

The Juniper Tree

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One of the most successful transplants to the colony established by the Society of Cousins on the far side of the moon was the juniper tree. Soon after Jack Baldwin and his daughter Rosalind emigrated in 2085, a project under Baldwin's direction planted junipers on the inside slopes of the domed crater, where they prospered in the low moisture environment. Visitors to the Society today may be excused if, strolling the woods above the agricultural lands of the crater floor, the fragrance of the foliage, beneath the projected blue sky of the dome, makes them think for a moment that they are in some low-gravity dream of New Mexico.

It was under a juniper tree that Jack disposed of the remains of Carey Evasson, the fourteen-year-old boy he killed.

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Ice

The blue squad's centering pass slid through the crease, where Maryjane fanned on the shot. The puck skidded to the boards, and Roz, who had been promoted to the red team for today's practice, picked it up to start a rush the other way. Carey spotted her from across the rink and set off parallel to her. They'd caught the blues off guard, with only Thabo between them and the goalie. Thabo came up to check her. Roz swerved right, then left a drop pass for Carey.

But Thabo poked his stick between Roz's legs and deflected the pass. While Roz and Carey overran the play, Thabo passed the puck back the other way to Maryjane.

Their breakaway was interrupted by the shriek of Coach Ingasdaughter's whistle. The coach skated onto the ice, yelling at Roz. "What kind of a play was that? You've got a two-on-one and you go for the drop pass? SHOOT THE PUCK!"

"But if Thabo had followed me Carey would have had an open net."

"If if if!" She raised her eyes to the roof of the cavern far overhead. "Why do you think Thabo didn't follow you? He knew you would pass, because you NEVER shoot! If you don't establish that you're a threat, they're always going to ignore you. For once, let the BOY get the rebound!"

Roz's face burned. The blue and red squads stood around watching her take the heat. Carey was looking down, brushing the blade of his stick across the ice.

Coach Ingasdaughter suddenly grabbed Roz by the shoulders, pulled her forward, and planted a kiss on her lips. "But what can I expect from a girl whose parents were married?" she said, letting Roz go. Someone snickered. "Ten minute break," Ingasdaughter said, and turned away.

Roz almost took a slash at her retreating back. Instead she looked past the coach to the bleachers where a few off-shift pressure workers sat, helmets thrown back over their shoulders, watching the practice. Beyond the rink, the floor of the cave was one huge mass of blue ice, humped and creased, refracting the lights and fading into the distance. The coach skated over to talk with her assistant. Most of the team went over to the cooler by the home bench. Roz skated to the penalty box, flipped the door open and sat down.

It was hard being the only immigrant on the hockey team. The cousins teased her, called her "High-G."

Roz had thought that going out for hockey would be a way for her make some girlfriends who could break her into one of the cliques. You needed a family to get anywhere among the cousins. You needed a mother. A father was of no consequence—everybody had a dozen fathers, or none at all.

Instead she met Carey. And, through dumb luck, it had seemed to work. Carey's grandmother, Margaret Emmasdaughter, had known Nora Sobieski personally. His mother was Eva Maggiesdaughter, chair of the Board of Matrons, by some measures the most powerful woman in the colony.

Some of the players started skating big circles on the oversized rink. She watched Carey build up a head of steam, grinning, his blond hair flying behind him. On the next time round he pulled off his glove, skated past the penalty box, winked, and gave her five as he flew by. The heavy gold ring he wore left a welt on her palm; just like Carey to hurt her with his carelessness, but she could not help but smile.

The first time she had met Carey a check she threw during practice nearly killed him. Roz had not gotten completely adjusted to skating in one-sixth G, how it was harder to start and stop, but also how much faster you got going than on earth. Carey had taken the full brunt of her hit and slammed headfirst into the boards. Play stopped. Everyone gathered around while he lay motionless on the ice.

Carey turned over and staggered to his feet, only his forehead showing above his shoulder pads. His voice came from somewhere within his jersey. “Watch out for those earth women, guys.”

Everyone laughed, and Carey poked his head out from below his pads. His bright green eyes had been focused on Roz's, and she burst out laughing, too.

When her father moved in with Eva, Carey became the brother she had never had, bold where she was shy, funny where she was sober.

Coach blew her whistle and they did two-on-one drills for the rest of the practice. Afterward Roz sat on a bench in the locker room taping the blade of her stick. At the end of the bench Maryjane flirted with Stella in stage whispers. Roz tried to ignore them.

Carey, wrapped only in a towel, sat down next to Roz and checked to see whether the coaches were in earshot. She liked watching the way the muscles of his chest and arms slid beneath his skin, so much that she tried hard not to look at him. He leaned toward her. “Hey, High-G—you interested in joining the First Imprints club?”

“What's that?”

He touched her on the leg. He always touched her, seemingly chance encounters, elbow to shoulder, knee to calf, his forehead brushing her hair. “A bunch of us are going to meet at the fountains in the dome,” Carey said. “When the carnival is real crazy we're going to sneak out onto the surface. You'll need your pressure suit—and make sure its waste reservoir vent is working.”

“Waste reservoir? What for?”

“Keep your voice down!”

“Why?”

“We're going to climb Shiva Ridge and pee on the mountaintop.” He tapped the finger on her leg. His touch was warm.

“Sounds like a boy thing,” she said. “If your mother finds out, you'll be in deep trouble.”

He smiled. "You'll never get to be an alpha female with that attitude, High-G. Mother would have invented this club, if she'd thought of it." He got up and went over to talk to Thabo.

God, she was so stupid! It was the beginning of Founders' Week, and she had hoped Carey would be her guide and companion through the carnival. She had worried all week what to wear. What a waste. She'd blown it. She tugged on the green asymmetrically-sleeved shirt she had chosen so carefully to set off her red hair.

Roz hung around the edges as Carey joked with the others, trying to laugh in the right places, feeling miserably out of place. After they dressed, she left with Carey, Thabo, and Raisa for the festival. Yellow triangular signs surrounded the pressure lock in the hallway linking the ice cavern to the lava tube. Roz struggled to keep up with Carey who, like all of the kids born on the moon, was taller than Roz. Raisa leaned on Thabo. Raisa had told Roz the day before that she was thinking about moving out and getting her own apartment. Raisa was thirteen, six months younger than Roz.

The lava tube was as much as forty meters wide, thirty tall, and it twisted and turned, rose and fell, revealing different vistas as they went along. Shops and apartments clung to the walls. Gardens grew along the nave beneath heliostats that transformed light transmitted from the surface during the lunar day into a 24-hour cycle. Unless you went outside you could forget whether it was day or night out on the surface.

Now it was "night." As they entered the crater from the lava tube, the full extent of the colony was spread out before them. The crater was nearly two kilometers in diameter. Even in one-sixth G, the dome was a triumph of engineering, supported by a 500-meter tall central steel and glass spire. Roz could hardly believe it, but the school legend was that Carey had once climbed the spire in order to spray paint the name of a girl he liked on the inside of the dome.

Above, the dome was covered with five meters of regolith to protect the inside from radiation, and beneath the ribbed struts that spread out from the spire like an umbrella's, the interior surface was a screen on which could be projected a daytime sky or a nighttime starfield. Just now thousands of bright stars shone down. Mars and Jupiter hung in bright conjunction high overhead.

From the west and south sides of the crater many levels of balconied apartments overlooked the interior. Most of the crater floor was given over to agriculture, but at the base of the spire was Sobieski Park, the main meeting ground for the colony's 2500 inhabitants. An elaborate fountain surrounded the tower. There was an open-air theater. Trees and grass, luxuriantly irrigated in a display of conspicuous water consumption, spread out from the center.

Roz and the others climbed down the zigzag path from the lava tube and through the farmlands to the park. Beneath strings of colored lights hung in the trees, men and women danced to the music of a drum band. Naked revelers wove their way through the crowd. Both sexes wore bright, fragrant ribbons in their hair. A troupe performed low-gravity acrobatics on the amphitheater stage. Little children ran in and out of the fountains, while men and women in twos and threes and every combination of sexes leaned in each other's arms. On the shadowed grass, Roz watched an old man and a young girl lying together, not touching, leaning heads on elbows, speaking in low voices with their faces inches apart. What could they possibly have to say to each other? Thabo and Raisa faded off into the dancers around the band, and Roz was alone with Carey. Carey brought her a flavored ice and sat down on the grass beside her. The drum band was making a racket, and the people were dancing faster now.

"Sorry the coach is on your case so much," Carey said. He touched her shoulder gently. The Cousins were always touching each other. With them, the dividing line between touching for sex and touching just to touch was erased.

God, she wished she could figure out what she wanted. Was he her brother or her boyfriend? It was hard enough back on earth; among all these cousins it was impossible.

When she didn't answer right away, Carey said, "The invisible girl returns."

"What?"

"You're disappearing again. The girl from the planet nobody's ever seen."

Roz watched the girl with the man on the grass. The girl was no older than her. The distance between the two had disappeared; now the girl was climbing onto the man.

Carey ran his finger down Roz's arm, then gently nudged her over. Roz pushed him away. "No thanks."

Carey tried to kiss her cheek, and she turned away. "Not now, okay?"

"What's the matter?"

"Does something have to be the matter? Any Cousins girl might tell you no, too. Don't act like it's just because I'm from earth."

"It is."

"Is not."

"I'm not going to rape you, High-G. Cousins don't rape."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Absolutely nothing. But you know how screwed up it is down on earth."

"Lots of stuff people do here would be wrong on earth."

"Right. And people there shoot each other if anyone touches them."

Cousins could be so arrogant it made her want to spit. "You've never even seen the earth—let alone been there."

"I've seen you, Roz."

"You don't own me."

He smiled. "No. Your father does." He nuzzled her neck.

Roz hit him. "Get off me, you pig!" She got up and ran away.

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Festival

Forty milligrams of serentol, a whiff or two of THC, and an ounce of grain alcohol: Jack Baldwin wobbled through the crowd of revelers in Sobieski Park. Beneath the somatic night, feeling just an edge of anxiety, he looked for Eva among the faces.

The park was full of young men and women, their perfect bodies in one another's arms. Sex was their favorite pastime, and who could blame them? They went about it as if their lives depended on the next coupling. That was biology at work, he supposed—but if it was just genes having their way with the human body, then why all the emotional turmoil—does she love me who's he sleeping with I can't stand it

when she looks at him like that how unfair to treat me like a toy who does he think he is I can't stand it I'll die if I can't have her tonight ...

Where was Eva? He smiled. Apparently genes did not let go of your mind just because you were pushing forty. Sex had been a problem back on earth—always some screw up with women co-workers, hassles with his live-ins, distractions. Here, sex was the common coin of interpersonal contact, unjudged as taste in ice cream (but some people made a religion of taste), easy as speech (but speech was not always easy) frequent as eating (but some people starved themselves in the midst of plenty). Where did that leave him? Was he simply a victim of the culture that had raised him? Or was his frustration purely personal?

Where was Eva?

Men and women, naked, oiled, and smiling, wove their way through the celebrants, offering themselves to whoever might wish to take them. It was the one day of the year that the Society of Cousins fit the cliched image of polymorphous orgy that outsiders had of it. One of them, a dark young woman—dark as Eva—brushed her fingers across Jack's cheek, then swirled away on one luscious hip.

But Eva was taller, more slender. Eva's breasts were small, her waist narrow despite the softness of the belly that had borne Carey, and when they made love her hipbones pressed against him. She was forty, and there was gray in her black hair. This girl dancing by could satisfy his lust, and perhaps if he knew her would become a person as complex as Eva. But she would not be Eva: the combination of idealism and practicality, the temper that got her into trouble because she could not keep her mouth shut. Fierce when she fought for what mattered to her, but open-hearted to those who opposed her, with an inability to be successfully Machiavellian that was her saving grace.

He had met Eva a month after he and Roz had arrived at the colony. Jack was working on a new nematode that, combined with a gene-engineered composting process, would produce living soil from regolith more efficiently than the tedious chemical methods that had been used to create Fowler's initial environment. His specialty in nematodes had been the passport for him and Roz into the guarded Cousins society, the last bridge after a succession of burned bridges he had left behind them. He certainly had not planned to end up on the moon. The breakup with Helen. The fight over Roz, ending with him taking her against the court order. The succession of jobs. The forged vita.

Eva, newly elected head of the board, was head of the environmental subcommittee. She had come by the biotech lab in the outlying bunker. Jack did not know who the tall, striking woman in the webbed pressure suit was. She asked questions of Amravati, the head of the project, then came over to observe Jack, up to his ankles in muck, examining bacteria through an electron microscope visor.

Flirting led to a social meeting, more flirting led to sex. Sex—that vortex women hid behind their navels, that place he sometimes had to be so badly that every other thought fell away and he lost himself again. Or was it finding himself? Eva's specialty was physics, some type of quantum imaging that he did not understand and whose practical benefits he could not picture. But a relationship that had started as a mercenary opportunity had, to Jack's surprise, turned to something like love.

As Jack sat on the edge of the fountain, hoping he might find Eva in the crowd, instead he spotted Roz. Her face was clouded; her dark brown eyes large with some trouble. "Roz?" he called.

She heard his voice, looked up, saw him. She hesitated a moment, then walked over.

"What's the matter, sweetheart?" he asked.

"Nothing." She sat down next to him. She was bothered by something.

Across the plaza, two of the acrobats juggled three children in the low gravity the way someone on earth might juggle bean bags. The kids, tucked into balls, squealed in delight as they rose and fell like the waters of the fountain. “Isn't this amazing?” Jack asked.

“Amazing, Dad—that's very perceptive.”

“What?”

“This place is disgusting. Look at that old creep there feeling up that girl.”

“We talked about this, Roz. The Cousins do things differently. But they don't do anything against anyone's will.”

“It's all okay with you, just as long as you're getting laid every night.”

He put his hand on her leg. “What's going on?”

She pulled away. “Nothing's going on! I'm just tired of watching you take advantage of people. Mom would never have brought me here.”

Roz never mentioned her mother. Jack tried to focus. “I don't know, girl. Your mom had her own problems fitting in.”

“The only reason we came here is that you couldn't get a job back on earth.”

He tried to get Roz to look at him, but she was fixed on her oversized plastic shoes. “Aren't we hostile tonight,” he said. She didn't answer. He saw for the first time how much her profile had become that of a grown woman. “I'll admit it. The job had something to do with it. But Roz, you've got a chance to become someone here you could never be on earth—if you'll make an effort. Women are important here. Hell, women run the place! Do you think I like the idea of being a second-class citizen? I gave up a lot to bring you here.”

“All you care about is getting into Eva's bed,” Roz told the shoes. “She's using you, and she'll just dump you after she's had enough, like all these other cousins.”

“You think that little of my choices?”

That made her look at him. Her face was screwed into a furious scowl. The music of the drum band stopped suddenly, and the people applauded. “How do you know Eva's not going to try to get me into bed with her, too?”

Jack laughed. “I don't think so.”

She stood up. “God, you are so smug! I can't tell you anything!”

“Roz, what is this—”

She turned and stalked off. “Roz!” he called after her. She did not turn back.

Next to him, a thin black woman holding a toddler had been eavesdropping. Jack walked away to escape her gaze. The band started another song. Inwardly churning, he listened to the music for a few minutes, watching the people dance. Whatever his failings, hadn't he always done his best for Roz? He didn't expect her to agree with him all the time, but she had to know how much he loved her.

The amused detachment with which he'd entered the plaza was gone. The steel drums gave him a

headache. He crossed the plaza. Before he had gone ten paces he saw Eva. She was in the crowd of dancers, paired with a round faced woman. The woman was grinning fiercely; she bumped against Eva, slid her belly up against Eva's. Eva had her arms raised into the air and was smiling too, grinding her hips.

As Jack stood watching, someone sidled up to him. It was Hal Keikosson, who worked in Agriculture. Hal was in his forties and still living with his mother—a common situation among the cousins.

“Hey, Jack. Who was that girl I saw you talking to? That red hair? Cute.”

Jack kept watching Eva and the woman. Eva had not noticed him yet. “That was my daughter,” he told Hal.

“Interesting.” Hal swayed a bit, clutching a squeeze cup in his sweaty hand.

Jack ought to let it go, but he couldn't. “What does that mean?”

“Nothing. She must be fourteen or fifteen already, right?”

“She's fourteen.”

“And maybe she isn't your daughter.” Hal giggled.

Jack stared at him. “What?”

“I mean, how could her mother be sure—or maybe she lied to you.”

“Shut the fuck up before I belt you.”

“Hey, it's none of my business who you sleep with.”

“I'm not sleeping with her.”

“Calm down, calm down, cousin.” Hal took a sip from his cup. He looked benignly over at the figures writhing in the shadows beneath the trees. “Too bad,” he said quietly, and chuckled.

Jack stalked away to keep from taking a swing at him.

The drum band was louder now, and so was the babble of the increasing crowd. He passed a group of drunken singers. Near the amphitheater he saw one of the acrobat children staggering around in circles, giggling. Jamira Tamlasdaughter, a friend of Eva's, tried to say hello, but he passed her by with a wave. Jack's head throbbed. Beyond the trees that marked the border of Sobieski Park he followed a path through fields of dry-lands soybeans, corn, potatoes. There was no one out here—most of the cousins were at the festival now.

A kilometer later the path turned upward into the open lands of the crater slopes. Low, hardy blue-white grass covered the ground. But the sound of the band still floated over the fields, and turning, Jack could see the central tower lit by the colored lights. The foliage was side lit only by that distant light and the projected starlight from the dome. Somewhere off to his left a night bird sang in a scraggly pine. He turned his back to the festival.

It was an easy climb in one-sixth G, and when he hit the concrete rim of the crater that supported the dome, he followed the perimeter road around toward the north airlock. He wanted out. The best refuge he could think of was the biotech lab.

Because of the festival, the airlock was deserted. Jack took his pressure suit from his locker, suited up,

and cycled through the personnel lock. He passed through the radiation baffles to the surface.

Though it was night inside the dome, out here it was lunar afternoon. Harsh shadows lay beneath the fields of solar collectors lining the road to the labs. Jack skipped along the tracked-up roadway, kicking up a powder of fines. Over the throb of his headache he listened to the sound of his own breathing in his earphones.

The fight he'd had with Roz was just like one of his final spats with Helen, full of buried resentments and false assumptions. Roz's accusations stung because there was an element of truth in them. But Roz was wrong to say Jack didn't care about her. From the moment of her birth Jack had committed himself to Roz without reservation. Clearly he hadn't paid enough attention to her troubles, but he would do anything to protect her.

Roz didn't understand that things were hard for Jack. "All men are boys," the cousins said. In the case of a jerk like Keikosson, he could admit the saying's truth. But it was as much a product of the way they lived as of the men themselves. The women of the cousins indulged their boys their pleasures, kept them adolescents far into their adulthood. It was a form of control-by-privilege.

Jack chafed at the way a male in the colony was seldom respected for his achievements, but rather for who his mother and grandmother were. He hated the way women deferred to him once it got around that he was Eva Maggiesdaughter's latest partner. He hated the sidelong glances he got about his relationship to Roz. He was Roz's father. He was not anyone's boy.

The biotech labs were located in a bunker a kilometer north of Fowler. He entered the personnel lock, air-blasted the fines from his suit and removed it. Like the airlock, the lab was deserted. He passed through the greenhouse's rows of juniper and piñon seedlings to the soils lab. The temperature on his latest batch of nematode soil was 30 centigrade. He drew on some boots, rolled back the cover on the reservoir and waded into the loamy earth. The rich smell of nitrogen compounds filled his lungs, and he felt momentarily dizzy with relaxation.

Taking a cermet rake from the tool cabinet, he worked over the surface of the soil. His nematodes were doing their jobs nicely, increasing the water content, breaking down organics and hosting the nitrogen-fixing bacteria. Once his team got the okay from the colony's environmental committee, they would start a trial planting using the soil and the greenhouse seedlings on Fowler's east slope.

He had not been working long when he heard the airlock alert. Startled, he dropped the rake and stood up. Some minutes later a figure emerged from the greenhouse and peered from around the rock crusher. "Jack?"

"Over here, Carey," Jack said.

The boy came over. He was taller than his mother, and blond instead of dark. Jack wondered once again who his father was. Carey was still wearing his pressure suit, helmet off.

"What are you doing here?" Jack asked. "How did you know I was here?"

"I was coming into the north airlock when I saw you cycling out," Carey said. "By the time I got my suit on you were gone, but I figured you might be here. I wanted to speak with you about Roz, Jack."

"What about her?"

"I think she's having a hard time," Carey said. "I think you might want to pay more attention to what's going on with her. Fathers like you do that, right?"

“Fathers like what?”

“Come on, Jack, you know—earth fathers.”

“What's wrong with Roz?” Jack asked.

“She seems to have some sexual hang-ups. She hasn't talked with you about it? She talks about you all the time.”

“I don't think there's anything wrong with Roz. Besides, it's none of your business, Carey.”

“Well, it sort of is. At least if she's not telling you these things, and you care about her, then I guess I need to tell you. Like after we slept together the first time, she cried.”

“You slept with her.” Jack's own voice sounded leaden in his ears.

“Sure. I thought you knew.” Carey was completely unselfconscious. “I mean, we're all in the same apartment. She didn't tell you that, either?”

“No.”

“She needs help. She's making some progress with the kids on the hockey team, but for every step forward she takes one back. I think she's too hung up on you, Jack.”

“Don't call me Jack.”

Carey looked confused. “Excuse me?”

“Don't call me Jack, you little pissant. You don't know a thing about me and Roz.”

“I know you're immigrants and don't understand everything. But a lot of people are starting to think you need to live separately. You don't own Roz.”

“What the hell are you talking about?”

“She's a woman. She can make up her own mind.”

The boy's face was an open map of earnest, smug innocence. Jack couldn't stand it. “Damn you, she's not your whore!”

Carey laughed. “A whore? That's an earth thing, right? One of those sexual ownership practices?”

Jack took one step, grabbed the collar of the boy's pressure suit and yanked him forward. Carey's feet caught on the edge of the reservoir. As he fell, he twisted around; Jack lost his own balance and shoved Carey downward to keep from falling himself. Much faster than normal in lunar-G, Carey hit the ground. His head snapped sideways against the rake.

Catching his balance, Jack waited for Carey to get up. But he didn't get up. Jack crouched over the boy. Carey had fallen onto the head of the rake; one of the six-centimeter ceramic tines had penetrated his temple. Blood seeped into the soil.

Carefully, Jack drew out the tines, rolled him over. Carey shuddered and the blood flowed more freely. The boy's breathing was shallow, his eyes unfocused. As Jack watched, Carey's breathing stopped.

After ten minutes of futile CPR, Jack fell back from Carey's limp body and sat down heavily on the edge

of the reservoir.

Jesus Christ. What had he done? What was he going to do now? Eva!—what would she think?

It was an accident. But that didn't matter. He was an immigrant, an outsider, a man. Someone would surely accuse him of murder. They would drug him into insensibility, cut up his brain. At best they would expel him from the colony, and Roz with him—or worse still, they might not expel Roz. He sat there facing the cold reality of his thirty-eight years of screwed up life.

Carey's head lolled back into the muck, his mouth open. “You arrogant prick,” Jack whispered to the dead boy. “You fucked it all up.”

He looked around the room. In front of him was the reduction chamber, the crusher, the soil reservoir. Shuddering, he went back to the tool chest and found a machete. He dragged Carey's body over the edge of the reservoir, getting dirt up to his own elbows. The soil was rich with the heat of decomposition.

Jack was about to begin cutting off Carey's arms when the airlock alert sounded again. He panicked. He stumbled out of the reservoir, trying to heft Carey's body into the hopper of the crusher. Before he could conceal the body he heard steps behind him.

It was Roz. She stood for a moment staring at him as he held Carey's bare ankle in his hand. “Dad?”

“Go away, Roz.”

She came over to him. “Dad, what's going on?” She saw the body. “Jesus, Dad, what happened?”

“An accident. The less you know about it the better.”

She took a couple of steps closer. “Carey? Is he all right?”

“Go *away*, Roz.”

Roz put her hand to her mouth. “Is he dead?”

Jack let go of Carey and came over to her. “It was an accident, Roz. I didn't mean to hurt him. He fell down.”

“Carey!” She rushed over, then backed away until she bumped into the rock crusher. “He's dead! What happened? Dad! Why did you do this?”

Jack didn't know what to do. He looked back at Carey, lying awkwardly on the concrete floor, the machete beside his leg. “It was an accident, Roz. I grabbed him, he fell. I didn't mean to—”

“Carey,” she said. “Carey.” She would not look at Jack.

“Roz, I would never have hurt him on purpose. I—”

“What were you fighting about?”

“It wasn't a fight. He told me you had slept together. I was shocked, I guess. I—”

Roz slumped to the floor. “It was my fault?”

“No. It was an accident.”

"I don't believe this," she said. She looked at Carey's body. Jack thought about the last time she must have seen him naked. "You're going to go to jail!" Roz said. "They might even kill you. Who's going to take care of me?"

"I'm going to take care of you. Please, Roz, don't think about this. You need to get out of here."

"What are we going to do?"

"You're not going to do anything except get out! Don't you understand?"

Roz stared at him a long moment. "I can help."

Jack felt chilled. "I don't want your help! I'm your father, damn it!"

She sat there, her eyes welling with tears. It was a nightmare. He sat down next to her and put his arm around her. She cried against his shoulder. A long time passed, and neither of them spoke.

Finally she pulled away from him. "It's my fault," she said. "I should have told you I loved him."

Jack closed his eyes. He could hear his own pulse in his ears. The earth of the reservoir smelled as rich as ever. "Please, don't say any more."

"Oh, god, how could you do this?" he heard her whisper. "Carey ... " She cried against Jack's shoulder some more.

Then, after a while, swallowing her tears, Roz said, "If we get rid of his suit ... if we get rid of his suit, they'll think he got lost on the surface."

He opened his eyes and looked at her. Now he was scared. Who was this girl?

"What do you mean?" he asked.

* * * *

Eating

Eva expected Jack would turn up at the festival eventually, and she didn't want to miss the partying. Her mother came by with some of her cronies, and then Eva found herself dancing with Angela Angelasdaughter, the colony's most notorious artist. Ten years ago, any gossip session in the sauna would devote ten minutes to the sexy sculptress and her physicist lover. Since then Angela had gained a pot belly, but her smile was as wicked as ever.

During a break in the music, Eva shared a drink with Jamira Tamlasdaughter. Jamira told Eva she had seen Jack earlier. "He's so handsome, Eva," Jamira said. "You're so lucky. He's like a god."

Eva smiled, thinking of Jack's taut body stretched across her bed. "Where did he go?"

"I don't know. I expect he's here somewhere."

But Jack did not show up. What with one thing and another it was well after midnight when Eva returned to her apartment. Jack was sitting on the floor with a glass in front of him.

"So here you are," Eva said. "I thought we would meet at the festival."

He looked up at her, and his blue eyes were so soulfully sad that she melted. "I couldn't find you," he said quietly.

She sat down next to him. “I got caught up at the lab.” She and Victor had been working overtime on assembler programming. “Are Carey and Roz here?”

“No.”

“Good. Then we can entertain ourselves—unless this stuff you pour into yourself makes that unnecessary.”

Jack put his arms around her, pulled her to him, and rested his forehead against hers. “You know I always need you,” he whispered. Eva could smell spiced alcohol on his breath. She pulled him back onto the floor, and they kissed furiously.

They eventually found their way to the bedroom. Afterward, she was ravenously hungry. As a member of the Board, she had earned the privilege of a small kitchen: she padded in, naked, and returned to the room with a plate, a knife, an apple and a hunk of cheese.

Jack was stretched across the bed just as she had imagined him, the muscles of his belly thrown into relief by the low light. She sat cross-legged beside him, cut a slice from the apple and offered it to him. “Here we are, in the Garden. Eve offers you an apple.”

“No, thanks.”

“Come on, Adam. Have some fun.”

His eyes flicked away from her, the corner of his mouth twitched. “I’ve had too much fun already,” he said to the ceiling.

She drew the apple slice across his chest, down to his navel. “There’s always more where that came from.”

“I’m worried about Roz. She shouldn’t be out this late.”

“Your daughter’s too sensible to do anything risky.” Eva heard the door to the apartment open, the sound of someone coming down the hall and entering Rosalind’s room. “See?” Eva said. “There she is.”

“What about Carey?”

“Carey, on the other hand, is no doubt is busy getting into some sort of trouble. We’ll deal with him in the morning.”

She brushed her hand over his penis, and it stiffened. He said nothing, but eventually his hand came up to touch her hair, and then he pulled close and made love to her with an intensity that left her breathless and relaxed. He fell asleep beside her, and she lay watching the plate and the apple slices in the faint light. Soon, she thought, soon, they would be able to reproduce anything. She would prove that the cousins were not some backward-looking female-dominated hive. They would stun the world. Dreaming of this, Jack’s arm around her, she fell asleep.

In the morning Carey had not returned.

Over breakfast—Eva finished the apple, now turned brown—she asked Roz what had happened after hockey practice. After denying anything, Roz finally admitted that Carey and some others had used the cover of the festival to sneak out of the colony onto the surface. The “First Imprints Club.” In the dead lunar surface their markings in the dust would last as long as if etched in stone.

That sounded like Carey, right down to the wasting of water. Eva called Carey's friends. She discovered that Carey had left them at the festival, telling them he would catch up with them at the airlock. After waiting for him, they had gone out without him, expecting that he'd meet them on Shiva Ridge.

Carey's pressure suit was not in his locker at the north airlock. Eva tried not to panic. She alerted colony security. Hundreds of volunteers joined in a search of the surface. With the assistance of Carey's friends they found the footprints of the party, but none for Carey. Lunar Positioning Satellites could not raise his suit's locator. Parties scanned the prominent landmarks, but came up empty.

The next days became a nightmare. Eva spent all of her waking hours out on the surface with the search parties, coming inside only to recharge her air supply and catch an hour or two of sleep. Her eyes fell into a permanent squint from the brightness of the surface. For the first twenty-four hours Eva still hoped Carey might be found alive. He had fallen unconscious in the shadow of some rock, she told herself; hypothermia would keep his metabolism low so he wouldn't exhaust his oxygen.

As the hours passed she kept despair at bay by driving herself even harder. The third day found her a part of a line of twenty cousins, at hundred-meter intervals, sweeping Shiva ridge for the fourth time. Something was wrong with her faceplate: it was breaking all the gray landscape into particles, no piece of the moon connected to any other piece, and all of it was dead. The voices of the other searchers calling to each other sounded in her ear button. "Nothing here." "Where's here?" "I'm on the east end of the ridge, below Black Rock."

Eva felt numb. She came to the edge of a lava tube whose roof had fallen in. It was fifty meters to the shadowed bottom. Even in lunar gravity the fall would be fatal. She swayed on the edge, having trouble breathing. Her mouth was dry, and her eyes itched.

Someone grabbed her arm and pulled her away. "No," his voice came over her ear button, as close as her own thoughts. It was Jack. He wrapped her in a bear hug, drew her back. He made her return with him to Fowler, to eat a meal, to take some pills and sleep for fourteen hours. After that Eva no longer tormented herself with impossibilities. Jack stayed with her every minute of her time on the surface. Despite her heartache, she still hoped Carey's body would turn up so she could figure out what had happened. But when a further week of searches still brought nothing, she asked that they be called off. The official inquest ruled Carey missing, presumed dead by hazard of fortune.

She turned to her work. The project was her only hope now. It was more than a matter of demonstrating the value of cousins' science. Over the next months, the first assemblies using scans of organic compounds were completed. They produced edible soy protein and worked their way up toward apple sauce.

At meetings in the boardroom that looked out over the green fields of Fowler basin, the other matrons watched her out of the corners of their eyes. Eva controlled her voice, operated her body as if by remote. Everything is normal, she told herself. Some mornings she would wake and listen for Carey thumping around the apartment, only to hear silence. She hid his pictures. Though she would not empty his room, she closed its door and never went inside. She went to watch the hockey team play. Other cousins sat beside her and made a show of treating her normally.

Hockey was such a violent game—a boy's game. Had the cousins adopted it for that very reason, to go against the perception that women were soft? Eva watched Roz throw herself around the ice like a demon. What would drive such a shy girl to compete so hard?

At night she lay awake and thought about Carey. She imagined him out there on the surface, running out of air. What was it about boys and men that they always took such big risks? You couldn't protect them.

If you tried to, they got sulky and depressed. She had never questioned the place the cousins had prepared for boys in their world, how their aggression and desire for dominance had been thwarted and channeled. *Keep your son close; let your daughter go*, the homily went. Had she been fair to Carey? If she had him back with her this minute, could she keep herself from smothering him?

Jack went back to his own work: his team planted a copse of junipers, piñon, sage, and wildflowers on the east slopes of Fowler, hauling loads of their new soil that promised a better growth rate than the chemically prepared soils. He came home each night with dirt under his fingernails, scrubbed himself raw in the shower and fell into bed exhausted. Jack and Eva had not made love after that night Carey disappeared. At first Eva had no desire, and then, after her need returned and she might have felt it a comfort to have Jack hold her in his arms, he was so depressed by Carey's loss that he would not touch her. Eva saw that worrying about her had taken Jack away from Roz.

"I'm sorry," she vowed to Jack's sleeping form one night. "I can do better."

Since Carey's disappearance, Roz spent less time at home. Eva saw the pain in Jack's eyes as he watched Roz. She wondered what it must be like for Roz, to have this single strong male presence always there in her life. She owed Roz and Jack better than she had been giving, and the effort to engage them would help her stop thinking about Carey.

She arranged for Roz to spend her second-semester practicum in the colony's materials co-operatives. What to do about Jack's relationship to Roz was harder to figure out. Eva was a physicist, and had never paid much attention to the theories of Nora Sobieski and the other founders. It wasn't as though a man taking an interest in his daughter's upbringing was necessarily unnatural. But Eva realized that, just like her with Carey, out of his fear of losing Roz, Jack ran the risk of smothering her. *Keep your son close; let your daughter go*: whether Jack could see it or not, it was time for Roz to begin to find her own place in the world.

Jack had taken to bringing home chard and romaine lettuce and carrots from the gardens. He brought a potted juniper for the balcony where they ate their meals. There one night at dinner Eva suggested to Jack that Roz move out.

Jack looked frightened. "She's only fourteen, Eva."

"If she doesn't begin to break free now she will have a much harder time later. "

"I understand that. It's just—it's not the way she grew up. She and I haven't been here that long. And with—with Carey gone ..." his voice trailed off.

Eva watched him. "Jack, I know I've been distant. I know it's been hard for you. If you don't want to be alone with me, I'll understand. I just hope you won't live with Roz."

"For pity's, Eva! Don't you believe in love?"

She was taken aback. "Of course I do." She poked her fork at her salad.

"Well, I love Roz. I love ... I love you."

Eva felt out of her depth. What did he mean when he said the word love? She looked into Jack's handsome face: blue eyes, curly blond hair, square jaw. How much, when he looked so hurt, he reminded her of Carey. Jack watched her intently. He was trying to communicate something, but she had no idea what it was.

"I know you love us," Eva said. "That's not the question. But if Roz is ever going to fit in here, she needs

to begin to network ... I might even say the same for you.”

“Network.” He sat still as a stone.

He acted so wounded; he was putting her on the spot. Was this about sex? “I’m not trying to push you away, Jack. It’s not me who’s been turning away every night in bed.”

“I realize that,” he said defensively. “I thought that you were still grieving for Carey.”

God, she was no good at this interpersonal stuff. She looked away. She tried the salad grown from the gardens he and his team had planted. “Let me handle my grief in my own way,” she said.

He said nothing. He seemed more sad than angry. They ate in silence. After a while he asked her, “How’s the salad?”

“The best I’ve ever tasted. And the pine nuts—are they from the new trees?”

“Yes,” he said.

“The juniper smells wonderful.”

“It’s yours,” he said. “I grew it for you.”

* * * *

Transformation

When Roz told Jack about Carey’s plans to meet the First Imprints Club, Jack picked up Carey’s pressure suit. He laid the suit on the floor, adjusted it so that the locator lay flat against the concrete, and ground his heel into it until the chip snapped. “Okay,” Jack said. “You take his things and lose them some place on the surface where they’ll never be found.”

Roz knew that Jack’s real reason for rushing her out was to keep her from seeing him dispose of Carey’s body. She did not object. She stuffed Carey’s clothes into the suit, sealed it up and, while her father turned back to the body, headed for the airlock.

“Wait,” Jack said. “Take this.”

Fearfully, she turned. Jack had taken something from Carey’s hand. It was Carey’s ring.

She shoved the ring inside her own suit, then hurried through the airlock onto the lunar surface.

The shadows of lunar afternoon lay precisely as they had when she had entered the lab an hour before, a girl seeking to apologize to her dad. Between then and now, something had broken.

Jack had looked so surprised, so guilty—so old. The skin beneath his eyes was dark and papery, as if he hadn’t slept in a week. Had he looked this tired when she had argued with him in the plaza? It made her wonder just what had been going on all this time. How could Jack kill Carey? Had he been so near to breaking all along? As she shuffled across the humped, dusty surface, Roz fought to keep from crying again at the awfulness of Carey’s death and the precariousness of their situation.

For most of her life, it had been just her and her father. Roz’s mother Helen had been a graduate student in plant pathology when Jack met her at Purdue. Roz’s first memory was of sitting in the bathtub as her mom taught her to count on her toes. When Roz was six, her mother’s increasing bouts of depression broke up the marriage. Helen had custody of Roz for more than a year before Jack rescued her, and Roz remembered that year vividly: afternoons hanging out with the kids in the neighboring apartment, suppers

of corn flakes, Helen coming back from her classes unhappy, Roz trying to wake Helen to get her to work in the mornings, Helen shouting at Jack every time he came to pick Roz up for visits. When Jack had stolen Roz away, though he never said anything bad about Helen, Roz felt that she would never miss her mother again.

Now Roz wished she knew where Helen was, what she was doing at just that moment. What had *she* gone through when she was fourteen? Nothing as bad as this.

As she moved away from Fowler across the lunar surface, Roz tried to stay to the shadows. But there was little chance of anyone spotting her. What she needed to do was lose Carey's suit somewhere that nobody was likely to find it for thirty or forty years.

It should not be so hard. These were the rumpled highlands, a landscape of hills, ridges, craters, and ejecta. Around the colony the ground was scuffed with a million bootprints. Roz hid hers among them, bouncing along below the eastern rim of Fowler.

She then struck off along a side track of footprints that aimed northeast. A couple of kilometers along, she broke off from the path and made a long leap to a rock scarp uncovered with dust. She landed clumsily but safe, and left no boot marks. She proceeded in this direction for some distance, aiming herself from rock to rock to leave as few footprints as possible. The short horizon made Roz feel as if she was a bug on a plate, nearing the edge of the world. She kept her bearings by periodically noting some point ahead and behind so that she would not get lost. That was the biggest danger of surface hopping, and the source of the rule against ever doing it alone. It would be easy to explain Carey's disappearance as an intoxicated boy getting lost and running out of air. A broken radio, a faulty locator.

A kilometer on, Roz found a pit behind a group of ejecta boulders. Deep in the shadow on the north side of the largest, she dug away the top layer of regolith and stuffed the suit into the pit. She shoved the dirt back over the suit. By the time she was done, her hands were freezing. She stood back on a boulder and inspected the spot. She had kept most of the scuffs she'd created to the shadows, which would not change much for some time in the slow lunar day. Roz headed back along the path she had come, rock to rock, taking long strides in the low gravity until she met the traveled path again. Up above her, a third of the way across the black sky from the sun, angry red Mars gleamed beside Jupiter like an orange eye.

Her air supply was in the red when she reached Fowler's north lock. She was able to pass through without seeing anyone; the festival was still going strong.

Roz stowed her suit in an empty locker, set the combination, and walked back around the rim road toward Eva's apartment—the long way, making a three-quarter circuit of the crater. On the southeast slope she stopped and watched the lights of the festival. When she finally got home, she found an empty glass sitting on the living room floor, and the door to Jack and Eva's room was closed. She went to her own room, closed her door, undressed. There she found Carey's ring in her pocket, warm from the heat of her own body.

* * * *

Through all of Eva's quizzing of Roz the next morning, Jack sat drinking juice, ignoring them both. Roz was stunned by how calm he looked. What went on inside? She had never thought that there might be things going on inside her father that were not apparent on the surface.

Then the searches began. Over and over Roz had to retell her story of parting with Carey at the festival. At just what time has she last seen Carey? What had Carey said? In what direction had Carey gone? Jack threw himself into the "search"—but whenever Roz looked at him, she saw that he was watching her.

As the search stretched beyond the first days, Carey's friends came up and sympathized with Roz. For the first time kids who had held her at arms' length confided in her. They shared their shock and grief. Roz supposed that, from the outside, her own terror looked like shock. Colony security used volunteers from the school in the searches, and Roz took part, though never in the northeast quadrant. Every time one of the parties returned she was petrified that they would come back with Carey's pressure suit.

Near the end of the third day, Roz was sitting in the apartment, clutching Carey's ring in her hand, when Jack brought Eva back with him. Eva was so sick Jack almost had to prop her up. Jack fed Eva, made her take some pills and go to sleep. He came out of their room and shut the door.

"What happened?" Roz asked.

Jack pulled Roz away from the door. "I caught Eva on the edge of a precipice. I think she was about to jump off."

"Oh, Jesus! What are we going to do?"

"She'll be okay after she gets some rest. We need to take care of her."

"Take care of her! We killed her son!"

"Keep your voice down. Nobody killed anyone. It was an accident."

"I don't think I can stand this, Dad."

"You're doing fine, Roz. I need you to be my strong girl. Just act normal."

Just act normal. Roz tried to focus on school. The hockey game against Shackleton was postponed, but the practices continued. When it became obvious that Carey wasn't coming back, Maryjane moved up to take Carey's place in Roz's line. At night Roz squeezed her eyes shut, pressed her palms against them to drive thoughts of Carey's body from her imagination. She would not talk to Jack about it, and in his few hurried words with her he never spoke of that night.

Roz hated hearing the sound of Jack's voice when he talked to Eva or anyone else, so casually modulated, so *sane*. Just act normal. When he spoke with Roz his voice was edged with panic. Roz vowed that she would never in her life have two voices.

Maybe Eva had two voices, too. After the searches were ended, Eva seemed distressingly normal. Roz could tell Eva was upset only by the firmness with which she spoke, as if she were thinking everything over two or three times, and by the absolute quality of her silences.

At first Roz was afraid to be around Eva, she seemed so in control. Yet Roz could tell that at some level Eva was deeply wounded in a way she could not see in Jack. The only word Roz could think of to describe Eva was a word so absurdly old fashioned that she would have been embarrassed to say it aloud: noble. Eva was the strongest person Roz had ever met. It made Roz want to comfort her—but Roz was too afraid.

The weeks passed, and they resumed a simulation of ordinary life. Eva took an interest in Roz that she had not while Carey was still alive. For Roz's second semester practicum, Eva arranged for Roz to work successive months in the colony's four materials cooperatives, Air, Water, Agriculture, and Fabrication. Roz was glad to spend more time out of the apartment.

With Air, Roz worked outside in the southwest industrial area, helping move lunar regolith to the grinder. Various trace elements, including the H3 used in fusion reactors, were drawn off and saved. After

grinding, the regolith was put in a reduction chamber with powdered graphite and heated to produce carbon monoxide, which was reintroduced to the regolith in a second chamber to produce CO₂. The carbon dioxide was separated by a solar-powered electrochemical cell. The carbon was recycled as graphite, and the O₂ liquefied. The excess was sold to other lunar colonies or traded for nitrogen.

With Water, she worked at the far end of the ice cavern, where the ice was crushed, vaporized, distilled and refrozen. Some of the water was electrolyzed to provide oxygen and carbon, a rare element on the moon.

With Agriculture she shoveled sheep and guinea pig shit, and moved chicken wastes to recycling for fertilizer.

With Fabrication she did quality control for the anhydrous production of fiberglass cables coated with iron. Any contamination of the fiberglass with water would compromise its strength and durability. Structural materials were one of the colony's other major exports.

Everything she learned during her practicum was so logical. Everything she felt when she was in the apartment with Eva and her father was insane. While she worked, when she could forget the expression on Jack's face when she'd found him standing above Carey's naked body, the colony felt like home. The minute she thought about the place that was supposed to be her home, she felt lost. Looking down from the balcony of their apartment on interior of the crater, she saw the spire that supported the dome as a great tree spreading over the cousins' lives. Behind her she heard Jack and Eva's voices, so human, so mysterious.

Eva quizzed Roz every few days about the practicum. Because they spoke only about the practical issues of running the Society, these conversations were a relief to Roz. She thought they were a relief for Eva as well. Roz could ask any question, as long as it was about engineering. Eva would lean next to Roz over the tablet and click through diagrams of chemical syntheses, twisting the ends of her hair in her fingers.

One evening as they were going through one of these sessions, Jack exploded. Afraid that he might say something that would make Eva suspicious, Roz went with him for a walk to talk over what was bothering him. When she told him she was thinking of moving out, he threatened to tell Eva what had happened to Carey. His paranoia was so sharp in the air that she could smell it. She begged him to be quiet.

Roz realized that she was trapped. It would be safer for her and Jack both if she moved out of the apartment. Raisa was still looking for a roommate, and it would only be the matter of a few days for her to make the arrangements and move her things. But there was nothing she could do.

* * * *

One day late in Roz's practicum, Eva called her to the Fabrication research lab. Roz realized that it was not an accident that the last stop on her practicum tour was Fabrication, and the last stop at Fabrication was research, Eva's own area. Roz had a sudden dread that Eva knew something, that ever since the festival she had been setting a trap, which was about to spring.

Like the biotech lab that her father worked in, in the interests of preventing contamination the nanotech lab was separated from the colony. At the end of the northwest lava tube, Roz suited up and passed through a lock onto the surface. It was months since Carey's disappearance, and full night now. Mars and Jupiter were no longer visible; Venus shone brightly on the horizon. She followed a string of lights to the lab, entered, and pulled off her suit.

Eva met her at the check-in. "Thank you for coming, Roz. Come with me. I want to show you the

Quantum Non-destructive Scanner Array.”

The QNSA lab was the largest in the facility. The scanner looked like nothing so much as a huge blue marble, the size of an elephant, divided at the equator. Eva had the technicians lift the upper hemisphere to expose the target area. “What we do here is pull a fast one on the universe. We bypass the uncertainty principle on the sub-atomic level by measuring test subjects at below the Planck-Wheeler length.”

“I don't know that much physics,” Roz said.

Eva put her hand around Roz's shoulder. Despite the affectionate gesture, she was not smiling. “We've made huge strides in the last six months.”

“What's it for?”

“There are a hundred purposes—some of them quite revolutionary. On the most basic level, if we can scan to sufficient accuracy, and if the assembler team can succeed in producing a programmable assembler that can use the scan—then we will have created the most flexible manufacturing system in history. Any object we scan could be duplicated in the assembler.”

“Isn't that expensive?”

“Smart girl. Yes, it is very expensive—of technology, energy, and time. It doesn't make economic sense to use a system like this to manufacture simple things, like, say, an electric motor. That would be like running an MRI to check whether there's gum in your pocket. But for more complicated things—organic compounds, for instance—it holds fascinating possibilities. Let me show you something.”

She took Roz into a side room separated by a large window from the lab. In the corner was a refrigerator. From it Eva took out two apples. She handed them to Roz. “What do you think of these?”

Roz looked them over. They were the same size, the same shape. Both felt cool in her palms. In fact, they felt exactly alike. She looked at them more closely. There was a spray of freckles near the stem of the apple in her right hand. She held the other next to it, turned it until they were in the same position. An identical spray of freckles marked the second apple.

“They're the same.”

“Yes. Now compare this.” Eva pulled a third apple from the refrigerator. This one was past its prime; its skin was darker and softer, and it smelled sweet. Yet it had exactly the same pattern of freckles as the other two.

“All three of these apples were assembled from the same quantum scan. We scanned the original apple six months ago. These two apples were assembled from the QNS yesterday, the other a week ago. If we load the right raw materials into the assembler, we can create as many identical apples as we like.”

“That's amazing!”

“Yes. Though it's too expensive a way to make apples. In fact, there aren't many things that would justify the expense of reproduction by QNSA.”

Eva took the apples back. She put the old one and one of the new ones back into the refrigerator. Then she polished the third on her sleeve and took a bite of it. Chewing, she handed it to Roz. “Try it.”

Roz took a bite. It tasted crisp and tart. Another lab worker came in and got a squeeze bottle out of the refrigerator. He nodded to Eva, smiled at Roz, and went out.

“I hoped at first that I might get over the loss of Carey,” Eva said. She looked through the window at the big blue marble. “I told myself that he was only one person, that we all die eventually, that it was his recklessness that had killed him and I never wanted him to be other than he was.” She brushed the back of her hand against her eye. “But a son is not supposed to die before his mother. Everything looks different afterwards. It's all just a collection of atoms.”

Eva turned to Roz. “How does the apple taste?”

“Good.”

“I'm glad. Now, Roz, I want to tell you what I'm going to do. It's something that no one's ever done before. Because of that it's not a crime yet, but if it doesn't become so common as to be ordinary in the future, I'm sure it will become a crime.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Some months ago, the project had reached a stage where we could scan a living organism. We scanned several guinea pigs, even a sheep. One night, while the lab was empty, I brought Carey here and scanned him.

“I've been waiting until we worked the bugs out of the assembler. Three days ago we recreated one of the guinea pigs from a four-month-old scan. Do you know what that means?”

Roz held her breath. “I think so.”

“If that guinea pig suffers no aftereffects, I am going to reconstitute Carey. I want you to help me.”

The sky opened up and a torrent of pure joy shot down to fill Roz up. She could not believe it. She hugged Eva, buried her head against the tall woman's breast. It was a miracle. It was the way out.

* * * *

Fire

Nematodes made up most of the animal life on earth, by mass, Jack reminded himself. They were everywhere. The number of parasitic varieties was minuscule compared to the beneficial ones. Nothing to worry about.

But his hands itched. And his skin burned.

It had not taken Jack long to cut up Carey's body, run it through the reduction chamber, mince the remains in the crusher and mix them into the project soil. He had hosed down the crusher and the floor of the lab. Fire, earth, water. Within a week there was nothing left of Carey but his elemental chemicals in the dirt.

Still, images of Carey were imprinted on the inside of Jack's eyelids. I'm a freakshow, he thought a dozen times each day, climbing down the slope to the crater floor, pruning seedlings in the greenhouse, sitting on the edge of the pool in Sobieski Park. Lying in bed with Eva. I'm a lethal male in a society constructed to prevent males from going lethal. I didn't even know it was happening. I'm a fucking maniac and no one can tell.

No one had noticed anything—at least he didn't think they had. He had a tough afternoon the day they transferred the test soil to the pilot project site on Fowler's east slope. He insisted that he amend the soil himself, plant the junipers with his own hands. He wore protective gloves. When Amravati said something about it, he replied quickly, “Don't want to take a chance with these new bugs.”

“If there are any bugs we don't know about, then we're all in trouble,” she said.

The seedlings flourished. Growth rates were elevated as much as fifteen percent. Within three months the project had progressed enough to schedule a tour by the Board of Matrons. Eva and the others strolled over the slopes among the low, fragrant growth. As Eva walked over the ground that contained all that was left of her only son, a wave of heat swept over Jack. His face felt flushed; his forehead burned.

The Board approved the project. The next week they voted Amravati a commendation, with special notice of Jack's contribution. “If you don't watch out, Jack, you're going to get stuck here,” Hal Keikosson said.

“What?” he said.

Hal smiled at him. “I mean you're becoming a Cousin, cousin.”

A cousin on the outside, a stranger within. There were lots of difficult aspects to the aftermath of Carey's death, among them the problem of Eva. For example, despite the fact that, during the search, he had saved Eva's life out on the edge of the precipice, it was impossible for him to touch her in bed. He had discovered how much her eyes were like Carey's. Lying beside her at night, hands burning, pretending to sleep until he heard Eva's faint snore, and pretending to sleep after that for fear of waking her, Jack felt more alone than he had since he was five years old. One night he heard Eva stir beside him, rise up on one elbow and watch him. He heard her whisper, “I'm sorry. I can do better.” What did she have to feel sorry about? How could she possibly be asking his forgiveness?

The colony clinic prescribed a salve for his skin that did nothing but make him smell like sulfur. I'm the lunar Mephistopheles, he thought. He resorted to magic: If some part of Carey was coming back to torment Jack, maybe bringing Carey home would mollify his ghost. Jack potted one of the junipers and set it up on their balcony. He fed Eva lettuce from the greenhouse to see what effect it would have on her. It made her suggest that Roz should move out.

Roz. That was the worst thing, the absolute worst. Jack was stunned that Roz had so readily put herself at risk to save him. Though it was, at some level he had difficulty admitting, immensely gratifying, and removed any doubt he had ever had that she loved him, now he could not look at Roz the same way. He was in debt to his daughter, and like a boulder that they were both chained to, that debt stood between them at every moment.

When Roz started her practicum in Fabrication, she began to spend more time with Eva. Jack watched them joke together as they sat in the apartment and went over the steps in the manufacture of building glass. Their heads were so close together, Roz's red hair and Eva's brown. The skirl of Roz's silly, high-pitched giggle, for some reason, made him want to cry.

“You laugh too much,” he said.

They looked up at him, dead silent, identical astonishment on their faces.

“Can't you keep quiet?” he said.

“Sorry, Dad,” Roz muttered. “I didn't know I wasn't allowed to laugh.” She pushed the tablet away from her. “I have something I need to tell you.”

Jack tried to keep the panic out of his voice. “What's that?”

“I think I'm going to move out. There's an apartment that Raisa and I can move into opening up in the old section of the south wall.”

“Raisa? I thought you didn't even like her.”

“I think I was just projecting; she's really a good person. She's never mean.”

Jack wanted to argue, but was intimidated by Eva's presence. Eva had put this idea in Roz's head.

“Come with me,” he said to Roz. “We'll take a walk. Do you mind, Eva? We need to talk this over father to daughter.”

“Go right ahead.”

Roz looked sullen, but she came with him. They descended from the apartment, down the pathway toward the crater floor. The inside of the dome was a brilliant cloudless sky. On the field below them a harvester sprayed soybeans into a hopper truck. “Is this because of Carey?” Jack asked.

Roz crossed her arms over his chest and looked at her feet. “I don't want to talk about Carey,” she said.

“You know it was an accident, Roz, I—”

She bounced on her toes and leapt five feet into the air, coming down well ahead of him. A woman going the other way looked at her and smiled. Jack hurried to catch up.

Roz still wouldn't look at him. “I will not talk about Carey, Dad. This isn't about him. I'm fourteen, and a cousins girl at fourteen who won't leave home is sick.” She bounced again.

He didn't know what to say. He knew she was lying, that it had to have something to do with Carey. But he wasn't going to beg.

“You're going to tell Eva the truth,” he said when he caught up.

“Don't be stupid!” Roz said. “I've given up too much for this. I don't want to move again.”

Stupid. How stupid he had been to come here. “I brought you here to keep us from drifting apart.”

“Dad, did you think I was going to be with you forever?”

He rubbed his palms up and down his forearms, but that only made the itching worse. “Will you call me?”

“I'll see you every day.”

Jack stopped following her. Roz continued down the path toward Sobieski Park, and did not look back.

“What do you think, Carey?” he whispered aloud as he watched his daughter walk away. “Is this one of those earth things? One of those sexual ownership practices?”

Jack tried to imagine what it would be like to be alone with Eva in one of the largest apartments in the colony. Perhaps it would not be so bad. He could plant a dozen junipers on the balcony. He could prepare all their meals. Hell, he could bring in a bed of Carey's soil and sleep in it.

He began meeting Jamira Tamlasdaughter in the sauna at the gym. They would claim one of the private alcoves and fuck. The heat of the sauna made him forget his burning skin. There was nothing wrong with it. There was nothing right about it. Roz was always out. Eva stayed away even longer at the labs, sometimes not coming back at night until he was asleep. The mysterious absences grew until one night it had been a full twenty-four hours since Jack had last seen either Eva or Roz. It was fertile ground for worry. Someone had found Carey's pressure suit. Roz had not hidden it well enough, and now she was in

trouble. Or Eva had tricked her into an admission. She had broken down, given in to guilt.

His phone rang. He touched the contact on his wristward.

“Dad? Can you meet me at Fabrication Research?”

Roz's voice was charged with excitement. He hadn't heard her sound so young in months. “What is it, Roz?”

“You won't believe it. All our troubles are over! We're resurrecting Carey!”

“What?”

“The assembler. I can't tell you more now, someone might hear. Come at 0300. If anyone asks, tell them that you're going somewhere else.”

“Is Eva there?”

“Yes. I've got to go now. See you at 0300.”

“Roz—”

He felt sick. Resurrecting Carey? Roz must have told Eva what had happened.

Still, what could he do but go? Jack paced the rooms for hours. He left after somatic midnight. The perimeter road to the north airlock was quiet; there was a slight breeze, a hum of insects around the lights. He told the lock attendant that he was going to biotech.

When he sealed up his suit he felt he could not breathe. He checked the readouts repeatedly, but despite the evidence that nothing was wrong, he felt stifled. Sweat trickled down his neck into his collar.

Outside the sun hammered down and the glare of the baked surface hid the stars. He upped the polarization on his faceplate, but still his eyes hurt. He followed the road from the airlock, between the fields of solar collectors, to the ramp entrance to the Fabrication Research Lab. He passed through the radiation maze, opened the outer door of the lab airlock. When he stripped off his suit his shirt was soaked with sweat. He wiped his arm across his brow, ran his fingers through his sweaty hair. He waited. He did not open the inner door.

And if, by some miracle, they did recreate Carey? Roz said that all their troubles would be over. They could go back to who they were.

Fat chance. He had hoped that coming to the Society would offer Roz a freedom that he could not earn for her on earth. No one on the moon knew him. And even if he did fail again, among the cousins a father's faults would not determine how others saw his daughter. Roz could be herself, not some reflection of him.

As he stood there, poised before the inner lock door, he had a sudden memory of Helen, on their honeymoon. On the beach at St. Kitts. Helen had surprised him by wearing a new bikini, so small that when she pulled off her shorts and T-shirt she was clearly self-conscious. But proud, in some way. He remembered feeling protective of her, and puzzled, and a little sorry. It hit him for the first time that she was fighting her body for his attention, and how sad that must be for her—on the one hand to know she had this power over him that came simply from her sexuality, and on the other that she, Helen, was someone completely apart from that body that drew him like a magnet. For a moment he had seen himself from outside. He'd been ashamed of his own sexuality, and the way it threatened to deform their

relationship. Who was she, really? Who was he?

At the time he had taken her in his arms, smiled, complimented her. He had felt sure that with time, they would know each other completely. How pathetic. After the break up, he had at least thought that he could know his daughter. That was why he wanted Roz—to love someone without sex coming in the way. To love someone without caring about himself.

How stupid he had been. Whether they'd come or not, inevitably she would see have seen him differently, or been destroyed by trying not to. Whether he'd killed Carey or not, Roz would have to fight to escape the mirror he held up to her.

With a sick feeling in his gut, he realized he had lost his daughter.

He was so hot. He was burning up. He shut his eyes and tried not to see or hear anything, but there was a roaring in his ears like a turbulent storm, and his eyes burned and flashed like lightning.

He would feel better if he went outside. Instead of opening the inner door, he put his pressure suit back on and opened the outside door. It was bright and hot out on the surface—but in the shadows of the rocks it would be cool. He stepped out of the shadow of the radiation baffle, up the ramp to the dusty surface. Instead of following the path back to the colony, he struck off between the rows of solar collectors toward a giant boulder that loomed on the horizon. As he walked, on his sleeve keyboard he punched in the override code for his suit's pressure failsafes.

By the time he had reached the chill shadow of the rock, all that remained between him and relief was the manual helmet release. He reached up to his neck and felt for the latch. He was so hot. He was burning up. But soon he would be cool again.

* * * *

Happy Ending

When the indicators showed the airlock was occupied, they waited for Jack to enter the lab. Instead, after a few minutes the outer lock of the airlock opened and he left again. Roz was worried.

“I'm going to see what he's up to,” she told Eva.

She pulled on her pressure suit and waited the maddening few minutes it took the lock to recycle. As soon as pressure was equalized she slid open the outer door and ran up the ramp. There was no sign of her father on the path back to Fowler. But as she followed the footprints away from the ramp, she spotted a figure in the distance heading out toward the hills.

Roz hurried after, skipping as fast as she could without lurching off onto the collectors.

When she caught up, he was on his knees in the shadow of a big rock, jerking about spasmodically. The strangeness of his motion alarmed her. She had never seen anyone move like that. Before she could reach him he slowed, stopped, and fell, slowly, onto his side. Calmly, quietly. Less like a fall, more like the drift of a feather. She rushed to his side, and saw that he had broken the seal on his helmet.

“No!” she screamed, and the sound of her voice echoed in her ears. Jack's face was purple with broken blood vessels, his eyes bloody. He was dead.

High-G, they called her, and it was a good thing, as she carried her father's body back to the fabrication lab.

* * * *

It was Roz's idea to put Jack's corpse into the assembler, to add the materials of his body to the atoms

used to recreate Carey. There would be hell to pay with security, but Eva agreed to do it.

The assembly took seven days. When the others at the colony discovered what Eva was doing, there was some debate, but they let the process continue. At the end of the week the fluid supporting the nanomachines was drained off, revealing Carey's perfect body. Carey shuddered and coughed, and they helped him out of the assembler.

To him it was six months earlier, and his mother had just completed his scan. It took him a long time to accept that he had not fallen into some dream only seconds after he had been placed in the marble, to awaken in this vat of warm fluid. He thought he was the original, not the copy. For all practical purposes he was right.

Later, as they were finding a pressure suit they could adapt to Carey's size to take him home, he asked Roz, "Where's Jack?"

* * * *

The Juniper Tree

All this happened a long time ago.

Nora Sobieski founded the Society of Cousins to free girls like Roz of the feeling that they must depend on their fathers or boyfriends for their sense of self, and incidentally to free boys like Carey of the need to prove themselves superior to other boys by owning girls like Roz. Girls still go through infatuations, still fall in love, still feel the influence men as well as of women. But Roz and Eva in the end are actually in the same boat—a boat that does not contain Jack, or even Carey.

The young junipers stand ghostly gray in the night. The air smells fragrant with pinon. In the thin, clear starlight Roz can see wildflowers blooming beneath the trees—columbine, pennyroyal, groundsel. She sits on the slope and pulls Carey's ring from her pocket. The ring is fashioned into the image of two vines that twine around each other, each with no beginning and no end, each eternally separate from the other.

Roz holds the ring in the middle of her palm, wondering if she should get rid of it at last, knowing that she can never give it back and keep her father's secret.