks."

"You're welcome!"

XLI. No Material Misrepresentation

February 26, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"You made her day when you offered to allow her to showcase your condo."

"It's the least I could do, given the rules say I can't pay her."

"No, but she wants to repay you for your offer! You can imagine how!"

I chuckled, "Good to know, but not necessary."

"Of course not, and it wasn't you who suggested it or, worse, demanded it."

"I take it that happens?"

"Seriously, Jonathan? Where do you work?"

"Never mind. Of course it happens."

I excused myself and went up to my room so I could place my weekly call to my mom.

"Hi, Mom!" I said when she answered.

"Hi, Jonathan. Have you heard from Bev at all?"

"No, and I don't expect to."

"She filed a lawsuit against her parents to get Heather back. They were served late on Friday afternoon."

"Wonderful. Right now, I think it's best for Heather if she stays with Jim and Julie, at least until Bev gets her act together. I have no doubt Family Court will do the right thing. But I didn't call to talk about Bev. How is Judge Pierce?"

"You can call him Mitchell outside his courtroom!"

"I hope to never be inside his courtroom!"

Mom laughed, "Good point. We're doing fine, but nobody is printing wedding invitations just yet."

"Just be happy, Mom. That's what matters."

"How are you doing?"

"OK. I had a very good talk with Deanna yesterday, and between her, Bianca, Violet, and Beth, I'm working on getting my feelings in some semblance of order."

"That balm won't work, Jonathan."

"Given I was referring to having deep conversations about life, not what you were implying, I'd say it will."

"Sorry; I shouldn't have said that."

"Apology accepted. And how do YOU know it won't work?"

Mom laughed, "What? You don't trust my extensive experience with relationships?"

"Considering you didn't date from the time you signaled the stork to bring me until after I left home, no!"

"You're a brat!"

"I try," I chuckled.

We chatted for another five minutes, and after we ended the call, I went downstairs to hang out with my housemates until bedtime.



February 27, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

My phone rang just before 11:00am on Monday.

"Research, Kane."

"Mr. Kane? Please hold for Thomas Hart."

He was on the line about ten seconds later.

"Good morning, Jonathan."

"Good morning, Mr. Hart. What can I do for you?"

"Are you free for lunch tomorrow?"

"I am."

"Let's meet in my offices at 12:15pm. I'll have lunch brought in."

I considered asking the agenda, but given I had asked Violet to set up meetings with all of my clients, I decided to wait to see what he had to say face-to-face. I was reasonably sure there were no problems, as individual partners and associates were continuing to add to their accounts on a monthly basis, and the pension fund deposit had been received on the 15th.

"I'll see you then," I said.

I ended the call just as a building engineer arrived to install the fasteners in my office so I could hang 'Cherry Blossom' and 'Rising Sun'. He worked quickly, and then Violet and I hung the paintings before joining Bianca for lunch. After we ate, the three of us went to the gym.

During the afternoon, I spent time analyzing the precious metals market, then called in Tony, Steve Mansour from the Commodities team, and Scott Moreland from the FX/Banking team for a discussion.

"The model from the data analytics team predicts gold will fall precipitously. It's rising at the moment. Thoughts?"

"Those models are like Voodoo," Scott said. "Change the input parameters slightly, and you get completely disparate results."

"They've been back-tested and are reasonably accurate," I countered.

"Sure, but that's true of every economic model ever developed in history. They're great at predicting the past, but they're no better than throwing darts at a board for the future. They're like gambling systems that appear to work but are statistically unsound."

"The fundamentals actually support a fairly significant drop," Steve said. "The odds of a rate hike are fairly high, which means a move out of equities and into fixed-income products, especially Treasury instruments. I'm sure you've seen Joel's prediction on fixed income rates for the next twelve months. Gold is rising now, but nothing, and I mean nothing, supports that except Reagan jawboning the Fed."

"That's going no place," Tony said firmly. "In fact, everyone here agrees Volcker is going to tighten, not loosen. Fundamentally, the only way to fight inflation is to choke off borrowing and reduce the amount of money in circulation."

"The idea that inflation results from rising prices is mass delusion on an epic scale. We all know that rising prices are a *result* of inflation, with too many dollars chasing too few goods. That's a result of an expansion of the money supply through fractional reserve banking. Treasury doesn't need to print money to expand the money supply; they just need to cut interest rates to encourage borrowing and ensure the banks have money to lend."

"For every dollar Treasury prints or the Fed lends, the banks can lend \$9 and stay within the reserve requirements. The average person thinks that if a bank had \$10,000 in deposits and a 10% reserve, they could lend \$9,000, but we all know they can lend \$90,000, creating \$80,000 out of thin air."

"Listen to the gold bug!" Scott said with a grin.

"You know better than that!" Tony countered. "None of us here supports a gold standard, but that doesn't change the facts about fiat currencies and fractional reserve banking."

"Does anyone think the fundamentals support the current gold price?" I asked.

"No," they all said.

"And everyone agrees Volcker is going to tighten?"

"Yes," they all agreed.

"Target price for December?"

"\$950," Tony said.

"\$910," Scott said.

"\$890," Steve said.

"I'd say Scott's middle number is a good target price for tomorrow's analyst report. And I'll point out that it's right in the middle of the \$900-\$920 projection from Steve Smith's most recent model."

"Even a blind squirrel finds a nut now and again!" Scott said with a smile.

"Scott," I said, "I know you don't trust the models but don't totally discount them. They are simply one tool in our toolbox. And so far, they've been right more than they've been wrong. Thanks guys. Let's get that revised price target into the morning report."

"You're going to trade now, right?"

"Tomorrow morning, after we publish the report," I said. "I'll sell December gold and silver and cover with December call options. The slide will start once Volcker announces the next set of rate hikes. Thanks, guys."

They left, and I made notes about the moves I'd make on Tuesday morning. Just after the markets closed, Noel Spurgeon came to see the additional paintings.

"Margolis is beside himself," he said. "I told him we hung those paintings in our Research Department."

I laughed, "I can see how that would annoy him! Does he know I work for you?"

"I didn't mention it to him, so if you didn't, I doubt it. Our two firms have a different focus -- they're M&A and IPO advisors, and we're active traders. Our paths cross occasionally, but I know him socially, and, as I said, the competition goes back to Wharton."

"Mind if I ask how the competition started?"

"Over a girl. I won, of course, and he's never forgotten that an underclassman beat him."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Let me know when your friend is going to show him the artwork. I'll decide by then. She'll do what you ask, right?"

"So long as it's not detrimental to her, yes. And you know I won't ask her to do anything like that."

"I'll let you know. Any progress on finding opportunities?"

"You'll see it in tomorrow's analyst report, but we're predicting gold to fall about 20% by the end of the year. I'll make my moves after the report is published in the morning."

"Thanks. That'll keep the natives from getting too restless. How sure are you?"

"The models and the analysts all agree within a \$60 range -- \$890 to \$950; current price is about \$1155."

"What's your number?"

"I agree with the model's low end -- \$900; we're going with a consensus of \$910 for the report."

"You're that confident that Volcker will tighten despite Reagan pressuring him to loosen?"

"I am not uncertain."

"I agree. Interest rates have come down by a third, and housing starts have taken off, which is a sign of an overheating economy and too much money sloshing around."

"That's our analysis as well."

"Keep up the good work, Kane. These two new pieces are very good."

"Unfortunately, her productivity is limited by the mandatory work she has to do for her classes, which isn't in her usual style."

"Dad?" Samantha said, coming into the office. "Cheryl said you were looking at paintings. Can I see?"

"Those two there," he said, pointing to the new paintings. "There are four more in the analyst bullpen. I need to go upstairs. Come back when you're done."

"OK."

He left, and Samantha stood with her hands on her hips, looking at the paintings.

"It's just a bunch of colors," she observed.

"Yes, but the six paintings tell two stories. These two are about my wife, who was Japanese-American. The one on the left is 'Rising Sun', and you can see how the reds, yellows, and oranges radiate from the center, with shades of blue representing the sky and sea. The other one is 'Cherry Blossom' and is meant to evoke memories of Japan."

"Your wife died?"

"Yes."

"Oh. What about the other paintings?"

"They're about the stock market and precious metals market. Let's go see them."

I explained the paintings to an increasingly disinterested eight-year-old, but given she was Noel Spurgeon's daughter, I was going to do my best to keep her happy.

"When's your birthday?" I asked.

"April 14th. I'll be eight."

"Do you know what you want to do when you grow up?"

"Run Spurgeon Capital! Girls can do anything boys can do!"

I couldn't imagine a more earth-shattering event than a woman taking over at Spurgeon. I also couldn't envision Noel Spurgeon ever allowing that.

"I agree with you," I said.

"Dad says you're the hottest new trader here. I agree!"

"Thank you," I said, trying hard not to laugh at the blatant flirting from a not-quite-eight-year-old girl.

"Thanks for showing me the paintings."

"You're welcome."

She left, and I returned to my office to finish out my day. After work, I joined Deanna for dinner at Sixty-Five Chinese.

"I'm taking Natasha to the condo tomorrow afternoon," Deanna said after we sat down with our food, which we'd ordered at the counter.

"Sounds good."

"Can I ask you a hypothetical question?"

"I'd say after yesterday, you absolutely don't need to ask if you can ask."

"Do you think Natasha is attractive?"

"Ask the *real* question!"

Deanna laughed, "Would you fuck her?"

"She's attractive in a nerdy librarian sort of way."

"She doesn't need the glasses -- they have clear lenses. She started wearing them in High School on the theory that 'men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses'."

"I missed that one."

"It's attributed to Dorothy Parker, a writer and poet from the 1920s through 1960s. Natasha was sick of guys assuming an artist would have sex at the drop of a hat, and she was being hit on by anyone and everyone who saw her art -- mostly drawings with colored pencils. The glasses were self-defense."

"Does that actually work?"

"In part by making her look more intelligent, which for a whole class of guys is a turn-off. Think about all those clowns you work with. Do they hire secretaries for their intelligence?"

"No, but every once in a while, they make a mistake and hire someone like Anna. Usually, they're more like Mia - girls with the most exciting mammalian protuberances."

"Nice Zappa quote!" Deanna declared. "I didn't know you were a Zappa fan."

"Jack is. We listened to tapes of *Joe's Garage* in the car on the way to work back when he moved in. That album was pretty outrageous!"

"That was the point, really. The theme is about censorship and a totalitarian state. Think about the things we hear from politicians about music needing ratings to 'protect' us. Those same idiots would censor the painting of you and Bianca. Back to my question..."

"I'm curious why you're asking."

"You are not that dense!"

"She mentioned it again, which indicated to you that she not only offered but wants to."

"I knew you were intelligent!"

"Yeah, yeah," I chuckled. "But if she's concerned about guys assuming she'll have sex and hitting on her for sex, it doesn't make sen...wait! *She* is asking, not me, which makes all the difference in the world."

"Well, well, well," Deanna teased. "He has a clue!"

"And she's not saying it directly to me because she knows about Keiko, so she doesn't want to come off as insensitive or as offering a sympathy screw."

"Now, all kidding aside, I'm actually impressed."

"I think the answer is that I still need to work through everything we discussed on Saturday, and at least for the short term, just be with you when we can find the time."

"That makes sense."

We finished our meal then walked to the Art Institute. Claire saw us and asked me to step into her office.

"I decided to change things up slightly," she said. "Will your slacks stay up without the suspenders on your shoulders?"

"If I'm not moving around, they should. Why?"

"I was thinking tonight we'd have you bare-chested and Alexa wearing just her panties standing behind you and slightly to the side with one hand on your chest and one on your stomach. Let's try it with the suspenders hanging down and see if it works."

"OK," I agreed.

"I'll step out; you can hang your suit jacket, shirt, and tie in the closet there. Take off your undershirt if you wear one. You can wear the robe to walk next door if you want, but nobody will file a complaint for a topless man walking down the hall."

"That sounds sexist and discriminatory," I said with a silly smile.

Claire laughed, "It is, but we live in a nation ruled by prudes and nags who have no sense of humor. Have you heard about the parody of Jerry Falwell printed in *Hustler*?"

"The one that implied Falwell had sex with his mom?" I asked. "If so, only from the news report."

"That's the one. Parody is protected by the First Amendment, no matter what the Puritans in government think. Hopefully, Flynt will win, though I expect it'll go to the Supreme Court. I suspect you also know about George Carlin being arrested and the decision that allowed his skits to be played on the radio."

"Vaguely," I replied. "I've heard the skit on cassette."

"Anyway, I'll leave you to change."

She left, closing the door behind her, but about five seconds later, there was a knock, and a few seconds after that, Alexa came in.

"You don't mind, right?" she asked.

"It's not like we're not going to see each other in the studio!"

"True, but some people are reluctant to undress with other people around if it's not about sex."

I shrugged, "It doesn't bother me if it doesn't bother you."

She stripped down to her black bikini panties, and I removed my suit coat, pushed my suspenders from my shoulders, and removed my shirt and t-shirt. I put on my robe while Alexa put on her robe and a pair of slippers, and we left the office. We walked the short distance down the hall and into the studio.

We removed our robes, and Claire directed us into position. Alexa moved close behind me, and I felt her breast push into my back as she put one hand on my chest and the other very low on my stomach.

"Nice muscle tone," she said quietly.

"Thanks."

She tightened her embrace just a bit and slid her left hand down so that her pinky was just barely inside the waist of my slacks. I was surprised that it didn't cause a reaction, but for some reason, it didn't feel like a sexual advance, even though it was meant to imply one.

Two hours later, when the session ended, Alexa and I returned to Claire's office to dress, and then Deanna and I left the building.

"I have a key to Sophie's and Ivy's dorm room," Deanna said. "They'll be out until 11:00pm. Interested?"

"Yes."



February 28, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Jonathan Kane to see Thomas Hart," I said to the gorgeous blonde receptionist at Hart-Lincoln when I arrived for lunch on Tuesday.

"He's expecting you, Mr. Kane. Chloé will be here in a moment to escort you in."

"Thank you."

"My condolences for your loss."

"Thank you."

She placed a call, and less than a minute later, Chloé, a gorgeous brunette, came to escort me to Mr. Hart's office. It seemed to me that Spurgeon and Hart-Lincoln had similar hiring criteria, as every secretary was drop-dead gorgeous, though Nelson had made the point that there were no shenanigans similar to the ones at Spurgeon.

"Good afternoon, Jonathan," Thomas Hart said when I was shown into his lavish office.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Hart."

"Tom, please."

We shook hands.

"Come sit at the table," he offered. "I have roast beef sandwiches from Jason's Deli."

We moved to a beautiful cherrywood table and sat down. I opened the wrapping of the huge roast beef sandwich, opened the bag of chips, and finally, the bottle of San Pellegrino.

"First," Tom said, "I need to offer my condolences."

"Thank you. I received notice of your generous gift to the Leukemia Society in Keiko's name. I'm very grateful."

"You're welcome. I want to congratulate you on the returns you earned for us last year. The partners are extremely happy."

"Thank you again."

"My main reason for inviting you here is to discuss some high-net-worth individuals we represent and how we'd go about ensuring absolute privacy."

"Spurgeon Capital does not disclose any information, except as required by law, to anyone without written permission from the client. That's why your firm is not listed in my marketing material. To my knowledge, we've never had a leak. Obviously, a trust could be used to shield individual names, though Legal and Compliance would need to see the trust documents. I suspect there are other legal structures you could use, but I don't know enough to comment on that."

"If I were to set up a meeting, who would know?"

"Initially? Just me and possibly my assistant, who I trust implicitly, or I wouldn't have hired her. After that, it depends on the structure and what Compliance and Legal need to know to properly vet the client. May I inquire as to how much we're talking?"

"Around \$40,000,000."

That would take my AUM to over \$150 million and my annual income north of \$300,000, not counting my share of the carried interest or any bonus.

"OK. Have whoever is coordinating on your side contact my administrative assistant, Violet Clemmons. She keeps my calendar, and she'll exercise complete discretion."

"Would you send over four copies of the prospectus and a copy of your audited earnings report?"

"I have five copies in my bag," I said.

I reached into my satchel and handed them to him.

"I see you planned ahead," Thomas Hart observed.

"I wasn't sure of the purpose of the meeting, so I grabbed a few extra copies on my way out. If we do close the deal, I'd like to offer gift certificates for two to Smith & Wollensky for you and each of the individuals."

"Thank you. Now that the business part is out of the way, I have a personal matter I'd like to discuss. Nothing you say from this point on will have any bearing on our business."

There was only one possible topic -- Kayleigh. I had to be exceedingly careful how I answered any questions, as I didn't want to violate her privacy, nor did I want to piss off Thomas Hart, despite his assurances.

"I'm not sure how much I can say," I replied.

"I knew you were smart enough to figure out what I was talking about."

"I think the simplest, most straightforward answer is that I'm an atheist, and your granddaughter is a devout Catholic. I don't believe there is sufficient room for compromise, given the requirements of the Catholic Church."

"I'm an atheist as well," Thomas Hart said. "Let me ask you this question - if someone is spouting arrant nonsense about non-existent beings, what exactly is your obligation to lift a finger to further their spinning of fairy tales?"

"I agree with you in principle, but, and this is jumping the gun, there are promises that have to be made."

"Not by you."

"I'm sorry, but that's not my understanding."

"The *Catholic* spouse has to commit to raising any children in the Catholic Church. The non-Christian spouse simply has to acknowledge that promise. That's it."

"You're sure about that?"

"Positive. My wife is Catholic, my daughter is Catholic, my son-in-law was raised Lutheran, and my granddaughters are Catholic. My son-in-law goes to church

twice a year with my daughter and granddaughters, and you can rest assured he doesn't agree with that Roman claptrap."

"There are other concerns," I countered.

"Always. Look, I'm not telling you to ask my granddaughter to marry you, but I am going to bat for her. If you can compromise, so can she. If not, then she has no right to complain or be depressed. I've said my piece, and we'll never discuss this again unless you bring it up. I hear from Nelson you bought a condo in the Hancock Center."

"I did, but I'm not moving yet. I'm having an interior design student from the School of the Art Institute develop a plan to decorate and furnish it."

"Smart move! Someone young, who'll have a similar eye, but also won't charge you the kind of fees interior designers would charge for a remake of a condo in that building."

"I'm curious, but what would a top designer cost?"

"Anywhere from \$30 to \$100 grand, depending on the designer and what you need."

"Top to bottom, except floors and appliances, for a six-bedroom townhouse style condo."

"Then closer to the high end for a top New York or Chicago designer, and it might be months before they had time for you, or they'd take the engagement and slough off the work on junior designers, so you'd get the same as you are, but also paying through the nose."

"I might be going out on a limb, but isn't that what you do with legal work?"

Thomas Hart laughed, "A good point, though most legal work is actually routine, not creative. You may not know this because Nelson isn't a litigator, but litigators only spend about 5% of their time in trials. Most of it is briefs and what we call 'motions practice', arguing fine points of the law before you even get to the merits of the case. And, in the end, almost everything is settled and doesn't go to trial."

"Is that true for criminal defense, too?"

"More go to trial, but in many cases, we negotiate plea agreements because they provide certainty to both our client and the government. Juries, civil or criminal, are notoriously unpredictable. I've seen what appear to be slam dunk cases for the government result in verdicts of 'not guilty' and clients who were obviously innocent convicted."

"Are you saying innocent people take plea deals?"

"Yes, especially if it ensures no jail or prison time and the government has enough circumstantial evidence to appear credible, or, to be blunt, has witnesses who will hurt them, even though the testimony is, let's call it, inaccurate."

"May I ask a legal question?"

"Given what we discussed earlier that I won't bring up again, I can't see how I could say 'no'."

I explained the situation with Heather, the document I'd signed, and the fact that Bev had filed a custody lawsuit.

"You're right that it's a technical violation, but I don't think there is any significant risk. That's not zero, mind you. Given the circumstances, no

prosecutor is going to bring criminal charges against you. You didn't fill out the document, the FBI told Border Patrol you were the father, Bev didn't correct them when she had the opportunity, you had legal guardianship, and you delivered the child to her grandparents. That's a loser case that no US Attorney is going to give two seconds of thought.

"That leaves us with the SEC. First, someone would need to file a complaint or make a referral because there is no way they know anything at all about this. If someone does tell them, they'll notify you, and you bring the letter to me. Show it to nobody else, and I'll make it go away with not even a reprimand."

"I believe you, but you need to know that the SEC has been looking at Spurgeon for *anything*, including a minor technical violation."

"That's true of every firm, believe it or not. And in this case, you didn't make a *material* misrepresentation. In other words, what you signed had exactly zero impact on the outcome. You had a legal right to take the child into your custody and, as her guardian, the legal right to place her in the care of her grandparents. Therefore, the Border Patrol writing 'father' on the form and you signing it literally had no material effect, and that means there is no violation. You behaved ethically and honestly, broke no laws, and ensured the best interest of the child. I don't normally guarantee outcomes, but in this case, I can safely do it."

"Thanks."

"I'll be in touch about those potential investors."

"I appreciate that."

We shook hands, he walked me to reception, and I headed back to the office. As I walked, I considered what to do about Kayleigh. I didn't think there was any real possibility of finding a way forward with her, but I didn't want to disappoint her

grandfather. To satisfy him, all I needed to do was see her once more. That would fulfill his implied request and ensure we had a positive relationship going forward.

When I reached the office, I added the potential new clients to my pipeline report at 10%, which indicated they were referrals, but I hadn't spoken to them directly. I spent the rest of the afternoon doing research, and at 5:00pm, Bianca, Jack, and I headed home. After dinner, I went up to my room and placed a call to Kayleigh.

"Hello?"

"Hi, Kayleigh, it's Jonathan Kane."

"Hi..." she said tentatively.

"I know things at breakfast didn't go so well, but I wondered if you'd like to get together and talk more."

"Did my grandfather put you up to this?"

"Only in the sense that he clarified something where I had a slightly inaccurate understanding. I'm not saying we can overcome our differences, but I'm willing to have another conversation if you are. You don't have to answer now, if you want to think about it."

She was quiet for a moment.

"I'd like that. When?"

"Why don't we meet for coffee on Saturday afternoon? 3:00pm at Maxim's?"

"I'll see you there. I'm really glad you called."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, then went downstairs to spend time with my housemates.



February 29, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Late on Wednesday afternoon, Scott came to my door.

"Got a sec?"

"Sure."

He came in, shut the door, and sat down.

"What's up?"

"You're a straight shooter, so I'll just ask directly -- is the goal of the data analytics team to replace analysts?"

"No. As I mentioned on Monday, they're simply one tool in the toolbox. And I will point out we went with your price target in the report that went out on Tuesday."

"That wasn't throwing me a bone?"

"No. I look at the model, but I don't trust it any more than you do. If it supports our analysis, that helps increase our confidence factor; if it goes against our analysis, then either it or we are wrong, and possibly both are wrong. That means we have to review our analysis, and Bianca and Steve their model. Our goal is to improve our forecasting, but in the end, a trained analyst has to

evaluate the output because of what you said - every single financial model breaks down at some point.

"The thing is, the true value of those models, especially the FX models, is the thing you identified as a potential weakness -- change the inputs, and you change the results. That property of those models allows us to run a bunch of different scenarios and understand the results much faster than the entire team could do with calculators. It also allows us to run sample portfolios with ease and model various scenarios."

"So you don't think that will ever happen? I mean, analysts replaced with computers?"

"'Never' is a long time, but I don't think you have anything to worry about. Will data analytics become more important? Certainly. Will it replace us? No."

"You're not going to be an analyst for much longer."

"Longer than you might think," I replied. "Noel Spurgeon expressly asked me to stay in this role."

"Even though you'll have three securities licenses by the end of July?"

"Yes. And I agreed. I have your back, Scott. And the computers are not taking over the world just yet."

"Thanks, Jonathan."

"Come see me anytime."

He left, and I returned to my analysis of the current account balances, looking for clues about changes in exchange rates. So much depended on how much the Fed

and other central banks tightened. Our models had predictions, but none of us trusted them completely, as I'd just discussed with Scott. Maybe, at some point in the future, the models would be more accurate, but for now, it really was down to research and analysis.

The big news of the day was that Pierre Trudeau had announced his decision to step down as leader of the Liberal Party in Canada, as it appeared the party was going to suffer a crushing defeat by the Progressive Conservatives led by Brian Mulroney. While that was big news in Canada, it really wouldn't affect the US markets in any significant way.

At 5:00pm, I left the office to meet Deanna at Wendy's for dinner, and after we ate, we walked to the Art Institute. Alexa arrived at the same time, and she and I went into Claire's office to strip down to our underwear -- navy blue briefs for me and black lace panties for Claire.

"I'll show you mine if you show me yours," Alexa teased.

"Can't wait until Monday?" I asked with a sly smile.

"Never hunted for your Christmas presents early?"

There hadn't been much to hunt for, but I didn't feel a need to tell Alexa my complete history.

"No," I replied. "I take it you did?"

"Yes. My parents were very creative, but Sophie and I were pretty good at finding them."

I put on my robe, and Alexa rolled her eyes and put on hers. The two of us went to the studio, and Claire had us stand so that we were facing each other, with our

hands on each other's waists. Alexa took a tiny step forward until her nipples just barely brushed against my chest.

"Monday is going to be interesting," she said quietly.

I simply smiled and held the pose. When the session ended, Deanna let me know Sophie had lent her the key again, but I suggested we just go home, and Deanna agreed without protest.



March 1, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Just after 9:00am on Thursday, my phone rang.

"Research, Kane."

"Jonathan, this is Stefan Chojnicki. Do you have a moment?"

"I do. What can I do for you?"

"Bev's attorney submitted the guardianship document as part of her challenge to Jim and Julie having custody. Will you sign an affidavit along the lines we discussed last week?"

"You mean that as Heather's legal guardian, I determined it was in her best interest to be with her grandparents."

"I do. I'd also like a statement of events from you going back to when Bev left for St. Louis. I don't feel a need to depose you, so an affidavit for that will work as well. Are you using the same attorney?"

"Actually, given the situation, I'd prefer you work through Gwen Meyer, who is a family law specialist here. Well, unless you think I need a criminal defense attorney for any reason."

"I can't imagine what that would be. You were Heather's legal guardian while Bev was being held by the government. I don't think you have anything to worry about with the form you signed because, in the end, it wasn't material to Heather being under your guardianship."

"How do I prepare the statement?"

"Just write out what happened and deliver it to Ms. Meyer. She'll craft it into the proper format and have you sign before a notary under penalty of perjury. I'll cover any fees and charge them back to Jim and Julie."

"It'll be far less of a burden if I pay Ms. Meyer than if they do. I'll cover her fees."

"I'm sure the Newtons will appreciate it. You may be deposed by her lawyer, but you are well within your rights to insist they come to you and cover all your costs. It's my advice you don't come to Ohio until this is resolved, as they could serve you with a subpoena that you would have to honor. Make them try to enforce it in Illinois if they go that route. Your attorney will advise you, but once you've given a sworn statement, the chances that an out-of-state subpoena to appear would be enforced in a civil case are small."

"Actually, I have a question -- isn't there a conflict of interest because you were Bev's attorney?"

"Potentially, but Bev signed a waiver with regard to her parents because they were paying. It's possible for her to revoke that waiver, but she hasn't. In addition, Heather was also my client and still is. If Bev or her lawyer were to

object, I'd step aside and turn this over to another attorney in our firm who has never worked on the case."

"OK. Let me give you Ms. Meyer's number."

I gave him her address and phone number, and he said he'd call her right away.



March 2, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Thanks for coming to my office, Ms. Meyer," I said when Violet showed her in late on Friday morning.

"You're welcome. I was in a deposition in the building, so it wasn't out of my way at all. I've reviewed the proposed affidavit from Mr. Chojnicki, and I see no reason for you not to sign it. Do you have the chronology you promised to create last night?"

"I do," I said, handing her six pages I'd written in MacWrite the previous evening.

"What did you use to create these?"

"A program on a Macintosh computer from Apple and an ImageWriter printer."

She scanned them.

"These look to be thorough," she said. "I'll put them in the proper form and have them ready by Monday. I'll fax you copies for review and make any changes or corrections. You'll need to come to my office so you can sign in front of me and my notary because this will be a sworn statement under oath."

"No problem. If we can do it on Tuesday, that would be best."

"Anytime after 11:00am will be fine, and it won't take more than ten minutes. I'll send them overnight to Mr. Chojnicki, and he'll have them Wednesday morning."

"That sounds good. I have my checkbook, so I'll write you a check for the cost, and you can hold any balance as a retainer."

"That's perfect."

I wrote a check for \$500 and handed it to her, then walked her to the elevators. I wasn't surprised when both Bianca and Violet were in my office when I returned.

"All good?" Bianca asked.

"I don't know that I'd call it good," I replied. "But everything is going the way Mr. Chojnicki suggested it would. My part is to make sure Heather is safe."

"Bev is going to hate you even more than she already does," Bianca observed.

"Oh, I know, but I have to do what's in Heather's best interest."

They left, and I went back to work. The rest of the day progressed normally, and at 5:00pm, I met Jack, Kristy, and CeCi in the lobby. After dinner in Greektown, we went to see *Blame it on Rio*, a sex comedy about a middle-aged man having a sexual relationship with his friend's seventeen-year-old daughter. It was funny, and seeing Demi Moore topless was worth the price of admission by itself.

After the movie, we made our usual visit to Oberweis for ice cream, then headed home. During the drive, I briefly considered inviting CeCi to spend the night, but in the end, I decided it was better to simply sleep alone.

XLII. You Don't Believe That!

March 3, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Last Saturday was your last class for your license, right?" Violet asked when we sat down for breakfast on Saturday morning.

"Yes. You're seeing Nancy today, right?"

"Yes. You're coming back for lunch, right?"

"I am. I'll need to leave about 2:30pm because I'm meeting a friend for coffee, and I'll stop at Jewel and the dry cleaners on the way home."

"OK. I like spending time with you, but I get to see you six days a week now!"

"How do you think things are going now that you've been at Spurgeon for a month?"

"The work is really interesting, everyone in Research is really nice, and I got to fly on a private jet!"

"I'm glad you're enjoying it."

"Now I've been to Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Ohio because of you. Before I met you, I was never out of Illinois or even the Chicago area, really."

"Is there someplace you'd like to visit?"

"You'll think it's silly, but, Disney World."

"There's nothing silly about that at all. And now, with your job at Spurgeon, you can basically afford to go anywhere you want on your vacation."

"It's weird that I make more money than starting teachers, and I don't even have my degree. And that doesn't even take into account my bonus."

"Teachers are underpaid compared to the value they provide to society; we discussed why that was."

"How do you feel about increasing taxes?"

"I hate paying taxes as much as the next guy, but I like the services the government provides. Could they be more efficient? Sure. Are some things they spend money on silly or wasteful? Absolutely. But we need police, fire and rescue, roads, schools, hospitals, and a military to defend the country. A big part of the problem is that schools are funded by property taxes, which are regressive."

"You mean property tax increases hurt people with lower incomes, right?"

"Yes. If my taxes go up \$500 a month, I'll hate it, but it won't materially change my standard of living. Raising your taxes \$500 a month when you were working at the daycare would have left you with almost no money on which to live, and you didn't have a mortgage."

"You support progressive income taxes?"

"I'd prefer a more efficient system with fewer deductions and exemptions, most of which benefit people with higher incomes. In the end, somebody has to pay,

and those who have more should pay more, no matter what system or formula you use."

"Don't you receive special tax treatment?"

"Carried interest is considered unrealized gains until withdrawn, similar to how other capital gains are handled. If I own a stock, I'm not taxed on any gains until I sell it. Ultimately, the carried interest rules only defer taxes because I'll pay the capital gains rate when I withdraw it."

"I haven't asked at work, but how are things going with the condo?"

"One of Deanna's friends from the School of the Art Institute is working on an interior design. She showed me some initial ideas, and now she has access to the condo to create a formal design. The basic theme is an open, minimalist plan."

"So, the opposite of my house, which has big, heavy furniture with dark wood?"

"You inherited that from your grandfather, right?"

"Yes. The only things I took with me when I left my parents' house were my clothes, a couple of stuffed animals, and a picture of my sister and me when I was nine, which was before. Everything else was sold or otherwise disposed of. You can imagine why I didn't want anything."

"I can. How is your sister?"

"The same. I went to visit on Tuesday evening after work. She's so drugged she doesn't know who I am. They've tried everything they can think of, but nothing has worked. She's likely to be like this for the rest of her life. So far as anyone can tell, my visits don't help her in any way. I'm not going to stop going, but it's extremely frustrating and makes me angry."

"I'd say I understand, but I don't, at least not from the standpoint of being a victim of that kind of abuse."

"Actually, Nancy insists I use 'survivor' because I focus on me, not what was done to me. It's the only way to move forward."

"And I think you just hit on why she's so helpful compared to Doctor Lochner. Doctor Lochner saw you as a victim who could never escape what happened, and Nancy sees you as a survivor who can move forward."

"I think you're right about that, though Doctor Lochner did help at first. She's the one who got me to the point where I no longer needed drugs to control my emotions and limit my panic attacks. After that, you're right."

"That was right before we met, wasn't it?"

"Yes, and she suggested I try to make a friend, and I chose you."

"Which was not what she'd intended."

"Obviously, but I clearly made the right decision. You've helped me more than anyone, even more than Nancy. Thank you."

"You're welcome."

We finished eating, and after I helped her clean up the kitchen, I headed to class.

A little over three hours later, I was back at Violet's house to have lunch. We ate, then went to sit in the front room and listen to music.

"How was your session with Nancy?" I asked.

"I was surprised you didn't ask while we were eating!"

"I felt it was better to not be distracted by our meal and having to do the dishes because I thought it might be a deep conversation."

"You mean because of the things we talked about after my last session?"

"Yes. Did you discuss that with Nancy?"

"Yes, of course. We had a really good talk, and she absolutely agrees that taking things slowly, step-by-step, is the right approach. She compared it to being thirteen or fourteen when you first start really thinking about that stuff and experiment a bit. I know I mentioned that she and I talked about the fact that I didn't go through the normal adolescent period because of what happened.

"She also pointed out something that I hadn't considered, and that is that most girls at that age are afraid of sex, at least a little, because the concept can be scary, even without any abuse. And that's what experimenting and discovering your limits is about. I never had that experience. And, interestingly, neither did you, if I understand what you said about you and Bev."

"First kiss to losing our virginities together in less than five minutes?"

"That was her first kiss, too, right?"

"I believe so, yes. I never asked, and she never said."

"Wait! That's different from what you said before."

"I know. I told you what I believed without the caveat that it was based on inferences and assumptions, not anything Bev said."

"You don't trust anything she said because of all the stuff that's happened."

"Let's just say that at this point, in hindsight, I have quite a few questions. That said, until she started lying to me, it didn't matter."

"How so?"

"Bev was free to do as she saw fit, so long as she was honest with me. In other words, I didn't and don't care if she kissed someone before me or even slept with someone before me. That was her business, not mine, as we had never agreed to be an exclusive couple. If she had said she hadn't when she had, that would have been a problem. And I'm not talking details or names, just 'Yes, I have'.

"You know I tried my best to help her, but she kept pushing me away and running away despite repeated offers from me. I think I understand now what was driving her, but I didn't at the time. She was living a lie, and I think that's what caused her to begin behaving erratically. That's when my focus shifted to Heather, and why I insisted at every turn that Bev accept child support from Glen and reconcile with her parents."

"Could you get into any trouble for what happened?"

"Not according to Thomas Hart. I laid everything out for him when I had lunch with him. He made it clear that I didn't make any material misrepresentations. That is, the form saying I was Heather's father didn't make a difference in the outcome because I was Heather's legal guardian."

"What's going to happen now?"

"I have no idea, but what I hope happens is that Heather stays with her grandparents, Bev gets counseling, and after she gets her act together, regains custody. Anyway, did you discuss anything else with Nancy?"

"We talked about my job, about school, and about developing other friendships besides Lily. Basically, I feel safe enough to expand my tiny group of friends."

"That's a good thing."

"There is a girl who's been in several of my classes who I've said 'hi' to plenty of times, so I'm going to see if she's interested in having coffee. How are you doing?"

"I had a deep philosophical conversation with Deanna, and she helped me by suggesting a way out of the circular problem I was having. I think I know the correct way forward now."

"Does that mean you're ready to ask for a kiss?"

"Yes, but I think I need to explain the tentative solution first."

"Is this bad?" Violet asked nervously.

"I promise, with all my heart, that nothing, and I mean nothing, will ever interfere with our friendship. And that is not meant to say we'll only be friends but to say that we will *always* be friends. I hope you trust me enough to believe that promise."

"I do; it just seemed as if you were about to say something you were afraid I wouldn't like."

"My concern is more that I don't know what you'll say or how you'll react, which is what gives me a bit of trepidation."

"You made a promise, and I promise I won't be upset no matter what you say."

"My dilemma was how I could move forward without feeling I was replacing Keiko as my wife. You correctly pointed out that committing to being interred next to her when I die was a potential point of conflict with a future wife. But it also created an internal conflict for me. Deanna's insight was that I should embrace the idea of not replacing Keiko."

Violet was quiet for a moment, and I simply let her think about what I'd said.

"You mean never marrying again?" she finally asked after about two minutes.

"As I said to someone else on another topic, 'never' is a long time. The problem was thinking of Keiko as my wife, which will always be true, but also thinking about a future wife. I'd have a 'first wife' and a 'second wife'. In my mind, that was diminishing Keiko, and I couldn't get past it."

"What does that mean?"

"I'm not exactly sure, but one thing I did realize is that my desire for a traditional family was driven by a belief that my life would have automatically been better had my dad married my mom and we'd been a family. But, as Deanna put it, the only thing I know about my dad is that he was a traveling salesman who was happy to seduce a sixteen-year-old girl in 1962. There's no way to know if things would have been better because they could have been significantly worse."

"If he was like my dad, right?"

"Yes, or any other parent who loses custody for being abusive."

"I wondered about your insistence on a traditional family when you and Bianca agreed to have a baby together without being married, but then I found out about Keiko's illness, and it made sense."

"What you don't know is that Bianca and I had agreed on that before Keiko's diagnosis. So, while I was insisting I wanted a traditional family, I'd already agreed not to have one. I obviously don't have a problem with babies being born out of wedlock because I was one, and I don't condemn my mom for sending a message to the stork at sixteen."

Violet laughed, "Too funny!"

"I've also called it 'performing the ritual to invite me into her life'."

Violet laughed again. "Because you don't want to think about your mom doing that?"

"Actually, it doesn't bother me. I said those things to my mom to tease her about it."

"It's cute."

"Thanks. So, my way forward is to assume I won't marry again, but that doesn't preclude other children or a long-term relationship, even a monogamous one. I can't say for sure what the future will hold or how things will develop. I'm just saying that I can't promise to ever marry again, and nobody should assume that's what's going to happen."

"You mean me?" Violet asked.

"I mean anyone. May I be blunt?"

"You are with everyone but me, from what I've seen."

"That's true because of past circumstances. I've been more direct with you over time and have done my best to treat you the way I would any other generally conservative young woman."

"I think I know what you're going to say, but you should say it."

I nodded, "I'm ready to kiss you if you want, but that kiss isn't any kind of commitment to an exclusive relationship, now or in the future. And that's true of anything we might do together."

"Anything?" she asked.

"Yes. Neither of us knows if we'll get to that point, but I don't want to mislead you."

Violet laughed softly, "Seriously? You don't believe that! You believe I want to, and I know you want to because that's been clear since the gum!"

"True," I chuckled. "But desire is insufficient for what I think are obvious reasons."

"And yet, I'm confident you believe it will happen. In fact, you wanted it to happen, but you felt even kissing me was a commitment to a very specific future."

"I did."

"I know I promised a straight answer, but you changed the parameters. You know I don't think it's only for marriage, but I've always thought it was only for a committed relationship. I want some time to think about it, OK?"

"Of course. As I said, I promise to be your friend no matter what."

"Thank you."

We hung out until 2:30pm when I had to leave, and when Violet walked me to the door, she gave me a tight hug and a soft kiss on the cheek that implied far more than the peck on the lips she'd given me on one occasion. I was actually glad she'd asked for time because I realized I needed more time despite saying I was willing to kiss her.

I pushed that to the back of my mind and considered what I might say to Kayleigh and what kind of compromise would even be possible, given Deanna's proposed solution to my dilemma. I honestly doubted there was a way forward, but one thing gave me pause -- Mary Kealty. She had been an apparently devout Catholic but had claimed it was all to keep her parents happy.

The difference was that Mary had disclaimed believing at least some Catholic doctrine, while Kayleigh had stated she agreed with it. The other name that popped into my head was Teresa, Maria's sister, who had said she was a faithful Catholic but had gone to bed with me nonetheless. And Teri came to mind as well, though she claimed it was as much cultural as anything.

Ultimately, though, none of that likely mattered, given my current thinking about the future. Nothing was set in stone, and all options were open, but the least likely option was one that Kayleigh would likely insist upon, just as Teri had. Accepting that condition would simply put me right back where I had been -- concerned about replacing Keiko.

When I walked into Maxim's, Kayleigh was waiting at the hostess stand, and we were immediately seated. A waitress poured coffee and asked if we wanted anything to eat, but we both declined.

"Were you waiting long?" I asked.

"Maybe two minutes, if even that," she replied.

"I'm not quite sure how to approach this, so I think I'm just going to ask why you gave me your phone number that day you were called to act as a Notary."

"You seemed nice, were obviously super successful, were tall and in good shape, and if my grandfather trusted you with his money, you had to be an honest, trustworthy guy. He didn't like either of the guys I dated seriously in High School or junior college, and he obviously likes you. It seemed like a good chance to take."

"I didn't call because, at that point, I was involved with Keiko, and she'd received her diagnosis. When you made your second overture, I wasn't quite ready to see anyone. I'm still proceeding very carefully."

"That's totally understandable, and that's why I made the point of saying I hoped you'd call when you were ready. I just didn't want to miss a chance, though I'm not sure I really have one."

"I suppose it's a question of what you want, what you believe, and where you can compromise. Your grandfather and grandmother appear to have figured it out, at least to hear him tell it, and so have your parents."

"You agree with my grandfather about Catholic teaching, right?"

"What little we discussed, yes. The way I see it is that for us to move forward in any way, some huge compromises would be necessary, and when you made a point of agreeing completely with Catholic doctrine, that was a strong indication there was no reasonable middle ground on which to meet."

"Which doctrines bug you the most?"

"Probably the ones on which you can't compromise -- sin, confession, abortion, birth control, and sex."

"I feel like you've had this conversation before."

"A few times," I replied. "If you'll pardon the expression, you can't swing a dead cat in Chicago without hitting a Catholic! I've met a few girls where there was mutual interest, and we've talked about all those things. That's how I knew about the requirements for a Catholic wedding, though your grandfather corrected a slight misunderstanding. May I ask how your mom and dad handle things?"

"You mean about church? Dad goes to church with us on Christmas and Easter, but that's it."

"Does that bother you?"

"A bit, but I'm used to it."

And that right there was probably the death knell.

"Does he talk about his disagreements with Catholic teaching?"

"Not to us -- my sisters and me. I can't say what they discuss in private."

"I think we're at an impasse unless you can suggest a way forward, given what you said about your dad not going to church bothering you and him basically being quiet about what he thinks about Catholic teaching, which I think you might expect. I'm open to suggestions."

"I don't think I have any," Kayleigh said. "I know girls who simply go to church because their parents expect them to and others who basically ignore what the Church teaches about certain things, but that's not me. I guess the only remotely possible way forward would be for you to speak to my priest."

"I don't think that will be productive," I replied. "As Robert Heinlein said, *'Never attempt to teach a pig to sing; it wastes your time and annoys the pig'*. Fundamentally, it won't be productive, and all it will do is waste his time and annoy me. Asking me to believe in the existence of God, or any gods, is a bridge too far."

"I kind of figured, but it was the only thing I could think of."

We finished our coffee, I paid, and we walked out of the restaurant.

"Thanks for meeting me," I said. "If anything changes, feel free to call."

"I'd say the same, but I'm pretty sure we both know they won't."

"If you took the L, I could give you a lift home or walk you the L."

She accepted the offer of a ride, and after I dropped her at her apartment, I drove to Jewel, where I did the weekly grocery shopping. After I left Jewel, I stopped at the dry cleaners, then headed home. As with the previous Saturday, everyone was out except Deanna and me, so I made us burgers and fries for dinner.

"How did things go with Violet?" Deanna asked.

"She asked for some time to consider the changed parameters."

"You told her my proposed solution?"

"Yes. Her struggle was not about pre-marital sex, but she always assumed it would actually be pre-marital."

"That's a fairly common rule for girls -- it's OK to sleep with a steady boyfriend if it's leading towards marriage, but there has to be a realistic chance you'll marry. It's kind of the middle option between my attitude that you do it with who you want and let relationships worry about themselves; and keeping your knees firmly pressed together until your wedding night.

"Of course, there are shades of grey, bad decisions, hormones, and a host of other factors that might cause a girl to have sex outside the parameters she imagined were in control. Ivy and Sophie changed my mind, and Shelly and Bianca certainly acted contrary to what they had intended because they played that game with you.

"Then there are the ones for whom I have zero respect -- they use sex as a lure and always hold it just out of reach -- what they called a 'prick tease' in High School. Worse are the ones who give the impression it's casual but then demand complete and total fidelity and monogamy. I think you've run into the latter, but I don't think the former."

"I have had girls who felt it meant something more than I did but didn't make that clear until after the fact. Of course, most girls were at one of the games, and there was no way any of them had the wrong impression about what it meant or was in a position to insist it meant we were a couple. When it wasn't in the context of a game or a referral, I was very careful to explain what I could offer."

"Eight hard inches and endless orgasms!" Deanna smirked.

"That, too," I chuckled. "But you know I meant in terms of a relationship!"

"Of course. Did you turn me down on Wednesday because you're having second thoughts?"

"Not in the sense that I think it was a mistake, no. I really am just trying to wrap my head around everything to do with Keiko. I'm making progress, and I feel...better, I suppose. I had intended to offer to have sex tonight, so hopefully that allays your concerns."

"My only concern is for your state of mind. I know you have a lot to work through, but I also know that last Saturday unlocked your thinking. If you're contemplating your next move, CeCi would absolutely be a good option."

I nodded, "I know. I actually considered asking her to stay last night, but I decided to wait until after I had my talk with Violet."

"Are you concerned about inviting someone into your and Keiko's bed?" Deanna asked.

"I hadn't thought about that," I replied. "So possibly subconsciously, but other girls have been in that bed."

"You know that intellectually, but emotionally? And it was before you married her."

"It was, and I have no idea, honestly. Once you and I had sex last weekend, the fidelity block was shattered."

"Again, intellectually, but emotionally?"

"You know I'm not used to dealing with emotions."

"Obviously. And if I didn't have my art, I'm not sure I'd survive dealing with my emotions. It's an outlet, and a very good one, at least for me. What outlet do you have?"

"None I could point to," I replied.

"Music, art, acting, or a hobby are probably the best ways to express emotions. Can you sing?"

"I've never tried except occasionally singing along with the radio, and I've never even tried to play an instrument. I don't feel I have a single artistic bone in my body, though I appreciate it the same as I do music. I never tried to act, and I don't have a hobby."

"With your memory and good looks, a community theatre might be perfect for you, if you can express emotion with your voice, posture, and facial expressions. There's an easy way to find out -- read some parts for a play aloud and try to convey the emotions. I'm not well-versed in acting, but my friend Trey, who's a dramatic arts major, could help.

"If it works, you could talk to someone at The Streeterville Theatre. It's a community theatre -- not professionals -- that has a small theatre not far from the Hancock Center. That would be a good way to meet people, have some fun, and have an outlet for your emotions that won't affect your work. Is that something you think you might like?"

"Maybe," I replied. "Time is a consideration, given I'm taking two classes over the summer, but then in the Fall, I'll be doing an independent study, which will give me more flexibility. Remind me in August, OK?"

"I will. Before I forget, could we meet Natasha next Thursday at the condo? She says she'll have sketches of the living space to show you and get some feedback."

"I don't have plans for Thursday, so that will work."

We finished eating and cleaned up the kitchen. After Deanna put the last dish into the cupboard, I took her hand and led her up to my room, where we made gentle love twice before heading naked to the hot tub. Deanna sat close so that our shoulders, hips, and legs touched.

"This is not me complaining at all, just making an observation, but you've been extremely gentle, which was not your way in the past. I mean, you *could* be, but usually, it was more energetic and athletic."

I shrugged, "That is what I need right now."

"Your interior life would be very interesting to experience, but short of a Vulcan Mind Meld, I'm not sure how it could happen."

"You mean how I think?"

"More than that -- how you experience the world and react to it intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. And you know I don't mean religion."

"Because that would give you insights into me that would be valuable for someone who has become my main confidante."

"Yes. I think, but I'm not sure, that now that you're past the fidelity block, you're searching for what I'd call a 'new normal'. That's a phrase from 1918, where the entire world had to figure out how to transition from war to peace in a world that looked completely different from the world of 1914. That's why you feel the need to keep the resumption of our sexual relationship secret; well, maybe

'private' is better, as you won't lie about it. I believe your internal struggle, perhaps subconscious, is whether to go back to the way things were or do something different."

"I don't think I can go back because I'm not the same person I was. What happened with Keiko changed me, and I think you're right that I'm trying to figure out what that means, and not just with regard to sex. Part of that is trying to define my relationship with Violet, which is far more complicated now than it was before."

"You mean that before, there were clear boundaries around your friendship because there was no real prospect of a physical relationship? And now, that prospect is there, and without boundaries, you feel...unsafe to proceed?"

"Something like that," I replied. "Maybe 'trepidation' is better than 'unsafe'."

"You're usually the most decisive person I know," Deanna observed. "Your knowledge of Violet's past is giving you serious pause. I know this is a bullshit question, but I'm going to ask it anyway -- if you met Violet now, without knowing about her past, what would you do?"

I chuckled, "A bullshit question indeed because I can't simply forget what I know, but I'm positive you know the answer because you said it last Saturday."

"You both want to fuck each other senseless! And that leads to another question -- could you?"

"Right now? Probably not. And next, you're going to suggest I need to get past THAT block so that Violet and I can be together the way we both envision."

"I'm more than happy to assist in preparing for that endeavor!"

I chuckled, "Of course you are!"

"You have other options for that, too -- Natasha, who I suspect is adventurous and a wildcat and already offered. And I maintain that after Monday, every straight girl and gay guy in the drawing class is going to want to fuck YOU!"

"OK, I know I'm bigger than average, but seriously?"

"Seriously! Impressive equipment on a good-looking guy combined with art students?"

"Didn't you just tell me Natasha didn't want the attention?"

"Yes, but, as we agreed, there's a difference when the girl pursues from when the guy *assumes* it's there for the taking. I'm pretty sure you never assumed once in your entire life."

"That's true. I had several conversations with Marcia about 'possibility' versus 'assumption'. I made the point that her inviting me into her townhouse caused me to think she might be inviting me in to have sex, but I never assumed we would. When it didn't happen, I wasn't bothered by it. A guy who assumed he was going to get laid would be bothered."

"Exactly."

"So, Miss Haight, setting aside what you think about my interior life, as you called it, what would you like to do?"

"You won't believe this, but I want to keep talking. There's plenty of time for fucking like crazed bunny rabbits if that's what you're implying with your question."

"It wasn't anything other than asking what *you* needed, as you've been fulfilling my needs without worrying about yours."

"You're wrong. Everything that has happened since last Saturday afternoon has met my needs. Am I interested in an over-the-top session with you and CeCi? Sure. Do I need it? No. And I think you understand that completely."

"Now that you've said it, you're right."

"Then let's just keep talking," she said, taking my hand.



March 4, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I hope you don't mind that I invited some of the girls to join us this afternoon," Bianca said at breakfast on Sunday morning.

"Not at all. I'm positive Costas, Dustin, Archie, and Trevor won't mind. Who?"

"Meg, Nicole, Josie, and Kasey. None of them is going to misbehave."

"I wouldn't expect them to. Do we have enough brats and burgers?"

"I stopped at Dominick's on the way home last night and picked up some extra stuff because we hadn't discussed it before you went shopping. How did things go yesterday?"

"Pretty much as expected. There really isn't a way forward with a devout Catholic. Even my compromises won't work because it bugs her that her dad doesn't go to church every Sunday."

"That won't mess things up with Hart-Lincoln, will it?"

"No. Thomas Hart was clear it would have no effect. And if he asked Kayleigh, I believe she'll be honest about it. Her last comment was basically the only possible way forward was for me to speak to her priest. You can imagine how that meeting would go!"

"Not well for the priest! What's his response? 'God told me'? or 'Because the Pope said so'? You'd laugh at those responses."

"I quoted Heinlein about trying to teach a pig to sing," I replied.

Bianca laughed, "Nice one."

"Where's Juliette?"

"Shower. She should be down in a minute or two. This was probably the last weekend I'll go out. I feel like a beached whale!"

"I think if I say what just popped into my mind, I won't live to see Sofia born!"

Bianca laughed, "You were going to say, 'You look like one, too!', right?"

"No. I *thought* it, but there was no chance those words were going to pass my lips! And you're sexy, even if you are eight months pregnant!"

"I meant to ask you about the Toyota. I saw on the information sheet for the condo that two spots are included, and I wondered if you were going to pay for a spot when you aren't going to use your car very often because we'll take the elevators to work, and you could take the L to school."

"I actually hadn't thought about the cars," I replied. "Deanna and CeCi use it occasionally, but they mostly won't need it, either. If you're willing, we could

probably share two cars between the five of us without any trouble. Juliette only rarely borrows your car because you two do most stuff together."

"That makes sense to me. Your car is easily big enough for three adults and Sofia's car seat. You could probably squeeze in four adults if you didn't mind being uncomfortable for a short trip."

"OK. That's settled, then."

"I'll create a flyer with the Macintosh to hang up at Loyola. We just need to know the Blue Book value."

"I'll look that up tomorrow. Let's wait until closer to our move date to actually put up the flyer."

"Don't forget we have our interview with the nanny service on Tuesday afternoon right after work."

"I remember. What schedule did you decide on?"

"6:00am to 6:00pm, Monday through Thursday. 6:00am to midnight on Friday. That means two different nannies, one who works 6:00am to 2:00pm and the other who starts at 2:00pm. That gives us total flexibility. "

"Remember, for June, July, and part of August, I'll have class on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays."

"I saw it on the calendar. We'll make it work. My grandmother offered to help for the first two months or so, and I accepted. I was sure you'd be OK with it."

"I am. What's the plan?"

"She'll come during the afternoons after the first week so I can nap or run errands or whatever."

"Have your parents climbed down off the ceiling?"

"Mostly. Grandma says as soon as Sofía is born, they'll forget that I'm not married to you and I'm sleeping with Juliette. Your mom is obviously OK with it."

"Her only concern was that I was disrespecting Keiko, but Keiko talked to her and let her know she'd approved."

"Morning!" Juliette exclaimed, coming into the kitchen.

CeCi came in a few minutes later, and then finally, Deanna. Jack and Kristy had gone out for the day, and had left early, so they didn't join us.

"What are you painting today, Dee?" CeCi asked.

"A bowl with fruit."

"Exciting," CeCi said deadpan.

"Have you considered drawing or painting people having sex?" Bianca asked.

"That's not permitted by the course rubric, and you need special permission to display something like that, and they're reluctant to give it. It's similar to the rubrics for CeCi's film and photography courses."

"Photography?" Juliette asked.

"Yes," CeCi said. "It's a core part of the film curriculum. This semester is buildings and nature; next semester is people."

"What do you have to take besides the film and photo classes?"

"English, a pair of humanities electives, art history, a social science, and a natural science. The film courses span from concept to distribution, including screenwriting, camera work, directing, audio, post-production, and just about anything else you can think of."

"I know where you can find the male model for your nudes," Deanna said, tilting her head in my direction.

"Gee, thanks," I chuckled.

"You have NOTHING to be embarrassed about!" Bianca exclaimed.

"I'm not sure I want nude photos of me circulating!"

"They won't," CeCi said. "They'll be in my portfolio."

"It's similar to what I told you about the drawings for my class," Deanna said.

"Sure, some will be displayed, but most end up in a portfolio and aren't sold."

"What happens to paintings?" Juliette inquired.

"Mostly, for paintings done as assignments, they collect dust in the artist's attic. Some are displayed, and very few are sold, mostly after the artist has a following of some kind. The two I completed recently will be displayed in Jonathan's condo in the room that's going to be Jonathan's private gallery. Others I'll display at Ateljé D."

We all finished breakfast, Juliette and I cleaned up, and then we all relaxed until our friends arrived around 11:00am.

XLIII. Holy God!

March 5, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"They what?!" I asked in surprise.

"Bev and Glen Rodgers were married in November of last year," Mr. Chojnicki said. "I'm looking at an Illinois marriage certificate. I take it from your reaction that you had no idea."

"I didn't. They had talked about it, but I had no idea they'd done it. How does that affect the situation with Heather?"

"It complicates it because Glen is challenging the guardianship document."

"It was created before they married," I countered.

"Yes, it was, but it was after she'd acknowledged he was the father. He's claiming the guardianship document was created under false pretenses because she didn't have his permission."

"What aren't you telling me?"

"Nothing, at least at this point. This is complicated because Bev had registered her car and changed her driving license to Missouri, and the documents were created in Missouri, so the validity may turn on Missouri law with regard to the offspring of unwed couples. And that is complicated by Glen's offer to pay child support and her adamant refusal to accept it until much later. Then add in the fact that Heather was in North Dakota when she was placed in your custody,

custody was transferred to Jim and Julie in Illinois, and Heather was brought back to Ohio. It is, to put it mildly, a mess."

"Is Heather still with the Newtons?"

"Yes. They have temporary custody and that won't change because it's in Heather's best interest, and she's with family. The affidavits Gwen Meyer is preparing will ensure that remains the case until the status of the guardianship document is determined."

"How long is this going to take?"

"Months."

"You may not know, but how is Bev paying her expenses, including for an attorney?"

"Glen Rodgers received a large insurance payout when his wife passed, and given he and Bev married, she has access to those funds. That's how they're paying for Glen's attorneys, from what I understand."

"What's the bottom line? Could I be in any trouble?"

"I don't see how, given the FBI and Border Patrol initiated everything, and we have statements from both of them to that regard. Everyone acted in good faith based on the best knowledge they had at the time, and Heather is exactly where she would have ended up without your involvement."

"Bev would never have agreed."

"That's true, but if North Dakota had taken Heather into emergency care, they'd have contacted her nearest relatives and made arrangements for them to take Heather. That's how it works in the majority of cases such as this."

"What do you think will happen?"

"I honestly can't handicap this one for you in any reasonable way. If Glen is convicted or pleads guilty to statutory rape, terminating his parental rights will be fairly straightforward. If that happens, his challenge to the guardianship document is moot. At that point, it's going to come down to what Family Services and the judge think is best for Heather."

"If Bev had no resources, it would be a slam dunk for Jim and Julie to retain physical custody, and Bev likely would have visitation rights. Because Bev appears to have enough resources to cover her expenses for the foreseeable future, it's complicated because Bev has to somehow convince Family Services and the judge that she didn't aid and abet Glen's attempt to flee arrest. Bev's attorney is working hard to get those charges dismissed, and if they are, she has a shot."

"You're right; it's a mess. Gwen Meyer is going to fax a proof copy of the affidavit to me this afternoon for review. I'll visit her office tomorrow to sign it, and you'll have it on Wednesday via Federal Express."

"OK. I'm going to call her and ask her to insert a statement that you had no knowledge of their marriage. I assume that's OK?"

"It is because it's the truth."

"Thanks, Jonathan."

"You're welcome."

I hung up just in time to have lunch with Bianca and Violet in the break room. I explained what Mr. Chojnicki had told me.

"She lied to you about that, too?!" Violet said, shaking her head.

"Maybe it's better to say she omitted that vital piece of information. What's odd is that Glen didn't tell the Border Patrol."

"Maybe he did, and Bev denied it and showed the power of attorney documents and guardianship documents, and *she* told the Border Patrol you were Bev's father. Or confirmed what the FBI said when she was asked."

I nodded, "That makes sense because she thought I'd bring Heather to my house, not give her to her grandparents. I think it fits, given Mr. Chojnicki said in cases such as this, the default is for Family Services to place the child with their closest relative, at least temporarily."

"I think you did the right thing, Jonathan," Violet said.

"Me, too." I agreed. "I just wish I had a way to stay completely out of it, but it appears that's not possible."

"Could she try to throw you under the bus?" Bianca asked.

"She could, but all the lawyers agree that everyone from the FBI to Border Patrol to me to Jim and Julie all acted in good faith, based on what we knew. Hopefully, the affidavits will be the end of it, and I no longer have to worry about it."

We finished our lunches, then Violet and I went to the gym, but Bianca was too far along in her pregnancy to work out, even lightly. The fax of the proposed

affidavits from Gwen Meyer was waiting, and I took the time to review them. I made a few minor corrections, then faxed them back to her.

I had a productive afternoon, and at 5:00pm, I left to have dinner with Deanna at Bacino's.

"So, ready for the BIG reveal!" Deanna smirked.

"You do realize that you're making me think twice, right?" I asked, pretending to be annoyed.

"You always handle teasing really well," Deanna said nervously.

"And give back as good as I get!" I chuckled.

"You actually had me worried for a second there!"

"In all seriousness, I have had second thoughts, but I gave my word, so I'll do it."

"Why second thoughts?"

"Because the drawings will be displayed in public. It has nothing to do with being ashamed, just about my reputation. That would be my concern with CeCi taking photos."

"OK to be a smart ass?"

"Sure."

"I thought at work it was all about having bigger balls and a bigger dick!"

I chuckled, "It is, but the size of your assets under management and their growth are more important, and in most minds, translate directly to dick size!"

"I bet not!" Deanna declared mirthfully.

"Well, you can take it to the bank that I have no intention of finding out!"

"And the Swedish girl can't tell you, right?"

"To my knowledge, no."

"Ever bang any of the secretaries who would know?"

"Much to my regret, one. She left about six months ago when she got married, so I can't ask her even if I was inclined to, which I'm not."

"Regret?"

"It was a mistake to get involved in any way with any of the secretaries who participate in the shenanigans at work. It was different with Anna because she rejects that behavior the same as I do."

"Violet is your secretary..."

"I know," I replied, "and that presents its own set of potential difficulties, but our work relationship is clearly defined, even though we never directly discussed it. It's purely professional, with the exception that she eats lunch with Bianca and me three days a week. My relationship with Bianca is pretty obvious."

"I'll say!" Deanna declared. "Has anyone said anything?"

"Nothing negative to me, and Bianca quietly let it be known she was pregnant before Keiko and I married."

"It's going to be very strange having a baby in the house and then the condo."

"TELL me about it!" I chuckled. "I hope, eventually, you'll teach her to draw and paint."

"That'll be fun! I know neither you nor Bianca plays an instrument, but music lessons are valuable as well."

"That's something to consider, but it's down the road a piece. Finger paint is a lot easier than the piano! I managed fingerpaint in kindergarten!"

"I know this is way ahead of the game, but public school or private school?"

"That's not something Bianca and I have discussed, but we have five or six years to figure it out."

We finished eating and made our way to the Art Institute, where Deanna went into the studio while I went into Claire's office. A few seconds later, Alexa walked in and shut the door behind her."

"Ready for this?" she asked with a smirk.

"As I'll ever be. Have you done this before?"

"No. My sister is the crazy, adventurous one in the family! I'm a communications major, not an artist! This is me stepping outside my usual boundaries. Deanna encouraged me to do it."

"Me, too," I chuckled. "Though only after the original model dropped out. We should probably get ready."

I turned my back and began undressing.

"Why turn away?" Alexa asked.

"Because watching you undress might cause a problematic reaction!"

Alexa laughed, "Can't raise or lower the main mast on command?"

"Not particularly, no. A girl undressing is erotic. A naked one depends on context."

"An interesting point I hadn't considered. I think we should see each other before we go to the studio. Turn at the same time?"

"Yes."

We both undressed and when Alexa said she was ready, we turned to face each other.

"Holy God!" she gasped, her eyes wide.

"No, Jonathan," I replied.

Alexa laughed, "You're huge!"

"Sophie didn't tell you?"

"No!"

"When you suggested a preview the other evening, I thought it was because you wanted to verify her claims."

"I had no idea," she said, shaking her head.

We put on our robes and slippers, then walked to the studio.

"Tonight is simply a human figure drawing. Jonathan and Alexa, I'll simply have you stand next to each other, about a foot apart, holding hands. Just stand on the throw rug; no slippers, please."

Alexa and I removed our slippers, then shrugged off our robes, letting them fall to the floor behind us. I took her hand in mine, and she squeezed briefly.

"Jesus!" one of the female students gasped.

"Whoa!" another female voice said, slightly louder.

"Damn!" one of the male students uttered just barely audibly.

"Let's draw, please," Claire said, taking two steps forward so she could see us from the front.

She raised both eyebrows, and her lip curled, but she didn't react otherwise or say anything. Standing naked in front of a dozen people was an interesting experience, but weirdly, I wasn't self-conscious, uncomfortable, or embarrassed, which I understood to be the usual reaction to being seen naked. That drew my mind back to the conversation I'd had with Deanna about that, and I understood slightly better.

I also thought about Deanna's comment about how her fellow students would react. The two verbal responses had been both surprising and not surprising.

They were surprising in the sense that I was sure every one of those students had seen members of the opposite sex naked; not surprising given the assurances of experienced girls that I was much bigger than the average guy.

The other surprise was Alexa's revelation that Sophie hadn't said anything to her, something I had assumed would have happened. Sophie had certainly told Ivy and later Deanna, and I found it slightly strange she hadn't told her little sister, especially given we were going to pose together. But as I thought more about it, the dynamic between sisters was different than between friends, as evidenced by Allyson and Clara.

During the first break, Alexa and I put on our robes and slippers and sat on the small couch in the studio with cups of coffee provided by Claire.

"Hi," a blonde guy about my height said, coming over to us. "I'm Rick."

"Jonathan," I said, extending my hand,

"Want to grab a beer after class?" he asked.

Given what Deanna had said about three of the four guys being gay or bi, I had a good idea that his invitation was not just to have a beer.

"Thanks for the offer, but I'm straight."

"Oops! I thought...never mind."

"Don't sweat it. I'm not offended, but I'm also not interested. That said, I'm always open to new friends."

"Thanks. Where do you go to school?"

"Part-time at Circle. I work as a securities analyst for Spurgeon Capital."

"Without a degree?"

"Yes. I have two securities licenses and am working on my third."

"Now I really wish you were interested! You know the situation with artists, I'm sure!"

"Deanna is a close friend, so yeah, I do."

"That probably explains your attitude. Most guys in finance are anti-gay."

"Maybe so, but not me, given four of my five closest male friends are gay."

"There has to be a story there."

"There is. After class, hang back, and I'll give you my business card. Give me a call, and you can buy me a beer, but I won't be going home with you!"

He laughed, "I will. Thanks."

"Deftly handled," Alexa said. "You shot him down, but he walked away happy."

After our ten-minute break, we resumed our pose. During our second break, one of the female students, a short, dark-haired girl with brown eyes, came over to us.

"Hi, I'm Britney," she said. "Would you be available for some private modeling sessions? I need a subject for an independent study project."

"What's the project?"

"Multi-discipline -- photo, sketch, paint, charcoal, clay, plaster, and bronze of the same subject."

"When do you need to know?"

"By the end of the semester. It's my Summer course."

"Let me think about it, please."

"I hope you will!"

She walked away, and a few minutes later, Alexa and I returned to our pose. When class ended, we put on our robes and walked to Claire's office to dress.

"You're going to be propositioned by at least two more girls," Alexa said once the door was closed and we'd started dressing. "They were seriously impressed by your equipment!"

"I have to ask, so long as the guy gets you there, does it matter?"

"Only a well-endowed guy would ask if size matters!" Alexa laughed.

"It was actually a serious question."

"Consider it like boobs -- bigger is usually better, right?"

"Any breasts with which I'm permitted to play are the perfect size!"

Alexa laughed, "Wise! With dicks, I suppose it depends on the girl. Some might see it as a challenge, some might be afraid, and some might be more turned on by depth and girth."

"Not to imply anything..."

"Fascination," Alexa said. "Sophie told me you were damned good, and I was interested. Now I'm interested and fascinated. I didn't say anything before because Deanna told me about what happened with your wife, and I didn't want to seem insensitive. I'm fairly certain you find me attractive."

"I do."

"If you're interested, just ask. I don't want to push."

"Thanks. I'm still working through my emotions."

"I can imagine."

We finished dressing, and Alexa opened the door. Rick was waiting, and I handed him my business card. He walked away, and Deanna walked up to me.

"Ready to go?"

"Yes."

We left the building and hailed a cab to take us to the Hancock Center to retrieve my car.

"So, Rick and Britney?" she teased.

I laughed, "Rick did proposition me by asking if I wanted to have a beer. I declined but offered friendship. It was the polite thing to do, and I wasn't offended."

"Of course not, or you wouldn't have so many gay friends. And Britney?"

"Asked me to model for her multi-discipline independent study, which she said involved photography, sketching, painting, clay, and bronze. I said I'd let her know. I think I could only agree to do that if I agreed to CeCi's request to model for her photography class."

"My opinion is you should do both. There really isn't much downside. If nobody cares about your boss screwing underage girls, do you think they're going to care about tasteful nudes?"

"An interesting point."

"Especially given what he's doing is illegal and what you're doing is legal. So?"

"She said she didn't need an answer until the end of the semester. Do you know how bronze statues are made?"

"The method they teach at the school is called the 'lost wax' method and involves making a model with oil-based clay, using that to make a wax mould, then creating a bronze casting. I haven't done it, and I believe there are more steps."

"Is that something you have to do?"

"There are a number of different independent study programs. The one I chose for the Summer involves sketching scenes from different angles. It'll help me develop better perspective in my art."

"That doesn't really help your abstract art, does it?"

"There really aren't any classes in abstract art for what I think are obvious reasons."

"You can't teach it, but can't you teach painting techniques or whatever?"

"Yes, and I get those from my other classes. You've heard Claire critique student work in class, as well as make suggestions. The various media and techniques we're learning can be applied to any form of art. So even if I'm not going to sketch as my main form, everything I learn helps me improve."

"That makes sense."

"By the way," Deanna said with a smirk I could just see in the dimly lit cab, "Adriana did NOT draw you to scale!"

"The girl who sits next to you with the short-cropped bleach-blonde hair?"

"She affects the stereotypical dyke pretty well."

"Dyke?" I asked.

"A butch lesbian who affects something of a masculine demeanor. Think about how she dresses, her hair, lack of makeup, and so on."

I shrugged, "I didn't notice, at least in the way you mean."

"Because the lesbian and bisexual girls who you know act feminine."

"So you're saying she doesn't appreciate men?"

"She's an ardent feminist and is convinced men think with their dicks and have far too high opinion of them. One of her favorite jokes is about why straight females have poor spatial abilities."

"OK, I'll bite," I said with a grin.

Deanna held her thumb and forefinger about three inches apart and said, "Because they've been told this is six inches!"

"Too funny," I said with a laugh. "Implying that men exaggerate."

"In my experience, and that of my friends, the ones who brag are usually exaggerating. The ones who don't have to exaggerate generally don't brag. Present company being an example."

"Speaking of that, I was surprised that Sophie hadn't said anything to Alexa."

"Interesting," Deanna said. "One of the first things she said about you to me was that you were supremely well-endowed!"

"I was thinking context, maybe? Or being sisters, given how Allyson and Clara behaved."

"Could be," Deanna agreed as the cab pulled up in front of the Hancock Center.

I paid the cabbie, and Deanna and I got out. We made our way to the parking garage, where I retrieved my car.

"Did Alexa say anything?" Deanna asked as I pulled out of the parking garage.

"When she first saw me, she said, 'Holy God!' and I responded, 'No, Jonathan!'"

Deanna laughed softly, "Perfect comeback."

"After the session, she suggested she was interested but was concerned it was too soon after Keiko."

"She seems more sensitive than Sophie or Ivy, who would suggest an over-the-top threesome to help you forget."

"That would be a terrible idea. Your approach was the right one."

"I know you pretty well. And, given that, I think you're at a point where you don't need to keep things private, at least with our housemates. CeCi will absolutely appreciate you inviting her to sleep with you on Friday night."

"Is that your way of asking if you can sleep with me tonight?"

"Or you come sleep with me, if your bed is a concern."

"I'm not sure if it is or not," I said.

"I know Tasha is going to suggest a new bed -- a low-wooden frame. I'd say king-sized, if past performance is any indicator of future activity."

I laughed, "Nice turn of the disclaimer we put on literally every piece of paper that leaves Spurgeon Capital."

"You were fully and completely committed to Keiko, but I think your true nature is more like before her. Not that you were fake with Keiko, just that it ran contrary to your nature and had to do with your Platonic ideal of a family based on your experience growing up."

"An ideal you neatly demolished during our conversations. And that's not a complaint, simply an acknowledgment that you corrected my erroneous thinking. To your point, isn't there something to be said for moderation and restraint?"

"Those are good things...in moderation!"

I laughed hard, "That's awesome!"

"I just thought of it! I wasn't suggesting you shouldn't be selective, just that you are not naturally monogamous, and you don't have the social or religious strictures that demand it. Rich, powerful men -- which is what you are, even if there are richer, more powerful men -- attract willing young women. I can't think of an ethical reason not to take advantage of that situation."

"Ethics would only require birth control, honesty, and not violating any commitments anyone had made. I know some people put the ethical duty on the one who would break the commitment, but I don't want to put myself in that position."

"I agree, which is why the only way I could have been your mistress was with Keiko's full knowledge and approval, which she wasn't about to give!"

"She did make an exception for Bianca so that I could father a child, though, after that, she certainly wasn't inclined to do so. We'd have adopted had she lived."

"You know I'm not trying to pressure you, right?"

"You expressing your preferences or giving advice in no way compels me to act," I replied. "I evaluate it based on my needs and objectives and decide whether or not to act."

"Another Jonathan answer if there ever was one!"

"Consistency is important!"

I pulled into the driveway, got out, opened the garage door, then pulled in. Once I'd parked, Deanna and I got out of the car, I closed the garage door, and we walked into the house.

"Will you come to bed with me?" she asked.

"Yes."



March 6, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

When I came down the attic stairs from Deanna's room on Tuesday morning, Bianca was in the hallway.

"Interesting development," she said quietly.

"I'm going to shower. Come with, if you want to discuss it privately."

Bianca nodded and followed me to my room. I shut the door, discarded my robe, and went into the bathroom. I turned on the shower and waited for the water to warm up.

"Deanna and I have had some very deep philosophical discussions the last two Saturdays, and we've talked a lot at dinner on Mondays and Wednesdays. That led to having sex a few times, and last night, I decided it was OK to not keep it private any longer. Please don't share with anyone outside the house."

"I won't," Bianca replied as I got into the shower. "So, what does this mean?"

"Nothing more than Deanna and I are lovers again. I'm still trying to work through my emotions and figure out the best way forward."

"So, just Deanna for now?"

I shrugged as I lathered my body with soap.

"One day at a time," I replied. "Go on, give your opinion!"

Bianca laughed softly, "You knew I was going to ask if it was OK."

"Of course. And you don't need to ask any more than Deanna needs to ask. As I said to her, people expressing their preferences does not compel me to act, and I evaluate their advice or requests based on my needs and objectives and decide whether or not to act."

"That's my Jonathan!" Bianca declared.

"Deanna said basically the same thing. Go on..."

"With no disrespect to Keiko, I'd be very happy with the *status quo ante*. Well, once I deliver this watermelon I appear to have swallowed and no longer look like a baby elephant!"

"As I said the other day, you're still sexy, something I would never have expected to think about a pregnant woman."

"Because, like most guys, a pregnant woman scares the hell out of you when you're not ready to have a kid!"

"Point taken," I chuckled. "Help the clueless guy here, but how long before you can fool around?"

"Being pregnant does not affect my mouth," Bianca smirked. "But to answer the question you intended, between eight and twelve weeks, according to the

pregnancy booklet from my OB/GYN. A lot depends on the delivery, especially if I need an episiotomy."

"A what?"

"A minor surgical incision to prevent tearing of the perineum during delivery. If Sofía is bigger than average, they'll do that proactively because it results in an easy, clean repair, as opposed to if it tears."

"Remind me to thank the non-existent deities that I'm a guy!" I declared as I rinsed off the lather.

"I could tell you even more about labor and delivery! Remember, we have our childbirth classes on the 24th and 31st."

"They're on my calendar, and Violet knows I'll need to skip lunch those days. Do you want to shower here?"

"I don't think Irish Spring is my scent! Now, if you offer to stay in the shower with me, that would be different."

I considered the message it would send if I were to say 'no', though I was sure Bianca would understand. I didn't want to send a message that she, the soon-to-be mother of my child, was in any way less important to me than Deanna, so my course of action was clear.

"Come in," I said.

Bianca smiled, shed her robe, and waddled to the shower, which caused me to crack up.

"Laugh it up, Fuzzball!" she growled.

"Sorry, but it is funny."

"From YOUR perspective, because you don't have to push a bowling ball out of your body in about a month!"

"As I said, I thank every non-existent deity for that!"

"Just shut up and wash my back, please!"

"Yes, Ma'am!"

I lovingly washed Bianca's back and butt, then handed her the soap so she could wash her front. She used my shampoo to wash her hair, and when she had rinsed off, we got out of the shower. We dried ourselves, put on our robes, and she went to her room to dress. I quickly dressed, then went downstairs to have breakfast -- Cornflakes, sliced banana, and milk, as well as coffee and a glass of grapefruit juice.

Jack and Bianca both came in and made their own breakfasts and once we'd eaten, we left the house for the drive to work. As usual, I put on a pot of coffee, then went to my desk to begin work. The big news was Iran had formally accused Iraq of using chemical weapons in their war, which had started in September 1980. That information caused me to increase my threat index for the Middle East, which bumped up the global threat index.

Violet arrived about fifteen minutes later and came to my door.

"Don't forget you need to go to Ms. Meyer's at lunch today."

"It's in my DayTimer, but thank you for the reminder!"

"All part of the service!"

She left, and I continued working on my portion of the analyst report. Gold had continued to rise due to retail buying of gold coins, but our entire team was convinced the Fed was going to tighten before the end of the month and would probably tighten again in April, May, and possibly June. That would, all things being equal, cause a precipitous decrease in gold prices or, to put it another way, a strengthening of gold against the dollar as there would be fewer dollars available to purchase gold.

Tightening would also have the same effect on the equities markets, with a combination of less excess capital to be invested and a 'flight to quality', that is, to triple-A rated bonds and government securities. That meant I needed to rebalance my portfolio and divest cyclical stocks, such as consumer goods, which tracked the economy in a trailing manner.

In addition, it would mean less investment money for the tech firms springing up in the San Francisco Bay area and along Route 128 in Boston. That meant tech stocks would likely languish. I didn't want to give up all the potential gains, so I'd hold onto Apple and would buy into the 3COM IPO later in the month but divest myself of Commodore, Atari, and a few other tech stocks.

I completed my analysis, then began entering the various orders into the trading system, using the proceeds from the sales to purchase a mix of short-term Treasuries and Nikkei 225 index shares. If all of that played out as I expected, it would go a long way, combined with the gold and silver plays, to achieving my goal of 20% returns for the year.

My strategy had risks, but I didn't see any better options without taking inordinate risks with my clients' money. There were a number of short plays we'd identified that would go out in the analyst report, but my appetite for risk wasn't high enough to act on any of them beyond the short I'd put on Bethlehem

Steel, which I expected to close out in June after the Fed hikes and competition hammered the stock down.

Once I had all the trades entered, I reviewed them, then typed an 'X' in the action field and hit the 'Enter' key on my PC, which sent the trades via the mainframe to the executing brokers. Five minutes later, I had trade confirmations and updated my spreadsheet with the new positions. I ran a quick portfolio analysis and wasn't thrilled with the gains, but I did have gains, so that was something.

Fundamentally, I had three numbers with which I had to concern myself -- total stock market returns, the hurdle rate, and the average gains of other Spurgeon funds. If I didn't beat the market, I'd be in a precarious position. If I beat the hurdle but fell short of others, I'd be watched closely. If I beat the firm average, I'd be in very good shape. That said, my goal was to beat Noel Spurgeon, if at all possible.

Just before 10:30am, Violet let me know that Thomas Hart's secretary had called to arrange a meeting with the potential investor. She'd provided three possible dates and times, and after consulting my calendar, I asked Violet to set the meeting for March 20th at 11:00am.

At 11:10am, I left the office and caught a cab to Gwen Meyer's office in Hyde Park. As we had planned, I signed the documents before her assistant, who was a Notary Public. Once that was completed, she put everything in a Federal Express envelope and promised they'd be in Cincinnati in the morning. I thanked her, then caught a cab back to the office, where I ate my lunch at my desk.

I spent the afternoon updating my threat model spreadsheet, and at 5:00pm, Bianca and I left the Hancock Center and walked to the offices of the nanny agency on Ontario Street.

"Good afternoon!" a woman about my mom's age said when we walked into the lobby. "You must be Bianca and Jonathan."

"We are," Bianca replied. "Ms. Pearson?"

"Yes. It's nice to meet you. Please, come into my office."

We followed her to her office, and after declining drinks, we all sat down.

"I've reviewed your profile questionnaire, and I've identified five good candidates, three for the first shift and two for the second. Just to confirm, you're currently on Morse Avenue in Rogers Park but will move to 175 East Delaware Place in May."

"That's correct," I replied.

"Your expected due date is the 8th of April, correct, Bianca?"

"That's correct. We'd like them to start on the 20th, as I put on the form."

"They'll all be available by then. I have their CVs, along with photos."

She handed Bianca a stack of five folders, and Bianca opened the first one, and we perused the résumé. We repeated that four times, and I considered which two of the five women were the best choices. In the end, I felt all of them were acceptable, as they'd all been vetted by the agency, and each had at least some experience.

"I have no objections to any of them," I said to Bianca. "I'll support your choices."

Bianca looked through the folders one more time, then handed me two. One was a younger woman, who was twenty-three and single, who would take the

morning shift. The other was a woman who was forty-three, the mother of two college-age children, who would take the afternoon/evening shift.

"I'm OK with both of these," I said and handed them to Ms. Pearson.

"Then I'll make the necessary arrangements. I'll need a deposit of \$600 today for the days in April. It's fully refundable if you cancel by the end of March. We'll invoice you in advance for each month, with the balance due no later than the 25th."

I took my checkbook from my satchel and wrote out the check. Bianca and I signed the contract, which she'd run by Gwen Meyer, and I handed it and the check to Ms. Pearson. She gave me a receipt, then made a copy of the contract for us. Once we had that, we thanked her and left the agency.

"Why those two?" I asked as we walked back towards the Hancock Center, where Jack was waiting for us.

"The mom seemed like the best choice for the afternoon/evening shift because I felt she'd be more reliable than the younger, single girl. For the morning, all three were about the same age -- early twenties -- so I went with the one from Wicker Park because she could hop on the L at Damen, just a block or two from her house. And remember, we can request a change if someone isn't working out the way we expect."

"Makes sense to me."

"We never did discuss rent," Bianca said, "and I won't accept anything that is unreasonably low. I'm making really good money and want to contribute."

"And I want you to build equity, too. I'll ask Robert Black to suggest an appropriate amount and run it by Nancy King so we can make sure it's all copacetic with the government."

"Cool. Are you keeping the rent the same for Juliette and CeCi?"

"Yes. This was a decision you and I made, and they shouldn't suffer for it. Jack and Kristy agreed to pay market rent, which won't be a problem given his new role. They expect to stay until Kristy graduates and gets a job. Then they'll be ready to buy."

"That's around 1988, right?"

"Yes. She's finishing her third year at Loyola, and she'll have three years in law school."

We reached the Hancock Center, met Jack, and then the three of us headed home. We had a relaxing evening at home, and after the 10:00pm news, I went up to bed, this time alone.



March 7, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Wednesday was a typical day until 3:30pm when Stefan Chojnicki called.

"Bev's attorneys want to depose you. I assume you decline to appear in Ohio for a deposition?"

"You assume correctly," I replied.

"Which attorney do you want to use?"

"Gwen Meyer," I replied. "This is her area of expertise. They have to cover the costs, or I'll decline to speak to them without a subpoena. According to Gwen, my sworn affidavit is sufficient."

"She's correct. They'll go to the judge, but he has no personal jurisdiction over you as you're not in Ohio. They'd have to go through the out-of-state process, and from our earlier conversation, you'll decline based on that affidavit."

"Yep."

"Good."

"Gwen warned me that Bev could attend the deposition."

"She would have that legal right, but she's not permitted to say anything at all on the record. Ms. Meyer will object if Bev speaks even a word during the deposition. I expect her to advise you not to speak to Bev as well."

"I figured that would be the case. I honestly just want this to be over."

"You and the Newtons are in complete agreement on that."

"How is Heather?"

"In very good health and Julie is taking her to a playgroup twice a week."

"That's good. I'll wait to hear from Gwen about the deposition."

"It may be a few days while they complain to the judge and then a few days while they negotiate Ms. Meyer's charges in the event they can actually enforce the subpoena. You can't be compensated for your time, unfortunately."

"OK. I'll wait to hear."

"Thanks for your help, Jonathan."

"You're welcome."

XLIV. Obsession

March 7, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Impressive self-control," Alexa said as we dressed after our modeling session.

I'd been reclined on what Claire had called a 'marriage couch', which was a type of sofa from India. It was designed for reclining, with a high back and side on one end and a lower side and back on the other end. I had lain on my back, with Alexa lying half on me and half on the couch cushion, with my arm around her and her head on my chest.

"Context is everything," I said. "Your body feels great, but with four guys watching, my brain basically turns off my libido. Now that I think about it, I understand why a gay guy would be better."

Alexa nodded, "No real risk of an erection. What if the class were just girls?"

"That might be different," I replied with a grin.

She laughed, "Sophie indicated you had entertained more than one girl at a time."

"Sophie talks too much," I replied, though I smiled to show I wasn't annoyed.

"Not enough to tell me what I was going to see! Can I say something, and have you just let it go if it bothers you?"

"Sure."

"I'd like to get together sometime."

The way she'd said that, along with her body language and facial expression, made it clear that 'get together' meant fool around. She was attractive, and I was interested, but my concern was doing that might lead to an embarrassing problem.

"Ask me again when we're done modeling," I said.

"Count on it!" she declared.

When we finished dressing, Alexa opened the door and stepped out, with Claire stepping in before I could walk out.

"Do you have a minute?" she asked.

"I do," I replied.

She shut the door and moved to stand in front of me.

"I wondered if you'd help me with an experiment when the semester ends."

"What kind of experiment?" I asked.

She laughed softly, "Physiology. I want to see if I can deep-throat that monster you have in your briefs!"

I almost laughed but managed not to. At dinner, Deanna had hinted that Claire might be interested, and I'd agreed it was possible, given her expression on Monday night. I felt the best answer was the one I'd just given Alexa.

"Ask me again in May, please," I said with a smile.

"You can take that to the bank!" she declared. "Thanks for modeling for us."

"You're welcome!"

I left the office and saw Deanna waiting with one of the girls from class. When I walked over, Deanna winked and walked away.

"Hi," the cute dark-haired girl said. "I'm Stefi."

"Jonathan, though I'm sure you knew that."

"I did. Here's my number. If you're not doing anything on Saturday night, call me."

I accepted the piece of paper that had her name and number and put it in my pocket.

"I'll call you either way tomorrow," I said.

"Thanks! Good night!"

"Good night!"

She walked away, and Deanna came over to me.

"As I said!" she smirked. "Rick warned off the other guys."

We began walking towards the doors.

"They'd be wasting their time," I said.

"What did Stefi want?"

I decided to be a smart ass.

"The same thing all you girls want!" I said. "I'm just a piece of ass!"

Deanna laughed, "Nice role reversal!"

"I was kidding, obviously, but there is some truth to it. Claire propositioned me."

"I told you that would happen."

"Sure, but do you know *what* her proposition was?"

"Besides the obvious?"

"She wanted help with a physiology experiment; one that no sane, rational guy could resist."

"I can guess, but go ahead and say it."

"To see if she could, and I'm quoting here, deep-throat the monster in my briefs."

Deanna laughed, "And yet, because you made the comment about a sane, rational guy, you either declined or put her off."

"She did say it would be May, after class ends, which makes sense. I suggested she ask again in May. I said the same thing to Alexa when she propositioned me."

"And Stefi?"

"I have a day to think about it, and I could always say I was busy or whatever. Do you know anything about her?"

"Just that she's from some small town in Oklahoma that, according to her, has two churches and one gas station and is a hundred miles from anything interesting to do."

"Goshen was a heck of a lot closer to Cincinnati, and I rarely made it there, so that I can relate. What about Britney?"

"San Diego. She's a military brat. Her dad is a Marine major, and her mom is a Navy Lieutenant Commander. Those are the same rank, according to her."

"I don't think the military has many calls for artists, so she's clearly not following in her parents' footsteps!"

"True."

We caught a cab back to the Hancock Center.

"Have you decided about posing for her?"

"I'm leaning towards it because I'm strongly considering posing for CeCi. If I decide against modeling for CeCi, then I won't for Britney."

"I didn't check, but what's the next set of poses?"

"Side by side in bed with the sheets pulled up to your waists on Monday; standing slightly offset with Alexa wearing your unbuttoned shirt on Wednesday. The following week is Spring Break. After Spring Break, it'll mostly be clothed -- swim trunks for you and a bikini for her, for example. Casual

clothes and sunglasses for another session. In one session, Claire will bring in bikes. Basically, it's all about the relationship."

"Why not do all those first?"

"Because the full-body nudes are the most important ones, and she wanted to get those out of the way in case either of you were to drop out for any reason. It's far easier to find models when nudity isn't required. It would kind of mess up the series, but it would be played as a breakup."

"Interesting. Have you received any grades?"

"The grade comes from the finished portfolio. So far, it's just the critiques you've heard in class. Well, and the private one to Adriana for drawing you smaller than Michelangelo's *David*."

"I'd simply pass it off as artistic license," I said. "Why stir up trouble?"

"Because Adriana didn't follow the rubric. It's like the pottery I'm going to have to do. I do not have ANY interest, but it's part of my degree curriculum."

"Art teacher, right?"

"Yes. Ultimately, a Master of Fine Arts in Education. So, I can't just ignore the rubric because I don't like it. If they want me to make a mug, I'll make a mug and do my best."

"That makes sense."

"It's like any other thing anyone has to do for class. I'm sure you've had assignments you didn't like."

"Not really. I bet I will in my English and sociology courses this Summer!"

"In High School?"

"That's why. I positively hated writing book reports in grade school and term papers for English in High School. I didn't mind them for history classes, but writing ten pages about a book I hated was the worst. How about you?"

"Science. I really didn't care for biology, chemistry, or physics; anatomy was interesting."

"Uh-huh," I chuckled as the cab pulled up in front of the Hancock Center.

After I paid the cabbie, we got out and headed to my car.

"It wasn't human reproduction!" Deanna exclaimed. "But I enjoyed learning about how all the organ systems work. That was far more interesting than plants and animals, chemical formulas, and physics experiments."

"What did you think of art class?"

"It was OK, but I was way ahead of everyone else. Music class, too."

We reached my car, got in, and headed home. At home, we watched the 10:00pm news, and when it finished, I joined Deanna in her room.



March 8, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Thursday, after work, Bianca, Jack, and I went to the condo to meet Natasha so I could see her drawings.

"As you can see from this overhead plan, I have your segregated area for your projection TV and eight comfortable chairs at the end of the open space, against the wall. That avoids blocking any windows. Next to that is what I call the conversation pit -- a group of sectional furniture pieces set in a 'U' with the open space towards the windows. Next to that is room for a pool table or grand piano, and finally, at the other end with the windows, is the dining room table that seats twelve."

"Grand piano or pool table?" I asked.

"My idea," Bianca said. "I mentioned it to Deanna."

"The other option is simply to leave it open as a mingling space," Natasha suggested. "The den on this floor I left off, as I understand it's going to be similar to your front room."

"Correct," I said.

"Then the last piece is chairs along the kitchen breakfast bar, which will seat six."

"That floorplan looks good," I said.

"The upstairs floorplan is simple, really -- six bedrooms plus the sitting space at the top of the stairs. I have two concepts for that -- one is a pair of couches, and the other is casual, with beanbag chairs, floor cushions, or something similar. I think the casual option might be better because it could be a play space for your daughter."

"I like that idea," I said.

"The bedrooms would all have low, wooden pedestal beds with mattresses but no box springs. That's more of a European style, which I think you'll like. Each

room would also have either a desk or a wardrobe, depending on individual choice. The two larger rooms will also have a love seat."

"So far, so good."

"Then let me show you the perspective sketches."

We all looked them over, and they looked fantastic. My biggest concern was the cost of the furniture, but I could do it piecemeal if I needed to, with the second batch being in July when I received my second-quarter payout.

"Fantastic," I said.

"Talk about 'high society'!" Jack said, shaking his head. "Great stuff, but way out of my price at the moment."

"Just hang in there," I said. "You'll get there. Natasha, what about the windows?"

"Except in the TV area, a dual system with a light-colored cloth blind with a fairly open weave and a darker, more closed weave cloth blind. The darker color would be for daytime to cut the light and reduce the strain on the wall air conditioning units. The lighter one is for the evenings so you can see out while entertaining. Close both, and you keep the heat in during the winter nights. By the TV, the darker blind would be blackout, so there's no glare."

"That all makes sense."

"The bedrooms would all have blackout blinds as their second blind."

"Automatic or manual blinds?" Bianca asked.

"Either will work," Natasha said. "Personally, I'd go with automatic for the downstairs and manual for the four bedrooms and the upstairs sitting area. I have paint samples and fabric samples for furniture, which I'll leave with you. I think it's best to leave the walls downstairs matte eggshell white, and with gloss in the kitchen because it's easier to clean.

"For the bedrooms, the same color, but with borders in each room to match the bedding. Those are mix and match, and you could do all the rooms the same, all different, or however you wanted. For the room that is going to be the gallery, I have a scheme that Dee and I worked out, and you can see it in this drawing."

"That's going to be really sharp," Bianca said. "I love the lighting."

"It's gallery-style," Natasha said. "The only concern there is the electrical, but I spoke to an electrician to see if it could be done, and he suggested running the power behind the baseboards and using conduit to get to the lights. You can see that in the drawing."

"Awesome stuff," I said. "Impressive work. For the blinds and electrical, I'm going to use Brown Construction or a contractor they suggest. For the rest of it, I'll sit down and determine a budget, and then I'd like you and Deanna to simply execute your plan."

"Just like that?" Natasha asked.

"Just like that!"

"I need you to sign some releases so I can use the drawings and photos for class."

"Come to the kitchen, and I'll sign."

"Mind if I wander around?" Jack asked.

"Not at all."

Bianca went with Jack, and Deanna followed Natasha and me to the kitchen. She handed me a pen and three forms she'd filled in. I read them and signed them, then handed them to her.

"How much can I compensate you without you getting into trouble?"

"The only rule is you can't pay me for anything I submit."

"So I could, say, pay you an hourly rate for choosing the furniture and bedding?"

"Yes."

"OK. I'll factor that into my budget. As we agreed, you're welcome to show your professor at any time, and after that, we'll work out any showings you might want to do."

"I can't tell you how grateful I am!" she exclaimed.

She stepped over to me and hugged me tightly,

"But I could show you!" she whispered into my ear.

I hugged her back, and when I lowered my arms, she stepped back.

"When the work is done, we'll celebrate," I said.

"I'm looking forward to it!" she exclaimed.

Jack and Bianca returned, and the five of us left the condo. In the lobby, we bade Natasha 'goodbye', then the four of us headed to the parking garage to get my car.

"She did an amazing job for only being a Freshman," I observed.

"She's been doing this since she was fourteen, though mostly just for herself, her family, and a few friends."

"She's going to be very successful," I said.

"That she will!" Deanna agreed.

When we arrived home, we ate dinner that Juliette had prepared, and then I went up to my room to call Stefi. I'd contemplated what to do sporadically through the day and on the drive home, decided it was worth testing the waters, similar to with Kayleigh, though without the Catholic baggage.

"Hello?"

"Hi, this is Jonathan; is this Stefi?"

"It is. Hi!"

"Would you like to have dinner on Saturday evening and see *Against All Odds*?"

"Yes!" she exclaimed happily.

"I can pick you up at 5:00pm. Do you live in the dorms?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll see you on Saturday."

"Great!"

We said 'goodbye', and after I hung up, I went downstairs to hang out with my housemates. As usual, I went to bed after the 10:00pm news, but by myself.



March 9, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Late on Friday morning, my phone rang.

"Research, Kane," I said after picking up the handset.

"Mr. Jonathan Kane?" a male voice said.

"Yes."

"Mr. Kane, my name is Larry Walsh, an attorney in Milford, Ohio. I represent Miss Beverly Newton, and I have a subpoena to take a deposition from you."

"I've provided an affidavit to Stefan Chojnicki at Barnes and Walden," I said.

"Everything I know is in that affidavit, and I have no plans to come to Ohio in the near future."

"I can take steps to enforce the subpoena," he said.

"Yes, you can. I'm represented by Ms. Gwen Meyer, and from this point on, you need to speak to her. Let me give you her address, phone number, and fax."

"Fine," he said, sounding annoyed.

I provided the information, and after he repeated it back, we ended the call. I called Gwen to let her know, and her assistant said she was on the phone with Mr. Walsh and would call me back, most likely after lunch. I let him know when I'd be back from the gym, then called Stefan Chojnicki to let him know. He was in court, but his secretary promised to relay the message.

I was, frankly, tired of Bev, and there was no way I was going to do anything to help her when all she needed to do was call her parents and reconcile to put an end to the nonsense. Her situation was far removed from the one with my grandparents, who had kicked my mom out, refused any contact with her, and rebuffed my attempt to reconcile. I wondered if I should make another attempt, but the fact that they had boycotted both my wedding to Keiko and her funeral meant any attempt would likely be fruitless.

I had lunch with Bianca and Violet as usual, then Violet and I went to the gym. I returned to the office, and about ten minutes later, Gwen Meyer called.

"That is one unhappy attorney," Ms. Meyer said.

"Tell me something I could possibly care less about," I countered.

She laughed, "Oh, I know. I was just letting you know he's not going to give up. I reiterated your refusal to travel to Ohio, and he made it clear that the affidavit was insufficient in his mind. He said he intends to enforce the subpoena, so I asked him to have the court send me a certified copy of the subpoena. That'll delay them until at least Monday or Tuesday. Once I receive it, I'll draft a response to the court stating the facts and ask for the subpoena to be quashed. If that works, it's over, though he could try again if this goes to trial."

"You should make it clear to him, if you haven't, that I'm going to do his client far more harm than good, given our past relationship."

"Of that, I have no doubt, but he obviously thinks he has some angle. Remember, Bev is feeding him information so he will very likely know every intimate secret the two of you ever shared."

"Wonderful," I said, my voice conveying my annoyance. "If the Ohio judge won't quash the subpoena, what happens?"

"Mr. Walsh will have to hire counsel here in Illinois to enforce it. In my motion to quash, I'll make it clear we intend to oppose that and notify Mr. Walsh that I reject any *ex parte* hearings in Illinois. If he tries that, we'll have the subpoena quashed and file a motion for sanctions against whichever attorney he uses here."

"Can this hurt anything Jim and Julie Newton are doing?"

"At worst, your affidavit would be deemed inadmissible because they were unable to cross-examine you. But that actually doesn't help them because Family Services in Ohio *can* use the affidavits if they so choose and base their reports on them. There is literally nothing he can do to stop that, which gets your testimony in through the back door. And yes, that's all perfectly legal and conforms to how things work here as well."

"OK. Charge this time to me, and don't worry about Stefan Chojnicki trying to get it back from Bev or her attorney."

"That will make life easier for all of us. Thanks. I'll be in touch when round two begins."

"Thanks, Gwen."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, and unsurprisingly, Bianca came into my office, closing the door behind her.

"How bad?"

"Lawyer games. It'll cost me a few hundred bucks, but it's worth it. According to Gwen, there is literally no way for him to enforce an out-of-state subpoena, given I've filed an affidavit. What he can do is argue against my affidavit being admitted into evidence, but that won't matter because it will be filed with Family Services, who can base their report on it and admit it themselves."

"Sneaky! What can they do?"

"Try to get a judge here to enforce the subpoena, but that's unlikely. The worst-case scenario is they get to depose me here, and I wreck their case because I was nice in my affidavit. I said just enough to ensure Jim and Julie keep Heather until Bev gets her shit together but not enough to harm her long-term. Think about all the stuff I know and could say."

"Then why is her attorney pressing? You'd think he'd drop it and have her counter anything you said."

"Gwen Meyer's theory is she's fed him something he thinks will help. I have no idea what she said, obviously, but she has absolutely nothing. Could she make me look bad? Sure. But not nearly as bad as she'll look if they depose."

"You are really angry with her, aren't you?"

"Not angry, just frustrated because she could solve this by simply going to her parents and reconciling. That appears to be so beyond the pale for her that she can't do it even to get Heather back."

"She's irrational."

"And has been since she learned that Glen is Heather's father. And I know literally everything."

"Unless she lied to you."

"OK, sure, about some details, but who are they going to believe at this point? The 'stand up' guy or the irrational, erratic woman? And are they going to give her Heather when Heather has the first truly stable situation she's known, except the brief period after she was born, but think about who was caring for her then."

"Bev's mom while she was in school."

"Yes. Anyway, I've seriously had enough of her, and I'll leave it to Gwen Meyer and Stefan Chojnicki. I'm done with Bev."

"Words I couldn't imagine coming out of your mouth six months ago."

"I know."

"On another note, I let Mrs. Peterson know my last day before maternity leave will be April 6th, no matter what. I'm already starting to get tired in the afternoons, so I might move that back a week."

"Just let me know and make sure Steve is up to speed on anything he needs to cover for you."

"Will do. When do you create your budget for next year?"

"September. Make sure you let me know what toys you want and if you need another staff member."

"We have a backlog, but it's not too bad. Tony is prioritizing requests from the desks over Research, but you're getting some time. If you think your stuff is falling too far behind what you want, then it will be time to hire."

"OK. Just keep me posted. We have about six months before we need to construct the first budget document."

"Will do."

She left, I went back to work, and at 5:00pm, I headed downstairs to meet Jack, Kristy, CeCi, the boys, and Rick. Everyone was twenty-one, which meant we could go anywhere, so we decided to go to Jazz Showcase for dinner and a show. Rick fit right in, and we had a good time eating great food, drinking, and listening to fantastic music.

"I'm glad you're back to your usual self," Costas said when we left the club just before midnight.

"Me, too," I said.

Jack, Kristy, CeCi, and I bade the others 'good night' and headed home. I'd made sure I'd only drank pop after 10:00pm, so I didn't run any risks with the Chicago cops, but I still drove more carefully than usual. At home, I parked in the garage, and we all went into the house.

"If you want to sleep together, I'll join you in your room," I said to CeCi.

She smiled broadly, grabbed my hand, and led me to her bedroom.

"You have to be up early for class, right?" she asked as we undressed.

"Yes, so I do want to get enough sleep, and I'd rather we're tender and loving than athletic."

"Me, too," she agreed.



March 10, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

When the alarm went off on Saturday morning, CeCi got out of bed with me and followed me to my shower. I turned on the taps, and once the water was warm, we stepped in.

"Am I the first one since Keiko?"

"No. I was with Deanna a few times, but I asked her to keep it private. She and I had several very deep conversations, and it was just the natural thing to do. I don't expect you to say anything to anyone, but just in case, the knowledge isn't for anyone outside the house."

"I wouldn't tell anyone," CeCi said. "Nobody knows I've slept with you except our housemates and Shelly. Heck, nobody knows I've had sex except them, and only you and Dee know firsthand."

"Tell me it's none of my business if you want, but you weren't with anyone else?"

"No. It just didn't seem right because I was your regular Friday date, and then, well, when Keiko received her terminal diagnosis, I decided I'd be there for you in any way I could, which meant not being with anyone else."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I didn't realize."

"There's no need to apologize! I wanted to go out with you, and I wanted to help you. That's on me, not you. I'm here for you any way you need, and I know Dee and Bianca are as well."

"I appreciate that."

"Just tell me what you need, and I'll do it."

"Thanks."

"Can I ask why we were in my bed for the first time ever? I mean, I can guess, but it's safer to ask."

"I'm still working through everything that happened, and I'm not quite ready to be in our bed with anyone else. I may just wait until we move when I'll have a new bed and new bedding."

"OK. As I said, just tell me what you need."

"Right now, I need a shower so I can get to Violet's for breakfast and then go to class."

We quickly washed ourselves, dried off, and CeCi went back to her room to dress. I dressed, went downstairs, and left the house. Twenty-five minutes later, Violet let me into her house so we could have breakfast. After breakfast, I went to class, then returned to Violet's house for lunch. We had a good time, and she didn't raise the question of the kiss, so I let it be. I was positive she'd ask, and it was only a matter of time. A very positive note was that she'd had coffee with Kallie, a girl in her class.

I received a tight hug and soft kiss on the cheek that was full of promise, then walked to my car. On the way home, I stopped at Jewel for groceries and at the

dry cleaners. When I arrived home, I put away the groceries, hung up my suits and shirts, then sat down at my desk to work out a budget for Natasha to decorate the condo.

My cash flow from my properties, including the house, would be net positive with the rent I'd agreed with Jack and Kristy. My total expenses for the condo, the association fee, utilities, and property taxes, taking into account the rent Bianca, Juliette, and CeCi would pay, accounted for less than half of my monthly salary. The remainder of my expenses did not eat up the remainder of my after-tax take-home pay. That meant that my quarterly payout was unencumbered by expenses, as were any bonuses.

I came up with a total amount I felt I could spend, split across April and July, but with about 80% in April, given I'd have the extra money from MTB. I created a spreadsheet with the 'rooms', even though the main living space was simply open, and prioritized them -- four bedrooms and the nursery, the kitchen stools, then the TV area, then the dining area, then the conversation pit, the 'play' space upstairs, then the open area, which I decided should have a pool table, and finally, the gallery. The new Japanese room wasn't part of that, as I had everything except the «tatami» flooring and a futon. The flooring was on its way from Japan, and I'd buy the futon at Pier 1.

As I reviewed everything, I realized how easy it would be to get into the position of many of the traders -- illiquid and house-poor. I reverified my numbers, checked my carried interest and my investment in the Spurgeon Select fund, and was happy that even in the worst-case scenario where I lost my job, I'd have enough assets to survive two full years without any income, something I felt was highly unlikely both in terms of losing my job and in not being able to land on my feet at another firm.

Satisfied that I had a financially sound plan, I printed the spreadsheet and took it to Deanna, who was in her studio.

"These numbers are...never mind, I've said that too many times now! I'll get together with Tasha, and we'll get the ball rolling. Who's going to install the Japanese mats?"

"Brown Construction can do it," I said. "I put Marcus Washington in touch with someone Ichirō recommended in California who has done a number of them. They also know you or Natasha will be in touch about the electrical and blinds."

"It wasn't mentioned on Thursday, but did you see she had the Bonsai plants on stands along the windows in the...what are we calling that?"

"The main living space," I replied. "And yes, I saw that. I also noticed she'd drawn in other plants. Just match her drawings, and I'll be very happy."

"I know you well enough that you did, but I'm going to ask -- did you run these numbers to ensure you aren't overextending yourself?"

"I did, but I appreciate the sanity check. I already set aside what you'll need for Ateljé D from my bonus check, and the check for the 'preview guarantee' will cover almost all of the remodeling."

"You'd fail a sanity check, Mr. Kane!" Deanna teased.

"No kidding!" I chuckled. "Don't forget you need to go to the leasing office and have your photo taken for your building ID."

"I won't forget!"

"OK. I'm going to get ready for my date. Don't wait up, Mom!"

Deanna laughed, "There's a fantasy I'm sure you never had."

"OK, the Greek legend aside, is that actually a thing?"

"According to my psych class in High School, it is. If you think about it, all those Greek myths are about observed human behavior, often attributed to gods or demigods. So, there is some truth to it. You obviously know about the Oedipus Complex, but do you know about the corresponding female one for their dad?"

"Electra, wasn't it?"

"Yes. It's basically a girl's psychosexual competition with her mother for possession of her father. However, there was a huge debate between Freud and Jung over it, and there is some controversy. Anyway, go get your shower so you can pick up Stefi on time!"

I left Deanna's studio, and about forty-five minutes later, I was holding the door of my Le Barron so Stefi could get in.

"Italian OK?" I asked as I pulled away from the curb.

"Yes!" Stefi agreed.

I made the short drive to the restaurant on Monroe and took advantage of their valet parking service. We went inside, I selected the more elegant of the three restaurants and we were seated quickly.

"Deanna tells me you're from Oklahoma," I said.

"A place nobody ever heard of -- Canton, population 750. It's literally in the middle of nowhere and is surrounded by farms."

"That's actually not too different from where I'm from -- Goshen, Ohio, with a similarly small population. But it's only twenty-five miles to Cincinnati."

"Canton is a hundred miles from Oklahoma City, which is about the same size as Cincinnati, I think. You at least have a baseball team and a football team!" Stefi declared. "No such thing in Oklahoma City."

A waiter came and took our drink orders, but because Stefi was under twenty-one, we ordered pop.

"What degree are you seeking?" I asked.

"A BA in graphic design," she replied. "What exactly do you do?"

"I'm a licensed securities professional. My main role is Head of Research at Spurgeon Capital, but I'm also what the public would call a stockbroker, though I'm actually a fund manager."

"You're only twenty or so, right?"

"Twenty-one. You?"

"Nineteen next week."

The waiter brought our drinks, and we asked for time to review the menus. We did that, and he was back in about five minutes. He took our orders and left, returning less than two minutes later with our salads.

"So, were you 'Whoa!' or 'Jesus!'" I asked.

Stefi laughed, "Neither! I was speechless! 'Whoa!' was Britney. 'Jesus!' was Kelly. And 'Damn!' was Rick."

"Rick asked me to have a beer, but I politely declined. That said, he did go out with a group of my friends and me on Friday."

"It seems like every guy at the School of the Art Institute is gay or bi! I know that's not true, but it seems like it, especially given I didn't know a single gay or lesbian person back home."

"I bet you did; they just weren't out."

"You're right, I'm sure, but even the rumor a guy was gay would mean having the tar beat out of him. People in Canton are super conservative, and most everyone attends church."

"You?"

"First Baptist for my whole life."

"Do you still go to church?"

"I've gone to Moody Church pretty regularly since I moved here. Do you go to church?"

And here we very likely hit the brick wall, though I had a hard time in my mind reconciling sketching nude models and what I knew about Evangelical Christians, given everything I read about Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. Robertson was interesting, not because of his religion, but because his CBN Satellite Service had been the first satellite channel to connect to cable systems.

"No. I've never gone to church except for a half-dozen weddings and a funeral. Can I ask a question that might be a bit out of line?"

"You mean going to church and studying at the Art Institute?"

"I was thinking more specifically about the subject matter of the class."

"My pastor back home would have kittens if he knew, and I'm pretty sure Pastor Lutzer at Moody would as well."

"So, how do you reconcile those two things?"

"Until Monday, I didn't have to," Stefi said.

That telegraphed something I hadn't expected, or at least strongly implied it. I wasn't quite sure how to proceed and decided to shift the conversation a bit and figure out if Stefi was interesting enough to make that conversation productive.

"How did you decide to study graphic arts and come here?"

"My seventh-grade art teacher encouraged me to start drawing, and I really enjoyed it. When I was a Junior, I met with the guidance counselor, and she suggested graphic design. Of the four schools she recommended, this was the one I liked best. How did you decide to come to Chicago?"

"I asked my uncle -- my mom's sister's husband -- to help me find a job. He convinced a friend of his to hire me as a mailroom clerk. I moved here right after High School graduation and worked my way up to supervisor after a year, then to analyst. I earned two securities licenses and was appointed to head the newly created Research Department last Fall."

"What does it mean to manage a fund?" Stefi asked.

"I accept money from investors and use that to buy and sell stocks, bonds, and other financial instruments on their behalf. I collect an annual fee and keep a portion of the profits I earn for them, subject to a complex formula."

"Do you mind if I ask where you live?"

"I own a house in Rogers Park, but in May, I'll move into a condo I bought at 175 East Delaware Place."

"A house *and* a condo? At twenty-one?"

"Yes."

We finished our salads, and the waiter brought our main courses.

"I probably should have asked before I gave you my number, but do you have a girlfriend?"

"You don't know that part of my story?" I asked, slightly surprised.

"No," Stefi replied. "What?"

"My wife died of leukemia in December."

"Oh my gosh!" she gasped. "That's terrible! I'm SO sorry!"

"Thanks. And please don't feel bad for asking. I thought Deanna might have said something."

"Not to me, at least. We're not friends, just classmates. How long were you married? I mean, if it's OK to ask."

"You can ask any question you want," I said. "If I don't want to answer, I'll say so. We married in a civil ceremony last August and a Shinto ceremony in October. She died on December 27th."

"Just so sad," Stefi observed. "She was your age?"

"A year younger."

"Unreal."

The conversation for the rest of the meal was subdued because Stefi clearly felt bad for raising the subject. After we ordered dessert, I decided to say something.

"You seem kind of down," I said. "There's no need to be."

"I feel awful for asking about that."

"You had no way of knowing, and asking about a girlfriend was a legitimate question."

"I suppose."

I felt I needed to change the subject, and when the waiter brought our dessert, I did that. Once the waiter put our desserts in front of us, I spoke.

"Earlier, I asked about reconciling your faith and sketching nudes. You said you didn't have to worry about it until Monday. I'm curious to hear your thinking if you're willing to share."

She took a deep breath and let it out.

"Promise not to laugh?"

"Yes," I replied.

"I'd never seen one before, well, on an adult. I changed diapers in the nursery at church and when I babysat. When I saw it, I was speechless, as I said. I was fascinated, and as I drew it, I thought it was gorgeous. It made me think things I'd never really thought before and confused me. After class, it was all I could think about, and that night, I had dreams I'd NEVER had before about things I'd never done. On Tuesday, I was so flustered I couldn't think straight. Then, on Wednesday, I knew what I had to do -- give you my number, ask you to call me, and hope you'd do all those things with me."

XLV. An Apology

March 10, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Had Stefi come to me on Monday night and said what she'd just said, I'd have been seriously concerned, but it was five days later, and we were sitting in a restaurant fully clothed. Two things gave me pause -- birth control and her regular church attendance. The first one was easily remedied, as there was an Osco on the way back to Stefi's dorm. As for church, that wasn't my problem, so long as I clearly communicated my position.

While those things gave me pause, the larger issues were whether I wanted to be with her and if I was ready to be with someone new. It really was a question of 'when', not 'if' at this point, and the ultimate question was if I was ready to fulfill her fantasy. There was no question of attraction, as she had long, dark hair, brown eyes, and a nice body, not to mention an obvious desire to be with me. Who was I kidding? Of course I wanted her.

And that brought me back to 'should I' and 'should she'. I was positive that at some point, there was going to be a first new girl, if not today, then potentially Alexa, or, I thought, Violet if she could accept my situation. And that was really the question for Stefi. The correct course of action was to lay it out and let her decide if she could accept that.

"If we do what you're suggesting, I can't make any promises beyond doing my best to fulfill your fantasy, and I need to say upfront that going to church isn't on my agenda and isn't likely to be."

"I don't care! Thinking about it is driving me crazy!"

I had one last chance to be sure I was ready for this, and I felt I was.

"If you're sure," I said, "finish your dessert, and we can skip the movie and go to your dorm room."

"Oh, God, yes!" Stefi moaned.

I wondered now if I could handle her rather than the other way around! The pent-up sexual energy that was going to be released might move seismographs in California. We both quickly finished our dessert, and after I paid the check, we left the restaurant. The only fly in the ointment was that I'd used the valet service, which meant retrieving my car, finding a place to park to go to Osco, and then parking in a garage a short walk from the school.

Stefi fidgeted while we waited for the valet to bring the car and almost leapt in when the valet held the door for her. I went around to the driver's side and got in and once the doors were closed, drove away.

"I need to stop at Osco," I said. "I wasn't prepared."

Stefi laughed softly, "I'm on the Pill to regulate my period. My mom had kittens when my doctor prescribed it when I was sixteen, and she didn't want to fill the prescription. My aunt finally talked her into it, but I wasn't ever allowed to be alone with a guy after that."

"I don't agree with your parents on that, but given my mom got pregnant with me when she was fifteen, I at least understand your mom's point."

"It was dumb because I never really thought about doing it until last Monday. Then, all of a sudden, I HAD to do it!"

I pulled into a parking garage a few blocks from Stefi's dorm, and after parking, we walked quickly to the exit, then the two blocks to the dorm. Stefi let us in with her keys and signed me in. She led me to the elevator, which we took to the fourth floor. When we stepped out, I followed her down the hall to her room, which was a single. She opened the door to let us in, then closed and locked it behind us. She turned on the overhead light, and we took off our coats and shoes.

"I want to see it," she said, her voice dripping with desire.

I nodded and removed my rugby shirt, t-shirt, jeans, socks, and briefs. Knowing what she wanted, I was already rising to the occasion.

"Oh, God!" Stefi moaned. "Can I touch it? Please?"

"Whatever you want," I agreed.

Stefi moved to where I was standing, and I felt her hand on my rapidly hardening shaft. She squeezed gently, then traced her fingers upwards to my glans. She wrapped her hand around it and squeezed softly.

"Oh," she cooed. "So hard and so soft."

She surprised me by dropping to her knees and pressing my glans against her cheek. She moved her other hand to cup my sack and lifted just enough to weigh my balls.

"So cool!" she exclaimed breathlessly.

Stefi spent several minutes exploring, including stroking me, cupping my sack, squeezing gently, rubbing my glans on her cheek, and examining me closely.

"I want to kiss it," she whispered, looking up.

I nodded, and she planted a quick kiss on the tip, then another, and a third. She began kissing down along my shaft, and when she reached the base, she kissed each side of my sack before kissing back up to my glans. She kissed it again, this time, though, with her mouth slightly open so that her tongue touched the slit. She repeated what she'd done before, but this time, her tongue traced along my shaft.

When she completed that cycle, she grasped my shaft and held my glans to her cheek while fondling my sack. After a minute, she moved back a bit and planted a sloppy, wet kiss on my glans. This time, she swirled her tongue around and around, then opened her mouth wide, moved forward, and closed her lips around the base of my glans.

Stefi moaned softly, then began sucking gently and running her tongue over my glans, causing me to twitch and groan in pleasure. After a minute, it dawned on me that she knew what she wanted to do but had no real idea how to do it.

"Stroke me while you bob your head up and down, so your lips move along my dick," I instructed. "And slide your tongue around."

Stefi moaned again, and I felt her soft hand grasp me and begin stroking. She began moving her head so that her tongue and lips slid over my glans and along my shaft. The pleasure was exquisite, and the desire burning inside her made up for inexperience. My pleasure built slowly but then became overwhelming, and I knew I was close.

"Stefi," I said. "You know what's going to happen, right?"

She released me, looked up, smiled, then quickly took me into her mouth. She stroked faster, sucked harder, swirled her tongue faster, and squeezed my sack

slightly harder. Thirty seconds later, I twitched twice, groaned, and the first spurt of cum splashed into Stefi's mouth. She moaned and redoubled her efforts, coaxing spurt after spurt, hungrily swallowing my cum.

She kept up her ministrations for about five minutes after I'd cum, and the pleasure was intense as I was extremely sensitive after an orgasm. She finally released me, then planted numerous kisses all over my dick.

"So cool," she breathed, then stood up. "I need it in me!"

She stepped back and quickly shed her clothes. My erection showed no signs of subsiding, so I maneuvered Stefi to the bed.

"I want to see it go in," she whispered urgently.

Instead of having her lie down, I moved the pillows and had her sit on the edge of the bed with the pillows behind her. I helped her into a reclining position, resting on the pillows and supporting herself with her elbows, then moved between her legs. Just below her dark pubic hair, I saw labia slick with juices, and I was positive she was ready.

I grasped my shaft and rubbed my glans along Stefi's labia while she watched wide-eyed. When I was coated with her copious juices, I moved to the correct spot and slowly pressed forward, spreading her labia.

"Oh!" she gasped as I entered her. "Oh!"

She was dripping wet, so I simply continued sliding into her and had no trouble pushing all the way in.

"Oh! OH! OH!"

I slowly pulled back, and Stefi watched intently as I began fucking her with long, slow strokes. I felt her squeeze her muscles, which intensified my pleasure, but I'd cum recently, so there was no way I wasn't going to last a long time despite the exquisite feel of her tight, slick tunnel.

After about two dozen strokes, I pulled out completely and moved onto the bed. I lay on my back and had Stefi straddle me. I helped her mount me, and she moaned loudly as she slid down my shaft. At that point, nature took over, and she began moving up and down and back and forth, grinding against me.

Just over a minute later, she tensed, held her breath, squeezed her muscles, and ground hard against me. Her breath exploded from her mouth, her body shook, and she groaned deeply as her pussy spasmed hard around my rock-hard shaft. That orgasm unleashed her, and she began moving more wildly, bringing herself off several more times before I blasted cum deep inside her, setting off a tremendous orgasm, the strong spasms of her pussy milking cum from me and causing my head to spin in ecstasy.

When both our orgasms passed, Stefi stretched out on top of me and put her head on my chest, panting hard. I was breathing heavily as well, despite Stefi being the one who had exerted herself. Over the next five minutes, our breathing returned to normal, and I softened and slipped from her.

It dawned on me we hadn't kissed, even once, despite her giving a blow job and fucking. I decided there was one more thing to do before our first kiss, so I gently moved Stefi onto her back, moved down, got between her legs, and kissed the insides of her thighs. I planted kisses along her labia, then pushed my tongue in and teased her clit. I slipped my arms under her legs, lifted them, moved my hands to her firm breasts, and strummed her nipples as I closed my mouth around her clit.

"UNGH!" she groaned "UNG! UNGH! UNGH!"

She began flexing her hips and, a minute later, had a strong orgasm. That one was followed by two more over the course of ten minutes before I moved up beside her.

"I want to suck you again," she breathed.

Not being an idiot, I didn't object, so she slid down and rested her head on my stomach. She explored with her hands, lips, and tongue, and when I was hard, she began bobbing, sucking, licking, and stroking, all the while cupping my sack. I'd cum twice, so I knew she'd have to work harder.

After a few minutes, I put my hands on her hips and encouraged her to straddle my face. She did so and moaned deeply around my shaft when I flicked her clit with my tongue. Our sixty-nine lasted for nearly fifteen minutes before I had my release, which was a perfect reward for the four orgasms I'd given her with my tongue.

When she finally released me, she moved off me but didn't turn, instead resting her head on my stomach and running her fingernails along my shaft. She played with me for about ten minutes before blood began flowing again, and she moved on top of me to sixty-nine again.

This time, though, once I was hard, I encouraged her to move off me. After a bit of maneuvering, she was on her back, I was between her legs and plunged into her slick tunnel. I began fucking her with strong strokes, and after about a dozen, she wrapped her legs around me and began humping wildly. We fucked *hard* for fifteen minutes, with Stefi moaning, groaning, and gasping for breath as she had four good orgasms before I pushed as deeply into her as possible and came hard.

When my orgasm had passed, I raised my head and pressed my mouth to Stefi's mouth. She parted her lips, and our tongues tangled in our first kiss. We kissed

until I softened and slipped from her, at which point I rolled off her and lay on my back next to her in her twin bed.

"Unreal," she breathed. "Way better than my dream!"

"It was fantastic," I said.

"Can you just keep doing it for as long as we want?"

"No," I replied. "Physiology being what it is, three, possibly four more times, with longer in between, before I need to sleep to recover."

"The rules say you can't sleep over," she said. "But I want to suck you while you lick me twice, then have you on top and go hard like we just did."

"I'm more than happy to oblige."

Two and a half hours later, we got out of bed, and I borrowed a towel from her so I could walk down to the guys' showers. She put on a robe and went to the girls' showers, and when we were both clean, we met back in the room to dress.

"I was surprised you didn't start with kissing," I observed.

Stefi laughed softly, "I wanted it so bad that I didn't want to waste time!"

"Was that your first ever kiss?"

"Yes!" she declared mirthfully. "And it was after I sucked you, we screwed, and you licked me!"

"Are you going to church in the morning?" I asked.

"I don't think I can after what we just did! That's not exactly OK in their eyes."

"And yours?"

"If I didn't want to do it, I wouldn't have. I wanted to! I know you said no promises, and I accepted that, but if you want, you could come over next Saturday. I could touch and kiss and lick and suck your gorgeous thing all afternoon and evening until midnight curfew!"

"Tempting," I chuckled.

"We can do anything else you want, too! But if not, I totally understand."

"OK to let you know on Wednesday or Thursday?"

"Yes! I need to walk you down and sign you out."

"OK."

She came over to me and put her arms around me. I hugged her back, and we exchanged a soft French kiss.

"You fulfilled my fantasy," she said dreamily. "Thank you."

"It was my pleasure! Literally!"

We kissed again, and she escorted me to the lobby, where she signed me out. I said 'good night', then left the building and walked to the parking garage, where I retrieved my car. I drove home, and when I went into the house, it was dark, but I saw light coming from Deanna's studio, so I pulled down the stairs, climbed partway up, and saw her staring at a partially finished abstract painting with her brush on her chin.

"Mind if I come in?" I asked.

"No! Come on!"

I climbed the stairs, then pulled them shut, and Deanna put down her brush and took off her smock. We sat down, side-by-side, in two bean bag chairs.

"So?" she asked with a smirk.

"I normally don't talk about what I do or don't do with girls except with them or witnesses, but after our conversations the past two weeks, I'm going to make a permanent exception for you."

Deanna smiled, "I appreciate that."

"The shortest way to say it is that if you and CeCi are interested in a threesome, I'm game."

"Wow! That's a change!"

"You're going to be inclined to disbelieve what I tell you, but it's completely true. Monday was the first time she'd ever seen a grown man naked, and her imagination and libido ran away with her."

"You're serious?"

"As a heart attack! She said once she saw it, she started obsessing and dreaming, and during dessert, she told me she gave me her number because she wanted to do all the stuff she imagined. Needless to say, we didn't make it to the movie. Instead, we went back to her dorm, where she fulfilled her fantasy - she had me strip, explored my dick and balls, gave me a blowjob, had me take her virginity

while she watched, rode me, engaged in sixty-nine, and had me fuck her before we exchanged our first kiss, which was her first one ever."

"No way!" Deanna exclaimed. "Seriously?"

"Seriously. After that, sixty-nine twice, and then we fucked like crazed bunny rabbits. We showered and dressed, then she signed me out, but only after asking me for a repeat performance next Saturday."

"That's just crazy enough to be true and puts the letters in *Penthouse* to shame!"

"Letters?"

"Guys write in with their stories, which are usually obviously exaggerated. Yours would be over-the-top! What changed?"

"Remember I was in the 'if' stage? Tonight, it was the 'when' stage, at least with regard to being with a new girl. I knew I'd eventually do it, so why not with a girl who clearly was dying to have uninhibited sex with me?"

"I suppose that does make sense. Are you OK?"

"Yes. I suggested we go back to her dorm because I'm still not ready to invite someone into Keiko's and my bed. I'm absolutely going to wait until the new bed is in the condo for that. One other interesting point -- Stefi was a regular church-goer until tonight."

"Huh?"

"She went to a Baptist church in Oklahoma and to Moody Church here. She said after tonight, she can't go back."

"Uh-oh."

"Uh-oh?"

"Jonathan, you clearly didn't use rubbers..."

"She went on the Pill at sixteen to regulate her period. She said her mom freaked out when the doctor prescribed it and refused to fill the prescription until her aunt intervened. From that point on, Stefi wasn't allowed to be alone with a boy."

Deana laughed, "And then they let her come to Chicago to attend a school that is a complete den of iniquity! And one thing is for sure - you and I are going to fuck each other senseless very soon! Well, assuming you're OK with that."

"I don't think I'm back to 'normal', but I'm not sure I can ever go back to the old normal. It's finding the 'new normal' as you suggested."

"I'm happy to see in...let's call it a more normal state. I spent some time with Tasha this afternoon and showed her the budget. We're going to start looking at furniture. Given today's developments, we're going to furnish your room first so that you have a love nest to use for the next few months."

I chuckled. "I appreciate the thought. I'm not planning to go crazy."

"No, but crazy always seems to find you!"



March 11, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

When I woke up on Sunday, I got out of bed, emptied my bladder, shaved, showered, and dressed, then went downstairs to have breakfast. I ate with Jack and Kristy, then spent time in the Japanese room reading the *Trib*, *Crain's*, *The*

Economist, and the *Wall Street Journal*. At various times, Bianca, Juliette, and CeCi sat with me and read. Jack and Kristy went out for the day, and everyone else had had lunch together.

Ellie showed up at 1:00pm as we had planned for our study session. We went to the basement so that we didn't prevent others from using the great room or Japanese room.

"Today, we'll talk about how Spurgeon's FX desk operates and how they make money," I said.

"OK," Ellie agreed.

I spent the next two hours explaining how to use futures and options to manage exchange rate risk, international settlement, exchange rate arbitrage, and money management.

"How do you make money?"

"Every transaction has an associated fee, usually a fraction of a percentage of the deal. If we have a sufficient supply of both currencies, we don't pay any external fees, which is the best-case scenario. If we don't, then we purchase the currency on the open market, negotiate the exchange rate, and split the fees with the counterparty. Fees are where we make the most money, though it's a tiny amount per transaction.

"We make more on exchange rate arbitrage, keeping the difference in rates as our profit. And then there's currency speculation, which I explained using the Bolivar as an example. Those are rare opportunities, but they can be extremely profitable."

"Could you lose money?"

"Yes, if you're holding too much of a currency that declines in value against other currencies. Say, for example, you were holding Bolivars when they were devalued -- you would lose money because you could buy fewer goods or exchange them for fewer dollars or pounds. You could also be in a position where you needed to acquire a large amount of a currency and couldn't find a counterparty who was willing to give you a good rate."

"I thought they were fixed."

"They are, and they aren't. There's the published rate, but remember what I said about private or 'dark' trades in stocks? That can be done with currency as well. If Mr. Matheson calls a banker in Singapore, they can agree to make a direct private trade at any rate on which they agree. I did that with shares in Hawaiian Airlines, where we found a private party to sell me a large block of stock away from the exchange.

"Remember what we talked about last Spring -- you and I could agree to trade stocks sitting here in my house, and it's perfectly legal. The same would be true if you had been on vacation and had British pounds you no longer needed, and I bought them because I was going to London."

"Right, I remember that. The goal of the exchanges is an efficient, ordered market, but you can make backroom deals so long as you follow the rules."

"Exactly."

"Will you hire me when I graduate?"

"I can't guarantee it, but I'll do my best. Remember, Noel Spurgeon is in complete control and has the final say about hiring and headcount. You're minoring in computers, right?"

"Yes."

"That'll give you a leg up because computers give us a huge edge, and we need to stay ahead. Two weeks?"

"Yes. How are you doing?"

"OK, actually. Work keeps me busy, and I have my friends. I'm still working through my feelings about Keiko and dealing with my emotions. Things are improving, but not totally back to normal. Well, what will pass for what Deanna called a 'new normal' anyway. How are you doing?"

"About the same; I miss her, but life has to go on."

"Yes, it does."

"Are you seeing anyone?" Ellie asked.

I had a sneaking suspicion where that question might lead, and that was a situation I didn't care to revisit. That meant a careful answer was required.

"CeCi still goes out with me on Friday evenings," I said. "And I spend time with Bianca, obviously, and Violet. I'm not ready to start any kind of relationship at this point."

"That makes sense."

We were finished, so I led her upstairs. At the front door, she gave me a quick hug, and I stood on the porch until she got into her friend's car. Once she'd driven off, I went back inside.

I helped Juliette make dinner, and after dinner, Deanna, CeCi, and I got into the hot tub. Bianca's doctor had advised her against it, so she and Juliette stayed in the house.

"Are there any rules?" CeCi asked.

"You mean about sex? No. I'm taking each day and each opportunity as it comes. Well, except I decided not to use my bed. That'll change in the condo when I have a new bed and new bedding. I know it's not logical, given I've been with both of you, but it still feels as if it would be disrespecting Keiko to use our bed."

"Logic does not apply to mourning," Deanna observed. "Can I ask an extreme favor?"

"You can always ask, and nothing you ask for will upset me."

"Are you *sure* about that?" she asked with a silly smile.

"Go for it!" I chuckled.

"The actual favor was that you, CeCi, and I christen your new bed."

"I can see my way clear for that," I replied. "And the *other* thing that popped into your mind?"

"We all take each other around the world!"

I laughed, "You want to do that to me again badly enough that you'll invite me to do it to you?"

"Strangely, it was a turn-on. But I know you aren't particularly interested in either giving or receiving."

"For a special occasion, for two very special girls, I could see my way clear."

"We have about a month to figure it out," Deanna said. "We can do that before everyone moves in. CeCi?"

"I'm game if you two are. I'm going to miss the hot tub."

"Me, too," I said. "But there are large whirlpool tubs in four bedrooms. The other two are the nursery and the art gallery. It's not quite as good, but two people easily fit in those, and you could squeeze in three with one facing the other two. The master bathroom has a large stall shower, and the other ones have smaller stall showers."

"Can I see it?"

"Deanna and Natasha have keys, so either of them could take you, or I could show you next Friday."

"Friday is probably better because of class and work."

"You know, I don't think I mentioned it, but," I switched to a poorly faked Italian accent, "the rent stays like-a before!"

"OK, Signor Roberto!" Deanna said, causing both CeCi and me to laugh.

"Didn't he lower the rent?" CeCi asked.

"Well, when you show up with Vito Corleone, I'll consider it!" I chuckled.

Deanna smirked, "There's always the trope of the young, innocent girl fucking her landlord because she can't pay her rent!"

"Too late!" CeCi said mirthfully. "My innocence disappeared in April of last year and I'm not about to go looking for it!"

"I'll pose for you, CeCi," I said.

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Thanks so much!" CeCi gushed.

"Does that mean you'll say 'yes' to Britney, too?" Deanna inquired.

"I'm leaning towards doing it," I replied. "And I also think I'm going to act on your suggestion for the Fall with the community theatre."

"What's that about?" CeCi asked.

"An outlet for Jonathan's emotions and a way for him to reduce stress."

"And all those available thespians who have zero inhibitions!"

"You mean like art students?" I chuckled.

"Guilty as charged!" CeCi declared.

"Me, too!" Deanna added.

"I'm very happy to have both of you as friends," I said. "It's helped me tremendously."

"Us, too," Deanna replied. "Right, CeCi?"

"Absolutely."



March 12, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Monday was, thankfully, an attorney-free day. There were no major world events, and the US markets seemed to be in the doldrums, waiting for the Fed to act. The next opportunity for a regular rate change was in a week. Things in the Research Department were firing on all cylinders, and I was very happy with the quality of the combined daily analyst report.

After lunch, something popped into my mind that I'd forgotten. I picked up the phone and dialed Julie, Noel Spurgeon's secretary.

"I'm looking for a week when the house in Saint Martin is free later this year."

"There are dates in October and December."

"Nothing in July or August, while school is out?"

"No."

"OK. What are the December dates?"

"The 15th to the 23rd."

I consulted my calendar and penciled those dates in.

"I'll take those days," I said. "Thanks."

"Traveling companions?"

"TBD," I replied. "I'll let you know before the end of November."

"OK. I'll reserve the plane for the flights as well. Depart in the morning of the 15th and return the afternoon of the 23rd."

"Thank you very much."

We ended the call, and I dialed Trish in Personnel to arrange the time off. I had her include the following week, plus the 31st, so I could have ten consecutive trading days off, as required by firm policy. Once I finished, I let Violet know the dates.

"Who are you taking?" she asked.

"I haven't decided. We can discuss it later, OK? Just update my schedule, please."

"Will do!"

I left the Research office and went to the FX Desk office and asked Mia to see Mr. Matheson. She sent me in, and I let him know about my scheduled vacation. He approved, which I was sure he would do, and I left his office and returned to my desk.

"Jonathan," Violet said from the door to my office about ten minutes later. "Anna Bergdahl would like to see you."

I was almost certain that her motivation was my vacation request, but given how she'd reacted to me going to Kansas, there was no way I was going to take her to Saint Martin, even if I reconsidered my view on dating someone from Spurgeon,

which I had not. Bianca was an obvious exception, as was Violet, but those were pre-existing relationships.

"About?" I asked, despite my certainty.

"She didn't say. I could call her back and ask her."

I didn't want to put Violet in the position of asking, so I simply asked her to let Anna know I was available. Two minutes later, Anna appeared in my office and came over to my desk.

"I owe you an apology," she said.

"For?"

"Accusing you of putting Bev in front of everything else. That obviously wasn't true."

"Believe it or not, I could see how it looked that way from the outside, despite it wasn't true. But you know what? You would have known that had you given me a chance to explain. Instead, you broke up with me and flat-out refused to discuss it."

Anna frowned, "I'm sorry."

"Apology accepted."

"Can I buy you a drink as a way of showing I'm sorry?"

Which was her way of trying to restart the relationship and, as I saw it, take the trip to Saint Martin. That was absolutely not happening, and I wasn't going to start down that path.

"I don't think that's a good idea," I replied.

"OK. I am sorry."

"And I accept your apology."

She left, and I turned back to my Bloomberg terminal. The rest of the day was routine, and as was the norm for Mondays, I met Deanna for dinner. After dinner, we headed to the Art Institute.

The pose was, as Deanna had suggested -- Alexa and I reclined against pillows side by side in a twin bed with the sheets pulled up to just expose the top of our pubic hair. During our first break, I let Britney know that I would pose for her, and she was ecstatic. At the end of class, Alexa and I went back to Claire's office.

"Only one more nude," I said as we began dressing. "I was surprised by that."

"Anytime you want a private viewing, just let me know!" Alexa declared. "With no more nudes after Wednesday, there isn't any real risk. Well, unless you go for Speedos instead of trunks."

"Trunks."

We finished dressing, and Alexa opened the door. She stepped out, and a strawberry-blonde girl stepped in.

"Hi, I'm Kelly," she said. "Can I ask you what might seem like an odd question?"

"Sure."

"Who did you vote for in the mayoral race?"

"Washington," I replied. "Why?"

She smiled, "My roommate is black, and I wondered if you'd like to come to our apartment and play with us after class on Wednesday?"

Deanna had not been wrong, but I wasn't sure I wanted to go down that path, so I temporized.

"Let me think about it, and I'll let you know before class on Wednesday, OK?"

"Great!" she exclaimed.

I walked out of the office to find a smirking Deanna.

"Told ya!" she teased.

"She invited me to, and I'm quoting, 'come to her apartment and play with her and her roommate'."

Deanna tittered, "And?"

"I said I'd let her know on Wednesday before class. It is a bit strange because her roommate hasn't even seen me."

"No, but Kelly sure has! And she was the one who said, 'Jesus!' that first night."

"Let me ask you a question -- if it was a choice between sleeping with you and going with them, what would you advise?"

"That I have exactly what I want -- a patron and hopefully a lover for life. I'm not the monogamous type any more than you are. You know I was with a guy while

you and Keiko were together, and I'll probably be with other guys occasionally. You don't object to that, so, if you want to have fun, have fun."

"No judging, but John Margolis?"

"No, because I'm not going to give him something to lord over Mr. Spurgeon, and I'm sure as hell not sleeping with your boss!"

I chuckled, "You're four or five years too old for him."

"You don't approve, right?"

"Only because he's putting the entire firm at risk because they're under the age of consent."

We hailed a cab and got in. The cabbie dropped us at the Hancock Center, where Deanna and I retrieved my car. Thirty minutes later, we were in the house. We watched the 10:00pm news, and when we went upstairs, Deanna invited me to her bed, and I accepted.



March 13, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Tuesday turned out to be another attorney-free day, which made me very happy, though I knew it couldn't last. I had thought through Kelly's request and decided against it because it felt wrong. I couldn't put my finger on why, but it certainly had nothing to do with her roommate being black. That had, in fact, intrigued me, though I knew, intellectually at least, that all the parts were in the same place and worked the same way.

I wasn't sure what I'd do about Alexa or Claire, but I had until May to decide. On the other hand, I had very much enjoyed Saturday afternoon and evening with

Stefi, and her offer to spend ten hours orally pleasuring me was certainly enticing. I could see no reason to turn that down, and strangely, that was more interesting than Kelly's offer.

As I thought about it, what gave me serious pause was the 'sight-unseen' situation with the roommate. It was one thing for a girl who had met me to want to fool around; it was another thing for a girl who hadn't. While that had been true with CeCi, my final decision hadn't been made until after she'd arrived and we'd spent some time together. Even Mary Kealty, who had appeared at my apartment with the intent of having sex, was after we'd seen each other a few times. Stefi and I had gone to dinner and had time to talk before we'd gone back to her dorm.

I thought back to Allyson, who was probably the one exception -- Kristy and I had been on a date and had met Allyson, and she and Kristy had immediately decided on a threesome. Even Allyson's parties, including the one where I'd met Bianca, had involved some interaction before deciding to fool around. Kelly's offer was, if I interpreted it correctly, basically to walk in the door of her apartment and immediately begin fooling around.

All of that thinking led me to think about what kind of rules or guidelines or whatever I might put in place to keep things from getting completely out of control the way they nearly had with Ellie and her insane baseball game. The question was where to draw the line, so to speak. I had been with Deanna and CeCi, and there was no doubt in my mind that I'd be with Bianca again, which likely meant Juliette as well.

There was a good chance I'd be with Beth, given things she'd said. Marcia was dating someone fairly seriously, so despite the vibes I had from her, that wasn't likely, though I knew she wanted to be with me again. The thing was, she thought there might be a possibility of a romantic relationship, and I didn't feel it, even setting aside my conversations with Deanna.

Most of the other girls had paired off with someone, though Josie, Meg, Miranda, and Kasey were all only dating casually. There were also Katy and Esme, who I was sure were available, given they were on something of a sexual rampage at Princeton, having done their best to experience every possible option, including threesomes in every possible configuration. There were also the other girls who'd expressed interest in a casual encounter, Alexa and Claire, who I'd thought of before, and Natasha.

And then there was Violet. She was probably both the simplest and most complicated of all the girls. Simplest because I'd wanted to be involved with her from the first day I'd met her and had made what I wanted clear by putting her previously-chewed gum in my mouth. Most complicated because of her history and because she was unquestionably in love with me. My concern for her had shifted from her having a very bad reaction to attempting to have sex or having sex to needing more than I could provide with regard to a relationship.

Because of that, I was happy that Violet had put off her answer to my saying I was ready to share a 'real' kiss. If she said 'yes', which I was sure she would, then she and I would have to have a serious talk to ensure we didn't do anything to harm our relationship.

I pushed those thoughts out of my head and resumed my analysis of currencies and exchange rates.

XLVI. A Small World

March 13, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

At lunchtime on Tuesday, I left the building and met Marcia at a deli near the Congressional District office where she worked.

"How are things going with Congressman Hayes?" I asked.

"I'm really happy to be managing the district office, and we're doing really good work for our constituents."

"I'm happy to hear that. Would you be able to arrange a meeting with the Congressman when he's in Chicago?"

"I need to say something off the record," Marcia said.

"Sure."

"For 'meet and greet', we prioritize donors, and size matters."

I laughed, "So I've heard!"

Marcia smirked, "What? I was talking about a contribution!"

"Uh-huh! Just as Steve Martin was talking about his girlfriend's cat!"

"You lost me."

"He has a skit that is totally off-color. OK to tell you?"

"Sure."

I modulated my voice to sound similar to Steve Martin's, though it wasn't a very good impression.

'I went to this girl's apartment, and she had the best pussy I have ever...'

"The audience goes crazy. So he continues..."

'Oh, now come on! I'm talking about her cat! That makes me sick! You can't say anything anymore without people taking it dirty. I'm sorry, that disgusts me!'

"He pauses for a few seconds, then says, completely deadpan..."

'Incidentally, that cat was the best fuck I ever had.'

Marica shook her head, "Rude, crude, and socially unacceptable!"

"And yet, perfect for a stand-up routine with an adult audience. Have you heard Frank Zappa's *Joe's Garage* album?"

"No."

"It's like that, only more so. I also heard a song by him, *Bobby Brown Goes Down* which is far worse in terms of 'rude, crude, and socially unacceptable', and yet, it's awesome. In one verse, near the beginning, he sings..."

*Here I am at a famous school
I'm dressin' sharp, and I'm actin' cool
I got a cheerleader here wants to help with my paper
I'll let her do all the work, and maybe later I'll rape her!*

"...and gets worse from there."

"That's just sick!" Marcia declared.

"Maybe so, but Frank Zappa, like George Carlin, refuses to be bound by social norms and, in fact, uses them to create offensive humor, which is the best kind."

"Seriously?"

"You know I don't follow social conventions except insofar as I have to at work. I prefer people who defy social convention and who express themselves freely."

"You behave conservatively and traditionally."

"I have that *public* image because it's what my clients expect. What you don't see, for example, is me posing nude for an art class at the School of the Art Institute."

"No way!" Marcia gasped.

"It's true. I also posed nude with Bianca for a painting Deanna did. You'll be able to see that one in the gallery in my new condo."

"When are you moving?"

"Sometime in late April or early May, depending on when my interior designer finishes her work."

"So you've gone full aristocrat now?"

"I inherited no money and no title," I replied. "Am I better off than the vast majority of people in Chicago? Yes. And that's because I generate more wealth

for others than the vast majority of people do. There are baseball players who make more than I do, and I daresay you feel they make less of a contribution to society than I do."

"I'd actually say it's similar because you don't create jobs."

"Bullshit. The baseball player, to use that example, helps create jobs for thousands of people -- groundskeepers, ushers, ticket-sellers, sports reporters, memorabilia creators and sellers, everyone who works for advertisers on sports broadcasts, and so on. Does he pay them directly? No. But without him, they wouldn't exist.

"In the same way, I create jobs both directly and indirectly. I help pay for everyone without a securities license who works at Spurgeon, plus the cleaning staff at the Hancock Center, the men and women who work at the exchanges, accountants, lawyers, and so on, not to mention the people I hire to do work for me on my house or manage my rental properties. Not to mention creating capital which is used to found and run businesses, and my work facilitates international trade.

"Both the baseball player and I pay taxes, which create *your* job. We pay significantly higher taxes than the average person, too. Granted, some extremely high net-worth individuals escape taxation, but that sure as heck isn't me or Bill Buckner or Ryne Sandberg! And guess who can fix that? Congressman Hayes. Back to the meeting, should I just write you a check?"

"No. We have to keep constituent services completely separate from the campaign committee. I can't even ask you for a contribution, which is why I hinted at it and said even that hint was off the record. I'll give you the address to send the check to, which should be made out to 'Hayes for Congress'. They'll contact you to get some personal information before they deposit the check."

"Personal information?"

"They have to report contributions, and that includes your name, address, and occupation."

"I'll take care of it."

"And I'll set up the meeting, probably in April."

"Thanks. How are things otherwise?"

"OK. You know I'm dating, but nothing serious yet. I've been out with two different guys a few times each, and I think the best thing to say is I haven't found exactly what I'm looking for. Well, that's not quite true...sorry, I shouldn't say that."

"No need to walk on eggshells," I said. "It won't upset me if you just say what you're thinking."

"You know how I feel about you, even if it's too soon for you to act on it."

"I'm working through my feelings, and I'm making good progress, I think. I've concluded a few things, and one of them is that in order to move forward, I have to find a way that honors Keiko and doesn't diminish my relationship with her. It also has to account for my commitment to her that when the time comes, I'll be cremated, and my ashes will be placed next to hers in her family's crypt. It also has to allow for a special relationship with Bianca because she and I are having a daughter together in about a month. And it has to allow for my relationships with Violet, who will always be a close friend, and my role as Deanna's patron."

"Nothing like creating a ton of non-negotiable prerequisites and limits!"

I nodded, "I understand, and you and I have had this discussion. Some things just can't be negotiated. My usual example is a few devout Catholic girls for whom a church wedding is a requirement or who want to raise their kids Catholic and not have me say anything to contradict the Catholic religious teachings. But there was also a girl who was Hindu whose family did not approve because I wasn't Hindu.

"Differing worldviews can be a problem, as can different goals, such as having a small or large family or no kids at all. Obviously, I can't compromise with regard to my soon-to-be-born daughter. Nor could I compromise about my choice of career or the way I do my job. Those things are simply part of who I am.

"That said, there are areas where compromise or even agreeing to disagree are OK. Taking something simple -- if we don't like the same TV shows, two TVs or a VCR solves the problem. If we don't like the same sports, we can each go to games with our friends. Political differences aren't particularly relevant so long as both spouses are tolerant. And so on. Where to live, where to go on vacation, and so on, are all open for discussion and negotiation.

"Right now, and for the foreseeable future, I have no intention of remarrying. I may never remarry. That resolves, at least in my mind, the concern I have for diminishing Keiko's role in my life and her being my wife. It feels wrong to have a 'first wife' and 'second wife', and that feeling may never go away. That doesn't mean I won't have a long-term romantic relationship, perhaps even a monogamous one; it just means nobody should assume that marriage is in the cards."

"I'm not quite sure what to say about that," Marcia replied. "You're saying you're a confirmed bachelor for life?"

"I'm saying that's the default, and nobody should count on it changing."

"And you think a girl should just have to accept that?"

"Yes, but not in the way you mean. For example, I accept that a young woman I saw twice is a devout Catholic and nothing I say or do is going to change that. Any relationship would have to be on those terms. If I can't accept it, that's on *me*, not on her. That said, she also has to accept that I'm never going to be religious, devout, or otherwise. If she can't accept that, it's on her. But neither of us should enter a relationship assuming the other will ever change."

"Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" Marcia asked scornfully.

"Keiko," I said flatly.

Marcia frowned and looked down.

"Sorry," she said, barely audibly.

"In the end, Marcia, you have choices, but your choices don't compel a specific response on my part any more than my choices compel a specific response on your part. In the end, the terms of our relationship have to be negotiated like the terms of *any* relationship. Often, that's done by inference and informally, but even if the terms aren't stated clearly, they exist, including by social convention."

"You reject that out of hand!"

"And yet, I know it, understand it, and use it to gauge how others will react unless I know they are of a similar mindset to me. You mistake me rejecting social convention for how I live my life for rejecting needing to accommodate it in my decision making. Not to mention competing social conventions based on religion or class or venue."

"So what I want doesn't matter?" Marcia asked.

"Sure it does. But unless you're in '*I want an Oompa Loompa, and I want one now!*' mode, what you want has to take into account what is possible, which has to include all considerations. Bluntly, you tell me what you want, I tell you what I can offer, and we see if there is any way to meet in the middle if there is a gap.

"Let's cut to the chase -- you are certain you want to marry, and I am reasonably certain I don't. There is no actual middle ground there unless one of us changes our mind. That means we stay friends and participate in Jeri's cabal she intends to use to take over the world. The terms of that friendship are negotiable, including how often we see each other, what kinds of things we do together, and so on."

"So you're saying you'll have sex with me, but you'll never be my boyfriend?"

"Actually, that's inaccurate. It would be more accurate to say that I won't be your *husband*. I didn't rule out a long-term girlfriend, including an exclusive one. I simply ruled out marriage."

"Why would a girl sign up for that?"

"Because it met her needs, and she didn't feel a marriage certificate was necessary? Let me give you another example -- some people do not want to have kids. That's a legitimate choice, and anyone who wants kids shouldn't marry someone who doesn't. Doing so would be foolish in the extreme and likely lead directly to divorce. Fundamentally, you don't get to decide for anyone else.

"And that, I think, is the core of our disconnect. Your job is, in effect, to decide for others; mine is to provide them the means to decide for themselves. Fortunately, there are limits on *both* our jobs -- the Constitution limits how far you can intrude into my life, and laws and regulations limit what I'm allowed to do to generate

wealth for others, and the law limits their actions to things that don't physically harm others."

"I'm not sure how to take all of that."

"Bottom line, based on what you've said? You want to marry and have kids, and that means I'm not a good choice for a life partner."

"So you'll never change your mind?"

"All I'm saying is that you can't expect me to ever change my mind. It's a subtle difference but an important one."

"You are nothing if not pedantic," Marcia observed.

"It's who I am."

We finished our lunches, and I returned to the office. I wrote out a check to 'Hayes for Congress', put it in an envelope, added postage, and put it in my 'Out' box for the mailroom to collect. I spent time during the afternoon making calls to my current clients simply to check in, and for each call, I confirmed a face-to-face visit in May or June that Violet had arranged.

At the end of the day, rather than head home, I drove to Ichirō's house for dinner with him and Atsuko. After a very nice Japanese meal, Atsuko brought a pot of tea for Ichirō and me.

"Did you study the materials I provided?" Ichirō asked.

"I did," I replied. "There were some very good lessons there, though I had to think of them slightly differently from the way they were written to apply outside of karate."

"And what did you learn?"

"First, the Dōjō precepts apply across all facets of life, not just for karate -- perfection of character; faithfulness; making a supreme effort; respect for others and self; and non-violence. Those quite clearly define my approach to life and boil it down to a simple set of rules to live by, as it were."

"Very good. The other list is more specific to Shōtōkan karate, but I think you are wise enough to glean precepts from it which apply to your life."

"Yes," I replied. "With a minor modification to words to apply generally, there were three that stood out. First, *'Be constantly mindful, diligent, and resourceful in your pursuit of life'*; next, *'Calamity springs from carelessness'*; and finally, *'First know yourself, then know others'*."

"And which of those would you say was the most important?"

"Knowing oneself. Unless you are self-aware, you cannot see your own faults and flaws and cannot improve. In a way, it's like the Catholic practice of confession but without all the baggage that comes along with it."

"An apt comparison, at least so far as I understand the practice. It is those precepts which are the most important ones taught at the dōjō. Most students think it's about learning self-defense or staying in shape. The true «空手家» (*karate-ka*) -- student of karate -- understands that learning and living the precepts is far more important than perfecting the movements."

"Don't they go hand-in-hand?" I inquired.

"If you see that, then you are far ahead of most students. They do, indeed, go hand-in-hand. Learning the physical disciplines aids learning the spiritual

disciplines, and learning the spiritual disciplines gives meaning to the physical disciplines."

"As I said once before, I simply don't have the time to dedicate to karate training to do it properly. There may come a time when I do, but at the moment, I can't make the commitment. I believe you have much to teach me, and I want to learn from you, but at least until I complete my Bachelor's degree, it will have to be informal."

Ichirō nodded, "I do understand, and I hope that the day will come when I can act as your Sensei."

"If I understand the meaning of that word, I believe that this conversation shows you are already doing it."

"A very good insight, and there is much truth to it, but the physical is part of it, as I mentioned before."

"I want to continue this relationship, both for your wisdom and because you are my grandfather by marriage."

"Thank you, Jonathan-san. Keiko chose well, and you honor her memory."

"Something I will do for the rest of my life."



March 14, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

The string of attorney-free days came to a screeching halt on Wednesday afternoon when Gwen Meyer called.

"I received the certified copy of the subpoena," she said. "There is a complication in that I can't present my motion to quash directly because I'm not a member of the Ohio bar. Stefan Chojnicki's motion to quash was already denied, so the only way to actually have the subpoena quashed in Ohio is for you to hire counsel in Ohio, and it would very likely need to be someone not from Mr. Chojnicki's firm."

"Wonderful. I assume that means Mr. Walsh is going to press forward?"

"Yes. Along with the certified copy of the subpoena, I received notice that Mr. Walsh has retained counsel in Illinois."

"Who?"

"Brandon Littleton."

I couldn't help but laugh, "He'll have to try again. Mr. Littleton is a client, which means he has a conflict, right?"

"You deal directly with him, correct?"

"Yes, as trustee for a trust that is invested in my fund. In fact, I spoke to him yesterday afternoon, and he didn't mention it."

"The letter from Mr. Walsh is dated Friday. Let me call Mr. Walsh and find out. I'll call you back as soon as I speak to him."

"Thanks."

I went back to work, and about fifteen minutes later, Gwen Meyer called back.

"Mr. Littleton notified him of the conflict as soon as he received the files on Monday. The new attorney is Jack Switzer from Allen & Baker. Mr. Walsh retained him yesterday and verified over the phone that there were no conflicts."

"So what happens now?"

"I'll call Mr. Switzer and ask what he intends to do. You may want to consider simply acquiescing to the subpoena to stop a prolonged battle. I'm not advising one way or the other, mind you; this is totally up to you. That said, you expressed your concern for Heather Newton, and the longer we fight, the longer it will take for a resolution."

"That's a reasonable point. I know depositions have very few limitations, but is it possible to negotiate?"

"Always. What did you have in mind?"

"No questions about my personal life of any kind, except as it relates directly to Bev; no questions about Violet Clemmons of any kind and no deposition from her under any circumstances; and no questions about the form I signed in Antler, North Dakota."

"That first one, I'm sure we can achieve. About Miss Clemmons, what's your concern?"

"Just that I don't want to involve her in what is shaping up to be a knock-down, drag-out fight with Bev. She's undergone serious emotional trauma in the past, and I don't want her involved in any way, if that's possible."

"What is your relationship with her?"

"She's a close friend, and we've never been romantically involved. When she traveled with me, she had her own room, and I can prove that if need be. She now works for me as my administrative assistant, but that started after Bev was arrested."

"OK," Ms. Meyer replied. "I think I know how to handle that. As for the form you signed, you really don't want to cause them to scrutinize it, and telling them that it's off limits will point them straight to it."

"What do you suggest?" I asked.

She was quiet for a moment, then said, "I think we'll insist that any interactions with the government are off-limits, given the pending criminal charges. Other than acknowledging that you spoke to the Border Patrol and collected Heather from them, I'll put everything else off limits."

"If you can achieve those three conditions, I won't fight the subpoena. If not, then the gloves are off, and you take them down like Foreman took down Frazier."

Ms. Meyer laughed, "'Down goes Walsh?'"

"Something like that. The deposition should be somewhere we control, too. I can make a conference room available here. Make that a condition, but it's negotiable, unlike the other three."

"I'll call Mr. Switzer and get back to you shortly, though it's 3:45pm, so it might be tomorrow."

"Thanks, Gwen."

"You're welcome."

I ended the call, then turned to my Bloomberg terminal to continue research into some strange volume numbers in the currency market during the day. By 5:00pm, I concluded it was simply part of the 'random walk' of trades and that someone had needed to close out several positions against the British pound.

When I left the office, I made my way to Maxim's for dinner with Deanna.

"I'm going to say 'no' to Kelly," I said. "It just seems 'off' the way Ellie's plans for a last party before Keiko and I formally committed were 'off'. And this does not implicate any other relationship or future possibility. It's just 'no' for this specific request."

"This is where I need a Vulcan mind meld, so I can understand your thinking."

"I can try to explain. The short version is that the idea of having sex with someone I haven't seen, let alone even said two words to, seems wrong. This is different from CeCi because we had some time together before we went to bed together. What Kelly proposed was basically showing up at her apartment with her and having sex with her and her roommate."

"Anonymous sex wouldn't work for me, and probably not for most people. It's even different from picking up a girl at a party. Even having a drink together or dancing once makes a difference, at least as I see it."

"Showing up at my place with a bottle of Jack?" I asked with an arched eyebrow.

"And yet, that met your basic criteria. Did either of us agree, in advance, to have sex with each other?"

"I certainly didn't because I didn't know Sophie and Ivy were bringing you with them."

"And while I bought the bottle of Jack Daniel's, we talked and had pizza before Sophie made her suggestion, which I could have rejected. But by then, I had met the 'one dance' or 'one drink' standard I mentioned before. And I think it fits how you handled last Saturday with Stefie."

"Point taken. Is Kelly going to be upset?"

"I can't imagine she would, but do you care?"

"Not particularly, no. I mean, I try my best not to needlessly upset someone, but I also won't do something I don't think is in my best interest just to avoid upsetting someone."

"Nor should you! That would make you a doormat. You don't let anyone push you around, and that's a good thing. You listen to advice, but you make your own decisions, which is exactly how your closest friends want it. And I'm positive that's how your bosses at Spurgeon want it."

"It is."

"Are you seeing Stefi again?"

I chuckled, "What sane man would refuse a girl who said she wanted to perform oral sex on him for ten hours straight?"

Deanna laughed, "Boys and blowjobs!"

"Let's just say I have never had a woman treat oral sex as worship, and she is a devout worshiper!"

"That good?"

"It was a spiritual experience!"

"Are you going to continue seeing her?"

"I'm playing it by ear, but I won't let it distract me from the people who matter most to me. You can take that to the bank."

When we finished our meal, we headed to the school, where we had our final nude modeling session, though this time with Alexa wearing my unbuttoned dress shirt. At the end of the session, Claire reminded everyone that the following week was Spring Break, so there were no classes.

After I dressed, I let Kelly know I wasn't available, and she seemed to take it in stride without being upset. I also let Stefi know that I'd see her on Saturday, and she was very happy.

"Did Kelly say anything?" Deanna asked.

"Just that she was disappointed, and the offer was still there for any Wednesday for the rest of the semester. I said I'd keep it in mind."

"Usually you're direct; why not just say 'no'."

"I did say 'no', and she extended an open-ended invitation which I acknowledged. I didn't tell her I was going home to wash my hair or whatever fiction girls made up in High School."

"In the 50s!" Deanna laughed. "I know it's a trope, but I doubt anyone has used that phony excuse in twenty years!"

"And yet, it got my point across -- if I'd said 'not tonight', that would be different. I simply thanked her for the invitation and said I had to decline. She didn't ask

why; she just extended the invitation should I change my mind. And, as I said, I acknowledged that."

"I didn't mean to make you defensive," Deanna said. "I was simply commenting on your usual style."

"I do know how to use finesse, in addition to being blunt; I just don't do it very often, which is why you're surprised. I was fairly blunt with Anna on Monday when she came to apologize for how she handled the situation with Bev."

"Now? Out of the blue?"

"No. I asked Mr. Matheson to approve my vacation time and booked a week in Saint Martin. She came to see me right after that."

"Foolish. She should have waited so that it wasn't so obvious. What dates?"

"December 15th through the 23rd. I wanted a time when school was out."

"Who's going?"

"I left that open, but you'll be invited for sure."

"Thanks!"



March 16, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Thursday had been an attorney-free day, but Friday wasn't. While I was reading a news report about the kidnapping of a political officer from the US Embassy in Lebanon, my phone rang.

"Research, Kane."

"Jonathan, it's Gwen Meyer. Do you have a moment?"

"I do."

"They rejected your request to place those topics off limits as they're in the affidavits, and they want to be able to question you on them. I tried for any kind of limitation, but Mr. Switzer and Mr. Walsh refused to accept any restrictions."

"Wonderful."

"Unfortunately, it gets worse. They intend to depose Miss Clemmons after they've deposed you."

"Send over your standard retainer form. I'll pay for you to protect Violet. I want every means possible used to prevent that, including appealing any rulings. Scorched earth. They are NOT going to like what they hear in my deposition, and I'm not going to pull any punches or couch things to protect Bev from looking batshit insane."

"Take a deep breath, Jonathan," Gwen suggested.

I did.

"I understand, Gwen," I said. "I get it. But going after Violet is beyond the pale. That's Bev retaliating because she knows how protective I am of Violet. She's lashing out, and I'm going to make her pay. But, fight my deposition, and we'll see where things go."

"OK. You absolutely do not want to travel to Ohio until this is sorted out."

"I have no plans to go there until a business trip in September. If this is still in play, I'll fly the client here instead. What happens now?"

"They file a notice with the court, I appear as your counsel, and a date is set for a hearing. They'll try to expedite it, but usually, hearings are set two to four weeks after an appearance is filed. I have seen them held on the same day, but there are no exigent circumstances that would warrant that. I will need your calendar, and I can use that to object to dates when you aren't available."

"The only client meeting I have before the end of May is next Tuesday. Of course, other things could come up."

"OK. When I hear from them, I'll ask again. It's possible they'll file today, but more likely, it'll be Monday, with my first appearance a week later. I'll keep you posted."

"Thanks. If you fax the form, I'll have Violet sign it and have it couriered back with a check."

"Thanks, Jonathan. I'll do that right away."

We ended the call, and I used the intercom to ask Violet to come into my office. She walked in a few seconds later, and I indicated she should close the door.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

I got up and went to the couch, sat down, and patted the cushion next to me. She came over and sat down.

"Bev declared war," I said. "She instructed her attorneys to try to depose you."

"What?!" Violet gasped.

"I have no idea what they want to ask, but you can be sure it will be to try to get me into trouble in some way or make it look as if I did something wrong. I asked Gwen Meyer to represent you. She's going to send over a form you need to sign. I'll write a check for the retainer, and then you can have Naomi courier it back, charged to me personally."

"You're paying?"

"Yes. And I told Gwen to go scorched earth to protect you. I'm fighting the subpoena, but if the court orders me to sit for the deposition, I will. If they order you to sit, we'll appeal it all the way to the Illinois Supreme Court. I promised to protect you, and I will."

"The Illinois Supreme Court? Really?"

"There is a method to my madness," I replied. "According to Nelson, it can take a year or more to move through the appeals process. That's another year Heather stays with Jim and Julie unless Bev drops her attempt to depose you."

"Won't that be expensive?"

"And worth every penny to make sure you don't have to sit for a deposition. Nothing you could say should be able to hurt me, but lawyers are notorious for twisting things. For one, I would expect them to suggest that we were lovers and conspired to steal Heather from Bev."

"WHAT?!" Violet gasped.

"It's the logical play on their part. Remember, they need to find some way to show I had no authority to give Heather to Jim and Julie, and maybe even that

the US government had no authority to give Heather to me. They'll use every dirty trick in the book."

"That's horrible!"

"Which is exactly why you don't want to sit for a deposition. I don't, either, but if they force me to, I'll state clearly that Bev was irrational, erratic, and unfit to be Heather's mom."

"You believe that?"

"Sadly, I do. But the deeper I bury Bev, the more desperate they'll be to discredit me and impeach my testimony. Unfortunately, that means going after you and our relationship, among other things."

"Is there any way to stop this?"

"One. And that is Bev going to her parents, reconciling, and agreeing to attend counseling."

"Will they accept that? Her parents, I mean?"

"That's what they've wanted from the start; that and for Heather to be safe and be in a stable situation. Anyway, when the fax arrives, read it over, sign it, and I'll give you a check to courier to Ms. Meyer."

"Thanks for taking care of me."

"You're welcome."

"Can I ask about Saint Martin?"

"I figured we'd discuss it on Saturday. I haven't made any decisions."

"I can't take vacation until next year, right?"

"Unfortunately, that's true, but there's also the complication of you working here and my destination being one of Noel Spurgeon's houses. You know what everyone would think."

Violet laughed softly, "And you remember what I said about that!"

"I do. Have you heard anything like that?"

"One of the secretaries asked me if you were as good as rumored, and I said I had no way of knowing. I don't think she believed me. I thought Anna wasn't like that."

"It wasn't Anna," I replied. "It was a secretary who no longer works here. About three months after I started, the opportunity presented itself, and I foolishly took advantage of it. It was a huge mistake and part of why I resolved not to date anyone from Spurgeon. I should have stuck to that decision instead of seeing Anna, and once that ended, I promised myself I'd never do that again. You and Bianca are exceptions because they were pre-existing relationships."

"But you and I haven't..."

"No, we haven't; you and I are intimate friends, just not lovers. But we're very close and, to be honest, closer than if we were dating. My closest guy friends are Jack and Costas; you and Deanna are my closest female friends. Bianca is slightly different category due to our baby, and Keiko was in a category all her own."

"Which is why you said what you did about the future, right?"

"Yes. And we should save this conversation for tomorrow. I don't have class due to Spring Break, so I'll spend the morning with you. I'm meeting a friend at 1:00pm."

"Remember, I meet Nancy tomorrow. I think you could come along."

"You know I'm happy to speak with her because she's helping."

"Good. And the following week, you have your childbirth class, right?"

"Yes. We'll have lunch, but I'll have to leave by 12:30."

"OK."

Violet got up and left the office, and I went to my desk and wrote out a check to Gwen Meyer. Violet came to get it about ten minutes later and took the form and the check to the mailroom so it could be couriered back to Ms. Meyer.

After the end of the workday, I met Jack, Kristy, and CeCi in the lobby, and we went to Star of Siam for dinner. After dinner, we saw *Against All Odds*, then went for ice cream. When we arrived home, CeCi invited me to her room to spend the night.



March 17, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Did you want to discuss the future," I asked Violet after we cleaned up the kitchen following breakfast.

"I think maybe it's better to wait until after our session with Nancy, if that's OK."

"Absolutely."

"I'm not sure if you remember, but I normally do my grocery shopping while you're in class. Could we go?"

"Of course."

We put on our jackets and left the house to walk to Jewel. We chatted amiably as we walked, and when we turned the corner onto Halsted, a young Hispanic guy who was walking quickly and not paying attention bumped into me.

"Oh, sorry!" he declared.

"No harm, no foul," I replied. "I met a guy who became a good friend when he nearly ran me down with his bicycle! I'm Jonathan Kane."

"Jorge González," he replied.

"What do you do, Jorge?"

"I'm a student at IIT. You?"

"Research analyst and stockbroker. This is my friend, Violet Clemmons, who's my administrative assistant. We're also both part-time students at Circle."

"Stockbroker? You're not much older than I am!"

I nodded, "True. I had an opportunity, and I seized it. What's your major?"

"Electrical engineering. Do you live in Bridgeport?"

"Rogers Park for me," I said. "Violet lives in University Village. I take it you live in Bridgeport?"

"No, I live on campus. I'm scouting for an apartment for the Summer and next year so I don't have to live in the dorms."

"Chicago native?"

"Puerto Rico. You?"

"Goshen, Ohio," I replied. "It's near Cincinnati. Violet is from Chicagoland."

"Sorry to rush off, but I have an appointment to see an apartment. It's actually in University Village."

"I used to rent on West Polk," I replied.

"That's where I'm headed. The woman's last name is Andros."

I laughed, "Small world. She and her late husband were my landlords, and I dated their daughter for a time. They're good people. Let me give you my card. If you run into any trouble with them, which I doubt, give me a call."

"You'd do that?"

"I'm a decent judge of character, and you look like an honest, upstanding guy, and you apologized for bumping into me when it really was my fault for not paying close enough attention."

"I wasn't looking where I was going," he said.

"Even so, Violet and I were walking side by side and taking up more than half the sidewalk."

I pulled the small case with my business cards in it and handed one to Jorge.

"Thanks," he said. "I need to run."

"Just be careful!"

He smiled and nodded, then extended his hand. We shook, and he was on his way.

"I can't believe he's trying to rent from Lily's mom!" Violet declared.

"As I said, it's a small world."

We continued along Halsted, past Ichirō's dōjō, and walked into Jewel to do Violet's weekly shopping.

XLVII. I'm Not Sharing My New Toy!

March 17, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"How are you doing, Jonathan?" Nancy Jane Moore asked when she invited me into her office to chat after Violet's session on Saturday.

"OK. My friends are helping keep me on an even keel."

"You've undergone quite a few stress-generating changes in the past year -- moving, being promoted, marrying, and Keiko's death, not to mention the situation with your girlfriend from High School."

"I see Violet has kept you posted," I said with a friendly smile.

"Given your relationship with her, we talk about you a lot. To allay any concern you might have, we also talk about Lily and, most recently, Kallie, the girl she met in class."

"I wasn't concerned," I replied. "I expect Violet to talk to you about me, and I seriously doubt she's said anything inaccurate or anything I'd consider a violation of my confidence."

"On that note, I wanted to ask you what was going on with your friend in Ohio, if you're willing to share. Violet demurred, except to say she might be caught up in it."

I explained the situation with Bev, clearly showing my frustration, and Nancy picked up on it right away, as I would have expected her to.

"You need to find a way to get past the frustration and anger," Nancy said. "I completely understand why you feel the way you do, but the last thing you need is added stress."

"Somebody should tell Bev," I said. "I did my best to stay completely out of it. The truly frustrating part is that all Bev needs to do is reconcile with her parents, and all of these problems will go away. I know it's not easy, but it's also her best path to regaining full custody of her daughter."

"You said she wasn't acting or thinking rationally. You appear to be able to do that even in the most stressful situations; most people cannot do that. But that also raises a concern that you're bottling up all those emotions. You need an outlet, or you risk suffering severe consequences. The situation in which you find yourself is one that often precedes alcohol or drug abuse, extreme risk-taking, or other self-destructive behaviors."

"I'm working out three days a week at the gym, and I'm spending quiet time relaxing, as you suggested."

"Have you sought any additional counseling?"

"No. Well, not professional. My friends Costas, Jack, and Deanna have worked hard to help me avoid doing those things you suggest. Drugs are a non-starter, and I only drink occasionally."

"You say that, but the stress you're under could easily cause you to behave as erratically as you described your friend behaving."

"Keiko's grandfather runs the karate dōjō just down the street, and he suggested martial arts for both the physical and mental discipline, but I simply do not have the time to commit to that."

"Has your spirituality changed at all?"

"If you mean do I suddenly believe in magic sky beings who are inexplicably interested in my sex life? No."

Nancy laughed, "I wasn't thinking THAT radical!"

"Keiko and I discussed the possibility that somehow we might meet again in the future, but beyond that, not really."

"And how did that make you feel?"

"Despite being skeptical, it's something I would like to think were possible. The problem is that falls right into the wishful thinking trap. I don't doubt the universe is more complicated than I can even imagine, but life after death in any form that we might understand it is not something I could believe in any more than I can believe in any gods."

"I think, based on what you've said, that Buddhism might work for you. There is no need to believe in any deity for that system to work. I don't think it would do any harm for you to speak to a Zen Buddhist monk, and it might do some good. I assume you know one, given Keiko had a Buddhist funeral, according to Violet."

"I do. I'll consider speaking to him."

"Good. Can we discuss your relationship with Violet?"

"Isn't that the point?" I asked.

Nancy smiled and nodded, "Yes, of course. I asked because, technically, you aren't my client, and this conversation might delve into very private areas."

"I'm an open book, at least with regard to my relationship with Violet."

"She suggested you've ruled out marrying again."

"It's complicated, but I think the best way to say it is that no young woman should assume I intend to marry or expect me to want to marry in the future."

"That has something to do with your feelings for Keiko, right?"

"Everything to do with them. She's my wife, and I can't wrap my head around replacing her. It's also the case that I committed to her that when the time comes, I'll be cremated and interred next to her. Violet rightly pointed out that would cause conflict with any woman I might marry in the future, and she's not wrong."

"It's only been about ten weeks, correct?"

"Yes. And if you're going to say that I shouldn't make any decisions now, I'm not because I'm not foreclosing the idea, I'm simply saying nobody should expect me to do it. It's a nuanced position but an important one. I think another way to put it is that it's possible I'll marry again, but not probable. Maybe the probability changes in the future, but nobody should count on that."

"I'm going to take a page from your book and be direct -- you know what Violet wants, right?"

"No, I don't. Violet doesn't know what Violet wants unless she's told you something she hasn't told me. Does she have a desire to go to bed with me? Absolutely. Do I have the same desire? You betcha! But having that desire is only one component. Neither of us is fifteen, and life is much too complicated to act purely on our libidos."

"For you, that might well be true, and in fact, I believe it is. Violet, on the other hand, is closer to fifteen than twenty-one in terms of emotional development, and her thinking is more like, if you'll pardon the expression, a horny teenager than an adult who has learned to deal with their sexual urges."

"Who says that's the case?" I asked with a grin.

Nancy laughed, "OK, but you implied you were able to control those urges, at least somewhat. I suspect strongly that you and Keiko were not intimate for long periods of time during her chemo and then towards the end. I also, based on our conversations, suspect you were completely faithful."

"Your suspicions are correct."

"And one of your struggles after her death has been what is a valid expression of your sexuality, given your obviously deep feelings for her."

"Yes. One thing I've concluded is that I simply can't invite anyone to sleep in the bed Keiko and I shared. I'm going to replace it when I move in April or May."

"I see you're wearing a ring on your right hand. Did you move it?"

"No. Japanese wear them on their right hands. Keiko and I followed the older tradition of exchanging engagement rings, which we both wore on our right hands, again, following Japanese tradition."

"Do you find it surprising that you operate on a mix of emotion and logic?"
Nancy asked.

"I certainly never had to deal with the kinds of emotional challenges growing up that I've had since Keiko's diagnosis."

"I'm going to tell you something you already know, but it has to be said -- Violet is operating on emotion. And she, like you, is experiencing those emotions for the first time. The Violet you met would never have contemplated a sexual relationship."

"No, she wouldn't have," I agreed.

"Violet is not under psychological or psychiatric care, so I can't advise one way or the other. All I can do is exhort you to be very careful and to understand, as best you can, what it would mean to her."

I nodded, "I made the point of talking to her about my vision of the future for exactly that reason. That gave her pause, and had I not said that she would likely have pressed forward. I said it because I promised her that I would never intentionally do anything to hurt her and would do my utmost to protect her and keep her safe."

"That is exactly what she needs," Nancy said. "That is what her parents should have done, and instead, they hurt her in ways you and I may never truly fathom."

"If such a place existed, there would be a special place in Hell for her parents, one where the tortures were infinitely worse. Eternal punishment seems fitting for their heinous crime, but life in prison will have to do, at least for her dad. Her mom, on the other hand, got off easy despite aiding and abetting the abuse."

"Your anger and indignation are completely understandable, but don't let them consume you or drive you to do something you might regret."

"I'm a pacifist."

"And yet, the kind of thing that happened to Violet could drive even the most committed pacifist to violence."

I nodded, "I can see that."

"We're out of time, but please speak to someone. You can always call me, but I think the Buddhist monk might be more effective because of the tie to Keiko's family and traditions."

"Thanks, Nancy."

"You're welcome!"

I left her office, joined Violet, and we left the building. We walked silently towards her house, and after about a block, I felt Violet's hand brush mine. When it brushed a second time, I took her hand in mine, and we walked hand-in-hand the rest of the way to her house. We went inside, she made a pot of coffee, and we went to sit in her front room.

"Can I ask what you and Nancy talked about?" Violet inquired once we'd sat down on the couch.

"Me, mostly, and how I'm dealing with Keiko's death. Obviously, we talked about my relationship with you, but it really was mostly her expressing concern for my emotional and mental health. She suggested I see someone, and her conclusion was the Buddhist monk at the temple who conducted Keiko's services would be a good choice."

"She's worried you're bottling up your emotions?"

"Yes, not to mention all the stress I'm under from work, Bev, and most importantly, Keiko."

"Are you going to?"

"I think so," I replied. "How was your talk?"

"Good. We talked about you and me, of course, but also Lily and Kallie."

"Did you tell her what Lily suggested?"

Violet laughed softly, "I did. She laughed but then said I needed to consider what that would mean and that you and I should discuss our relationship."

"She advised me to be careful, which was unnecessary, given I promised you I would never, ever do anything to hurt you, and I'm sure you expressed that to Nancy."

"I did. I believe you, and she believes you, too."

"Are you ready to have the conversation? If not, just say so."

"I want to tell you what Nancy said about that, but I think I should tell you what I'm thinking first. I'm positive we both know what will happen if we kiss, but I need more time to think because of the curveball you threw me about the future."

"Take all the time you need," I said.

"When I told Nancy what you explained about the future, she wasn't surprised, but she was somewhat concerned about making what appears to be a permanent decision so soon after Keiko died. She believes your thinking will evolve over time, but she also agrees that I can't assume you will ever want to marry again. According to her, I have three options -- decide to stay close friends and never be

together; accept that we may never be a couple and be with you without any expectations of being a couple; or wait and see. Her advice was to wait and see."

"The first and third options are, in effect, the same," I replied. "Because even if you decided you simply want to remain friends, you would have the option of changing your mind in the future, assuming I followed the path I laid out."

"I see your point," Violet said. "I did say one other thing to her, and I know how this will sound, but I am sure of one thing -- it's either you or nobody. I'm not saying that to try to pressure you or encourage you to do something you don't think is right."

"Did you tell Nancy that?"

"Yes. I simply don't see how I could ever get close enough to anyone else to do that. And I'm OK with that. Nancy said she understood."

"I'm going to guess that Nancy suggested your thinking would evolve, just as she believes mine will."

Yes, she does feel my thinking will evolve, as will yours. I don't believe mine will because the idea of dating scares me and I don't know if I'd ever feel safe. I also don't want to have to tell anyone else about what happened to me."

"I think I understand," I replied.

"She said something else, too -- that being with you might change my thinking in ways I can't predict. That was when I told her I had considered just doing it to get past my fears and my nervousness."

"I think that would be risky," I replied.

"I'm sure Nancy does, too. Should we make lunch so you can go meet your friend?"

"That sounds good."

We made lunch, ate, cleaned up, and Violet walked me to the door. We hugged, but this time she tightened her arms, pressing her body firmly against mine. I returned the tight hug, and we held it for what seemed like minutes but was, in reality, about thirty seconds. Violet kissed my cheek, released me, then watched as I walked to my car.

As I drove away, I thought about the conversations we'd had and Nancy's observation that Violet was, at least with regard to relationships, acting like a fifteen-year-old just discovering the realities of a physical relationship and trying to make sense of the urges she was having and the complexity of relationships.

Our relationship was complex and ever-evolving, and we'd likely be in a very different place if it hadn't been for Keiko. But I couldn't go back in time, and I wouldn't if I could because I was positive I'd done the right thing with Keiko. I wondered, though, what decision I'd have made if Violet had progressed to the same point a year ago.

If I were honest with myself, I'd have chosen Violet and never become involved with Keiko. That would likely also have foreclosed having a baby with Bianca. That world would be so different that it was almost impossible to imagine at this point. While I didn't believe in destiny or fate or anything like that, Keiko and I had come into each other's lives at precisely the right time for me to walk her terrible path with her. Walking that path had helped both of us, despite the ultimately tragic outcome of her untimely death.

As I pulled into a parking garage near the School of the Art Institute dorms, I thought about my obligations, how best to balance them, and how to forge the

best future for myself, my soon-to-be-born daughter, and my closest friends. Obviously, at least in my mind, work -- or more specifically, my clients -- had to come first because that provided the resources to meet all my other obligations.

My personal life was about to be upended by the birth of my daughter, who had to be my primary concern. Nothing could be more important than providing her with a safe, stable environment. That had been driven home by how my mom had cared for me and the unfolding nightmare with Heather. While circumstances meant having a nanny, I had no intention of foisting Sofía on her as a way of shirking my responsibilities.

After Sofía, there were Bianca and Deanna, to whom I had critical -- but differing -- obligations. Bianca as my partner in raising Sofía, a confidante, and a future partner should I eventually strike out on my own. Deanna as her patron and advisor, and she was, at least for the moment, my closest confidante. I couldn't imagine a future without them in it.

The same was true for Violet, though my relationship with her was complicated by her past and my recent history. We needed to find the correct way forward that ensured we'd be the closest of friends, even if that meant never becoming lovers. There was little doubt in my mind that she would, at some point, she would ask me to take her to bed; the question would be on what terms.

Beyond those important women, including a soon-to-arrive very young one, there were my male friends, starting with Jack. If things went the way he and Bianca predicted, we'd become partners in a firm we ran. I was still on the fence about that, trying to balance my loyalty to Noel Spurgeon and my visceral distaste for the way the secretaries were treated. Of course, it was possible my hand might be forced if he were ever called to account for his predilection for underage girls.

Finally, there were the boys -- Costas, Trevor, Dustin, and Archie, who were all good friends. I saw very little of Stuart and almost nothing of Tom because of their jobs and Tom's imploding marriage. My obligations to them weren't as strong as to Jack and the young women, but I resolved to be the best friend I possibly could.

As I got out of my car, I refocused on the present and recalled Deanna's question about continuing to see Stefi. My answer -- that I wouldn't let it distract me from those most important to me -- had presaged the internal dialogue I'd just had about my obligations. Whether or not I'd see her a third time would depend on how she might fit into my busy life, if at all.

When I walked into the dorm building, a monitor at the desk called up to Stefi's room, and two minutes later, she appeared in the lobby. She signed me in, and more or less dragged me to the elevator and then from the elevator into her room, where a thin blonde girl was sitting on the bed.

"This is my friend, Tara," Stefi said. "She was just leaving, right Tara?"

Tara laughed, "Hi and bye!"

As she passed Stefi, Tara whispered, 'hot!', then left the room, closing the door behind her. Stefi locked the door and turned to me.

"Don't you have on too many clothes?" she asked.

"If I do, you do!" I declared.

We both quickly undressed, and Stefi pushed me to sit on the edge of the bed and knelt in front of me.

"All day?" she asked with a sly smile, then planted a kiss on the tip of my dick, which was standing at full attention.

"Only a fool would object!"

"You want to screw, right?"

"And lick you, too."

"Well, let me do this, then you can lick me, screw me, and then I can suck you for the rest of the day!"

She didn't wait for an answer and began kissing and licking my shaft and sack, occasionally pressing my erection firmly against her cheek. After innumerable kisses, she parted her lips and took me slowly into her mouth, sucking gently and swirling her tongue. She grasped me with one hand and began stroking while she cupped my sack with her other hand.

I leaned back on my elbows and watched as she made love to my dick with her mouth. Her slow ministrations gradually increased in speed, and about ten minutes later, she was bobbing and stroking fast, sucking hard, and gently squeezing my balls. The pressure built, and I eventually reached the point of no return. I groaned as I twitched, and cum jetted into Stefi's mouth. After the last spurt, she swallowed and continued pleasuring me for two minutes before releasing me.

I moved to lie on my side and patted the bed next to me. Stefi got in and lay on her back. I kissed her softly, then did something I hadn't done the previous Saturday -- kissed, licked, and sucked her nipples. Stefi clearly enjoyed that, as she moaned softly the entire time. I kissed my way down her abdomen and her mons then parted her labia with my tongue. I flicked her clit, causing her to moan, and when I closed my mouth around her and sucked, she groaned deeply.

I continued pleasuring her until I was hard and brought her off four times with my mouth while strumming her nipples with my thumb. After the fourth orgasm, I moved up, grasped my shaft, rubbed my glans along her slick labia, then plunged into her, burying myself deeply in her tight, slick pussy.

Stefi wrapped her legs around me, and we began moving, gently at first, but then more forcefully. The blowjob had, as they usually did, ensured I could go longer, and we fucked hard for fifteen minutes before the spasms of Stefi's third orgasm brought me off, and I pumped cum deep inside her. When my orgasm had run its course, I pulled out, slid down, and gave Stefi one more orgasm with my tongue.

"Do you like how that tastes?" she asked.

"Yes, very much. I'm curious what you think, given you didn't insist I wash after we screwed."

"I honestly didn't even think about it until after I had you in my mouth again, but it's not bad. Have you tasted yours?"

"I did kiss you after the blowjobs, in case you forgot!"

Stefi laughed, "But not until after we screwed, too! What do you think?"

"It's no big deal, and it's pretty diluted by the time we kiss."

"So you've never actually tasted it like I tasted myself on your lips and on your dick?"

I knew *exactly* what was going to happen if I answered the question.

"I have. A girl French kissed me without swallowing, and I nearly threw up because of the idea. I got past that, and I guess the answer is that it's more a texture thing than a taste thing."

"Would you be OK with me French kissing you after?"

"If you want to, I'm willing. I'm also willing to lick you while you suck me, if you want."

"You could, some; I really get off on sucking you."

And suck she did -- five times before she suggested we order pizza.

"If it's OK with you, I'm going to invite Tara to eat with us," Stefi said.

"That's fine with me," I replied

Stefi called in an order for pizza, and then we went to shower so we could dress.

"I was surprised you only French kissed me before swallowing one time," I said as we sat on the bed after our showers and waited for the pizza.

"I'm greedy!" she declared mirthfully. "There's something about sucking and swallowing that is sexy and satisfying. I don't have orgasms, but even so, it makes me feel really good. And I'm sure you noticed that right after I swallow, I orgasm easily and really hard from your tongue."

"But three of the five times, you preferred just sucking."

"I really, really like doing that, and it's not as if you didn't give me lots of orgasms with your mouth and from screwing, along with those two times we did it at the same time."

"And you discovered this about yourself because I posed naked for your drawing class!"

Stefi laughed softly, "I would NEVER have thought that. Before that session where you were totally naked, I planned for my first time to be my wedding night and thought oral sex was gross and dirty. Seeing you naked totally changed me! I gave a blowjob, swallowed, had sex, and had you lick me, and not a wedding ring or engagement ring in sight!"

"And how do you feel?"

Stefi smirked, "Screwed! But seriously? I don't regret it in any way, shape or form, and if you're free next Saturday, I'm happy to suck you all day again! Or we can screw all day if you want, so long as you let me suck you at least once."

"I'm busy the next two Saturdays," I said. "As for what you suggested, there is a compromise -- screw, but finish in your mouth."

"The best of both worlds!" she declared. "We can do that after pizza. You can go twice more at least, right?"

"I think so, yes. It really was just seeing me naked that flipped the switch, so to speak?"

"Yes! I mean, I was fascinated, and I thought it was gorgeous! When I started drawing, that's what I drew first after the rough outlines. As I drew it, I wondered what it would look like hard, and when I imagined that, I wanted to kiss and hug it. The more I thought about it, the more I wanted to do it. The first night, I only thought about that, and it was all I was going to do if you said yes. But then I started getting these other feelings and Ideas, and I knew if I did suck you that I was going to give up my virginity, too.

"I wanted all of that, which is why I gave you my number. Truth be told, it was way better than my fantasy because I had NO idea how it was going to make me feel or how good you could make me feel. Doing it changed my entire life, and I'm happy! In fact, I'm happier than I have been since I started High School. I finally found what was missing, even though I didn't know it was missing, if that makes sense."

"I may be venturing into an area that I shouldn't, but what about church?"

"Billy Joel was right! The sinners have MUCH more fun! I went to church because I always went to church and believed because I had always believed. Seeing you naked...broke the spell, I guess. It doesn't bother me in any way, and I don't regret it. In a way, it set me free and my art is better because it's not bound by worrying what my pastor or my parents might think."

The phone rang, and Stefi answered it. She acknowledged that the pizza had arrived, then called Tara to let her know. After the call, Stefi went down to get the pizza and Cokes and returned with Tara following her into the room.

"Whew!" Tara exclaimed, wrinkling her nose. "Open a window!"

Stefi laughed, and once she put down the pizza, she cracked open the window to let in some fresh air.

"I hear you're a stockbroker," Tara said as we dug into the thin-crust pepperoni pizza.

"I am. What's your focus?"

"Fashion design."

"Clothes?" I asked.

"Yes. For teens and younger kids."

"What year?"

"Sophomore. How long have you been a stockbroker? You seem about the same age as my older brother, who's twenty-one."

"I'm twenty-one, and I've had my license for just over a year."

"You don't have to go to college for that?"

"No. You just have to be able to pass the licensure exams."

"I bet that pays really well."

"If you're good, you can make a lot of money; if not, you can lose your shirt."

"How good is he, Stefi?" Tara asked with a smirk.

"I have no idea!" Stefi declared. "I've never seen him at work!"

Both girls laughed, and I joined in.

"Are you from Chicago?" Tara asked.

"Goshen, Ohio. I moved here after I graduated from High School in 1981. You?"

"Madison, Wisconsin. Mind if I ask where you live?"

"Rogers Park, but I'm moving to a condo at 175 East Delaware Place."

"The Hancock Center?"

"Yes."

"He's absolutely good if he can afford a condo there!" Tara declared.

"Those two things have nothing to do with each other!" Stefi smirked, causing both Tara and me to laugh at the juxtaposition.

"Cute!" Tara declared.

"How did you two meet?" I asked.

"Our laundry schedules lined up back in September," Stefi said. "We got to talking, then we started hanging out."

"And you met Jonathan because HE was hanging out!" Tara teased.

All of us laughed again.

"True!" Stefi declared.

"Are you guys going to be a couple?" Tara asked.

"I told you we're just having fun!" Stefi said. "Don't scare him away!"

"Scare him away?" Tara asked. "No chance! I want to borrow him!"

"I'm not sharing my new toy!" Stefi declared. "I'm not done playing with it!"

I laughed, both because the girls were funny and also in relief that Stefi didn't have any specific designs on me beyond sex.

"Then I'll see you later!" Tara said. "Bye, Jonathan!"

"Bye!"

She left, and Stefi locked the door behind her.

"How do you want to do it?"

"I'll lick you, we screw, and because you like to suck so much after I give you a pair of orgasms, you suck me until I cum. Best of both worlds, as I said!"

We did that three times before midnight, and I was completely spent from having cum more than any other day in my life.

"I'll see you in class, so just let me know when you're free on a Saturday!" Stefi said when she escorted me to the lobby so she could sign me out. She did, we exchanged a quick kiss, and I left the building. I walked quickly to the parking garage, got into my car, and headed home.



March 18, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Did you see the message on the pad by the phone?" CeCi asked when I came downstairs on Sunday morning to have breakfast.

"I did. I'll return the call around noon."

"Morning!" Bianca declared.

"Hi. How are you feeling?"

"Tired. And I am SO ready to have this baby!"

"Morning!" Deanna said, joining us in the kitchen. "Jonathan? Natasha and I are ready to begin making purchases. How do you want to handle it?"

"I'll write you a check for a quarter of it. Just deposit it in your account and track your spending. When it runs low, let me know, but also let me know if you think you might go over the budget."

"That'll work," she said.

"I'll do that right after breakfast."

We all ate breakfast, then Juliette, CeCi, Deanna, and I did chores, including mopping the floors, doing laundry, and cleaning the bathrooms. When we finished, I made a pot of coffee and everyone except Jack and Kristy sat down together in the great room.

"We really should get a cleaning service," Deanna said when we finished.

"There's one recommended by the condo association. Want me to check into it?"

"Yes, please. With all of us working or in school or both, we don't have a lot of free time."

"You should consider setting up a household account," Bianca said. "And maybe give two of us access to it. You just transfer money to it each month and use it to pay utilities, for groceries, and so on. That way three of us can do those things and not worry about reimbursements. And we can just deposit our rent to it as well."

"Let me talk to Bob Black to make sure there aren't any gotchas with that, but it makes sense to me."

"The other thing that probably makes sense is to figure out the average we spend on groceries each month and just deposit that, too, rather than tracking everything to the penny each month. You could keep a spreadsheet and use a rolling average of the past year. If there are significant extras, we figure it out."

"I'm all for simple," I said.

"That makes it easier for everyone," CeCi observed. "We just pay the same amount each month."

"I already have a spreadsheet, so we can just take it from there," I said. "We'll start on the first of day of the next month after we move."

We finished our coffee, and everyone did their own thing until lunch. For me, it was continuing to read *Les Misérables*. When I finished it, I had two other long books to read that Keiko had read -- *Roots* and *The Stand*. After lunch, I returned the phone call that had come in while I'd been out on Saturday afternoon.

"Hi, it's Jonathan returning your call."

"Hi," Teri said. "I'm home on break and wanted to see how you're doing."

"I'm OK," I said. "How is school?"

"Basically the same as when I last spoke to you. I've still avoided the 'Freshman Fifteen', I'm making straight A's, practicing violin, taking lessons, and playing in the symphony. How is work?"

"I'm doing well, but it's a tough year so far in the stock market."

"Well, from what I know about you, I'm sure you'll figure out how to make money! Are you free some evening this week?"

"Tomorrow or Tuesday are free; on Wednesday, I'm going to a Hawks game, and on Thursday, I have my monthly dinner with Jeri's cabal."

"How about tomorrow? Teri asked.

"Sure. Where would you like to eat?"

"Greektown works."

"Sounds good. I'll pick you up at your house at 5:30pm, if that's OK."

"It is. See you then!"

Just after I said 'goodbye' and hung up, the doorbell rang and I went to answer it.

"Hi!" Katy and Esme exclaimed in unison.

"Hi," I replied.

I invited them in, and they each gave me a hug, and I walked with them to the great room where Bianca was relaxing on the couch with her legs up. She stood and hugged her cousin.

"You are HUGE, *prima!*" Esme exclaimed. "Soon, right?"

"Three weeks, give or take."

"Have your mom and dad chilled?"

"Not really, but grandma is cool. She's going to help out for a few weeks after Sofía is born. How is Princeton?"

"We're both making straight A's and having the time of our lives!" Esme declared. "Right, Katy?"

"Right! How are you doing, Jonathan?"

"Work is good, and I'm working on getting my head straight."

"I can't even begin to imagine," Katy replied.

"I'll leave you three to hang out," I said. "I'll be in the Japanese room reading. Dinner is 6:00pm; we're having Chinese delivered."

"Cool!" Katy exclaimed.

I left and went back to the Japanese room, where Deanna joined me, taking a break from painting to read an art theory textbook. I read and relaxed until our food was delivered, and all my housemates, plus Esme and Katy, shared the six separate dishes, plus hot and sour soup and eggrolls. When we finished eating, Katy pulled me aside.

"I know it might be too soon," she said. "But if you're interested, Esme and I are interested."

"Ask me again in June, OK? I promise to consider it."

"Classes actually end the first week in May."

"Then ask me in May!" I chuckled.

"We will!" Katy agreed. "I totally understand, too, and I know you're still hurting. Would you consider doing a favor for me?"

"What's that?"

"Throw a graduation party for my sister and three friends?"

"Let me guess," I said with a grin, "you want me to play games with them? *Pin the tail on the donkey* where I'm the donkey, and it's their tails that are pinned?"

Katy laughed, "That wasn't what I had in mind, but you never know!"

"Sorry," I chuckled. "With my history with you and Esme..."

"Obviously! And it was a funny joke. They want to have the party someplace with no parents around; not because they plan to do anything crazy, but they're all eighteen, so they want to have fun without the parental units."

"I'll have moved to the condo by then, but we can host it here. I'll clear it with Jack. How many?"

"Around a dozen total, evenly mixed, guys and girls, if that's cool."

"It is."

"Thanks! I'll call you later in the week to set a day. And you never know, maybe they will be interested! Lexi is my little sister, after all!"

"Is she planning on attending Princeton?"

"Yes."

"I don't know that the university will survive!"

XLVIII. I'm Done Arguing, and I'm Done Fighting

March 19, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday, the Federal Reserve did exactly what we expected, tightening by half a point, making the prime rate 11.5%. That was historically high, but just over half the 21.5% of December 1980. The market had mostly priced in the increase, but as the Research team had projected, gold was down and was all but certain to continue down.

My positions were balanced for the interest rate increase, so I didn't need to make any immediate changes. On the plus side, all Treasury instruments would earn an additional interest, which would help with my overall return, at least in ensuring I beat the hurdle rate. Missing that was a serious negative, even if I beat the market, as Spurgeon Capital only made a profit if we beat it.

After lunch and the gym, Tony and I met with Joel, Mark, Scott, and Pete to revise our interest rate projections. All six of us agreed the fed would tighten again in April, but we were split on if they would in May and June. After a healthy debate, we set the target interest rate for June to 12.5%. We lowered our DJIA and S&P targets but increased our Nikkei 225 target because the Japanese market was heading in the opposite direction of the US markets.

At 3:00pm, I left the office to go to the bank to set up the household account, added Bianca's and Deanna's names as signers, and took signature cards with me for them to sign. At 5:00pm, I left the office and drove to Bridgeport to pick up Teri. She opened the door when I rang the bell.

"Hi," she said. "I'm ready."

She called 'goodbye' to her parents, and we walked to my car. We got in, and about ten minutes later, I parked across the street from the restaurant. When we went into the restaurant, we were seated immediately. We ordered drinks, and the waiter brought them immediately and, a few minutes later, took our orders.

"What's been going on in your life?" Teri asked once the waiter left.

"Work is going well, as I said on the phone. I've signed several new clients, and I have a meeting tomorrow morning to hopefully sign four new clients. In addition, I hired Violet as my administrative assistant. I just completed the course for a Series 30 -- or Branch Manager's -- license. When I pass the exam in May, I'll be able to run my own trading desk, though I'm going to stay as Head of Research for a few years.

"Outside of work, things have been all over the map. My friend Bev's husband, Glen, was being investigated for statutory rape, and the two of them tried to run to Canada with Heather. That created a complete mess, though Heather is with her grandparents."

"The teacher? I thought Bev was over the age of consent!"

"She was. He apparently had sex with a pair of Freshman girls, possibly more. I got caught up in the mess because they were arrested, and that made me Heather's legal guardian. I arranged to pick her up in North Dakota, and Bev's parents came to Chicago to get Heather from me. Now there's an ugly custody battle in Ohio, and I'm involved as a witness, though only by affidavit and possibly a deposition."

"Fourteen? And he's in his forties? That's just disgusting!"

"I'm not judging, but the law sure will."

"You think it's OK?"

"I think I don't know enough about what happened, and we both know girls that young have sex. I do my best to stay out of other people's business, and that seems to work well for me. But enough about that. On a positive note, I bought a condo in the Hancock Center, and I'm moving in late April or early May."

"Just you?"

"Bianca, Juliette, Deanna, CeCi, and me. Well, and my daughter with Bianca, who'll be born before we move. Jack and Kristy are renting the house from me."

"What floor?"

"The 91st and 92nd. It's six bedrooms and is configured similar to a townhouse."

"You must be doing even better than I thought!"

"I am, though I can only do it because I have a low-rate mortgage through work. My commute will be three elevator trips. The nice thing is, both Bianca and I will be that close to home to be sure we can care for our daughter, though we'll have help during the day."

"I honestly don't know what to say to all of that other than I'm impressed."

"Thanks."

"Are you taking a class?"

"International finance," I replied. "Over the summer, I'll take two, and then in the Fall, I'll start an independent study class to complete my degree in about two years, with credit for work."

"So you'll finish before I do."

"So it would seem, but I need to work that out with my advisor."

The waiter brought our small Greek salads, and we began eating.

"I know it might be too soon and out of line to even ask, but are you dating?"

"I saw the granddaughter of one of my clients twice, but she's a devout Catholic, so that went exactly no place. I've seen another girl twice, but I don't see that going anywhere."

"Not to be a bitch, but why not call me?" Teri asked.

"I don't think you're going to like my answer," I said. "I struggled with how I could move forward and properly honor my relationship with Keiko and honor her memory, combined with a promise I made to her. I can explain in detail, but the bottom line is that I don't think I'll remarry, ever."

"And you didn't think to call me, knowing how I feel about you?"

"Blunt answer?"

"That is your way, so, yes."

"First, I was basically just testing the waters; second, I honestly didn't know how you felt after I had married Keiko; third, I knew you'd be home for the Summer

in June; fourth, I'm not committing to anyone; fifth, for all I knew, you had a boyfriend; and sixth, I seriously doubt you'd accept the terms."

"Don't you think you at least owe me the courtesy of asking me?"

"I suppose I do, and maybe I should have called you, but honestly, that would have been once I had sorted things out further and felt I could enter into a relationship of some kind. You called Saturday, I called back, and here we are, with me telling you where I am face-to-face rather than over the phone."

"I'll give you that, but a call would have been nice."

"I'll grant that I could have called and probably should have, but we're here now and can have a conversation, assuming you want to."

"I'm not sure there is a conversation to be had if marriage is completely off the table for all time. You've gone from 'sleep with me in the hope that we would marry' to 'sleep with me with no hope that we would marry'. And you think that would be acceptable to me?"

"No, I don't. Not to be a jerk, but I was positive that you wouldn't, which meant calling you would only have annoyed you, and we probably wouldn't be having dinner together and talking face-to-face. To me, doing this is better than saying it over the phone, and you at least get a nice meal out of it."

"I will give you credit for saying it in person and not leading me on. How do you see your life unfolding if you don't ever marry?"

"First, not marrying does not mean I won't have a long-term monogamous relationship, and it also doesn't mean I wouldn't have more kids. I just wouldn't have a 'second wife'."

"Because you don't want to replace Keiko?"

"That is it in a nutshell. I promised her I'd be cremated and interred with her when my time comes as well."

"And that promise means you wouldn't be buried with a second wife."

"Correct."

"Not to be a bitch or insensitive, but that promise to Keiko overrides literally *everything*?"

"I'm a man of my word."

"Let me turn the tables," Teri said. "What kind of future could you offer?"

"Think about what I said -- the only thing off the table is a marriage certificate. May I make an observation?"

"I'm not going to like this, am I?"

"Probably not. You have this idea in your head of what you want in a lifetime partner. I don't conform to that, so you are insisting I change to fulfill what you want. Your proposed compromises all revolve around my conforming. You have to know by now that isn't likely, and that leads me to ask myself why you keep trying. You are working awfully hard at something with little or no chance of success if you expect me to change who I fundamentally am.

"That leads me to conclude that one of three things is true. Given the circumstances and given your persistence, I have to conclude that either you're a determined gold-digger; you're so hopelessly in love with me that you can't let go; or you want to fuck so badly you can't let go."

"You can't be serious!" Teri exclaimed, clearly offended.

"Tell me another option, then," I replied. "You have relentlessly pursued me despite all the roadblocks, and in your pursuit, you changed timing and tactics, but it always came down to me accepting your conditions. Remember, I don't object to your criteria for a mate as wrong or inappropriate; it's just that I cannot conform to who you want me to be.

"Put the shoe on the other foot. If I relentlessly pursued you and insisted you change to be who I wanted you to be and act how I wanted you to act, you'd have shown me the door long ago. But you haven't because I'm not pursuing you. I am, on the other hand, making it clear what I can reasonably offer."

"Which, in the end, comes down to wanting to sleep with whomever you want."

"While that's true on its face, it is not a full representation of my thinking. Remember, nothing I said precludes the possibility of a long-term, monogamous relationship. If a marriage certificate is mandatory for you, then there isn't a solution because I can't commit to ever agreeing to marry.

"The thing is, that piece of paper is pretty much irrelevant to the relationship. It's keeping your vows, not the piece of paper, that matters. All the paper does is provide a few government, social, and legal benefits. But those benefits come with strings attached, including complications in ending the relationship.

"And if you're worried about those benefits, nearly all of them can be gained through appropriate contracts. And before you freak out about that word, I've heard it used about marriage, even without it being patriarchal. Finances, child custody, medical power of attorney, and a host of other things have other solutions. What specifically does the piece of paper mean?"

"It's a commitment," Teri replied.

I shook my head, "No, it's not. It's formal legal recognition of the commitment, it's not the commitment in and of itself."

"You are hopelessly pedantic and logical."

"Mandatory traits in my chosen profession," I replied.

The waiter brought our main courses and took away our empty salad plates.

"I maintain you are going to have serious problems in your relationships," Teri said.

"So you say, but I believe I can find a like-minded partner or partners. There are absolutely long-term relationships that don't include a marriage certificate. If that's off the table for you, then I don't see a way forward. That said, I am curious about which of those three things is true or if you have a fourth possibility."

"I'll play your game for a moment. Which of those three do you believe is true?"

"I'd say, based on everything that has happened and been said, you aren't hopelessly in love with me. Evidence strongly suggests you aren't a gold digger. That leaves one possibility. And that possibility explains literally every interaction we've had since we met in math class."

"This I have to hear," Teri said skeptically.

"Because of what happened with your brother and your best friend, you set very specific criteria for when you would have sex. Every single thing you've done since we met has been to fulfill those criteria so you can do what you so badly want to do. That fits the pattern, and nothing that has happened between us

contradicts the overriding fact that you want to fuck, and you want to fuck so badly that you can't stand it. The problem is, your self-imposed criteria preclude the only solution available."

"You really are a smug bastard," Teri said flatly.

"Maybe, but I believe I've accurately analyzed the situation. As I said, the ball is in your court. You have, as I see it, two choices. Either we don't see each other again, or we fuck and see what happens. BUT that's not happening before the end of the semester because I'm not ready to enter into a relationship at this point."

"Back to 'put up or shut up'?" Teri asked, her eyes narrowing.

"That is what it boils down to," I said. "I don't want to fight with you. If you can't accept me for who I am, then you have to stop pursuing me. Bottom line? Go back to school, think about it, and call me in June if you want to move forward."

"You mean if I want to fuck," she said flatly.

"It's up to you, Teri. I'm done arguing with you and done fighting with you."

We finished our meal in relative silence and, by mutual consent, skipped dessert. After I paid the check, I drove her home and walked her to the door.

"Good night," she said as she unlocked the door.

"Good night. My number won't change when I move."

"You actually expect me to call you?"

Not only expect, but I was positive she would. Whether that led to the obvious result was a different question.

"I expect you to do what you feel is in your best interest," I said.

"Uh-huh."

She went into the house and closed the door behind her, so I walked back to my car. I got in, buckled in, and headed home.



March 20, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Tuesday morning, I heard from Gwen Meyer.

"A motion to compel was filed, along with a notice for an appearance next Monday at 9:00am. There is no need for you to come to court on Monday, as all that will happen is I'll file my appearance as your attorney, and a date will be set for a hearing on the motion. Your goal is to make this as difficult as possible for them, right?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll appear and file several motions aimed at nullifying the subpoena in Illinois. That will potentially require briefs, which will push the hearing to late April at the earliest. The outcome of those motions will give us clues as to whether the judge will force Miss Clemmons to sit for a deposition if and when they attempt to subpoena her."

"You're the expert," I said. "Do what you think is necessary to prevent it. I'm sure you'll do this, but please keep me fully informed about the chances for success at any given stage so I can make informed decisions about how to proceed."

"I will absolutely do that. One option is to ask the judge to issue a protective order based on our offer to sit. It helps that we've made that offer, as it puts the onus on Mr. Switzer to explain why they aren't willing to accept the conditions."

"I have a question that came to mind -- is it possible to take 'take the Fifth' in the deposition?"

"Only for matters where we reasonably believe it covers criminal activity. It's a double-edged sword -- it protects you from admitting elements of a crime, but it also waves a red flag that you believe you might have committed a crime. You're worried about the form stating you are Heather's father, right?"

"Yes, though Thomas Hart doesn't believe criminal charges are likely; the concern is civil and with regard to my SEC licenses."

"That's a more problematic situation, as taking the Fifth in a deposition is almost always limited to potential criminal charges. That said, given there is a remote chance of charges, it would be legitimate. The problem lies with how we convince the judge you aren't trying to avoid answering legitimate questions without revealing the nature of your concern.

"There is one other possible solution, and that is if the government were to get some kind of order based on you testifying against Glen Rodgers. We haven't discussed it in detail, but from what I understand, you have no material information with regard to the charges in Ohio. Is my understanding correct?"

"The only thing I know is that he and Bev were together when she was seventeen, and Ohio's age of consent is sixteen. To my knowledge, he hasn't been charged with anything with regard to her."

"OK. I'll be in Cook County Circuit Court on Monday and will call you that afternoon."

"Thanks, Gwen."

I hung up, and about ten minutes later, Violet and I left for Hart-Lincoln.

"Are you sure I should be in this meeting?" she asked as we rode the elevator down to the lobby.

"Yes. It's similar to the situation in Ohio. I plan to take you to every meeting with a potential new client. I don't see you as being an administrative assistant forever. If I do what Jack and Bianca are suggesting, I'm hoping you'll have a significant management role in running the firm."

"Seriously? Me?"

"Seriously. You. I would need someone I trusted without any reservations to be what amounts to a Chief Operations Officer. Spurgeon doesn't have one but really needs one. Mr. Spurgeon is far too involved in day-to-day matters, and it's not a good use of his time. That said, it's how he wants to run things, and it is up to him. But think about the things I'm starting to delegate to you already.

"You are absolutely not a secretary; that's why your title is Administrative Assistant. That indicates you handle all the administrative crap that I don't want to do and which isn't a good use of my time. Yes, I approve time off, but someone has to schedule it, ensure there are no conflicts, keep track of it, and report it to Personnel. Granted, that's a fairly simple task, but it's one that needs to be done."

"You're already planning?"

"In the sense that I'm going to make sure I have all my ducks in a row for that possible future, yes. But what I just said about a COO is really about how Spurgeon could operate more efficiently. That said, it's not like Noel Spurgeon ignores efficiency improvements -- creating the Research Department is an example of him doing that."

We reached the lobby, walked out to the street, and walked towards the building where Hart-Lincoln had their offices.

"In this hypothetical future, what would Ellie do?"

"That remains to be seen and will depend on what she wants to do and what she's good at doing. But it's all speculation because, as I've said, unless something bad happens, I will be loyal to Noel Spurgeon. After all, he's given me the opportunity to be where I am now."

"That does make sense, and it's not like you aren't making a ton of money!"

"Always remember that for me, money is only a means to an end. My goal has always been a comfortable life where I didn't have to worry about money."

"So you found a job where worrying about money is your main job!" Violet declared.

I laughed, "True, but you know that I meant that in reference to growing up. Money is a tool or a facilitator, but it has its limits. And," I added with a sigh, "there are simply some things money can't buy."

"Keiko, right?"

"Yes. I'd have spent every dime I had if it could have saved her."

"We're almost there -- can I ask you what Ms. Meyer had to say?"

"Just that a motion to compel a deposition was filed and that Gwen will appear on my behalf on Monday. She'll file some motions, and they'll argue them sometime in April or May. Right now, I have twin goals -- avoid the deposition completely and drag it out as long as possible."

"Won't that cost you a lot of money?"

"Some, but from my perspective, I'm spending it on Heather."

"You really care for that little girl."

"I think I bonded with her because I was there when she was born. She's innocent and shouldn't suffer for whatever it is that's wrong with Bev. I know firsthand how hard it is to raise a kid on your own, but my mom never ran away. She was kicked out of her house, went to live with a friend, and was determined to find a way to care for me. Bev wasn't kicked out, and despite the fact that her dad would have gone ape over Glen, he would never have kicked Bev out of the house. And even if he had, my mom would have helped her, and so would I. Instead, she ran away."

We walked into the building and made our way to the elevators. Just over a minute later, we were in reception.

"Jonathan Kane and Violet Clemmons from Spurgeon Capital to see Thomas Hart," I said.

"He's expecting you, Mr. Kane. Chloé will be out in a moment."

"Thank you."

She made a short call, and thirty seconds later, Chloé arrived to escort us to the conference room where Thomas Hart and five middle-aged gentlemen were sitting.

"Good morning, Jonathan."

"Good morning, Tom. This is my executive assistant, Violet Clemmons."

"Welcome, Miss Clemmons," Tom said. "Let me make introductions. I have with me John Di Silvestro, Mark Pusateri, Tom DeAngelis, and Paul Scariano, all attorneys. Each of these men represents one of the investors I discussed with you, and they have the authority to act on behalf of their principals. I also have my colleague John Cerone, an attorney here at Hart-Lincoln."

"It's nice to meet you, gentlemen," I said. "Violet, would you hand out copies of the prospectus and the presentation folders, please?"

My presentation went along standard lines, and the questions were similar to those I'd received from the pension funds. That took about thirty minutes, and then there were questions relating to their principals.

"Can you guarantee absolute anonymity?" Mr. DeAngelis asked.

"You can certainly set up whatever structures are necessary to maintain privacy," I replied. "Mr. Hart or Mr. Cerone could advise you on the proper corporate entity or trust structure to limit exposure. Only our Legal and Compliance teams would see those documents. Even I don't need to see them, and we only use investor names in marketing materials if we have a signed release that allows us to do so."

"I know you have to put those disclaimers on all your materials," Mr. Pusateri said. "But give me the straight dope -- are you going to lose our money?"

"There is always a risk," I replied. "All I can do is point to Spurgeon's ten-year track record and my trading strategy as outlined in the prospectus. Remember, my money is in this fund, as is some of Noel Spurgeon's, and we only make money if you make money."

"The 2% fee is charged no matter what, right?"

"Yes, though that covers our expenses, including trading costs, staff salaries, rent, and so on. Our actual profit comes from the 20% fee on gains above 8%. Remember, forward-looking statements are not guarantees, but I expect to have gains of at least double the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average."

"You'll take our phone calls?" Mr. DeAngelis asked. "And I mean immediately, not a week later, and not pawned off to an underling?"

"You can take that to the bank," I replied. "If I am not in the office, Violet will know where I am and be able to get hold of me. It's my practice to meet with each client on a quarterly basis, though that's obviously up to each individual client."

"Is there anything else?" Thomas Hart asked.

The men all shook their heads.

"Violet has gift certificates for each of your principals for two to dine at Smith & Wollensky on me. Violet?"

She handed each of the four men an envelope and then one to Thomas Hart.

"Thank you, gentlemen," I said. "I look forward to hearing from you."

We all shook hands, and Thomas Hart called for Chloé to escort us back to reception. Violet and I took the elevators down to the lobby and began walking back to the Hancock Center.

"Are you concerned about all five of them being Italians?" Violet asked.

I chuckled, "I did notice, but I can't imagine Thomas Hart being involved with the Chicago Outfit! When they busted the judges and lawyers in Greylord, nobody from Hart Lincoln was indicted, and I haven't even heard any rumors. Is it possible those guys were in the Mob? I suppose anything is possible, but I can't imagine the Mafia investing money with Spurgeon."

"Why? Don't gangsters want to make money and retire?" Violet asked.

I laughed, "Well, yes, of course, but why would they subject themselves to SEC regulation? Not to mention, Legal and Compliance will vet them, and that includes the principals they want to keep anonymous, at least to some point."

"Why would they want to be anonymous?"

"Jeri warned me that as soon as people knew I had money, they'd come with their hands outstretched -- charities, politicians, inventors, scam artists, and people simply looking for a handout. Right now, I'm flying under the radar, so to speak, but it's not going to last, especially after I made a political contribution to Congressman Charles Hayes' election committee and donated to the Leukemia Society of America in Keiko's name."

"Then how would they find you?"

"By finding out who Keiko was. There's a marriage certificate, along with other things that tie her to me. I've also heard that charities share donor lists."

"Do you plan to give to charity regularly?"

"Yes. I'll make a substantial donation every year to the Leukemia Society. I'm sure there will be other causes I feel are worthy in the future. One of the key lessons I learned from reading about men like Andrew Carnegie was philanthropy. He was responsible for building and endowing over 2500 libraries, mostly in the US, UK, and Canada. That started when he was in his late forties. He funded Carnegie Hall and a host of other educational and charitable causes.

"One of his guiding principles was that he would limit his salary from running his companies and use any excess income from royalties, dividends, or sales of companies for philanthropy. I agree with that, at least in concept, and as my income increases, I'll give a larger and larger portion to charity. Of course, I'll also ensure I provide for my daughter and any other children I might have."

"But you...uhm, never mind!"

"You were going to say something about me not planning to marry, right?"

"Yes, and I remembered your mom and dad were never married, and you and Bianca aren't married so that obviously isn't something that concerns you."

"To be blunt, I make enough money that I don't have to care what people think about that except for Bianca and whomever else I might have a kid with someday. That's not saying I will or I won't, just that if I did."

We reached the Hancock Center and rode the elevator up to 29, where we had lunch with Bianca. After lunch, I spent the afternoon on research, then at 5:00pm, I left the office to meet Beth for dinner at our usual haunt, Eli's The Place for Steak.

"I did take your advice," I said after we ordered. "I asked someone out twice, though it's not going anywhere because she's a devout Catholic."

"You'd sign up to be Jewish before you'd do that, even if it meant having a *bris*!"

I laughed, "Are you saying sex with you is SO good that I'd be willing to do that?"

"You've been very happy!"

"True, though you did promise you'd stop sleeping with me if we ever married!"

"Oh, I did not!" Beth declared. "It's the stereotype of the Jewish American Princess! That is not me! Not to mention, you know how much I like sex!"

"Possibly," I replied with a grin.

"If that's a challenge, you are *required* to allow me to accept it and prove it!"

"Which works in your favor whether you succeed or not!"

Beth rolled her eyes, "As if you've ever once complained! But back to the dates, I take it you've at least partly resolved your mental block?"

"Yes. Deanna helped me talk it through, and when I put all the pieces together, it came down to not wanting to feel as if I was replacing Keiko, which led to a pair of conclusions -- no sex with anyone else in the bed she and I shared and no plans to marry in the future."

"No sex in your bed, ever?" Beth asked, surprised.

"I'll have a new bed in the condo, so it'll be a different bed, different bedding, and be in a different room."

"And with you moving in April or May, it will be four months after she passed. It's a reasonable point to begin to consider taking a new lover or resuming a previous relationship."

"You?" I asked.

"All you need to do is ask," Beth replied. "No marriage, ever?"

"What I've said is that I won't rule it out completely because things could change and my thinking could evolve, but nobody should assume I'll ever be willing to marry."

"Confirmed bachelor, or just no paperwork?"

"No paperwork. I won't rule out a long-term, monogamous relationship, but I don't believe I'll ever marry again. I don't want a 'second wife', not to mention my commitment to Keiko to be interred next to her as her husband."

"Ah, now it makes sense," Beth said. "You believe the spiritual bond transcends this life?"

"I have no idea, and neither did Keiko, but she did say she hoped one day we'd be together. In my mind, that will be true symbolically and in the memories of her family and our friends. That's enough for me, and I don't have to ascribe it to any particular religious belief."

"In a sense, that's very Jewish -- in the Jewish Scriptures, it says 'G-d remembered Abraham', not in the sense of a forgotten memory, but in the sense of calling him

to mind or thinking about him. The Russian Orthodox continue that idea by saying 'Memory eternal' when someone dies."

"That's an idea I can get behind, though, without all the religious baggage that goes along with it. It's like the commands to love one another or care for widows and orphans -- those are commendable and don't need any religious belief to be implemented in our lives."

"That's true, though one could do them out of religious obligation. That's what a *mitzvah* is in Judaism -- doing good deeds to fulfill the commandments of the Law. In effect, my obligation to G-d is fulfilled by acts of kindness -- *mitzvah* -- to others. James, who you paraphrased, says the same thing in the Christian Scriptures -- '*This is perfect religion: to care for widows and orphans*'."

The waiter brought our salads, and we began to eat.

"Going back to your dates, how did you feel about it?"

"OK. And I didn't try to sabotage them; it was truly the fact that the young woman is a devout Catholic, and I can't meet her minimum standards any more than I could meet yours."

"The key is getting back on the horse after you've been thrown. There's no need to rush into anything, but taking off the straitjacket is a positive sign. What else are you doing?"

"Posing nude for one of Deanna's art classes."

Beth laughed, "I bet you raised some eyebrows!"

"You could say that! One of the gay guys in class hit on me."

"Probably a size queen!" Beth smirked.

"A what?"

"A trope about some gay men preferring partners with much larger-than-average dicks."

"I did turn him down, though I invited him to hang out with us."

"Any lesbians in the class?"

"One Deanna referred to as a 'dyke', who drew me similar to Michaelangelo's *David* rather than to scale.

Beth laughed so hard I thought she was going to cry.

"That's just perfect!" she said about thirty seconds later. "Man hater who takes revenge by minimizing the thing she hates and which she feels is central to a guy's ego."

"It backfired, though, because she was critiqued for not following the rubric, which was realistic representations. You don't seem surprised I did that."

"You don't subscribe to American Puritanism, so no, it didn't surprise me. You have a healthy self-image and have the self-confidence to do something like that. I suspect if you had the opportunity to visit a nude beach, you would."

"I would. In fact, that was proposed as something to do when I'm in Saint Martin later this year."

"If you're flying on the company jet, make sure it's configured with the sleeping cabin so you can join the Mile-High Club!"

"I'll see what I can do. Enough about me, how are things with you?"

"About the same. We did find a young tailor's apprentice in Tel Aviv, and my grandfather is working with an immigration lawyer to facilitate him coming here."

"That's good."

"No change on the boyfriend front, which I think was obvious when I said you just need to ask."

"And tie you up?" I asked with a grin.

Beth laughed, "I still want to do that when you're ready to ask, if you're willing."

"Assuming I decide to ask, unless you plan to invite me to your house and explain to your parents, it'll have to wait until after I move."

"You're just not thinking creatively enough! The apartment over the tailor shop is still empty, and it has a bed! All I'd need to do was put sheets on it and get soft ropes and a pair of handcuffs! You'll bring the nightstick!"

I chuckled, "Stupid porn scenes notwithstanding, I'm not going to club you with it!"

"*Insatiable*, right?"

"Yes. I saw that and *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*, and found them mostly boring and silly."

"And the scene where the guy gets done in the ass with the strap-on?" Beth asked.

"It was disconcerting to see that, and I honestly didn't see the attraction."

"Prostate stimulation can increase the intensity of male orgasm. I could demonstrate!"

I laughed, "Why am I not surprised you'd make that offer?"

"Because you're smart! That is not something I could even consider suggesting to Jeremy or Joshua, but with you, I could say it and not worry about you freaking out. We even discussed it obliquely with regard to Sophie and Ivy."

"True. Is that something you actually want to do?"

"Is that something you would actually do?"

"I asked you first!" I declared.

"You know I'm completely sexually liberated, at least as a heterosexual, though I draw the line at S&M, scat, and watersports."

"S&M?"

"Sadism and Masochism; giving or receiving pain. Something we both ruled out."

"Right. I just didn't know the initials. So that's a 'yes'?"

"Yes."

"Here's the REAL question -- receiving, too?"

"Asks the guy who is the metaphorical lover in Ezekiel!"

"You'll forgive me if I don't catch that reference."

"Ezekiel is a book in the Jewish Scriptures. He's writing about Israel following foreign gods, comparing Israel to a loose woman who...'*lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses*'."

"I know that verse! My friend Paula used it as an example of porn in the Bible."

"Did she also tell you about *Song of Solomon* where there are references to hard dicks and dripping pussies, just couched in poetry?"

"Yes, something about the guy being compared to the 'cedars of Lebanon'."

"Exactly," Beth said. "And referring to a rounded goblet, always dripping with wine on the girl."

"So, the answer to the question?"

"I think I'd allow it as part of an exchange," she said. "But I don't think either of us are enamored enough with the idea to agree. Let's leave it how we're leaving the light bondage. When you're ready to ask to have sex, I'll ask, and you can say 'yes' or 'no', and I'll ask, and you can say 'yes' or 'no'."

"I'm good with that."

XLIX. Preparations

March 21, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Wednesday, 3COM's IPO was completed, and I received my full allocation of 5000 shares. There was a ninety-day lock-up period during which I would pay a small 'fine' to the M&A firm that took them public, but I didn't feel I'd need to sell before then, and so long as the share rose by more than 35¢, I'd make a profit, even after the penalty was imposed. I had wanted more shares, but the total float wasn't large enough for that to happen.

At the end of the day, Violet and I left the Hancock Center together, as we had tickets to see the Hawks and the Winnipeg Jets.

"What are we doing for two hours?" she asked.

"I'd suggest dinner, but I know you enjoy our tradition of hot dogs, nachos, and Cokes at the stadium. How about Water Tower Place? We can browse the shops and get a snack if you want."

"Sure!"

That was what we did, opting to have soft pretzels as a snack. We spent a total of an hour in the mall before walking back to the Hancock Center to retrieve my car. We drove to the stadium, parked in the special lot, then made our way inside. We bought our hot dogs, nachos, and Cokes and made our way to our seats. I received knowing looks from several traders who had their girlfriends or secretaries as their guests, though what they thought they knew wasn't true.

The game was hard fought, with the teams tied 1-1 at the end of the first period, but the Hawks blew the game wide open in the second, scoring three goals in less than seven minutes to build a 4-1 lead. The Jets scored a goal in the third period, but the Hawks answered with back-to-back goals in a span of thirty-four seconds to go up 6-2, which is how the game ended.

"That was more like it!" I said happily as Violet and I left the stadium.

"Sure," Violet agreed, "but the Hawks are 27-40-8, and the Jets are only slightly better! This season is a write-off!"

"And yet, they have a shot at making the playoffs," I replied.

"And they'll be knocked out in the first round unless some miracle occurs!" Violet declared. "They need to get their act together!"

"Are you saying you don't want to join me for playoff games?" I asked.

"You'll be in big trouble if you take anyone else, Mr. Kane!"

"I would never do that, Miss Clemmons!"

"Did you see the looks that Mark and Bob were giving us?"

"Ignore them," I said. "There is literally no way to prevent them from assuming that we're just like them."

"I can't believe they're married and show up with their secretaries or mistresses!"

"You mean like when I was married and brought you to games? Where they saw us together before I hired you?"

"Oh!" Violet gasped. "But it's different because we weren't sleeping together!"

"We aren't now, either, but you know they assumed we were, even then. Externally, it fits the pattern."

"Except my chest is nowhere near as big as their dates!" Violet declared.

"That does seem to be the primary hiring criterion," I replied. "That said, yours are nicer."

"Nice try! They're both like double-D's! I'm way smaller!"

"And yet, perfect for a pixie such as yourself!"

"Only compared to you!" Violet declared. "OK, I'm not tall by any means, but most girls are only four or five inches taller than me. You're like a foot taller!"

"How about I just say you are properly proportioned and very sexy?"

"You really think that?"

"Long black hair, brown eyes, great smile, perfectly proportioned breasts, slightly flared hips, a cute butt, and muscular legs. What more is there to ask for? Add in a great personality, and you're a real catch, Miss Clemmons!"

"Flattery will get you...breakfast on Saturday!"

"I already get that without the flattery!"

"You really mean what you said?"

"Yes. It's what I thought that very first night in class. But after the gum incident, things went very differently from the way I thought they might."

"That was an invitation to have sex, wasn't it?" Violet asked as we reached the car.

I didn't answer until we were in the car, buckled in, and pulling away.

"More or less," I replied. "It implied 'swapping spit'."

"Implied nothing! You got my saliva in your mouth!"

"True," I agreed. "And obviously, a French kiss is the start down that particular road, though it doesn't always lead there."

"I think," Violet said quietly, "that if you French kiss me, it's going to be like you and Bev."

"Except for one thing -- I promised we'd take things slowly, in stages."

"Right, because hormones don't override EVERYTHING!" Violet declared. "You and Bev didn't use birth control, right?"

"No, we didn't."

"Hardly logical, practical, or analytical," Violet observed.

"My brain might have been addled by hormones," I allowed.

"As I said!"

"And yet, I also promised not to do anything that would hurt you, and that means emotionally or physically. In my mind, that means taking it slow and being gentle. The only way I'd consider anything else is if you expressly asked for it."

"Do what Lily said?" Violet asked with a smirk.

"That is an option, but not one I recommend for you. But then again, you have free will and are in control. If you decide you want to, and you want anything other than slow and gentle, you need to tell me."

"If we do, you'll still want to sleep with other girls, right?"

"It's safer to say I won't rule out being with other girls unless I make a commitment not to, and I am not ready to make any commitments that might be permanent. Remember, that's not never, just not now, and not something to assume will happen in the future. I think Nancy's surmise that my thinking will evolve is correct, but neither I nor anyone else can predict how."

"So it would just be sex for fun?"

"No. With you, it could only be making love. That's not to say it won't be fun but to say I care deeply for you. I just can't make any commitments now."

"You said something similar before Keiko," Violet countered.

"I did, but it was a question of 'when' not 'if' I would marry, and I was saying that I wasn't ready. Well, until I was. But now, it's 'if' with the odds heavily on 'no'. So, while it's similar, it's not the same. Does that make sense?"

"Yes."

"There is no rush," I said. "Nobody will come between us, and if I won't make a commitment to you that would guarantee you would fulfill my fantasies, I'm not going to make one to anyone."

"Me? Fantasies?"

"I told you what I thought of you that first night! The things we might do flashed through my head."

"Because you're a guy!" Violet declared mirthfully.

"Guilty as charged!"



March 22, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Good evening, Master Jonathan," Karl said when I arrived at Jeri's house on Thursday evening. "Miss Jeri is waiting in the drawing room."

"Thank you."

"May I bring you a drink?"

"Bourbon, please."

"Very good, sir."

He walked me to the drawing room, announced me, then went to fix my drink. Jeri greeted me with a hug.

"How are you doing?" she asked.

"Things are going fairly well," I replied. "Can I ask something?"

"You know the answer is 'yes!'" Jeri smirked.

"Obviously, and that's your 'once per encounter'. Why is it a 'drawing room'?"

"Bummer! Short for 'withdrawing room'. The men would stay at the table to drink, and the women would 'withdraw' to a room set aside for their use."

"That actually makes perfect sense. Well, minus the patriarchal BS of sending the women away."

"Different times, but it's also the case that men need time with other men and women need time with other women."

"True, so long as it isn't forced."

"Jonathan Kane, feminist!"

"Jonathan Kane, meritocratic egalitarian."

"Are you going to schedule your trip to Saint Martin now?"

"Already did. Angling for an invitation?"

"Always! You know I'll go with you! I should invite you to go with me to Monaco in June We'll be at the Grand Prix. But Noel Spurgeon will be there, and the last thing I want is for him to know I'm sleeping with anyone!"

"Rumors suggest you're too old for him."

"It's not a rumor that he beds fourteen- and fifteen-year-old girls; it's a fact. I know some. And you can bet he'd absolutely want to bed the shy, quiet, mousey, blushing seventeen-year-old virgin!"

"Do I know her?" I asked.

"Me, you nut!" Jeri declared. "What he *thinks*, not the reality that I demanded you fuck me in every way possible on multiple occasions!"

Karl brought in my drink, and I was positive he'd overheard Jeri's comment, but she insisted that he and Karolin would never betray her confidence.

"I think my uncle and aunt will be there," I said. "And Lisa."

"Yes."

"Miss Jeri," Karl announced, "Miss Allyson and Miss Marcia."

Allyson and Marcia came in, and a minute later, before Karl could bring their drinks, he showed in Pete and Nelson. Ten minutes later, Gary had arrived, and everyone had their drinks. About fifteen minutes later, dinner was served, so we all moved to the dining room. Dinner was excellent, as always, and the dessert was great. After dessert, We had coffee and brandy in the drawing room.

"After you drop Allyson at Loyola, come by my place," Marcia offered as everyone was getting ready to leave.

"No promises, but ask me again next month, OK?" I said. "Lunch next week?"

"OK. Tuesday is good."

Allyson and I left together, and I headed for Loyola.

"You seem like you're doing OK," Allyson observed.

"I am. How have you been?"

"Pretty good. You heard school is going well, and that's the most important thing. I have to maintain my 4.0 so I can be sure to get into med school."

"When do you take the admission test?"

"Anytime between now and February. I'll start sending applications in August."

"What schools?"

"Loyola, Northwestern, University of Chicago, and Rush. Loyola is my first choice."

"And you plan to apply to hospitals here?"

"Yes. That happens during the last year of medical school after I take the first two parts of the medical licensing exam."

"How many parts are there?"

"Three. You take the last one at some point during or after Residency. That's when you get your actual license. You can work as a doctor without a license under the supervision of a senior doctor. That's what Perry is doing now. When will you get your next license?"

"The exam is in May, and I'll hear the results in June."

"Which one is this?"

"The Branch Manager's License, or Series 30, which allows me to supervise other licensed professionals."

I pulled into the parking lot at Loyola and stopped by the sidewalk that led to the dorm.

"Want to come in and hang out and talk for a bit?" Allyson asked. "I have some Cokes and homemade cookies."

"What kind of cookies?" I asked with a grin.

"They're homemade, so does it matter?" Allyson asked with a laugh. "Chocolate chip."

"Sure."

I parked and followed Allyson into the dorm and to her room. She got two cans of Coke from a mini-fridge and opened a tin of homemade chocolate chip cookies. I took two, popped open the can of Coke, and took a swig.

"Where's your roommate?"

"No idea. I wasn't concerned because we were only coming in to talk. Well, unless you had another idea."

"Tempting," I said.

Just then, the door opened, and a dark-haired girl came in.

"Barb, my friend Jonathan. Jonathan, my roommate Barb."

"I hope you have enough to share!" Barb said with a smirk. "Cookies, I mean!"

"Uh-huh!" Allyson replied with a laugh. "Cookies. Right."

"Well, if you're offering..." Barb said.

"Just teasing," Allyson said. "Jonathan just came in to talk. Well, unless he's changed his mind!"

"Not tonight, Dear, I have a headache!" I said, causing both girls to laugh.

I had a good time talking to Allyson and Barb, and after about ninety minutes, I said 'good night' and headed home.



March 24, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday, I had breakfast with Violet, went to class, had lunch with Violet, then headed home to pick up Bianca for our childbirth class at Loyola.

"Are we going to have the Memorial Day party at the house or in the condo?" she asked.

"We'll have to check with Jack because we'll be moved out by then, but I can't imagine he'll say 'no'. I already cleared Katy's sister's graduation party with him, so I'm sure he'll be cool."

"Are we having a housewarming party?"

"I figure we'll schedule it once Natasha and Deanna are done decorating. Are you going to make it to April 6th?"

"So far, so good. It's only two weeks, so I think I will. I can change it at any time, according to Mrs. Peterson."

"Do you have everything you need at the house?"

"Yes, including infant disposable diapers and onesies. The girls are throwing a baby shower on April 1st, which is a Sunday."

"I'll make myself scarce!" I said. "Maybe Jack and I can do something that day. I assume Kristy will be at the shower."

"She will."

"Cool. For the Memorial Day Party, be sure to invite Rick, please. His number is in my address book by the phone."

"That's the new guy from the Art Institute, right?"

"Yes."

"And all Jeri's gang, too, right?"

"Yes, please."

"I'll take care of it."

We arrived at Loyola and I helped Bianca from the car. I had real doubts about her making it to April 6th at work, but it was up to her. We walked into the classroom, and our instructor, Jenny West, asked us to sign in. I signed for both of us, and we took our spot on a cushioned mat. Ten minutes later, with nine other couples in attendance, the class began.

Jenny described the labor and delivery process, which I'd already seen first-hand when Heather was born. That made me the 'experienced' person in the room, as everyone else were first time parents. After the description of labor and delivery, we spent forty-five minutes learning breathing exercises.

"They really should have done a single two-hour class instead of two one-hour classes," I said when we left the classroom.

"I guess they wanted to separate the 'normal delivery' from the C-section stuff, or maybe it's a different instructor.

"What would cause you to need a C-section?"

"I honestly don't know," Bianca replied. "Doctor Wisniewski said there were no complications so far, and Sofia is in the correct orientation. If you want to ask Doctor Wisniewski, you can do it at our appointment on Monday afternoon."

"I was just curious, and I'm sure they'll go over that next week."

I helped Bianca into the car, and we headed for the house. I dropped her at home, and Deanna joined me for my usual Saturday grocery shopping trip.

"Natasha called this morning, and the borders in the bedrooms will be finished by the end of this week. The bedroom furniture will be delivered a week from Thursday."

"Sounds good. Who's painting the borders?"

"Three students from the school. One thing we didn't think about -- a washer and dryer. There are hookups, and I figured you wouldn't take the ones from the house."

"The space is tight, so we'll need measurements and then a trip to Abt."

"I have measurements for each room, including that one. We had done all the other ones before we started looking for furniture; I remembered the laundry room yesterday."

"If you don't need to get home, we can make the trip now, before Jewel."

"That probably makes sense. The Friday after your new bed is delivered, you, CeCi, and I have a date to christen it!"

"The only caveat is if Bianca were to go into labor."

"That obviously takes precedence!" Deanna agreed. "On that topic, will you spend the night tonight?"

"I will."

We made the trip to Abt, where we selected a slightly higher quality washer and dryer than I'd purchased for the house. We arranged delivery on a day Deanna could be there, though I was the backup as I could leave the office to meet the delivery men. After the appliance store, we went to Jewel and the dry cleaners, then headed home.



March 26, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Everything looks good," Doctor Wisniewski said after completing an ultrasound. "Sofía has sufficient amniotic fluid, her heart is strong, she's in the proper position, and mom's blood pressure and blood sugar are great. I'd say Sofía is on target for sometime between April 5th and April 12th. Are you still working, Bianca?"

"Yes, until April 6th."

"If you're up to it, that's fine, though if I may suggest, this Friday would be a better choice."

"I have to agree with Doctor Wisniewski," I said. "Steve Smith can handle things while you're gone."

"Looks as if I'm outvoted 3-1!" Bianca declared.

"If you need a note for your employer, I can provide one," Doctor Wisniewski offered.

"I'm pretty sure they know she's not faking it," I said with a grin.

Both Bianca and Doctor Wisniewski laughed.

"I won't need a note," Bianca said. "The Director of Personnel is cool, and Jonathan is my boss."

"I wasn't aware," Doctor Wisniewski said.

"We've been together for most of the past three years," Bianca said. "Our agreement to have a baby was made before he hired me."

"Sorry, that wasn't meant to sound accusatory, but now I realize how it might have. Do you have any questions?"

I thought about asking about a C-section but then decided against it.

"Jonathan is a pro!" Bianca declared. "He was with his best friend from High School when she gave birth about two years ago."

"Not mine," I said. "There was an absentee father, so I filled in."

"That's a serious commitment to a friend! If there's nothing else, I'll let you two go. Bianca, call me with any questions, if your water breaks, you have contractions, or you feel lightheaded."

We left, I paid the co-pay at reception, and then Bianca and I headed back to the Spurgeon office to complete the day. Before we headed home, Bianca spoke to Mrs. Peterson and cleared the change for her maternity leave. Just before the end of the day, Gwen Meyer finally called.

"I filed my motions," she said. "Briefs are due next Monday. That's a bit faster than I would like, but Mr. Switzer made a compelling argument for expediency. The hearing on the motions will be on April 10th at 1:30pm. The judge may issue an immediate ruling or may take everything under advisement and issue a ruling at a later date."

"Do I need to be at the hearing?"

"No, but I'd advise you to, on the chance you're wanted as a witness. If you don't attend, Mr. Switzer could argue you ceded your personal right to object if my motions fail."

"Then I'll be there unless Bianca is in active labor."

"If that's the case, I can get a continuance. Any objections by Mr. Switzer will fall on deaf ears."

"What's your prediction?"

"It's a toss-up on the deposition. The fact we negotiated is a double-edged sword. It shows you're willing, at least under some circumstances, to sit for a deposition. But it also shows you reject the usual open-ended nature. If we lose, I'll immediately request a protective order. That may or may not delay things further, depending on a number of factors."

"Thanks, Gwen."

"You're welcome."



March 27, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Can I ask a blunt question?" Marcia inquired when we met for lunch on Tuesday.

"Always," I replied.

"Did you offer Allyson a ride to avoid me inviting you to stay the night?"

"No, and you know I'm perfectly capable of saying 'no'. I've given Allyson a ride since she began attending the dinners. Is there a problem?"

"No," Marcia replied, but her body language and her eyes made it clear the actual answer was 'Yes'.

"What's bugging you?" I asked, reasonably certain what it was.

"What do you think?"

What I thought was that Marcia was the opposite of Teri. Teri wanted to marry so she could fuck; Marcia wanted to fuck so I'd marry her. While that might come across as an oversimplification, it was also a reasonably accurate distillation of their approaches to a relationship with me. The problem for both of them was that I had no intention of marrying again, though, as I had admitted to Violet, it was possible I might change my mind, even if it wasn't probable.

"I think you want something I can't offer now and probably never could. Despite your progressive credentials, you want a traditional family. I totally understand because I had that same desire. I can't explain why with any certainty, but more than likely, it was the idea that having a traditional family would have unquestionably made my life better growing up. I came to the conclusion recently that it was probably a fantasy because I know so little about my biological dad.

"What I can offer is my friendship and collaboration with Jeri's group, and individually between us, to make our lives better and our corner of the world a better place. What I can't offer is to marry you or promise a long-term monogamous relationship. I may never have one, but I can't predict the future any more than you can. I don't think you're interested in being a casual girlfriend for the long term; in fact, I'm sure of it."

"Basically, no-strings-attached sex? Forever?"

"One thing I've learned is that except in cases where it's 'just sex', there are always strings attached; it's simply a matter of type and strength. Fundamentally, you and I have a relationship that would be affected by having sex, and that friendship comes with some amount of obligations, commitments, and feelings. Those are 'strings', even if they aren't attached to wedding attire."

"You're saying what we did wasn't 'just sex'?"

"Correct. The first time had a profound effect on our relationship. Not having sex in Wisconsin had a profound effect on our relationship. Having uninhibited sex had a profound effect on our relationship. If it had been 'just sex', it wouldn't have had any effect because we'd just have been fucking to fuck and feel good, and gone our separate ways, so to speak."

"I honestly have the impression you've done that a lot."

"I *thought* I did," I replied. "But I realized that with very few exceptions, it had a significant effect on the girl or on me. That's true even of girls I was with who understood we'd never marry for her reasons, my reasons, or mutual reasons. Even a casual sexual relationship with a friend affects the friendship."

"You sound more like a girl talking about sex than a guy," Marcia observed.

"No, I sound like a *person*. I think, but I can't prove, that most guys are affected by sex even if they refuse to admit it to anyone or even to themselves. Perhaps they're affected less by it than girls, but I know girls who are very happy to have multiple casual partners and think the way you think guys think about sex -- for them, it's fun and doesn't mean anything more than having fun and getting off."

"How did being with me make you feel?"

"To borrow a phrase, I have mixed emotions because our relationship has always been complicated. We're friends -- good friends -- but we never 'clicked' the way I did with Keiko. That's not either of our faults; it's just who we are."

"Because the first time we had sex was so bad, and then I messed up with the trip to Waukesha."

"I think those were both symptoms, not causes, if you will. Had we truly clicked, I think things would have gone differently. Think about my main point about

those incidents -- lack of true communication. Had we clicked, I feel you would have been more open to a conversation, which might well have prevented the negative outcome from our first time together."

"So there was never really a chance?"

"I don't think that's accurate; I think there was a chance; it simply didn't work out the way you wanted. But I believe what you wanted changed, too. That's normal, I think, as relationships evolve. But we didn't end on the same page because we didn't click."

Marcia took a bite of her sandwich and didn't answer, so I continued eating to wait to see what she was going to say. Ultimately, I didn't feel we'd ever be more than close friends, no matter what happened, and that wasn't enough for her. I also felt sleeping with her in the future would only prolong her unhappiness. It was better to simply be friends and not have her feel that something might develop.

"So what now?" Marcia asked when we finished eating.

"We remain friends and collaborate as I suggested. You find someone who both meets your needs and has the same goals with regard to a family. And I figure out what my future will look like."

"You're ruling out sex?" Marcia asked.

"I think that's for the best at this point."

She frowned and didn't say anything. We both had to get back to work, so we got up and left the deli.

"I guess I'll see you when I see you, then," Marcia said.

"We should have lunch at least once a month in addition to Jeri's dinners."

"Sure," Marcia said, sounding skeptical.

She turned and began walking towards the subway, and I walked in the opposite direction towards the Hancock Center. When I arrived at the office, I called Hart-Lincoln to speak to Thomas Hart about the developments with regard to the deposition and my concern about the SEC.

"That's a tricky situation," he said. "I'm going to courier a retainer document to you. Send it back with a check for \$25. I'll accompany you to the hearing and won't charge you for it."

"Thank you."

"Which firm is representing the Ohio interests?"

"Allen & Baker. The attorney is Jack Switzer."

"I'll call Thad Baker and see what I can find out."

"That's allowed?"

"Two partners at opposing law firms discussing an action against one of their clients? Absolutely."

"Thanks."



March 28, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Thomas Hart called me late on Wednesday afternoon.

"You were right to be concerned," he said. "They're coming for your securities licenses."

"Shit!" I swore. "Sorry."

"It's understandable. Just remember to never use words like that in court."

"So, now what?"

"I spoke at length with Thad Baker and Jack Switzer, and after that conversation, I'm convinced that Miss Newtown instructed Larry Walsh to go after you as revenge for losing custody of her daughter. Jack Switzer does not think there is any room for negotiation. Remember, he's simply acting on behalf of his client, who is Larry Walsh. Mr. Walsh can only do what Miss Newton instructs him with regard to negotiating."

"What do they want?"

"That's the problem -- she wants your securities licenses. Her attorney knows you can only hurt his case, but given he's already in a losing position, he's trying to make the best of it. And they've created a nice trap -- in order to get a protective order for the deposition, we'd have to reveal our concern to the judge, and that would be part of any complaint filed with the SEC. The fact that would be a civil action means that the rules of evidence are relaxed compared to the rules for criminal procedure."

"Is there anything that can be done?"

"Paul Lincoln and I spoke about a potential strategy, but it's not clear if it will work because, in the end, the Ohio judge would have the final say. If Ms. Meyer loses the motions, I'll file for a TRO based on the fact that the subpoena was issued purely as a vendetta, not to obtain any actual probative information. That will be granted, and a hearing will be scheduled within seventy-two hours. We'll subpoena Miss Newton, and if she refuses to come to Illinois and testify, it is very likely the TRO will be made permanent."

"What are the risks?"

"That she'll instruct her attorney to make the complaint to the SEC based on the document you filed. If that happens, what I said before is true -- bring me the inquiry letter, and I'll make it go away because there will be no statements by you under oath that contain material misrepresentations. You can bet your bottom dollar they'll get everything on the record in the deposition, including you lying to the police in Kansas."

"Doesn't the same thing apply -- the guardianship document governed."

"Based on what you told me, you were expressly asked if you were Heather's father and said 'yes', and intentionally misled the hospital staff and social services. Miss Newton knows all of that, right?"

"Yes."

"As does your traveling companion, Miss Clemmons?"

"Yes."

"Who now works for you. Do I need to draw the line, or can you connect the dots?"

"That I hired her to ensure her silence," I sighed.

"That is what they will infer. And Miss Clemmons would be asked under oath if you admitted the ruse to her, which you said you did."

"I did."

"You do not want any of that on the record, and at the moment, I don't see any way of preventing them from asking those questions. Once it's on the record, it will be much harder to simply make it go away."

"Wonderful. Should I inform our Legal or Compliance departments?"

"Absolutely not. Wait until the SEC contacts you, then see me, and I'll handle it. Because this isn't a trading violation, nothing will be sent to Spurgeon until a formal investigation is opened, which only happens after you answer their letter."

"OK."

"Do you think Miss Newton is so vindictive that she'll travel here for the hearing?"

"I can't imagine her not doing that if she feels it's the only way to regain custody of her daughter."

"You understand I'll have to destroy her on the stand, right?"

"I expected as much. Do what you have to do."

"I'll see you on the 10th at the hearing."

"Thanks."



March 30, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday, I had lunch with Stan Jakes from the *Trib* and Len Walter from WBBM radio. We had a good discussion about the markets and world events, and I shared as much as I could about our market projections. I was confident that neither reporter would betray my confidence, but I still had to be careful not to directly violate my duty to Spurgeon to keep our projections tightly held.

After lunch, I met with Bianca, Steve Smith, and Tony to discuss how we'd handle the roughly six weeks Bianca would be out, though she insisted she'd be back part-time sooner than that. Ultimately, we agreed we'd limit work on Research-specific tools and instead focus on programs and spreadsheets that had general applicability. That wouldn't really harm Research and would keep the 'Suits' happy.

Late in the afternoon, Julie called to let me know I had two tickets for the Hawks playoff game against the North Stars on April 7th. I thanked her but wondered if I'd actually be able to use them, given Bianca might deliver at any time in the next ten days or so. If that happened, I'd give the tickets to Jack. I could do that directly now, given he was now on a trading team, though he didn't qualify for his own tickets as a runner.

After work, I joined Jack, Kristy, and CeCe for dinner at The Berghoff, then we went to see *Splash* starring Tom Hanks and Daryl Hannah and featuring Eugene Levy and John Candy. We all enjoyed the movie, a romantic comedy about a love affair with a mermaid. After the movie, we had ice cream, then headed home, where I joined CeCi in her bed.



March 31, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"That's horrible!" Violet exclaimed when I related what Thomas Hart had said.
"Why not tell me sooner?"

"Because I didn't want to discuss it at work. I haven't told anyone else about it because the last thing I want is for anyone at Spurgeon besides you, Bianca, or Jack to get wind of it. If Legal or Compliance get involved, it might actually make it worse."

"I can't believe she'd ruin your life!"

"I'm positive she believes I've ruined hers, and she's lashing out."

"She's totally unstable and needs psychiatric help."

"I don't disagree, but she's not going to do that because admitting she's lost her mind would ensure she loses her custody suit. The *only* way this could be resolved is if she reconciles with her parents and drops the suit. She's adamantly refused to even speak to them since she left home and went to St. Louis."

"How do you stop it?"

"I have two attorneys working on it, and they have a strategy. All I can do is let it play out and see what happens. If Bev pushes it all the way to the limit, she'll likely lose Heather forever because I will reveal everything I know about her when I give the deposition or testify, and my attorneys will destroy her on the stand."

"You'd really do that to her?"

"She's doing it to herself. She can end this anytime, and she can win by simply reconciling with her parents."

"Unbelievable."

"I know. On a happier note, I didn't have a chance to tell you yesterday I have Hawks tickets for their playoff game on the 7th. There's obviously a chance I'll have to miss that or the game between the Sox and the Tigers because of Sofía's immanent arrival."

"It's going to be strange seeing you as a dad, but I think you'll be a great one! I saw how you handled Heather, well, besides being freaked out when we went to Overland Park. You were great on the drive back from North Dakota and the night at the hotel."

"Thanks."

"Can I ask a question without implying anything?"

"No, but I promise not to read anything into the implication. Will that do?"

"You are terminally pedantic!" Violet declared, rolling her eyes.

"And yet, that ensures there is no miscommunication between us."

"True. What I wondered was whether you want to have more kids."

I couldn't help but act on the implication because it would allow me to tease Violet.

"With you?" I asked with a smirk.

"YOU PROMISED!" she protested, but she was laughing.

"I know! And we could, but to ensure the stork received the message properly, we'd need to practice the ritual for a few years before actually sending the official message!"

Violet laughed, "You're so goofy!"

"Thank you! The answer is that I'm open to the idea, and it's not a decision I need to make today. May I ask a question that violates my promise?"

"You already did that! Technically, you broke your word, but I know you were just teasing."

"Was I?" I asked.

Violet was quiet for a moment, then shook her head.

"You were, but you weren't. You were answering a question I hadn't asked, which you assumed was important to me, but in a way that could just be passed off as being goofy."

"Correct. It's my judgment that now that we've reached this point, that's something you're considering, and it has some amount of impact on your decision."

"I know we don't have a lot of time right now because you have to go to class, but if we did that -- make a baby, I mean -- would you still be with other girls?"

"There are two distinct...phases, I guess -- going to bed together and agreeing to have a baby. Right now, today, I can't accept any conditions from anyone for going to bed together. When the time comes to consider having another kid, then we'd discuss the structure of the relationship and reach an agreement before we tried to have a baby."

"It's possible you would want to be with someone else, too?"

"Many things are possible," I said. "One possibility is we agree to be a couple, intending it to last as long as we live; another is we handle it as I did with Bianca; another is there's one specific person I could be with besides you; or some other arrangement on which we could agree."

"It sounds as if there's someone you have in mind."

"Complete confidence?"

"Yes."

"Deanna. She offered, assuming my wife was amenable, to be my mistress for as long as it suited both of us."

"Right!" Violet said, laughing. "How did *that* go over with Keiko?"

"As I said, she offered so long as my wife was amenable. Keiko was not amenable."

"Do you think anyone would be?"

"Bianca actually offered a situation where we married, and other girls joined us from time to time. Ellie wanted me to set up a harem."

Violet laughed, "Her *Hail Mary* pass?"

"Something like that. Again, complete confidence -- Ellie is a voyeur. She's excited by watching other people have sex."

"Weird."

"Sorry to cut this short, but I have to go to class. You're seeing Nancy, right?"

"Yes. You're coming back for lunch before you and Bianca go to your class, right?"

"Yes. Just remember next weekend we have to play everything by ear because of Sofía. You'll know, obviously, if Bianca calls me at work to say she's in labor."

"And you're going to change pooppy diapers?" Violet teased.

"I signed up for that when Bianca and I notified the stork we wanted a baby!"

Violet laughed again, "Go to class, you goofball!"

We hugged, she kissed my cheek, and I headed to class. Four hours later, I returned to have lunch. Violet didn't bring up going to bed together or having a baby, so I avoided both topics. When we finished eating, I helped her clean up, then headed home to get Bianca.

"You look unhappy," I said to Bianca when I saw her sitting alone in the Japanese room.

"Juliette broke up with me," Bianca sighed. "She decided she couldn't handle being around a baby basically full-time."

L. Breasts or Thighs?

March 31, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

I went over to the Mamasan chair where Bianca was sitting, sat down next to her, and put my arm around her.

"What can I do for you?" I asked.

"You're doing it right now," she replied.

"OK to ask a practical question?"

"She's going to move out today. She checked with Loyola yesterday, and there is space in the dorms because of people who dropped out."

"OK. I need to make sure I get the key from her."

"She gave it to me. She promised to have all her things out before dinner."

"Is Jack here?"

"Yes."

"I'm going to go speak to him and have him keep an eye on her while we go to our class. I don't expect her to do anything untoward, but I'm not going to take that risk. I'll be right back."

I went to find Jack and found him and Kristy in the basement watching TV.

"Hey," I said. "I need your help."

"Anything. What?"

"Juliette broke up with Bianca and is moving out this afternoon. I need to take Bianca to our childbirth class. Would you keep an eye on things?"

"Damn straight, I will," Jack said, standing up.

"Is Bianca OK?" Kristy asked.

"She seems to be. I'm sure she could use a friend right now, but we need to leave."

The three of us went upstairs, and I walked Bianca out to the car. I helped her get in, got in myself, and then headed for Loyola.

"She just sprung this on you today?"

"This morning. I kind of felt her pulling away the last few days, but I thought it was because I'm basically a beached whale! Remind me to NEVER do this again!"

"Noted," I replied with a grin.

"Says the man whose entire contribution was a tablespoon of genetic material delivered in about fifteen minutes!"

"Are you forgetting the scores of attempts before the successful one?" I asked.

"Yes, but those weren't contributions to my current situation! It's like counting batting practice in a player's batting average!"

"Did I miss you being this cranky before today?"

"Yes, because I mostly bitched to Juliette, Kristy, and CeCi. Deanna was singularly uninterested in hearing me bitch about what she called a self-inflicted condition!"

"She has a point," I teased.

"Excuse me?!" Bianca growled. "YOU inflicted this on me!"

"It takes two to tango, Chica!" I chuckled.

"That's Argentinian, not Mexican!"

"I see my pedanticism is rubbing off on you! Is it really that bad?"

"My back hurts, my feet are swollen, my boobs hurt, I'm tired, and I have to pee about every five seconds because YOUR daughter is sitting on *my* bladder."

"Now she's *my* daughter? Not ours?"

"*Our* daughter is lovely; *your* daughter is a troublemaker!"

"Nice. So this is how it's going to be?"

"Of course! But you know I'm teasing."

"I do. I hate to pile on bad news, but I found out Bev's goal with the deposition is to have my securities licenses revoked."

"*Pinche puta!*" Bianca growled.

"You must be angry," I said. "You never swear in Spanish, at least around me. Did you call her a 'bitch'?"

"A fucking bitch! Now what?"

"I spoke to Thomas Hart, and he has a strategy. I think it will work, but it'll be ugly, and the end result will be Bev losing Heather for good."

"Whoa!"

"She's trying to take revenge by reporting me to the SEC, and she wants me on record for lying to the cops in Overland Park and misrepresenting myself as Heather's dad both there and in North Dakota. If there is nothing on the record, Thomas Hart can very likely make a complaint go away. If it's on the record, then it could get very ugly for me.

"To prevent that, he's going to challenge the deposition as being purely vindictive and subpoena Bev as a witness. If she refuses to come here to testify, the entire thing will be over. If she does, he'll put her on the stand and expose her as completely unhinged, unstable, erratic, and in need of psychiatric care."

"What a crazy bitch!" Bianca declared. "Or should I say that in Spanish?"

"I have heard you say maybe three dozen words in Spanish, almost all to your grandmother. Why now?"

"Probably because I'm emotional, nervous, cranky, and generally uncomfortable. Remember, I mostly spoke Spanish before I started first grade, and it comes back when I'm stressed or emotional."

"You were bilingual then, right?"

"Yes, but my Spanish was far better than my English. That changed, and by fifth grade, they were about equal. Now, my English is far better, even though I can converse in Spanish. When is all this going to happen?"

"There's a hearing on the afternoon of the 10th. The first thing will be on Gwen's motion to prevent the deposition. If that fails, Thomas Hart will request an emergency restraining order based on the fact that the deposition is purely vindictive. He believes he'll get that and then demand Bev appear so he can question her. I'm positive she'll come here because she's lashing out. Her options are limited now -- reconcile with her parents and get Heather back in the near future, or ruin my life. Guess which one she chose?"

"That's insane."

"Exactly."

Our childbirth class went through all the possible complications of labor and delivery and what to expect if they should happen. I found the entire discussion fascinating, as I had literally no idea just how many things might go wrong and how they could go wrong. Obviously, I hoped we experienced none of them, but being prepared was key to understanding our options, if any of the problems arose.

"Will you be OK at home if I do the grocery shopping?" I asked Bianca when we arrived home.

"Yes. Kristy will be here. She and Jack aren't going out tonight, so you don't need to rush. Would you sleep in my bed with me until I deliver? I don't believe Deanna or CeCi will object."

"I'm sure they won't. And yes, I will. It'll be interesting."

"Sleeping next to a mountain?" Bianca asked.

"It'll be an all-new experience for me."

I parked in the driveway and helped Bianca into the house. Once I was inside, I checked with Jack, who said Juliette had moved all of her things without incident and wasn't planning to return. I thanked him, then went to find Deanna so we could do the grocery shopping.

"Bianca asked me to sleep in her bed with her until she delivers," I said.

"She's entitled! I know she's been uncomfortable, and after Juliette pulled her stunt, I get it."

"Bianca indicated you had no sympathy," I said.

"You can take that to the bank! She did that to herself!"

"With my help!" I countered.

"I've had plenty of similar help, and I'm not in that condition and have no intention of being!"

"Excuse me for turning this serious, but that seems like a change in your thinking."

"I don't think I'm cut out to be a mom. This past year has shown me what it's like to be free to be myself and do what is important to me. A kid would take that away for eighteen years, at least. It also leaves me free to structure my relationships in any way I see fit. You and I discussed that a few weeks ago, and you know my ideal situation."

"Yes, I do, and for the foreseeable future, you and I will have that. What happens long-term remains to be seen, though I will be your patron whether or not we continue our physical relationship."

"Speaking of 'physical relationship', on Friday, will you and CeCi come to the condo instead of going out with Jack and Kristy?"

"Yes. We can order food."

"I'll take care of that. I'll also make sure there are towels, soap, and TP there. You keep a bag of spare clothes in your trunk, right?"

"Yes."

"What do you think about my suggestion for that? CeCi and I both are adamant that it has to be totally up to you. We'll be happy with whatever you want."

"I did say I could see my way clear, with the two of you, to your over-the-top request."

"You still have a week to think about it," Deanna said. "We don't want you to do something you'll regret."

"I understand. You said we'd each take the other around the world, and I'm OK with that. Just remember I need to be at least semi-coherent on Saturday morning for breakfast with Violet and class, and I have Hawks tickets for Saturday evening and Sox tickets for Sunday afternoon."

"I think we can make that work. On a similar topic, I'm positive Stefi will want to see you again."

"That doesn't surprise me, but next weekend is crazy, and there's the chance that Bianca will deliver at any time after Monday. So, if she asks, we'll have to figure out when."

"She's just a fun fling, right?"

"Yes. As she said to her friend Tara, she's not done playing with her new toy just yet."

"It is a fun toy!" Deanna declared. "But it's more than that. I would never have believed it, but sex is better with someone who cares deeply for you."

"I made a similar comment to Marcia this week."

"She's still interested?"

"Yes, but she and I never clicked. It's like with Ellie. I can be friends and can collaborate with them, but being lovers sends the wrong message."

"Speaking of messages, you never said what happened with Teri."

"I called her out on her motivation, and she became upset with me."

Deanna laughed, "Her entire goal was to have you fuck her brains out, but she had to satisfy her own conditions before that could happen."

"You knew?"

"Remember what I said about clues? Teri might not realize it, but it was obvious she wanted to fuck you. That was her entire point of trying to find a way to get you to marry her."

"How long have you known?"

"From before you asked Keiko to marry you. Teri looked at you like a lioness eyeing a zebra. And she tried everything she could to orchestrate a wedding night with you. But, to be a bit crude, the bait she was dangling was nowhere good enough. How did you figure it out?"

"Analysis and process of elimination. I didn't get the idea she was a gold digger, and I didn't get the signal that she was hopelessly in love with me. The only other reason I could fathom that would have her pursue me so relentlessly was that she wanted to fuck. And that's what I told her."

"You weren't out late enough for that to have happened."

"Even if she had admitted it, I wouldn't have because I'm not ready to lay out the terms of a relationship. If I can't do that for Violet, I can't do it for anyone."

"Now *there* is someone hopelessly in love with you."

"I know. That complicates things, as does the solution you helped me craft. In any event, I told Teri to go back to UofI and to only call me if she wants to fuck with no terms, promises, or commitments."

"Do you think she'll call?"

"Do you?"

"She clearly wants to, but she spent six months doing everything she could to rope you in, when her best chance was to go to bed with you and hope you chose her over Keiko. I don't think you would have, but that truly was Teri's only chance. She had to know it, too."

"I suspect you're right, given all the things she said and did. But I'd have turned her down because I knew what it would have meant. If she was going to take the 'fuck and see' approach, it had to be before I knew about her determination to wait until she was married. But that was a Catch-22 because she couldn't until we'd had the discussion, at which point, I put it off limits."

"Keiko was going to win, anyway," Deanna said. "I don't think Teri understood that at first."

"She didn't. It was when Keiko received her diagnosis that Teri realized she held the losing hand. That's when she began probing for an opening."

"Isn't that what SHE wanted you to do?" Deanna smirked.

I laughed, "Yes, but I meant a way to achieve her goal with some sort of guarantee of a relationship."

I pulled into the lot at Jewel, which meant our conversation had to shift to more mundane things. When we returned home, Deana and I prepared dinner, and after dinner, I spent the evening with my housemates watching TV, then went to Bianca's room with her.

"How do you sleep?" I asked.

"Either on my back or my side," Bianca said. "I think on my side, and you can spoon behind me."

"Are we wearing pyjamas and a nightgown?"

"Naked, please. Well, assuming that won't cause you to be in an uncomfortable state."

"It won't. Posing nude has actually helped me in that way."

"You never got hard posing?"

"No. Not even in the office where we changed. It was weird, actually. I mean, in one pose, I was cupping her breasts, and while it was nice, it didn't feel sexual. Maybe it was guys being in the room, but I don't think it was just that."

We undressed and got into bed, with Bianca lying on her side and me behind her with my body pressed against hers and my arm around her.

"Thank you," Bianca sighed.

"You're welcome."



April 1, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"This is very strange!" I said to Bianca as we showered on Sunday morning.

"You had your arms around me in Deanna's studio!"

"Yes, I did, but washing your body is more intimate, and thinking about our daughter in your womb is just...awe-inspiring. Wait! What was that!"

"She kicked you!" Bianca said.

"Unreal," I breathed. "Just totally unreal."

I kept my sudsy hand on Bianca's stomach, and Sofía kicked twice more.

"What does that feel like for you?" I asked.

"Life," Bianca said. "Growing in my womb."

"Yeah."

I finished soaping Bianca and used the hand-held showerhead to rinse her off. I quickly washed, and we got out of the shower. I dried Bianca, then myself, and led her to the bedroom so we could dress.

"Want to indulge in a fantasy?" Bianca asked as I started to pull on my pyjamas to walk to my room.

"What's that?" I asked.

"A blowjob from a very sexy, very pregnant woman?"

"Whose fantasy is that?" I asked.

Bianca laughed, "Mine, but now yours, too!"

"Nice judo move!" I chuckled.

"Get in bed and sit up against the headboard so I can lie on my side and be fully on the bed," she instructed.

I did as Bianca asked, she climbed into bed and positioned herself so her head was next to my groin. She gave me a sexy loving blowjob, and my release was wonderful but also charged with emotion. When she finished, she moved up so we could share a soft kiss.

"That was wonderful," I said. "And very different."

"I know, right?" Bianca said. "It's been nine months since I could do that for you, and despite having done it so many times, this one was special."

"Very."

"Promise me something?"

"What?"

"That no matter what else happens, you and I will make love once I'm recovered."

"Count on it," I said.

Later that morning, after breakfast, I called my mom. I filled her in on Bianca's progress with our baby, then described what was going on with Bev.

"She is really lashing out," Mom said. "She's made some ridiculous claims about Jim and Julie, too."

"About?"

"That they were abusive and threatened to kick her out."

"Flat-out lies," I said.

"I know. She also claimed Jim threatened to kill Glen."

"Also a lie, given he didn't know who the baby's father was until Bev stopped speaking to them. Well, unless Jim threatened Glen."

"I don't think they ever spoke, and Glen moved to Illinois long before Jim found out."

"I think Bev is mentally ill."

"So do I," Mom said. "What's going to happen with you?"

"My attorneys think I'll be OK, but to ensure that, they're going to have to ruin Bev's chances of ever regaining custody of Heather. Bev is being vindictive, and as such, it's the only way. Well, unless she reconciles with her parents. Then ALL the problems basically go away."

"Jim and Julie have tried, but she refused. They contacted her attorney, and she told her attorney to tell them to, and this is a quote 'drop dead and go to Hell'."

"She's unhinged," I sighed.

"And it's not your fault, Jonathan. Not in any way. You did everything you could for her, and you absolutely did the right thing in giving Heather to Jim and Julie."

"I keep wondering what would have happened if I'd told her I was thinking of moving to Chicago before everything was arranged."

"She had the opportunity to talk to you, but instead, she took up with Bob Leahy before you even left. You made a mistake, but she doubled down and could have easily rectified it by asking you to take her with you, even if it meant her waiting a year to finish High School before she moved. She could have fixed it when she left home, too. Or when she decided to leave St. Louis. You rescued her once and Heather twice. There was nothing more for you to do."

"I know," I replied. "But...no, you're right."

"I'm hesitant to say this, but do you remember Mrs. Caulfield?"

"The school psychologist?"

"Yes. She suggested Bev might be schizophrenic. Everything fits that potential diagnosis."

"Oh, shit," I breathed. "Sorry, Mom."

"I work in a High School, so I've heard far worse."

"And yet, I shouldn't swear in front of my mom."

"If there were a time for it after I told you, that qualifies."

"Yeah. Doesn't her attorney see the signs?"

"I have no idea."

"If she does come to Illinois, things are going to go from bad to worse; well, from worse to worst, I guess."

"Do what you have to do to protect your licenses, Jonathan. You've done everything possible to help Bev. There's no more to give."

"I can't help but think there is."

"And logically, you know that's not the case. You've gone above and beyond. At some point, you have to look out for yourself. You did what you had to do to ensure Heather is in a stable, loving environment."

"I know."

"Call me when Bianca goes into labor, and then let me know when it's OK to visit my granddaughter!"

"I will!"

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, then went to find Deanna, who was in her studio.

"My mom said the psychologist at my High School thinks Bev is schizophrenic."

"I'm no expert, obviously, but I remember from an intro to psych class that onset often begins in the late teens or early twenties. And she's sure been behaving erratically. Her lawyer chalked it up to postpartum depression, right?"

"Yes. But the way my mom described it is that all those symptoms fit being schizophrenic. And you know, I suspected she was mentally ill."

"Then it's a very good thing you got her daughter away from her. That could have ended horribly. Maybe ten years ago, there was a woman in Cincinnati who killed her two young kids and was committed to a mental hospital without a trial."

"I don't recall that, but I don't doubt you. I didn't watch the news all that often, and we didn't have the daily newspaper. We did get the Sunday paper because the coupons more than made up for the cost and saved us significant money at the grocery store."

"That was a very different life from the one you have now."

"And yet, I'd trade it all for Keiko still being here."

"I know," Deanna replied. "You seem a bit more morose than you've been recently."

"I think the situation with Bev is weighing on me."

"What can I do for you?"

"You're doing it now by listening."

"If you need something else, just say so."

"Not that, at least not now."

Deanna smiled, "I meant anything, but that is included in 'anything'."

"Just be my friend."

"Always."

I left and went to find Jack so we could leave the house to the girls for the baby shower, which would begin in about an hour.



April 2, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday morning, I called to speak to Thomas Hart, but he was unavailable. He called back just before lunch.

"I have some new information that might be relevant," I said.

"What's that?" he asked.

"According to my mom, the school psychologist at the High School Bev and I attended suspects Bev might be schizophrenic. Supposedly, it explains her behavior since I moved to Chicago."

"That's good to know. Can you provide the name and phone number of this psychologist?"

"Dorothy Caulfield, at Goshen High School," I said, then spelled her name and gave him the main number for the school.

"OK. I don't know how things work in Ohio, but it's possible that the psychologist could speak to public health officials and have them act to have Miss Newton evaluated. It's a long shot, but it's worth a try, and it would actually help Miss Newton. In addition, I'll try to get some kind of admissible statement from Ms. Caulfield, though unless she recently evaluated Miss Newton, that is probably not possible."

"Also, my mom said that Bev has made some outlandish claims about her parents, most of which are implausible, but at least one is provably false."

"What's that last one?"

"That her dad threatened to kill the father of her baby. The thing is, Jim Newton had no idea who the father was until I told him, which was *after* Glen Rodgers had moved to Illinois and right before he and Bev made a run for the border. Bev was estranged, and Jim didn't know Glen was Heather's dad, so that claim is literally impossible."

"Do me a favor. If there is any erratic behavior of which you're aware that is not in your deposition, write it out and fax it to my paralegal."

"Will do. You'll have it no later than tomorrow morning."

"Thank you, Jonathan. Keep your chin up; we'll win this for you."

"Thanks."

We ended the call, and I wrote a note to myself to make the list at home that evening after my modeling session. I ate lunch with Violet, and she and I went to the gym. I spent the afternoon meeting with each of the analysts to get a feel for how they thought things were going and if they were content. I was pleased to find that everyone agreed things were running well and there were no complaints.

Late in the afternoon, I decided to do something I'd changed my mind about at least six times. I picked up the phone, checked my Rolodex, and dialed the number.

"Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. How may I direct your call?"

"Office of the Trade Attaché, please."

I was connected, and I was reasonably certain it was the same aide I'd spoken to before.

"Good afternoon. This is Jonathan Kane with Spurgeon Capital in Chicago. I believe we've spoken on the phone, and you sent me material."

"Yes, Mr. Kane. I remember you. How may I help you?"

"I'd like to visit Belarus Tractors in Wisconsin and, if at all possible, meet with Trade Attaché Voronin."

"Visit to the factory can be arranged at your convenience. Minister Voronin will be in Chicago beginning April 14th. He has room on his schedule for meeting at 1:30pm on Monday, April 16th. Would you like to arrange meeting?"

"Yes, please. And it probably makes sense to visit the factory before then."

"What day do you propose?"

"How about Thursday, April 12th?" I suggested.

"I will arrange for you."

"Thank you."

"May I have number for your facsimile machine so I may send you itinerary?"

I gave it to him, thanked him, and then ended the call. I immediately made a note about meeting both Minister Voronin and Viktor Bykov in my DayTimer, then wrote out a quick report of my contact to file with Legal.

About an hour later, I left the office to meet Deanna for dinner at Maxim's, after which we headed to the Art Institute for her class.

"Now it gets boring!" Alexa declared.

"I don't know," I said. "I bet you look hot in a bikini!"

"You've seen literally everything! How can that be hot?"

"Because it is!" I replied. "Normally, I'd say it leaves something to the imagination, but as you say, I've seen it all. But even so, I think it'll be hot."

"Well, today is shorts, T-shirts, and bikes. Wednesday is tennis outfits."

"I've never even held a tennis racket!" I replied.

"And I haven't held your balls!" Alexa smirked.

I laughed, "Cute."

We both changed, with me changing into my gym shorts and putting on a Cincinnati Reds t-shirt.

"Seriously?" Alexa asked. "The Reds?"

"I listened to nearly every game during the '75 and '76 seasons. The same was true in '73, though they lost to the A's that year. And I love how that T-shirt fits!"

It was tight and form-fitting, and Alexa had on a soft cotton bra that was perfectly outlined by the shirt.

"I thought about not wearing a bra, but Claire said I should so as to give a bit of extra detail to draw."

"Claire has NO taste!" I declared.

Alexa laughed, and we left the office to walk to the studio. We posed side by side, standing with our bikes to our right so that mine was between us. After class, Stefi was waiting for me.

"Any chance I can play with my toy on Saturday?" she asked.

"I was given tickets for the Hawks game, and I have class, so not really."

"Bummer. What are you doing right now?"

"Talking to you!"

Stefi laughed, "You know what I meant!"

"Unfortunately, I'm Deanna's ride. How about tomorrow evening right after work?"

"Yes!" Stefi declared happily. "Just show up at the dorm!"

"Will do!" I agreed.

She left, then Deanna and I headed out to hail a cab to take us to my car at the Hancock Center.

"You really like being worshiped orally, don't you?!" Deanna asked with a smirk.

"Show me a guy, straight or gay, who doesn't like blowjobs!"

"An empty set!" Deanna declared. "Kind of like girls who don't like having their pussy eaten!"

We got into a cab and continued the conversation, though with our voices lowered against the cabbie hearing us.

"Actually," I said, "all kidding aside, I bet there is a combination of negatives on that -- girls and guys who don't like receiving or giving."

"You're right, of course. I know girls who think it's gross or who spit instead of swallow and only do it because they feel they have to or to avoid giving up the kitty before they're ready."

"Giving up the kitty?" I asked with a laugh.

"Something a girl back in Cinci said about why she was blowing her boyfriend. She spit."

"The girls I've been with have all been happy to swallow, even the virgins."

"OK, but think about the category of girls who'll fuck in front of an audience. What are the chances they won't give enthusiastic blowjobs and swallow?"

"Probably small."

"I have heard from girls about guys who dislike giving oral, but more often about guys who were completely inept at it."

"Bev taught me, and I paid careful attention!"

"Smart man! That guarantees repeat customers and can even be the thing that pushes the girl to fuck if she wasn't sure."

"I can confirm that from firsthand experience!" I declared.

"Of course you can!" Deanna declared mirthfully."

The cabbie dropped us at the Hancock Center, and after I paid him, Deanna and I got into my car for the drive home. At home, I used the Macintosh, with Bianca's assistance, to create a document that expanded on my affidavit. When I finished it, I printed it, put it and put it in my satchel. I returned upstairs, went through my usual bedtime routine, then joined Bianca in her bed to sleep spooned together.



April 3, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Tuesday morning, I faxed the document I'd created to Thomas Hart's paralegal, along with a copy of the affidavit, and put the confirmation into a folder. I put the folder into my desk drawer, then began working on the global threat assessment portion of the combined analyst report.

The day was routine, and at 5:00pm, I left the office. I drove to the Art Institute dorm and parked in a nearby parking garage, which was less expensive than round-trip by cab. When I walked into the lobby, I was surprised to see Tara in the lobby.

"Hi," Tara said. "You obviously didn't get Stefi's message."

"No, I didn't."

"She's been puking all day. She didn't have your number, so she had me leave a message for Deanna in her box at school, but I guess Deanna didn't get it or didn't get hold of you."

"Something she ate?" I asked.

"I'm pretty sure because three other girls are sick as well. They all ate at the same diner last night. I'm not doing anything. Want to grab something to eat?"

"Sure, as long as it's not that diner!"

"I heard they were reported to the Health Department. There's a chicken place two blocks away that's pretty good -- Harold's."

"Sounds good."

"What's your favorite?" Tara asked with a sly smile. "Breasts or thighs?"

"Well, If I had to choose," I paused, "between the thighs," I paused again.

Tara laughed, getting my meaning.

"...and breasts," I continued, "I'd choose breasts."

"Perfect inflection and pauses!" Tara declared. "I take it you practice your oral skills regularly?"

I laughed, "As often as possible."

"And you're a...cunning linguist?"

I laughed hard at the play on words.

"That's awesome!" I declared.

"You aren't the only one who practices his oral skills!"

We reached the restaurant and went inside.

"Let's split a half," Tara suggested. "We can split the white or dark whichever way you want because I like both. Get sauce on the side unless you're sure you like it."

"Drink?" I asked.

"Coke."

I ordered a half-chicken with sauce on the side, large fries, and two Cokes. I paid, and our order was up less than a minute later. I carried the tray to a table while Tara got straws, napkins, and catsup.

"What's the sauce?" I asked.

"Barbecue. If you don't ask for it on the side, they pour it over the chicken. It's messy, too. Do you like barbecue sauce?"

"On ribs, yes. I haven't ever had it on fried chicken."

She opened one of the containers of red sauce, stuck her finger in it, and offered it to me. I laughed, then opened my mouth and took her finger in. I sucked gently and ran my tongue around her finger.

"Not bad," I said.

"I'll say!" Tara exclaimed, licking her lips. "If you like it, it's not quite as messy if you just put a bit on the chicken before you eat it. Well, unless you like sauce all over your face!"

"It depends on the sauce!"

We started eating, and I carefully poured a bit of the sauce on the chicken before each bite. Both of us ate without talking much until we finished our meals. I took the trash to a bin, we used pre-packaged wipes to wash our faces and hands, then left the restaurant.

"Want to come back to my room? To talk and listen to music?" Tara asked. "Stefi suggested I entertain you so she won't complain."

"Talk?" I asked, positive it was simply her way of inviting me to play.

"Talk," Tara said. "I obviously can't hang out with Stefi or our friends because they're all sick."

I had nothing special to do, and Bianca wasn't expecting me until after midnight so I could hang out with Tara.

"Sure," I agreed.

We walked back to the dorm, Tara signed me in, and we took the elevator up to the same floor where Stefi's room was. We turned in the other direction, and Tara let us into her room. She went over to a turntable, turned it on, the set the tonearm. As soon as the music started playing, I started laughing.

*I really do appreciate the fact you're sitting here
Your voice sounds so wonderful
But your face don't look too clear
So, Barmaid, bring a pitcher, another round of brew
Honey, why don't we get drunk and screw*

It was obvious that she'd planned that in advance, as the record was already on the turntable and the tonearm in the right place.

"Let's not be *too* obvious!" I declared with a grin.

She removed the Jimmy Buffett album and put on Journey's *Escape* album. A few seconds later, the first notes of *Don't Stop Believin'* came from the speakers. Tara plopped down in a red beanbag chair and patted to a yellow one next to her, so I sat down.

"How did you go from a small town in Ohio to being a stockbroker in less than three years?" Tara asked.

"I was born to an unwed mother, and we struggled for all eighteen years until I graduated High School. I wanted to forge a different life for myself, so I decided to get out of Clermont County, Ohio. I asked my uncle -- my mom's sister's husband -- to find me an entry-level job in Chicago. He asked a friend for a favor, and that friend, Noel Spurgeon, hired me to work in the mailroom.

"I immediately started learning everything I could about the business and asked for training manuals. That got the attention of one of the senior guys. I worked hard and was promoted to mailroom supervisor after about a year. I studied hard and invested, and that senior person promoted me to analyst. I earned two securities licenses, and I was allowed to start my own fund and accept clients. After about six months, there was a reorganization, and I was promoted to Head of Research."

"That's impressive," Tara said.

"What about you? Where are you from?"

"New York. Dad is an investment banker with Lehman Brothers, and Mom is a senior partner in a Wall Street law firm. We live in Manhattan, and I went to a private school. I'm a Freshman like Stefi."

"So, pretty much opposite of Stefi and me, who came from small towns in rural counties."

"Pretty much. I came here instead of going to school in New York because I needed to get away from my parents. They're totally driven and only care about their jobs, not me and my sister. She's two years older and is studying at Oxford."

"Well," I said with a silly smile, "that rules out 'gold digger'!"

"I have plenty of money, but I'm careful not to flaunt it because so many students here are more like you and are on scholarships. When I saw your suit, I knew for sure you had money. I recognize tailored suits and fitted shirts -- totally my dad's uniform. Fortunately, you don't seem like him."

"At work, I'm all about work. Outside of work, I'm all about friends and having a good time."

"That's how it should be, but my dad was on conference calls basically all evening, and mom was always working on a brief, practicing her arguments, or on the phone. Their answer to pretty much everything was to throw money at it."

"I had a really good relationship with my mom; I still do."

"I talk to my parents once a month to make sure the checks keep flowing. They never call any other time, and I only call that one time."

"What happens when you graduate?"

"My dream job would be designing clothing for OshKosh B'gosh. I'll try there, but otherwise, most likely back to New York. I take it you're here until you can get hired in New York?"

"No. I plan to stay with Spurgeon. I like Chicago, and it's not as if I'm not making good money. I just bought a condo in the Hancock Center."

"You must be doing *really* well. Those are pricey, though nothing compared to New York."

"Right there is a good reason to stay in Chicago. The cost of living is so much less, and I don't have to be on Wall Street to make money."

"How did you end up modeling?"

"My friend Deanna, who is in the class, asked me when the original guy dropped out."

"Have you modeled before?"

"Nope. First time."

"Gutsy! Can I ask you a very important question?"

"What's that?"

"Are we going to sit here talking and wondering what it would be like to be together, or actually find out?"

LI. What Do You Know?

April 3, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"You're home early!" Bianca observed when I walked into her room just after 8:30pm.

"Stefi is sick from something she ate, so I had dinner with her friend Tara, and Tara and I listened to music in her room for a bit before I headed home."

"In Jonathanland, that's the setup for getting laid! Every! Single! Time!"

"She offered, but I elected to come home instead."

"That's inconsistent with your past behavior. Come to bed."

I undressed, went to the bathroom to empty my bladder, then returned and climbed into bed with Bianca. I got under the comforter, we lay side by side, on our backs, and continued the conversation.

"I'm being consistent with my current thinking," I said. "I'm still trying to sort things out, and it's not as if I'm being a monk."

"Unless I'm completely out of the loop, you've only been with one new girl since December, and that was Stefi."

"That's true, and that was...call it an experiment. I needed to test the waters and start figuring out how I was going to manage that part of my life. I don't know just yet what kind of relationships I want to have. Right now, the only things that

are clearly defined are my relationship with Deanna as her patron, with you as the mother of my daughter, and with Violet as a close friend.

"Beyond that, CeCi will be around for another three years but then move to California, given she wants to get into movie making. I may be with Beth again, but she's eventually going to marry. I ended the physical part of my relationship with Marcia because that's going nowhere. And I basically gave Teri an ultimatum, which I seriously doubt she can accept.

"Stefi is a fun distraction, but she's not interested in anything long-term, at least as far as I can tell. You know that Alexa and Natasha have both offered, and I may take them up on their offers. Claire, too, but I'm less sure about that one. Katy and Esme are interested, and I put them off until they come back from Princeton. Then there are the girls from the past who aren't seeing anyone seriously.

"The ultimate question is, which path do I take? All the options are on the table except marriage, from a long-term monogamous relationship to a harem, though that last one isn't nearly as interesting as it once might have been. And whatever decision I make, it has to allow for my special relationships with you, Violet, and Deanna."

"You obviously want to talk, but can I ask some questions about Tara?"

"Sure."

"Were you attracted to her?"

"Moderately. She's about five inches shorter than me, thin, average looking, with blonde hair."

"And Stefi?"

"About the same height as Tara, dark hair, cute, with what I'd call typical midwestern looks."

"So, just curvy enough to be interesting and soft in all the right places?"

"Something like that. You're curvier; Stefi is more like CeCi, though not as tall."

"I sure have curves now!" Bianca declared. "Fortunately, I haven't gained too much weight. I'm basically right in the middle of the expected weight gain. Anyway, would it have been different if you were more attracted to Tara?"

"I don't think so. I think what it came down to is a combination of what I said about testing the waters and not wanting to mess things up with Stefi."

"That good?" Bianca asked.

"She treats blowjobs as if they're worship services and has offered to do nothing but perform oral sex for the entire time we're together!"

Bianca laughed, "And no sane, red-blooded male is going to pass that up!"

"As she said, she's playing with her new toy and isn't done with it yet, which I interpreted to mean that at some point, she'll decide to move on. And that's OK. I like her; she's fun and funny, but it's literally just sex. Circling back to my point about figuring things out, I'm curious how you see the future."

"Well, you know I strongly prefer girls, so I need to meet someone new, though I'm in no rush because of Sofía. But I suspect you assumed that and are asking about me and you."

"Yes."

"My ideal future hasn't changed much -- a long-term girlfriend, a baby with you, and you and I sleep together on occasion. That seems to fit most of your possible scenarios, except one where you commit to strict monogamy. I obviously would prefer you didn't, but you seem pre-disposed to that kind of relationship."

"Maybe," I said. "That's what I'm trying to sort out. No matter what, that's not going to happen anytime soon. I know I said that before Keiko, but events conspired to push us to a commitment before we intended. We were slowly working our way there but ran out of time. In a sense, it's like our decision to have a baby -- our preferred timeline was after you graduated, but events conspired to convince us to change it."

"But you feel Deanna's idea has merit, right?"

"Yes, and that argues against a strictly monogamous relationship. And unlike before Keiko, I can see myself in some kind of long-term relationship that allows for that. As for you and me, it's about Sofia. Whether we sleep together is an open question and has to work within whatever relationships we each have. Fundamentally, you and I will configure our relationship to fit the circumstances, just as we have from day one."

"True. Violet is the true wildcard, isn't she?"

"Yes. To say that it's complicated is a serious understatement. She was basically ready to move forward when I revealed my new thinking. That kind of sent her for a loop because she'd be having sex with me with no promise of marriage. She was never of the mindset that sex had to wait for marriage, but she expected it to be in an exclusive relationship that had the possibility of marriage."

"She didn't rule it out?"

"No. She's contemplating what that means and if it's sufficient to simply agree that we'll be close for the rest of our lives, whichever way it goes."

"She'd come with you, Jack, and me, right?"

"Assuming that ever happens! I know you and Jack think it's the right move, but there would have to be some incident that not only made me want to leave Spurgeon but also allowed me to leave with most of my AUM intact. I can't imagine what that might be."

"But you want to be on your own, right?"

"That would be the ideal, but I'm very happy at Spurgeon. You know I object to the stuff that goes on with secretaries, but we have a toehold on fixing that -- you, Violet, and Anna. And I feel the political environment is changing, too. Can you point to anything else?"

"Besides the rumors about Noel Spurgeon? Not really."

"And if he's not careful, he could end up in prison, which would probably be the end of Spurgeon. At that point, it would be easy to leave as customers would likely bail if I didn't. But Jeri insists he has enough money to get away with it."

"Until he doesn't," Bianca said. "One miscalculation, and it's all over."

"It's a foolish risk, especially given how widespread the rumors are. But that aside, I have to be loyal to Matheson and Spurgeon, given everything they've done for me and the fact that they have never once harmed me in any way. If that changes, then I'll consider it."

"Back to Violet, if she were to ask for an exclusive relationship, would you?"

"Not at this point. As I said to her, if that's what she wants, a 'wait and see' approach is best for her. Nothing is going to interfere with our friendship or going to games or her working for me."

"That makes sense. What will you do if Teri calls you?"

"The smart-ass answer is fuck her brains out; the actual answer is I'm not sure because her singlemindedness has always focused on marriage, and I'd be concerned she saw fucking as a means to an end."

"You mean she'd be playing the long game? Fuck, and then slowly tighten the reins until you had no more freedom?"

"Yes. Obviously, I could push back, but why invite trouble? I'd have to be convinced she really meant it, and I'm not quite sure how to do that. I mean, sure, I could fuck her and then tell her to get lost, but that seems crass."

"True, but it would actually serve her right."

"No, actually, it wouldn't. That would be on me, not on her. It would be unethical."

"Which is the kiss of death for anything you might consider."

"A line I cannot cross."

"So, all that said, was Tara really just about Stefi? Or something else?"

"As I said, it really is about figuring out the best way forward. And, as I said, it's not as if I've taken new girls off the table, given I'm leaning strongly towards being with Natasha and Alexa."

"And Katy and my cousin, right?"

"Yes, but I've been with them before. We'll see how things go, but I'll likely invite Meg, Miranda, Kasey, and Josie on dates sometime after we move. I got along really well with them, and none of them are seeing anyone seriously. Most of the other girls have boyfriends at this point, which is not surprising."

"I think you're on a good path. Obviously, Keiko is still in your mind and always will be, but life does have to go on."

"Yes, it does," I agreed.



April 4, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Wednesday was another attorney-free day, though I'd likely have very few of those starting in about a week when the hearing on Gwen's motions would be heard. I had lunch with Violet, and we went to the gym, and otherwise had a normal day. The only thing that was out of the ordinary was a fax from Brown Construction with the final quote for the electrical work and blinds. I signed it and faxed it back, then called to confirm the dates.

At 5:00pm, I left the office and headed to Mr. Greek Gyros in Greektown to have dinner with Deanna, taking my car, as the combined walks were too far to make it otherwise. We ordered our food and sat down.

"Sorry about yesterday," Deanna said. "I didn't get the message until this morning."

"No harm, no foul," I said. "It all worked out in the end. Also, I received the fax from Brown Construction, signed it, and faxed it back."

"Cool. Have you heard from Keiko's grandfather about the flooring?"

"The mats will arrive next week. I already agreed to an hourly rate quote with Brown Construction because they weren't comfortable with a fixed price for something they've never done. Once the mats are here, they'll coordinate with me for an install."

"OK. The washer and dryer will be delivered tomorrow, as will the furniture. We already have the bedding, but we'll wash it before we put it on the beds. I bought a cheap king-sized fitted sheet for Friday night so we don't have to try to rush to get the new stuff washed. And I'll bring towels, TP, and soap with me tomorrow."

"Thanks for taking care of everything."

"Thank Natasha! She's running the project! I'm just the gofer!"

"She's tracking her hours, right?"

"Yes. She's also hoping for a completion bonus!"

I chuckled, "We'll see."

"If you want my advice, the way you handled things before Keiko worked pretty well, though I'd advise not getting involved with Ellie beyond mentoring her."

"I actually had a fairly long conversation with Bianca last night, and I think the best approach is a measured one."

"Eight inches at a time!" Deanna said mirthfully.

"Yeah, yeah. I'm curious -- are there other girls you'd suggest avoiding?"

"She was really the only problematic one. You know why, right?"

"From that question, I suspect not."

The counterman brought our gyros platters and confirmed we were satisfied. He returned to the counter, and Deanna and I began to eat.

"To create a situation where you had no real option other than a harem with her as the primary concubine. She wanted you to have a reputation as someone willing to fuck anyone, anytime, on command, and make sure any girl who you felt was a legitimate option for the future was put off by it."

"You're joking!"

"Think about it, Jonathan. She escalated at every opportunity and would have continued escalating."

"Physiology has its limits! I'm not sure even the last baseball game was humanly possible."

"She was testing the limits of your physiology, and I daresay would have switched to games, contests, or some other way of increasing the number of girls."

"Even assuming that's the case, I have to believe there was a limit to girls who would do that."

"Yes, of course, but not practically. She'd just find new Freshman girls every year. She was extremely jealous of Keiko and wanted to prevent you from being a couple, if at all possible. If you hadn't put a stop to it, she'd have thrown the kitchen sink at preventing you from committing to Keiko."

"You're making me reconsider mentoring her," I said. "That kind of thinking is dangerous. I disagree with the 'win at all costs' strategy my mentor follows, believing there's more profit to be had in a 'win-win' scenario. And if I have to give up some short-term gains to achieve that, I'm sure not going to lose sleep over it."

"You haven't committed to hiring her, have you?"

"No, because I can't make that commitment, and even if I could, I wouldn't until after she graduates. I know I can count on Jack, Bianca, and Violet to behave ethically. I'm not so sure about Ellie after what you've said. And it's not as if I could ask her."

"Sure you could. If you don't think you'll receive an honest answer that tells you something important in and of itself."

"True, but I expect her to simply say it's her voyeuristic fantasy. Why would she admit something that would sunder the relationship? And it would be tough to reject her answer, given it's consistent with what she said before."

"But is it consistent with her behavior? Didn't she tell you she was unhappy you chose Keiko over her?"

"Yes."

"And she knew you were on track to ask Keiko to marry you, and escalated, despite Keiko ostensibly being her close friend. Think about that."

"A good point. I have to ask what you think I should do with Teri."

"Bang her like a drum and then act indifferent!"

"I actually would expect the sex to be pretty hot."

"Even more reason to act as if it were 'ho-hum'! She'd go nuts!"

"Which is what I'm trying to avoid!"

"I'm just yanking your chain, well, mostly. Honestly, you have better options for uncomplicated, unattached sex. Girls like Stefi or Katy and Esme. Or Natasha and Alexa. Even if they thought about a relationship, which I'm not saying they would, they're not thinking that now, except perhaps in the most speculative, general kind of way. If it's the red hair, ask Nicole to come over!"

"Red hair and green eyes take a backseat to Asian girls of every sort!"

"I'm curious how that developed."

"Blame Anala! I barely knew anyone from Asia back home except one exchange student. When I met Anala, I thought she was the most beautiful girl I'd ever met. She rejected my advances, but we became friends. That's how I met Gudia, and then later, I met Huifen and eventually Keiko. If I have a type, that's it -- Chinese, Japanese, or Indian girls. But looks aren't the only thing, obviously."

"And tall, thin, dark-haired girls with braids?"

"You know I'm attracted to you," I said. "And there's way more to it than just skin color, eye color, eye shape, and hair color. I would never let physical traits control a relationship. Sure, it might be why I noticed someone, but not why I stayed with them."

We finished our meals and left the restaurant for the drive to the Art Institute, where we parked and went inside. We saw Stefi waiting outside the office, so Deanna continued on to the studio.

"Sorry about last night," she said.

"It's OK. Feeling better?"

"Still a little queasy. I'm pretty sure it was the tacos, and Nika, Sherry, Kimba, and I were all puking our guts out. I saw the nurse yesterday and today, and she said it was either that or stomach flu. Anyway, I wouldn't have been upset if you were with Tara last night. It's not like she was taking you away from me, and we're not a couple, right?"

"Right. Just good, clean fun. You agree, right?"

"Absolutely! I'm probably not going to feel up to playing with my toy before the weekend, and you're busy with class, the hockey game, and the baseball game, right?"

"Yes."

"Next Saturday? The 14th?"

"That should work."

"Same bat time, same bat channel! 1:00pm at my dorm?"

"Yes."

"If you aren't busy tomorrow, Tara would love to see you. It's between you and her, so long as you don't blow me off for her!"

"I'll think about it."

"Just call the dorm and ask for her if you decide to."

She went to the studio, and I joined Alexa in the office to change into our tennis outfits, which basically consisted of white shorts and a white T-shirt for me and a white tennis skirt and a white polo for Alexa.

"That's downright sexy," I said.

"Guys watch women's tennis to see short skirts and nice legs!"

"I can safely say I've never seen a tennis match. All I know is that you hit the ball back and forth across the net, kind of like ping-pong."

"Kind of. Grab your racket; I'll grab the balls!"

I laughed, and we headed to the studio to pose. When class ended, we changed, and I headed home with Deanna.



April 5, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Another half point," Pete said, coming into my office. "That makes the Prime Rate 12%."

"And the market is responding accordingly," I replied. "Let's meet this afternoon at 1:00pm to revise our projection for tomorrow's report."

"OK. I'll let the other guys know."

"Send Tony in, if you would, please."

Pete left, and Tony came in.

"You're going to update the election forecast, right?"

"Yes. My gut tells me that if our projections are right, Reagan is going to take further hits in approval. He has a couple of points to give, but more than that, and our prediction of an easy victory is going up in smoke."

"Is there honestly a path for Mondale to win the Electoral College? Even if the national poll numbers look bad, Reagan could lose California and New York and still cruise to victory, though with a lower margin in the popular vote."

"The mythical popular vote!" Tony retorted. "Only the Electoral College counts. In theory, Reagan could win his states by a single vote, Mondale could win 100% of the votes in his states, and Mondale would have more aggregate popular votes. But so what? It's a meaningless number. That's why I'm using state-by-state polls if I can find them or past voting results compared to past poll numbers adjusted for current poll numbers. It's crude but accurate enough for our purposes."

"I bow to your superior knowledge," I chuckled. "I do remember about the Electoral College, but if I remember, there have been very few cases where the President was elected with a minority of the popular vote, meaningless as it is. Lincoln was one, but those were special circumstances, and I know the House had to elect Presidents a couple of times."

"You're right, of course, but my dad teaches political science at UofC, and the whole 'popular vote' is one of his hot buttons because it lacks any constitutional standing."

"Run scenarios for two more rate hikes, please."

"Two? We're projecting only one more, right?"

"Yes, but if you look at the reported inflation numbers, they indicate one more might not be enough. I agree tightening twice more in an election year looks bad for the Fed, but Volcker has the credentials to do it."

"I dunno," Tony said. "He was appointed by Carter, so it could look suspiciously like trying to stack the deck for Mondale."

"Fine. Assume that's true -- is that going to swing things back?"

"No. People look in their wallets, at their paychecks, and at what things cost. Reagan is a stalwart Cold Warrior, but as the saying goes, you can't win an election with foreign policy; you can only lose one. Or, as my dad says, in the end, it always comes down to the economy. Even without Desert One, Carter was doomed, despite polls suggesting otherwise."

"Run the numbers, and let's see what we see."

"Will do!"

After lunch with Violet, I met with Tony, Joel, Mark, Scott, and Pete to revise our projections. We changed our target interest rate to 12.75%, splitting the difference between one or two more half-point rate hikes. We also lowered our market predictions, with our S&P 500 target now 5% and our DJIA target -1.5%. That meant that even Triple-A corporate bond funds, which were taxable, would beat the returns of the S&P without a significant increase in risk.

My projections for the Nikkei, which I'd worked on with Rich, were for a 12% return. That meant that I had a strong baseline in the Nikkei and my Treasury

instruments and that my precious metals plays, along with Hawaiian Airlines, General Foods, and Bethlehem Steel, put me on target for gains in the high teens, more than triple the S&P. I spent the afternoon determining what I'd do with \$40 million in additional capital and concluded the best approach was to extend my precious metals positions, take larger positions in Apple and Mattel, and allocated the balance into the Nikkei 225.

At about 4:00pm, I called Pete into my office to discuss banking stocks.

"What would you say about a short on Continental Illinois?" I asked.

"I'd say their stock is in the crapper, and the next stop is the sewer."

"Federal bailout or no?"

"They can't let a bank that size fail. The cascading effects would cause a rash of other failures and stagnate the economy, or worse, as capital would dry up almost instantly."

"Too big to fail?"

"Yes. The problem is that it sets a bad precedent and creates a moral hazard by privatizing profits and socializing losses. Banks seek ever higher profits, knowing that if things go wrong, the FDIC or FSLIC will step in, the shareholders will be wiped out, but the executives keep everything they earned. It's a recipe for disaster."

"Speculate, please."

"There's a rumor, completely unconfirmed, of an SEC investigation into ESM Government Securities in Florida. They do repo, and there have been rumors about shady dealings and cooked books. They are tied to Home State Savings in

Cincinnati. If anything happens to ESM, Home State is going to be in serious trouble, similar to what happened with Chase Manhattan after Drysdale Government Securities went down in 1982. I've also put together a list of S&Ls offering above-market rates and making riskier loans. I don't have anything actionable just yet, but I'll have a full report at the end of this month."

"No idea when that SEC investigation will complete?"

"No. As I said, unconfirmed rumors. It could just be someone spreading FUD, but I'll keep my ear to the ground."

"Good. We don't use ESM for overnight lending, so there is no need to warn Noel Spurgeon until we have concrete information, or you can confirm the investigation through some back channel."

"I'll see what I can dig up, but don't count on it in the short term."

"Understood."

He left, and I called Joel Steinem.

"I need to borrow 400,000 shares of Continental Illinois for a short."

"And I need a date with Charlie's Angels!" he declared. "Half the planet has either shorted or is looking to short that stock. If I can locate the shares, it'll cost you."

"Understood. I'll pay as much as 50 bips."

"Holy shit, man! What do you know?"

"If that bank isn't a crater of smoking rubble by the end of May, I'll buy you dinner at any place you can name, even if we have to fly there."

"Let me work. I'm positive I can locate shares at that rate, but it may take a day or two."

"Thanks."

I'd be paying 1.5% interest per month, but given it was a very short-term play, I wasn't worried. If the FDIC did step in to seize the bank, as I expected, the shares would drop; if it failed, they'd be worthless, and I'd never have to make good on replacing them.

"Jonathan," Violet said from the door to my office. "Can I ask a question?"

"Sure."

"What's 'repo'?"

"Listening to my conversations?" I asked with a smile.

"The door was open, and I sit right outside!"

"I was teasing, but I'm sure you knew that. 'Repo' is short for 'repurchase agreement'. It's used for overnight liquidity or reserve purposes. I sell government securities to someone, and they sell them back to me the next day at a slightly higher rate, which is the equivalent of interest on the loan, and is called the 'repo rate'. Neither side changes their overall capitalization, but one now has sufficient cash on hand for whatever requirement they had. Banks, brokerages, hedge funds, and major corporations all do it.

"Technically, any security can be used, but highly liquid, that is, ones that can easily be sold, are most commonly used. Mainly that's government securities, but it can also be high-grade corporate bonds or even equities, but equities create significant risk in the case of a default. The other important point is that from a tax perspective, it's a single transaction, so only the interest is taxable, not the two corresponding asset sales."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome!"

She returned to her desk, and I picked up the phone to make a call I'd debated all day.

"162 North State," the male voice said.

"Tara Schumann, please."

"One moment."

He connected the call, and Tara answered.

"Hi, it's Jonathan. Would you like to have dinner and hang out?"

"Yes!"

"Meet me at Maxim's at 5:30?"

"See you there!"

We ended the call, and I dialed the house. Bianca answered on the third ring.

"Sorry, it takes me time to waddle to the phone!" she said after we greeted each other.

"I understand. I'll be late tonight, probably after midnight."

"I figured that would be the case after the convo this morning when you said you were thinking about it. You're spending tomorrow night at the condo, right?"

"Yes. The new phone is hooked up, so you can reach me if Sofía informs you of her intent to enter the world."

Bianca laughed, "OK. The only potential concerns are the hockey game and baseball game, but Deanna will be around to take me to Illinois Masonic if I go into labor while you're at the games."

"I'll call you between periods of the hockey game and during the 7th inning stretch of the baseball game."

"OK. You'll have plenty of time; I'm sure you remember the usual timeline from our class."

"Yes, but I also want to be with you. Violet will understand."

"See you tonight after midnight!"

We said 'goodbye', and I hung up. About twenty minutes later, I left the office and drove to a parking garage near Tara's dorm, then walked from there to Maxim's. Tara arrived about three minutes later, and we went to the lower level, where we were seated in a booth.

"At the risk of messing this up," Tara said once we'd ordered, "why the change of heart?"

"There is more here than meets the eye," I said. "Neither you nor Stefi know much about me beyond I'm from Goshen, Ohio, I'm single, and I work as a stockbroker. I'll tell you some of it, but you need to keep it to yourself, OK?"

"Just so we're clear -- you're not cheating on anyone, are you?"

I was surprised Stefi hadn't said anything.

"No. I was married, but my wife died of leukemia two days after Christmas."

"Oh my gosh! That really happened?"

"Yes."

"I'm so sorry!"

"Thanks. That meant being with someone new was a serious struggle, and I had to make sure my head was screwed on reasonably straight and also be sure I wasn't somehow disrespecting my wife's memory. When Stefi asked me out, I agreed to go to dinner and a movie with her as my first serious date. I wasn't sure what I was going to do, but when she revealed her fantasy and specifically asked me to fulfill it, I agreed.

"She and I agreed we were just having fun, and when we had pizza with you, she expressed her opposition to you 'borrowing' me. I know she was ill Tuesday night, but I still had a concern about upsetting her, even though we were just having fun together. She pulled me aside last night to arrange to see me a week from Saturday and made it clear she was OK with you 'borrowing' me, so long as it didn't interfere.

"That led me to consider my options, and I thought about it last night after I went home, as well as at work today. I concluded I hadn't really been fair to you because by coming back to your room, I implied we'd fool around, which I was fairly certain was your plan. Maybe not, but either way, when you asked directly, I just felt I wasn't ready. I've reconsidered and decided to call you. What happens after dinner is up to you."

"If I had known..." Tara said.

"I understand, but it's on me. I know you were a bit miffed when I said I was leaving last night, and I could have explained, but I elected not to. You asked today, and I felt I at least owed you an explanation. Had you not asked, I'm not sure if I would have told you. Basically, I decided we'd have dinner and see what happened, with no assumptions and no specific idea of what I'd say."

"Stefi doesn't know any of this?"

"She does, but she obviously kept it to herself, which I appreciate."

"My lips are sealed! Just as they will be later! That is, if you're *up* for it!"

The waitress brought our salads and a basket of fresh bread, and we began eating.

"If it's OK to ask, how long were you married?"

"We had a civil ceremony in mid-August and a Shinto ceremony in early October."

"Whoa! How long were you engaged?"

"About a month. We'd been dating, progressively more seriously, since February. She was diagnosed after we'd effectively agreed to get engaged but before we were officially engaged. I did what I would have done had she not had that diagnosis."

"I don't even know what to say about that. It's so tragic. But now I totally understand what happened Tuesday night. Well, as best anyone could who hasn't gone through something like that."

"We should probably change the subject," I said. "Otherwise, this conversation will be morose."

"Sorry."

"That wasn't a complaint, just a suggestion. Pick any topic you like."

"First-time stories?" she asked with a smirk.

I laughed, "Mine is simple. I was seventeen, and it was a girl I'd known since I was a toddler and who was my best friend. She kissed me for the first time on her sixteenth birthday. Five minutes later, neither of us was a virgin! We made sure five more times!"

Tara laughed, "Wow! First kiss to first time was five minutes?"

"Yep! You?"

"I was fifteen and was bored out of my gourd. I couldn't think of anything to do, so I went to my best friend's condo to hang out. I could get in because the doorman knew me. When I rang the bell, her older brother answered the door and told me she wasn't home. I said I was bored and looking for something to do. He asked what, and I said anything, as long as it was fun.

He invited me in, got us Cokes, and put on some music. He asked if I wanted to have some serious fun, and I said yes. He leaned over and kissed me, and we started making out like crazy. The next thing I knew, I was naked, and he had his tongue in me. I was SO hot I begged him to do it with me. I didn't have to ask twice! He stripped, got a rubber, put it on, and popped my cherry right there on the couch. It was pretty good, but there was a problem - a blood and pussy juice stain on the couch!"

"Oops!"

"Yeah. I wanted to do it again, but he was freaked out about getting the stain out before his parents came home, so I left. I never had another chance with him because my friend was home, and he went back to college, and when he came home, he had a girlfriend. I was bummed, but I met a guy at school that Fall, and we started screwing after about two months. It didn't last, and there were a couple of other guys at home, and then one since I came here. I'm going to guess you got laid a lot before you got married."

"You could say that! It was after I moved to Chicago, though, because I was with the girl from High School from our first time until I moved."

"What happened to her?"

"It's a really long story, but the short version is after I moved to Chicago, she got pregnant and had a falling out with her parents over the father. It's still a total mess."

"You didn't mention birth control. Was she on the Pill your first time?"

"No birth control. We were ridiculously lucky. She went on the Pill almost right away. And she was religious about it, so she was one of very few who get

pregnant even if they take the Pill. It might have been antibiotics, but she's not sure."

"That would suck. I'd absolutely have an abortion if the Pill failed, at least until I graduate and have a job. There's no way I'd have a baby now, nor would I in High School."

"It's hard to argue with that, given what I know from my mom's situation, in addition to my friend's. I have rubbers with me."

"I'm on the Pill, so you don't have to use them unless you have some rule about it. The guy I've been with a few times here always uses them because, in High School, he had a scare when a girl he'd been with, who said she was on the Pill, was late and had a positive EPT. She had her period about two weeks late, though her gynecologist said it was probably a miscarriage. She'd have been about a month pregnant at that point."

"No rule like that," I replied. "But I'm not opposed to using rubbers."

"If the choice is screwing with a rubber or not screwing, I think every guy would choose screwing!"

"I'd say that was a safe bet."

The waitress brought our main courses, and a busboy cleared away our salad plates.

"What does your dad do for Lehman?"

"M&A advisory. He's not happy about the acquisition by American Express."

"And your mom?"

"The same thing -- M&A advisory, though from a legal rather than financial standpoint. She's at Ackerman. I'm sure they'd both be interested in talking to you."

"Isn't it a bit early for 'meet the parents'?" I asked.

Tara laughed, "A bit! But you have to know the business is about as incestuous as any on the planet. Everyone senior knows everyone senior and will get into bed with their worst enemy if they can make a buck!"

"I'm just starting out, so personal contacts would be good."

"I'm more worried about personal contact between you and me! We should finish our meal and have each other for dessert."

"That works for me!"

LII. We Should Go

April 5, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Fuuuuuuuuck!" Tara groaned as she slid down my shaft and engulfed me in her slick tunnel in her dorm room on Thursday evening.

She took a couple of deep breaths, let them out, and began grinding her clit against my pubic bone. It didn't take her long before she moaned, her pussy spasmed, and she groaned deeply. I watched intently as the thin, blonde girl with small breasts and wispy pubic hair continued grinding, extending her orgasm,

When it had passed, she leaned down so we could share a French kiss. Our tongues tangled for a minute before she sat up and began grinding again. She brought herself off twice more, French kissing me after each one.

"I want you to fuck me hard," she whispered urgently.

Tara lifted off, and we switched positions, so she was on her back, and I was on top of her. I plunged into her with a firm stroke, and she groaned loudly as my pubic bone pressed on her clit. She wrapped her arms and legs around me and pushed her hips up to encourage me. I began slowly but quickly increased the speed and strength of my thrusts until we were fucking hard.

Tara had an orgasm which brought me close, then a second one which pushed me past the point of no return. I pushed completely inside her and ground against her clit as jets of cum spurted into her spasming pussy. When our mutual orgasms passed, we lay together until I softened and slipped from her, then moved off her to lie next to her.

"That," Tara said, breathing heavily, "was awesome."

"It was," I agreed.

"How long to recover?"

"Ten minutes; less with encouragement."

"Any hangups about eating pussy after you've cum in it?"

"No."

Tara moved on top of me, with her head by my groin and her pussy over my face. She grasped my shaft and began licking our combined juices from it, then lowered her pussy to my mouth. I brought her off once before she got me hard, then a second time as she bobbed, licked, and sucked. After a few minutes, she released me, turned, and quickly impaled herself on me. She brought herself off twice, kissing me after each one, then lifted off.

"Want to cum in my mouth?" she asked.

"Yes."

She turned and planted her pussy on my lips while she took my glans into her mouth. While I tongued her clit, she began stroking me while swirling her tongue and sucking hard. After a short time, she began bobbing, and right after I brought her off, I twitched, signaling Tara I was about to cum. She kept just my glans in her mouth and lashed it with her tongue while stroking me with one hand and squeezing my sack with the other.

It didn't take long before I groaned as cum exploded into Tara's mouth. She continued stroking, sucking, licking, and squeezing until she'd milked the last bit of cum from me. She made a few bobs, released me, turned, and made eye contact, getting permission to kiss. I nodded, and we exchanged a deep French kiss, though she had swallowed.

"No hangups with that, either!" she declared happily when she broke the kiss and moved next to me.

"You and Stefi didn't talk?"

"No. Well, she showed me her drawings, and told me you were awesome, but no details. I knew you were big from the drawings, but holy God, it felt like you were splitting me in two when I put in that first time. I've never felt so full in my life!"

"Glad to be of service!" I said with a grin.

"Well, I know at least half-a-dozen girls who could use a good servicing from a guy with a big dick!"

"Probably not a good idea at this juncture," I said.

"Stefi would murder me in my sleep!" Tara declared.

"I meant from my perspective, but there is that."

"Mind if I ask about your preferences or kinks?"

"No kinks that I'm aware of, and I'm pretty much game for anything hetero, though I'm not into S&M or any of the stranger stuff."

"Stranger stuff?"

"Water sports or scat."

"OK, you lost me on those."

"Playing with urine and feces."

"OK, now that's just downright gross! People do that?"

"So I've heard. Nobody has ever asked, nor have I met anyone who thought either of those were appealing. And that includes girls who had tried anal."

"I never understood the point for straight people to do that. Gay guys, sure, because they don't have pussies, but otherwise? I just don't see it. Have you done it?"

"Yes, at the express request of a few girls who wanted to try it. Only one of them truly liked it."

"And you?"

"It didn't do anything special for me, and I very much prefer vaginal or oral; by miles."

"Have you had a threesome?"

"Yes, on quite a few occasions, actually. I was involved with two bi girls, one who strongly preferred girls and one who strongly preferred guys. The one who prefers guys got married last year; the one who prefers girls just broke up with a long-term girlfriend. I take it you haven't."

"No, and I'm not interested because I can't see myself even kissing a girl."

"I feel the same way about guys. Is there anything you want to do you haven't done?"

"Well, if my boobs weren't so small as to be almost non-existent, I'd like to try a tit fuck, but that's basically impossible. I did have a guy cum on my face, though it wasn't intended. Let's just say my first blowjob did not go very well! I choked and coughed, and only one spurt ended up in my mouth. It was actually kind of cool to have it on my face, but the guy didn't appreciate it at all."

"He's an idiot! Any girl who brings me off with her mouth is A-OK, splash, spit, or swallow!"

Tara laughed, "Splash, as in on her face or chest or whatever?"

"Yes, or even if it ends up on me. Seriously, being unhappy about a girl making you cum with her mouth is a sign of idiocy!"

"I like your attitude! Ready to go again?"

"Yes!"

"Lick me and fuck me hard? Then we'll do the sixty-nine, ride, sixty-nine before we shower."

"I like how you think!"



April 6, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday morning, when Jack and I arrived at the Hancock Center, I walked to the condo elevators and went up to the 91st floor, taking my bag of spare clothes with me to leave in the condo. I let myself in and checked that the washer and dryer were hooked up, which they were, then went upstairs.

I checked the bedrooms, noting the different painted borders along with the pedestal beds -- a king in the master bedroom and queens in the other three that would be used by Bianca, Deanna, and CeCi. The room that would be the gallery had simply had borders painted and had no furniture, as planned.

Last, I checked the room that would be the nursery, and what caught my eye was the images that had been painted on the wall -- bunnies, birds, a bear cub, and kittens on one wall, and balloons and rainbows on the opposite wall. That was a complete surprise, as Natasha hadn't mentioned it.

Satisfied that everything was going according to plan, I took the elevator down to the lobby, crossed to the business side, and took the elevator up to 29 to begin my day. I greeted Rich and Mark about the Asian markets and morning trading in Europe, then headed to the Research Department offices, where I made a pot of coffee and began my morning assessment.

The world was basically in a holding pattern, with the usual low-intensity conflicts continuing around the globe, but none appeared to be escalating or spreading, and things between the US and the Soviet Union had returned to a steady state after KAL 007 and the invasion of Grenada.

Two areas I was watching closely were Kashmir, where India and Pakistan were in perpetual conflict that might turn into open warfare, and Brazil, where popular sentiment was turning significantly against the military government installed after a coup supported by the United States. Based on reporting in the

Times of India and translations of articles from the Brazilian press, I nudged my Asian and South American risk factors slightly upward.

On a positive note, President Reagan had, on Wednesday, called for a global ban on chemical weapons. That had been a response to claims by Iran that Iraq had used chemical weapons in the war between the two countries, an act condemned by the UN. I hadn't adjusted my global risk assessment for that, as I had every confidence nothing would happen, and if it did, the Russians and Chinese would cheat, and most likely, so would the US.

The rest of the morning was routine, and I had lunch with Violet in the break room and worked out in the gym. When I returned, I had a message from Joel Steinem, which I returned.

"I found your borrow. I negotiated 32 bips, which was below your maximum, so I executed the trade for you."

"Thanks."

"That'll be one hell of a payoff if the bank turns into the crater of smoking rubble you're predicting. Do you intend to sell on the news?"

"It all depends on what the FDIC does and what kind of bailout occurs. It's around \$23, and I'll be happy at \$10 and take the \$4.5 million after borrowing costs. More, and I'll be happier still. Obviously, I can't hold past the end of June if the stock isn't canceled, given what it's costing me."

"Makes sense. Glad to be of assistance."

"Take the wife or mistress out for a nice meal on me."

"I can't afford a mistress! Wife number one made sure of that!"

"Then just bring me the receipt for you and Mrs. Steinem!"

"Nice doing business with you!"

"You come through every time, so you earn my repeat business!"

"Thanks, Jonathan. Have a good weekend."

"You, too, Joel!"

We ended the call, and I checked the trade confirmation. There were several ways things could go, and, in the end, the actions of the Feds would dictate if I rode it all the way down or closed out my position before the bottom.

I spent the rest of the day reviewing Pete's report about S&Ls and banks that were paying rates above the market and those with the riskiest loan portfolios. At some point in the not-too-distant future, we'd be shorting some of those stocks, applying our own pressure to badly managed S&Ls.

While some people might see that as predatory, the entire idea of a free market was that market forces would drive badly run companies out of business while building up well-run companies. The problem was, as Pete had correctly identified, the moral hazard created by the government insuring losses while allowing the profits to be privatized. And that wasn't just true about banks -- it was true about auto manufacturers, steel producers, and a host of other sectors where government bailouts were the norm.

At 5:00pm, I put all my work into my desk drawers, locked the drawers, then left the office. I had let Jack know that CeCi and I wouldn't be joining him and Kristy, so instead of meeting them, I headed for the residential elevators and

rode them up to the 91st floor. I let myself into the condo and was greeted by Deanna and CeCi.

"The food will be here in about thirty minutes," Deanna said. "Why don't you check out the bedrooms?"

"I did that this morning! I love the painting in the nursery! Who?"

"One of the art students, Kassie. Well, her full name is Kassiopeia. She's from Greece. When I told her it was a nursery, she offered to paint the extra images. I actually have a release for you to sign for her so she can use photos of the works."

"Of course. Thank her for me, please."

"I was thinking we'd invite the three artists to the housewarming whenever we have it."

"That sounds good. Who are the other two?"

"Kendra and Stacey. Also, I heard from Marcus Washington at Brown Construction that the permits were issued yesterday. They'll start installing the blinds a week from Monday, and the electrical in the gallery room will be done after that."

"Excellent. The flooring will be installed the following week. That means everything will be ready to move in, assuming you'll have all the decoration done."

"Close, I think. Worst-case is by the end of April, and we could move anytime, really, because all the beds are here. And if you think about it, it might make

sense for Bianca to be here with the baby. We could move enough kitchen stuff and stock the fridge so that she could come here once she delivers."

"I'll discuss that with her. I did have one thing to ask about, and that's where the computers will go. Will they all still be in your room?"

"The problem with that is it makes it tough for others to use them. The new Japanese room is meant to be a completely quiet place, with the only electronics being a small stereo system. That means they have to be in the common living space."

"Or the space upstairs that we discussed being a play area," Deanna suggested. "At least for the first year or so, you wouldn't need it, and it's not as if there isn't sufficient space in the main living area for a play area. And with only one kid, the nursery has plenty of room, too. It would even work with two cribs, if that were somehow necessary. And they could be swapped for bunk beds."

"True," I agreed.

"And I'll probably be in California by then," CeCi observed, "so you'll have an additional room."

"We're getting WAY ahead," I said. "One kid is all I expect for the foreseeable future. Well, unless either of you is planning on a very different future from the ones we've discussed."

"No chance!" CeCi declared. "I mean, yes, eventually, but not until I'm at least somewhat established, which I figure is around thirty, which seems right to me. And I know Dee has no particular interest in having kids."

"Then let's use that sitting room space upstairs for the computers," I said. "Plan for the Macintosh, the printer, and the IBM PC. The Atari 800 will be connected

to the projection TV, and I'll likely give the Apple II to someone, as we barely use it now."

"If you don't object, I'll take it," CeCi said. "I can put it in my room and use it for term papers or whatever."

"That's fine with me," I said. "Deanna, make it happen!"

The intercom buzzed, and Deanna moved to pick up the handset. She had a brief conversation and replaced the handset on the hook.

"Our food is here. The doorman is sending the delivery person up."

Three minutes later, the doorbell rang, and I answered it. I accepted the food from the young Chinese delivery boy, paid him, and then brought the food to the kitchen.

"I'm glad the chairs for the breakfast bar are here," I said. "Otherwise, we'd have to sit on the floor!"

"I bought an inexpensive set of flatware that's in the drawer, and there are napkins as well."

We set out the food and ate from paper plates, as we didn't have any dishes. When we finished eating, Deanna collected all of the containers and plates, put them in a plastic garbage bag, then dropped them into the garbage chute in the laundry room.

"What's the plan?" I asked Deanna when she returned.

"If we're going to do what I proposed, then we each have to do it each way with each other. For oral, I was thinking of a fun variation -- I suck you, you lick CeCi,

and she licks me. Once you cum, we rest a bit, then switch so CeCi sucks you while you lick me, and I lick CeCi."

"That sounds fun!" CeCi declared.

"I agree."

"Anal gets more complicated," Deanna said. "You do me, I do you, you do CeCi, CeCi does you, then CeCi and I do each other. We finish with you fucking CeCi, me fucking CeCi, you fucking me, then CeCi fucking me."

"That's over the top, for sure!" I chuckled. "If you and CeCi agree, I'm good with that."

"I'm in!" CeCi declared.

"Then let's repair to the boudoir," Deanna exclaimed.

The three of us went up to the master bedroom, undressed, and got into my new king-sized bed.



April 7, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"That was crazy!" I declared when the three of us dragged ourselves out of bed on Saturday morning.

"I might have gotten a bit carried away when I was pegging you," Deanna declared.

We moved to the bathroom, and I turned on the tap in the large stall shower.

"That was VERY weird," I said as we got into the shower. "That first time you were slow and gentle; last night you fucked me."

"And?"

"My opinion is still the same -- I did it because you wanted to, not because it turned me on. Do you like it?"

"I consider it a fair trade for the thrill of doing you that way," Deanna said. "But we don't have to do this again. CeCi?"

"Same. Doing Jonathan gives me a sense of power and control, but him doing me is just weird, not exciting."

"Then I think we declare this experiment complete," I said. "That is NOT to say we didn't need to have an over-the-top christening of the bed!"

"Changing subjects, when do we want to have the housewarming?" Deanna asked. "Memorial Day is out because we're having the party at the house."

"What about the second Sunday in May? That's two weeks before Memorial Day, and everything will be in place by then."

"Who do we invite?"

"I think the basic guest list should be the same as the one we used when we moved to the house on Morse, plus new friends and the art students, of course. Actually, before we confirm the date, make sure Natasha can attend. I want her to hear what I'm sure will be positive responses to her interior design work."

"I'll put together a list," Deanna said. "I know normally Bianca would do this stuff, but she's going to be a bit preoccupied any day now!"

"That's an understatement if there ever was one!" CeCi declared. "I'll help, Dee."

"Thank you both!"

"I'll take your suits home," Deanna said. "I'm doing the grocery shopping with Jack and Kristy today, and we'll drop off your suits and shirts at the dry cleaners."

"Thanks."

We finished our joint shower, dried off, and dressed. I kissed the girls goodbye, then left the condo to head to Violet's house for breakfast.

"Are you spending the afternoon here?" she asked after we sat down to eat.

"I think it makes the most sense," I said. "Unless you don't want me to."

"I do! What time will you be here tomorrow?"

"I figure 11:00am so we can get to Comiskey and see batting practice."

"Great!"

We ate, I helped Violet clean up, then left for class. Four hours later, I was sitting at the table with Violet once again, this time for lunch.

"How are things with the new condo?" she asked.

"Good. Everything should be done by the end of this month. We're tentatively planning a housewarming for May 13th. Bianca and I may actually move sooner,

which would make things easier for the nannies who start April 20th. It would also mean I'd be very close if Bianca and Sofía needed me."

"Any moment now, right?"

"Yes. I'll call Bianca before we leave for the game, then during each intermission. Tomorrow, I'll call after batting practice and during the seventh-inning stretch. That way, if she goes into labor, I can head home. I hope you understand."

"Of course! And if it happens today, Lily will go to the game with me tomorrow."

"Hopefully, Sofía will respect hockey and baseball!"

Violet laughed, "If you think that will happen, you're going to be in for a rude awakening!"

"What? Babies don't operate on *my* schedule?" I asked with a goofy smile.

"Good luck being a dad!" Violet tittered. "You're going to need it!"

"I think that's true whether I'm being silly or not! It's a huge change in my life, but one I'm very happy about."

"And all teasing aside, I think you'll make an awesome dad."

"Thanks."

"Are you and Bianca going to have a second one?"

I shook my head, "No. She only wants one, and if the last few weeks are any indication, she's not going to change her mind! I'm open to having another kid, but that's in the future."

"But without being married, right?"

"I'd say that's a safe assumption."

"So how will that work? I mean, if you had a kid with someone other than Bianca?"

"The usual way," I smirked.

Violet laughed, "You are so bad!"

"Thank you! But if you're referring to the condo, CeCi plans to move to California when she graduates to start her film career, which opens up a bedroom."

"Because you're assuming whoever it is won't move into your bedroom with you?"

"I'm making no assumptions about anything, just allowing for all possibilities. I don't see that happening soon, though, if it happens at all."

"So what would it be like if we went to bed together? Wait! Don't answer that! What would *our relationship* be like if we went to bed together?"

I laughed, "Afraid of how I might answer?"

"POSITIVE about how you would answer!"

"One way to answer is to say that other than that, it wouldn't change, in that we'd keep doing the same things we do now -- spend time together, go to baseball, hockey, and football games, and with you working for me. And while

that's true, it would also change the meaning of all those things in ways we can't exactly predict."

"That's what concerns you, right?"

"Yes, and you as well."

"You know, I never thought it was just for married couples, but I also felt it was only for couples. You didn't. I wonder what it would mean to you."

"That is a very good question," I replied. "I doubt I can answer it to your satisfaction because I can't answer to my own satisfaction. All I can say is that sex is natural, fun, and feels good, and I can't ascribe a deeper meaning to it, at least not now."

"But it was different with Keiko, right? I mean, from other girls?"

"I think the best answer is that it was different with Keiko, but it was also different with Bianca when we were inviting Sofía into our lives. And it would be different with you, but I can't explain how."

Violet smiled, "You love me. Maybe not the same way you loved Keiko or the way you love Bianca, but you love me."

"I do, but what that means is unclear because there are so many nuances to that word, not to mention it being driven by emotion, not logic or analysis."

"And that confuses you because you don't know how to deal with it. It's like you dealing with what happened with Keiko. You were out of sorts, which most people would be, but you were out of sorts because there was nothing logical about it."

"I'd say that's a valid assessment."

We finished eating, cleaned up the kitchen, then went to the front room. I sat down on the couch and was both surprised and not surprised when Violet sat on my lap. I put my arms around her, and she pulled her legs up, curled up almost like a cat, and snuggled against my chest.

"I like this," she said.

"Me, too," I agreed.

We cuddled quietly for a few minutes before Violet lifted her head from my shoulder.

"What do you want to do?" she asked.

"There are so many ways I could answer that question, but the best answer is to be your friend, to take care of you, and to protect you."

"You know that's not what I meant," she said quietly.

"Actually, it is because what you're clearly implying can only happen if I can be sure it won't mess up those three things. Well, not sure as in some kind of absolute guarantee, but sure as in being confident."

"Is that how it was with Keiko?"

"No. It started as just having some fun and making each other feel good. The feelings developed over time. The same was true with Bianca."

"What about Bev? Wait, sorry, you probably don't want to talk about her."

"It's OK. Everything with Bev was different. Remember, we knew each other from the time we were toddlers and spent a lot of time together. Things developed naturally, and we didn't even notice because the changes were gradual over time. That was both good and bad -- good because we were just Jonathan and Bev; and bad because we didn't talk about how we felt about each other. That's what I believe led to the disastrous events that followed my decision to come to Chicago without even consulting Bev."

"You still blame yourself?"

"No, I take responsibility for my actions, just as Bev has to take responsibility for hers. If she felt betrayed, she could have talked to me about it, and I believe we would have found a solution. Instead, she started seeing Bob Leahey almost right after I told her I was moving."

"And then Glen."

"Yes. And who knows? Maybe that would have happened anyway. And now that I think more about it, our relationship -- I mean yours and mine -- developed the same way. The main difference is we spoke about our feelings, and everything just progressed naturally. To the point where you're cuddled in my lap, and we're dancing around the idea of going to bed together."

"You want to, I want to, so why aren't we?" Violet asked.

"Because we both have the exact same question -- what would it mean? Because neither of us knows the answer to that with any certainty, neither of us is willing to take the risk to do what we both want to do."

Violet sighed, "I think you're right. I'm not afraid now, just nervous. But I don't want to lose you. Want to hear something funny?"

"Sure."

"Most girls think they have to go to bed with a guy to not lose him; I'm afraid that if we do, I could lose you because it might mess things up."

"Just remember, we have plenty of time. There is zero risk that I'm going to enter into a committed monogamous relationship anytime soon."

"Didn't you say that before Keiko?"

"I did, but things are different now, mostly because of her."

"Can I kiss you?"

I nodded, and Violet gave me a soft kiss on the lips, sighed, then snuggled close. We sat quietly for about twenty minutes, then Violet suggested we go grocery shopping, and I agreed.

"Did you hear from that guy, Jorge?" Violet asked as we walked past Lily's house.

"No. Did Lily say anything?"

"No, but I'll see her on Tuesday for dinner. I'll ask her then."

When we turned onto Halsted, we walked past Ichirō-san's dōjō, but a class was in session, so I elected not to stop and say 'hello', as I'd see him later in the month for dinner. Violet and I completed her shopping and returned to her house. I helped her clean, and just after 5:00pm, I called to check on Bianca, then Violet and I left the house for the stadium. When we arrived, we bought our usual hot dogs, nachos, and Cokes and settled into our seats.

The Hawks were, to our surprise, in very good shape, as they'd won the first game of the series at the Met Center in Minneapolis. That meant they only had to win their two home games to advance to the next round. Sadly, it didn't go that way, with the North Stars scoring twice in the first period, then again early in the second period to go up 3-0. The Hawks got a goal halfway through the period but couldn't take the momentum. The North Stars scored again in the third period to seal a 4-1 victory, a 2-1 lead in the series, and regain their home-ice advantage.

"Well, that positively stunk!" Violet groused as we made our way from the stadium. "And what was with the fight five seconds into the game?"

"No idea. There were twelve penalties in the first period of Game 2 and twelve in the first period of tonight's game. Now the Hawks have to win tomorrow and then away on Tuesday. I don't think they will."

"Me either," Violet said unhappily.

We made our way to the car, I drove her home, then headed to my house in Rogers Park, where Bianca was waiting in bed.

"Soon," I think," she said when I climbed into bed. "She's dropped, and I can feel a bit of pressure."

"Dropped?"

"It means her head is engaged, and she's in position for labor to start. It could be a week, but I don't think so. I feel like two or three days at most, but that might just be wishful thinking!"

"I can skip the game tomorrow," I said. "Violet already arranged with Lily for Lily to go if I can't make it."

"That won't get you in trouble with Spurgeon?"

"No. I have a legitimate excuse, but also, nobody is going to give me grief at this point. Even if I'm 'only' head of Research, I'm considered part of the fraternity."

"It's like a frat house there, for sure! Well, not in our office, but upstairs, for sure."

"One thing I appreciate about Matheson is he's not into coke. Neither is Spurgeon."

"Matheson's vice is girls with huge tits like Mia! Spurgeon's is fifteen-year-olds!"

"And mine?"

"Art students, or so it seems! In fact, other than the BJ from me, you've only been with art students since Keiko, right?"

"Yes, though not intentionally. It just kind of worked out that way."

"I'm super tired, so I hope you don't mind if we just go to sleep."

"Not at all."



April 8, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I think you're safe to go to the Sox game," Bianca said. "No change, and it's 10:00am. Just call as you promised."

"You're sure?"

"Positive."

I called Violet to let her know I'd be going to the game, and about fifteen minutes later, I left the house. I parked in front of Violet's house, and she came out immediately. I locked the car, then the two of us walked toward Comiskey Park. We got to watch the Sox take batting practice, and once they left the field, I went to the payphone and called home. Bianca said nothing had changed, so we ended the call, and I returned to my seat.

The Sox didn't fare any better than the Hawks had, giving up two runs in the second and two more in the fifth. Jack Morris tossed a no-hitter for the Tigers, striking out eight and walking six, facing only five more batters than the minimum. The game ended with a 4-0 Tigers victory.

"OK, that stunk even worse than last night!" Violet complained as we made our way from the stadium. "A no-hitter!"

"You have to admit Morris put on an excellent pitching exhibition."

"No, I don't!" Violet growled.

"Wow! Somebody is annoyed!"

"You're a Reds fan, so you don't take it personally! I bet if it were the Reds who were no-hit by the Cubs, you'd be unhappy."

"Sadly, I'd expect it at this point. Everything seems to go wrong for them and has since they won the Series in '76. They won the NL West in '79 but were swept out by the Pirates, then, in '82, they had the best record in baseball but were denied the playoffs because of the stupid way they split the season after the strike."

"We see the Reds at the end of May, right?"

"Yes. and the only thing they have going for them is the Cubs are perennial losers since 1908!"

"I wouldn't say that in Wrigleyville! They get really bent out of shape about that, but it's their own fault because of the Curse of the Billy Goat!"

"Just like the Curse of the Bambino against the Red Sox. I was never really worried during the '75 Series because I was positive the Curse would prevent the Sox from beating the Reds!"

"You believe in curses?"

"No, but the Red Sox and Cubs players do, and that's the actual problem. They think something will go wrong, and it inevitably does, mostly because they're psyched out."

We made our way back to Violet's house, where she gave me a hug and a soft kiss on the lips before I headed home.

"How are you doing?" I asked Bianca when I arrived home just before 5:00pm."

"Tonight or tomorrow," Bianca said. "Something feels totally different. That feeling started about an hour ago."

"But no contractions?"

"Not yet, but I'll be surprised if they don't start before morning."

"Who's making dinner?"

"Jack and Kristy. How was the game?"

"The Sox were no-hit. Violet was singularly unhappy, especially after the Hawks lost last night. If they don't win today, they're out. I wanted to talk to you about moving -- Deanna suggested we could do it sooner, given the beds are there. I was thinking that would be easier for the nanny, plus it would put it close for me."

"I'm OK with that," Bianca said. "There's no specific reason to stay here except that the condo isn't furnished. But so long as my bed and the crib are there, and I have clothes and kitchen stuff, it could work."

"More furniture will be delivered during the coming week; the only downside I can see is that the blinds and electrical work won't be completed for two weeks."

"The nanny service starts on the 20th," Bianca said. "That's the day the work will be done, right?"

"Yes."

"Then why don't I move that day? You can bring some things with you each day so that we won't have much to move on the 20th. Deanna has more to move, but most of her stuff is going to her new studio soon. The computers are the big thing, right?"

"Yes. And the Japanese room, but that will be quick. It can't be done until the new floor is in, so we have to wait for that to be completed. But that's one trip in a small U-Haul."

"I think we have a plan," Bianca said.

"The other potential conflict is the hearing on Tuesday afternoon. If you're in labor, I'll have to ask for a postponement, but Gwen is aware that's possible."

"Good."

"I need to do my laundry and replace the bag I keep in my car."

"Dinner should be ready in about fifteen minutes, and then I'm going to bed because I'm so tired, and I won't get much sleep if I go into labor."

"Whatever you need!"



April 9, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Jonathan!" Bianca said, shaking my shoulder.

"What?" I asked groggily.

"I'm having contractions."

That statement caused me to snap awake immediately and sit up.

"What do you need me to do?"

"Make some breakfast, please. I'm going to call the number Doctor Wisniewski gave me."

I got up, put on my robe, and went down to the kitchen. It was 3:42am, but I was wide awake, most likely because about a gallon of adrenaline had been dumped into my system just a few minutes before. I decided the best bet was scrambled eggs and sausage links, so I quickly began preparing them, as well as toasting bread.

"The nurse said to stay home until either my water breaks or the contractions are eight minutes apart. They're about ten minutes apart now."

"How long?" I asked.

"It could be an hour or two, or it could be eight. Everyone is different, and I don't have any previous experience to draw on."

I finished making breakfast, we ate, and I cleaned up. By then, it was late enough to call my mom without waking her.

"Bianca is in labor," I said when Mom answered the phone.

"How far apart are her contractions?"

"Ten minutes. We're supposed to wait until they're closer or Bianca's water breaks."

"Let me know when you leave for the hospital, OK?"

"I will."

"Good luck!"

"Thanks."

I hung up and went to sit with Bianca on the couch in the great room and saw her sitting on a thick towel.

"Just in case," she said.

"A wise precaution."

About fifteen minutes later, Jack came downstairs, and I let him know, then called Mr. Matheson's voice mail at the office and left a message that I'd be at the hospital and would check in later in the day. I then called Tony at home. I apologized for waking him and let him know what was going on. He wished me luck and said he'd make sure everything ran smoothly at the office.

I sat with Bianca and read while she watched one of the morning news programs, and at 6:41am, she had a contraction just under eight minutes from the previous one.

"We should go," she said.

"Then let's get you to the car!"

LIII. Sofía Angélica Kane-Pérez

April 9, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Push now, Bianca!" Doctor Wisniewski commanded just before 1:00pm.

Bianca bore down and pushed, and Sofía's head appeared. Doctor Wisniewski called for a suction bulb and cleaned Sofía's mouth and nose.

"One more push at the next contraction!" Doctor Wisniewski said.

Just a few seconds later, Bianca bore down and pushed, and Doctor Wisniewski maneuvered Sofía's shoulders, and as her feet appeared, she cried!

"A healthy baby girl!" Doctor Wisniewski said. "Welcome, Sofía!"

She placed Sofía on Bianca's stomach and quickly listened to Sofía's heart and lungs.

"Want to cut the cord, Dad?" Doctor Wisniewski asked.

"Absolutely!"

She handed me a pair of surgical scissors and showed me where to cut. I firmly squeezed the scissors, severing the umbilical cord.

Doctor Wisniewski handed Sofía to a nurse who put her in a warmer and cleaned her up. She weighed Sofía and measured her, announcing my daughter weighed seven pounds, eight ounces and was twenty inches long. The nurse then drew blood from Sofía's heel, and my daughter cried out unhappily but quieted a bit

when the nurse swaddled her with a blanket. She brought Sofía to Bianca, who took her in her arms.

"Hi, Sofía," Bianca said.

"You can nurse her whenever you're ready," Doctor Wisniewski said. "Do you want me to call the nurse to guide you?"

"Yes, please," Bianca said. "I'm a complete rookie!"

"Not anymore!" Doctor Wisniewski declared. "You're a pro now!"

"And retired!" Bianca replied. "One is enough!"

Doctor Wisniewski called for a neonatal nurse to come to the room, and she arrived about ten minutes later. I looked on as the nurse followed an almost identical script to the one I'd seen when Heather had been born. I was still in complete awe at the entire process, marveling at the almost magical nature of having a baby and nursing her.

"Dad, do we have a full name?" the original nurse asked.

"Sofía Angélica Kane-Pérez," I said. "Accents on the 'i' in Sofía, the 'e' in Angélica, and the first 'e' in Pérez."

"I think the computer will explode, but I'll mark that on the application for Sofía's birth certificate. Mom's full name and birthdate?"

"Bianca Luisa Pérez, with an accent on the 'e'; October 14, 1963."

"Yours?"

"Jonathan Edward Kane; November 3, 1962."

"Mom's birthplace?"

"Cicero, Illinois."

"Yours?"

"Goshen, Ohio."

"Occupations?"

"Bianca is a data analyst; I'm Director of Research."

She handed me the application and asked me to sign and date it.

"Do you want to hold her, Jonathan?" Bianca asked. "That way, I can sign."

"Sure."

I carefully accepted my infant daughter from Bianca and held her as I'd been taught when Heather had been born. Bianca signed the forms, and the original nurse used a sponge to clean Bianca, then changed the sheets.

"I need a nap," Bianca announced.

"Then I'll take Miss Sofía to the nursery," the nurse said. "Do you want to have her spend the night with you?"

"Yes, please!" Bianca said.

"OK. We'll bring her back in about two hours," she said, taking my daughter from my arms.

"Thanks."

"I need to call my mom," I said. "And you need to call yours."

"After my nap, OK?"

"Yes, of course. I'll go use the payphone because I can't make long-distance calls from the room phone."

I kissed Bianca, who closed her eyes, and I left the room. I walked down the hallway and used my calling card to call my mom at Goshen High.

"Goshen High, Linda Kane speaking."

"How does it feel to be a grandma?" I asked.

"Wonderful! How does it feel to be a dad?"

"Amazing! She was born at 12:59pm, weighs seven pounds, eight ounces, and is twenty inches long."

"Did you stick to the same name?"

"Yes. Sofía Angélica Kane-Pérez."

"If you don't object, I'll drive up a week from Friday evening and stay until Sunday evening."

"That's fine with me. You can see the new condo, too."

"Condo?"

"Condo. We're moving around sometime around the 20th. which is the Friday you'll be here.."

"Oh, my!"

"Are you bringing the judge with you?"

"I'll call his chambers and find out."

"And I'll call Violet so you can stay with her. She won't mind you sharing a room!"

"Brat!"

"As I've said, I come by it honestly!"

We ended the call, and I dialed Violet's direct number at Spurgeon.

"Sofía Angélica Kane-Pérez was born at 12:59pm!" I said when Violet answered.

"Congratulations! How big?"

"Seven pounds, eight ounces, and twenty inches long."

"I'll let everyone know."

"Thanks. My mom is planning to drive up a week from Friday. Is it OK if she stays with you?"

"Of course!"

"She might bring her boyfriend. I said I didn't think you'd object if they shared a room."

Violet laughed, "You're too funny! How is Bianca?"

"Tired. She's napping right now."

I ended the call, then placed a call to the house, though I wasn't sure anyone would be home. I was correct, so I left a message with the details and asked whoever received the message to tell everyone else.

I went back to the room, which was darkened, and sat in the recliner and took a nap of my own. I woke before Bianca, and when she woke up, she called her mom and insisted she not come to the hospital. Her mom acquiesced, and Bianca agreed she could visit on Tuesday afternoon. She called her grandmother next, and her grandmother promised to be at the house at noon.

"Are you going to model tonight?" Bianca asked once she completed those calls.

"That's up to you. Deanna promised to let Claire know I might miss, and they can work around it."

"You should go because all I'm going to do is nap and feed Sofía because she's going to wake up every two hours or so. You can come back after you model if you want, but I think you should go home and get a good night's sleep, then come back first thing in the morning to bring me home."

"If you're sure."

"Positive."

"They're releasing you at 10:00am, so I'll be able to make the hearing at 1:30pm. Your grandma will be with you, so I don't think I'll ask Gwen to postpone."

"We'll be fine!"

The nurse brought Sofía into the room, and Bianca nursed her, then cuddled her. I had another chance to hold her, then we put her down in the warmer. We repeated that once more before I left to meet Deanna at Aurelio's for dinner.

"Congratulations!" she exclaimed. "I called Violet to ask, and she told me Bianca and Sofía were doing great!"

"Thanks. And they are. I'll bring them home tomorrow. Bianca and I decided we'd move on the 20th, which is the day the nanny service begins. I'll slowly begin moving things to the condo. Once the floor is finished in the new Japanese room, I'll hire a U-Haul and bring the furniture. How is the budget?"

"We should come in under it," Deanna said.

"Good. Then please outfit the kitchen. I'll leave what we have now for Jack and Kristy."

"OK. That should be straightforward."

"I really appreciate all the work you're doing. How are things at Ateljé D?"

"I'm going to have an opening show the first weekend in May. I put up flyers at school today. I'll have my work, plus two paintings each from Kassie, Kendra, and Stacey."

"Are you going to call John Margolis from Lakeview Partners?"

"Obviously, given I took his money! I'll let him see everything on Thursday."

"Interesting," I smirked.

Deanna laughed, "I meant artwork! He didn't pay me enough to even think about sleeping with him!"

"I'm curious what that number is," I said with a sly smile.

"I don't know, but I know \$1000 isn't it!"

"But there is a number!"

"Of course there is. Would you fuck Ellie for \$10 million?"

"Probably."

"But not for \$1000?"

"Point taken. That said, there is no amount that would be enough for me to give a blowjob!"

"If Spurgeon offered to turn over Spurgeon Capital and all his assets in exchange for a blowjob? With an ironclad contract?"

I laughed, "First, he would never do that; second, a contract with a commitment to a sex act would be illegal!"

"Oh, stop being pedantic for five seconds and answer the hypothetical!"

"You might have a point," I chuckled.

"There's actually an easier path to that! How old is his daughter?"

"Eight next week," I replied, immediately understanding Deanna's point.

"So, in ten years, you marry her, become the heir, and get it all! Or, if you had the ethics of her dad, start fucking her when she turns fourteen so you ensure you marry her!"

"I get your point, but no amount of money would be worth twenty years in jail for having sex with a girl that young. You know they'd throw the book at me if anyone ever found out. And that assumes I have any interest in underage girls, which I do not."

"So, wait until she's seventeen!" Deanna teased. "You win everything at that point!"

"It's an interesting thought. Before I forget, I haven't said anything to Stefi about Sofia or Keiko, and I'd prefer not to complicate things. What have you said to Alexa?"

"Nothing about that, but I'm positive Sophie would have told her everything."

"Maybe not; Sophie didn't describe my measurements to Alexa."

"Interesting!" Deanna declared. "So she was just as surprised as Claire and all the students in class."

"Yep. Back to Margolis -- he'll buy anything you have on display that isn't personal. And he'll try to buy those, too."

"Obviously! And I'll price them accordingly. If, for some reason, he balks, then I'll put an appropriate price on them for the show."

"I'll make a good capitalist of you yet!" I chuckled.

"Are you going back to the hospital?"

"Not until the morning. Bianca wants to sleep between nursing Sofía and wants me to get a good night's sleep because we were up so early today."

"Sleep with me? And I just mean sleep. More is up to you."

"I'd like that."

We finished our meal and headed to the school, where Alexa and I posed in bathing suits. She looked very sexy in a white string bikini, and I let her know that.

"I still find it amusing that you've seen it all but are drooling over me in a bikini!" she said after our session.

"Not drooling, just noting that I like it. I don't find it inconsistent to think you look sexy in the bikini and that your naked body is gorgeous, even goddess-like!"

"You're welcome to worship at my temple any time!"

"Our last session is April 25th," I said. "Why don't we get together on the 28th?"

"Deal! Can you pick me up at Northwestern?"

"How about 4:30pm?"

"Great!" Alexa exclaimed.

We finished changing, and I left the office to meet Deanna so we could head home.



April 10, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"How are my girls?" I asked when I walked into Bianca's room at 7:30am on Tuesday morning.

"I'm still tired, and I feel like I passed a watermelon, but I'm happy, and Sofía seems content. How are you doing?"

"I got a good night's sleep," I replied.

"Doctor Wisniewski should be here in about twenty minutes. She'll sign the discharge papers, and we should be able to leave by 9:00am. I know the answer, but I have to ask - do you have the car seat in your car?"

"Yes. Jack helped me buckle it in properly this morning. It's in the back seat, behind the driver's seat. I believe everything else at home is ready."

"Yes. CeCi helped me with putting the bedding on the crib, all the clothes from the baby shower are washed, and we have diapers and formula."

"Ignorant dad question here -- when does she start receiving vaccinations?"

"I'll make her first pediatric appointment for when she's two months old. That's when she receives DPT and polio vaccines. The nurse gave me a schedule last night, and it's in my bag if you want to look it over."

"Thanks."

I got the paper from the bag and reviewed it. I saw Sofía would receive vaccinations at two months, four months, six months, a year, and at fifteen months. I put the paper back in Bianca's bag, and a few minutes later, Doctor Wisniewski came into the room. She examined both Bianca and Sofía and pronounced them healthy and fit to be discharged. She filled out the form, congratulated both of us, then left.

Bianca got dressed, and about thirty minutes later, an orderly and nurse came in. They helped Bianca into the wheelchair and gave Sofía to her. I picked up Bianca's bag and followed them to the door to the hospital. They waited while I retrieved the car, then wheeled her to it. She got into the back seat, got Sofía situated, and we headed for home.

"Can I say how strange this is," I said as I drove.

"Having a baby?"

"Not just a baby, but *my* daughter. Yesterday morning, I was Jonathan Kane, stockbroker. Now I'm a dad and have a family. It's...I don't know what it is!"

"Pretty amazing, isn't it? We created this little girl and brought her into the world."

"Yeah."

When we arrived home, I helped Bianca, who was carrying Sofía, into the house. We put Sofía in her crib, and Bianca went to lie down. I called the office to check in, and made lunch for the two of us, then left to attend the hearing about the subpoena.

I met Gwen Meyer and Thomas Hart outside the courtroom.

"The way this works," Gwen said, "is the lawyers do all the talking. If you have something relevant, signal me, and I'll come speak to you. Don't speak unless the judge directly addresses you or I ask you to say something. All you can do is cause yourself problems."

"I'll keep my mouth shut."

The three of us went into the courtroom, and Gwen indicated I should sit on a bench behind the railing while she went through a gate and sat down at a table. I was surprised when Thomas Hart sat down next to me but decided not to ask any questions. Another attorney -- I guessed it was Jack Switzer -- came in and sat down at the other table. About five minutes later, the bailiff stood.

"All rise! The Circuit Court of Cook County is in session. Judge Karl F. Bradford, presiding."

We stood, the judge came in, and the bailiff said we could sit.

"Ms. Meyer?" Judge Bradford said. "Are you prepared to argue your motion?"

"Yes, Your Honor. Your Honor, we are here on the matter of enforcement of a foreign subpoena against my client. We are asking that this court deny that enforcement.

"My client has provided a detailed affidavit and has no further information to provide. He is a new father, with his child being born yesterday afternoon, and is a key employee at his firm. Generally speaking, except in criminal cases, out-of-state subpoenas are discretionary, and my client exercised his right to testify by deposition. My motion contains the precedents and citations.

"When the Ohio litigant retained counsel in Illinois to enforce the subpoena, my client offered to sit for the deposition, so long as the questions were limited specifically to the matter at hand. The Ohio litigant, through counsel, refused any limitations or accommodations. That refusal to negotiate led directly to the filing of this motion.

"The Ohio litigant has a remedy that does not require an open-ended, unlimited deposition -- she may petition the issuing court for exclusion of the affidavit. Doing so would eliminate any testimony the Ohio litigant feels is harmful to her case. Based on that, we ask that this court deny the application to enforce the foreign subpoena. Thank you."

"Mr. Switzer?" Judge Bradford asked. "Do you wish to respond?"

"Yes, Your Honor. I will not rehash the arguments in the motion, but I will counter what Ms. Meyer has said. While it is true that the foreign court could refuse to admit the affidavit, per Ohio statutes, Family Services may use the affidavit in their determination of custody, and that determination is always admitted. Mr. Kane's affidavit would, in effect, be snuck in the back door, and the Ohio litigant would have no recourse.

"While it is inarguable that Mr. Kane is a new father, and it is probable he is a key member of his firm, we are only asking for two hours of his time, which is not unreasonable. In order to counter the testimony in the affidavit, we need to ability to ask any relevant questions, including any events material to the questions of guardianship or custody. We ask that this court rule against the motion and order enforcement of the foreign subpoena. Thank you."

"Ms. Meyer, based on the back door admissibility of your client's affidavit and consistent with precedent in such matters, I deny your motion and order your client to sit for a deposition. Said deposition is limited to two hours and may

include any relevant questions about fact material to the Ohio litigant's case. It is so ordered."

"Your honor," Thomas Hart said, standing up. "Thomas Hart of Hart-Lincoln. May I approach and be heard on an emergency application?"

"You may approach," Judge Bradford said.

Thomas Hart went through the gate and stood at the lectern.

"What is your application, Mr. Hart?" Judge Bradford inquired.

"Your Honor, I ask for an emergency temporary restraining order against the Ohio litigant."

"On what grounds, sir?"

"On application and belief, the Ohio litigant is acting vindictively in an attempt to harm my client, Mr. Kane."

"Objection, Your Honor!" Jack Switzer said, rising. "Ms. Meyer is Mr. Kane's counsel of record in this matter."

"Your honor, I am not appearing to argue Ms. Meyer's motion, on which you have already ruled. If I may be permitted to continue, I will explain."

"Mr. Switzer, will you withdraw your objection until counsel completes his argument? I will hear it then."

"Yes, Your Honor," Mr. Switzer said. "Withdrawn."

"Continue, Mr. Hart," Judge Bradford said.

"Thank you, Your Honor. Mr. Kane, as he testified in his affidavit, was the legal guardian for the minor child in question in the Ohio litigation. When the Ohio litigant was arrested, Mr. Kane, acting in what he felt was the best interest of the minor child, delivered the child to her grandparents over the objections of the detained mother. Because of this, the Ohio litigant sought a deposition, the sole purpose of which is not to gain material facts, but instead to harm my client.

"We are asking for the TRO so that my client may act to protect himself from a fishing expedition. We are ready to make the necessary arguments under seal as soon as opposing counsel is ready. We will, of course, present an application for a subpoena for the Ohio litigant so that we can question her *in camera*."

"Mr. Switzer?" Judge Bradford inquired.

"We object to this obvious delaying tactic. Your Honor has already ruled, and Ms. Meyer could have presented these arguments, but she chose not to. In addition, it would appear that Mr. Hart's client is attempting to use the very tactic that he claims the Ohio litigant is using - retribution disguised as testimony."

"Mr. Hart?"

"Ms. Meyer is a family law attorney who practices civil law. I am a criminal defense attorney, and I am of the belief that Mr. Switzer's Ohio litigant will insist on questions for which I would advise my client to invoke his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. We do not believe there have been any violations, but even an investigation could harm my client irreparably.

"We believe the very nature of the questions will have the purpose of attempting to elicit testimony that impugns my client's good name and attempts to manufacture an investigation into possible federal criminal charges. Even if

charges are not filed by the US Attorney, the same testimony could be turned over to the SEC for civil action or a criminal referral."

"Mr. Switzer, I'm compelled by Mr. Hart's argument to issue the TRO. If you wish me to lift it, you will need to produce the Ohio litigant for a hearing *in camera* so I may determine if what Mr. Hart has stated is true. When can you have the Ohio litigant appear?"

"I don't know, Your Honor. I will need time to confer with Ohio counsel. May I have leave to file an interlocutory appeal against the TRO?"

"No. If I make it permanent, then you may appeal through the normal process."

"Yes, Your Honor."

"Ms. Meyer, are you still open to a deposition with negotiated limits?"

"Yes, Your Honor."

"Mr. Switzer, I advise you to suggest to the Ohio litigant that she negotiate the bounds of the deposition and save us all the time and trouble. Is there anything further?"

"No, Your Honor," all three attorneys said.

"Court is adjourned pending a notice of hearing on the TRO. Said hearing requiring the attendance of the Ohio litigant. Court is adjourned."

He banged the gavel, everyone stood, and the judge left the courtroom.

Both Ms. Meyer and Thomas Hart went to speak with Jack Switzer, so I sat down to wait. They spoke for five minutes and then came through the gate. Thomas

looked at me to indicate I shouldn't say anything, so I followed them out of the courtroom and into a small conference room.

"The judge basically told Mr. Switzer he's going to lose," Thomas Hart said. "That's why he encouraged negotiation. Mr. Switzer is clearly willing, but he's operating under the direction of the Ohio attorney. Do you think Miss Newton is going to yield?"

"No, unfortunately, I don't. As I've said repeatedly, she could win simply by reconciling with her parents, but she refuses to do so. She's so angry with me for how I handled the situation with Heather, she's not going to back down."

"If that's true, then she's going to appear," Thomas said. "You're still on board with my strategy?"

"Yes. No holds barred."

"OK. I'll keep in touch with Jack Switzer and let you know the next steps. Hopefully, between him and the Ohio attorney, they can change Miss Newton's mind. If they can't, then we'll fight the next battle."

"What does *in camera* mean?" I asked.

"A hearing that is closed to the public, often held in the judge's chambers, though it can be held in the courtroom. A court reporter will record the hearing, but that record will be sealed, which means nobody is permitted to see it except counsel."

"And 'interlocutory'?"

"An appeal of a ruling by a judge made before a final ruling is made on a case. Normally, you have to wait for a verdict and all post-verdict motions to be completed before you appeal. In limited circumstances, you can appeal during a

trial or hearing. A TRO is one of those limited exceptions, but in this case, because it could implicate criminal charges, all an appeal would do is result in the same hearing Judge Bradford ordered."

"You saying that there are potential criminal charges in court isn't a problem?"

"No. We didn't admit to any violations of the law; we only claimed they were going to try to manufacture suspicion to cause an investigation with the intent of harming you. And remember, as we discussed, you made no material misrepresentations. The problem is not the US Attorney, who would never attempt to bring such flimsy charges; the problem is the SEC who operate under different rules from criminal procedure. Revoking or suspending your licenses would be a civil matter. Anything else?"

"No."

"Ms. Meyer, I'll let you know if I hear from Mr. Switzer," Thomas Hart said. "And Jonathan, I'll be in touch."

I shook hands with both of them, left the courthouse, and headed home. As I drove, I contemplated the situation, and wondered if there was any way I could get Bev to simply speak to her parents. The conclusion I came to was that it was a lost cause because Bev was so angry with me that she couldn't see straight. There wasn't anyone I could go to as an intermediary, either, as I wasn't in contact with anyone back home except my mom and Bev's parents.

"How did it go?" Bianca asked when I walked into the house.

"We lost the motion to deny enforcement of the subpoena but won a temporary restraining order. Basically, Bev is going to have to come here and convince the judge that she's not being vindictive. I don't see how she can. The judge pushed

her Illinois attorney to agree to my conditions, but he can only do that if Bev agrees. But forget all that, how is Sofía?"

"Sleeping like a baby!" Bianca smirked. "She wakes up every two hours to eat and to get a clean diaper."

"And you?"

"I don't need a diaper," she said, shaking her head in amusement. "But I'm tired and happy. I'm a bit bummed about Juliette, but given a choice between her and Sofía, there's no contest."

"What can I do?" I asked.

"Right now? Just relax. You can change her when she wakes up to eat."

"Oh, joy," I said flatly.

Bianca laughed softly, "A big strong guy scared of a bit of poo! Come meet my grandmother. We went into the kitchen, and I saw a woman who looked enough like Bianca that I had a vision of what Bianca would look like in about forty years.

"«¡Abuela, este es Jonathan! Jonathan, mi «Abuela» María Angélica Álvarez Contreras, viuda de Ramón.»" ("Grandma, this is Jonathan! Jonathan, my grandma María Angélica Álvarez Contreras, widow of Ramón.")

"Pleased to meet you," I said.

"And you! Please call me either «Abuela» or María, and forget the litany of names we Mexicans are so fond of. Dinner will be ready in about forty minutes." ("Grandma")

"«Abuela» will be here from about 7:00am to 4:00pm every day until we move," Bianca said.

"I appreciate your help, Maria. Thank you. Bianca, I'm going to go change. Is it OK to check on Sofía?"

"Yes. Just do your best to be quiet; she only went down to sleep about fifteen minutes ago. I have the intercom in 'monitor' mode so I can hear her if she cries."

"Don't you mean 'when'?" I asked.

Bianca laughed softly, "Pretty much."

I went upstairs and found Deanna waiting for me.

"How did it go?" she asked, following me into my room and closing the door behind us.

"Not as well as I had hoped, though the judge basically told Bev's attorney to accept my conditions or he's likely to lose his motion to enforce the subpoena."

"How does that work? I should have asked before, but subpoenas are court orders, right?"

"Yes, but as Nelson explained to me, the judge in Ohio has no personal jurisdiction over me because I don't live there. He issued the subpoena but can't enforce it. To enforce it, Bev has to hire an attorney here to go to an Illinois judge, who does have personal jurisdiction over me and, in effect, ask nicely for the subpoena to be enforced. In a criminal case, that almost always happens. In a civil case, it depends on the circumstances. It has to do with federalism, and I vaguely remember how that works from American government class."

"What happens now?"

"If Bev accepts the conditions, I'll give the deposition voluntarily. If she doesn't, she's going to have to appear so my attorney can question her about my claim that she's being vindictive, and this is about retribution, not about gaining information that will help her case. We would have won outright, except that my affidavit can be snuck in the back door, even if Bev has it deemed inadmissible."

"How so?"

"Family Services can use it in their report, and that report is always admissible; in fact, it's something the court in Ohio orders them to produce. And the law in Ohio says they can use the information, even if the affidavit can't be used directly."

"So she's screwed no matter what."

"Which is why she's lashing out. She has a way out, and she refuses to take it."

"Unreal. On a happier note, your baby is beautiful!"

"Thanks. Bianca didn't say, and I didn't ask - did her parents visit today?"

"Her mom. Her dad was working and will stop by after dinner. I believe her mom will come back as well."

"OK. Any difficulties at the condo or Ateljé D?"

"Everything is going according to plan. I put up flyers, and I called John Margolis. He was beside himself happy to be beating Mr. Spurgeon to the punch!"

"Little does he know," I chuckled. "I do need to tell Noel Spurgeon about it."

"What will he do?"

"I actually have no idea. If he does come to you and tries to outbid Margolis, just say you accepted payment, and you can't go back on your word. That won't hurt me in any way, and I suspect Noel will make some kind of offer to foreclose Margolis in the future."

"This is crazy!" Deanna declared.

"Stick with me, and you won't ever be a starving artist, even if you do play one at shows!"

"That won't work with my own studio and gallery. I now have to turn into a stylish, cool, trendy *artiste*. New clothes, new hairstyle, and new attitude."

"What happens to the fawning stockbroker?"

"He has to be cool and trendy, too! Ask Beth; I guarantee she'll know exactly what I mean."

"I'll speak to her tomorrow. Is this normal? I mean, the different personas?"

"You have to play to your audience. My other option is full counter-culture, but that might not play well with the stockbroker set."

"You never know," I said. "Maybe they'd go for the 'hippie' look!"

Deanna laughed, "I think the last hippies disappeared a decade ago! It would be 'punk' or 'goth', depending."

"Goth?"

"It's a music-based subculture that began in the United Kingdom recently. Have you heard of Siouxsie and the Banshees, The Cure, or Bauhaus?"

"No. Rock groups?"

"Gothic rock. The subculture is into dressing in Victorian-style clothing, dying their hair black, and wearing dark makeup, including black lipstick. That style would absolutely get attention, but it's just not me. I do like the music, but I prefer not to wear makeup. And I'm not about to dye my hair purple or pink or get a Mohawk to go punk! So, Yuppie, it is!"

"Gary Hart is the Yuppie candidate, but he's going nowhere."

"YOU are a Yuppie!" Deanna declared. "Ask Beth!"

"I may be a Young, Upwardly-mobile Professional, but I don't wear Izod Lacoste!"

"Yet!"

"Kill me now!" I chuckled. "But I'll play the part for you."

"Good."

When we left my room, I quietly entered the nursery and saw my baby daughter asleep in her crib. I left, carefully closing the door, and went downstairs. We had a nice dinner, and just before 7:00pm, Bianca's parents, Juan and Gabriela, arrived. I had never met them, and it was obvious they didn't approve of Bianca having a baby without being married, but they were cordial. They spent about an

hour with us, with Gabriela holding Sofía most of the time. When they left, I sat with Bianca while she nursed Sofía.

"Did your mom say anything when she was here earlier?"

"Just what I'd call a bitchy comment about having a baby with a married man. I've tried to explain, but she's hearing none of it. My grandma is cool, though. She said the Spanish equivalent of my mom needing to get the stick out of her butt. Grandma is ecstatic to have a great-granddaughter. I think she's already planning the «quince» in her mind!"

"I think we can wait on that," I chuckled. "I assume it'll be a blowout party?"

"Count on it! Grandma arranged mine, and it was over the top! Of course, it'll be traditionally Mexican."

"I'd expect nothing less. Why did you introduce me in Spanish?"

"I mix and match with my grandma and my dad. I only speak English to my mom."

"There's a story there."

"Just the usual mother-daughter battles. Didn't Bev and her mom get into it like Keiko and her mom?"

"Not to that extent, but yes. Bev's dad was always cool until she got pregnant."

"That does tend to give dads heartburn. Mine is mostly over it, but as you saw, he's a bit standoffish because you fucked his little girl and got her pregnant. They were not unhappy that Juliette moved out."

"No surprise for socially conservative parents. I know it's probably too soon, but I'm going to invoke 'father of your baby' privileges and suggest that when you're up to it, we double-date Meg and Nicole."

"Nicole is bi?"

"With a heavy preference for girls. Sound familiar?"

"Hmm. A cute redhead we could share?"

"That is one potential future. It's up to you, obviously, but she'd fit in with the rest of us who'll be at the condo."

"We should invite both her and Meg to the housewarming."

"Consider it done. Am I sleeping with you tonight?"

"Yes. I'll bring Sofía into the bedroom, and she can sleep in the bassinet. Did Deanna mention she wanted to do a painting of the three of us soon?"

"No, we talked about other stuff when I went upstairs."

"I said I was OK with it, so long as you were. We'd need to make the studio really warm if our little one was going to be naked."

"Make the arrangements," I said. "I'm home all day Sunday. I don't recall if I told you, but I need to see Bob Black before lunch on Thursday to sign my tax forms."

"I bet those are interesting!"

"I owe a bit, but I prefer that to lending Uncle Sam money for an entire year. If you overpay, our favorite uncle doesn't pay you interest; if you underpay, he charges you vig that rivals the Mafia!"

"It's not that bad, is it?"

"The interest isn't, but they pile on penalties, too. The key is to always withhold at least your previous year's tax liability, as then there are no underpayment penalties. You can actually come in a bit short and be OK, but it's not worth the risk. And it's doubtful I'll see my overall tax bill go down year-to-year. You did yours, right?"

"I had no income, so I wasn't required to file. I was going to ask you -- who claims Sofía?"

"Given I have a much higher income, Bob Black suggests I file as Head of Household next year. You file single. Your marginal rate will be far lower than mine, so the deduction for a dependent wouldn't be as financially advantageous."

"OK. Do we need to update any paperwork with Gwen?"

"No. It's all in place, and if anything were to happen to you, I have full custody and vice-versa. In addition, if something happens to me, Sofía inherits everything, it goes into a testamentary trust, and you're paid a monthly stipend to help care for her. When she turns eighteen, she has more access, and when she turns twenty-five, it's all hers."

"I assume you modified your will?"

"Yes."

Bianca finished nursing Sofía, and the three of us went upstairs. We put Sofía down in the bassinet, and I went to my room to take care of my bedtime routine. Once I'd done that, I returned to Bianca's room and got in bed with her, despite it being much earlier than my usual bedtime, because I knew Sofía would wake up at least twice during the night to be fed.



April 11, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

When I arrived at work on Wednesday morning, I found a box of cigars and a bottle of bourbon on my desk with a card from Noel Spurgeon. I didn't smoke and had no intention of starting, but I had to be careful not to give offense. I knew some of the guys smoked cigars, including Stuart, Tom, and Lily's boyfriend Jim, but most of the rest didn't.

I started my day as I usually did by making a pot of coffee, then reviewed the analyst reports from Monday and Tuesday to ensure I hadn't missed anything important. There was nothing major in the reports except a note that there was a possibility of an additional interest rate hike over the two we had already projected.

That bumped the target rate to 13% and didn't bode well for Reagan's reelection. Tony's election analysis still had Reagan as the favorite, based on the Electoral College, but the numbers showed a belief that higher interest rates and a declining DJIA were going to make it a horse race. My gut told me Reagan would win, but I wouldn't place a bet on it if I had the opportunity.

As each member of my team came in, they congratulated me, and at 9:00am, Julie called and asked, on behalf of Noel Spurgeon, who was in New York, if I needed anything. I said I did not, expressed my thanks for the gifts, and then got back to work.

LIV. Foreign Relations

April 11, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Jonathan," Violet said over the intercom late on Wednesday morning, "I have Thomas Hart for you."

"Put him through, please."

She did so.

"Good morning, Tom," I said.

"Good morning, Jonathan. I'm calling about business this morning. The investors would like to move ahead. You'll be receiving all of the application information by courier tomorrow, but I wanted to give you a heads-up."

"Thank you very much," I replied. "Both for the new business and for the assistance yesterday."

"I haven't heard from Mr. Switzer; when I do, I'll be in touch."

"Thanks again."

We ended the call, and I went to see Murray Matheson.

"Congratulations," he said.

"Thanks. I just heard from Thomas Hart. \$40 mil will move, and we'll have the application paperwork tomorrow."

"You're kicking ass and taking names, Kane! I saw your huge short on Continental Illinois. Steinem said you're paying 32 bips. That's a heck of a bet. You're that sure?"

"I am not uncertain. Something has to give, and it has to give in the next sixty days."

"The price was up yesterday, creating a short squeeze."

"I have the resources to ride that out. When the Fed moves on them, you'll see the shares around \$10, down from yesterday's \$24½. If they allow it to fail, I won't have to buy the shares at all. Pete doesn't expect that to happen, and I agree. I'll make between \$10 and \$12 a share on a quarter million shares."

"And if the price runs up?"

"I'll stick it out as long as it takes. That bank is a house of cards, and there is no way it survives. Pete has a few other banks and S&Ls in his sights. You'll start seeing the loan portfolio analyses in a new section of the analyst report starting next week."

"Short the entire sector?"

"Not yet, but that appears to be the play. It might take a few years for this to play out, but we believe Continental Illinois is the tip of the iceberg. They were just first because of Penn Square."

"Back to the new capital, that puts your AUM around \$150 mil, right?"

"Just north of that."

"From the mailroom to \$400,000 a year in less than three years. When you first approached me, I thought you were full of shit. It looks like you're the real deal. Go find more ways to make us some money!"

"On it!" I declared.

I left his office and returned to mine. The base number he'd given was a bit high, but with bonuses, I'd easily exceed \$400,000 in income for the year. That number was still mind-boggling, but to keep it, I still had to perform at a high level. Resting on my laurels would put me at risk of underperforming in comparison to others at Spurgeon, and that was the kiss of death.

The rest of the morning was routine, and as usual, Violet and I ate lunch together, then went to the gym. When I returned, I called home to check on Bianca and Sofía, then called Beth to discuss Deanna's request.

"Chinos and a pink Izod Lacoste polo sounds about right!" Beth said mirthfully.

"I don't think so!" I retorted.

"Real men wear pink!"

"Not ones who want to survive working at Spurgeon Capital, they don't!"

"Actually, for you? Ivy League or British prep school. One look would be a tweed sports coat and brogue shoes with chinos and an Oxford shirt. Another look would be chinos with an L.L.Bean sweater and Top-Siders, which you might call deck shoes. Both of those looks would complement whatever trendy styles Deanna wears because casual is in and formal is out."

"Somebody forgot to tell Spurgeon Capital about that!"

Beth laughed, "Banks are always last because the last thing someone wants to see in a bank is trendy fashion! Customers want conservative, trustworthy bankers. Banks are built like Greek temples because that conveys strength and safety. If you aren't doing anything tomorrow evening, come by the shop, and I'll dress you properly."

"Now there's a first!" I chuckled. "You *dressing* me!"

"I'm happy to undress you any time! Come by after work tomorrow, we'll have dinner, and I'll set you up with proper Preppy clothing."

"Thanks, I think."

Beth laughed again, and I confirmed I'd come to the shop at 6:00pm tomorrow, Thursday, which would allow me time to return from my 1:00pm meeting at Belarus Tractors near Milwaukee. The rest of the day was routine, with research and an analysis of my portfolio positions, then dinner with Deanna and posing at the Art Institute. When I arrived home, Bianca was ready for bed, so I said 'good night' to my other housemates, and Bianca and I headed upstairs.



April 12, 1984, Brown Deer, Wisconsin

"Jonathan Kane to see Viktor Bykov," I said to the cute blonde sitting at the reception desk.

"Good morning, Mr. Kane. Mr. Bykov is expecting you. Let me take you to him."

She got up, and I followed her to a modest office. It had a large desk, a couch, a pair of chairs, and a coffee table, and the walls were adorned with agricultural photos, as well as a portrait of Konstantin Chernenko. Behind the desk chair was a photo of Lenin adorned with two Soviet flags.

"Mr. Bykov, Mr. Kane is here to see you," she said.

"Thank you, Nikki," Mr. Bykov said.

He came to me and offered his hand, which I shook.

"Please, call me Viktor Vladimirovich or simply Viktor."

"And you may call me Jonathan."

"Please sit and have tea."

We sat down, and he poured tea into a glass which was set in a silver holder, a way of serving tea I'd never seen.

"Would you like milk, sugar, or lemon?" he asked.

"Whatever is traditional for you," I said.

"Lemon, then."

He dropped lemon slices into each glass then handed me one.

"In Russia, there is a very old saying -- «чай да сахар» (*chay da sakhar*), which means 'tea and sugar'," he said, offering me a plate of cookies.

I took two, and he did the same.

"So, I understand you are financial analyst in Chicago."

"Yes, I am. My area of focus is foreign exchange, and while researching, I ran across references to trade between the US and the Soviet Union and decided to learn more. Your embassy in Washington suggested I learn about the success you're having selling Soviet tractors to Midwestern farmers."

"Our tractors are reliable, simple to repair, and cost significantly less than similar models from John Deere or International Harvester. Belarus tractors are also used by farmers in Eastern Europe and in India. When we finish tea, I will show you assembly and repair area. I also have small model of tractor as gift and have marketing and sales material to share. What will you do with information?"

"Mainly write a report for my company. Belarus is owned by the Soviet State, so there is no direct investment opportunity. But I see it as a base on which further trade can be established, which would be good for both countries."

"Yes, this is true. Unfortunately, too many Americans distrust Soviet Union and forget alliance to defeat fascists in Great Patriotic War. Perhaps, someday, our nations will be friends again."

"I certainly hope that happens," I said.

And I wanted to be in on the ground floor of any trade that occurred. I'd have the distinct advantage of having a pre-existing relationship if that happened, and I would also be able to take advantage of the general distrust of the East Bloc. That would keep other investors on the sidelines at first and create the conditions for significant profit. The risks were small, as I was only investing time, not money, but the payoff might be huge.

We finished our tea and cookies, and he gave me a tour of the plant and answered a number of questions about the tractors, the factory in the Soviet Union, and the difficulties encountered in shipping the tractors to the US. At the conclusion of the forty-minute tour, I thanked him, and he presented me with a

model of a red Belarus tractor that was about nine inches tall. We shook hands, and he walked me back to reception.

"Nikki, please provide Jonathan with complete set of marketing materials, including price list."

"Right away, Mr. Bykov!"

Mr. Bykov and I shook hands one more, I thanked him again, and he returned to his office to make a phone call.

"You're from Chicago?" she asked.

"Yes."

"If you don't have to get back, we could grab a beer after work."

"Unfortunately, I have a 6:00pm meeting tonight."

"Raincheck?" she asked hopefully.

"I can reach you here, right?"

"Yes. Do you have a card?"

I gave her one of my 'analyst' cards, as that was the role I was playing for this visit, and she gave me a folder of material. I thanked her, then headed out to my car for the drive back to Chicago.



April 12, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

When I arrived in Chicago, I was a bit early for my 6:00pm appointment with Beth, so I took the opportunity to check the condo. One advantage of the condo was a pair of 'in-and-out' twenty-four-hour passes, which meant I could come and go as I pleased without paying anything additional. Of course, those spots were included in the condo fees I was charged each month, but the amount was significantly less than the advertised rates and was comparable with what Spurgeon paid for the daytime parking spot I had used.

When I entered, I removed my shoes and walked through the entire condo. The dining room table and twelve chairs had been delivered, as had a large area rug, which effectively defined the dining area. In addition, two computer desks had been installed in the upstairs sitting area, throw rugs had been placed in each bedroom, and the master bedroom had a love seat, as well as a writing desk.

I checked the kitchen and saw that Deanna and Natasha had begun acquiring cooking and dining items, and some decorative containers had been set on the counters. Everything was coming together, and I could, if I wanted, move in at any time, and I'd bring my first load of items in the morning.

Everything was coming together nicely, and on Monday, Brown Construction would start installing the blinds and performing the electrical work in the bedroom that would serve as my art gallery. Satisfied that there were no concerns, I left the condo and headed back to the parking garage so I could drive to the tailor shop.

I parked in the alley in the spot reserved for the apartment, then walked to the store and went inside, where Beth greeted me with a hug and friendly kiss.

"How was your day?" she asked.

"Productive. While there isn't much to do at the moment, if relations between the US and the USSR thaw, the tractor company is a perfect example of how trade might work. Russia has significant natural resources and a large population. They could easily become a manufacturing powerhouse. But both of those things probably require the end of single-party rule. The challenge there is how it happens without blowing up the world."

"That would be doubleplusungood!" Beth declared.

"And to recall your jokes from when we first met, *goodsex* is in your future!"

Beth laughed, "That does fit what I joked about -- sexual intercourse only for procreation, without any physical pleasure on the part of the woman, and strictly within marriage! After I properly dress you, we'll have dinner and discuss committing *sexcrime*!"

"Let me guess, you're a rebel from the waist downwards?" I asked.

"You know it! It actually fits because I have to play the proper part for my work here, similar to how Julia kept up appearances. You do the same thing, to some extent. Come over to the casual section, and we'll see what we can find that will make Deanna happier than an eight-inch schlong!"

We spent nearly an hour with Beth showing me clothing and me trying things on. In the end, we settled on two outfits -- the first, tan chinos, a blue Oxford button-down shirt, and a light brown herringbone tweed jacket; the second, grey chinos with a black cable-knit sweater. Two pairs of deck shoes complete the outfits.

"Well, at least there are no crocodiles," I chuckled.

"You look really, really good in the tweed jacket. That's the one I'd go with unless Deanna has on a sweater outfit, in which case you opt for the sweater."

"No alterations?"

"No. That's not the look. You wear the off-the-rack jacket just fine. You could opt for one with elbow patches, but that looks too professorial, which is not what you're going for. You could also add an English cap, similar to what some golfers wear. That would give you a brim against the sun and would work in the winter or in the rain, too. Do you own a pair of sunglasses?"

"No."

"We don't sell them, but pick up a pair as an alternative to the cap, or even in combination with it."

She got a cap from the rack and had me try it on, along with the jacket.

"Perfect!" she declared. "I'll ring you up, then we can have dinner."

I paid for the clothing, which I stashed in the trunk of my car, and we headed to The Berghoff for dinner, mainly because we both wanted their private-label root beer.

"All teasing aside," Beth said after we'd ordered, "where are you?"

"Moving forward. I'm in a decent state of mind, though a bit addled by being a dad!"

"I bet!" Beth declared. "How is Bianca?"

"She's fine, though she's tired. She's really looking forward six months when Sofía will sleep through the night."

"That is the one thing I'm not looking forward to. The rest of the 'wife and mom' schtick is OK, but 2:00am feedings are not going to be fun at all."

"I'd take those in exchange for not changing dirty diapers!"

Beth smiled, "Yeah, those too, but not getting enough sleep really wears on you. Is it OK to ask about Bev?"

"Yes, and that's going downhill fast. I should be OK, but she's going to lose custody of Heather if she pursues her irrational vendetta against me. I have two very good attorneys who are making life difficult for her."

"She sounds as if she needs psychiatric help."

"You aren't the first to say that."

"And the condo?"

"Fantastic. The interior design student from the School of the Art Institute is doing a great job. We'll have a housewarming on May 13th."

"I'll be there! I really want to see it. Of course, you could give me a preview with a personal tour of the bedroom!"

"Somebody is horny," I teased.

"You know my situation."

"So, pick one of the guys, give him a preview of coming attractions, and marry him!"

"Thereby relieving you of the 'chore'?" Beth asked with an arched eyebrow.

"No, pushing you to make your decision. You've been on the fence for years, and one of them is going to find someone else if you don't choose soon."

"You're right, of course," Beth admitted.

"Which one would you choose if you had to pick right now? Doctor or attorney?"

"Probably Joshua, because I hear horror stories about Residency, and I'm not sure I want an absentee husband for three or four years. I'll make you a deal."

"What's that?"

"Fulfill my fantasy, and I'll tell Joshua I'm ready to accept the ring he's been hinting at."

"And fuck him senseless?"

"That goes without saying! I have to set the proper trap!"

I laughed, "I simply do not see you following the stereotype from your joke."

"No chance! So, how about it?"

"Next Tuesday, after work, in the apartment?"

"I'll bring the ropes, scarves, and handcuffs!"



April 13, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday morning, I brought my first trunkful of things from the house to the condo, then went to the office. I put the model tractor on my credenza, then began my workday. First, I wrote a special analyst note about my visit to Belarus Tractors. I set it aside, as I wouldn't send it out until I had updated it based on my meeting with the Soviet Trade Attaché, Ivan Voronin, on Monday. If some kind of thaw with the West occurred, there were myriad possibilities, though I suspected China would get there first, as the Chinese Communist Party was engaged in reforming the economy by de-collectivization of agriculture, opening up the country to foreign investment, and granting permission for entrepreneurs to start businesses.

Late in the morning, Leslie distributed the deposit statements for the quarterly payouts for fund managers. Given it included my portion of the fees charged to MTB Sports Management, I did a quick calculation of what I owed Jack, and then let Violet know I was going to the bank. At the bank, I withdrew \$2500 in cash, all twenties, and put the thick envelope containing a hundred-twenty-five twenty-dollar bills into the interior pocket of my suit coat.

When I returned to the office, I called the CBOT and left a message for Jack to come to my office when his work day ended instead of meeting me in the lobby of the Hancock Center. I had lunch with Violet, as usual, and we went to the gym. After lunch, I reviewed balance of trade numbers and used the modeling spreadsheet to project moves in exchange rates. I felt the model had improved significantly, but it still needed work.

"You wanted to see me?" Jack asked from the door of my office at 4:45pm.

"Come in and shut the door, please."

He did, then asked, "What's up?"

I took the envelope with cash from the locked desk drawer and walked over to him.

"Your idea for targeting sports management was spot on," I said, handing him the envelope. "This is your taste."

He opened the envelope, and his eyes went wide.

"How much is this?"

"\$2500."

"Holy shit, Man!" he exclaimed and extended his hand.

We shook and clapped each other on the back.

"It's deserved," I said. "This is between you and me, privately, and has nothing to do with Spurgeon. You do not need to report it to the IRS."

"The gravy train is starting to roll in a serious way!"

"Keep on keeping on, and there's a lot more there. Did you work out a time to take the study course for a Series 3 license with Mark Benton?"

"Yes. I'll do that in August and take the test in September."

"Good. Let me lock up, and we'll go meet Kristy and CeCi."

I put all my research materials into my desk drawer, then locked it. Jack and I left the office, and because he was no longer 'support staff', he could take the regular passenger elevator with me. The four of us had dinner at Bennigan's, then went

to see *Romancing the Stone*. At home, with Bianca's agreement, I joined CeCi in her bed for the night.



April 14, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday morning, Violet greeted me with a tight hug and a soft kiss on the lips. I was convinced the only thing standing between her asking to go to bed together was my inability to commit. We had a nice breakfast, with the conversation mostly about Sofía, and after helping clean up, I headed to class.

The class material for the day was about the differing methods of corporate accounting, with some countries having significant variations from the US. We focused mainly on Canada, the UK, France, and Germany but also discussed India and Japan.

In the US, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles -- GAAP -- were maintained by the Financial Accounting Standards Board, a private standards entity. The SEC had issued regulations accepting the FASB GAAP standards as 'substantially authoritative', which meant it was possible to not follow them, but strong justification would be necessary.

Other countries had other methods, and there was no coordination between them. There was an organization -- the International Accounting Standards Committee -- dedicated to developing and promulgating global standards, but it had not met with much success since its founding in 1973.

I had known some of that from my previous classes and the Spurgeon study material, and the class fleshed out that knowledge, which would be very helpful when analyzing foreign balance sheets and income statements, especially in Japan. I took detailed notes and also wrote down the suggested extra study material.

When class ended, I returned to Violet's house for lunch, and after lunch, I headed to the Art Institute dorm on State Street. When I arrived, the student at the desk called up to Stefi's room, then allowed me to use the elevator. Stefi's door was partly open, so I pushed it open and walked in, seeing Stefi, Tara, and a dark-haired girl I didn't know.

"Hi!" Stefi exclaimed.

"Hi, Stefi; Hi Tara."

"Hi!" Tara exclaimed.

"Jonathan, this is my friend Krissy," Stefi said. "Krissy, Jonathan."

"Hi!" she said. "You're tall!"

I couldn't tell for sure because she was sitting down, but she looked to be just over five feet tall or about fourteen inches shorter than me.

"I hear good things come in small packages," I said with a smile.

"For sure!" she exclaimed.

"Let's go, Krissy," Tara said. "They have important business to attend to!"

The two girls got up, and my estimate of Krissy proved accurate.

"Come back for pizza later," Stefi offered.

The girls accepted the invitation, then left the room.

"What's the plan before dinner?" I asked.

"Duh! Just like last time! Oral, screwing, then oral, so you cum in my mouth. Repeat until dinner!"

We got undressed and got into bed. Four hours and five orgasms for me later, she called to order pizza. Once the pizza was ordered, I borrowed a towel so we could shower before the food arrived.

"How long does this continue?" Stefi asked once we were back in her room.

The way she asked gave the strong impression she was past the 'new toy' stage, which didn't surprise me, as I knew that had to happen eventually. It was just sex, so that didn't bother me in any way, though I would miss her love for oral worship!

"I didn't have a timeline," I said. "Why?"

"I was thinking I want a boyfriend, and I'm pretty sure you're not looking for a committed relationship of any kind."

"Not in the near future, anyway. Are you trying to say this is it?"

"Can we just play it by ear?"

"Of course," I agreed.

"I know Tara would absolutely be interested in playing with your toy again!"

"She made that abundantly clear!"

"Can I get your number so I can call you in the future?"

"Sure."

I gave her my number, then she called Tara and Krissy to let them know the pizza would arrive shortly. The girls arrived about two minutes later, and the pizza and Cokes about ten minutes after that.

"Tara," Stefi said as we ate pepperoni pizza, "I let Jonathan know what we discussed."

"COOL!" she exclaimed. "Starting after we finish the pizza?"

"I certainly played extensively with him this afternoon!"

"Can anyone play with him?" Krissy asked.

"He's not mine to share or not share," Stefi said. "Ask him, but I think you might have to fight Tara!"

"I'm not a greedy bitch like *somebody* in this room!" Tara declared mirthfully.

"Hey!" Stefi protested. "I didn't stop you the other night! And you know I want to ask Brian out."

It did not surprise me at all that she had a guy in mind, as my availability was limited, and I suspected she wanted a guy to do things with in addition to the kind of things we did on Saturdays.

"I was yanking your chain!" Tara replied. "Jonathan, interested in coming to my room to play after pizza?"

"I am," I replied.

"Krissy, ask him if you're interested," Stefi prompted.

"The semester ends in two weeks," Krissy said. "I'm going home to Oregon. Any chance we could go out before then?"

"What about Thursday?" I asked.

"Yes! Pick me up at 5:30pm?"

"I can do that."

"Awesome!"

We finished our pizza, then Tara practically dragged me to her room, where we spent the next three hours screwing like crazed bunny rabbits.

"I'm here over the Summer," Tara said after we showered. "Call anytime! And let me have your number, please."

I gave her my number, then headed home, where I joined Bianca in her bed with our daughter asleep in the bassinet at the foot of the bed.



April 15, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"What pose do you want?" I asked Deanna at lunch on Sunday.

"I think similar to the last one, though, with Sofia in Bianca's arms and your arm around Bianca. And all of you naked, too."

"Sofia is likely to pee or even poop," Bianca said.

"Keep her diaper on until I'm ready to sketch her in, then take it off for maybe ten minutes."

"That should work OK," Bianca said.

"Uhm, isn't it going to be a bit weird for Sofía to see these paintings of her dad naked?" I asked.

"Not if she just sees them as part of her normal environment. Bianca, what if you nurse her in the painting?"

"I'm game," Bianca said.

"Cool. I have the heater running full blast in my studio so Sofía doesn't get chilled."

We finished our lunches, and when Sofía woke up, Bianca changed her diaper. The three of us went to Deanna's studio, where Bianca and I undressed, but we kept Sofía in her diaper. Deanna worked quickly, sketching the image, then had Bianca remove Sofía's diaper and begin to nurse. We made it through the session and then dressed. As we'd done the previous time, we'd pose again so that Deanna could fill in the details.

"You're not concerned about Sofía seeing naked paintings of me?" I asked

"I understand what you're getting at, but I think Deanna is right that if she sees them in the gallery when she's little, she won't think anything about it. Let's worry about it in a few years, OK?"

"Yes," I agreed. "Changing subjects, how do you want to move your stuff?"

"I packed some things in a gym bag you can take. If you just take everything out and put it on the bed, then bring the bag back to me, I should have everything there by Friday except what I need for Sofía. If you and Jack can move the crib on Friday morning, I'll drive in after lunch. Kristy said she'd bring the bassinet with her when she comes to meet you and Jack for dinner."

"That sounds like a good plan. I realized I want to order a few more standalone air cleaners because there's no way to have a whole-house unit - the A/C and heat are from those wall units, and there's no ducting."

"How does that work with the two bedrooms with no exterior walls?"

"They have heat but no A/C. But if you think about it, they get no sun, and everything around them is cooled by A/C, so it won't be a problem."

"That makes sense. I like that every room has its own heating. I like it warmer than you do."

"I find it easier to sleep when it's cooler, even in the Winter."

"Did you decide about the pool table?"

"Yes. I'll buy one in late July, after the next quarterly payout."

"What's your schedule for the week?"

"The last two modeling sessions are on Monday and Wednesday. On Tuesday, I'm seeing Beth, and barring some bizarre circumstances, that'll be the end because she's going to take Joshua up on his offer of a ring."

"How old is she?"

"Twenty-two, almost twenty-three. It's about the right time. And her intended is a newly-minted attorney. Her other option is a medical student, and she already has trouble finding time to see him. We know from Perry how crazy it is for new doctors."

"Over ninety hours a week, and it's nuts with thirty-six-hour shifts! That's why we almost never see her -- between classes, homework, and shifting her sleep schedule so that she can at least eat meals and occasionally screw, she's never available."

I chuckled, "And there's the *real* reason Beth isn't interested. Continuing my answer, I'm having dinner with an art student named Krissy on Thursday, then the usual on Friday.'

"What is it with the art students?" Bianca asked.

"Right time, right place, I'd say. And it's simple, uncomplicated sex. Even someone like Miranda, Kasey, or Josie is complicated because they were interested in a relationship and made that clear before I knew Keiko was the one. I'm already struggling with the situation with Violet because I can't see it ending any other way than some kind of permanent thing. And that's despite me telling her straight that I'm not ready for something like that and don't know when I'll be."

"You love her," Bianca said matter-of-factly. "You always have. Her situation made it impossible to do anything about it, and you chose Keiko."

"That's just it -- I didn't choose Keiko. She was *the one* and I can't tell you why I knew that or even how I knew; I just did."

"But you were waiting to see if Violet could get past her emotional trauma."

"I know I said or implied that, but the more I think about it, it was really about ensuring that Keiko could accept my relationship with Violet. And if we're going to play the 'What if?' game, I only met Violet and developed that close friendship with her because of her trauma. So when you say that I love her, I think you mean I'm committed to being her friend and caring for her."

"The Japanese name Keiko chose for you -- Yuusuke, her Courageous Protector. I mean no disrespect, nor am I trying to diminish Keiko, but that name describes your relationship not just with Keiko but with Violet, Deanna, and me. She chose well, capturing your personality perfectly. That's better than romantic love by miles and miles."

"Thanks. For Saturday, my mom will eat breakfast with Violet and me, then come to the condo while I'm in class. It's not perfect, but it'll have to do. She'll visit on Sunday as well."

"You can't miss class?"

"I missed one because of the trip to North Dakota, and I don't want to press it with only five classes to go. The only other option would be for her to come to the condo around 6:30am. I'll talk to her about it. The only other thing is what we already talked about -- moving things on Saturday. The Japanese room won't be completed, so we'll have to do that in the future. Deanna and CeCi are taking their stuff to the condo on Thursday, though some of Deanna's studio equipment will be moved on Saturday."

"Sounds like a good plan."

"One other thing -- the receptionist at the Russian tractor plant asked me out for a beer!"

Bianca smirked, "She wants your giant...Lektor!"

I laughed, "I doubt it's a trap like that."

"Are you going to call her?"

"I might. I just might."



April 16, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday morning, I moved the Atari 800 and the few books I owned, along with my cassettes and albums. I made a mental note to visit the stereo store and buy bigger speakers, along with a larger amp and a new device -- a Compact Disc player. The research I'd read made it clear that it would eventually replace cassette tapes and possibly even vinyl albums, though I was skeptical, based on some things I'd heard from a pair of traders at Spurgeon who said the sound wasn't as rich.

I went through my usual morning routine, and Violet came into my office when she arrived.

"I received my commission as a Notary," she said. "I need to obtain a bond and file the oath with the Secretary of State."

"Congratulations. Ask Mrs. Peterson about the bond, and if she doesn't have a company they use, call my insurance broker, Doug Borowiak, and I'm sure he'll take care of it. Given it's only for \$5000, it won't cost more than a few dollars a month."

"OK. I'll take care of that right away."

She left and I returned to working on the analyst report. I was interrupted by a call from Thomas Hart.

"I just received a call from Jack Switzer," he said. "Miss Newton is being intransigent and won't accept any limits on the questions they can ask. As best I can tell, that's against the advice of her Ohio attorney. Mr. Switzer is filing a notice for an *in camera* hearing on April 25th. In my opinion, that's a fool's errand because if they win, they won't have free rein, at least as I understand the signals the judge is sending."

"Her attorneys can't do anything?"

"Not really. We're ethically bound to proceed as the client instructs us unless it would violate the law, be frivolous, or a fraud upon the court. The only recourse would be to withdraw. In a case such as this, as a name partner in my firm, I'd recommend an attorney from my firm withdraw rather than make things worse for our client."

"You can't make them?" I asked.

"If it were a partner? No. We're all independent in that way. For an associate, I'd make my opinion clear, and a vote of the partnership could force the associate to drop the client. That's rare, but it does happen for various reasons."

"That makes sense. What time on the 25th?"

"It will be in the afternoon, but we won't know the time until the Clerk adds us to the docket. I'll let you know as soon as possible."

"Thanks."

We ended the call, I made a note in my calendar and returned to working on my report. I finished it, then spent the morning working with Steve Smith on a data model. Violet and I ate lunch together, then went to the gym. I was only in the office for a few minutes before I left so I could walk to the InterContinental Hotel, where I was meeting Trade Attaché Voronin.

At the hotel, I took the elevator up to the correct floor, and when I stepped off, I immediately saw two plainclothes officers, though I couldn't tell at first if they were FBI, Chicago Police, or Soviets.

"Sir," one of them said. "May I see your room key, please?"

"I'm not staying at the hotel; I have a meeting with Ivan Voronin, the Trade Attaché."

"May I see your identification, please?"

I pulled my wallet from the inside pocket of my suit coat and removed my license. I handed it to the man, who I was positive was an FBI agent. He looked it over, then used a walkie-talkie to speak to someone who confirmed I had an appointment.

"Go down the hall, sir. You'll see a diplomatic protection officer who'll confirm your identity and admit you."

"Thank you, Agent..."

"Menendez."

I nodded and walked down the hall, turning a corner, where I saw a uniformed female sitting at a desk in the hallway.

"Good afternoon," I said. "Jonathan Kane to see Trade Attaché Voronin."

"Good afternoon. I am Colonel Anisimova. I need to check you for weapons or recording devices, please."

I had never been frisked before, and now I was being frisked by a female KGB officer who, despite being around forty and wearing a severe uniform, was quite good-looking. I was surprised when she blithely felt my groin, having to bite my tongue to stop from saying she could have at least bought me a drink before copping a feel. I knew that wasn't what she was doing, but the touch was intimate.

"You may enter," she said.

She opened the door, announced my name, then stepped back into the hallway.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Kane," Ivan Voronin said.

"Good afternoon, Minister Voronin," I said, using the title on the fax I'd received.

"Please, come, sit. Yuri will fix us some tea and bring some cookies."

I sat and asked for lemon when queried, then accepted the tea, though it was in a regular china teacup with a saucer rather than a glass with a metal holder. Minister Voronin also had lemon in his tea, and Yuri, who was some kind of aide, placed a tray of cookies on the table in front of the couch where we sat.

"How did you find your visit to the plant in Wisconsin?"

"Informative. I had no idea such a thing even existed until I spoke to your aide at the embassy last year. I believe it sets a very good example of how our countries can cooperate."

"It is the most important program I have created in my role, and I hope to find other ventures. You are a financial analyst, yes?"

"Yes. I also have securities licenses and run a hedge fund."

"So, a true capitalist, then," Minister Voronin said with a smile.

"In the literal sense of the word! I would be very interested to hear of any new ventures."

"Unfortunately, the gears turn slowly," he said, "but this success provides a bit of grease."

"I don't know how I might help, but I'm open to finding ways to improve trade and relations between our countries."

"May I inquire your age?"

"Twenty-one."

"Did you begin university early?"

"I'm taking classes part-time," I replied.

"You have no degree?"

"Just a High School diploma," I replied.

"Impressive. It's not something one sees often, nor do capitalists usually wish to speak to a Soviet official."

"I'm a pacifist, and I think everyone can be friends. And, truth be told, I am looking for an edge on the competition, so to speak."

"Perhaps we can find a way to help each other and help our countries. If you leave me your card, I will be in touch and perhaps have others speak to you."

"I'd like that. I do need to let you know that I have to report everything to our Legal department."

"And I to the Foreign Minister! And..." he nodded towards the door.

"Let's try and avoid upsetting the 'Sword and Shield of the Party'," I said with a grin.

"A wise attitude!"

LV. Deluxe Apartment in the Sky!

April 16, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

When I returned to the office on Monday afternoon after meeting with Ivan Voronin, I revised the report I'd written after my trip to Wisconsin, adding a discussion of my meeting and the potential for future collaboration.

Writing the report made me think of Nikki, the receptionist at Belarus who had suggested we get a beer together. When I'd declined because I needed to return to Chicago, she'd asked for a raincheck. I'd given a non-committal answer and now considered if I should call her or not. A few things argued for making the call.

First, I put great value on meeting people and developing contacts, and that meant at all levels, not just Jeri's group of professionals or future professionals. Second, I was at a place where I was trying to find the best path forward, and that, too, called for meeting people. Maybe my future was with Violet, but that was by no means a sure thing. Third, if I was honest, she was a cute, perky blonde who was interested.

There really wasn't a good argument against calling her, so I picked up the phone, dialed 9 for an outside line, then dialed the number for Belarus.

"Belarus Tractors, how may I direct your call?"

"Is this Nikki?"

"Yes. Who's calling, please?"

"Jonathan Kane. We met last Thursday. You asked me out and I was busy, and you offered a raincheck. Would you like to have a beer?"

"Yes! When and where?"

"Given my schedule, either Sunday, April 29th, or Saturday, May 5th."

"The 5th would be better," she replied. "Where?"

"I'll come there, so you choose. I have a class on Saturday morning; I can be in Milwaukee by 2:30pm."

"Let's say 3:00pm at Wolski's Tavern on North Pulaski in Milwaukee. I can give you directions."

"OK."

She gave me directions, which I wrote down and repeated back to her. Once I had confirmed the directions, we exchanged home phone numbers in case either of us had a conflict.

"I'm really looking forward to it!" Nikki said happily.

"Me, too. See you on the 5th at 3:00pm at Wolski's Tavern."

We said 'goodbye', and I hung up. I made a note on my calendar, then went back to work. At the end of the day, I had dinner with Deanna, then went to the Art Institute for my penultimate modeling session. After the session, Deanna and I headed home, and I spent time with Bianca and Sofia before the three of us went up to Bianca's room to sleep.



April 17, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Tuesday, I left the office just before 10:00am and caught a cab to take me to Congressman Hayes' office. Marcia greeted me, then introduced me to the Congressman. We had a relatively short 'meet and greet', which was what Marcia had suggested would be the case. The meeting lasted all of ten minutes, but I had achieved my goal of meeting the Congressman, and now had to figure out how to cultivate the relationship. In my mind, that was best done through Marcia, so I took her to lunch.

"I need to find a hook," I said. "Something I can help the Congressman with to foster a mutually beneficial relationship."

"Campaign contributions," Marcia said with a smile.

"OK, besides that!"

"His main focus is on programs to convince inner-city dropouts to return to school to complete their diplomas and help them do that. I'm not sure that's an area where you can help being, and please don't take this the wrong way, a rich white guy. You can't relate to those kids."

"Is this another 'only blacks can represent blacks' argument?" I asked, positive I sounded slightly annoyed.

"How well do you think a fifteen-year-old black kid living in the projects is going to react to a white guy in a thousand-dollar suit?"

"I'll wear blue jeans and a T-shirt," I countered.

"That doesn't change who you are."

"So, what, then? Go out to DuPage County and find a Republican Congressman who doesn't give a rat's ass about Chicago? That's just flat-out stupid. Find a white Congressman in Chicago and help the Machine make things *worse* for Mayor Washington and that kid in the projects? Come on!"

"Find a charity run by blacks and donate," Marcia said. "That's the best way for someone like you to help. Support Operation PUSH and let the people who can relate to that kid do the work."

"Do you know how stupid that sounds?" I asked in exasperation. "The only way to solve our problems is to work together and to learn to trust each other. You're perpetuating the idea that white people are the problem. Are *some* white people the problem? They are. Are *all* white people the problem? They are most decidedly not. Seriously, am *I* part of the problem or part of the solution?"

"Both, actually," Marcia said. "Your job exploits the public for personal gain and the gain of other rich people."

"Yes, because all the union members whose pension funds I manage are rich and are all white. I have news for you -- that's not true."

"That's like defending yourself against charges of racism by saying you have black friends."

"You've constructed a neat trap and a self-fulfilling prophecy. It's BS. What happened to Doctor King's statement -- '*I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character*'? Or JFK's -- '*take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin*'?"

"You don't understand; in fact, I'm not sure you can."

"Actually, I do understand. I grew up poor, and every day was a struggle. I can actually relate better to those underprivileged kids than you can! You're digging deeper to make the chasm wider rather than filling in the trench. What you're suggesting, if carried to its logical conclusion, will result in segregation. I'm trying to help, and you're slapping my hand away.

"As for me being the problem, someone has to accumulate the capital to start and fund businesses, manage the funds in pension funds, pay taxes, and lend money to the government. Well, either that, or we become Marxist/Leninist, but I can show you the results of that failed ideology, and they are FAR worse than the results of capitalism."

"Socialism works," Marcia said. "Sweden is a perfect example."

"Sweden is not socialist; that's a complete misconception and mischaracterization. They are a social democracy. The vast majority of businesses are privately owned and traded on either the Swedish Stock Exchange, one of the European ones, or on a US Exchange. They have no forced unionization. They have no minimum wage. They are NOT socialist; they are capitalist. And they're very good capitalists!

"On the same note, China is busy ditching the Maoist version of Marxism in favor of market reforms and, gasp, private enterprise! So don't give me this socialist BS because it doesn't exist. The only countries that are even remotely close to socialism are in the East Bloc and Cuba. I'm not sure where you get your ideas, but they are seriously flawed.

"And I have to ask -- what happened? You were far more reasonable before, even if we disagreed in some areas. Now, it's as if I'm Public Enemy Number One. I want to be your friend, I want to find ways to collaborate, and I want to cultivate

a relationship with Congressman Hughes. You appear to think that's not just impossible but evil."

"As I said, you can't understand."

I shrugged and shook my head. I finished eating my lunch in silence and thought about what to do. I concluded that there was nothing I could do if Marcia wouldn't relent. And if she didn't relent, she was going to end up being excluded from Jeri's group no matter what I might say in her defense, and I was at a point where there likely wasn't anything I could say, at least with a straight face.

"Call me if you want to talk," I said. "But not if you want to take potshots and tell me how evil I am."

Marcia didn't respond, so I left the deli and caught a cab back to the Hancock Center. Later that afternoon, after thinking more about it, I reluctantly picked up the phone and dialed Jeri's number.

"Lundgren residence."

"Good afternoon, Karl. This is Jonathan. May I speak with Jeri, please?"

"Yes, of course, Master Jonathan. One moment, please."

"Hi, Jonathan!" Jeri said when she came on the line. "What's up?"

I explained what had happened with Marcia and my concern about her participating in the group.

"That's quite the change in attitude for you," Jeri observed. "You were adamant that she was a permanent member."

"I know. It appears I was wrong. Do you have any idea what changed recently?"

"Other than her changing jobs? No. You know we don't really talk. Did something happen between the two of you?"

It dawned on me just then what I'd missed -- I had told Marcia that we didn't click and had rejected any kind of relationship with her beyond friendship.

"Crap," I said. "I told her I wasn't interested in her romantically. She wasn't happy, but I didn't think she'd trash our friendship over that."

"If you fucked her, I'd say that's it. She's not me. You and I could fuck, and it didn't affect anything else about our relationship."

That wasn't quite true, but close enough.

"It came down to her being interested in me in a way that I wasn't interested in her. Technically, that was true for you and me, but your transactional view of sex meant that it wasn't about romance in any way, shape, or form. It was, if you will, a business deal. Most people don't see it that way."

"Your view is closer to mine than that of the romantic fools who put WAY too much meaning on it."

"I think my views are more nuanced, but we can have this conversation another time. My point was to warn you that Marcia might act strangely at our dinner on the 26th. If she does, then we'll have a tough decision to make."

"Screw it! We should just disinvite her now. I can't do it because you flat-out forbade me. But here's the thing - why call me if you haven't changed your mind? And if you have, then why beat around the bush? Make the decision, Jonathan -- do you think she's going to help or hurt the group?"

"Hurt," I admitted.

"Then I'll disinvite her."

"I guess there really isn't a choice."

"No, there isn't. See you on Thursday of next week."

"See you."

We ended the call, and I turned back to my Bloomberg terminal. I wasn't happy with the outcome, but I didn't see any way around it. I pushed that from my mind and completed my workday. When I left the office, I went up to the condo because I wasn't meeting Beth until 6:00pm.

The projection TV had been delivered, as had the sectional sofa. We were still missing the chairs for the TV area, but everything else was in place, including all the necessary kitchen equipment and place settings. The hardware and wiring for the blinds looked to be about halfway done, which is what I expected, and the electrical work in the gallery room was also about halfway done.

The wooden flooring in the new Japanese room had been taken up, and the subfloor was being prepared for the installation of the mats. That, too, looked to be far enough along that it would be finished by Friday, though I wasn't entirely sure, as the promised completion date had been the end of the month.

I noticed that Deanna had hung some prints on the walls, breaking up the large expanses of white, though eventually, other artwork would replace the prints, and not just Deanna's. I'd buy some other pieces as well, though that would be in the future. All in all, I was very happy, and Natasha absolutely deserved to be rewarded for her work.

I left the condo, took the elevator down to the lobby, and the doorman hailed a cab for me. Just under ten minutes later, I walked into the tailor shop. Beth finished with her customer, let her grandfather know she was leaving, and we walked out to the sidewalk.

"I have all the stuff in the apartment," she said. "Let's just eat at the diner around the corner."

"Slumming?" I asked with a goofy smile.

"Horny!" she declared. "You know that! But we do need to kill time until my grandfather closes the shop at 7:00pm. We don't want him hearing my screams of ecstasy!"

"You're that confident?"

"Even without the fantasy, you make me scream! I was just controlled at your place because of your housemates!"

We entered the diner and were seated by the hostess. We ordered and ate and still had about twenty minutes to kill, so we ordered coffee and pie.

"This is going to be our last time, right?" Beth asked.

"That is the plan," I replied. "And I am yours to command."

"Tie me up, ravish me in every possible way."

"And you want to tie me up?"

"Yes, but I don't feel as if you'd get off on it."

"I'm willing to give it a go."

"Then finish your pie!" Beth commanded.

I ate the last bit of my pie, downed the last of my coffee, then paid the check. We left the diner and walked back to the tailor shop, which was now dark. Beth and I walked around the side, climbed the stairs, and she let us into the apartment. Beth had rearranged the furniture so it didn't look the same as it had when Bev had used it, and I saw a gym bag on the bed.

"I'll strip, and then you tie me to the bed, legs tied with the soft ropes to the legs of the bed, hands handcuffed, and the cuffs tied to the bedrail with a rope. I want you to tie me tight enough, so I can't move very much. You've never done anything like this, right?"

"Correct."

"Then we need a 'safe word'. That's a word that if either of us uses, the other stops immediately and unties the person. We'll use 'red'. Say that, and that stops whatever we're doing, and I'll untie you; you do the same if I say it. That way, we know for sure everything is consensual, and the person isn't freaking out."

"That makes sense."

Beth unzipped the bag and took out the things she'd mentioned, along with lube.

"For the tit fuck and the back door!" she declared. "As huge as you are, we'll need a lot of it!"

"One logistical question -- if I tie you that way and tie you tight, what you called the 'back door' isn't possible."

"Do that last, and when we get there, untie my legs and lift them on your shoulders."

"That should work."

Beth quickly undressed, and I tied her to the bed with her guiding me. Once she was tied up, I undressed and contemplated how to proceed. I decided I'd cum in her mouth first, and after a moment's thought, I moved into a position I'd never used before -- sixty-nine with me on top.

I put my glans in Beth's mouth, and she began sucking and licking. I lowered my face to her pussy and pressed my tongue between her labia, coating it with her tangy juices. I swirled it several times, then flicked her clit. Beth moaned and I latched onto her clit, then began flexing my hips so that I was fucking her mouth.

Beth really got into it, and she sucked hard and swirled her tongue as I moved in and out of her mouth while tonguing her clit. I was surprised at how quickly my pleasure built, and I didn't try to hold back. Beth had a very good orgasm about thirty seconds before I felt the irresistible urge. I groaned, and cum spurted into Beth's mouth, her tongue swirling around my glans.

"That was SO hot!" she declared when I moved off her.

"I'm glad I lived up to the fantasy!"

I decided the next thing to do was a tit fuck, and while I waited to get hard again, I took a page from Stefi's book and worshiped Beth's gorgeous breasts, kissing, licking, and sucking. After about ten minutes, I retrieved the tube of lubricant, squirted some between her breasts, and some on my palm. I slowly stroked myself until I was hard, then put my dick between her breasts and pressed them together.

I began sliding forward and back, and Beth raised her head, providing me with a perfect target -- her nose. Again, my pleasure built quicker than usual, and soon enough, jets of cum landed on Beth's nose, lips, chin, and neck. She licked her lips and smiled, and I moved off her, ready to begin the next round.

I always got hard while eating pussy, and it was no different this time, and after giving Beth three orgasms with my lips and tongue, I moved between her legs. She was dripping wet, so I lined up, pushed in a bit, then thrust hard, driving all the way into her in one savage thrust.

Beth groaned deeply, then growled, "FUCK ME!"

I did, pounding her as if I was trying to drive her not just through the bed but through the floor as well. Beth could barely move, but she did flex her hips as I fucked her hard and fast. When Beth came, she screamed loudly, and strong spasms massaged my shaft as I pistoned in and out of her. I fucked her for fifteen minutes, giving her three very good orgasms, before I slammed deep into her, ground against her clit, and my cum blasted deep inside her.

"I'm going to have to do this again," she panted when finally pulled out.

I decided the best way to get hard was to sixty-nine with me on top again. It didn't take long for me to get hard, and when I was fully erect, I quickly moved off her, untied her legs, and applied liberal amounts of lube to my glans and shaft and her rear entrance. As she'd advised, I lifted her legs to my shoulders, lined up, and pushed slowly into her rear.

Beth moaned as I pushed in and groaned deeply when I was fully inside her. I began fucking her butt with slow, measured strokes, slowly increasing speed and force. I didn't go nearly as hard as I had when I was in her pussy, but neither did I go slow. I knew I could last for a long time, but I didn't think it was a good idea

to go for twenty minutes. I allowed my pleasure to build, and after six minutes, pushed as deep as I possibly could before cum spurted into Beth's butt.

When my orgasm had passed, I unlocked the cuffs and let her up.

"That was hotter than just about anything I've ever done!" she declared. "Go wash up, OK?"

I used the shower to thoroughly wash my groin, soaping and rinsing twice to ensure I was clean. I got out and quickly dried off.

"Still OK with this idea?"

"I'm willing to give it a go," I said.

"Then get into bed."

I did as she requested, and she tied me the same way she'd been tied. It felt very strange, and I felt as if the walls were closing in, but I took a few deep breaths, and the feeling went away.

Beth started, just as I had, with sixty-nine, bobbing, sucking, licking, and stroking me until I came after having given her just one orgasm with my mouth, Beth released me, turned, and French kissed me hard. She hadn't swallowed and allowed all my cum to drain into my mouth. We kissed for several minutes before she released me.

"Naughty girl!" I declared.

Beth laughed softly, "I knew you were OK with it, even if it doesn't thrill you. How are you doing?"

"OK. It didn't really feel any different from doing it not tied up."

The same was true after she got me hard again and rode me hard and fast, giving herself four good orgasms before I had my sixth of the evening. I almost laughed when Beth lifted off, quickly moved up, and straddled my face, pressing her freshly fucked pussy onto my mouth. I licked her to another orgasm, then she got up. She went over to the bag and pulled out something familiar.

"You know what this is, right?" she asked.

"I do, and I hate to ruin it for you, but been there, done that."

Beth laughed, "Why am I am not surprised?! Are you game? I've never done it before and thought this might be my only opportunity."

"Oh sure, why not," I chuckled.

Beth stepped into the harness, inserted the dildo in the pocket, then untied my legs. She slathered lube on the dildo and between my butt cheeks. As I had with her, she lifted my legs, positioned the dildo, and pushed forward. I took a deep breath, let it out, and did my best to relax. Beth pushed a bit harder, and the dildo slid into me about an inch. I groaned, and she carefully pushed it all the way into me using a series of gentle thrusts.

"This is really interesting," she said after a minute. "It's like total power and control."

"It doesn't do anything for you, does it?" she asked.

"No, not at all."

After another minute, she pulled out, removed the harness, and unlocked the cuffs.

"Let's wash and then, for the last act, a long, slow screw."

"That works for me!"

And that's what we did, finishing about 11:30pm. After a quick wash, we left the apartment. I hailed a cab for Beth, and once she was safely away, I hailed one for myself to take me to the Hancock Center. Forty-five minutes later, I was home. The timing was perfect, as Sofía had just woken up to eat.

"Have fun?" Bianca asked.

"I did. Beth and I are moving on to the next stage of our relationship."

"You two really clicked, minus her being Jewish."

"Very true," I agreed. "I'm positive we'll be friends for life. How has Sofía been today?"

"She's a perfect four-function baby!" Bianca declared. "Cry, eat, poop, sleep! Repeat *ad infinitum* for the next several months!"

"Too funny! Am I sleeping in your room with you two?"

"I want you to if you want to."

"I do."



April 18, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Wednesday morning, I brought more of my and Bianca's things to the condo, along with some things Deanna and CeCi had asked me to bring. I dropped off those things, then headed to the office. I completed my usual morning routine, and just after the market opened, I was notified that all of the applications by the investors who had been introduced by Thomas Hart had cleared Legal and Compliance. All the information had been sent to New Accounts to set up the accounts on the computer and arrange for the transfer of the securities and money they currently held. I placed a call to inform Thomas Hart, then returned to my usual daily routine.

Just before 10:00am, Violet let me know that Beth was on the line, and I had Violet transfer the call.

"Morning," I said.

"Morning! I was calling to see how you're doing."

"Just fine," I replied. "That wasn't my cup of tea, but I'm not upset or anything. We just discovered a minor, and largely irrelevant, difference in our sexuality. As an experiment, it was fine; it's just not something I'd do again. You, on the other hand, will."

"I have a date with Joshua on Saturday."

"That's good! What's a Jewish wedding like?"

"The biggest party you've ever seen in your life!" Beth declared. "You'll be invited, of course."

"I wouldn't miss it!"

"Lunch in early May?" Beth suggested.

"Absolutely. Just let me know. And don't forget the housewarming on the 13th."

"Already on my calendar."

We said 'goodbye', I hung up, and went back to work. I appreciated Beth's call and was pleased she'd noticed I had been a bit out of sorts while fulfilling her request. It had been pleasurable, but as I'd said to Beth, it wasn't something I'd repeat.

As I worked, I turned over the current state of my relationships in the back of my mind. Beth and I had ended things by mutual agreement, and I was positive we'd continue to be close friends. I had definitively ended things with Marcia, and it appeared our friendship would end as well. I'd done something similar with Teri, though there was a chance she'd call in June. And there was Anala, with whom I had never been physically intimate, who seemed to have disappeared from my life.

On the positive side of the ledger, my relationship with Bianca had deepened, mostly due to Sofía but also because of her breakup with Juliette. Somewhat unexpectedly, Deanna had filled the role Anala had once filled and was my closest confidante, even closer than Bianca. In addition, her career was budding, and she was selling paintings, though if I calculated her earnings versus time spent, she was barely making minimum wage.

Then, there was Violet, who presented perhaps the greatest challenge. Now, two years since I'd first met her, she was in a place where things might progress beyond our very close friendship. Violet coming out of her shell right at the time I had resolved not to enter into any exclusive relationship, had me considering if my proposed path forward was the right one. If there was someone I might be with long-term, she was the most likely candidate.

Beyond those long-term relationships, of whatever character, there were the 'art school girls' as Bianca had called them. They provided a fun diversion and an outlet for my libido without any complications. All of them were very likely only short-term flings, and they would, similar to Stefi, move on to relationships as many of the Loyola girls had.

As usual for a Wednesday, Violet and I ate lunch in the break room, then went to the gym. After our workout, we returned to the office, where I had a productive afternoon. At 5:00pm, I left the office to meet Deanna for dinner and then the final modeling session of the semester. We'd been given the option of what to wear, and I chose my new chinos, Oxford shirt, and tweed jacket, along with the English cap, deck shoes, and a pair of Ray Ban Aviator Gold Double Mirror sunglasses I'd purchased.

"Talk about a different look!" Alexa exclaimed when I finished dressing. "Totally Preppy!"

"I asked a friend whose family operates a tailor shop to create a new look."

"I like it. I mean, you're totally hot in your suit, but this works for more casual times. You could pull off the bomber jacket or Member's Only jacket instead of the sports coat, too."

"That's something to consider. You're really cute in that outfit!"

She had on a knee-length blue denim skirt, a white blouse, and white moccasin loafers.

"But it would look better on the floor next to your bed?" she asked with a smirk.

"I thought that was about a Prom dress!"

"It is, but the thought is the same! Shall we?"

We left the office and went to the studio, where we posed side by side with our arms around each other and with Alexa resting her head on my shoulder. Two hours later, we were finished, and Claire brought us both into her office.

"You can pick up your checks on Friday or Monday," she said. "I'll be in the office from 9:00am to 11:00am and 2:00pm to 3:00pm both days and 5:00pm to 7:00pm on Monday. You both did a great job and unless you object, I'll add you both to the list of available models."

"I'm OK with that," I said.

"Me, too," Alexa agreed.

"Thank you both!"

We left the office, and I met Deanna in the corridor. We left the building and caught a cab to the Hancock Center, and from there, we drove home.

"I just finished nursing Sofía," Bianca said when I walked in. "Want to hold her before she goes back in her crib?"

"Absolutely. I'll change and be down in a flash!"

I went upstairs, changed into shorts and a T-shirt, and went to sit on the couch next to Bianca. She carefully handed me Sofía, who looked very content, most likely because she had just finished eating and had a clean diaper.

"I wonder what you're going to be when you grow up," I said to my daughter.

"Didn't you say it was too soon to worry about public or private school?" Bianca asked, rolling her eyes. "Now you're questioning her about a career?"

"I can wonder about it, and I wasn't expecting an answer! I'm sure she'll be more than happy to speak her mind as a teenager, at least if she's anything like her mom!"

"Or her dad!" Bianca retorted.

"True! Do you have stuff for me to take to the condo tomorrow morning?"

"Yes. A box and a bag in my room. Dee said she had some things as well."

"OK. The plan for Saturday is that as soon as I get out of class, Violet and I will come to the house to meet Jack, Kristy, and Deanna. Kristy is going to rent the truck to save time. If it's OK with you, you should stay at the condo with Sofía and my mom."

"Fine with me! I'm not supposed to lift anything heavier than Sofía for another ten days."

"Also, Deanna and CeCi are going to do a full grocery shopping trip on Saturday morning to stock the condo. There are basic things there now, along with wine and beer, but I figured we'd order Chinese for Friday evening."

"That makes sense."

"I think she's asleep," I said, looking down at Sofía's placid countenance.

"Let's take her upstairs. You can put her directly into the bassinet, and we can go to bed. Interrupted sleep cycles are not my thing!"

I carefully stood and carried my daughter up to Bianca's room, where I placed her in the bassinet and covered her. I went to my room, completed my bedtime routine, then returned to Bianca's room to sleep.



April 19, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Thursday, after I delivered a load of clothes and other belongings to the condo, then went to the office to begin my day. Later that morning, after completing my portion of the analyst report, I used some of the available cash in my fund to double my holdings in Home Depot, as the shares were somewhat of a bargain due to the stumbling economy. I'd already been the beneficiary of a pair of two-for-one stock splits, and I saw no limit to growth in the stock. That was a long-term play, but I expected it to pay off handsomely.

I also bought shares in Teledyne, based on John Peters' projection that they would make a share repurchase in the next two months, similar to the ones they'd completed in the late 70s. I also bought shares in EDS on whispers that General Motors was investigating an acquisition. If both those things happened, I'd be well on my way to beating 20% returns for the year, which was my target.

To pay for the Teledyne and EDS shares, I sold several stocks that had simply not met expectations for growth. I didn't lose money on any of them, though the opportunity cost of the capital tied up in them was huge. Those stocks included United Technologies and Storage Technology, the former stagnant and the latter having dropped back to my initial purchase price.

I ate lunch with Violet in the break room, then went upstairs to check on the progress of the work in the condo. All of the blinds were installed, and the electrical work in the gallery had been completed. The «tatami» flooring was being installed by two workmen from Brown Construction, and they'd finish by the end of the day.

"What's left?" I asked Deanna, who walked in a few minutes later.

"The chairs for the TV area will be delivered this afternoon, and that's it. Bianca said you decided to order a pool table."

"Yes, but not until July when I receive my next quarterly payout."

"Natasha suggested orange or burgundy felt rather than green."

"I've actually never seen anything but green. I'll have to ask when the time comes. Did Natasha schedule the tour for her professor?"

"Yes. Sunday afternoon. I felt that was best. The photography student will be here to shoot a layout late this afternoon. The releases are on the breakfast bar."

We walked over, and I signed them.

"When are you going to the stereo store?"

"Probably next Wednesday evening, now that modeling is done. Well, I have to schedule with Britney, but that's flexible. Anything you need from me?"

"I have everything here and at Ateljé D under control! And I did speak to John Margolis. He'll have his preview on May 3rd. I'll need you on the evening of the 4th, obviously."

"Obviously! Do you need me to get wine or champagne for you?"

"Kristy took care of it, and I paid her from my Ateljé D account. I bought fluted champagne glasses, and two girls from school are going to be waitstaff."

"Great. And now that I think about it -- when you're shopping on Saturday, get some snacks or whatever to have out when Natasha brings her professor here."

"I'll take care of it!"

We hugged, and I left the condo and headed back to the office.

"Is everything ready?" Violet asked when I walked past her desk.

"They're finishing the floor in the Japanese room today, and the last of the furniture is being delivered this afternoon."

"How are we handling Saturday?"

"I think the best plan is for my mom and Mitchell to drive to the condo on Saturday morning. I think it makes sense for you to come along, and we'll have breakfast here, then I'll go to class. After class, I'll come here and pick you up so we can head to the house. Will you survive not having breakfast alone with me?"

"Oh, I suppose," Violet said with a theatrical sigh.

I laughed, "Then, that's the plan. My mom will call the office when she's leaving home. If she leaves right after school, she should arrive around 9:00pm. Judge Pierce is coming with her."

"Didn't he tell us to call him by his given name?"

"He did. My mom and *Mitchell* will arrive around 9:00pm. She said they'll stop for dinner along the way, so no need to worry about that."

"Good. When I came back from lunch, the fax confirming my bond was waiting for me on the machine. I need to go to the Secretary of State's office and file my oath."

"If you're ready, go now. What about your seal?"

"I ordered it from Atlas on Lake Street. It'll be ready on Monday."

Violet left to file her oath with the Secretary of State's office in the Loop, and I went into my office. About ten minutes later, my phone rang.

"Jonathan, it's Julie. Mr. Spurgeon would like to invite you and a date to a reception at his house on June 8th."

"What time?" I asked, as there was no way I would decline such an invitation.

"Drinks at 7:00pm; dinner at 8:00pm."

"I and a guest will be there," I said. "May I ask the occasion?"

"A fête to honor a concert pianist who defected from the East Bloc in 1970. A group of benefactors, which included Mr. Spurgeon's father, supported her and helped her become established in the US."

"Thanks. Do I need to let you know who I'm bringing?"

"No. If you need a car service to and from, that will be covered by Mr. Spurgeon."

"Thanks. Dress code?"

"Business casual," she said.

"Thank you."

I ended the call and knew who my date had to be and what I had to wear. I picked up the phone and dialed the number for the condo.

"Deluxe apartment in the sky! Deanna speaking!"

I laughed, "It's Jonathan! I love it!"

"Thanks. Bianca mentioned it, and I thought it was a great way to answer."

"Me, too! Mark June 8th on your calendar. You're my date for a fête for a pianist at Noel Spurgeon's house. Dress is business casual, so I'm going to wear my tweed jacket Preppy outfit. You should wear that black dress you wore for the show."

"I will. It sounds fun. Thanks for asking me!"

LVI. Four Girls

April 19, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Hi!" Krissy, who was wearing a dark blue skirt and light blue blouse, exclaimed when I walked into the lobby of the State Street dorm.

"Hi! Do you have a preference for dinner?"

"Connie's? I want deep dish at least once before I go home!"

"Then Connie's it is. I don't have my car because I took a cab, so I didn't have to pay to park for five minutes."

We left the building, I hailed a cab and directed the driver to Connie's on 26th Street. Ten minutes later, Krissy and I walked in and asked for a table. There was a twenty-minute wait, but we could put our pizza order in immediately, which would mean less time waiting after we were seated.

"Where in Oregon are you from?" I asked.

"Ontario," Krissy replied. "It's on the border with Idaho. It's about fifty miles from Boise and about four hundred from Portland."

"How big is it?"

"About 9,000. Where are you from?"

"Goshen, Ohio. It's about twenty-five miles northeast of Cincinnati. The town's population is under a thousand; the township has about the same as your hometown."

"How did you end up in Chicago?"

"During Senior year, I felt I had to get away from Goshen, so I called my uncle who lives in Chicago, and asked him to help me get an entry-level job here. He called a friend of his who offered me a job as a mailroom clerk. I worked my way up to mailroom supervisor, earned my securities license, was promoted to analyst, started running my own investment fund, and was promoted to manage the newly created Research Department."

"You're what? Twenty-seven or twenty-eight?"

"Twenty-one."

"Whoa! All that in three years?"

"A bit less, but yes."

"That's really impressive! You wouldn't happen to be looking for a girlfriend, would you?"

I had to commend both Stefi and Tara for not saying anything about Keiko, as I didn't want that to be the first thing someone knew about me.

"Well, at least you didn't jump right to a marriage proposal!" I chuckled.

Krissy laughed, "Good looking, dressed to the nines, successful, and friendly. What more could a girl ask for?"

"A reasonable point," I said with a smile. "My life is a bit complicated at the moment, not to mention you're going home for three months. Let's see how tonight goes, and if you want a second date, you can call me when you get back in August."

"OK!"

"What's your area of focus?"

"Photography. My goal is to be a photojournalist."

"That sounds like it could be a fun job."

I think so. I started with one of those Kodak Instamatic cameras when I was six, and I received an SLR as a birthday present when I turned thirteen. I was the photographer for our school newspaper and actually sold one photo to the local newspaper. I won a few competitions, too."

"That's impressive. Do you have siblings?"

"An older brother and a younger sister, about two years apart both ways. You?"

"Only kid."

"Do you work out? You look like it."

"Three times a week, mainly to stay in shape, not to get ripped."

"Did you play sports in High School?"

"No. I worked after school, so I really didn't have time. Did you?"

"Sure! Lead scorer on the basketball team!"

"You must have one heck of a jump shot!"

Krissy laughed, "Somehow, I don't think a five-foot girl who weighs a hundred pounds is going to be a basketball star!"

"No, but there are other sports?"

"Soccer? Volleyball? Softball? Those were the three main sports for girls besides basketball. Well, and track, but all those girls had really long legs. You're about six-two, right?"

"Yes."

"Are you a sports fan?"

"Baseball, hockey, and football. You?"

"College football. I used to watch with my dad and my brother. We didn't have a Major League baseball team anywhere close until the Mariners in '77, and Seattle is about 450 miles from Ontario. Cubs or Sox?"

"Reds," I replied. "But I prefer National League ball, so I prefer going to Wrigley over Comiskey."

"Cats or dogs?"

"We didn't have pets, but I was around dogs and cats, and I'm not in either camp. You?"

"I have a cat back home. I never liked dogs."

"Table for Kane!"

"That's us," I said.

We were seated, and the waitress brought our salads and Cokes.

"How did you learn everything to advance so quickly?" Krissy asked as we started eating.

"The company has study guides, and I took a couple of specialized classes. Most of what I do is analysis, which basically means studying something, analyzing it, and writing a report. The company uses those reports to decide what securities, futures contracts, options, bonds, or whatever to buy or sell."

"You don't need a college degree to do that?"

"No, but I am working on a degree in business part-time."

"Where do you live? An apartment in the city?"

"No. I own a house in Rogers Park, but as of tomorrow, I'm moving into a condo in the Loop."

"Wait! You're twenty-one, and you own a house AND a condo?"

"Yes."

"Holy Moly! If you don't have a girlfriend, I'm applying!"

"One step at a time!" I said with a smile. "As I said, let's see how the evening goes, and in August, when you come back, I'll take you on a second date if you want."

"I want!"

"Was there something specific you wanted to do tonight? Maybe see a movie?"

"Is it possible to see your condo? Or not until tomorrow?"

"We can do that."

Our pizza arrived, and the waiter put one of the thick slices on each of our plates. Connie's pan pizza was so thick it had to be cut into bite-size pieces with a large serrated knife and eaten with a fork.

"I can't believe this pizza," Krissy said. "Back home, it's totally thin."

"Same for me. I never knew about Chicago-style pizza until I came here. Connie's is really good, but I like Giordano's better. There are other things I never had before I came here -- Chicago-style hot dogs, Carson's Ribs, Portillo's Italian Beef, Maxwell Street Polish, and Ricobene's breaded steak with marinara sauce."

"I mostly eat in the dorm dining hall because I have to watch my money. I worked Summers starting after my Sophomore year, so I'd have spending money, and I'll work when I go home."

"What do you do?"

"Waitress at a restaurant my dad's best friend runs. What jobs did you have in High School?"

"I worked for a feed store, a lumber yard, and a landscaping company at various times, usually two jobs."

"What did your parents do?"

"My dad died before I was born, and my mom worked secretarial or office jobs. She's a secretary at the High School now."

"Before you were born?"

"Yes, after Mom got pregnant, he died in a plane crash. What do your parents do?"

"Dad works for the County as a health inspector. Mom is a secretary for a CPA."

"What about your older brother?"

"He joined the Navy when he graduated. He's an electrician on a nuclear submarine."

"The military was one thing I considered, but I'm a pacifist, so I didn't think that was a good idea."

"You wouldn't fight to defend the country?"

"If the country was invaded, I'd fight to protect people I care about. But going to Grenada or Lebanon? No. Did I just uncheck a box?"

"No, I'm not pro-military, and I want everyone to get along. That said, somebody has to defend the country."

"I agree."

"Are you a Republican or Democrat?"

"Democrat, but I voted for Reagan. You?"

"Republican. Did I just uncheck a box?"

"Given what I do for a living? No chance. "Everyone I work with is Republican. I'm the token Democrat. And a Democrat friend of mine basically read me off the other day for what I do for a living."

"What's wrong with investing and making money?"

"Nothing. I tried to point that out, but...never mind. It's a long, boring story that would have to delve into politics with which I don't agree."

"I tend to avoid politics because reporters have to be unbiased and objective, or at least that's how they need to present themselves."

"In my job, I have to present myself as a hardcore conservative capitalist. To do otherwise would lose business. Of course, I *am* a capitalist, but I'm not evil, selfish, or greedy. I'm a straight shooter and prefer blunt, direct conversations, but I know I have to temper that a bit with prospective clients."

"Blunt and direct?"

"I speak my mind, usually without any varnish or embroidery. I respond well to people who are direct and can be annoyed with people who beat around the bush. My job requires me to be logical and analytical, and that's pretty much my personality."

"Most people don't like blunt, direct talk."

I smiled, "I'm not most people. I get along best with people who do, but I also know how to schmooze when I need to."

"What you said before about clients, right?"

"Yes, or people I come in contact with in the course of life -- clerks at stores, waiters and waitresses, cabbies, and so on."

"That's called being polite!" Krissy declared.

"Yes, of course, but my point was that despite preferring blunt, direct talk, I know when it's not appropriate."

"Do you have fun? Or is it all just logic like Mr. Spock?"

"I do have fun, and I can be a real goofball in the right circumstances -- basically with people I'm close to."

We finished our meal, though there were three slices of pizza left, which I had the waiter put in a box. I paid the check, left a healthy tip, and we left the restaurant. I hailed a cab, and we got in.

"175 East Delaware Place," I told the cabbie.

"Yes, sir!" he said as he pulled the flag to start the meter.

"Where's that?" Krissy asked.

"The Hancock Center. That's where our offices are and where my condo is."

"By Water Tower Place, right?"

"Yes."

Nine minutes later, the cab pulled up in front of the building, and the doorman came out to open the door. I paid the cabbie, then Krissy and I got out.

"Mr. Kane, isn't it?" the doorman asked.

"It is. I have to ask..."

"When they took the photo for your ID card, they sent it down to the desk."

"I hope you don't mind if I just give you an envelope on the first of the month each month," I said, advice Jeri had given me.

"Not at all, Mr. Kane. Not at all."

"Thank you, Robert," I said, reading his name tag.

He held the door for us, and we went inside. We took the express elevator up to the sky lobby, then switched to the local elevator that served the 91st floor. When we exited the elevator, I led Krissy to the door, unlocked it, and let her in.

"WOW!" she gasped. "That view!"

"It is awe-inspiring. Let me show you around."

It seemed best to avoid talking about Keiko or Sofía until August, as it would only complicate things. I knew there was a risk of springing that on her later, but I wanted to at least get through the first date. That meant skipping the Japanese room, as it would be difficult to explain without telling the whole story, as well as the nursery.

"This is just unreal!" Krissy declared. "You're not pulling my leg about this being yours."

"I'm not."

I led her upstairs and showed her the master bedroom and the art gallery, noting that the other bedrooms were similar.

"Who is going to live here with you?"

"Three friends, to start with," I replied.

"I'll move in with you!" she declared.

"Just like that?"

"In addition to the stuff I said before, you're obviously very successful. A girl would be an idiot not to want to be your girlfriend."

She was moving awfully fast, and while I was interested in her, I had to take a measured approach. My expectation had been that the date would follow the ones I'd had with Stefi and Tara, not rush headlong into a potential relationship. That meant I basically had to come clean now rather than lead her on for the entire summer.

"Remember how I said my life was complicated? Let's open a bottle of wine, and I'll explain."

"OK," Krissy replied hesitantly.

"White, red, or white zinfandel?" I asked.

"Zinfandel, please."

I went to the fridge and retrieved a bottle of Sutter Home White Zinfandel. I used a corkscrew to open the bottle and poured some into two wine glasses I took from a rack that Natasha had installed under one of the cabinets. I carried both glasses to the 'conversation pit' formed by the sectional sofa arranged in a U shape, and Krissy and I sat down.

"First, this date did not go the way I expected it to..."

"You expected to get laid?" Krissy asked with an arched eyebrow.

"I didn't *expect* it, but based on my assessment of what was said by you, Stefi, and Tara, I felt it was *possible*, or perhaps even probable."

"I suppose that's reasonable. I don't believe in putting out on the first date. Or the second one, for that matter."

"A perfectly reasonable position. I will point out that a few minutes ago, you offered to move in with me!"

"It's a woman's prerogative to change her mind!" Krissy declared. "Wait, I just wrecked it, didn't I?"

"You mean because I'm a straight shooter, and you just implied inconsistency or fickleness?"

"Yes. I'm not, but it seemed like the right thing to say."

"And there is nothing wrong with changing your mind about something when presented with new information. There's a reason -- actually multiple reasons --

why I suggested waiting until August, and we'll get to those. But first, what I meant when I said it didn't go the way I expected I meant what amounted to an invitation to be a couple inside of the first fifteen minutes.

"Initially, I took that as a flip comment, though with potential underlying seriousness. Then you repeated it twice and offered to move in with me. I considered that you were serious about it, and it didn't feel right to wait to have this conversation in August because I didn't want you to go away with a potentially wrong picture of me and my situation. I'll explain, and it's probably best if you just listen, OK?"

"Sure. You're not, like, dying or something?"

"No, but...well, let me tell you the story. About sixteen months ago, I met a girl named Keiko. We hit it off almost immediately, and in fairly short order, I knew she was the one. Things progressed quickly because she felt the same way, and it was obvious to both of us where we were headed, despite my intention of not making a commitment like that at age twenty.

"Things were going really well until one day, she said she was feeling really tired, and after several doctor visits, she was diagnosed with leukemia on May 13th of last year. We immediately sought treatment, and she began chemotherapy. Despite that, we married in a civil ceremony in mid-August, then had a Shinto ceremony in early October. After two rounds of chemo, the doctors concluded that only a bone marrow transplant could save her, but we couldn't find a matching donor, and she died on December 27th."

"I, uhm, don't even know what to say," Krissy said quietly. "I'm so sorry."

"Thanks. Anyway, that's not the only complication. About two and a half years ago, I met Bianca, who became a close friend. She's bisexual, though she has a strong preference for girls. She asked me, at one point, if I'd help her have a

baby, and I had agreed, but I met Keiko, and that messed up the timeline and plans.

"I'll skip to the end -- when Keiko found out she had to have a bone marrow transplant to have a chance to live, she also found out that in nearly every case, that treatment renders the woman unable to conceive because of the high doses of radiation involved. We agreed we'd adopt, but she knew I wanted a biological child, so the three of us -- Bianca, Keiko, and me -- agreed that Bianca and I could try to have a baby before Keiko and I married. My daughter Sofía was born ten days ago."

"I'm at a loss for words."

"I understand. I come with quite a bit of baggage, and none of it was particularly relevant if this were a situation similar to Stefi and Tara, so I wasn't going to say anything. Things didn't go that way, and you made the first 'girlfriend' comment. As I said, the first one I could easily let go, but I suggested a conversation in August so all the emotional stuff didn't affect our date.

"Then you made the comment twice more, along with the offer to move in, and it was obvious to me that you did want a second date, which meant I had to decide to tell you now or in August. I felt it was wrong to, in effect, mislead you and have you come back in August expecting to begin a relationship and have me dump all of this on you then. I hope you understand why I'm not ready to make any kind of commitment at this point."

"I do," Krissy said. "And...heck, I'm not even sure what to say right now. I guess I have to ask how interested you are."

"Interested enough to want a second date," I replied.

"I suppose that's the only realistic answer you could give."

"Are you still interested in a second date?"

"I am, though I'm sure you'll understand a bit of trepidation about how complicated your life is compared to mine, which is pretty simple. I do need to say something because you might have the wrong impression."

"About?"

"I think I might have sounded like I was only interested in you because of your obvious wealth. I realize now I shouldn't have said it that way. All the other stuff I said was true, and this," she swept her arm, "is icing on the cake."

"I didn't get that idea," I said. "I mean, yes, that could have been true, but I felt you were reacting out of amazement, and trust me, I'm amazed myself. Twenty bucks was a lot of money for my mom and me when I was growing up, and now...well, I'm not profligate, but I can spend \$20 without thinking about it the way I would have."

"So, now that the cat's out of the bag, so to speak, who all will live here with you?"

"Bianca and Sofía, obviously. It would have included Bianca's girlfriend, but they broke up because the girlfriend couldn't handle being around a baby full-time at age twenty. My other two housemates are two students at the School of the Art Institute -- Deanna Haight and CeCi Forsythe.

"I'm Deanna's patron, and I'm helping her open her own gallery, Ateljé D. Each of them has her own room, and one of the extra rooms is going to be the nursery. Currently, my friends Jack and Kristy, who are married, are living with us at the house, and they're going to rent the house from me."

"Three girls? That's one better than Jack Tripper!"

I chuckled, "I never watched the show, but I know the premise. I don't have to pretend to be gay to fool my landlord because I'm my own landlord! Jokes aside, there are some significant challenges to a relationship with me."

"Including you being over a foot taller!"

"Keiko was only about two inches taller than you are," I replied. "She once asked if it bothered me to be a foot taller, and in response, I asked if it bothered her to be a foot shorter. Most of the girls I've dated since coming to Chicago have been shorter than me."

"You're about six-two, so no surprise there!"

"I meant significantly shorter! But I have dated a couple of girls who were around six foot. Anyway, I don't see that as a blocking factor. You're cute, and you did say that good things come in small packages. Honestly, I believe the best course of action is the one I originally suggested - you go home, and when you come back in August, we go on a second date."

"An interesting strategy when you have a girl who's interested in you alone in your condo."

"I drew the conclusion from everything you said that your belief is that it requires at least two dates before you'll consider it. After that, there are other factors, I'm sure. I don't find that viewpoint troubling in the least."

"Most guys would have taken what I just said as an invitation to try."

"And you may well have meant it that way, but I'm analyzing everything you've said and drawing appropriate conclusions. That's what I do for a living, and it's

my usual way of thinking outside of work as well. If my analysis is wrong, tell me, and I'll reevaluate."

"So, if I asked to spend the night, you'd accept?"

"That's couched as a hypothetical, and hypothetically speaking, I'd consider it."

"You are really exact in your thinking and speech!" Krissy declared.

"A function of what I need to do at work, but I suspect I'm good at work because it's who I am."

"Do you *want* me to spend the night?"

"I know you want a one-word answer, but it's not that simple because I can't commit to anything except a second date in August."

"You're still grieving," Krissy observed.

"Yes. It's not as bad as it was, but I'm still trying to sort out my feelings. OK to say something very direct that might sound offensive but isn't?"

"That does seem to be your approach, so go ahead."

"If you had followed the pattern of your friends, I wouldn't have thought twice about saying 'yes'. Once you put a relationship on the table, I had to consider a deeper meaning than just a one-night stand or a short-term fling."

"You make a weird amount of sense."

"Bianca and other friends call it 'Jonathanland', where logical analysis rules the day for things most people don't give a lot of thought or simply go with their

first impression. That approach to life is something you should consider before getting involved with me. One thing that approach can't do is read your mind, and given you hinted at some flexibility in your thinking, I'll leave the decision to you. Well, it's always up to you, but I mean, I'll go with your decision."

"You are really concerned with being precise in your speech."

"I once told someone there were four girls who could wreck a relationship -- Miss Communication, Miss Information, Miss Interpretation, and Miss Understanding."

Krissy laughed, "That's awesome!"

"Did you want some more wine?"

"Yes, please."

I got up, got the bottle from the fridge, and poured a second glass for each of us.

"I think your analysis is pretty good," Krissy said after taking a sip of wine.

"Waiting only delays the potential for three months, and given I won't be here, you don't think I should change my default thinking. There is zero to lose by waiting but there is some amount of risk to me in not waiting."

"That nicely sums it up, so I think your path forward is clear."

"Go home, talk to you on the phone a few times, come back in August, go on a date, and see where things lead."

"Yes."

"Then that's what I'll do."

We finished our wine, and I rinsed out the glasses, then escorted her to the lobby, where Robert hailed a cab for her to take her to her dorm. Once she was safely away, I made my way to the parking garage to retrieve my car, then headed home.

Once again, my timing was impeccable, and Sofía had just finished eating, so I held her until she fell asleep, and I carried her up to Bianca's room, where I put her in the bassinet. I went to my room to complete my bedtime ritual, then returned to get into bed with Bianca.

"Deanna pointed out we need to finish the painting before she's completely set up in her new gallery and studio. She suggested we come back here on Sunday evening for a few hours."

"That works for me," I said. "My mom and Mitchell will leave around 2:00pm, so they're home before 10:00pm Ohio time."

"OK. How was your date?"

"We had dinner, then went to the condo."

"Your first new girl in the condo!"

"Actually, we drank wine, talked, and then I sent her back to the dorm in a cab."

"Interesting. Why?"

"Over the course of dinner at Connie's, she mentioned several times that she was interested in a relationship. She's going home to Oregon for the Summer, so I suggested we have a second date in August, saying that things were complicated

at the moment. At one point, she asked where I lived, and I mentioned moving to the condo. She asked to see it, so we went there.

"She was blown away by the view and offered to spend the night if she could be my girlfriend. I once again suggested August, but because of the way the conversation went, I felt I had to tell her about Keiko and Sofía, who neither Stefi nor Tara had mentioned. As we talked, Krissy revealed that she felt at least two dates were necessary before she'd even consider sex.

"I made the point that she'd offered, and that led to further discussion. In the end, the agreement is that we'll go out in August and see how things go. Needless to say, the complications of my life gave her pause, but not enough pause to change her mind about being interested in a relationship."

"I didn't expect that!" Bianca declared.

"Me, either, but you know where I am, and I didn't reveal my thinking on long-term exclusive relationships except to say I wasn't ready for one. Krissy attributed that to me grieving for Keiko, and I'd say that's absolutely true, but it's more than just grieving."

"If Sofía didn't scare her off, I'd say she's really interested! What's she studying?"

"Photography. She wants to be a photojournalist."

"A job that might involve a lot of travel, so maybe a flexible relationship works for her."

"Who knows? I kicked the can down the road because I can't make any decisions like that now, and probably not for some time. We should get some sleep because our little princess is going to need attention in a few hours, and you're getting up with me so you can be at the condo when the nanny arrives."

We snuggled close, and I quickly fell asleep.



April 20, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday morning, we were up a bit early, so Jack and I could disassemble the crib and load it into my trunk along with the rest of my clothes and my toiletries. I also packed the intercom units in a box and put it in the trunk. Lastly, I got Keiko's urn, put it in a box I'd wrapped with silver wrapping paper, then put it in the passenger seat of Bianca's car.

I loaded the last of Bianca's things in the trunk of her car, then the three of us ate breakfast, and Bianca nursed Sofía. When we finished, the three of us headed for the condo, with Jack driving my car and me driving Bianca's car with her and Sofía in the back seat.

At the condo, we carried everything in, making three trips, and when we returned with the third load, the nanny had arrived.

"Jonathan, this is Chelsea Drake," Bianca said. "Chelsea, Jonathan Kane, Sofía's dad."

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Kane."

"Jonathan, please! You're a few years older than I am! It's nice to meet you as well. I need to set up the intercoms, and Jack and I need to put the crib together.."

I grabbed the box of intercoms, and Jack and I went upstairs. We quickly assembled the crib, and I put the unit we had configured in 'baby monitor' mode in the nursery. I turned it on, then put the other units in my bedroom, taking the time to change into my suit, as I hadn't wanted to wear it while carrying boxes

and the crib. Once I'd changed, I put the third unit in Bianca's bedroom and the fourth unit downstairs on the breakfast bar.

"Now that Chelsea will be with us, my grandmother is going to start coming in the afternoons," Bianca said. "She'll make dinner for us Monday through Friday. If we're out on Fridays, she'll make something we can eat on Saturday."

"Sounds good. I need to get to the office. The new phone should be transferred today, but according to Illinois Bell, sorry, Ameritech, they don't need to get into the condo. The two-line phone is in the kitchen, and my line rings in my bedroom. There are also two portable phones on the shelf behind the heating unit near the sectional sofas, one for each line."

"Cool."

"Call if you need anything. I'm just three elevator rides away!"

Jack and I left, taking the local elevator down to the sky lobby.

"That nanny is smoking hot!" he exclaimed once we were in the express elevator to the ground floor lobby.

"Not the reason we hired her," I chuckled. "She's worked as a nanny for five years, and in High School babysat every weekday afternoon for a family from her church. She had excellent references."

"What are her hours?"

"6:00am to 2:00pm, Monday to Friday. An older lady starts at 2:00pm and works until 6:00pm Monday through Thursday and until midnight on Fridays. That gives us flexibility, and we don't have to worry about finding a Friday night babysitter so we can go out."

"That can't be cheap."

"It's not, but with both Bianca and me contributing, it's not a stretch. You and Kristy can move into the master bedroom at any point. All my stuff is out of there except the IBM PC, which we'll move tomorrow."

"We'll do that tomorrow after we move the furniture from the Japanese room, the air cleaners, and the rest of Deanna's and CeCi's things."

"Deanna will leave a few things because she won't have her occupancy permit for her new studio until next week. She, Bianca, Sofía, and I will be at the house on Sunday afternoon so Deanna can complete the portrait of Sofía, Bianca, and me."

"No sweat! We don't need the attic for anything at the moment. The house is huge for two of us."

"And I appreciate you accommodating the parties."

"It's your house!"

"Yes, but you're renting, and I don't want to take advantage. It'll just be the two I told you about."

We walked through to the business side of the lobby, where I got onto an elevator, and Jack continued out of the building so he could take the L to the CBOT. As usual, when I arrived on 29, I stopped in to see Rich, then went to the Research Department. I made a pot of coffee, then began my day.

I broke my usual routine, going to the condo with Violet to have lunch with Bianca and Sofía, then going to the gym. The afternoon was routine, with the exception of my mom calling to let me know that she and Mitchell were leaving

for Chicago. I let Violet know, then went back to work. At the end of the day, Violet accompanied me to the condo to have dinner with Bianca, Sofía, CeCi, Deanna, and me.

"Jonathan, this is Jessica Rivers; Jessica, Jonathan Kane, Sofía's dad."

"Nice to meet you, Jonathan," she said. "Your daughter is an angel!"

"Not at 2:00am," I chuckled. "But thank you. Nice to meet you as well. Bianca, I'm going to change."

I went up to my room, changed out of my suit into sweatpants and a rugby shirt, then went back downstairs, where I greeted «Abuela», who was making something that smelled out of this world, and I was sure would taste as good.

"Can I see upstairs now that it's furnished?" Violet asked.

"Sure."

We went upstairs, and I showed her the nursery, the art gallery room, and then the master bedroom.

"How dark can you make it in here with two walls that are almost full windows?"

"The electric blinds have two layers; one is light colored with an open weave and diffuses the outside light; the other layer is blackout, so no light gets in. As high up as we are, the light-colored layer is sufficient at night and actually allows a fuzzy view of the city lights."

"The bed is huge!"

"It's king-size. Yours in your house is full-size. My old bed was queen-size."

We left the bedroom and went downstairs, and I was just about to sit down in the conversation pit when the intercom buzzer sounded. I went to the kitchen and lifted the handset.

"Mr. Kane? Robert in the lobby. Miss Mazarov is here. May I send her up?"

"Yes, please."

"Very good, sir."

I replaced the handset and waited for three minutes while Natasha came up to the condo. I opened the door for her and she greeted me with what Deanna and Jeri ad both called a 'society kiss' where our cheeks touched.

"The place looks fantastic!" I said.

"Thanks!"

"Deanna said your professor is going to be here on Sunday."

"Yes, at 3:00pm, along with the photographer, Kent. Dee gave me the signed releases."

"Come on in and meet the others; dinner is in about fifteen minutes."

I introduced Natasha to the people she hadn't met, and at 6:00pm, Jessica left, and «Abuela» brought a large pot to the dining room table.

"This is Carne Guisada," «Abuela» said. "A Tex-Mex beef stew. There is also rice, and I made fresh tortillas."

"«¡Muchas gracias!»", I said, using about 20% of the Spanish words I knew in one go.

"¡De nada!»" «Abuela» replied, and I could surmise what that meant.

We all sat down, including «Abuela», and Deanna poured red wine for all of us, and we began eating. The stew was fantastic, and the fresh, warm tortillas were the best I'd ever had. When we finished dinner, I attempted to help with the dishes, but «Abuela» shooed me away.

"I should go," Violet said. "I don't want your mom to have to wait."

"Let's go downstairs, and I'll have Robert hail a cab for you."

Five minutes later, she gave me a quick hug and kiss and got into the cab. I gave the cabbie enough for the fare and a tip, then Robert closed the door. The cab pulled away, and I headed back upstairs. «Abuela» finished the dishes, and after ensuring Bianca didn't need anything, she left.

Sofía woke up not long after, and after Bianca nursed her, I held her before putting her in her crib to sleep. We had a nice evening together, talking, listening to music, and enjoying the view of the city. Sofía woke again around 9:30pm, and Bianca went to get her. As was our usual pattern, after Sofía nursed, I held her until she fell asleep, then I carried her up to Bianca's room and put her in her bassinet.

"I don't expect you in bed tonight," Bianca said. "CeCi usually gets Fridays."

"True."

We hugged and I went back downstairs and was met by Natasha at the base of the stairs.

"So, about my completion bonus..." she said with an inviting smile.

"Let me speak to Deanna and CeCi," I said.

"No need! I cleared it with Dee, who cleared it with CeCi!"

"Then come upstairs, and we'll negotiate!"

I took her hand and led her back up the stairs to my room.

LVII. The Hearing

April 20, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"What kind of bonus payment did you have in mind?" I asked Natasha when we were in my bedroom.

"Well, if Dee is to be believed, and I believe she is, then I'd like it provided in four installments! Tonight is your reward for hiring me, and it's my job to make you cum as many times as I can. Then, the next four Wednesdays are my bonus, and it's your job to make ME cum as many times as you can!"

"I believe that's fair," I said with a grin.

"But, I have a firm rule."

"What's that?"

"You're not allowed to ask, and it's most likely I won't ever ask again. Agree to that, and I promise nirvana!"

"I'm not disagreeing, but I am curious -- does that have to do with what Deanna told me about you wearing clear-lens glasses?"

"It started when I was fourteen; I developed early and pretty much looked like I do now. I helped my best friend decorate her room, and that evening, after dinner, her dad came on to me. That started a pattern, and I think every adult male over fifteen on Kodiak Island hit on me at one time or another. I tried dressing differently, and it didn't work, so I cut my hair short and got the glasses. That cut down on some of it."

"Sorry to interrupt, but Kodiak Island?"

"Alaska. Anyway, for my Junior Prom, I turned down six different invitations and asked a shy, quiet guy who had never hit on me. He was a perfect gentleman, and I made sure I thanked him properly that night. We dated for about a year until he joined the Navy, but even having a boyfriend didn't cut down on the attention.

"That's what made me determined to leave Kodiak. When I came to Chicago, I decided I didn't want a steady boyfriend, and I stuck to what worked -- I asked the guys and made the rule they couldn't ask and that it was short-term. I like the variety, and I'm not tied down. Ready for your reward?"

"I agree to your rule. The rubbers are in the drawer in the nightstand."

"I'm on the Pill"

"Then what are we waiting for?"

"Hell if I know!" Natasha declared.

We both quickly undressed, and I saw that Natasha was shaved smooth, with not even a hint of pubic hair. She came to me, we embraced, kissed, and tumbled into bed.



April 21, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Natasha kept her promise, giving me a slow, sexy, and exquisite blowjob, then, after she got me hard again, rode me to release. The next four hours were a mix of blowjobs and her riding me until about 3:30am, when I was too tired and

spent to go an eighth time. Because of the plan for the day, I was up at 6:30am, and Natasha and I got into the shower together. After the shower, we both dressed, then went downstairs.

"I don't think I should hang around for your mom," Natasha said.

"Mom won't care, and she won't assume anything. You're welcome to stay."

"That's OK. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Shall I walk you out?"

"Not necessary. You have breakfast to make."

We hugged at the door, and she left, and I went to the kitchen to make bacon, scrambled eggs, and toast. CeCi came to help me a few minutes after I started, and we had breakfast ready when my mom, Mitchell, and Violet arrived.

Unsurprisingly, my mom was far more interested in holding Sofía than she was eating breakfast. I had to leave at 7:40 to get to class, so I ate quickly, then left the condo and returned four hours later to pick up Violet so we could go to the house, where Jack, Kristy, and Deanna were waiting with a U-Haul.

"Jonathan," Jack said, "there was a message on the machine from a professor at Loyola interested in buying Keiko's car. I called him back, and he came by this morning. He's willing to pay your asking price. He left his home number and said he could come back any time today."

"Let me call him, then we'll load up."

I placed the call and arranged for the professor to come to the house right away. Once that was done, I joined Jack, Kristy, and Deanna in loading the U-Haul with

everything from the Japanese room. I had carefully packed all the items from the spirit shelf during the week and carried them personally to my car rather than putting them in the truck. We were about halfway done when the professor arrived. He handed me a check, and I gave him the two sets of keys, then signed the title over to him. Once he had driven off, I helped the others finish loading the U-Haul.

Jack and Kristy drove the U-Haul, and Violet, Deanna, and I drove in my car, and we returned to the Hancock Center where we unloaded the U-Haul and moved everything to the condo. When we finished, I thanked Jack and Kristy, and they left to return the truck.

"Sorry I was in and out and didn't have time to do more than say hello," I said to my mom.

"I didn't come to see you! I came to see my granddaughter!"

"Kicked to the curb by his mom at age twenty-one!" Bianca teased.

"Yeah, yeah! If I'm not wanted, I'm going to set up the computer we brought over today."

I went upstairs to the computer loft, as Natasha had called it once we'd changed the plan from a play area. I wasn't upset with my mom, and I knew she'd been teasing. I set up the IBM PC, made sure it worked and that I could print, then went back downstairs to spend time with my mom and Mitchell.

Violet and I made dinner for everyone, and after dinner, she, my mom, and Mitchell headed back to her house. Once they had left, Deanna and CeCi helped me install the spirit shelf in the new Japanese room. Once we finished, I spent a quiet evening with Bianca and Sofía, and when it was time for bed, I joined Bianca in her room, with Sofía in the bassinet rather than her crib.



April 22, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Sunday morning, my mom, Mitchell, and Violet came to the condo for breakfast and spent the morning with us. We all ate lunch together, and then my mom and Mitchell left to return to Ohio. Violet stayed, and we'd drop her at her house when Deanna, Bianca, Sofía, and I went to the house.

As planned, Natasha arrived at 3:00pm with her professor and Kent, the photographer. They spent about an hour, and Kent took multiple photos of every room. He'd make three copies -- one set for him to turn in as part of a project, one set for Natasha's portfolio, and one set for me. I thought it went very well, and when they left, Bianca, Sofía, Deanna, and I took Violet home, then headed to the house so Deanna could complete the second painting in her 'Nuclear Family' series.

That took close to three hours, and when we finished, we had a late dinner with Jack and Kristy, then headed back to the condo. Deanna asked if she could spend the night, and I agreed. I was surprised when CeCi followed us upstairs and asked to join us.

"Nothing crazy," she said. "Just make love and sleep all snuggled together."

"I'm OK with that if Deanna is," I said.

"It was Dee's idea!"

"Then join us," I said.



April 23, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

The major benefit of the location of the condo played out on Monday morning when I didn't have to get up until 6:15m to be in the office at 7:00am, and I could have a leisurely breakfast. Chelsea had arrived at 6:00am and had let herself in with the key Bianca had given her.

Chelsea wouldn't be too busy until Bianca returned to work, which she planned to do part-time starting May 7th. Until then, Chelsea would help around the house and watch Sofía so Bianca could nap, given she was still getting up at least twice during the night to feed Sofía.

At 6:50am, I made my relatively short commute and began my usual morning routine. It was a typical morning, and at 11:30am, Violet and I had lunch together and then went to the gym. Late in the afternoon, I was notified by New Accounts that the first tranche of transfers of the \$40 million had been completed. I reviewed the holdings and sold most of the equities, allocating the funds to purchase additional shares of my current holdings to keep my portfolio properly balanced.

When I left the office, rather than going straight home, I headed to the Art Institute to pick up my check from Claire. I had a sneaking suspicion it was orchestrated in the hopes she'd get me alone because she could have easily mailed the check to me. When I arrived, her office door was open, and I walked in to find her sitting at her desk.

"Hi, Jonathan!"

"Claire," I said with a nod.

"Come in and sit down, please."

I did, sitting in the chair facing her desk.

"You did a great job for your first time; in fact, a great job, even for someone who modeled regularly."

"Thanks."

"In the Fall, I'm teaching a community art class on Saturday mornings, and I wondered if you would be available to model for two class sessions -- one sketching and one painting. Because we take students as young as fifteen, you'd wear briefs for both sessions."

"How many hours?"

"Four -- 8:00am to noon, and you can pick your Saturdays, as I'm just starting to line up models. You'd pose alone; I intend to ask Alexa to pose for the female form classes."

"I could do that," I said. "When do you need to know the dates?"

"In the next week or so. That way, I can assign dates to other models and set the dates for our outdoor work."

"I'll check my calendar and call to let you know."

"Great! I realize May is still eight days away, but classes are finished..."

"And just what would this physiology experiment involve exactly?" I asked with an arched eyebrow.

"Claire?" a voice said from behind me.

I turned to see Adriana, the girl Deanna said had drawn me not to scale.

"Yes?" Claire responded.

"I wanted to discuss my course evaluation."

"I'll leave so you can do that," I offered.

Claire frowned and reluctantly handed me an envelope. I left her office, and headed back to the Hancock Center to have dinner with Bianca and Deanna. When I walked into the condo, I greeted everyone, then went upstairs, with Deanna following.

"You're home sooner than I expected," she said.

"Adriana came to the door just as Claire was propositioning me. Adriana wanted to discuss her course evaluation, so I left. That worked out OK because I was leaning against accepting Claire's offer."

"Why? Not saying you're making the wrong choice, just curious."

"In all honesty? I'm not all that interested in a random casual encounter."

"Stefi? Tara? Krissy?"

"Krissy and I spent the evening talking. Stefi, we were on a date and after talking quite a bit at dinner, chose to skip the movie for something more entertaining. Tara was a closer thing, though we did have dinner before she invited me to her room. Still, her intent was obvious from the moment she told me Stefi was sick."

"Natasha?" Deanna asked.

"Not quite a random, out-of-the-blue offer the way Claire's was. All things considered, I'd rather be with you, CeCi, and Natasha. And you know I'm seeing Alexa next weekend, though we'll see how that goes."

"Right!" Deanna said with a soft laugh, rolling her eyes. "You know what she wants!"

"OK, but we had quite a few interactions, some of them very intimate. It's different. Not to mention, Katie and Esme will be home from Princeton soon. I have plenty of other options as well, so Claire's offer wasn't even all that tempting. She did ask me to pose twice for a community art class in the Fall, though in briefs because they accept students as young as fifteen."

"Could you imagine?" Deanna asked. "People's heads would explode even though it's art, not sex."

"Evidence suggests differently," I said with a smirk. "Stefi, Tara, Claire, Alexa..."

"You might have a point," Deanna said with a knowing smile.

"What grade did you receive for Claire's class?"

"There are no grades; it's Pass/Fail. Or, more accurately, Credit/No Credit. I passed, and my evaluation and critique were largely positive. Claire and I disagree on a few things, but that's the nature of art. All of her criticism was constructive, even if I intend to mostly ignore the areas where she and I disagree. That's why there are no letter or number grades -- think about how difficult that would be."

I nodded, "Now that you explain it, it's obvious. Either you did the work, or you didn't. And Adriana did say she wanted to discuss her evaluation."

"Exactly. Her objection is Claire's critiques and evaluation of her work, and her purposeful misrendering of your anatomy was against the rubric. This wasn't a class in interpretation or a style exploration but one about accuracy. It's basically an introductory class in drawing male and female forms, and as such, you're supposed to get it right.

"I have other classes that are more interpretative and which allow variations in style. In those classes, pretty much anything goes, so long as you can explain your work and the meaning you intend to convey. So, a surrealist could, for example, make you bigger than John Holmes or have your dick coming out of your face, like an elephant's trunk. Or someone could paint a Byzantine-style icon of you as an act of adoration. And so on."

"Alexa did say 'Holy God!' and Kelly did say 'Jesus!'," I smirked. "And Stefi definitely worshiped, so maybe there is something to that!

Deanna laughed, "And I thought doctors had a god complex!"

"You know I'm joking. Shall we go downstairs and see what «Abuela» has for us tonight?"

"Steak fajitas with refried beans."

"Sounds great!"

We left the bedroom and headed downstairs to join Bianca, Sofía, and CeCi for dinner.



April 24, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Tuesday morning, I took a break around 10:00am and returned to the condo to pick up my suits and shirts, which needed to go to the dry cleaners, then went to the floor with the sky lobby where the in-building dry cleaners were located and dropped them off. Next, I visited the First Chicago branch, which was located on the same floor as the sky lobby, to deposit the check for the car and the one from Claire.

I also took a few minutes to check the full-service grocery store which offered free delivery in the building. The prices were a bit higher than Jewel or Dominick's, but the convenience made up for it. We could make two monthly 'stock up' runs to Jewel on Halsted and then supplement from the in-building grocery store.

Those things, along with the indoor swimming pool, were nice amenities. There was also a building handyman who could perform typical repairs and maid service, though I didn't think we'd make use of that. Those services and amenities meant I'd drive a lot less and could easily take the L to Circle and back rather than drive. It was also close enough to ride my bike, something I had rarely done since moving out of the apartment I'd rented from Lily's parents.

I returned to the office, worked until noon, then had lunch with Violet. After lunch, New Accounts notified me that the next tranche from the four investors had been transferred, and I spent most of the afternoon evaluating the holdings, once again selling most of them and reallocating the funds to keep my portfolio properly balanced.

The rest of the day was typical until about 3:30pm when CNN reported an earthquake of a magnitude around 6.0 in northern California. Initial reports were that damage was light, mainly due to the largely rural area where the quake occurred in the Santa Clara Valley. Given the apparent minimal damage and with no loss of life, it would have minimal impact on the financial markets when

they opened in the morning. Not long after that report, Violet let me know that Gordon DeLisse was on the phone, and I had her transfer the call.

"Hi, Gordon," I said after the call was transferred.

"Hi, Jonathan. Several of our USFL players are looking to invest, but they can't individually meet the minimums. Marvin was wondering if there is any accommodation to be had."

I could, in certain circumstances, waive the minimums, and this seemed to me to qualify, but I'd have to confirm that with Noel Spurgeon.

"I think we can make that work, but I'll need to confirm that internally. If there are any big names, it would help me sell it."

"I can't get you Donald Trump, if that's what you're asking!"

I chuckled, "I don't have a real estate license and don't manage any REITs, so I'll have to stick to players for the team he owns. If Herschel Walker is one of them, I'd say it's a done deal."

"We rep him, but unfortunately, he has someone else handling his investments. The players we rep are on the Generals, Bandits, Express, and Gamblers. The biggest name I can give you is Steve Young, a QB out of Brigham Young. He signed a \$40 million, ten-year deal. I can also put you in touch with J. William Oldenburg, a mortgage banker out West. He owns the Express."

"How much total investment are we talking about from the players?"

"About \$750,000, but you know they have serious potential to increase that in the future."

"Let me take it upstairs, but I believe I can sell it. And yes, I'll take J. William Oldenburg's contact information and an introduction."

"I'll speak to Marvin and have him grease the skids, then give you a call."

"Excellent, thanks. I'll call you by Friday with an answer."

We ended the call, and I called Julie to make an appointment to see Noel Spurgeon. Given his travel plans and schedule, she suggested 7:00am on Thursday morning, and I agreed. Once I ended that call, I asked Pete to come into my office.

"Would you get me as much information about J. William Oldenburg as you can?" I asked.

"The mortgage banker who owns the USFL team in LA?"

"Yes. The sports agent in Cincinnati I'm working with is going to make an introduction. The more I know, the better I'll be able to schmooze and bring him on board."

"I'll get right on it. When do you need it?"

"A couple of days should be fine. If you have it by Friday, that'll work."

"OK. I can do that."

"Thanks, Pete."

He left my office, I wrapped up my work for the day, then headed to Ichirō's house for our monthly dinner. I very much enjoyed our time together and was very happy I could continue the relationship. He did apply subtle pressure about

karate training but didn't press. I responded as I usually did, that time was limited and that exercising at the gym was more my style than karate training.

When I left his house, I headed to the condo, spent time with Bianca and Sofía, then joined Bianca in her bed to sleep.



April 25, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Wednesday morning, I checked Bloomberg and saw the damage estimates for the earthquake were less than \$10 million, and there were minimal injuries. That meant no real effect on the markets. The morning went along as usual, I had lunch with Violet, and we went to the gym together.

I left the office for the 2:00pm hearing about the subpoena for a deposition that Bev's attorneys were trying to enforce. I didn't relish what was going to happen, but I saw no way around it, given their clear intent to have me stripped of my licenses.

When I arrived at the courthouse, I saw Bev with Jack Switzer and an attorney I assumed was Larry Walsh outside the courtroom. She glared at me, and I simply ignored her as I knew I wasn't supposed to talk to her. About a minute later, Gwen arrived, followed shortly after by Thomas Hart. We went into the courtroom, and Bev and her attorneys followed us in.

At 2:00pm, the bailiff called for us to stand, and Judge Bradford entered. He sat down and gavelled the session to order.

"In keeping with a request from the proposed deponent, this hearing will be held *in camera*. The bailiff will clear the courtroom."

Three spectators were quickly escorted from the courtroom, but the fourth one objected.

"Your honor," he said. "Gary Constable, *Chicago Sun Times*. I object on First Amendment grounds."

"Your objection is noted, Mr. Constable, but the local rules permit closed hearings to protect an innocent party from irreparable harm. You may file a request with the Chief Judge to see the transcript, and if that is rejected, pursue the matter through the legal process. Bailiff?"

The reporter was obviously unhappy but didn't resist the bailiff's directions and left of his own accord, with the bailiff locking the door behind him.

"Mr. Hart, are you ready to proceed?" Judge Bradford asked.

"Yes, Your Honor. I ask Miss Beverly Louise Newton be called to the stand and sworn."

"Miss Newton, please take the stand," Judge Bradford ordered.

Bev walked to the witness stand, and the bailiff administered the oath.

"Good afternoon, Miss Newton," Thomas Hart said.

"Hi," Bev replied.

"Miss Newton, did you sign, before a Missouri Notary Public, a series of three documents, namely a general power of attorney, a medical power of attorney, and an assignment of guardianship document?"

"Yes."

"Your Honor, I'll submit these as respondent's exhibits one through three."

He handed them to the bailiff, who handed them to the judge.

"Miss Newton, I hand you a copy of the assignment of guardianship document. Would you please read the fourth paragraph? The one highlighted in yellow?"

Bev frowned but accepted the paper and began reading.

"The guardian shall have full authority to select caregivers for, authorize medical treatment for, travel with, and make all decisions which would normally be made by a custodial parent for, the minor child without reservation or limitation."

"And please read paragraph six, highlighted in orange."

"This guardianship shall come into effect when I am unable, for any reason, to provide daily care for my minor child and shall terminate when I notify the guardian in writing that I am once again able to care for her, or a court of competent jurisdiction shall so order."

"Thank you. Miss Newton, did you, at any time, notify Mr. Kane in writing that his guardianship was terminated?"

"No," Bev admitted grudgingly.

"Did the document contain any restrictions of any kind as to the guardian's choices?"

"No, but..."

"No, will suffice, Miss Newton," Thomas Hart quickly said. "I now direct your attention to the events in Overland Park, Kansas. According to a sworn affidavit, police were called due to your erratic behavior, and you were taken to Overland Park Regional Medical Center for psychiatric evaluation. Is this accurate?"

"Your Honor," the second attorney said, standing up. "Lawrence T. Walsh, attorney for Miss Newton. I would like to confer with my client."

"Objection!" Thomas Hart said immediately. "He is not licensed in Illinois, nor is he admitted *pro hoc vice*."

"Your Honor," Mr. Walsh said, "I am not asking to question my client nor any other witnesses, only to simply confer with her as her attorney in the Ohio matter."

"Mr. Hart?" the judge inquired.

"Per Illinois Supreme Court Rule 707, out-of-state attorneys may not participate in any court proceeding in Illinois without pre-approval from the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission. That includes any activities related to an active case, with the exception the attorney may, by custom, participate in depositions and advise a client during a deposition. They may not do so during any hearings or other proceedings that require an appearance."

"Your Honor," Mr. Switzer said. "We request a brief recess so Mr. Walsh may confer with his client outside the courtroom."

"I continue to object," Mr. Hart said. "The rule does not permit that consultation while the client is testifying, and Mr. Switzer is trying an end-run by having his client and Mr. Walsh step outside the courtroom to do what he is clearly not permitted to do in the courtroom."

"Mr. Hart is correct on the rule," Judge Bradford said. "Mr. Walsh, I'm willing to grant a continuance while you seek permission. To do so, you need to file a verified statement form with me, along with a certificate of good standing from Ohio. I will waive service requirements as Mr. Hart is here.

"Upon receipt of your statement, I will submit it to the ARDC, and they will notify you, usually within three business days of your approval. Once you are approved, the Clerk of Courts will accept your registration and collect the fee. At that point, you may participate.

"Your other option is to have your co-counsel handle the communications for you, but any advice given is his and must be given in his independent judgment and at his sole discretion."

"One moment, please, Your Honor, while we confer," Mr. Switzer requested.

"We'll recess for ten minutes. Miss Newton, please only speak to Mr. Switzer."

He banged the gavel and left the bench. Mr. Switzer and Mr. Walsh moved to a far corner of the courtroom to speak, and Mr. Hart came to speak to me.

"That was just to throw them off kilter," he said. "Obviously, Mr. Walsh can communicate through Mr. Switzer, and that's what they'll do, but my complaint was legitimate."

"You know your business; I know mine. That's why you're here doing what you're doing."

"You have no idea how many clients try to tell their attorneys how to handle their cases."

"True, though I compare it to clients of Spurgeon who try to tell us how to invest. If they want to do that, they can go to Charles Schwab or another retail broker. That really doesn't work for the law."

"You can act as your own attorney, but that is fraught with danger, mostly because you don't know the procedures and rules and don't know how to make a proper legal argument, conduct direct or cross-examination, or properly introduce evidence. Just being logical and truthful is not sufficient to win. And TV is nothing like the real courtroom."

I saw the other attorneys finish their conference, and Jack Switzer went to talk to Bev, with Larry Walsh staying several feet away and being quiet. It really was a silly game, but I trusted Thomas Hart to play the game to win. A few minutes later, the judge returned.

"Mr. Hart, you may continue," he said.

"Directing your attention to that day once again, Miss Newton, you were placed under psychiatric care, were you not?"

"I wasn't on a psychiatric hold," she replied.

"That wasn't my question, Miss Newton - were you under the care of a psychiatrist?"

"Yes," Bev answered grudgingly.

"Where was your daughter at the time?"

"In pediatrics or daycare at the hospital."

"Was she taken into custody by Kansas Family Services or other state or local agency?"

"No."

"Who was she released to?"

"Jonathan and his girlfriend."

That wasn't accurate, but I was sure I'd have my chance to speak.

"Did you raise any objections at all?"

"No. But he..."

"No will be sufficient, Miss Newton," Mr. Hart said. "I now direct you to Antler, North Dakota. Were you taken into custody attempting to help an accused rapist escape to Canada?"

"Objection!" Mr. Switzer said, standing up. "That would require my client to give up her right to self-incrimination in that pending criminal matter."

"Sustained," the judge said.

"Then," Mr. Hart said smoothly, "I move for immediate dismissal of the application for enforcement of the Ohio subpoena. Counsel cannot have it both ways -- insisting on my client answering potentially incriminating open-ended questions while instructing his client to refuse to answer our legitimate inquiries that go to show fitness and mental state and which underpin our belief that the purpose of the deposition is retribution. I reiterate my client's offer to sit for the deposition under a protective order that limits questions that touch on alleged or implied criminal acts."

"Mr. Switzer," Judge Bradford said, "Mr. Hart makes a very good point, and in the interest of fairness, I'm inclined to grant the dismissal. Either instruct your client to answer or accept the limited deposition. If you do neither, I will be forced to dismiss your application with prejudice in this matter."

"One moment while I confer with counsel and my client, please."

"Go ahead."

Mr. Switzer and Mr. Walsh conferred, and then Mr. Switzer conferred with Bev, and from her very angry look, I was positive they were telling her she had no choice but to accept the limited deposition. That could only harm her in my mind because I had more to say about what had happened, including her being under psychiatric care, which I had left out of my original deposition.

"Your Honor," Mr. Switzer said. "We'll accept the limited deposition."

"Then it is so ordered. I will hear arguments on the protective order immediately so as not to delay. Mr. Hart?"

"Yes, Your Honor. Our request is that any and all interactions with any government agency or law enforcement agency be off-limits, including any written or oral communication. In addition, no questions about my client's personal life except for interactions with Miss Newtown, her child, and her family. That limitation would expressly include questions about Miss Clemmons, who is simply a friend, not my client's girlfriend, as Miss Newton inaccurately stated. Thank you."

"Mr. Switzer?"

"We reluctantly agree to the order with regard to the government and law enforcement as well as those about Mr. Kane's personal life outside this matter. We object to the exclusion of Miss Clemmons, as whatever her relationship with Mr. Kane, she was involved in both incidents Mr. Hart raised while questioning my client. In addition, we reserve the right to ask questions about any material facts Mr. Kane provides, no matter what the subject."

"Mr. Hart?"

"One moment, Your Honor."

He came to me and spoke in a low voice.

"Concede the point on Miss Clemmons," he said. "The judge will most likely rule against you anyway because of her participation, and if we simply concede it, we look better."

"OK," I agreed. "Do that."

He returned through the low gate.

"Your Honor," he said, "we'll agree to allow questions about Miss Clemmons. With regard to questions about material facts, we agree, so long as they are directly relevant to the matter at hand and do not touch on the excluded oral statements and documents."

"Then it is so ordered," Judge Bradford declared. "Mr. Hart, you will make your client available for a three-hour evidence deposition within the next seven calendar days. I will not tolerate delays or missed depositions."

"Understood, Your Honor."

"Then the motion to enforce the subpoena is granted, the protective order is granted, and the case is held in abeyance for completion of the deposition, at which time I will close it *sua sponte* on notice from Mr. Switzer."

He banged the gavel and left the bench, and Thomas Hart came to speak to me.

"Are there any weekdays you are absolutely not available?"

"No. Afternoons would be best because they won't interfere as much with my work. Where will it be held?"

"My offices, so we control the venue."

"OK. Just let me know."

"I'll speak to Mr. Switzer now."

He went to confer with the other attorneys and returned about two minutes later.

"They want to do it tomorrow afternoon at 1:00pm because Miss Newton insists on attending."

"That's fine. I can do that."

"Then I'll see you in my office tomorrow at 12:30pm. If that reporter is still here and asks you about the proceeding, refer him to me, please. Don't even give your name."

"OK. Can I ask you about the Latin, I guess it was, the judge used at the end?"

"*Sua sponte* means the judge will act on his own, without a motion or hearing. It's normal in cases such as this and saves everyone time. Mr. Switzer will simply notify the clerk that the deposition is complete, and they'll close the matter."

"Thanks."

The bailiff had unlocked the courtroom, so I left. I didn't see the reporter, so I continued out of the building and headed to the stereo store to buy a more powerful amp, a Compact Disc player, and larger speakers. I spent about thirty minutes speaking with a guy about my age who was very knowledgeable and helped me select the best equipment for the open living space in the condo. In addition to the Compact Disc player, I bought copies of *52nd Street* by Billy Joel, *Let's Dance* by David Bowie, and a disc of music by Chopin.

We loaded all of that into my trunk, and we shook hands. I would still have thirty minutes in the office, so when I headed back to the Hancock Center, I went to the office where I had to break the news to Violet. I called her into my office to do so and shut the door.

"Will they question me?" she asked.

"Maybe, but they'll have to convince the Ohio judge to issue a subpoena. I'm positive Mr. Hart will represent you, and I'll take care of any costs. All you have to do is tell the truth and answer any questions they ask, but we'll use the same limits -- no questions about the government or law enforcement. There is one thing of which you should be aware -- Bev said, under oath, that you're my girlfriend."

"Well," Violet said with a silly smile, "if everyone thinks we're sleeping together, including your mom..."

"My mom?"

"She made a comment about how close we are and how that reminded her of you and Bev."

"That doesn't imply we're sleeping together."

"No, but she said you were uncharacteristically emotional, and if we hadn't resumed our relationship, I should be careful. It was obvious she was implying a *physical* relationship."

"And what did you say?"

Violet smirked, "That I liked it too much to stop!"

I laughed, "Oh, you did not!"

"OK, I didn't!" Violet admitted with a soft laugh. "I simply said that wasn't where we were in our relationship. I thought an outright denial would sound like I was protesting too much, as the saying goes."

"It's my own fault for teasing my mom so much about Glen and now Mitchell. She's just getting even."

"I did like how she pretended to ignore you because of Sofía, and you pretended to be offended. It was cute."

"Mom and I get along really well, and we always found ways to joke and tease, though it changed a bit since I moved out of the house."

"So...girlfriend?" Violet asked with a sly smile.

"Whatever might happen in the future, the last thing we want to do is change the character of our relationship before all of this plays out. You want to be able to say truthfully that we are not, and never have been, lovers."

"And when this is done?"

"Then we'll see where we are. OK?"

"Yes."

She left my office, I reviewed several memos in my 'In' box, and at 5:00pm, made the short commute to the condo.

"How was your day?" I asked Bianca when I walked in.

"I love having Sofía, but I really want to come back to work!"

"I have to leave that decision to you. You tell me what you want, and I'll make it happen."

"Could I come back starting Monday for four hours each day? 8:00am to noon?"

"If that's what you want to do, yes. I'll speak to Mrs. Peterson tomorrow. Come upstairs while I change so I can tell you what happened at the hearing."

Bianca followed me up to my room and closed the door. I related what happened, and that I'd be giving the deposition the following afternoon.

"So, in effect, she wasted time and money, and it ended up the way you wanted."

"Minus being able to ask questions about Violet. Bev kind of telegraphed their plan by calling Violet my girlfriend."

"How could that hurt you?"

"In the case? Not at all. But she knows how protective I am of Violet. And I suspect they'll try to use Violet to elicit testimony they can't get from me due to the protective order. We'll try and head that off, but I'm not sure it's possible. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

"Your attorney seems like a very smart guy."

"He didn't become managing partner of the second-largest law firm in Chicago by being an idiot! He handled it perfectly, and by asking Bev about North Dakota, he put her in a very tough spot. I'm going to state, quite clearly in the deposition, that Bev is guilty of violating the Fugitive Felon Act, though I won't actually use those words."

"Why? You know them."

"I don't want it to appear my attorneys gave me the information. I'll just say what she did and what Glen did. According to Nelson, the rules of evidence don't apply in a deposition, so I'm going to also say what my mom told me the school psychologist at Goshen High, Dorothy Caulfield, said about Bev being schizophrenic. And anything else I can think of that will ensure Heather stays with Jim and Julie until Bev is treated for her obvious psychological problems."

"Can I ask why you're being so vindictive?"

"I'm not," I replied. "First, I'm doing everything I can to protect Heather, who is completely innocent and has been subjected to being dragged all over the country by her unstable mom. Second, I am absolutely sure Bev is going to try to find a way to get a complaint to the SEC, even without my admission. To win that, I have to discredit her as a reliable reporter, and that means approaching

this the way I am. I don't like it, but I'm not going to surrender my licenses because Bev is pissed that I gave Heather to Jim and Julie."

"I can't argue with that. On another topic, Natasha is going to spend the night, right?"

"She did earn her completion bonus!" I declared. "All four installments!"

Bianca laughed, and the two of us left my room to go downstairs for dinner.

LVIII. You Learned an Important Lesson

April 26, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I might just have to modify my rule!" Natasha declared as we got into the shower on Thursday morning.

"I'm glad you enjoyed the extensive oral attention!"

"I cum so much easier from your tongue than fucking, and you had zero qualms of bringing me off with your tongue after you'd cum in me!"

"Is that really a problem?" I asked. "I mean for other guys?"

"Some guys," she replied. "But they also tend to be the ones who think them cumming is the end of it. My first boyfriend wasn't thrilled with kissing me after blowjobs, but he got over it pretty quickly, and I taught him how to pleasure me with his tongue. He did object at first, but I pointed out that if he came and I didn't, I was going to be VERY unhappy. He got the point!"

"Wise!"

"On Sunday, with me on top, I could get myself there, but it was more about you than me. Last night was about me! You acquitted yourself very well!"

"I aim to please," I replied. "It guarantees repeat customers!"

Natasha laughed, "Of that, I have no doubt!"

We finished our showers, dressed, and went downstairs. Natasha stayed for breakfast, and we left the condo together. We parted in the lobby, and I headed to the elevator to take me up to 32 for my meeting with Noel Spurgeon.

"What can I do for you, Kane?"

"MTB asked if we would waive the minimums for a few USFL players, including Steve Young. They offered the emolument of an introduction to J. William Oldenburg, who owns the LA Express and is a mortgage banker with a high net worth. I think we should do it, but I didn't commit to anything other than bringing it to your attention. Gordon did joke about Donald Trump, but all his money is tied up in real estate or the New Jersey Generals."

"He's too much of a loudmouth and too hands-on. He'd threaten to yank his money the minute we did something he didn't like, even if it was the right move. Anyway, can we use the names?"

"That was the implied offer, but I'll lock it down if you agree to waive the minimums."

"How much total?"

"About \$750,000, but Young's contract is \$40 million over ten years, so you know that number is going to go up on his investments alone."

"I thought that \$40 mil was an annuity with a long-term payout," Noel countered. "Not that I'd let that block it, but it might not be as lucrative as you think."

"I should have looked further into that number. I won't let it happen again."

"Don't sweat this one. Approved. Now we just have to hope the league survives. Chicago sure didn't work out for them so far. Blowing that twenty-one-point

lead over the Philadelphia Stars in the playoffs last year, and then the 'franchise swap' that sent all the good players to Arizona has done them in. Their last gasp of trying to sign Payton failed, and they'll be lucky to survive this season."

"I haven't followed the USFL much. MB does rep Herschel Walker, but he has someone handling his investments."

"So go get him, Kane! Ask for an introduction."

"I'll make the request."

"So long as they sign up contingent on having their names used in marketing literature at our discretion, I'll approve the exception. Make sure you get that in writing and have Henderson in legal review it before you sign."

"Will do. Thanks."

"Dismissed!"

I left his office and went down to 29, where I made a pot of coffee and began my daily routine. Pete came in at 7:30 am.

"Stay away from J. William Oldenburg."

"What did you find?"

"There are many questions about his personal finances and his relationship with his firm, Investment Mortgage International Inc. Utah is investigating him for fraud in a land deal, and my contacts tell me that he has a habit of luring S&Ls into questionable deals. More importantly, a friend of mine in San Fran says Oldenburg is overstating his wealth significantly. He also has the Express spending money like drunken sailors, and that is coming out of his own pocket."

"OK. I think to keep MB happy, I need to speak to him, but I'm not going to take money from him. You follow the USFL, right?"

"Yes."

"Steve Young's contract with the Express is \$40 mil over ten years. Do you know how it's structured?"

"That was something I read when I was looking into Oldenburg. It's an annuity with a forty-year payout. So he'll get a million a year for forty years, and given the annuity was paid for, that's guaranteed even if the league ends up not making it. There are attendance problems with several teams, including the Blitz and Express. The Express are drawing around 13,000 per game in the second-biggest market in the US. And the Blitz are doing worse."

"What's the end game?"

"A merger with the NFL similar to the AFL merger in '70. I could see a team like the Generals making it because the market is big enough, and they're drawing well. A few other teams could make it, as well. Heck, last year's Blitz were good enough to play in the NFL, just nobody here cared. If they do merge, I suspect it would be more like the '79 NHL expansion, where four of the six remaining WHA teams joined the NHL, rather than a merger of equals like the AFL/NFL."

"And if not?"

"Then it dies. To achieve the merger of either style, they have to do what the AFL did -- compete for players and put on good games with strong attendance. Part of the USFL's problem is head-to-head markets. That was mostly not the case for the AFL/NFL."

"Your best estimate?"

"It'll fail. I don't see them making it in their current configuration. Maybe if they ditch all the cities with NFL teams and focus on other big cities, they could do it. That's how the AFL operated, except for the Jets being in New York."

"I never followed any of that closely enough to know, and I was born in '63."

"A babe in the woods! Not that I'm all that much older; I was born in '58."

"Thanks for the catch," I said. "You just saved us some potential embarrassment."

"You're welcome! If you do sign Young, I'd appreciate an autographed photo."

"I'll ask!"

"Thanks!"

He left, and I returned to my work on the analyst report. When I finished, I went to see Mrs. Peterson to arrange for Bianca to come back to work part-time. We agreed on the terms, and then I went back to my office.

At 12:15pm, I left the office and walked to the building where Hart-Lincoln had its offices. I was immediately shown into Thomas Hart's office.

"Mr. Walsh is going to conduct the deposition," Thomas Hart said. "As we discussed, that's permitted by the rules. I'll sit with you for the entire session, and both Mr. Walsh and I will ask questions."

"I didn't realize you could do that."

"Judge Bradford expressly said this was an 'evidence' deposition, which means all parties may ask questions. The reason for that is that Miss Newton's attorneys plan to use the deposition in court to impeach your affidavit. The other kind of deposition, a discovery deposition, cannot be used for that purpose."

"OK."

"Remember you'll be under oath, so if you're stating an opinion, be sure to say that. In addition, if Mr. Walsh is a good attorney, which we have to assume he is, he'll be careful not to ask questions that harm his client. I will ask those."

"If Bev hasn't been truthful with him, he may not know where the landmines are," I said.

"Let me warn you now -- do not try to outfox him, do not spar with him, and no matter what happens, keep your cool. Let me do all of that. If you start sparring with him, you may find yourself in an untenable position, and you might open yourself to questions we've put off limits.

"The most important guiding principle in a deposition is that you can never say too little, but you can always say too much. Give the shortest, most succinct answers. Mr. Walsh will expect that and have follow-up questions. Be very careful of open-ended questions. You can't avoid answering them, but I can ask that the scope be narrowed.

"Finally, be careful of multi-part questions. I'll object to those, and Mr. Walsh will have to rephrase. Keep your answers narrow and do your best to limit their scope to the specific question you were asked. If you feel you need to say more, let me know at the breaks we'll take every hour."

"I understand."

"Is there anything specific you want on the record besides Miss Newton's mental instability and erratic behavior?"

"No. Everything else is in the affidavit."

"Last question before we go to the conference room -- what exactly is the nature of your relationship with Miss Clemmons?"

"Very close friends," I replied. "We haven't shared so much as a single romantic kiss. I'll explain to you, but this has to be covered by privilege."

"Of course."

"Her parents raped her older sister, Rose, and locked Violet in a cage while they were doing so after she stumbled upon the abuse. She was under psychiatric care from age fourteen to eighteen and has been seeing a counselor off and on since then. Her psychiatrist warned me that Violet might never be able to consummate a romantic relationship.

"We spent a lot of time together, and she went with me on those trips because she worked in a daycare before going to work for a plumbing company. I hired her from there as my administrative assistant. Every Saturday, I have breakfast with her before class and usually have lunch with her after class. And she comes to gatherings at my house. But, as I said, no physical intimacy of any kind."

"OK. I assume Miss Clemmons will testify to that?"

"Absolutely. If she is deposed, I'd like you to represent her, and I'll cover the fees."

"You'll both need to waive conflict of interest in that case."

"No problem. If it comes down to her or me, protect her, and we'll figure out how to proceed."

"OK. There will be a court reporter in the room, along with both attorneys and Miss Newton. I will also have a paralegal to take notes. Do you object to having my granddaughter as the paralegal?"

"Not at all. She's a sweet girl, but you know the issue."

"All too well. Shall we?"

We got up and went to the conference room, and Thomas Hart indicated where I should sit, which was to his left, with Kayleigh to his right and the court reporter at the end of the table. A minute later, a young man brought in Mr. Switzer, Mr. Walsh, and Bev."

"We'll go on record," Thomas Hart said, then nodded to the two attorneys.

"Good afternoon," Mr. Switzer said. "I am Jacob Switzer. With me is Lawrence Walsh, an attorney licensed in Ohio, and our client, Miss Beverly Louise Newton. We are here to depose Jonathan Edward Kane in the matter of custody of H.N., a minor, pending in Clermont County Family Court in Ohio.

"Good morning. I am Thomas Hart, counsel for the deponent, Jonathan Edward Kane. Also in the room are Court Reporter Wendy Carr and Kayleigh O'Connor, paralegal with Hart-Lincoln. This is an evidentiary hearing being conducted under an order of protection with specific areas declared off-limits as stipulated by both parties.

"Pursuant to Illinois rules, Miss Newton is permitted to attend the deposition but may not speak on the record. She is, of course, free to consult with counsel. Mr. Switzer and Mr. Walsh, you may proceed."

"Thank you, Counselor," Mr. Switzer said. "My colleague, Mr. Walsh, will conduct the deposition pursuant to the customary practice whereby out-of-state attorneys may take depositions.

LW: "State your full name, address, and occupation, please.

JK: Jonathan Edward Kane; 175 East Delaware Place, #9201, Chicago, Illinois; Head of Research for Spurgeon Capital here in Chicago."

LW: I hand you your sworn affidavit. Will you attest that your signature is affixed?

JK: It is.

LW: I direct your attention to page 3, line 40.

JK: OK. I have it. The first mention of my trip to Kansas.

LW: Did you travel to Overland Park, Kansas alone?

JK: No.

LW: Who did you travel with?

JK: Miss Violet Clemmons.

LW: And your relationship with Miss Clemmons

JK: She's a friend.

LW: Would you clarify that, please?

JK: There's nothing to clarify. She's a friend.

LW: She's not your girlfriend?

JK: No.

LW: Have you ever been intimate with her?

JK: No.

BN: BULLSHIT!

TH: Objection. Counselor, control your client, or I will insist she be removed.

LW: Bev, please. You cannot speak while we are on the record.

BN: Fine.

LW: On that trip, did you have adjoining rooms?

JK: We did.

LW: And was the door between them open for the entire night?

JK: It was.

LW: I now direct your attention to your affidavit, page 8, line 6.

JK: I have it. My stay at the InterContinental Hotel in Minneapolis.

LW: Did Miss Clemmons accompany you on that trip?

JK: She did.

LW: And you shared a room, did you not?

JK: A suite with separate bedrooms.

LW: Would you please explain why, in your entire affidavit, there is no mention of Miss Clemmons?

JK: Because I didn't want Bev vindictively going after Violet when Violet had done nothing wrong.

LW: Move to strike as non-responsive.

TH: You asked the question, Counselor, and my client gave an honest answer.

LW: Mr. Kane, have you ever spent the night at Miss Clemmons house?"

JK: Yes, after my wife died of leukemia when I needed time away. I slept in a guest bedroom.

LW: Did you recently hire Miss Clemmons to work at Spurgeon Capital?

JK: Yes, as my administrative assistant.

LW: Is it true that secretaries at Spurgeon are expected to sleep with their bosses?

TH: Objection. There is no foundation and no basis for that question, and it is outside the scope of your permitted questions.

LW: Miss Newton has given a sworn statement to that effect, and it implicates Mr. Kane's relationship with Miss Clemmons.

TH: Jonathan, please answer.

JK: There are rumors to that effect, but I have never personally witnessed any improper relationships between secretaries and their bosses.

Which was true as far as it went, as I didn't actually know anything was going on, though the evidence implied it was.

LW: Have you had intimate relations with any administrative staff at Spurgeon Capital

TH: Objection. That question violates the order of protection concerning my client's personal relationships except for your client, her family, and Miss Clemmons. Jonathan, do NOT answer.

LW: For the record, I believe the question is relevant, and Mr. Kane opened himself to answering when he admitted to hiring Miss Clemmons.

TH: You are welcome to call Judge Bradford and make your argument.

JS: Off the record, please.

Mr. Switzer and Mr. Walsh stepped out of the room and came back about two minutes later.

JS: "We're on the record again. We withdraw the question.

LW: Mr. Kane, did you ever have a discussion with my client about giving Heather to my client's parents?

JK: Yes.

LW: When was that?

JK: While driving back to Chicago from Overland Park.

LW: And what was her response?"

JK: She objected vehemently, but I told her quite clearly that I would do that if she refused to seek counseling for what I felt was mental illness."

TH: "What made you think Miss Newton was mentally ill?"

LW: Objection! Your client is not qualified to make that assessment.

TH: You opened the door, Counselor. My client simply stated an opinion. Jonathan, please answer and be expansive.

JK: Her completely erratic behavior, starting with when she dropped out of college, left home, and traveled to St. Louis. Then, she left a good job and a stable home environment with friends in St. Louis and landed in Overland Park. There, she was acting so erratically that the motel clerk called the police, who found her to be

hysterical and irrational, and transported her to the hospital, where she was placed under psychiatric care. Her attorney at the time attributed it to what he called postpartum depression, but after further erratic behavior in Chicago and after her arrest, Dorothy Caulfield at Goshen High suggested Bev might be schizophrenic."

BN: THAT'S A LIE YOU ASSHOLE!

TH: Mr. Walsh, control your client. If there is another outburst, I will end this deposition, and you can take it up with Judge Bradford.

LW: Bev, PLEASE be quiet. Mr. Hart, I suggest a ten-minute break.

TH: Agreed. We are off the record.

Bev and her attorneys went to a small conference room that had been set aside for them, and I followed Thomas Hart to his office.

"I don't think she'll be able to keep quiet, Tom," I said.

"I suspect you're right. She did herself no good and may have ruined her case. They certainly won't be able to use the deposition if her outbursts are there."

"How could they not be?"

"They'll try to exclude them from the final copy because they weren't questions asked of you or responses from you. I won't agree to that unless you instruct me to. I'd advise against it, but it's up to you. If they are left in, it'll be up to the judge in Ohio to decide whether to exclude them or not. We can ensure they are in the record by sending your deposition to the attorney representing Bev's parents,

who can give it to Family Services. It all depends on whether you still want 'scorched earth' or not."

"They're going after Violet, and she is completely innocent in every meaning of that word. To use the term in the Spurgeon training manual about how to deal with competition -- *sine missione*."

Thomas Hart nodded, "No quarter. Let me ask you this as a friend, and I hope I can call you that."

"You can."

"Are you positive you want her to lose custody of her daughter?"

"Certainly in the short term, yes. If she gets counseling, no. As I said, this would all end if Bev simply reconciled with her parents and sought counseling. Her parents would help her, she'd be with Heather and would regain custody in short order, assuming the counseling was successful.

"I never knew Bev to be irrational growing up, nor did she ever act erratically. Something happened after she had her affair with Glen Rodgers. Maybe it's just the stress of an unplanned pregnancy with her teacher; maybe it's what Mr. Chojnicki said -- postpartum depression. Maybe it is mental illness, as Mrs. Caulfield suggested, though I hope not. But in the end, she was putting Heather in danger, and I couldn't allow that."

"What is that little girl to you?"

"The daughter of my best friend growing up," I said. "I was with Bev when she gave birth, and I bonded with Heather. I also can relate, given I'm the child of a single mom who was kicked out of her religious parents' house for getting pregnant at age fifteen."

"I think I understand a bit better, and I also understand your difficulty with religious people."

"They're fine so long as they leave me alone."

"I'm with you on that one. Do you need the restroom before we return?"

"No."

We returned to the conference room and sat down, and about a minute later, Bev and her lawyers came in. She was looking daggers at me, and I was positive that very shortly, she'd lose it again.

TH: We are back on the record. Jonathan, can you tell us what you did to try to help Bev?

JK: I brought her to Chicago, found her a place to live, covered her expenses, and helped her get a job.

TH: Why did she leave Chicago?

JK: Because her husband, Glen Rodgers, was accused of multiple counts of statutory rape in Ohio. It is my opinion she fled with him and attempted to help him escape across the border to Canada.

BN: YOU LYING BASTARD! THAT'S NOT TRUE! YOU LIED TO THE GOVERNMENT! YOU KIDNAPPED HEATHER!

TH: Let the record reflect a third outburst by Miss Newton. This deposition is terminated.

JS: Tom, if Miss Newton agrees to leave the room, can we continue?

JK: I'm OK with that.

TH: Then yes, we'll agree.

BN: SO YOU CAN LIE BEHIND MY BACK INSTEAD OF TO MY FACE?
FUCK YOU, JONATHAN! NO!

TH: This deposition is terminated. We are off the record.

Bev looked like she might leap across the table and attack me, and I felt my best option was to simply stay seated.

"Larry, would you take Bev out," Jack Switzer requested.

Mr. Walsh managed to get Bev to stand up and leave the room with him, though she looked daggers at me the whole way.

"Tom, I'm sorry," Jack Switzer said. "She promised she'd behave."

"I'd advise a complete psychological assessment," Thomas Hart said. "I'll walk you out. Kayleigh, would you please escort Jonathan to my office?"

She agreed, and we got up and walked to her grandfather's office.

"She needs help," Kayleigh said quietly.

"I've been encouraging that for over a year."

"How have you been otherwise?"

"Fine, thanks. You?"

"Fine. I just wish there was a solution to what we discussed. My grandfather thinks you're a great guy, and I agree."

"You know the problem," I said.

"Yes, I do. I just...no, never mind. Here comes my grandfather."

She walked away, and Thomas Hart came into his office.

"Now what?" I asked.

"That's probably it for you. I'm positive Jack will drop her as a client because she's unstable and irrational. She could have had this deposition if she'd agreed to the terms, and they were very likely onto something with regard to you and Violet, even if it was just to impeach your affidavit."

"How so?"

"Your initial feelings of wanting to give Bev a chance to win her custody dispute caused you to give incomplete information in the affidavit. You didn't lie, but they'd show you purposefully left out key details, and they would use that to try to impugn your character. It was a good gambit that might have swayed the judge in Ohio had Miss Newton not lost control of herself."

"Could I get in trouble for leaving out that information?"

"No. Nothing you wrote was false; you simply omitted what you felt was irrelevant information. It's only actually relevant to try to impeach your affidavit. I suspect they had other questions, and they might well have tried to find someone at Spurgeon with whom you did have a relationship."

"Bev knows about a secretary I dated briefly."

"Did she work for you?"

"No, but we were on the FX Desk together."

"They'd have tried to use that to impeach you as well, doing their best to imply you and Miss Clemmons were lying. Again, not particularly damning in the scheme of things, but important to rebut the affidavit. They had a good strategy, but their client ruined it. Remember what I said yesterday in court? A client can wreck things very easily if they don't listen to their attorney."

"What will happen with the court case?"

"That was what I wanted to speak to Jack about. He'll notify the judge that the deposition was taken and leave it at that. Mr. Walsh has no standing nor any ability to challenge that ruling without going to the judge to seek permission, and if he does that, he's likely to make Judge Bradford very angry because of what happened today. Making a judge angry never goes well."

"Thank you for your assistance, as well as the basic legal education. The most important thing I learned is that I know just enough about how it works to get myself in serious trouble!"

Thomas Hart nodded, "Then you learned the most important lesson."

"I need to get back to the office. Thanks again."

"Don't mention it. Just keep generating those fantastic returns."

He walked me to reception, where we shook hands. I thanked him again, then used the elevator to take me to the lobby. From there, I walked back to the Hancock Center.

The rest of the day was typical, and at 5:00 pm, I went up to the condo to see Bianca and Sofía, though I was having dinner at Jeri's house with our group. When I walked in, Sofía had just finished nursing, so I took the opportunity to hold her.

"Everything is set for Monday," I said. "Your salary will be pro-rated until you're back full-time, but you'll still accrue your vacation and sick days at the usual rate."

"Excellent! If I can convince our darling daughter to only wake up once during the night, I'll be able to come back full-time. Until then, I still need an afternoon nap. You seem to manage."

"Because as soon as you get back into bed with the little leech on your breast, I fall back asleep!"

Bianca laughed, "It does seem like that at times! She's a hungry little thing!"

"How will you handle feeding her while working half days?"

"I bought a breast pump, so I'll express milk before I come to work. If she needs more, then Chelsea will give her a bottle of formula. I'm not opposed to formula, but breast milk is better for Sofía."

I held my daughter for about ten minutes, but she didn't fall asleep, so I handed her back to Bianca, then left for my dinner with Jeri's group. As usual, Karl showed me in, but this time, Pete was there ahead of me, so Jeri and I didn't have

a chance to talk privately about Marcia. Once everyone else had arrived. Jeri announced that Marcia wouldn't be attending in the future.

We had our usual excellent meal and good conversation, and at the end of the meal, when we adjourned to the drawing room, Allyson pulled me aside.

"Mind if I come to see Sofía and the condo when we're done?" Allyson inquired.

"And then you'll go back to Loyola?" I asked with a grin.

Allyson laughed softly, "If that's what will happen, I can wait for the housewarming on the 13th. Obviously, if you aren't in the mood, I'll just have James take me back to Loyola, and I won't be upset."

I considered it, knowing that Allyson was one of the least demanding, most mellow girls I knew, who had not been upset when I'd suggested we didn't click well enough to be a couple. I knew exactly how I could make her day.

"I think I'd like to have the *much better* sister come home with me tonight!"

Allyson smiled and winked, and we joined the others in the drawing room. We spent about forty minutes with the group before saying 'good night', then Allyson and I left, with Allyson telling Jeri I would get her home. Twenty minutes later, we walked up the steps from the parking garage to the elevators and got in.

"What floor is the Sky Lobby?" Allyson asked after we got into the elevator."

"44th," I said. "We switch to a local elevator there. There's an indoor pool on that floor, too; the highest one in the US measured from ground level."

"No way!"

"Just wait until you see the condo."

We changed elevators, and I pressed the button for the 91st floor. The elevator whisked us up, and we stepped out. I let us into the condo, and Allyson stopped dead in her tracks.

"That view!" she gaped. "Wow!"

"Hey Allyson!" Bianca exclaimed. "Want to see Sofía?"

"Hey Bianca! Yes!"

We walked over to Bianca, who was sitting in the conversation pit, and Allyson sat down next to her.

"Oh my God, she's sooo cute!" Allyson gushed.

"And the future doctor turns into a twelve-year-old girl!" Deanna teased.

Bianca allowed Allyson to hold Sofía for a few minutes, then Allyson handed her to me, and I sat down with the girls.

"She's much more aware," I said. "And it's only been two weeks."

"Babies sleep most of the time," CeCi observed. "Something like eighteen hours when they're newborn, but they wake up every few hours. By the time she's six months old, she'll sleep through the night, but some babies do that around four months. The thing is, an eight-hour stretch means if she goes down at 8:00pm she's awake at 4:00 am. It can take some time to shift that to coincide with your sleep schedule."

"How did you learn so much?" Bianca asked.

"I babysat from the time I was twelve, including infants."

Just then, Sofía yawned, something I hadn't seen before.

"She yawned!" I exclaimed.

"And she snores, too!" Bianca said. "But it's soft, almost like a cat purring. Why don't you give her to me, and you can give Allyson a tour."

I carefully handed my daughter back to Bianca, then gave Allyson a full tour, ending in the Master bedroom.

"This is unbelievable! I know this is totally out of line to ask, but how much do you make a year?"

"This year, it'll be north of \$300,000 in commissions and bonuses. Next year, it'll be closer to \$400,000."

"Not to be mercenary, but I wouldn't mind a sugar daddy paying for medical school!"

"All kidding aside, how much does medical school cost?"

"It's actually not that bad -- about \$8,000 a year. Dad can afford it, so we won't have to borrow money. But even if I did have to borrow, \$32,000 in debt isn't terrible. It'll cost Kristy about the same for three years of law school, though she'll make way more money when she graduates than I will. The bucks for doctors don't come until you're an Attending. Interns don't get paid much, but each year of Residency, your salary goes up."

"Before we start, do I need to get you back to Loyola in the morning?"

"I'd appreciate it, but the easiest would be to call a car service and have them pick me up at 7:00 am."

"I can do that. Let me get the Yellow Pages and make the call. I'll be right back."

I went downstairs and got the Yellow Pages from the cabinet above the phone, looked up limo services, and called Chicago Livery, the company Jeri used. I arranged for a Town Car to pick up Allyson at 7:00am outside the lobby of the building, then went back upstairs, where I found her in bed.

"All set," I said. "7:00am outside the lobby. It's pre-paid, including tip."

"I'd like the tip...and the whole shaft!" she declared.

I undressed, quickly brushed my teeth, emptied my bladder, then joined Allyson in bed.



April 27, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I really enjoyed last night," Allyson said when we got into the shower on Friday morning. "But you were gentle and loving, which is something of a change. Not a bad thing, just different."

"I suspect it's not obvious, except maybe to Bianca, Deanna, or Violet, but I'm having serious mood swings, and I'm still trying to sort out the best path forward."

"This will sound self-serving, but I think you need to take some time before you start any kind of committed relationship."

"I don't disagree with you. In fact, my current thinking -- and I don't expect this to change -- is that I won't remarry."

"That's a pretty radical decision. Don't you think it's the emotions from losing Keiko?"

"I'm sure that's part of it, but she's my wife, and, as illogical as it might sound, I don't want anyone else to fill that role with that title. It's also the case that I promised her that when my time comes, I'll be cremated and interred next to her at Montrose Cemetery. My name is already engraved on the stele, though painted red to indicate I'm still living."

"That seems out of character for you," Allyson said. "You don't believe in life after death or any kind of eternity or soul or anything like that."

"I know. Keiko expressed the hope that someday, somehow, we could see each other again. I think that's improbable in the extreme, but being interred next to her just feels right. It honors her and her family, and to me, that's important."

"And that commitment would create challenges in any future relationship."

"Not to mention the baby you were fawning over last night!"

"That does certainly create complications. What you're saying seems to make some amount of sense, though your feelings may change over time."

"I don't disagree, but nobody should count on them changing."

"Then I'm going to ask for something that is only possible in that kind of future -- we agree to be occasional lovers until one of us is in a committed relationship,

and after, if those relationships don't last. Once a month after Jeri's dinners? Or another time if our lives interfere with getting together as a group?"

"You're thinking about when your schedule is like Perry's?"

"Ninety-plus hour weeks with barely any sleep due to thirty-six-hour shifts. Having a casual lover will be perfect because a relationship will be nigh-on-impossible. I'm not sure how Shelly does it."

"By adapting her sleep schedule to when Perry is not on shift. She just has to manage her classes."

"So, interested in getting into a *very* tight spot once a month or so for the foreseeable future?"

"I can see my way clear to do that!"

We finished our shower, dressed, then went downstairs to have breakfast.

"Jonathan," Bianca said. "Did you see the calendar?"

"No. Why?"

"CeCi's shifts changed now that the semester is over. She's on both Friday and Saturday evenings, starting tonight. She was going to let you know last night, but you brought a friend home!"

"Did I block her?" Allyson asked.

"No," I replied. "She's my regular Friday date, which was true while Keiko was alive as well, though it was purely platonic. Keiko insisted I go out with Jack, and CeCi was my regular companion."

We ate breakfast, and at about 6:50 am, Allyson and I left the condo and took the elevators down to the lobby.

"Good morning, Mr. Kane," Terrance, the morning doorman, said. "Miss Crowley's car is here."

"Thank you, Lawrence."

Allyson and I hugged, and Terrance escorted her out to the waiting car. I headed to the business elevators, rode up to 29, checked with Rich, then went to the Research office to begin my day. After making coffee, I turned on the Bloomberg terminal and began working.

Later that morning, I received notification that the final transfer from the investors Thomas Hart had brought to me had been received, and I performed my usual rebalancing of my portfolio. Once that was complete, I called Gordon at MTB Sports Management.

"We can waive the minimums for all the players," I said. "All the other conditions apply, including the lockup and the fees, and in exchange for waiving the minimums, we'd need to be able to include payer names in marketing materials."

"I'll confirm that with Marvin, but I'm sure he'll be OK with that. He did place the call to J. William Oldenburg, who is expecting your call. Let me give you his private number."

I'd have to find a way to *not* do business with Mr. Oldenburg without upsetting MTB.

"Thanks," I said after writing it down and repeating it back. "I do have one favor to ask. One of my guys is a huge USFL fan. Could you arrange an autographed photo of Steve Young?"

"I'll do you one better -- an autographed game-worn jersey and an autographed football."

"That will make his day! I'll have Violet send you copies of the new account form by Federal Express for Monday delivery."

"Thanks, Jonathan. I'll have the memorabilia to you by Friday of next week."

"I appreciate it."

"We rep some Reds and Bengals players, so I can get you anything you want from either team."

"Thanks. I'll keep that in mind."

We ended the call, and I returned to work while thinking of who to call to be my date for the evening.

LIX. True Confession

April 28, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Thanks for inviting me out last night with Jack and Kristy," Deanna said as she stretched then snuggled close on Saturday morning.

"Unfortunately, I need to get out of bed so I can have breakfast with Violet and go to class."

"You don't mind if I stay in bed, do you?"

"Not at all."

"I'll change the sheets when I get up," she said.

"Thanks."

I took a quick shower, dressed, then drove to Violet's house for breakfast.

"How long will it be before the situation with Bev is resolved?"

"That's up to Family Court in Ohio," I replied. "I think, at this point, we're no longer involved. It would be nearly impossible for Bev to subpoena either of us now. It would go back to Judge Bradford, and I suspect he would not be at all receptive to such a request. After what happened, I'm not sure they could get the Ohio judge to issue one for you because to do so, they'd have to show him the deposition results, and I'm pretty sure that would not go well at all."

"She really does need help. I can't believe how she acted at the deposition. She was always a bit flakey, but that was not something I would have expected."

"Me, either, though I had a hint from the last phone call we had where she called me names because I did what I promised her I would do."

"Give Heather to Bev's parents."

"Exactly. You were there when I said it, and she didn't revoke the guardianship documents."

"She and Glen married, so wouldn't that give him some kind of rights? Not to mention being her biological dad?"

"Yes, and last I heard, he was trying to challenge the guardianship documents, but that's between him, Bev, and the State of Ohio. I'm safe because I had no reason to believe the guardianship document wasn't valid. Remember, she and Glen married back in November without telling any of us."

"This whole thing is crazy!"

"I know," I replied. "And I can't help but think it could have been prevented."

"It's not your fault, Jon!" Violet declared.

"So it's 'Jon' now, is it?" I asked.

"Oh! Sorry! I didn't know you didn't like it."

"I usually go by my full name because that's what my mom always used, and I actually like it. Bev called me 'Jonny', which started around the time she was in kindergarten. I don't mind if you call me Jon."

"You know it's not your fault, right?"

"I know I can trace the start of the sequence to something I did. Part of me says that if I were able to go back and change it, I should. But part of me says that if I did that, my life would be so different as to be unrecognizable."

"You like your life, right?"

"With the exception of the situation with Bev, I do. Sure, I've made other mistakes, but it's impossible to go through life without making mistakes. And now, I need to finish eating so I can help you clean up before I go to class."

Twenty minutes later, after helping Violet clean up, I was sitting in class waiting for Professor Baum to begin his lecture on the history of money, something I would have thought would have been done at the beginning of the semester. I knew the general outline, but he filled in a number of gaps, concluding with the issuance of 'fiat' currencies and them becoming the dominant currency type.

I was no 'gold bug', but I did understand the nature of 'fiat' currencies and the fact that monetary inflation was limited only by the political will of what the British Press called the government of the day. There were some controls in place, but those controls could easily be overridden, and even a sound currency such as the dollar could flounder, similar to the Bolivar, or fail, similar to the Deutsche Mark of Weimar Germany.

In the end, though, the job I did depended on the liquidity of the dollar, which meant the Federal Reserve needed the flexibility to increase the money supply without having to acquire additional gold reserves. In my business, gold and silver were just commodities, similar to oil or grain. For me, they were, in effect, just another thing to be traded with no intrinsic value.

When class ended, I returned to Violet's house to have lunch. After lunch, I went back to the condo to spend a few hours with Bianca and Sofía.

"There was a call for you about twenty minutes ago," Bianca said when I walked in. "Kayleigh O'Connell."

"Did she say what she wanted?"

"No. She just asked that you call her."

"I'm not sure what to think about that, given the situation," I said. "She did speak to me briefly on Thursday, and it seemed like she had something to say, but then her grandfather returned. I suppose I should call her."

"Before you do, I had something I wanted to mention now that it's just the two of us here."

"Three!" I counted.

Bianca laughed, "Technically correct, but I doubt Sofía is going to care about the conversation."

"What's up?"

"In her spare time, which she has now because I'm not working, Chelsea has been reading her Bible."

I shrugged, "So? I mean, unless she's reading it *to* Sofía, I couldn't possibly care less. Do you think she intends to do that?"

"I have no idea. I just thought I'd mention it."

"OK. I'm not going to worry about it any more than I was concerned because her CV, as the agency called it, said she had extensive experience that included the church nursery and babysitting for people from her church. Seriously, if people want to believe those fables, they're free to do so. That said, trying to snare my kid into them is a different story altogether."

"Should I mention it?"

"Not unless something else happens. I mean, if she gives Sofía a book of Bible stories or something like that, then yes, by all means, say something. But I'm not going to lose any sleep because our nanny goes to church and reads her Bible. Or do you disagree?"

"I don't, I just wanted to make sure you knew."

"I appreciate it. Let me return the call, then I'll come sit with you and Sofía until I need to leave for my date with Alexa."

I went up to my room to make the call.

"Hi, it's Jonathan," I said when she answered.

"Hi. I wondered if you would want to get coffee and talk."

"Not to be rude, but nothing has changed on my side."

"I know, but...well, would you meet me for coffee? I promise it's not to try to convert you or anything like that."

"How about tomorrow afternoon around 3:00pm at the diner on Taylor just east of Aberdeen?"

"I'll see you there. Thanks."

"You're welcome."

After we said 'goodbye' and I hung up, I went downstairs and sat next to Bianca, who was nursing Sofia.

"Does that kid do anything except eat?" I asked with a smirk.

"I know, right?" Bianca said. "But I like nursing her. You can hold her when she finishes eating. What did Kayleigh want?"

"To have coffee. We're meeting tomorrow at 3:00pm. I'm not sure what she wants."

"I do!" Bianca exclaimed.

"Given she's a devout Catholic and made the point that she agrees with all Catholic doctrine, that would be completely off-limits without a ring and a wedding dress."

"Right, because Zappa was wrong when he sang *Catholic Girls!*"

"Some, I'm sure, because I've met them! But I've also met devout ones and ones who are in between. She did say it wasn't about converting me, but I'm positive that was so that I didn't think she was doing something like ambushing me by bringing her priest. Remember, she suggested I meet him. In any event, if it keeps Thomas Hart happy, it's worth a few hours of my time."

"How far would you go to keep him happy?"

"Not *that* far! And he actually promised it wouldn't affect our relationship. But I'm not one to leave things to chance if I have a *reasonable* way of nudging them in the direction I want them to go. And even if he's determined not to let it affect the relationship, an unhappy granddaughter might well affect things, even if he's said they won't."

"Hedging your bets, as it were?"

"Yes. Making the effort, despite the gulf between us, sends the right message."

"Changing subjects, it's strange having this huge place with only three of us here."

"Jack and Kristy no longer live with us, and Deanna has her studio at Ateljé D, where she'll spend a lot of time. And with CeCi working evenings, there will be quite a bit of time when it's just you, me, and Sofía. Are you still interested in a double date with Meg and Nicole, if they're interested?"

"Yes. Maybe next Friday, the four of us with Jack and Kristy, if that won't cause any trouble."

"It won't. I was fortunate Deanna was available last night."

"I was surprised you didn't call one of the other girls."

"Most of them are seeing someone either committed or casual, so calling Friday afternoon was a crapshoot, and I didn't want any of them to cancel their plans, especially the ones who wanted an exclusive relationship with me before Keiko and I became a couple."

"I suppose that makes sense, given you have all your art students! Why don't you call Meg and see if they're free?"

"Sounds good!"

I got up and went to the kitchen and dialed Meg's dorm and was fortunate to find her in her room.

"Are you and Nicole free on Friday, May 11th?" I asked.

"Absolutely! What did you have in mind?"

"A triple date - Jack and Kristy; you and me; Nicole and Bianca."

"Bianca?! What happened to Juliette?"

"She decided she didn't want to live with a baby full-time."

"I can see that, but nine months later? Tacky."

"People change. Can you and Nicole get to the lobby of the Hancock Center at 5:15pm that Friday?"

"Absolutely! Looking forward to it!"

"Me, too!"

After saying 'goodbye', I hung up and went back to sit with Bianca and Sofía. Sofía had finished nursing, so Bianca handed her to me.

"We're set for a week from Friday," I said. "This Friday is the gallery opening."

"We just have to be home by midnight," Bianca said.

"Yes, of course. I've been taking this young lady into consideration for so many things."

Sofía fell asleep, and I carried her up to the nursery and put her in her crib. I checked that the intercom was on, then went back downstairs to spend another thirty minutes with Bianca before leaving for my date.

Just before 4:30pm, I arrived at Northwestern and saw Alexa in front of her dorm, so I pulled to the sidewalk, and she got into the car.

"Hi!" she exclaimed. "Where are we going?"

"Golden Bull in Chinatown or Star of Siam are both good options, given you're not twenty-one."

"I swear, the buttinskies are out of control! Wisconsin is still nineteen, but I bet that doesn't last due to pressure from Illinois and Washington, DC."

"You're probably right. Which place?"

"Thai sounds good."

"Thai it is."

I pulled away from the curb and headed south.

"How much has Sophie told you about me?" I asked.

"Believe it or not, not much. I know you're from Ohio, you're a financial analyst and stockbroker, and you're Deanna Haight's patron. Deanna told me about your wife, which I mentioned during a modeling session. Sophie and Ivy gave you

rave reviews, but you already know Sophie didn't let on about your anatomy. Where do you live?"

"I just moved to a condo at 175 East Delaware Place, north of the Loop. Before that, a house in Rogers Park. I was living in an apartment in Bridgeport when I met Sophie. Did she tell you how we met?"

"Your date walked out on you because Sophie did the usual Ed Debevic's schtick."

"That was the sequence of events, but even before that date, I was questioning whether I should continue to see her. I had pretty much decided to end things, and during dinner, things came to a head. When we finished eating, I suggested we should end the date and she got up and walked out. The funny thing was that after Sophie had flirted with me, my date suggested Sophie would give me her number if I asked. I suspect you know what happened."

"Sophie asked you out, and the next evening, she showed up with a bottle of Jack. Later, she introduced Ivy and Deanna. And that's really all I know. How did you get to be a stockbroker by age twenty-one?"

I told her the story, finishing just as I parked in the Rush Street lot about a block from Star of Siam.

"So when you met Sophie, you were still working in the mailroom?" Alexa asked as we got out of the car.

"I had just been promoted to supervisor at that point. What about you?"

"There isn't really much to tell. Grew up in Naperville, went to Naperville Central, was on the school newspaper, was in the top 5% of my class, and enrolled at Northwestern."

"Why the modeling gig?"

"Sophie dared me because I was basically the opposite of her in High School, and Deanna encouraged me. I think that was before she asked you."

"Yes, because you had accepted by the time she asked me. What did you do in High School?"

"Sophie was the party animal, while I preferred walking the Prairie Path or in a forest preserve or hanging out with my friends downtown or at the Riverwalk."

We walked into the restaurant and were immediately shown to a booth.

"Why did you agree to pose?" Alexa asked after the waitress took our drink orders.

"When the original model dropped out, Deanna asked, and after giving it some thought, I agreed because I wanted to help her. I did have a chuckle about you being Sophie's sister."

"Would you do it again?"

"I did volunteer to model for Claire's Saturday adult class in the Fall. She said she was going to ask you, too."

"She did, and I agreed. You're posing for Britney, right?"

"Yes. And CeCi Forsythe, who is one of my housemates, along with Deanna and Bianca."

"Bianca has a girlfriend, right?"

"Did. They broke up because her girlfriend decided she couldn't handle living with a baby. I'll say it's an interesting experience so far!"

"So, you got to live out the male fantasy of screwing the lesbian?" Alexa asked with a smirk.

"Bianca is bisexual. I never really understood that fantasy. Someone suggested it's because guys think all lesbians need is a good screwing to turn straight, which makes zero sense. I mean, they don't think gay guys will turn straight if they screw a girl."

"Men are pigs. Well, not all, but enough. Try being a good-looking teenage girl sometime, and you'll find out."

"You're the second person I've heard that from in the past week."

Which tended to confirm the rumors about the guys at Spurgeon who went after teenage girls, not to mention Glen's obvious predilection for High School girls, including Freshmen."

"I know some girls who like older guys, but mostly that's guys in college, not guys old enough to be their dad. You're about three years older than me, which is about right."

"What are you looking for?"

"I thought that was blatantly obvious!" Alexa declared.

The waitress returned to take our orders, then left to put them in with the kitchen.

"I believe you know what I meant," I said with a smile. "Are you looking for a boyfriend? A husband? A fling?"

"A husband?! Are you out of your gourd?! I need to graduate from college first, at least!"

"I was just listing the possibilities! I'll cross that one off the list!"

Alexa laughed, "Cute. I'm not making any long-term plans with anyone or about anything except finishing my degree. Everything else, I just take one day at a time and see where things go."

"Not to disrespect Keiko, but that's what happened with her. We met, began seeing each other, and taking each day as it came led to us marrying. That said, there is the question of whether you and I will see each other regularly, irregularly, or if this is just a single date."

"Do we have to answer that now? Can't we just worry about today and let tomorrow worry about itself?"

"Yes, of course. I think my caution comes from dating a few girls who had the idea that moving beyond kissing was a commitment to at least an exclusive relationship."

"Did you sleep with any of them?"

"One, because I didn't understand she felt that way until after we'd been together, and the way she had behaved before didn't imply it at all."

"I think a lot of girls assume it does and think guys should understand that."

"Deanna suggested that there are three basic types -- the ones who have to be virgins on their wedding night; ones who will have sex with a steady boyfriend or fiancé; ones who think no commitments are necessary."

"That sounds about right. For guys, I think most would fall into the third category, but there are some guys who are in the other groups. The way I see it, it's responding to the risks -- girls risk getting pregnant and all the crap that goes along with that. Guys don't have that risk."

"Child support?"

"OK, sure, it costs them money, but they don't have to actually be involved in any way, and it doesn't mess up school or work or whatever, and there is zero stigma. It's also impossible to tell if a guy fathered a kid out of wedlock, whereas it's impossible to hide the fact that you're pregnant once you get to a certain point."

"True. I guess I hadn't thought much about it beyond a girl being willing or not, mainly because I don't ascribe to any particular moral code."

"I went to church with my parents when I was little, but both Sophie and I stopped when she was sixteen and I was fourteen. My two younger brothers quit going last year."

"How old are they?"

"Sixteen and thirteen."

"When's your birthday?"

"I turn nineteen next Thursday. When's your birthday?"

"November 3rd. I'll be twenty-two."

The waitress brought our food, and we began eating. While we ate, we chatted about our classes, our families, and sports. When we finished eating, I paid the check, and we left the restaurant.

"Your condo is close, right?" Alexa asked as we got into the car.

"Yes. It's in the Hancock Center."

"I'd like to see it."

"Then we'll do that."

I drove the relatively short distance to the Hancock Center, and we traversed the elevators to reach the 91st floor. Alexa's reaction was the same as everyone else's.

"Whoa!" she exclaimed. "This is...unbelievable!"

"Believe it!" Bianca declared.

"Alexa, Bianca Pérez, my housemate, and Sofía's mother. Bianca, Alexa Wilson, Sophie's sister."

They exchanged greetings, and I asked about Sofía, who was asleep. I gave Alexa a tour, which ended in the art gallery, where Deanna had already hung some paintings.

"Sophie said you were really successful, but I don't think she knows the half of it!"

"She and Ivy were more interested in their married professor than hanging out with me!"

Alexa laughed, "I heard all about that one. Those two girls are crazy!"

So were CeCi and Deanna, though I wasn't going to reveal that, nor was I going to advertise.

"Do you want to go to a movie or just hang out?" I asked.

"How about we share a bottle of wine and get to know each other!"

"I'd say we're pretty familiar as it is!"

Alexa laughed, "True."

"Cabernet, White Zinfandel, or Chardonnay?"

"Chardonnay. Go get a bottle and bring it upstairs."

"OK."

I went downstairs, retrieved a bottle from the fridge, uncorked it, got two glasses, and returned upstairs. I found Alexa sitting on the loveseat in the master bedroom, so I walked in and closed the door. I poured wine for both of us, then turned on the stereo and put on *An Innocent Man* by Billy Joel.

"Well, that's not you, for sure!" Alexa declared when she saw the album.

"Not since June 22, 1980!"

"You remember the exact date?"

"It was Bev's sixteenth birthday," I replied. "She gave *me* a present! You?"

"True confession? It'll be tonight."

"Sorry," I said because I was sure I registered surprise and that Alexa had noticed. "I just didn't expect you to say that, especially with how comfortable you were with being naked together in front of the students, not to mention my hands on your breasts and the other intimate poses."

"I was never ashamed of my body or a prude, and it's not like I haven't had boyfriends. I've made out quite a bit, but touching only over clothes. Sophie had a reputation, which I didn't want, and frankly, I wasn't ready. Now I am. I'm on the Pill, and unlike Sophie, I do sleepovers!"

"Not that you intend to stay that long, but I'm meeting a friend at 3:00pm."

"I'm not the jealous type, and I don't own you, so it's OK to say you have a date!"

"It's actually not a date," I countered. "But understood."

"That gives us what? Eighteen hours? That should be enough for my first time!"

"Did you have something specific in mind?"

"To give my first blowjob and have my first fuck. After that, wild sex, sleep together, then more wild sex!"

"That sounds like a very good plan!"

"Then let's get undressed!" Alexa said, setting down her wine glass and standing up.

I set down my glass and stood up as well. This time, unlike during the modeling session, we watched each other undress. Also, unlike the modeling session, I felt blood begin to flow, and by the time I was undressed, I was mostly erect. As soon as Alexa was naked, she came over to me, gently grasped my shaft, and gave me a soft kiss.

"I wanted to touch this when I saw it, but that would have created a significant problem!"

I moved my hands to her breasts and cupped them gently.

"Holding these almost did that."

Alexa kissed me again, then gently pushed me back to sit on the loveseat. She knelt in front of me and began slowly stroking my fully erect shaft, then planted a soft kiss on the tip. A second kiss followed, then I watched as she parted her lips and took my glans into her mouth as I felt her free hand cup my sack.

She moaned softly, then started swirling her tongue. She sucked softly and began bobbing, slowly taking more of my dick into her mouth. When she had me halfway in, she slowly pulled back, gently dragging her teeth along my shaft. I groaned from the intense pleasure, and Alexa repeated that about every five bobs.

Alexa seemed to be in no hurry, and I was certainly in no rush to cum, as I was really enjoying the sights, sounds, and sensations of an exquisite blowjob. It continued for several more minutes until I twitched, and Alexa pulled back, so just my glans was in her mouth.

Alexa stroked faster, gently squeezed my sack, and I groaned deeply as the first jet of cum blasted into her soft mouth. Alexa applied just a bit of pressure with

her teeth to the base of my glans, and I groaned again as jets of cum splashed into her mouth, my orgasm intensified by her hand squeezing my sack and her teeth on my glans.

I felt Alexa swallow, then bob twice before releasing me. She stood up, sat in my lap, and we exchanged a fierce French kiss, our tongues twisting and twirling around each other. I moved my right hand to her left breast and began strumming her nipple with my thumb. Alexa moaned softly, and after about a minute, I stopped her in my arms, stood, and carried her to the bed.

I lay her on her back, then got into bed next to her. We exchanged another French kiss, then I moved so I could kiss her breasts and suck on her nipples. After enjoying her breasts for a time, I kissed my way down her flat stomach to her neatly trimmed pubic hair and planted several kisses on her mons before moving between her legs.

I lowered my head and ran my tongue along her slick labia, enjoying her musky smell and taste. I wanted a full taste, so I carefully pressed my tongue into her tunnel, coating it with her juices. Alexa moaned softly, then groaned when I flicked her clit with my tongue. I pressed my tongue deeply into her once more, then flicked her clit again before closing my mouth around her and sucking gently.

I brought her off twice before I felt the stirrings of my next erection. A few strokes with my hand had me rock hard, and I moved on top of Alexa. I grasped my shaft, rubbed it along her slick labia, then positioned it at the entrance to her tunnel. I leaned down to French kiss her as I pushed forward, entering her tight, slick pussy. Three strokes later, I was buried inside her.

"Holy God!" she gasped, breaking the kiss.

"No, still Jonathan!" I replied.

Alexa wrapped her legs around me and raised her hips, and I didn't delay. I began moving, slowly at first, gradually increasing the force of my thrusts, and Alexa met each one, matching her movements to mine. We fucked at a modest pace, one that would certainly allow me to go a long time.

Alexa had a pair of good orgasms over the next ten minutes, after which we began fucking hard. She had a third orgasm, and the spasms of her pussy were enough to take me over the edge. I groaned and pushed as deeply into her as I could and ground against her clit as I pumped cum into her. When our orgasms passed, I gently withdrew and moved to lie on my back next to Alexa.

"Sophie wasn't kidding," Alexa said, breathing heavily.

"That blowjob was amazing!" I declared. "Though a bit scary."

Alexa laughed softly, "My best friend from High School gave me pointers. Her college boyfriend taught her how to do that. I was afraid I might hurt you, but obviously, I got it right."

"I'll say!" I declared.

"I need to thank whoever taught you about using your mouth! That was heavenly."

"Bev. I was totally clueless about female anatomy and physiology, so she taught me what she liked."

"Those orgasms were more intense, not that the ones I had while we were fucking were bad."

"I've found many girls, maybe most, have better orgasms from oral than from screwing, but Bev taught me how to get her there by putting pressure on her clit and grinding."

"I owe her a debt of gratitude! What next?"

"Sixty-nine, then fuck? Repeat until we're tired. In the morning, more of the same, then a shower and breakfast."

"Sign me up!"



April 29, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

Alexa and I had done exactly what I'd proposed, and after breakfast on Sunday morning, we left the condo so I could drive her back to Northwestern.

"Can I say something without you freaking out?" Alexa asked after I pulled out of the parking garage.

"Probably, but I can't promise!"

"When you first entered me, what ran through my mind was that we fit perfectly together, and we were made for each other. But later, after the third time, I realized that was just basic anatomy."

"I think, and this is just me speculating, that there is something in our evolutionary development that makes women want to pair off. If you think about it, that would have been advantageous to raising a child, especially in prehistoric times. I'm positive religious belief factored in, but I suspect there is something deeper."

"It was deep, alright!" Alexa exclaimed. "I think you might be onto something. A sociology professor made the point that views on virginity likely had their origin in ensuring that any offspring belonged to a specific man. He pointed out that, for example, in Islam, there is a waiting period after a husband dies before the woman can remarry to ensure she's not pregnant."

"I can see that," I replied. "Monogamy would ensure that as well."

"Yes, he pointed that out, too. Basically, there are sociological and evolutionary advantages to monogamy or polygamy, especially in the days when self-defense required brute strength. As he put it, guns are the great equalizer because they take away the strength, weight, and agility advantages."

"That makes sense, too, though wouldn't having more than one husband provide for better protection than one husband with many wives?"

Alexa laughed, "I'd say it would, but guys aren't interested in signing up for that!"

"I'm sure there's a sociological explanation for that, too."

"The identity of the father, for one, but we actually didn't go into it."

"So how do you feel now?"

"Fucked!" Alexa giggled. "And empty! I never felt empty before, but I sure do now."

"It's 'tomorrow', so I'm curious what you're thinking."

"That we keep it casual, see each other occasionally, and see how things go. You said last night you weren't ready for a serious relationship, and I'm just finishing my Freshman year at Northwestern. OK to be completely honest?"

"Yes, of course."

"You having a kid and Bianca living with you is not how I pictured my long-term relationship playing out."

"I totally understand your point. My life is complicated."

"I'm not saying it's impossible, just that I have to consider it. We have time, obviously, so unless you object to my plan, I'd like to see you sometime in the next few weeks."

"I don't object."

"Good!"

I dropped Alexa at her dorm at Northwestern, then returned to the condo to hang out with Bianca, Sofía, Deanna, and Ceci. I had a few things to do first, including changing the sheets on my bed and starting a load of laundry. I did those things, then took my suits and shirts down to the dry cleaners on the sky lobby floor.

Happily, when I returned to the condo to sit down with the girls, Sofía was awake, and I was able to hold her.

"Is everything set for next Friday?" I asked Deanna.

"Yes. You know I put up flyers at school, and I personally invited my professors. I also took out an ad in the *Daily Defender* and in the *Reader*."

"Good plan. I had lunch with Stan Jakes recently and invited him. He'll be there and hopefully write an article."

"Awesome. I also confirmed with Vanessa and Cheryl, who are my waitstaff. They'll wear black slacks and white blouses, which are traditional. I know I mentioned Kristy bought the champagne, and I arranged party platters from Jewel. All of that was in the budget I gave you."

"And John Margolis?" I asked.

Deanna laughed, "As I said, he gets his advance showing, but he's NOT going to get to play with the kitty!"

Bianca and CeCi both laughed.

"As I told Jonathan, \$1000 is not nearly enough for me to fuck him as a thank you!"

"I want to know the number for Jonathan to give Costas a blowjob!" Bianca teased.

"Spurgeon Capital and all of Noel's assets," I said. "That would probably do it!"

"So a billion?"

"A billion in liquid assets; and that's after taxes!"

"You'd really do that?" CeCi asked.

"Hell no!" I chuckled. "But nobody is going to give me a billion dollars, either."

"You'll be worth that much someday," Bianca said.

"Even Noel isn't worth that much, but it's a nice goal."

"It's just us girls," Deanna said, "so I feel OK asking about your net worth."

"The condo, the house, and the pair of two-flats are basically a wash because of the mortgages, so I'd say just over a million, allowing for the taxes I'll owe on the carried interest."

"That's impressive for three years," she observed.

"That's impressive, period!" CeCi declared.

"Right place, right time, and a bit of luck out of adversity," I said.

"You don't mean Keiko, I'm sure," CeCi said.

"Bev. I landed my first major client because I had to be in Overland Park, Kansas, a place I'd never have gone looking for business."

"Jeri and the law firm were before that, right?"

"Yes, though I sent the prospectus to Overland Park before I signed Hart-Lincoln. And Jeri's trust fund was more about her mom than anything."

"That and her wanting you to fuck her!" Deanna declared. "I've seen how she looks at you."

"Jeri and I are business partners. She did suggest we be the preëminent Chicago power couple, but our worldviews are too divergent. She's very much 'win at all costs' and 'take no prisoners', whereas I'm more 'art of the deal' and 'win-win'.

She has a completely transactional view of relationships, one that makes my patronage of Deanna look like a passionate, romantic love affair!"

"Because it is!" CeCi declared. "Neither of you are actual romantics, but you have a very special relationship, rivaled only by Bianca, and Keiko was beyond that."

"All of you are special in your own way," I said. "That includes you, CeCi."

I smelled an odor that could only mean one thing.

"I think someone needs a fresh diaper," I said. "I'll be right back."

I took Sofía upstairs, removed her soiled diaper, cleaned her up, then put on a fresh diaper. I put the soiled diaper in the pail and, after washing my hands, carried my daughter back downstairs.

"My dad would die before he'd change a diaper," Bianca declared.

"I didn't have a macho Mexican dad as a role model," I chuckled.

"He takes that WAY too far at times. I like strong men, for sure, but not that over-the-top Latin male bullshit. You balance it about right, Jonathan. Keiko called you an 'Alpha male' but said you were tender and loving, too."

"I didn't realize you two discussed me!"

"Of course we did! We all do! The 'Jonathan Project' is not a one-woman endeavor!"

"The 'Jonathan Project'?" I asked with an arched eyebrow and a smile.

"I'm mostly teasing but helping shape you into a well-rounded man who can be a father, a lover, a patron, a provider, and a friend. Keiko totally picked the right name for you that translates to 'Courageous Protector'. You're still doing that for her, or her memory, by walling off that part of your heart. Any girl who might have designs on you in the future will have to accept that, or she won't make the cut. And it's why you most likely won't marry again."

"I think Bianca is exactly right," CeCi interjected. "All of us, but especially Keiko, knew you would do everything in your power to help us; protect us when we need it; and give us space when we need it. I'm positive that years from now, no matter what happens, I'll be able to pick up the phone and call for advice or help."

"Absolutely," Deanna said. "I feel the same way. And I know Bianca does, or she wouldn't have had a baby with you. I'm hoping for a lifetime of good sex, too!"

"Me, too!" Bianca declared.

"Me, three!" Ceci exclaimed. "Though that might be limited by meeting a guy I want to have kids with."

"Just don't make an exclusive commitment," Deanna said. "Does anyone in this room give a fuck that Sofía's parents aren't married? And where you're going? They'll give zero fucks about having a kid without being married. Half of Hollywood is shagging the other half, and nobody cares except a couple of tabloid publishers and a couple of idiot preachers on TV!"

"True," CeCi said. "But that's years from now. Jonathan, can I spend the night tomorrow night? I don't get home until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays now."

"Yes, of course. I'm going to make lunch. Is everyone hungry?"

"Yes," came the chorus from the three adult women.

"Then let me put Sleeping Beauty in her crib, and I'll make some lunch."

LX. A Knowledgeable Source in the Financial Services Industry

April 29, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

At 3:00pm, I met Kayleigh at the diner I had frequented with Violet when we'd had classes together or at the same time. We had walked up at almost the same time, with me just a few seconds in front of her. I greeted her, held the door for her, and we went in. By chance, the hostess seated us right away in the same booth Violet and I had regularly used after classes.

The waitress arrived almost right away, and we ordered coffee but declined menus. The waitress came back with the pot, filled our cups, then asked once again if we wanted to order anything. Neither of us did, so she left the booth.

"Thanks for meeting me," she said. "I know how we left things last time, but I had a long talk with my grandfather, and I wanted to discuss it with you."

"OK," I said with a bit of apprehension, as I had hoped not to involve Thomas Hart in this because, as I saw it, it could only cause trouble, not help.

"Do you know my grandfather's story?"

"No," I don't.

"He was a Senior at New Trier High School in Winnetka when the 'Japs' as he calls them, bombed Pearl Harbor. When he graduated, he joined the Marines and was eventually assigned to the 6th Marine Regiment. He fought on Guadalcanal and Tarawa and was promoted to Sergeant. He fought on Saipan and Tinian

before he was transferred to the 5th Marine Division and fought on Iwo Jima. He won a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star on Iwo Jima.

After that, They returned to Hawai'i and were there when the war ended. His unit was assigned occupation duty, and they were in Japan until December, when they returned to San Francisco. He took advantage of the G.I. Bill and went to UCLA for his undergraduate degree, then Stanford for his law degree. Once he finished, he came back to Chicago and joined a small law firm, where he met Paul Lincoln, and they formed Hart-Lincoln in 1956."

"Doing rough math, your mom had to be born sometime after he shipped out but before he returned."

"There's that analytical skill in operation! Grandma and Grandpa met in High School. When he completed basic training and was preparing to ship out, he called her and asked her to marry him. She was only seventeen, but she said 'yes' and took the train to California. They married the day before he shipped out, and Mom was born in 1943.

"She stayed in San Diego with the wives of two other Marines, and all three of them worked in a hospital. Both their husbands died, one on Iwo Jima and one on Okinawa. When Grandpa came home, he and Grandma moved to LA, then to Palo Alto, before coming to Chicago.

"Mom met Dad at New Trier when he was a Senior and she was a Freshman. They married a few days after Mom graduated, and she worked while he finished his degree. I was born about ten months after they married. Dad got his teaching job, and Mom went to nursing school and had my little brother."

"My mom was seventeen when I was born, so not too much different from your grandma and mom."

"Things were different back then, especially with the war. Anyway, the thing I didn't tell you was that both Grandma and Grandpa were devout Catholics. When Grandpa came home, he refused to have anything to do with church and began telling people he was an atheist. He says that the aphorism 'there are no atheists in foxholes' is a lie because nobody who had actually been in a foxhole on those islands in the Pacific could ever believe in God."

"I obviously wasn't there, but from what my teachers in High School said about it, I find it hard to argue with his point."

"I never knew he'd been a devout Catholic until after I saw you the second time. Grandma still goes to church, and she obviously took my mom, who took me. Grandpa never once said anything about it to me, and I don't think he said anything to my mom, either. During the talk, he explained why he thinks it's all 'arrant nonsense', and as you say, it's understandable because of the things he saw. All that is to say that I think I understand you a bit better than I did before."

"That's not a bad thing, but I'm not sure it's sufficient to change the conclusion the last time we met."

"What would be sufficient?" Kayleigh asked.

"I'm not sure I know the answer to that question because it would come down to a negotiated solution. If we assume that your conversation with your grandfather created the necessary conditions for you to reconsider your views, there is still the hurdle that I'm not sure I can provide the kind of relationship I believe you want, at least not anytime soon.

"What I don't want is for you to begin a relationship expecting it will lead to a traditional marriage because I don't know if anything like that is in my future. You also have to take into account the other things I told you when we were

together. In other words, it would be anything but conservative or traditional. And that leads me to ask why you're trying so hard."

"Before I knew about you being an atheist and about your baby, you basically matched my idea of an ideal guy, and given how much my grandfather likes you and trusts you, I'd say my judgment was confirmed."

"Those are two fairly big issues, one much bigger than the other."

"Atheism, right?"

"Yes. All things being equal, being a widower with a child isn't that far of a leap, even if the child wasn't from my marriage. I mean, sure, it could be a bridge too far for you, but if that were the case, you wouldn't be here. Your being here tells me you believe you can handle that part of my life. I suppose my question is what you want to do."

"I guess the first question to ask is if you're attracted to me."

"Yes. You're very pretty, in good shape, and seem like a sweet girl."

"I know that's not enough, well, except maybe in a bar, but it's a start. Would you be open to having coffee sometimes and talking?"

I had a flashback to Rachel Kealty and considered my circumstances and Kayleigh's behavior. Ultimately, I wanted to keep Thomas Hart happy, and so long as Kayleigh wasn't pushing hard, there was no reason not to occasionally have coffee. Eventually, she'd find a 'nice Catholic boy', and that would be that.

"Sure," I replied. "Why don't you call me when you want to get together to talk? I promise I'll make the time."

"Thanks."

We finished our coffee, and I left a generous tip for the waitress as we'd only had coffee, then headed back to the condo.

"So?" Bianca asked when I sat down with her after changing into sweats and a T-shirt.

"She's still interested and is trying to find some way forward. She had a talk with her grandfather, which I think opened her eyes a bit about atheism. He was a Marine during World War II, and that experience convinced him no gods exist."

"I could see that. My great-uncle served on a ship that was hit by a kamikaze. He was the first on that side of the family to come to the US from Mexico."

"My dad would have been too young for Korea and died before Viet Nam. My Grandfather wasn't drafted for World War II or Korea. I told you about my mom's friend whose husband was killed in Viet Nam, right?"

"Yes. Your first time in a church was his funeral, right?"

"Yes, then when his widow remarried. I don't remember much, except there was some kind of hubbub about the guy who walked her down the aisle who was around sixteen, I think. Mom never did say anything about it."

"Her brother or cousin?"

"No clue. I could ask my mom when I speak to her next weekend, and I think I will."

"Some of the girls from Loyola are coming over tomorrow in the afternoon -- Sally, Julianne, and Lucy. Shelly will be here, too. They'll show up around 4:00pm and have dinner with us."

"OK. I don't have any plans."

"And all of them have serious or semi-serious guys," Bianca said.

I laughed, "I didn't mean it that way!"

"Speaking of 'that way', Esme will be home on Tuesday. I'm sure she'll be in touch."

"I'm sure she will!"



April 30, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Monday, just after 10:30am, I placed the call to J. William Oldenburg. I had to balance not saying anything that might upset him and harm the relationship with MTB Sports Management but also not trying to bring him aboard as a client based on Pete's research.

"Good morning," I said after I was transferred. "This is Jonathan Kane calling from Spurgeon Capital in Chicago."

"Good morning. Marv said you'd be calling. He mentioned you've been talking to Steve Young, and that you're managing investments for a number of players they rep."

"That's correct. I generally serve pension funds and high-net-worth individuals but recently cultivated a relationship with Marv at MTB to help players capitalize on their playing income, which I know can be short-lived."

"What investment vehicles do you use?"

"Whatever earns the best return," I replied. "Last year, I had a total return of 39.7% on the first dollar in using a mix of investment classes -- equities, precious metals, currencies, and government securities. I operate a hedge fund and use the entire set of strategies to insulate my fund from market risk. The assets are all highly liquid and often protected with options for risk management. I understand you're a mortgage banker."

"That's correct. My firm issues mortgage-backed securities, but I suspect those aren't liquid enough for your fund."

"I avoid holding real estate or any related products for exactly that reason, though I personally own real estate. I'm calling about your personal investments to see if we might find some common ground."

"Fees?"

"Two and twenty," I said. "With an 8% hurdle."

"Steep. I had a pitch from Madoff that offers similar returns but without the fees."

"The question you have to ask yourself about that is how he makes his money."

"That was the thing that gave me pause. Why wouldn't I simply buy the S&P?"

"I nearly doubled it last year, so even with the fees, you come out way ahead. That said, unlike an S&P fund, there is a lockup period with a significant penalty if you withdraw the funds before a year is out."

"Liquidity is key for me," he said. "I'm not sure I can afford to lock up assets for a year."

Which was exactly what I had expected, based on what Pete had said about Oldenburg's finances.

"That restriction can't be waived because of the potential tax implications for other investors in the fund."

"Let's say I could work with that. What's involved?"

"A review by our Legal and Compliance teams. So long as you haven't had any trouble with the SEC, or in your case, banking regulators, it's usually a formality."

"How hard do they look?"

"They'll ask about ongoing investigations in each state where you operate, plus from the SEC."

"I'm having some trouble with Utah at the moment. It's a nuisance thing, which I'm sure you've encountered."

"I have," I said.

"Let me resolve that, and I think we can do business."

If Pete was right, he wasn't going to resolve it, and that was my 'out'.

"Sounds good," I said. "Let me give you my contact information."

I gave it to him, wished him well with his team, then ended the call. I was confident nothing I'd said would cause any blowback from MTB, and if Oldenburg called to invest, I'd flag Legal and Compliance with the information Pete had uncovered.

I returned to work and, at 11:45am, had lunch with Violet in the break room. We had just finished eating when Bianca came to say she was leaving for the day.

"How are you feeling?" I asked.

"I really needed to come back to work! I know it was only a month, but I was going stir-crazy! See you later!"

She left, and Violet and I left to go to the gym to work out.

"I was surprised she came back so soon," Violet observed.

"If you think about it, Sofía mostly sleeps and doesn't do much except eat when she's awake. Bianca was never going to be a stay-at-home mom, so coming back part-time is perfect for her. That was why we hired nannies."

"Sure, I was just surprised it was so soon; I wasn't objecting in general."

"I had to leave that to Bianca to decide, though I do agree with her that it doesn't harm Sofía. We won't ever foist her off permanently on hired help the way my friend Jeri is."

"That's just so wrong!"

"I agree, but Jeri seems to have turned out OK despite that, or maybe because of that, given what I know about her mom."

We parted at the gym to go into the proper locker rooms, completed our personal exercise routines, showered in the proper locker rooms, then headed back upstairs to complete the workday. At 5:00pm, I put everything into the desk, locked it, and made the three-elevator trip to the condo, stopping to hand Robert an envelope to cover tips I'd have given him and the other doormen.

My housemates and the girls greeted me with hugs when I arrived, and after I changed, we had a nice evening together.



May 3, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I could get used to this," Natasha said on Thursday morning when we got out of bed.

"That goes directly against what you told me that first night!" I said with a grin as we got into the shower together.

"Would that be a problem?" she asked as I began to lather her lithe, sexy body.

"It would depend on what you mean by 'get used to'," I said.

"I have two more years before I go graduate school. Every Wednesday until then? Obviously, if something comes up besides that huge dick of yours, we'd work around it."

"I'd be OK with that, so long as we both understand things could change before you graduate."

"Obviously. It's just casual, so if something changes, we'll discuss it and come to some resolution. I won't be upset, and you won't be upset."

"Then I agree."

"Then you get a reward!" she exclaimed.

She lowered herself to her knees and gave me an awesome blowjob before standing so I could finish washing her. She washed me, and after we both rinsed off, we dried ourselves, dressed, then went downstairs for breakfast.

After we ate, she and I left the condo together, she headed for the L, and I continued to the Spurgeon offices. The morning was routine until 10:30am, when Luke Fahey, the new mailroom employee, brought me a box that had been sent via Federal Express. I opened it and extracted an interior box, then called Pete to come into my office.

"This is for you," I said.

"For me?" Pete asked.

"Yes."

He used a pocket knife to carefully slice the tape, then opened the box.

"HOLY SHIT!" he exclaimed. "A ball AND a jersey?!"

"A game jersey," I said.

"I don't even know what to say!"

"'Thank you' is customary! But you need to say that to Gordon DeLisse at MTB Sports Management."

"OK to call him? I know how touchy traders are with anyone talking to their contacts."

"Absolutely. Give him a call."

"Will do. Thanks, Jonathan."

"You're welcome."



May 4, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"What time did you get home last night?" I asked Deanna when I arrived at Ateljé D at 5:30pm on Friday.

"I didn't fuck him, Dad!" Deanna teased.

"You know that's not any of my business! Bianca and I went to bed early, and you don't get up as early as I do on weekdays unless you've slept in my bed! So?"

"About midnight. He bought three paintings at the 'pre-show' prices. Of course, he felt that plus the grand entitled him to a roll in the hay. He went home disappointed."

"Despite 'beating' Noel Spurgeon?" I asked with a smirk.

"Oh, he'll mention that to Mr. Spurgeon, I'm sure, but he won't buy more unless I fuck him."

"Is that a common thing?"

"For female artists? Unfortunately, yes. And it usually doesn't work out anything like it did for you and me!"

"Because we had sex *before* we entered into the patronage relationship," I said. "Is there anything I need to do?"

"Look hot!"

"He *is* hot, Dee!" a thin, pretty girl with long black hair down to her waist, dressed in black slacks and a white blouse that revealed cleavage, declared.

"Jonathan, meet Vanessa, a graphic design student.

"Hi!" Vanessa said.

"Hi," I said. "Thanks for helping out."

"It'll be fun!" she exclaimed, then called out, "Hey, Cheryl, come see Dee's patron! He's smoking hot!"

I chuckled, "I'm no Burt Reynolds or Rock Hudson!"

"Hi!" Cheryl, a striking blond with equally long hair, clad identically, said. "She's right! Those clothes look nice on you, though they'd look a lot nicer on the floor of my bedroom!"

"Down, girl!" Deanna ordered, and all three girls laughed.

"Right, like you care?" Vanessa asked.

"No, but we have work to do!"

"Slave driver!" Vanessa growled, and again, all three girls laughed.

"The girls agreed to work during the housewarming, too," Deanna said. "I'm going to hang as many pieces in the condo as possible, including paintings by Kassie, Kendra, and Stacey."

"You have a free hand," I said. "You're the one with an eye for style."

"That was mostly Natasha, but I can arrange artwork on the walls!"

"I never asked," I said, "but what hours are you going to keep?"

"Tuesday through Friday, 7:00pm to 10:00pm; Saturday, 11:00am to 6:00pm. Other times by appointment. I'll be here a lot when the gallery is closed, given I can't paint at home because we can't set up ventilation."

"I think they'd be very upset if we tried to open a window!" I said with a grin.

"I also have half a dozen students who want to display here, including sculptures."

"Very cool. Did you work out a commission structure?"

"Yes. For students, it'll be 10%; for anyone else, the usual 50%."

"Wow! And I thought 20% was high!"

"It is hard to sell art, and it's low volume. Somebody has to cover the costs of the gallery. I mean, you are, now, but I want it to be self-sustaining and be able to

take a small salary in addition to selling my own art. Eventually, as I said, I'll supplement with art lessons, both small groups and one-on-one."

"I trust you to know your business! What can I do?"

"Stay by me like a fawning idiot!" she teased. "You'll have to act to be an idiot!"

"Shall I drool?"

"I'm teasing! Just stay by me and look pretty."

"I think acting like a fawning idiot might be a better choice!" I chuckled.

"Boys can be pretty! But I was teasing again because you aren't a pretty boy. You have rugged good looks. We could dress you as the Marlboro Man, and you could pull it off. I see Kendra at the door; would you let her in?"

I went to the door and twisted the knob to unlock the door and let in a very pretty girl with ebony skin in a gorgeous, form-fitting white dress that highlighted her svelte figure.

"You must be Jonathan!" she said, giving me a 'society' kiss.

"And you must be Kendra!" I replied. "Come in, please."

Before I could close the door, two other girls walked up.

"You must be Kassie and Stacey!"

"Yes!" the redhead with curly hair, wearing tight jeans and a skin-tight T-shirt, said. "But which is which?"

"You're Kassie," I said, then nodded to the curvy platinum blonde wearing a peasant skirt and a white blouse, "and she's Stacey!"

"Wow, he's good!" the blonde declared.

"How did you know?" the redhead, now obviously Kassie, asked.

"Trade secret!" I said with a grin. "Come in, please."

The girls came in, and I locked the door. About ten minutes later, I unlocked the door and put an easel outside on the sidewalk with 'Grand Opening: Ateljé D' painted on it with glitter paint. I went back inside and stood next to Deanna as several well-dressed people came in through the door.

There was a steady flow of people, including students, professors, and potential customers, and just before 8:30pm, Stan Jakes arrived with a photographer. He interviewed all four of the artists but spent the most time with Deanna. His photographer took a shot that had Deanna in the foreground and the other three in the background, and then one with me next to her and the other artists to our sides.

"I owe you," I said. "Thanks."

"You can pay that debt right now. I need to talk to you about a tidbit Len Walter fed me, and it can't wait."

"Let's step back into the studio for some privacy."

I let Deanna know, and Stan and I moved through the swinging door to Deanna's studio.

"What's up?"

"This is actually for possible publication. I'll call you a knowledgeable source in the financial services industry. Nobody except my editor will know who you are."

"OK."

"Continental Illinois. Is it going to fail?"

"This part is background and can't be quoted because it would identify me."

"OK. Not for attribution or publication."

"I shorted 400,000 shares in early April and told our executing broker that if that bank isn't a crater of smoking rubble by the end of May, I'd buy him dinner at any place he could name, even if we have to fly there."

"Back on the record -- it sounds like you think it's going to fail."

"There are only two options -- outright failure or seizure and sale. My best banking analyst, a former Continental Illinois employee, says it's too big to fail. He thinks it'll be seized and sold, with the shareholders largely wiped out. I'd say that's the most likely outcome because otherwise, there will be cascading failures, similar to how the Penn Square debacle is about to take down Continental Illinois."

"Does anyone lose money in that scenario?"

"Not depositors, if that's who you mean. The purchasing banks will make the depositors whole, mostly by buying the performing loans for pennies on the dollar. The FDIC or Federal Reserve will likely eat the non-performing loans and

try to make it up with shares in whatever corporation they set up to be sold or to act as receiver if the bank fails."

"Totally not for publication, but my edification, how much do you stand to make?"

"For my fund? About \$4,500,000, give or take, if it's seized and sold; around \$8,000,000 if it fails."

"What happens next?"

"If that rumor spreads, or you write this article, there will be a run on the bank. The first to pull out will be other banks and large depositors, which will exacerbate the problem and make it a self-fulfilling prophecy. If they think it's going to fail, they'll act that way and actually cause it to fail."

"That confirms what Len said. He heard that a pair of very large depositors transferred tens of millions from Continental Illinois this afternoon."

"Then it's started. And if Len Walter knows it, others know it, and Monday will be a bloodbath."

"How long before something is done?"

"I can't read those tea leaves for you in any exact way, which is why I said the end of May. There are ways to defend against a run, including invoking limits on large transfers, but that is basically pre-announcing your death. They'll make public statements about the bank being safe and offer higher interest rates to keep or attract capital. I don't think it will work, and I'd give it about two weeks before the FDIC, Federal Reserve, and the Comptroller of the Currency have to step in with emergency funding or outright seizure. Or they could let it fail, but our best analysis is that won't be allowed to happen."

"Thanks. I'm going to try to get that in tomorrow's paper. The gallery article will run next Sunday because the *Tempo* section for this Sunday has already been put to bed."

"Thanks. Do me a favor? Don't use the photo with me or mention my name. Someone will put two and two together and come up with Jonathan Kane."

"Way ahead of you. I'll tell the editor to go with the pretty girls and forget the guy who's messing up the photo!"

I chuckled, "Nice."

"Actually, I'll just tell the editor you're a source, and he'll eighty-six the photo, no questions asked."

"Good."

"I think we're even," Stan said.

We shook hands, left the studio, and rejoined the others. Stan and his photographer left a few minutes later, and I demurred when Deanna asked what we talked about. At 11:00pm, Vanessa, Cheryl, and I gently and politely escorted guests from the studio, and when the last one had left, I locked the door.

"How did we do?" I inquired.

"We sold seven pieces, which is really good for a first showing."

"Does that include the three Margolis bought?"

"Yes. And that's OK because we want to have something to sell tomorrow!"

We cleaned up, then Deanna and I left Ateljé D and got into a Town Car to take us back to the Hancock Center. At the condo, Deanna joined me in my room, and after we made love, she asked about Stan Jakes.

"I mentioned I'm a confidential source, and he asked about a rumor he heard from a business reporter. I confirmed it for him, and I expect to see it in tomorrow's paper attributed to a 'knowledgeable source'. They'll run the story on Ateljé D next Sunday because it's too late to get it into this weekend's edition due to deadlines. If I understand correctly how it works, they've already printed the *Tempo* section for Sunday's paper."

"The article will help more than the ads I ran. We had just over sixty guests tonight, about a quarter of which weren't personally invited, so I'm happy."

"If you're happy, I'm happy!"

We snuggled close together and fell asleep.



May 5, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday morning, when Deanna and I went down to breakfast, I picked up the *Chicago Tribune* and found a third-page article questioning the financial stability of Continental Illinois, citing a 'knowledgeable source' in the industry. It was short on detail, which I knew it had to be, but laid out the case I'd made to Stan Jakes. There was no question in my mind that the transfers late on Friday would cause a run on the bank.

I put the paper down and helped Deanna make breakfast.

"I meant to ask last night," I said, "but what's with asking Vanessa and Cheryl to work the housewarming?"

"It totally fits your 'deluxe apartment in the sky'! And the other three artists will be here the entire time. You have friends who either are, or will be, in a position to buy art. Vanessa and Cheryl will keep the refreshments stocked, serve food and drinks, and otherwise run things so you can spend time with your guests, and Bianca can worry about Sofia."

"I actually hadn't considered that last bit! I'm still getting used to the idea of having to think about Sofia before I decide what to do, and I know it's even more of a challenge for Bianca because Sofia is nursing."

"You extended invitations to your bosses, right?"

"Yes, along with my aunt and uncle, Jeri's parents, Beth's family, and Congressman Hayes, though I can probably only expect him if I toss money into his campaign coffers. And even then, I'm not sure because Marcia and I had a serious falling out."

"Over?"

"Being an unapologetic capitalist rather than accepting her...Marxist views."

"Marxist, really?"

"I make so much money that I am now officially an Enemy of the People who cannot relate to the underprivileged kids Congressman Hayes is focused on helping."

"YOU were an underprivileged kid!"

"Yes, exactly, but Marcia doesn't see me as a *success* story but as somehow betraying society."

"I never had that picture of her."

"I think it has as much to do with me telling her I wasn't interested in her as more than a platonic friend than anything else."

"A frustrated gold digger? She saw the brass ring, and you moved it out of reach, and now she wants to take it all from you?"

"Bottom line? Yes. It was couched in a way that effectively said the only thing I was good for was contributing money and that I was, in effect, an unproductive member of society. That's reading between the lines, but it was clear she thinks what I do has no value, despite the fact that I pointed out all the people who have jobs because of what I do, including generating capital to start new businesses. She rejected that."

"OK, I'm what you would call a liberal Democrat when it comes to my politics, and I object to unfair tax benefits for people like Spurgeon, but I don't think he should be put out of business or have all his wealth confiscated! Taxes should be higher on people like him, with no special loopholes."

"And me?" I asked with an arched eyebrow.

"You aren't in the same category, at least not yet, and I've heard you object to the tax loopholes! I'd keep the progressive graduated tax system but dump most of the loopholes and special treatment."

"What about unrealized gains? What I refer to as 'carried interest'?"

"I'm still a capitalist!" Deanna declared. "I don't believe in wealth taxes or anything like that. That said, I'd prefer to see lower property taxes and higher income taxes in Illinois because the flat Illinois income tax is regressive. And a better social safety net."

"Which is rational. I think I'm the only person at Spurgeon who doesn't bitch about his taxes, including Bianca!"

"I HEARD THAT!" Bianca called out from the conversation pit where she was nursing Sofía.

"You were meant to, my Republican friend!"

"At least the ratio is better now!" Bianca declared. "Three against one instead of six!"

"Wrong!" I declared. "There were *two* Republicans, so the ratio is the same!"

"Keiko."

"Yes. She followed her grandfather's principle that no Japanese-American should ever vote for a Democrat because it was Roosevelt and the Democrats who interned Japanese-Americans despite not a single incident of collaboration, unlike German-Americans. And worse, as we discussed before Keiko died, the FBI and military intelligence admitted that Japanese-Americans posed no actual security risk."

"Evil," Bianca declared. "Not to make an excuse, but can you imagine locking up the entire city of Milwaukee?"

"And Cincinnati," Deanna added. "Most of Ohio, actually, I think, along with good chunks of Pennsylvania and Michigan, and probably most of Wisconsin,

too. The Japanese were easy targets because there were fewer of them, and, well, pure racism was at play, too."

"And still exists," I said. "You know Spurgeon has no blacks, and Bianca is the only Hispanic in a professional position except for one guy from Spain, but he's considered to be 'white' whereas Bianca is not."

"Because my ancestors moved from Spain four hundred years before he moved here!" Bianca declared.

"In the larger scheme of things, that's a bigger problem than traders «schtupping» their secretaries. I'm not sure how to fix it."

"By running your own firm," Bianca said. "I know you need more AUM, but honestly, I don't see any way to fix Spurgeon as long as Noel Spurgeon is running it."

"I hear you," I said. "And I don't disagree, but as I've said, Noel Spurgeon and Murray Matheson gave me the opportunity, and I won't betray their support. In any event, it's moot until I'm in a position to even think about it seriously."

Deanna and I finished breakfast and cleaned up. She left for her gallery, and I went to sit with Bianca and Sofía. About five minutes later, my phone rang, so I got up to answer it. I walked to the kitchen, pressed the button for my line, and picked up the handset.

"Kane."

"Jonathan, it's Pete. Did you see the article in the *Trib*?"

"I did. Assuming the information is accurate, could you find out who pulled out?"

"I can call a friend who works in private banking and ask. He'll probably know. The stock is going to crater on Monday. And there will be a run on the bank."

"No doubt. What's their move?"

"Find a friendly bank and offer much higher rates, and offer better rates on overnight paper. Runs are liquidity crises because the bank's balance sheet includes all the loans, most of which can't be called. So they have to scramble to find free cash to cover the withdrawals and their usual daily operations. They'll probably sell stock holdings as well, which will generate free cash."

"How long can they sustain that?"

"With a serious run? Thirty days or less, and I can't imagine regulators not stepping in sometime in the next two weeks. They can't let it fail for all the reasons I gave you before."

"But is there political will?"

"That's always the question, especially with a free-market advocate like Reagan in office. I think the professionals will convince the politicians that they can't risk cascading failures which could take down the entire financial system. 'Too big to fail' is a real thing."

"I want you to write something, call it a 'Flash Note' that we have on every desk by 7:00am on Monday. Can you do that today or tomorrow? I'll call Jack Nelson and alert him we need something distributed before 7:00am. His guys won't mind the OT."

"I can do that. I'll go into the office and write it up today. I'll print copies for you and for the mailroom. I'll leave yours on your desk and put the other copy on Naomi's desk."

"OK. I'll call Jack Nelson now. Thanks, Pete. Dinner for you and your wife on me at Smith & Wollensky, Morton's The Steakhouse, or Eli's The Place For Steak."

"Thanks! Let me get on it. Later."

"Later."

I flashed the switchhook and dialed Jack Nelson's home number. His wife answered and called him to the phone.

"Jack, it's Kane," I said. "Pete Mueller is writing what I'm calling a Flash Analyst Note that needs to be on every desk by 7:00am on Monday. He'll leave a copy on Naomi's desk today, and it'll need to be photocopied and distributed."

"Reagan is starting World War III?" Jack Nelson asked.

"No, but Continental Illinois looks like it's about to fail. We predicted it, but there's a blurb in today's *Trib* that made it public. I want the revised analysis on every trader's desk when they show up."

"I'll call Kasparov and have her send someone in tomorrow to handle it. That way, the overnight traders have it, too."

"Thanks, Jack. I'll bring you a bottle of Maker's Mark."

"As if I could drink it!" he growled.

"So keep it at work, and don't tell Mrs. Nelson!"

"I knew I liked you for a reason, Kane!" he chuckled. "We'll get it done."

"Thanks."

I hung up and went back to sit with Bianca.

"The bank?"

"Yes."

"You're going to make \$5 million, give or take a million."

"The fund will, but I get a nice taste."

"That would be a 3% return overall for the year on one trade."

"Yes," I replied. "And well on the way to besting Noel Spurgeon in the yearly league table in terms of total return."

"He's going to hate that!"

"Yes, but he likes the money, so he'll bitch all the way to the bank!"

Bianca laughed, "So he wins either way."

"It's great to be the king! I need to do the grocery shopping before I head to Milwaukee."

"We could come along. I can put Sofia in her carrier that Kristy bought me. The one where she's basically lying on my chest."

"I actually never considered how soon it was OK to take her anywhere."

"The nurse at the hospital suggested two weeks beyond taking her home. Of course, we had to bring her here, too. But those two weeks were also about my recovery. I finally feel almost normal, but I need to lose the rest of the baby weight. I'll start going to the gym again next Monday after I work my half day."

"When does she need to eat again?"

"Probably about two hours. We have enough time if we go now."

"Then let's do that."

LXI. Why Not, Indeed?

May 5, 1984, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

After lunch with Bianca, I'd showered before heading to Milwaukee for my date with Nikki, the receptionist from Belarus Tractors. I found a parking spot and walked into Wolski's Tavern just before 3:00pm to find Nikki waiting.

"Hi!" she exclaimed.

"Hi. Shall we get a table?"

"Yes. Non-smoking OK?"

"Preferred."

We asked the hostess to seat us in the non-smoking area, though given most of the bar permitted smoking, it only helped a bit. A waiter came to the table and took our orders for a pair of draught beers, and returned with them almost immediately.

"What does a 'financial analyst' do?" Nikki asked. "And what are 'Series 3 and Series 7' licenses?"

"I manage a team that researches and evaluates investments -- stocks, bonds, commodities, currencies, and precious metals. That information is used to decide what investments will create the greatest returns for our clients. The two licenses allow me to broker any kind of financial instrument except life insurance or real estate. I run my own investment fund in addition to running the Research Department."

"Why visit a Soviet company? It's not like you can buy stock in them."

"True, but international trade is important to the global financial system. And who knows what will happen in the future? If Russia reforms the way China is starting to, maybe eventually, I could buy shares in Belarus on the Moscow or Leningrad Stock Exchange. What do you do for Belarus?"

"Whatever they ask! Basically, the usual receptionist's duties plus accounting clerk and payroll clerk duties."

"How long have you worked there?"

"Since I graduated from High School last year. Are you originally from Chicago?"

"Goshen, Ohio, which is about twenty-five miles northeast of Cincinnati. You?"

"Waukesha, which is west of here."

"I've been there. A friend insisted I try a Ponza Rotta at Jimmy's Grotto. I loved it."

"Dinner later? You could take me there."

"I could absolutely go for that."

"How old are you? I'm guessing at least twenty-five."

"Twenty-one," I replied.

"Really? I would have thought you needed a college degree to do your job."

"No, just the securities licenses. And actually, my main job doesn't require any kind of license or degree. I am taking classes part-time because work pays for them, but they aren't required."

"Do you live in Chicago?"

"I have a condo in the city," I replied. "Do you live in Milwaukee?"

"I live in Waukesha with my parents. It saves me a ton of money."

"Mind if I ask what your dad does?"

"He manages computer operations and programming for Waukesha County. My mom is a secretary in the Waukesha County Sheriff's Department. What about your parents.?"

"My dad was a salesman but died before I was born. My mom is a secretary at the local High School."

"So you never met him? Uhm, sorry. That's obvious from what you said."

"Don't sweat it. What do you like to do?"

"I'm a Brewers fan and like to go to games with my friends. I also like sailing on the lake with my best friend's family. My older brother is a pilot, and I like flying with him in his light plane."

"Does he do that for a living?"

"No. He's a CPA in Madison."

"So he's a bit older than you?"

"Nine years. We have different moms. Brent's mom had an affair and moved to California with the guy. Dad married my mom about five years after the divorce was final, and I was born two years later."

"What's it like to work for Russians?"

"Like any other job, I think. I mean, it's not like they made me swear to be a communist or whatever. I think the only strange things are the soviet flags and pictures of Lenin and the current Soviet leader. Well, and the FBI surveillance."

"Of you?"

"They talked to me one time right after I started, but otherwise, they haven't bothered me. They watch Mr. Bykov and Yuri, the main engineer, and follow them sometimes. They have very restrictive visas that limit where they can go. So, like they can't go near any military bases or nuclear plants, or visit certain kinds of companies. Our field engineers, who are mechanics, are all Americans. That means they can go anywhere and not have to worry about it."

"What about the KGB? I met with a trade official in Chicago, and he had a KGB security guard."

"I bet that was Major Anisimova. I've met her a few times. She's actually very nice and has a fifteen-year-old daughter. Did you know Belarus offers to take any staff member to Russia every year? We can go once every five years."

"I didn't know that. Are you going?"

"Absolutely! I mean, sure, it's behind the Iron Curtain, but I want to do it. We'll tour the Minsk Tractor Factory, then go to Moscow and have a tour there. The entire trip is only five days in Russia, but it'll be fun."

"I'd say it's a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I'd go if I was in your position."

"Do you get to travel for your job?"

"So far, I've been to Kansas, Wisconsin, and Ohio on business. Not exactly scenic tours, and the Ohio trip was to Cincinnati."

"Have you been overseas?"

"No. You?"

"To Canada, but that's it. How often do you ask guys who come into the office to have a beer?"

"You're the first! Most people who come in are farmers my dad's age! I haven't met anyone I really liked since I graduated High School, so when a nice-looking guy in a suit who's not too old came in, I decided to ask. I mean, what's the worst possible result? You said 'no'?"

"Good point!"

"So what do you do in your spare time?" Nikki asked.

"Hockey and baseball games, plus hanging out with my friends."

"Cubs or Sox?"

"Reds. I'm seeing them at Wrigley at the end of May with some friends."

"What do you drive?"

"A burgundy 1983 LeBaron convertible with a 5-speed transmission. You?"

"A blue '83 Ford Fairmont sedan. It was a graduation present. Did you play any sports in High School? You look like you could have played defensive back."

"No. I worked to help make ends meet. It was just my mom and me."

"She never remarried?"

"No. She worked two jobs so we could have our little house and a car. As soon as I could mow lawns and shovel snow, I started working. Later, I worked at a lumber yard, a feed store, and for a landscaping company."

"How did you end up in Chicago?"

"My uncle arranged for an entry-level job at Spurgeon Capital, and I worked my way up from mailroom clerk to mailroom supervisor to analyst to head of Research and earned my licenses in the process.."

"Wow! That's amazing! I absolutely chose the right guy to ask to have a beer!"

We finished our beers, but it wasn't even 3:30pm, so it was far too early for dinner.

"We have a couple of hours to kill," I said. "Any suggestions for what to do?"

"Milwaukee has a good art museum and a zoo," Nikki suggested.

"I'm OK with either of those," I said.

"How about the zoo? It's actually on the way to Waukesha."

"Sounds good. I suppose I'll follow you, but directions would be good in case somehow we're separated."

She gave me directions, which I wrote in the notebook I always carried, and after I paid for the beers, we left the pub. We were parked relatively close to each other, so it was easy to coordinate. I followed her Ford Fairmont without incident, and we arrived at the zoo about twenty minutes after we'd left the pub. We spent about two hours seeing the main animal exhibits and chatting about growing up.

At 5:30pm, we left the zoo and headed to Jimmy's Grotto in Waukesha. We seated ourselves and ordered pepperoni Ponzas and a pitcher of root beer.

"Do you have a specific time you have to be back in Chicago?" Nikki asked.

"No, and I don't have to be up early tomorrow. Why?"

"I thought maybe we could see a movie."

"Did you check, or do we need to get a paper?"

"I checked. I want to see *Sixteen Candles*. It's a romantic comedy and got great reviews. I'm pretty sure it's set in the Chicago suburbs. It's playing in Brookfield, which is just west of the zoo."

"I'm game," I said.

"Bonus points for not balking at a romantic comedy!"

"Do I get to see this scorecard?" I asked with a grin.

"That's not how it works!" Nikki declared mirthfully. "You should know that!"

"I actually never dated in High School. My girlfriend was a neighbor girl I'd known since we were both toddlers. We were close friends and simply became boyfriend and girlfriend. We mostly hung out and didn't go out much."

"What happened with her, if it's OK to ask?"

"I moved to Chicago, she started seeing someone, and got pregnant."

"She wouldn't come with you?"

"She was a year behind me in High School, so that wasn't possible."

"And she started seeing someone so quickly?"

"It's complicated. What I gave you was an outline. Both of us made mistakes."

"Sorry, I didn't mean to pry."

"It's OK."

Our Ponza Rottas arrived, and we began eating.

"I hope I didn't upset you," Nikki said a few minutes later.

"You didn't. I tend to be direct, and I don't mind direct questions. Usually, I give direct answers, but relationships are complicated, and, honestly, we don't know each other well enough to share at that level."

Nikki was quiet for a moment, then nodded, "You're right. It's just you seem so approachable and easy to talk to that I forgot we basically just met."

"It's OK, as I said. You didn't lose any points!"

"I don't suppose I get to see the scorecard, do I?"

"Here's where, if I knew you better, I'd make a joke, but based on what I just said, I probably shouldn't."

"Now you *have* to say it," Nikki demanded.

I chuckled, "I was going to say, 'Is this where I say I'll show you mine if you show me yours?'"

Nikki laughed, "That's cute, actually. Do you joke and tease a lot?"

"With my friends, yes, and they give as good as they get."

"That sounds like me and my two best friends."

We both focused on eating our meal and didn't talk much until it was time to leave to go to the movie.

"I live about a mile from here," Nikki said. "We could drop my car at my house, which will make it easier later."

"Sure," I agreed.

We got into our cars, and I followed Nikki to a residential subdivision with modest two-story houses. She pulled into a driveway, and I stopped by the curb. She got out of her car, walked over to mine, and got in. She gave me directions to the theatre in Brookfield, and I bought tickets for the 7:00pm showing. Neither of us wanted popcorn or drinks, so after using the facilities, we went into the theatre to wait for the movie to start.

When the house lights were turned down, I felt Nikki's shoulder lightly bump mine, then about fifteen seconds later, I felt it again. I took the hint and put my arm around her, something I obviously knew about but had never actually done in a movie theatre. It was a typical High School thing, which made sense, given Nikki had graduated the previous year and still lived at home.

If I understood the rituals properly, that meant I'd receive a 'good night' kiss when I drove her home after the movie. That would, I felt, inevitably lead to a second date, which created a conundrum -- when to tell Nikki about Keiko and Sofía. One would likely generate sympathy, and the other, concern, given my relationship with Bianca. The question of future relationships could wait until it became necessary, if it ever did.

As the feature started, I made a concentrated effort to quiet the analytical part of my mind so I could focus on enjoying the movie. Enjoy it I did, as the comedy far outweighed the romance, and Anthony Michael Hall stole the show with one-liners that caused the audience to laugh repeatedly. Nikki clearly enjoyed the movie, as she was laughing right along with me.

"That was awesome!" Nikki gushed when we left the theatre.

"I agree! I really enjoyed it."

We walked to the car, and I held the door for Nikki to get in. Once she was in, I closed the door, walked around to the driver's side, and got in.

"Do I have enough points for a second date?" I asked as I started the car.

"Yes!" Nikki exclaimed as I pulled out of the parking spot. "Absolutely! When?"

"First, let me tell you two things that are very important."

"Uhm, OK. What?"

"I was married, and my wife died of leukemia on December 27th of last year."

"Oh my gosh! I'm so sorry!"

"Thanks. The second thing is that before I married, a lesbian friend asked me to help her have a baby. I did that, and I have a one-month-old daughter named Sofía. She and her mom live in my condo with me but have their own rooms."

"I, uhm, don't know what to say about that."

"You have plenty of time to think about it," I said. "The next few weeks are very busy, so it would probably be three weeks before we can go out again."

"The timing..."

"I was faithful to my vows to Keiko. She and I were dating, but not exclusively at that point, though we were moving towards being a couple. She was diagnosed with leukemia and started treatment before I asked her to marry me. One side-effect of treatment is infertility, so Keiko and I agreed that I'd fulfill Bianca's -- Sofía's mom -- request.

"That all happened before we had a traditional Japanese engagement ceremony. Shortly thereafter, Keiko and I married in a civil ceremony because the future was unclear, then later on, we had a Shinto ceremony. The chemo didn't work, and we couldn't find a compatible bone marrow donor. Given there was no hope, she chose to stop treatment and come home, and died two days after Christmas."

"You weren't married very long."

"No, we weren't. I met her through a mutual friend in February, we had our engagement ceremony in August, as well as our civil wedding ceremony. Our Shinto ceremony was in October, and she died in December."

"You married her knowing she was going to die?"

"Knowing she *might* die," I countered. "I had decided she was the one before her diagnosis, and I felt anything other than following through would be betraying everything I believe in -- to be honest, to keep your word, and to follow through on your commitments."

"It sounds almost like *Love Story*," Nikki observed.

"There are parallels. Bianca insisted I see the movie after Keiko's diagnosis but before the engagement ceremony."

"Does your baby's mom have a...girlfriend, I guess it would be?"

"She did, but the girl broke up with her because she didn't want to live with a baby. That happened right before Sofía was born, despite the girlfriend agreeing it was OK for Bianca to have a baby. I'm sure Bianca will find a new girlfriend."

"And she'll live with you forever?"

"That is the plan," I replied. "Bianca works for me as a data analyst."

"Is that how you met her?"

"No. I met her at a party thrown by a friend of a girl who is the daughter of a floor trader and who temped in the mailroom. I hired her after I was promoted last August."

We had reached her house, and I pulled into the driveway. We both got out of the car, and I walked her to the door.

"Do you want me to call you?" I asked.

Nikki was quiet for a moment, then nodded, "Yes."

I debated whether or not to try to kiss her, and when she didn't turn to unlock the door, I was confident that I should. I leaned forward, and our lips touched in a soft kiss.

"I had a good time," she said. "Call soon, OK?"

"I will. Though, as I said, things are a bit hectic for the next two weeks. I'm taking another securities license exam on Wednesday, and I have my final for the class I'm taking on the 19th, and that's when things will calm down. But I'll call before then."

"Great!"

Nikki gave me a quick kiss, then turned to unlock the door. Once she was safely inside, I headed back to my car for the ninety-minute drive home.



May 7, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"«Abuela» knows that we're celebrating Violet's birthday tonight, right?" I asked Bianca as we ate breakfast together on Monday morning.

"Yes. I'll bake the cake this afternoon. Violet turns twenty-one today, right?"

"Yes. Her gift was delivered on Wednesday. I'll bring it down after I dress for work. I also ordered flowers for her. They'll be delivered this morning."

"How did things go with the girl from Milwaukee?"

"I was surprised you didn't ask last night when I got into bed."

"I was beat! Sofía was cranky yesterday, and I didn't get much sleep. Fortunately, Chelsea will be here today, and I can nap this afternoon after work."

"What was wrong?" I asked.

"Who knows? Baby-itis?! I think some people call it 'colic', but she was just unhappy and cried a lot. Fortunately, she calmed down just before you came home and fell asleep. She was fine when I fed her at 2:00am and 5:00am."

"I wasn't around Heather enough to know, but when does she start eating baby food?"

"Probably around six months, but only to supplement breast milk. I'm going to make her food the way my mom did for us -- basically purée it in a blender."

"What kinds of things?"

"Bananas, apples, peaches, carrots, and peas. Eventually, chicken. She'll nurse until she's around sixteen months, though she may stop sooner on her own. So, Milwaukee?"

"She's interested in a second date. I didn't say anything about Keiko or Sofía until I was taking Nikki home from the theatre after seeing *Sixteen Candles*. I felt it was better to not influence her one way or the other, and, honestly, if either of us hadn't been interested in a second date, I wouldn't have said anything at all."

"That makes sense. I assume that's how you plan to handle any new girls?"

"I think so."

"So you're branching out from art students?" Bianca asked with a smirk.

"That was just a function of modeling for Claire's class."

"You're modeling for another student, right? I mean, besides CeCi?"

"Yes. That starts soon. She's supposed to call to set up our first session."

"And the one who went home to Oregon?"

"Krissy? We'll talk over the Summer a few times. I'm enjoying getting to know a bunch of different girls who aren't part of one of Ellie's baseball games."

"That really bugs you that much?" Bianca asked.

"It didn't, at least in the beginning; it was just the ridiculous, over-the-top idea she had. She totally got off on seeing me have sex with other girls, which changed the character from the games we played when Allyson hosted them."

"Those were fun! I still remember that first kiss at Allyson's New Year's Eve party!"

"And who knew it would lead to that little girl in her crib upstairs!"

"Not me, that's for sure!"

"Me, either!"

We finished our breakfast, I went upstairs to change, and when I went back downstairs, I put the wrapped gift for Violet on the breakfast bar. I grabbed my satchel, and Bianca and I made our three-elevator commute.

When I arrived, I saw the 'Flash Note' Pete had written about Continental Illinois on my desk and quickly read through it. It was clear, succinct, and to the point. He had confirmed what Stan Jakes had told me with his friend at the bank, and the conclusion was that a run on the bank would begin as soon as it opened for business, though institutions could initiate transfers at any time, and execution depended on their agreement with Continental Illinois.

My phone rang just as I was coming back to my desk with a cup of freshly brewed coffee.

"Research, Kane."

"Noel. Who wrote the report?"

"Pete Mueller. I called him after I saw the article in the *Trib*. Jack Nelson had someone come in to distribute it yesterday afternoon before the overnight guys started their day."

"Excellent work. That short of yours is going to pay off handsomely. I want you to expand the research on banks and S&Ls. This won't be an isolated incident."

"Mueller is on it, and you'll see an expanded section on banking in today's analyst report. It will include an overall health rating for the sector and a list of the fifteen institutions with the worst balance sheets due to non-performing loans. We're improving our model; Pérez is working on that."

"A step ahead once again. You're kicking ass, Kane. Keep it up!"

"Will do."

"Make sure you take care of Mueller."

"Already on it. I offered steak dinners for him and his wife."

"Good man. I'll remember this at bonus time for your team."

"Thanks."

He hung up without a further word, so I replaced the handset in the cradle. I turned back to my IBM PC and continued working on my section of the daily analyst report. I finished it and reviewed what the rest of the team had written and had just finished when Violet's flowers were delivered.

"You're so sweet!" she exclaimed. "Thank you!"

"You're welcome! Happy birthday!"

As we were in the office, we didn't even hug so as not to give the wrong impression. Pete came into my office a few minutes later.

"I just spoke to my contact, and there's a run on institutional deposits. The bank is responding as we discussed, and my contact's rough estimate is they can survive about two weeks without government help. Internal rumors say they're talking to the Fed about emergency liquidity, but there's pushback from the White House."

"That makes sense. The money pros at Treasury and the Fed will have to convince Reagan to act, and he might not. I still agree with you that when push comes to shove, there will be intervention, but it might be a close thing. Noel

Spurgeon complimented you on the 'Flash Note'. He said he'd remember at bonus time."

"Fuckin' A!" Pete exclaimed.

"And let me know where you want to take Katey."

"Morton's."

"OK. I'll call and set it up. Dinner for two, dessert, and a bottle of wine. I should have the gift certificate from them by the end of the week. You'll just need to make reservations. And gratuity is included."

"Thanks!"

"Keep up the good work!"

He left the office, and I went about my typical morning routine. I had lunch with Violet as usual, and we went to the gym to work out. During the afternoon, we had what had become a monthly staff meeting on the first Monday of each month. I commended the team for their work, and we discussed changes and improvements to the daily analyst report, as well as the programming work Steve Smith and Bianca were doing, though Bianca wasn't in attendance.

At the end of the day, Violet accompanied me to the condo so we could celebrate her birthday. «Abuela» had made spicy grilled chicken, roasted zucchini, and rice, which was fantastic. As she'd promised, Bianca had made «Tres Leches» cake, and when it was brought out, Deanna, CeCi, Bianca, and I sang *Happy Birthday* to Violet.

The cake was out of this world, and once we finished it, I gave Violet the box with her gift. She opened it and gasped when she saw the ruby bracelet, earrings,

and pendant I'd ordered from a jeweler near the tailor shop Beth had recommended.

"Thank you so much!" Violet exclaimed.

"You're welcome! Happy twenty-first birthday!"

Everyone else chimed in as well, and Violet put on the jewelry. We all got up from the table, and Deanna said she was going to her studio and asked to borrow the car after she and CeCi helped clean up after the meal. I agreed, and Violet and I went into the Japanese room. We didn't have to take off our shoes for the «tatami» mats, as Bianca and I had agreed we'd continue our 'no shoes inside' practice to preserve the hardwood floors and area rugs.

I put on a classical station that played album sides, then sat in one of the Papasan chairs next to Violet.

"Thank you for the wonderful gift," she said.

"You're welcome!"

Violet moved into my lap, and I put my arms loosely around her. She smiled, curled up, and rested her head on my shoulder, and sighed deeply.

"This feels so safe," she whispered.

"I'm glad," I replied. "You know I would never do anything to hurt you and will do everything in my power to ensure nobody else hurts you."

"Thank you."

We sat quietly for a few minutes, both enjoying the closeness.

"What are you thinking right now?" Violet asked.

"How much I care for you and how happy I am that we're friends."

"Not..."

"Rumors to the contrary notwithstanding, that is not the only thing I think about! In fact, it's not even the primary thing I think about! Of course, now that you brought it up..."

Violet laughed softly, "I'd say I'm sorry, but it wouldn't be true. If I asked you to, would you?"

"If you can accept me for who I am and what I'm able to provide, yes."

"You miss Keiko terribly, don't you?"

"I do."

"She's always going to have part of your heart."

"Bianca agrees with you."

"I don't see how it could be otherwise. Can I ask you something?"

"We already agreed you could!"

"Not that!" Violet laughed. "I mean, yes, that, but...I know you'll give me an honest answer."

"Of course."

"If we did, what would change other than that we did it?"

"In one sense, nothing; in another sense, we don't know. OK to be my usual self?"

"Yes, of course."

"If it were just for fun or to feel good, then nothing really would change except that we'd have done it. But I don't think either of us would think it was just for fun or to feel good. It would mean something to both of us, and we'd each have to deal with those feelings. Let me ask you this -- are you sure you won't have a panic attack?"

"I think the only way to know for sure is to actually get to that point. We discussed that at my house."

"That the only way you could know if you could do it was to do it."

"Yes. Will you give me a real kiss? Just one to see?"

"Yes."

Violet lifted her head and presented her lips for a kiss. I moved my head until our lips touched softly. We held that soft kiss for a short time before Violet's lips parted. I accepted the invitation and gently slid my tongue into her mouth, and we exchanged a very soft, very sweet French kiss. Violet moaned, and her body tensed a bit, so I broke the kiss.

"You OK?" I asked

"It made me feel very weird, like in the pit of my stomach."

"I believe that's normal," I said. "Is that why you tensed?"

"Sorry."

"There is no need to apologize!" I said gently. "Just answer the question."

"Yes," Violet said quietly. "It made me feel strange, but also made me want to..."

"That's normal, too."

"Kiss me again, please."

I touched my lips to Violet's and we exchanged a soft French kiss. Violet moaned but didn't tense, and we kissed for nearly a minute before she broke the kiss. She stared into my eye, then grasped my wrist. She began moving my arm upwards.

"Are you sure?" I asked quietly.

"I trust you to stop if I say stop, so you have to trust me to stop if I need to."

"OK," I agreed with a bit of trepidation.

We kissed again, and I carefully moved my hand to her small breast and cupped it through her fuzzy pink sweater. I had my reservations, not because I felt Violet was going to have a panic attack, but because of how it might change our relationship. As much as I loved her, I was not emotionally ready for a serious relationship. I broke the kiss but didn't move my hand.

"Are you sure about this?" I asked.

"Kiss me again, please."

I did and gently squeezed her breast, longing to feel it without the intervening material. After two minutes, Violet broke the kiss.

"You can put your hand under my sweater," she said quietly, seemingly reading my mind.

I almost asked if she was sure, but I'd asked earlier, and she'd made it clear she'd tell me to stop, so I simply moved my hand down and carefully slipped it under the pink sweater, feeling a cotton T-shirt. I slid my hand up and cupped her small breast through the T-shirt, realizing she wasn't wearing a bra.

We began kissing, and I rubbed Violet's nipple through the thin cotton material. I knew the next move had to be mine, so I slid my hand down to Violet's stomach and tugged on the t-shirt, pulling it from her skirt. I pushed my fingers under the soft cotton material, and they came in contact with Violet's stomach. She gasped and broke the kiss.

"Yes," she whispered.

We began kissing again, and I slowly slid my hand up towards Violet's breast. Her skin was silky smooth, and she trembled and moaned in anticipation as my fingers traced a path to her small, firm breast. I cupped her breast in my palm, then ran my finger around her engorged nipple.

My erection was straining against my briefs and slacks, but the way Violet was sitting, it wasn't pressing against her. I wondered how she'd react to seeing it, but my ability to think rationally was diminished as blood was redirected from other vital organs, including my brain, to make me rock hard.

We spent several minutes kissing with my hand on Violet's breast, alternating cupping it and running my finger over her nipple. Even in my slightly addled state, I recalled Violet talking about working our way towards making love.

That thought indicated my next move, and I released Violet's breast and cautiously slid my hand down her side and to her stomach, my fingers pointing downwards. I paused briefly, then gently pushed my fingers under the hem of her skirt, encountering the elastic waist of her cotton panties. I carefully pressed my fingers past it and felt soft pubic hair. I moved my fingers in a circle, then moved lower.

"Wait!" Violet gasped, breaking the kiss.

My first reaction was to withdraw my hand as if I'd touched a hot stove, but I fought that, as I felt it might send the wrong message. Instead, I left my hand where it was, the tips of my fingers about half an inch about the top of Violet's labia. I felt it better to wait for her to speak or take the next step, as anything I said or did could be misinterpreted or hurt her.

"W...w...we should stop," she finally said.

With that, I carefully removed my hand from under her clothes and simply held her.

"Say something," she requested, her voice barely audible.

"I love you, Violet," I said. "And I respect you."

"I...feel like I'm about to lose control, and I'm afraid I'm going to have a panic attack."

I suspected she was confusing the build-up to an orgasm to the onset of a panic attack, but I absolutely could not apply any pressure, as she might actually have a panic attack, which was the last thing I wanted. I remembered our conversation

about her being at the same stage as a young teenager, and the combination of excitement, nerves, and building physical pleasure was probably overwhelming.

"Then we can just cuddle," I offered.

"But you want to..."

"I desire you, but my desire to keep you safe and to protect you is far stronger."

"Thank you," she said, snuggling close.

We cuddled for about twenty minutes, and then she suggested she should go home before it was too late. We had a quick discussion about how she would get home, and we agreed that calling Chicago Livery was the best approach. I'd set up an account with them, so all I needed to do was order the car, and I'd be billed at the end of the month.

Ten minutes later, I accompanied Violet to the lobby.

"Miss Clemmons, your car is here," Robert said when we approached the door.

Violet and I exchanged a hug, and she kissed my cheek.

"See you tomorrow at work," she said. "Thank you for the gifts."

"You're welcome. See you tomorrow."

She and Robert went out to the black Town Car, he held the door for her and, once she was safely inside, closed the door. The Town Car pulled away, and I headed for the elevator to return to the condo.

"I would have bet anything she'd have spent the night tonight," Bianca said when I sat down next to her in the conversation pit.

"You know she has significant struggles, and she might never overcome them," I said.

"She's really changed and become what I would call a 'complete person' in the past year."

"I don't disagree, and that's major progress from where she was when I met her, and that was after she'd had four years of counseling to get her to the point where she was even comfortable talking to a guy."

"I have to ask -- is Violet willing to accept the reality that you'll most likely never marry and might well never have a committed, monogamous relationship?"

"We've discussed it a few times and I have no doubt that's part of her struggle. I think Nancy, the counselor Violet and I have both seen, put it best when she compared Violet to a young teen just discovering sex and sexuality. I'm positive it's overwhelming."

"You didn't have that problem, did you?"

"Because I never saw Bev that way until she kissed me on her sixteenth birthday, so I never struggled with it, per se. I mean, sure, I had urges, but never for Bev. The fact that we went from first kiss to screwing in just under five minutes left zero room for trepidation. Hormones took over, and I was incapable of rational thought as soon as I saw Bev's breasts!"

Bianca laughed, "I know about being unable to form a coherent thought from my first time! The desire just pushed all rationality aside, and I wanted, no, I *needed* to be fucked. I think that's how so many teenage girls end up pregnant."

"I suspect you're right."

A cry transmitted by the intercom interrupted our conversation.

"I'll get Miss Sofia," I offered.

Bianca smiled, so I got up and went upstairs. I changed my daughter's diaper, then brought her downstairs to her mom to nurse.

"I saw CeCi's door open," I said.

"She decided to go to the gallery with Deanna and hang out."

"Speaking of that, did Deanna let you know the gallery will be open Tuesday through Friday evenings and Saturday evenings?"

"Yes. She wrote it in the calendar book we keep by the phone."

Deanna had suggested the option of a notebook-style calendar so as not to have to hang a large blotter-style calendar on the wall the way we had at the house. I'd agreed because it would have stood out like a sore thumb in the design.

"Are you sleeping with me tonight?" Bianca asked a few minutes later.

"If you want, yes. Neither Deanna nor CeCi mentioned anything, and they're out."

"They snooze, they lose!" Bianca declared. "But all kidding aside, I don't want to monopolize you."

"Sure you do!" I countered with a grin. "So long as you have access to pussy, too!"

Bianca laughed, "As much as I like sex with you, that's actually not the important part."

"It's being a family -- you, me and Sofía."

"Exactly. We can do that without sex, but why not have sex, too?"

"Why not, indeed!" I chuckled.

LXII. Propositions

May 8, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"Can we talk about last night?" Violet asked, coming into my office mid-morning on Tuesday.

"Yes. Close the door, please."

She closed the door, and we sat on the settee.

"I'm really sorry," Violet said.

"There's nothing to be sorry for," I said gently. "We talked about taking things step-by-step."

"But you obviously wanted to."

"A true statement, but immaterial."

"I wanted to," Violet said. "But I felt like I was going to lose control."

"That feeling is nature's way of ensuring babies are born," I said with a smile. "I can't say for sure because I'm not a girl, but I suspect the feelings were similar to your panic attacks, though I suspect your panic attacks didn't have a pleasurable component."

"Not even!" Violet laughed. "I don't know; I mean, after thinking about it, I'm pretty sure it was both, plus being nervous."

"That makes perfect sense, and we can take it as slowly as you want. And I know you're struggling with the type of relationship we'd have."

"You know I don't think you have to be married to do that."

"Yes, but you also said you felt it was OK with a guy you thought you might marry. One thing that we didn't discuss was what you would want if it was up to you. Assume, for the sake of argument, that you can actually go to bed with me and not have a bad reaction."

"To be together as a couple and have a baby together," Violet said.

"That's a change," I said. "The baby, I mean."

Violet giggled, something rare for her.

"I was infected by the Sofía virus!" she declared.

"She is an adorable little thing," I said. "And I would love to have a baby with you eventually."

"Really?"

"Really. When we're both ready."

"If it were up to you, what would you want?"

"That's the major thing with which I'm struggling. I don't know what I want. What I can offer now is friendship, which could include physical affection, anywhere from, to use a metaphor, first base to a home run."

"Because you think sex can be just for fun, right?"

"Can be, yes. But what I'm saying is that if you just want hugs, that's fine; if you just want to kiss, that's fine, too. It doesn't *have* to lead to going all the way, as it were. And there's no rush, even if we were to decide to have a baby together. That could be ten years from now or even a bit longer."

"You weren't frustrated last night?"

Not frustrated, but certainly, I felt I'd missed out on something very special, something that would have allowed Violet to allow herself to 'lose control' with me. That said, the promise was there that when it happened -- and I felt it was 'when' not 'if' -- it was going to be mind-blowing.

"Not even a little bit," I said firmly and lovingly. "We can take this at whatever pace you feel is best."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome."

She left, and I returned to work. Late in the morning, I called Tony, Pete, and Scott into my office to discuss the latest rate hike by the Feds, which brought the Prime Rate to 12.5%.

"What do you think, Scott?" I asked.

"My money is on one more round of tightening in June. Reagan is already bitching up a storm about the Fed, and it's going to get worse, but I think, in the end, Volcker sticks with the program. I'd be more concerned about the banking sector."

"Me, too. Pete?"

"50/50 on another hike in June. The optics just look bad for Volcker in the middle of a Presidential election. Even he has to bow to reality. If Reagan loses because of the Fed tightening, Volcker will be accused of stacking the deck when the numbers tell me that it's an even-money bet."

"Tony?"

"Volcker has inflation bore-sighted and he is not afraid to pull the trigger. He doesn't give a damn about the politics. I'd bet on an increase, but then the numbers will flip, and we'll see a round of easing in September and October."

"I agree with that last bit," Pete offered. "Volcker will squeeze until it hurts, then quickly back off so he doesn't completely choke off growth. He almost has to loosen as fast as he tightened."

"Target interest rates for November 6th?" I asked.

"12.25%," Tony said.

"11.75%," Pete offered.

"12.5%," Scott added. "I don't think he'll cut that fast."

"Let's go with 12.25%," I said. "I tend to agree more with Scott, but Pete makes a good argument about the reciprocal loosening. Pete, any more news on Continental Illinois?"

"Outflows are continuing apace, but they're defending successfully so far. Sustainable for maybe two weeks, but I hear they're already jawboning Treasury Secretary Regan and Fed Chairman Volcker for emergency assistance to ride out what they're calling a temporary liquidity problem."

"Temporary? Hah!" Scott declared.

"I did say they were calling it that. They're a zombie bank at this point -- dead man walking."

"Thanks, guys. I'll be out this afternoon taking my Series 30 licensure test."

They left the office, and I ate lunch with Violet in the lunchroom, then left the office and walked to the building where the test was being given. It was a relatively short test consisting of fifty questions, either True/False or multiple choice, so I'd be gone less than two hours -- ten minutes each way, fifty minutes for the test, and about twenty minutes waiting time as I needed to check in for the exam.

Most of the material would be the same as for the Series 3 exam, except from a manager's perspective rather than from the perspective of a broker. Given I'd had both the Series 3 and Series 30 training courses, and had reviewed the material on Sunday, I was positive I knew the material. As I entered the building where the test would be given, I felt extremely confident as I'd only need to achieve a score of 70% to pass the exam.

I found the correct office, showed my ID, and, per the rules, put my wallet, keys, notebook, money clip, and checkbook into a small locker. I locked it, then went into the room where a proctor was waiting. I chose a seat in the second row and sat quietly, waiting for the exam to start.

At precisely 1:00pm, we were told to turn over the test booklet, break the seal, and begin the timed test. I worked methodically through the questions, none of which stumped me, though there were a few that used tricky wording that I believed was intended to catch people who weren't reading carefully.

I completed the test with fourteen minutes remaining and was confident I'd passed, so rather than spend time checking my answers, I signed the booklet and handed it in. I left the classroom, collected my items from the locker, then returned to the Hancock Center.

"How did you do?" Violet asked.

"I'm positive I passed, but I won't know until they notify me, which could be as soon as Friday, but more likely sometime next week. Then I have to file the application, and the license will be issued, probably sometime in late June or early July."

"But you'll keep this role, right?"

"Yes."

"I'm happy for you!"

"Thanks!"

I went into my office and spent the rest of the afternoon on research. At 5:00pm, I left the office and made the three-elevator commute to the condo. I greeted everyone, then went upstairs to change clothes. Five minutes later, I was back downstairs and sat down with Bianca and Sofía.

"You had a phone call from Britney Krause," Bianca said. "She left her number and asked you to call as soon as you could."

"That's the art student. Let me make the call."

I called Britney, and we agreed I'd meet her at 2:00pm on Saturday in a studio at the School of the Art Institute. The Summer session didn't actually start for two

weeks, but she wanted to get a head start. I opened the calendar and wrote that in, then went back to sit with Bianca and Sofía until dinner. At dinner, Deanna invited me to come to Ateljé D with her, and as I didn't have anything I needed to do, I agreed. Once we finished eating, we left the condo and drove to the gallery.

"Is there anything left to do to prepare for Sunday?" I asked.

"Just hang four paintings," she said. "I called the building handyman, and he'll come by on Thursday to put proper fasteners in the walls in the open area and a few in each bedroom, though I don't plan to hang anything on the bedroom ones -- each person has to decide what they want. For yours, probably just one more, given you have the Japanese prints you chose, including *Octopuses and Ama*."

"I'm happy for you to decide what to put on my walls," I said.

"Speaking of that, CeCi will give you copies of all the photos she takes, and we discussed creating some kind of display or collage, but we weren't sure you would want a bunch of photos of you hanging on the walls."

"Not particularly," I said. "I'd be OK with some kind of photo album, but I really don't want them on the walls. You're already going to display 'Nuclear Family' in the gallery room, right?"

We were interrupted by the tinkling of the bell on the door, indicating a visitor. Deanna left the studio, but I remained behind to allow her to interact with her visitor. She was back about ten minutes later.

"Could I get some additional capital?" she asked.

"For?"

"Art supplies. The woman who just stopped in was looking for supplies and we talked about how tough it can be to find them. I had planned to do that once I started offering classes after I graduate, but I think it would be a good thing to start now. There's enough space in the pantry room to keep a stock of supplies, and I could put up a sign with the list of things I'd have -- charcoal, pencils, paper, canvas, and paint. I wouldn't buy a large supply to start, that way, if they didn't sell, I could use them or offer them to other students. It would also create a bit of additional foot traffic, which is the lifeblood of galleries."

"Figure out how much you need and let me know."

"Will do!" she said, picking up her brush. "Back to your question -- yes, I plan to display them, though you did express concern about Sofía."

"I'm OK with it now," I said. "We'll worry about the display when she's older. Maybe you're right, but I'm not sure. Anyway, when is the next one?"

"When she's three months old, then six months, then a year. After that, once a year on her birthday until you say «¡No más!» like Roberto Durán!"

I chuckled, "Talk about an obscure reference! I vaguely remember the dustup about that."

"Yes, back in 1980 against Sugar Ray Leonard. My dad is a boxing fan, and he talked about that for weeks with his friends."

"You know, this is the first time I've actually watched you paint one of your abstract paintings. What's this one?"

"It's called *Afterlife*," Deanna said. "I'm not sure about it, and I might trash it and start over."

"How often does that happen?"

"Often enough. I have false starts fairly often, but then the emotion takes over. Well, usually. Sometimes, I just abandon the idea because it never flows."

"How long from start to finish?"

"It varies, but a couple of weeks, usually. Sometimes, the concepts percolate in my brain for weeks or months before I put the first paint on the canvas. The ones I've done for you were actually outliers in that the concepts just sprang fully formed in my mind."

"May I ask what you're trying to capture?"

"Keiko's «kami»," Deanna said. "This one is for me, never to be sold."

"I hope you'll display it."

"Probably in my room," Deanna said. "Consider it the equivalent of the portrait of her in the Japanese room or the urn in your room."

I nodded, "That makes perfect sense."

There was one other visitor that evening, though just someone who was passing by and curious. Deanna had me lock the doors at 9:00pm, though we stayed another hour while she worked on her painting. Just after 10:00pm, she threw in the towel and said she intended to start over. We headed home, and at her request, she joined me in my bed.



May 9, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

"I don't think it much matters," Tony said as we discussed the Soviet and East Bloc boycott of the Summer Olympics in LA that had been announced on Wednesday.

"I tend to agree. Mostly a tit-for-tat thing, and it's not like any advertising money flows past the Iron Curtain. Sure, we're missing some great athletes, but in the end, the rest of the world will be there."

"On a different topic, did you see they suspended the game between the Sox and Brewers last night and are resuming today?"

"Yeah," I replied. "I saw it on Bloomberg this morning -- seventeen innings so far. I didn't realize the rules required the game to be suspended at 1:00am."

"American League rules; not sure about the National League because it's not like games going past the 12th inning are very common. And it should have been over after the Brewers took a two-run lead in the top of the ninth. The Sox rallied with two in the bottom of the ninth with two out. And that was against Rollie Fingers, who's a sure Hall of Famer.

"It has a ways to go to break the modern record of twenty-five innings by the Cardinals and Mets in 1974. The all-time record is from 1920, when the Brooklyn Robins and Boston Braves played to a tie after 26 innings. They basically just gave up because ties were OK in those days."

"Brooklyn Robins?" I asked.

"The Dodgers. That was their name for about fifteen years. They had a bunch of other names before that, including the Grays, Bridegrooms, Superbas, and Trolley Dodgers. All of those were actually nicknames because their official name

was Brooklyn Base Ball Club. In 1933, they put 'Dodgers' on the uniforms, and that was it."

"I know the Reds were the 'Red Stockings' and 'Redlegs', and 'Reds' was shortened. At some point during the 60s, they avoided using 'Reds' because of the Soviet Union, but in the end, it won out. Anyway, unless there's some fallout beyond the East Bloc nations not showing up, we agree there's no effect on any of the markets."

"Yep."

He left, and I returned to a review of my portfolio and made a minor adjustment to the mix of Treasury instruments to ensure I didn't have any forced redemptions to make the estimated pension payouts. I had lunch with Violet, and we went to the gym together. The rest of the day was typical, and at 5:00pm, I left the office and made my way to the condo.

We had a nice dinner, and after dinner, Deanna left for Ateljé D. CeCi was at work, so it was just Bianca, Sofía, and me at home. Around 8:00pm, I was holding Sofía, and the phone rang, so Bianca got up to answer it. After a quick chat, she put her hand over the mouthpiece.

"It's my cousin. OK to invite her and Katy over on Saturday?"

"You don't need my permission! I have class in the morning and my modeling session with Britney in the afternoon."

"OK."

She finished her call with Esme, then came to sit with Sofía and me.

"They're coming over around 1:00pm," Bianca said. "I'm not sure how long they'll stay."

"It's your condo as much as mine," I said. "Remember, you're building equity with every rent payment."

"I can't see you ever selling this, even if you build a house elsewhere."

"Probably not, and it'll all go to Sofía and any brother or sister she might eventually have. But if you ever need the equity, you can cash it out."

"What are the chances of that? If you stay at Spurgeon, I'll make great money; if you leave Spurgeon, I'll make even more money!"

"I agree, but it's an important point."

"One which I acknowledge. Sofía's asleep, so I think you can put her down."

I nodded, carried my daughter upstairs, and put her in her crib.



May 11, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Friday, at 5:15pm, Bianca and I met Jack, Kristy, Meg, and Nicole in the lobby of the Hancock Center for our triple date.

"*Firestarter* or *The Natural*?" Kristy asked. "Stephen King or baseball."

Everyone voted for *The Natural*, which made the decision easy. There was more debate about where to eat dinner, but in the end, we all agreed to Maxim's because of the varied menu. The easiest way to get there was the Streeterville bus, so we all walked out to Michigan Avenue to the bus stop.

The six of us chatted amiably while waiting for the bus. The bus arrived about ten minutes later, and fifteen minutes later, we were seated in the downstairs of Maxim's. We ate, then took the same bus route back to Water Tower to see the movie. We all enjoyed the movie, which had a mythical storyline enhanced by amazing cinematography. When the movie ended, Jack and Kristy headed back to the house, and Bianca and I invited Meg and Nicole to come back to the condo.

"Holy shit!" Nicole exclaimed, stopping dead in her tracks when she walked into the condo, causing Meg to bump into her.

"Almost everyone has that reaction the first time they see the view," Bianca observed.

The girls moved further into the condo, and I shut the door.

"Hi, Jessica," I said. "How was Sofía?"

"She's an angel! She had her two bottles of expressed milk, and I put her in her crib about fifteen minutes ago."

"We have it from here. You can head home, but mark your time card for the full shift, please."

"Thank you!"

She left, and Bianca went to check on Sofía.

"Babysitter?" Meg asked.

"Nanny," I replied. "There are two who cover 6:00am to 6:00pm Monday through

Thursday and 6:00pm to midnight on Friday.

"Unreal," Nicole observed. "I might have to reconsider my future! If you're taking applications for full-time, live-in girlfriend, I'm in!"

I chuckled, "Not at the moment, but Bianca might be."

"Mercenary much?!" Meg teased.

"Right, like YOU didn't think the same thing!" Nicole challenged.

"Maybe..." Meg admitted with a silly smile. "Being serious now, who is living with you now?"

"Besides Bianca and Sofía? Just Deanna and CeCi. Jack and Kristy are renting the house in Rogers Park from me."

"How many bedrooms?" Nicole asked.

"Six. Four are being used by the adults, one is a nursery, and the other is an art gallery. Let me give you a tour."

I did that, concluding in the art gallery.

"Those two paintings are very cool," Nicole observed, standing near the two paintings in the 'Nuclear Family series.

"Deanna intends to add at least three or four more -- three months, six months, a year, and two years."

"It's fantastic work," Meg interjected. "Neither you nor Bianca seem to have any qualms about posing nude."

"Except about the extra baby weight in the second one," Bianca grouched. "But I'm going to the gym in the afternoons now, so I'll fix that."

"It's a bummer about the hot tub, though," Meg observed.

"The one major downside," I said. "But as you saw, four of the bedrooms have large whirlpool tubs, and the other two have soaker tubs. You can fit two in them or even three if one person sits at the opposite end. It's not perfect, but it'll do. It's similar to not having a backyard and fire pit. That said, there's an indoor swimming pool on the 47th floor that we have access to. The other thing we don't have is a fireplace. Tradeoffs, really, for the location and the view."

"Our commute is basically three elevator rides," Bianca interjected. "And Deanna and CeCi are much closer to school."

"What about Deanna's studio?" Nicole inquired.

"It's in the back of the gallery at Ateljé D. Did you visit?"

"On Saturday," Nicole replied. "But we didn't know there was a studio."

"It's a private space for Deanna, though she may allow some other art students to use it. Shall we go downstairs? We have beer, wine, bourbon, rum, and vodka, plus Coke and OJ."

"Well," Nicole said. "I think Meg and I would be up for a sloe comfortable screw!"

"Sorry, no sloe gin and no Southern Comfort, though there's a liquor store that will deliver to the building if you really want that."

"A glass of wine will do!" Nicole replied.

The four of us headed downstairs, where I opened a bottle of Sutter Home White Zinfandel. I poured four glasses and handed one to each of the girls, then they went to sit in the conversation pit formed by the sectional sofa while I put the Billy Joel Compact Disc into the player and turned it on.

"How are things going, Jonathan?" Meg asked.

"Work and school are going well," I replied. "I'm still dealing with Keiko's death and the best way forward. I miss her terribly, and I still hurt, but things are better."

"I'm sorry if the innuendo before bothered you," Nicole said.

"It didn't, but I can't speak for Bianca's opinion of her date propositioning me!"

"You know I don't mind!" Bianca declared. "And I'm not exactly ready to have sex, even if it's just oral. Doctor Wisniewski suggested at least eight weeks for any kind of genital sex. Well, assuming Nicole would be interested."

"Nicole would be," Nicole said with a smile.

"Mark June 16th on your calendar then!" Bianca declared. "The four of us should go out again."

"A foursome?" Nicole smirked.

"I'm down for that!" Bianca declared. "I'm not sure about Jonathan and Meg."

"Meg's not sure about Meg," Meg said. "But I'm down for getting together. Who knows what might happen?!"

"Let's plan dinner and a movie and take it from there," I suggested.

"Good plan!" Meg agreed.



May 12, 1984, Chicago, Illinois

On Saturday morning, I got out of Bianca's bed and went to my bathroom to shower. I had considered Meg and Nicole's implied offer to stay but chose, in the end, to call it a night at about 1:00am, and they had gone back to Loyola. They hadn't been disappointed and had said they were looking forward to getting together in June.

As I showered, I thought about Violet and the significant change that had occurred the previous Monday. No matter what else I did, I had to ensure I handled the situation properly. The difficulty was I didn't know what that meant. All I could do was what I had said many times to many people -- take each day as it arrived and figure out the best way forward.

It was warm enough to bike to Violet's house, and I did a rough calculation that I'd have enough time to bike to Violet's house, but I didn't want to go to class sweaty, and the L would risk being late, so I drove.

"Hi!" Violet exclaimed when she opened the door.

"Hi!"

She gave me a tight hug and a soft kiss on the lips, which I suspected would be the new normal greeting, after which I walked into the house. She had breakfast ready, so we sat down to eat.

"I wasn't fair to you on Monday," she said.

"I disagree," I countered. "We agreed we'd take it a step at a time and stop if you wanted to stop. You didn't lead me on in any way, shape, or form. I liked making out with you, and, as I said on Tuesday morning, I was not frustrated in any way. Please don't pressure yourself because you think I'm unhappy because I'm not. I enjoyed kissing you. I enjoyed touching your breast. I liked the feel of your pubic hair."

"But you wanted more," Violet said.

"And, unless I'm completely off base, so did you. But you felt we needed to stop, so we did. You did want more, right?"

Violet nodded, "Yes."

"And, if that's what you truly want, we'll get there, and it'll be glorious."

"But I've never done it before."

"But you know how it works, right?"

"Yes," Violet said, laughing softly. "Obviously."

"Then there is nothing to worry about. The basics really are that simple and feel very good."

"But other stuff..."

"All we have to do is tell each other what feels good," I said. "If there's something you don't want to do, you tell me, and I won't be upset. May I say something a bit crude?"

"Yes."

"If the dumbest jock and biggest airhead cheerleader can figure out how to have sex, anyone can!"

Violet laughed, then said, "I suppose so."

"And, given human beings have been having sex for as long as there have been human beings, long before there was even language, I think that says that we could figure it out even without lessons or an instruction manual!"

"Probably," she said with a silly smile.

"Not to mention Sofía is evidence I have at least a minor clue as to how to make a baby, which involves the same activity we're discussing!"

"Obviously!"

"So don't worry, OK? Just let things develop, and don't push yourself beyond what you're ready to do."

"OK."

After we finished our meal, I helped Violet clean up, then headed to class. I returned to Violet's house for lunch, receiving a greeting kiss and hug, and we had a nice lunch together.

"What happens when this class ends?" she asked.

"I'll have class on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays during the Summer. The Saturday class goes to 1:00pm, so I'll have breakfast with you. We'll play lunch by ear. OK?"

"Yes. I see you basically every day except Sunday now!"

"And I'm very happy about that. Are you enjoying your work?"

"Yes! I mean, sure, the filing and creating the index are pretty boring and repetitive, but there's other stuff I do, and I'm learning a lot. But seeing you every day, even if it's just to say 'hi' is awesome."

"I enjoy that as well."

"Do you have to leave right away after lunch?"

"I can stay about an hour."

"And we can make out?"

"Yes."

We ate lunch, cleaned up, then went to sit in the front room, where Violet sat on my lap while we kissed, and I cupped her breast through her sweater. I felt that was best so as not to push things beyond what she'd requested, and Violet didn't object. I very much enjoyed the make-out session, something I'd never actually done with any girl before Violet and I had first made out on Monday evening. Bev and I had, as I'd said many times, gone from first kiss to sex in under five minutes. And in Chicago, French kissing had been a precursor to sex basically every time.

At 1:40pm, I said 'goodbye' to Violet and received a hug and soft kiss, then headed to the School of the Art Institute to meet Britney for my first modeling session. I parked, then headed into the building and located the studio she'd specified. I stopped at the open door and knocked.

"Hi!" Britney exclaimed. "Come in!"

I stepped into the studio, and she moved over to close and lock the door, then closed the blind over the window in the door.

"For privacy," she said. "Just have a seat on the sofa."

"How does this work?" I asked as I sat down.

"For each medium, I have to use the same subject, though the poses can be different. There are no requirements other than that. Nudes, semi-nudes, and fully clothed are all OK. Unless you object, I intend to do all nudes."

"No objections. How do you do the plaster and bronze?"

"Using the 'lost wax' method. I make a clay model, then make a mould from that model. I then use the mould to make a wax model, which is then used to make a bronze casting. There are a number of steps to each of those, but that's the basic process. You may have seen a picture of the bronze sculpture 'Artemision Bronze', also known as 'God from the Sea'. It's a lifelike, two-meter-high nude of a Greek god. You're about 190 centimeters, so roughly the same height."

"I take it that it works similarly for plaster?"

"It'll be similar to the bronze, working from a clay model to create a silicone mould for the plaster. I'm allowed to use the original clay sculpture for the bronze and plaster, and I'll probably do that."

"How much time are you going to need from me?"

"Probably a total of four sessions. Today, I'll shoot the photos and do the pencil

sketch. The next session will be charcoal, then one for paint, and finally, one for the clay sculpture that I'll then use for the plaster and bronze. I'll be able to work from the photos and sketches as well."

"Sounds good."

"That's for my class. If you're game, I'd like to do some things for my portfolio, too."

"What's that?"

"A very detailed drawing of just your genitals, both flaccid and erect, and plaster moulds, again, both flaccid and erect. That would require making a latex mould, which would require you to shave."

"May I think about that?"

"Of course! Let me get the releases."

She walked over to a table, picked up a clipboard, and brought it to me. I quickly scanned the release, and it seemed identical to the ones I'd signed for Claire and Natasha. I scribbled my signature and the date on the two forms and then handed the clipboard back to Britney.

"If you'll get undressed, we'll start with the photos. I'll take two rolls, one black-and-white and the other color. We'll use two poses -- one reclined on the sofa, the other with you standing."

I undressed, and Britney put a green velvet cloth on the sofa, then had me recline on my right side with both legs bent at the knee -- the left vertical and the right horizontal. She had me put my left hand on my left knee and my right hand on my left collarbone.

"Perfect! Hold that pose, and I'll take twelve shots with each camera."

She did that, moving to different places to have different perspectives, then had me stand up. She directed me to stand with my right leg forward and slightly bent, with my center of gravity slightly forward, then had me stretch out my right arm, palm down, and place my left hand on my left hip.

"Excellent. Hold that for ten shots with each camera."

Once again, she used both cameras, moving to different locations, including behind me.

"All set. Next are sketches of those positions. Stay standing, but get as comfortable as you can because it's going to take as much as an hour for me to complete the pastel sketch."

I adjusted my stance a bit, and she sat on a stool with a sketch pad and an array of pastels. It took almost fifty minutes for her to finish, and I was thankful as I was starting to cramp. She showed me the sketch and it really did look like me.

"Sorry about how long that took. Back to the couch, in the same position you were in before. It should be comfortable enough for you to stay still for the thirty minutes or so it'll take to complete the pencil sketch."

I did as she asked, and about thirty minutes later, she showed me a very lifelike sketch.

"That's great stuff!" I said.

"The release specified \$20 for each session," Britney said. "If you'd rather, I'll fuck you!"

"Tempting, but I think we should keep this to modeling."

Britney pouted, "Bummer, but OK."

She went to her bag, got two ten-dollar bills, and handed them to me.

"Maybe when we finish?" she suggested.

"Ask again then," I said and began dressing.

I was reasonably sure I wouldn't take her up on her offer. It wasn't the casual sex, and she was certainly attractive, but the idea that basically every 'art school' girl seemed to think I was available for sex. Stefi and Tara had been fun, but both of them had at least talked to me a bit before proposing sex.

It was, in a sense, similar to Ellie assuming I'd have sex with anyone she presented. That had been partly my fault because I'd gone along with it, but it had gone too far. It was also the case that with Katy, Esme, and Taya likely still at the condo, one of them, or even all of them, might offer, and any of those three would win hands down over Britney.

I finished dressing, then asked when she'd need me again. We agreed on May 26th, and I left the studio. As I walked to my car, I decided to stop by Ateljé D and see Deanna. Ten minutes later, the bell on the door signaled my entry. Deanna came out of her study.

"Hey!" she exclaimed, coming over to me and giving me a hug.

"Hey, how is the foot traffic today?"

"Six, and I think four of them are interested buyers. I arranged for pieces from

two more students as well."

"Great! How is *Afterlife*?"

"I'm not feeling it right now. I'll absolutely do it, but I really need to feel it. I'm working on one I'll call *Rainy Night*."

"OK. I just stopped in to say 'Hi'. Are you home for dinner?"

"Probably around 6:30pm."

"OK. We'll plan dinner for around 6:45pm. See you at home."

We exchanged a hug, and I headed to the condo. When I walked in, I removed my shoes and saw Bianca, Katy, Esme, and Taya sitting in the conversation pit.

"Hey!" Esme exclaimed, hopping up.

She came over and gave me a hug, and I followed her to the sectional sofa, where the others greeted me.

"Jonathan," Bianca said, "there's a letter for you from the SEC.

I got up and went to the kitchen and got the letter from the basket on the counter. I used a letter opener and extracted the paper.

"I passed!" I announced. "A perfect score."

"AWESOME!" Bianca exclaimed.

"Passed what?" Katy asked.

"My Series 30 licensure test," I said as I walked back to sit with the girls. "That's a license that allows me to manage other licensed professionals. I'll fill out the application on Monday and should have it before mid-June."

"That's totally cool! And this condo is nothing short of amazing!"

"Thanks! Taya, how was your first year at Princeton?"

"Straight A's and lots of fun, though not quite as crazy as Esme and Katy!"

"Katy and I both have straight A's as well," Esme added. "We're still having lots of fun!"

"How was your modeling session?" Bianca asked.

"Same as always."

Bianca smirked, "Meaning she offered to fuck you!"

"She did, but I put her off."

"We saw the paintings Deanna did," Esme said. "They're awesome! And your baby is SO cute!"

"Thanks. Bianca, how was she today?"

"An angel! It was just that one day, and I can't think of anything we did differently."

"Did you have plans for dinner?" I asked.

"We actually hadn't talked about it."

"Pizza? Italian? Chinese? Deanna will be here around 6:30pm. CeCi won't because she works until 10:00pm."

"Whatever the girls want," Bianca said.

"Chicago-style pizza," Esme said. "We can't get that in New Jersey."

"Traditional sausage or pepperoni?"

"Sausage, of course!" Esme said.

The other girls agreed, so I went to the kitchen to call Connie's and order pizza to be delivered at 6:45pm. We had a nice afternoon, and I had a chance to hold Sofía after Bianca nursed her. Deanna arrived home just before the pizza was delivered, and we had a nice meal at the dining room table, sharing a bottle of red wine. After we ate, I cleared away the plates, glasses, and flatware, then loaded the dishwasher. I had just finished when Taya came to the kitchen.

"Is it too soon to ask if you're interested in having me for dessert?"

Of the three girls, she was the one I would have chosen for a one-on-one encounter, and, frankly, that was more my speed at the moment.

"It's not too soon to ask," I replied with a grin. "Go ahead."

Taya laughed softly, "Would you like to have me for dessert?"

"I certainly would!"