

LAMPIRAN A
LISTING PROGRAM

```
Private Sub Command3_Click()
```

```
End
```

```
End Sub
```

```
Private Sub compress_Click()
```

```
m1.Visible = True
```

```
m2.Visible = True
```

```
d1.Visible = False
```

```
d2.Visible = False
```

```
End Sub
```

```
Private Sub d1_Click()
```

```
CompDecomp = 2
```

```
Dim decompress As Boolean
```

```
Dim Dummy As Boolean
```

```
Dim StTime As Double
```

```
Dim Text As String
```

```
Dim LastUsed As Integer
```

```
If UBound(OriginalArray) = 0 Then
```

```
MsgBox "There is nothing to compress/Decompress"
```

```
Exit Sub
```

```
End If
```

```
If AutoDecodeIsOn = False Then
```

```
decompress = True
```

```
If CompDecomp = 0 Then Exit Sub
```

```
If CompDecomp = 1 Then decompress = False
```

```
Else
```

```
decompress = True
```

```
End If
```

```

If decompress = True Then
    LastUsed = UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs))
    If JustLoaded = True Then LastUsed = 0
    If WichCompressor <> LastUsed Then
        Text = "This is not compressed with ." & Chr(13)
        MsgBox Text
        Exit Sub
    End If
    Else
        LastCoder = WichCompressor
    End If
Call Copy_Orig2Work
LastDeCoded = decompress
    If JustLoaded = True Then
        JustLoaded = False
        ReDim UsedCodecs(0)
    End If
compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbHourglass
StTime = Timer
Call DeCompress_arithmetic_Dynamic(hasil)
compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbDefault
Call Show_Statistics(False, hasil)
Call afterContentD(hasil)
compression.save.Visible = True
    d1.Visible = False
    d2.Visible = False
End Sub

```

Private Sub d2_Click()

```
    CompDecomp = 2

    Dim decompress As Boolean

    Dim Dummy As Boolean

    Dim StTime As Double

    Dim Text As String

    Dim LastUsed As Integer

    If UBound(OriginalArray) = 0 Then

        MsgBox "There is nothing to compress/Decompress"

        Exit Sub

    End If

    If AutoDecodeIsOn = False Then

        decompress = True

        If CompDecomp = 0 Then Exit Sub

        If CompDecomp = 1 Then decompress = False

    Else

        decompress = True

    End If

    If decompress = True Then

        LastUsed = UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs))

        If JustLoaded = True Then LastUsed = 0

        If WichCompressor <> LastUsed Then

            Text = "This is not compressed with ." & Chr(13)

            MsgBox Text

            Exit Sub

        End If

    Else

        LastCoder = WichCompressor
```

```

        End If

Call Copy_Orig2Work

LastDeCoded = decompress

    If JustLoaded = True Then

        JustLoaded = False

        ReDim UsedCodecs(0)

    End If

compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbHourglass

StTime = Timer

Call DeCompress_Elias_Gamma(hasil)

Call MTF_DeCoderArray(hasil)

compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbDefault

Call Show_Statistics(False, hasil)

Call afterContentD(hasil)

compression.save.Visible = True

d1.Visible = False

d2.Visible = False

End Sub

Private Sub d3_Click()

    CompDecomp = 2

    Dim decompress As Boolean

    Dim Dummy As Boolean

    Dim StTime As Double

    Dim Text As String

    Dim LastUsed As Integer

    If UBound(OriginalArray) = 0 Then

        MsgBox "There is nothing to compress/Decompress"

        Exit Sub
    
```

```

End If

If AutoDecodeIsOn = False Then

    decompress = True

    If CompDecomp = 0 Then Exit Sub

    If CompDecomp = 1 Then decompress = False

Else

    decompress = True

End If

If decompress = True Then

    LastUsed = UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs))

    If JustLoaded = True Then LastUsed = 0

    If WichCompressor <> LastUsed Then

        Text = "This is not compressed with ." & Chr(13)

        MsgBox Text

        Exit Sub

    End If

Else

    LastCoder = WichCompressor

End If

Call Copy_Orig2Work

LastDeCoded = decompress

If JustLoaded = True Then

    JustLoaded = False

    ReDim UsedCodecs(0)

End If

compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbHourglass

StTime = Timer

Call DeCompress_Elias_Gamma(hasil)

```

```
Call DeCompress_arithmetic_Dynamic(hasil)

compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbDefault

Call Show_Statistics(False, hasil)

Call afterContent(hasil)

compression.save.Visible = True

    d1.Visible = False

    d2.Visible = False

        d3.Visible = False

        d4.Visible = False
```

End Sub

Private Sub d4_Click()

```
CompDecomp = 2

Dim decompress As Boolean

Dim Dummy As Boolean

Dim StTime As Double

Dim Text As String

Dim LastUsed As Integer

    If UBound(OriginalArray) = 0 Then

        MsgBox "There is nothing to compress/Decompress"

        Exit Sub

    End If

    If AutoDecodeIsOn = False Then

        decompress = True

            If CompDecomp = 0 Then Exit Sub

            If CompDecomp = 1 Then decompress = False

        Else

            decompress = True

        End If
```

```

If decompress = True Then
    LastUsed = UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs))
        If JustLoaded = True Then LastUsed = 0
    If WichCompressor <> LastUsed Then
        Text = "This is not compressed with ." & Chr(13)
        MsgBox Text
        Exit Sub
    End If
Else
    LastCoder = WichCompressor
End If
Call Copy_Orig2Work
LastDeCoded = decompress
    If JustLoaded = True Then
        JustLoaded = False
        ReDim UsedCodecs(0)
    End If
compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbHourglass
StTime = Timer
Call MTF_DeCoderArray(hasil)
compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbDefault
Call Show_Statistics(False, hasil)
Call afterContent(hasil)
compression.save.Visible = True
    d1.Visible = False
    d2.Visible = False
    d3.Visible = False
    d4.Visible = False

```


End Sub

Private Sub Form_Load()

```
Dim X As Integer
Dim y As Integer
Dim MaxWidth As Double
ReDim OriginalArray(0)
ReDim hasil(0)
ReDim UsedCodecs(0)
CompDecomp = 0
```

End Sub

Private Sub m1_Click()

```
CompDecomp = 1
Dim decompress As Boolean
Dim Dummy As Boolean
Dim StTime As Double
Dim Text As String
Dim LastUsed As Integer
If UBound(OriginalArray) = 0 Then
    MsgBox "There is nothing to compress/Decompress"
    Exit Sub
End If
If AutoDecodeIsOn = False Then
    decompress = True
    If CompDecomp = 0 Then Exit Sub
    If CompDecomp = 1 Then decompress = False
Else
    decompress = True
End If
```

```

If decompress = True Then
    LastUsed = UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs))
    If JustLoaded = True Then LastUsed = 0
    If WichCompressor <> LastUsed Then
        Text = "This is not compressed with ." & Chr(13)
        MsgBox Text
        Exit Sub
    End If
Else
    LastCoder = WichCompressor
End If
Call Copy_Orig2Work
LastDeCoded = decompress
If JustLoaded = True Then
    JustLoaded = False
    ReDim UsedCodecs(0)
End If
compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbHourglass
StTime = Timer
Call Compress_arithmetic_Dynamic(hasil)
compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbDefault
Call Show_Statistics(False, hasil)
Call afterContentC(hasil)
compression.save.Visible = True

m1.Visible = False
m2.Visible = False

End Sub

```

```

Private Sub m2_Click()

    CompDecomp = 1

    Dim decompress As Boolean

    Dim Dummy As Boolean

    Dim StTime As Double

    Dim Text As String

    Dim LastUsed As Integer

    If UBound(OriginalArray) = 0 Then

        MsgBox "There is nothing to compress/Decompress"

        Exit Sub

    End If

    If AutoDecodeIsOn = False Then

        decompress = True

        If CompDecomp = 0 Then Exit Sub

        If CompDecomp = 1 Then decompress = False

        Else

            decompress = True

    End If

    If decompress = True Then

        LastUsed = UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs))

        If JustLoaded = True Then LastUsed = 0

        If WichCompressor <> LastUsed Then

            Text = "This is not compressed with ." & Chr(13)

            MsgBox Text

            Exit Sub

        End If

    Else

        LastCoder = WichCompressor
    
```

```

    End If

    Call Copy_Orig2Work

    LastDeCoded = decompress

    If JustLoaded = True Then

        JustLoaded = False

        ReDim UsedCodecs(0)

    End If

    compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbHourglass

    StTime = Timer

    Call MTF_CoderArray(hasil)

    Call Compress_Elias_Gamma(hasil)

    compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbDefault

    Call Show_Statistics(False, hasil)

    Call afterContentC(hasil)

    compression.save.Visible = True

    m1.Visible = False

    m2.Visible = False

```

End Sub

Private Sub m3_Click()

```

    CompDecomp = 1

    Dim decompress As Boolean

    Dim Dummy As Boolean

    Dim StTime As Double

    Dim Text As String

    Dim LastUsed As Integer

    If UBound(OriginalArray) = 0 Then

        MsgBox "There is nothing to compress/Decompress"

        Exit Sub
    End If

```

```

End If

If AutoDecodeIsOn = False Then

    decompress = True

        If CompDecomp = 0 Then Exit Sub

        If CompDecomp = 1 Then decompress = False

Else

    decompress = True

End If

If decompress = True Then

    LastUsed = UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs))

        If JustLoaded = True Then LastUsed = 0

        If WichCompressor <> LastUsed Then

            Text = "This is not compressed with ." & Chr(13)

            MsgBox Text

            Exit Sub

        End If

    Else

        LastCoder = WichCompressor

    End If

Call Copy_Orig2Work

LastDeCoded = decompress

    If JustLoaded = True Then

        JustLoaded = False

        ReDim UsedCodecs(0)

    End If

compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbHourglass

StTime = Timer

Call Compress_arithmetic_Dynamic(hasil)

```

```
Call Compress_Elias_Gamma(hasil)

compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbDefault

Call Show_Statistics(False, hasil)

Call afterContent(hasil)

compression.save.Visible = True
```

End Sub

Private Sub m4_Click()

```
    CompDecomp = 1

    Dim decompress As Boolean

    Dim StTime As Double

    Dim Text As String

    Dim LastUsed As Integer

    If UBound(OriginalArray) = 0 Then

        MsgBox "There is nothing to compress/Decompress"

        Exit Sub

    End If

    If AutoDecodeIsOn = False Then

        decompress = True

        If CompDecomp = 0 Then Exit Sub

        If CompDecomp = 1 Then decompress = False

    Else

        decompress = True

    End If

    If decompress = True Then

        LastUsed = UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs))

        If JustLoaded = True Then LastUsed = 0

        If WichCompressor <> LastUsed Then

            Text = "This is not compressed with ." & Chr(13)
```

```

        MsgBox Text
            Exit Sub
        End If

    Else

        LastCoder = WichCompressor

    End If

    Call Copy_Orig2Work

    LastDeCoded = decompress

    If JustLoaded = True Then

        JustLoaded = False

        ReDim UsedCodecs(0)

    End If

    compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbHourglass

    StTime = Timer

    Call MTF_CoderArray(hasil)

    compression.MousePointer = MousePointerConstants.vbDefault

    Call Show_Statistics(False, hasil)

    Call afterContent(hasil)

    compression.save.Visible = True

    m1.Visible = False

    m2.Visible = False

    m3.Visible = False

    m4.Visible = False

End Sub

Private Sub open_Click()

    Dim OldFileName As String

    OldFileName = LoadFileName

```

```
Cdlg.DialogTitle = "Select the file you want to explore"
Cdlg.FileName = ""
Cdlg.ShowOpen
LoadFileName = Cdlg.FileName
Call load_File(LoadFileName)
    If LoadFileName = "" Then LoadFileName = OldFileName
Call Show_Contents(OriginalArray)
```

End Sub

Private Sub Decompress_Click()

```
d1.Visible = True
```

```
d2.Visible = True
```

```
m1.Visible = False
```

```
m2.Visible = False
```

End Sub

Private Sub Save_Click()

```
Call Save_File_As(hasil, False)
```

End Sub

Modules :

1. Cod_MTF

```
Public Sub MTF_CoderArray(Bytes() As Byte, Optional Dictionary As  
String = "")
```

```
    Dim DictString As String
```

```
    Dim NewPos As Integer
```

```
    Dim X As Long
```

```
    If Dictionary = "" Then
```

```
        For X = 0 To 255
```



```

        DictString = DictString & Chr(X)
    Next
Else
    DictString = Dictionary
End If
For X = 0 To UBound(Bytes)
    NewPos = InStr(DictString, Chr(Bytes(X)))
    DictString = Chr(Bytes(X)) & Left(DictString, NewPos - 1) &
Mid(DictString, NewPos + 1)
    Bytes(X) = NewPos - 1
Next
End Sub

```

```

Public Sub MTF_DeCoderArray(Bytes() As Byte, Optional Dictionary As
String = "")
    Dim DictString As String
    Dim NewString As String
    Dim NewPos As Integer
    Dim X As Long
    If Dictionary = "" Then
        For X = 0 To 255
            DictString = DictString & Chr(X)
        Next
    Else
        DictString = Dictionary
    End If
    For X = 0 To UBound(Bytes)
        NewPos = Bytes(X) + 1
        Bytes(X) = Asc(Mid(DictString, NewPos, 1))
    Next
End Sub

```

```
        DictString = Mid(DictString, NewPos, 1) & Left(DictString,  
NewPos - 1) & Mid(DictString, NewPos + 1)
```

```
    Next
```

```
End Sub
```

2. **Comp_Arithmetic_Dynamic**

```
Private OutStream() As Byte
```

```
Private OutPos As Long
```

```
Private OutBitCount As Integer
```

```
Private OutByteBuf As Byte
```

```
Private CharCount(257) As Long
```

```
Private Const MaxBits As Integer = 24
```

```
Private Bits_To_Follow As Integer
```

```
Private Const EOF_Symbol = 256
```

```
Public Sub Compress_arithmetic_Dynamic(ByteArray() As Byte)
```

```
    Dim InpPos As Long
```

```
    Dim Low As Long
```

```
    Dim High As Long
```

```
    Dim Range As Long
```

```
    Dim Half As Long
```

```
    Dim First_Qtr As Long
```

```
    Dim Third_Qtr As Long
```

```
    Dim Mid As Long
```

```
    Dim TotChars As Long
```

```
    Dim Char As Integer
```

```
    Dim Index As Integer
```

```
    Dim X As Integer
```

```
    Call Init_Arithmetic_Dynamic
```

```

Low = 0
High = (2 ^ MaxBits) - 1
Half = High / 2
First_Qtr = Half / 2
Third_Qtr = Half + First_Qtr
Char = 0
Do
    If InpPos > UBound(ByteArray) Then
        Char = EOF_Symbol
    Else
        Char = ByteArray(InpPos)
    End If
    InpPos = InpPos + 1
    Range = High - Low
    High = Low + CLng(Range * (CharCount(Char) / CharCount(0)))
    Low = Low + CLng(Range * (CharCount(Char + 1) / CharCount(0)))
    Do
        If High < Half Then
            Call Bit_Plus_Follow(0)
            '* Output 0 if
in low half. *'
        ElseIf Low >= Half Then
            '* Output 1 if in
high half.*'
            Call Bit_Plus_Follow(1)
            Low = Low - Half
            High = High - Half
            '* Subtract
offset to top. *'
        ElseIf Low >= First_Qtr And High < Third_Qtr Then
            '* Output an opposite bit *'
            Bits_To_Follow = Bits_To_Follow + 1
            '*
later if in middle half. *'
    End Do

```

```

        Low = Low - First_Qtr           '* Subtract
offset to middle*'

        High = High - First_Qtr

    Else                                 '* Otherwise exit
loop.  *'

        Exit Do

    End If

    Low = 2 * Low

    High = 2 * High + 1                 '* Scale up code range.  *'

Loop

If Char = EOF_Symbol Then Exit Do

Call update_Model(Char)

Loop

For X = MaxBits - 1 To 0 Step -1

    If (Low And 2 ^ X) = 0 Then

        Call AddBitsToOutputStream(0, 1)

    Else

        Call AddBitsToOutputStream(1, 1)

    End If

Next

Do While OutBitCount > 0

    Call AddBitsToOutputStream(1, 1)

Loop

ReDim ByteArray(OutPos - 1)

Call CopyMem(ByteArray(0), OutputStream(0), OutPos)

End Sub

Public Sub DeCompress_arithmetic_Dynamic(ByteArray() As Byte)

    Dim InpPos As Long

```

```
Dim InBitPos As Integer

Dim Low As Long

Dim High As Long

Dim Range As Long

Dim Half As Long

Dim First_Qtr As Long

Dim Third_Qtr As Long

Dim Mid As Long

Dim Value As Long

Dim TotChars As Long

Dim Char As Integer

Dim Index As Integer

Dim counter As Long

Dim Temp As Integer

Dim X As Integer

Call Init_Arithmetic_Dynamic

Value = 0

InpPos = 0

InBitPos = 0

Value = ReadBitsFromArray(ByteArray, InpPos, InBitPos, MaxBits)

Low = 0

High = (2 ^ MaxBits) - 1

Half = High / 2

First_Qtr = Half / 2

Third_Qtr = Half + First_Qtr

Char = 0

Do

    If InpPos > UBound(ByteArray) Then
```

```

Exit Do

End If

If OutPos = 15 Then
    OutPos = 15
End If

Range = High - Low
counter = Int((Value - Low + 1) * (CharCount(0) / Range))
For Char = 0 To 256
    If CharCount(Char) <= counter Then
        Exit For
    End If
Next

Char = Char - 1

If Char = EOF_Symbol Then Exit Do

High = Low + CLng(Range * (CharCount(Char) / CharCount(0)))
Low = Low + CLng(Range * (CharCount(Char + 1) / CharCount(0)))
Call update_Model(Char)
Call AddValueToOutStream(Char)

Do
    '* Loop to get rid of bits.
*'

    If InpPos <= UBound(ByteArray) Then
        If High < Half Then
            '* nothing *'
            '* Expand low
half.    '*
            Value = 2 * Value + ReadBitsFromArray(ByteArray,
InpPos, InBitPos, 1) '* Move in next input bit. *'

            ElseIf Low >= Half Then
                '* Expand high
half.    '*
                Value = Value - Half

```

```

        Low = Low - Half                '* Subtract
offset to top.  '*

        High = High - Half

        Value = 2 * Value + ReadBitsFromArray(ByteArray,
InpPos, InBitPos, 1)                '* Move in next input bit.  '*

        ElseIf Low >= First_Qtr And High < Third_Qtr Then '*
Expand middle half.                '*

        Value = Value - First_Qtr

        Low = Low - First_Qtr          '* Subtract
offset to middle*'

        High = High - First_Qtr

        Value = 2 * Value + ReadBitsFromArray(ByteArray,
InpPos, InBitPos, 1)                '* Move in next input bit.  '*

        Else                            '* Otherwise exit
loop.  '*

                Exit Do

        End If

        Low = 2 * Low

        High = 2 * High + 1            '* Scale up code
range.  '*

        Else

                Exit Do

        End If

        Loop

        Loop

        ReDim ByteArray(OutPos - 1)

        Call CopyMem(ByteArray(0), OutputStream(0), OutPos)

End Sub

Private Sub Init_Arithmetic_Dynamic()

        Dim X As Integer

```

```

ReDim OutStream(500)

OutPos = 0

OutBitCount = 0

OutByteBuf = 0

Bits_To_Follow = 0

For X = 0 To 257
    CharCount(X) = 258 - X
Next

End Sub

```

```

Private Sub update_Model(Index As Integer)

    Dim I As Integer

    I = Index

    Do While I >= 0

        CharCount(I) = CharCount(I) + 1

        I = I - 1

    Loop

End Sub

```

```

Private Sub Bit_Plus_Follow(Bit As Integer)

    Call AddBitsToOutStream(CLng(Bit), 1)                '* Output
the bit.                *'

    Do While Bits_To_Follow > 0

        Call AddBitsToOutStream(1 - Bit, 1)            '* Output
bits_to_follow        *'

        Bits_To_Follow = Bits_To_Follow - 1            '* opposite
bits. Set                *'

    Loop                                                '* bits_to_follow to
zero.                *'

End Sub

```



```

Private Sub AddValueToOutputStream(Number As Integer)

    If OutPos > UBound(OutputStream) Then ReDim Preserve OutputStream(OutPos
+ 100)

    OutputStream(OutPos) = Number

    OutPos = OutPos + 1

End Sub

```

```

Private Sub AddBitsToOutputStream(Number As Long, NumBits As Integer)

    Dim X As Long

    For X = NumBits - 1 To 0 Step -1

        OutByteBuf = OutByteBuf * 2 + (-1 * ((Number And CDb1(2 ^ X)) >
0))

        OutBitCount = OutBitCount + 1

        If OutBitCount = 8 Then

            OutputStream(OutPos) = OutByteBuf

            OutBitCount = 0

            OutByteBuf = 0

            OutPos = OutPos + 1

            If OutPos > UBound(OutputStream) Then

                ReDim Preserve OutputStream(OutPos + 500)

            End If

        End If

    Next

End Sub

```

'this function will return a value out of the amount of bits you asked for

```

Private Function ReadBitsFromArray(FromArray() As Byte, FromPos As
Long, FromBit As Integer, NumBits As Integer) As Long

```

```

Dim X As Integer

Dim Temp As Long

For X = 1 To NumBits
    Temp = Temp * 2 + (-1 * ((FromArray(FromPos) And 2 ^ (7 -
FromBit)) > 0))

    FromBit = FromBit + 1

    If FromBit = 8 Then
        If FromPos + 1 > UBound(FromArray) Then
            Do While X < NumBits
                Temp = Temp * 2
                X = X + 1
            Loop
            FromPos = FromPos + 1
            Exit For
        End If
        FromPos = FromPos + 1
        FromBit = 0
    End If
Next

ReadBitsFromArray = Temp

End Function

```

3. **Comp_EliasGamma**

```

Private LeadingZero(9) As Integer
Private GammaCode(9) As Integer
Private BitsToFollow(9) As Integer
Private OutPos As Long
Private OutByteBuf As Byte

```

```

Private OutBitCount As Integer

Private InpPos As Long

Private ReadBitPos As Integer

Public Sub Compress_Elias_Gamma(ByteArray() As Byte)

    Dim OutStream() As Byte

    Dim X As Long

    Call Init_Elias_Gamma

    ReDim OutStream(UBound(ByteArray))

    For X = 0 To UBound(ByteArray)

        Call AddEliasToArray(OutStream, CLng(ByteArray(X)))

    Next

    Call AddEliasToArray(OutStream, 256)

    If OutBitCount > 0 Then

        Call AddBitsToArray(OutStream, 0, 8 - OutBitCount)

    End If

    ReDim ByteArray(OutPos)

    Call CopyMem(ByteArray(0), OutStream(0), OutPos + 1)

End Sub

Public Sub DeCompress_Elias_Gamma(ByteArray() As Byte)

    Dim OutStream() As Byte

    Dim Char As Integer

    Dim X As Long

    Call Init_Elias_Gamma

    ReDim OutStream(UBound(ByteArray))

    Char = ReadEliasCode(ByteArray)

    Do While Char <> 256

```

```

        Call AddCharToArray(OutputStream, Char)

        Char = ReadEliasCode(ByteArray)

Loop
    OutPos = OutPos - 1

    ReDim ByteArray(OutPos)

    Call CopyMem(ByteArray(0), OutputStream(0), OutPos + 1)

End Sub

Private Sub Init_Elias_Gamma()

    OutPos = 0

    OutByteBuf = 0

    OutBitCount = 0

    InpPos = 0

    ReadBitPos = 0

    LeadingZero(0) = 0: GammaCode(0) = 1: BitsToFollow(0) = 0      '1
=1          -7

    LeadingZero(1) = 1: GammaCode(1) = 1: BitsToFollow(1) = 1      '01x
=2-3       -5

    LeadingZero(2) = 2: GammaCode(2) = 1: BitsToFollow(2) = 2      '001xx
=4-7       -3

    LeadingZero(3) = 3: GammaCode(3) = 1: BitsToFollow(3) = 3
'0001xxx      =8-15      -1

    LeadingZero(4) = 4: GammaCode(4) = 1: BitsToFollow(4) = 4
'00001xxxx    =16-31     +1

    LeadingZero(5) = 5: GammaCode(5) = 1: BitsToFollow(5) = 5
'000001xxxxx  =32-63     +3

    LeadingZero(6) = 6: GammaCode(6) = 1: BitsToFollow(6) = 6
'0000001xxxxxx =64-127    +5

    LeadingZero(7) = 7: GammaCode(7) = 1: BitsToFollow(7) = 7
'00000001xxxxxxx =128-255   +7

    LeadingZero(8) = 8: GammaCode(7) = 1: BitsToFollow(8) = 0
'0000000001    =256      +1

```

```
    LeadingZero(9) = 8: GammaCode(9) = 0: BitsToFollow(8) = 0
'000000000          =257          +1    EOF
```

```
End Sub
```

```
Private Function Get_Elias_Code(Number As Long) As Integer
```

```
    Select Case Number
```

```
    Case 1
```

```
        Get_Elias_Code = 0
```

```
    Case Is < 4
```

```
        Get_Elias_Code = 1
```

```
    Case Is < 8
```

```
        Get_Elias_Code = 2
```

```
    Case Is < 16
```

```
        Get_Elias_Code = 3
```

```
    Case Is < 32
```

```
        Get_Elias_Code = 4
```

```
    Case Is < 64
```

```
        Get_Elias_Code = 5
```

```
    Case Is < 128
```

```
        Get_Elias_Code = 6
```

```
    Case Is < 256
```

```
        Get_Elias_Code = 7
```

```
    Case Is = 256
```

```
        Get_Elias_Code = 8
```

```
    Case Else
```

```
        Get_Elias_Code = 9
```

```
    End Select
```

```
End Function
```

```

Private Sub AddEliasToArray(Toarray() As Byte, Char As Long)

    Dim Code As Integer

    Dim X As Integer

    Dim BitSize As Integer

    Char = Char + 1

    Code = Get_Elias_Code(Char)

    Call AddBitsToArray(Toarray, 0, LeadingZero(Code))

    Call AddBitsToArray(Toarray, CLng(GammaCode(Code)), 1)

    Call AddBitsToArray(Toarray, Char, BitsToFollow(Code))

End Sub

Private Function ReadEliasCode(FromArray() As Byte) As Integer

    Dim X As Integer

    Dim Temp As Integer

    Dim bitcount As Integer

    Do While ReadBitsFromArray(FromArray, InpPos, 1) = 0 And bitcount <
9
        bitcount = bitcount + 1

    Loop

    If bitcount = 9 Then ReadEliasCode = 256: Exit Function

    Temp = 2 ^ bitcount

    If bitcount < 8 Then

        Temp = Temp + ReadBitsFromArray(FromArray, InpPos, bitcount)

    End If

    ReadEliasCode = Temp - 1

End Function

'this sub will add an amount of bits into the outputstream

```

```
Private Sub AddBitsToArray(Toarray() As Byte, Number As Long, NumBits  
As Integer)
```

```
    Dim X As Long
```

```
    For X = NumBits - 1 To 0 Step -1
```

```
        OutByteBuf = OutByteBuf * 2 + (-1 * ((Number And 2 ^ X) > 0))
```

```
        OutBitCount = OutBitCount + 1
```

```
        If OutBitCount = 8 Then
```

```
            Toarray(OutPos) = OutByteBuf
```

```
            OutBitCount = 0
```

```
            OutByteBuf = 0
```

```
            OutPos = OutPos + 1
```

```
            If OutPos > UBound(Toarray) Then
```

```
                ReDim Preserve Toarray(OutPos + 500)
```

```
            End If
```

```
        End If
```

```
    Next
```

```
End Sub
```

```
Private Sub AddCharToArray(Toarray() As Byte, Char As Integer)
```

```
    If OutPos > UBound(Toarray) Then
```

```
        ReDim Preserve Toarray(OutPos + 100)
```

```
    End If
```

```
    Toarray(OutPos) = Char
```

```
    OutPos = OutPos + 1
```

```
End Sub
```

```
Private Function ReadBitsFromArray(FromArray() As Byte, FromPos As  
Long, NumBits As Integer) As Long
```

```
    Dim X As Integer
```

```

Dim Temp As Long

For X = 1 To NumBits

    Temp = Temp * 2 + (-1 * ((FromArray(FromPos) And 2 ^ (7 -
ReadBitPos)) > 0))

    ReadBitPos = ReadBitPos + 1

    If ReadBitPos = 8 Then

        If FromPos + 1 > UBound(FromArray) Then

            Do While X < NumBits

                Temp = Temp * 2

                X = X + 1

            Loop

            FromPos = FromPos + 1

            Exit For

        End If

        FromPos = FromPos + 1

        ReadBitPos = 0

    End If

Next

ReadBitsFromArray = Temp

End Function

```

4. Global

```

Public Declare Sub CopyMem Lib "kernel32" Alias "RtlMoveMemory"
(Destination As Any, source As Any, ByVal Length As Long)

```

```

Public OriginalArray() As Byte

```

```

Public OriginalSize As Long

```

```

Public hasil() As Byte

```

```

Public LoadFileName As String

```



```

Public JustLoaded As Boolean

Public DictionarySize As Integer

Public LastCoder As Integer

Public UsedCodecs() As Integer

Public LastDeCoded As Boolean

Public AritmaticRescale As Boolean

Public CompDecomp As Integer

Public Const Coder_MTF_No_Header = 6

Private CodName(20) As String

Public Const Compressor_EliasGamma = 16

Public CompName(61) As String

Private AutoDecodeIsOn As Boolean 'to see if autodecode is used

Public Sub Init_CoderNameDataBase()

    CodName(Coder_MTF_No_Header) = "Move to Front coder without header"

    CompName(Compressor_EliasGamma) = "Elias Gamma"

End Sub

Public Sub Copy_Orig2Work()

    ReDim hasil(UBound(OriginalArray))

    Call CopyMem(hasil(0), OriginalArray(0), UBound(OriginalArray) + 1)

End Sub

Public Sub Copy_Work2Orig()

```

```
ReDim OriginalArray(UBound(hasil))

Call CopyMem(OriginalArray(0), hasil(0), UBound(hasil) + 1)

End Sub
```

```
Public Sub load_File(Name As String)

    Dim FreeNum As Integer

    If Name = "" Then Exit Sub

    FreeNum = FreeFile

    Open Name For Binary As #FreeNum

    ReDim OriginalArray(0 To LOF(FreeNum) - 1)

    Get #FreeNum, , OriginalArray()

    Close #FreeNum

    JustLoaded = True

    Call Split_Header_From_File(OriginalArray)

    compression.Caption = "loading" & LoadFileName & ""

    OriginalSize = UBound(OriginalArray) + 1

    Call Show_Statistics(True, OriginalArray)

End Sub
```

```
Private Sub Split_Header_From_File(ByteArray() As Byte)

    Dim HeadText As String

    Dim X As Integer

    Dim CodecsUsed As Integer

    Dim Version As String

    Dim InPos As Long
```

```

InPos = UBound(ByteArray)

For X = 0 To 2
    HeadText = HeadText & Chr(ByteArray(InPos))
    InPos = InPos - 1
Next

If HeadText <> "UCF" Then Exit Sub 'this is an un-UCF'ed file

Version = Chr(ByteArray(InPos))
InPos = InPos - 1

Select Case Version
    Case "0"
        CodecsUsed = ByteArray(InPos)
        InPos = InPos - 1
        ReDim UsedCodecs(CodecsUsed)
        For X = 1 To CodecsUsed
            UsedCodecs(X) = ByteArray(InPos)
            InPos = InPos - 1
        Next
        ReDim Preserve ByteArray(InPos)
    End Select

ReDim hasil(0)

JustLoaded = False

End Sub

```

```

Public Sub Save_File_As(ByteArray() As Byte, source As Boolean)

    Dim FileNr As Integer

    Dim HeadArray() As Byte

    Dim OutHead As Integer

```

```

Dim HeadText As String

Dim Answer As Integer

Dim CodecsUsed As Integer

Dim SaveName As String

Dim ExtPos As Integer

Dim Temp As Integer

Dim X As Integer

If UBound(ByteArray) = 0 Then

    MsgBox "There is nothing to be saved"

    Exit Sub

End If

If source = False And LastCoder <> 0 Then Call
AddCoder2List(LastCoder)

If UBound(UsedCodecs) = 0 And UBound(ByteArray) =
UBound(OriginalArray) Then

    Answer = MsgBox("The file to save is the same as the original
file" & Chr(13), vbYesNo + vbExclamation)

    If Answer = vbNo Then

        Exit Sub

    End If

End If

Ask_SaveName:

SaveName = ""

compression.Cdlg.DialogTitle = "Type in the name you want to save
with"

compression.Cdlg.FileName = ""

compression.Cdlg.ShowSave

SaveName = compression.Cdlg.FileName

If SaveName = "" Then

    If source = False And LastCoder <> 0 Then

```

```

        ReDim Preserve UsedCodecs (UBound(UsedCodecs) - 1)

        LastCoder = UsedCodecs (UBound(UsedCodecs))

    End If

    Exit Sub

End If

Temp = 0

Do

    ExtPos = Temp

    Temp = InStr(ExtPos + 1, SaveName, ".")

Loop While Temp <> 0

If ExtPos = 0 Or ExtPos < Len(SaveName) - 5 Then

    SaveName = SaveName & ".hmf"

End If

HeadText = "UCF0"

If LastCoder = 0 And source = False Then

    CodecsUsed = 0

Else

    CodecsUsed = UBound(UsedCodecs)

End If

ReDim HeadArray(4 + CodecsUsed)

OutHead = 0

For X = CodecsUsed To 1 Step -1

    HeadArray(OutHead) = UsedCodecs(X)

    OutHead = OutHead + 1

Next

HeadArray(OutHead) = CodecsUsed

OutHead = OutHead + 1

For X = Len(HeadText) To 1 Step -1

```

```

        HeadArray(OutHead) = Asc(Mid(HeadText, X, 1))

        OutHead = OutHead + 1

    Next

    FileNr = FreeFile

    If Dir(SaveName, vbNormal) <> "" Then

        Answer = MsgBox("File already exists" & Chr(13) & Chr(13) &
"Overwrite", vbCritical + vbYesNo)

        If Answer = vbNo Then

            GoTo Ask_SaveName

        End If

        Kill SaveName 'first remove it otherwise size is not adjusted

    End If

    Open SaveName For Binary As #FileNr

    Put #FileNr, , ByteArray()

    If CodecsUsed > 0 Then

        Put #FileNr, , HeadArray()

    End If

    Close #FileNr

End Sub

```

```

Public Sub Show_Statistics(OrgData As Boolean, Data() As Byte)

    Dim StatWindow As Integer

    Dim Frequentie(255) As Long

    Dim SortFreq(1, 255) As Long

    Dim Counts() As Long

    Dim X As Long

    Dim Minval As Long

    Dim Maxval As Long

```

```

Dim next_offset As Long

Dim this_count As Long

Dim HeightValue As Double

Dim Entry As String

Dim NewSize As String

Dim NuSize As Long

Dim BPB As String

If OrgData = False Then StatWindow = 1

NuSize = UBound(Data) + 1

BPB = Format(((NuSize * 8) / OriginalSize), "###0.000") & " bpb"

NewSize = NuSize & " Bytes  ↵↵ " & Format(100 - (OriginalSize -
NuSize) / OriginalSize * 100, "##0.00") & "% "

For X = 0 To UBound(Data)

    Frequentie(Data(X)) = Frequentie(Data(X)) + 1

Next

Minval = UBound(Data)

For X = 0 To 255

    If Minval > Frequentie(X) Then Minval = Frequentie(X)

    If Maxval < Frequentie(X) Then Maxval = Frequentie(X)

Next

ReDim Counts(Minval To Maxval)

For X = 0 To 255

    Counts(Frequentie(X)) = Counts(Frequentie(X)) + 1

Next X

next_offset = 0

For X = Maxval To Minval Step -1

    this_count = Counts(X)

    Counts(X) = next_offset

    next_offset = next_offset + this_count

```

```

Next X

For X = 0 To 255
    SortFreq(0, Counts(Frequentie(X))) = Frequentie(X)
    SortFreq(1, Counts(Frequentie(X))) = X
    Counts(Frequentie(X)) = Counts(Frequentie(X)) + 1
Next X

compression.size(StatWindow).Caption = NewSize

End Sub

Public Sub Show_Contents(ByteArray() As Byte)

    Dim X As Long

    Dim y As Integer

    Dim AddText As String

    Dim Data As Byte

    Dim Text As String

    X = UBound(ByteArray)

    If X = 0 Then

        MsgBox "There is nothing to see because there is no data"

        Exit Sub

    End If

    On Error GoTo 0

    compression.beforeC.Clear

    For X = 0 To UBound(ByteArray) Step 50

        AddText = String(50, " ")

        For y = 0 To 49

            If X + y <= UBound(ByteArray) Then

                Data = ByteArray(X + y)

```



```

        If Data < 28 Then Text = Chr(1) Else Text = Chr(Data)

        Mid(AddText, y + 1, 1) = Text

    End If

Next

    compression.beforeC.AddItem AddText

Next

End Sub

```

```

Public Sub afterContentC(dataComp() As Byte)

    Dim X As Long

    Dim y As Integer

    Dim AddText As String

    Dim Data As Byte

    Dim Text As String

    X = UBound(dataComp)

    If X = 0 Then

        MsgBox "There is nothing to see because There is no data"

        Exit Sub

    End If

    On Error GoTo 0

    compression.afterC.Clear

    For X = 0 To UBound(dataComp) Step 150

        AddText = String(150, " ")

        For y = 0 To 147

            If y Mod 5 = 0 Then

                If X + y <= UBound(dataComp) Then

                    Data = dataComp(X + y)

```

```

        If Data < 28 Then Text = Chr(1) Else Text = Chr(Data)

        Text = Data

        Mid(AddText, y + 1, 3) = Asc(Text)

    End If

End If

Next

    compression.afterC.AddItem AddText

Next

End Sub

```

```

Public Sub afterContentD(dataComp() As Byte)

    Dim X As Long

    Dim y As Integer

    Dim AddText As String

    Dim Data As Byte

    Dim Text As String

    X = UBound(dataComp)

    If X = 0 Then

        MsgBox "There is nothing to see because There is no data"

        Exit Sub

    End If

    On Error GoTo 0

    compression.afterC.Clear

    For X = 0 To UBound(dataComp) Step 50

        AddText = String(50, " ")

        For y = 0 To 49

```

```

    If X + y <= UBound(dataComp) Then
        Data = dataComp(X + y)
        If Data < 28 Then Text = Chr(1) Else Text = Chr(Data)
        Mid(AddText, y + 1, 1) = Text
    End If
Next
    compression.afterC.AddItem AddText
Next
End Sub

```

```

Public Sub AddCoder2List(CodeNumber As Integer)
    JustLoaded = False
    If LastDeCoded = True Then
        If UBound(UsedCodecs) > 0 Then
            ReDim Preserve UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs) - 1)
            LastCoder = UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs))
        End If
        Exit Sub
    End If
    ReDim Preserve UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs) + 1)
    UsedCodecs(UBound(UsedCodecs)) = CodeNumber
End Sub

```

LAMPIRAN B

DATA TEKS

THE SOCIETY FOR THE BETTERMENT OF MANKIND

CHAPTER ONE

BARUCH ATA ADONAI

I got to be Dave's girlfriend by default. I mean, he would not waste his time with a woman in a million years. His greatest regret is that he wasn't born Jewish and he's dedicated his life to becoming the first Gentile rabbi. But since I hang around him, everyone thinks we're a couple.

We met in our Principles of Theology class. There's no assigned seating in the sloping lecture hall, so after half a semester of sitting behind him and not being able to concentrate, I decided to make the bold move of taking the seat next to him.

I don't think he noticed me for the first week since the topic was the Hebrew and Greek names for God and he took pages and pages of notes. Finally, one day after class, I just turned to him and said hi.

Then we started talking after every class about whatever had been discussed in the lecture although, granted, he did most of the speaking since he was the one who had the opinions.

Sometimes I honestly think he just likes me for my name, Ellen Waller, since El is one of those names for God. (That's his blasphemous streak, though, because the ancient Hebrews were terrified to even say the name of God never mind casually calling their friends "Lord", even in jest.)

Right now, in Principles of Theology II, we're in the book of Leviticus covering the ritual sacrifices and I'm getting nothing out of it but Dave loves it. He takes notes with a fanatical glint in his eyes as if he's on the verge of building an altar right there, slaughtering a goat, and making an offering.

"Hey Dave!" I slip into the seat beside him.

"El," he looks up briefly from his leather-bound Bible.

"Whatcha doing?"

"Seeing how many sacrifices Joshua offered."

"Good," I nod. I've learned to take everything Dave says as casually as if it's a comment about the weather.

"I was reading more about the sacrificial system last night in the library," says Dave. "I really don't think we're covering it adequately in class."

"But why even worry about it," I say. "We don't have to make animal sacrifices anymore because Christ is our ultimate sacrifice."

I'm rocking the boat, I know. Dave lives and breathes the Old Testament. But I've got to let him know I'm capable of analytical thought.

"I'm going to do a study into my genealogy." He hasn't even heard me he's so busy flipping through his Bible. "I'm sure I've got Levitical blood."

I almost paraphrase the apostle Paul, "Don't waste your time with vain genealogies." Waste your time with me.

After class I ask him what he's doing this weekend.

"Probably working on my bike," he says. His motorcycle is his only interest outside of theology.

"Really?" I project maximum enthusiasm and interest into the word.

"Yeah, I've got to replace the shocks." Dave is carefully putting his Bible into his Mediterranean satchel. An import from the Holy Land.

"Wow, that sounds like fun." Not an ounce of sarcasm in my voice.

"Wanna help?" he says.

"Yeah, I'd love to."

"How about Sunday afternoon? I'll be in the parking lot."

Dave keeps the Sabbath instead of Sunday so he's never free on Saturday.

"Maybe we can go for a ride too." This comment of his own free volition. It gives me hope.

"Shabbat Shalom," I say getting up to go to my next class. Dave deliberately didn't schedule any classes for Friday afternoon so that he could prepare for the Sabbath.

"Hey El!" he says. "Yeah?" I turn back.

"Ummm, I need a woman."

My heart hurdles.

"It's like, I haven't been keeping the Sabbath properly because I don't have a woman to light the candles."

Why should I have thought it would have been anything else?

"You want me to light candles?" I say.

"Yeah."

"OK," I say. "When should I come over?"

"Sun sets at 6:32 and it's got to be done eighteen minutes before sundown. Come over at 6:00."

I exit the lecture hall and make my way across the common, my heart pounding, a dazed but happy look on my face.

The common is a rose brick piazza with white metal tables and chairs and it reminds me of something you might see in the middle of an Italian village. On a reasonably warm day like today, students outnumber the ants ten-to-one, most of them with tons of books that remain unopened while they catch up on their quota of social interaction.

The majority of students at Union are business majors, and even before I met Dave I was never much into business, so consequently when I look around I only know one girl who was a roommate my freshman year. I slip on my sunglasses to avoid eye-contact with anyone and head for my next class.

At dinner I see Dave in the dining hall sitting surrounded by girls, all staring at him and laughing everytime he says something funny. He's got quite the following mainly because of his wavy blond hair and his theological intensity that's often taken personally by women looking for a sign that he likes them.

I'm at my worst when he's with other girls so I go and sit with Ted Stevents, who rumour has it, likes me. It's reassuring to talk to someone who treats every word I say as revealed knowledge.

After dinner I go back to the dorm and to the reasonably messy room that I share with Judith, my roommate and best friend, who is a jazz fanatic and composes music for the piano. Every morning we wake up to the radio set on a jazz station and for the rest of the day I've got Wynton Marsalis's trumpet solos running through my head. To add to the impact, she has a life-sized poster of Harry Connick Jr. on her side of the room.

I've never kept a Sabbath before so I don't know what to wear and Judith walks in when I'm trying on the tenth outfit.

"Where're you going?" she says.

"To keep the Sabbath."

"Oh." She understands my unorthodox relationship with Dave.

"What are you doing tonight?" I ask.

"Tom and I are going to a movie." She says it as if Tom is taking her to watch pigs mud-wrestle.

"What's the matter?" I ask. I've finally settled on a navy blue sweater and a black skirt.

"I dunno," she says listlessly. "It's like there are so many other things we could do."

I run a brush through my long brown hair. Judith and I are often mistaken for sisters, with our dark hair and pale skin.

"What do you want to do?"

"I want to go to New Orleans."

We're in Ontario.

When I arrive at his dorm, Dave has set up two candles in the lounge and is wearing a muted woven shirt that makes me think of an Israeli shepherd boy.

"So what do Jews do when there are no women to light the candles," I say.

"Oh, a man can light a candle. But it's better if a woman does it. More traditional."

I'm wondering why it's taken him this long to ask me. But Dave's not a man who operates on an obvious schedule. Other couples start going out and after a couple of months are doing everything together. Dave, he sort of moves according to the Spirit.

"Do you have something for your head?" he asks.

"What?"

"Your head has to be covered. Just a sec." He disappears through the door into the bedroom and comes back with a bandanna. "Here. Use this."

He looks at his watch.

"OK. We've got ten minutes. When I tell you, you're going to light the candles and then say, 'Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.'"

"What?!"

"It means Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us in His commandments and commanded us to light the Sabbath light."

"How'm I going to remember all that?" I say.

"I think I've got it written down somewhere." He opens a messy notebook that has been sitting on the floor and starts pushing papers around.

"Here." He hands me a torn half-sheet of paper that has Hebrew writing and the translation.

At exactly 6:14, Dave gives me a box of matches and we both stand up. Since I'm the type of person who has difficulty starting a fire with a woodpile and container of kerosene, it isn't until 6:15 and after four matches that the candles are lit.

"Baruch Ata Adonai," I read.

"Wave your hands," Dave interrupts me.

I look blank.

"Wave your hands over the candles."

"Elohenu Melech ha-olam," I say, trying to read and move my hands at the same time.

I nearly set the piece of paper on fire.

"Asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel shabbat."

"OK, cover your eyes with your hands, then uncover them and look at the candles."

I cover my eyes, then uncover them.

"Amen," says Dave.

"Amen," I say.

For some reason we stay standing. The solemnity of the ceremony is over, I sense, so I ask a question I've been wondering about for awhile.

"Hey, Dave," I say. "What do you think of traditional Christianity?" If your boyfriend were an accountant this would be a weird question, but you've got to understand that Dave thrives on this type of thing.

"There's a lot of people with a lot of questions," he says nodding his head as if, yes, that's a valid inquiry. "It satisfies some people."

"Would it satisfy you?"

"Probably not." He smiles. "Too much New Testament."

"Why don't you believe the New Testament?"

"It's not that I don't believe it," he says sitting down on one of the orange and brown fabric couches. The men's dorms are decorated in virile earth tones and the rugged wood and tweedy furniture gives you the feeling of being in a hunting lodge.

"I'm sure there was a man named Jesus. It's just that I don't discard the Old Testament. I like Judaism. I like the Jews. I like their conviction and their endurance. Judaism is a lifestyle. Maybe if Christianity were more of a lifestyle it would appeal to me."

Sitting down beside him I think about this because obviously Christianity can be a lifestyle. All you have to do is pick up a Baptist Bulletin or Campus Life to see that. Judaism must have been a calling for Dave otherwise I don't understand his total commitment.

Loving Dave is not a matter of impressing him with my strong convictions -- of which I seem to have none since all I have is journalism which is something I do, not feel -- it's a matter of trying to keep up with him. If anything, my commitment is to love boldly and to never regret it.

"Listen, Dave."

"Yeah?"

"Do you like me?" This question takes more courage to ask than you will ever know.

"Of course."

"No, I mean, do you like me? You could get anyone to light candles for you. Why'd you ask me?"

"Cos I thought you'd want to do it."

"But am I important to you? Do you love me?"

"Sure I love you," says Dave sincerely, putting his arm around me. "You're my neighbour, aren't you?"

I sigh. I have an idea for the Almighty suggestion box. Make love feel good.

CHAPTER TWO

SAINT HADASSAH

Hadassah Kaufman is sitting Indian-style on the faded blue-carpeted floor amidst rows and rows of books. She's supposed to be working. In fact, when she applied for

the job in the library and her supervisor asked her what her greatest weakness was, she replied, "I'm a budding workaholic." what she didn't bother to mention was that she was only a workaholic when the work interested her. Today she's supposed to be working on reference questions and searching out the answer to how many urban Peruvian men die of cancer each year doesn't interest her. There's a rush of air behind her, a whiff of cologne, and she feels the back of her neck being kissed. "Stop it!" she says turning to Eddie Prince who's crouched down behind her. "I took a vow of chastity."

"To who?"

"To myself."

She pushes him away with one hand as he tries to kiss her again, her eyes still on her book.

"What're you reading?"

"A History of Jews in Christian Society."

"But you want to be a nun." He stands up -- an instant giant from Hadassah's vantage point.

He's very attractive, thinks Hadassah as she looks up at him. Reminds her of Peter. Maybe that's why she enjoys torturing him so much.

"I know, but I'm still Jewish."

Eddie sighs and randomly picks a faded, yellow-covered book off the shelf called The Blue Room Murder.

"You have a major identity problem," he says.

"So?"

Eddie returns the dusty book to the shelf.

"Doesn't that ever bother you?" He stares down at her.

"Of course it does. But so does knowing that, as we speak, people are killing each other in Afghanistan."

Eddie keeps staring at her. It's his way of trying to make her feel uncomfortable, as if she has said something that was logically-flawed. He admitted this to her once.

"Do you know what this is?" she says. "If this were a movie, it would called: The Library: A Story of Mad Passion Amidst the Volumes of Waugh, Wilde, and Woolf, Not to Mention, an Extensive Collection of Outdated Light Fiction."

"You're too postmodern," says Eddie, abandoning the staring strategy. "You know you're going to get fired if you don't do anything."

"Is there a law of physics for that?" she asks, getting up with her book. Eddie is taking a physics class that he hates. "Like the rate at which one works is directly proportional to an employer's vested interest when all the variables are consistent?" She's walking through the aisles of books with Eddie behind her.

"Actually, I think it's more Biblical," replies Eddie. "I'm sure there's a parable about a lazy seed sower."

"I'm sorry, I wouldn't know, that sounds New Testament to me." She is deliberately being difficult. She knows the New Testament better than the Old.

"But you want to be a Catholic nun!"

"I want to be a Jewish nun," she corrects him.

Hadassah's story, if it had a name, would have been called Breakfast By the Sea, a heading she had seen in a New King James New Testament.

The ocean, Hadassah had thought when she was sixteen, was quite sufficient. If she could live in a convent by the endless waters she would be infinitely content. Peter Cairns agreed. When it came time to join a monastery, he wanted to be by the ocean that he had been raised near.

Hadassah and Peter had met at high school in their small eastern Nova Scotia town and had been drawn together by a mutual need to commit to a force greater than themselves. It would not be enough, Hadassah felt, to lay down her life for a suburban brick house with an adjoining garage that held a Toyota mini-van and a brood of children to fill them all with. She needed to be clutching a crucifix and dedicating herself to hours of prayers, offering her virgin body as a sacrifice to God. Any earthly desire she had, she squelched. She loved Peter with a Godly love and told herself it was not his wavy black hair or emerald green eyes that was so enticing, but his pure soul.

For his part, Peter was not taken by Hadassah's long chestnut-brown hair or creamy skin, but by her deep convictions.

Their carnal school-mates took it as a given that they were a fleshly couple. After all, they had been best friends since ninth grade and they were still together now in their final year of high school. The truth be known, Peter had only held Hadassah's hand when they were manoeuvring the craggy rocks of the Nova Scotian beach that they liked to meditate by.

"God being love," said Peter one day, as they were seated, leaning against a large rock facing the water, "would imply that if God is omnipotent and omnipresent, so is love."

"So do you think that there's love in the ocean?" asked Hadassah leaning forward.

"Yes, I do, because it doesn't swallow up the shore. I believe that it was love that shaped the earth."

Hadassah wrinkled her forehead.

"That's pretty powerful."

"In fact, Hadassah..." Peter was really getting into his point. "It's love that bridges the physical and the spiritual and will help us to understand the mind of God."

Both leaned back, taken by the depth of this new thought. In addition to bodily sacrifice, both were fervently dedicated to understanding the mind of God.

"But how do you love with that kind of love?" asked Hadassah.

"You act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly," replied Peter. "We're human and we look at love from a human standpoint. But God looks at love from a spiritual standpoint. He's interested in whether we love Him enough to follow what He says."

"It's as simple as that? Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly?"

"What more could God want?"

"It's times like this that I feel in harmony," said Hadassah leaning her head back against the rock. "There is nothing negative in me, only peace."

If they didn't go to the ocean, Peter and Hadassah spent many hours at one of the red-and-white checkered tables in Hadassah's uncle's small seafood restaurant, drinking Darjeeling tea, doing homework, and talking.

"When are you going to try to get into the monastery?" asked Hadassah one day after they had finished a series of complicated matrix problems and were eager to think about something else.

"When I turn twenty," he said, leaning back so that the armless red vinyl chair was perilously propped on only two metal legs.

They were both seventeen.

"I'd like to travel a bit first."

"I'm wondering if I should join a convent as soon as I graduate," said Hadassah thoughtfully. "I want to remain as unworldly as possible."

"Are you afraid of temptation, Hadassah?" asked Peter, smiling.

"No, I just want to be perfect."

"But is your perfection worth much if it hasn't been tested?"

Hadassah contemplated this. Certainly perfection was worth more if it could stand up to carnality and the baser side of man.

"Christ was perfect and He lived in the world," said Peter.

"OK, I can see that," said Hadassah running her fingers around the edge of her teacup. "But how do I test my perfection?"

"You don't," said Peter. "You let God test it."

That night, kneeling by her wooden-framed bed, hands clasped on her white cotton crocheted blanket, Hadassah prayed that God would test her perfection. She figured that once it had been proven that she was strong she could get on with her life and devote herself to her prayers.

"Listen," said Peter, the next day after school. "I read about a monastery that's about 50 kilometres east of here and we can get to it by bus. Do you want to check it out tomorrow?"

"Sure," said Hadassah. She had never actually been to a monastery, only once to a convent when she was little.

The next morning Peter and Hadassah boarded the Greyhound bus that would take them to Fine Point, Nova Scotia. Hadassah had packed some food so that they could eat on the way and not waste valuable time looking for a lunch spot once they had arrived. Peter described the convent as he had read about it. Then, since they both agreed they were hungry, they pulled out the food. Although Peter and Hadassah had lunch together everyday in the high school cafeteria, Hadassah had never actually noticed the way Peter ate before. They had always been divided by a wide chestnut wood-

imitation table and distracted by the din of a busy lunchroom. Now they were side-by-side, and Hadassah found herself really noticing Peter for the first time. "Oops!" Peter dribbled mustard down his chin and they both giggled as he wiped it off with his fingers until Hadassah could find a serviette. After the sandwiches, he pulled out one of the passion fruit juices, twisted off the cap, tossed back his head and downed half of the bottle. "His neck moves when he drinks," thought Hadassah and suddenly she felt warm, almost feverish. "Could you open the window? I feel strange," she said. "Oh sure," Peter replied. "Here, do you want to sit by the window?" As they were trading places, their bodies were forced against each other and a strained look appeared on Hadassah's face. She hung her head out the window until she began to feel a bit cooler. She also had to cross her leg towards the window so that her thigh didn't touch Peter's. Peter didn't seem to notice her condensed body position as he was involved with his guide book to the region around Fine Point. When they arrived and disembarked from the bus, Hadassah was very happy to be able to move freely again and to feel the cool air on her body. The scenery in the distance was ruggedly hilly and the town in the foreground was a well-kept main street of a couple of white wooden stores and a church by the waterside. "Excuse me," said Peter to an elderly lady about to go inside one of the Puritan buildings. "How do we get to the monastery?" "Just follow the coast about two miles in that direction," she pointed. As soon as they were passed the main street, the only way up the coast was a three-foot wide footpath precariously close to the water's edge. As they continued to walk along the tree-lined path, it became apparent they were going up, and what had initially been only about a two-foot drop to the water was becoming somewhat of a cliff. Knowing that Hadassah was prone to vertigo, Peter took her hand. Hadassah started to feel dizzy anyhow. "Don't be silly," she told herself. Peter was on the side of the cliff and she barely noticed the edge if she just concentrated on the path. Then she became aware that the dizziness wasn't originating in her head. It was coming from the right hand that was clutching Peter's and it was slowly spreading throughout her entire body. "Let's talk!" she blurted out suddenly. "What?" he sounded startled. They had been walking along in comfortable silence for the last twenty minutes. "I mean, I think it's great that we're going to actually see this monastery," she said. "I mean, this is what you've always wanted and here we are going to look at it." "You know Hadassah, I'm wondering if there aren't other ways to serve God?" "What?" she said. She almost stopped walking. "You mean, like not in a monastery?" "Yeah, I mean, you can pray and stuff. But how can you really help other people?" The look of panic on Hadassah's face caused him to slightly retract. "Oh, I'm not saying I'm not going to enter a monastery. I've just been thinking about the many ways that you can live to please God. That's all." "But to devote your life to God as a living sacrifice must be the most pleasing to him," said Hadassah. "I don't know. I mean, traditionally, sure. But what good is it to have the love of God and not to do something with it?" "But you are doing something with it. You're giving it back to God." "Yeah, but God must have made human beings for a reason. Not everyone can go into a convent or a monastery so there must be other ways to please him." "Like what?" "Oh, I don't know. Missionary work?" He laughed and then seeing the expression on Hadassah's face looked serious again. "Don't worry," he said squeezing her hand. "We're still going to look at a monastery today, remember?" Something inside of Hadassah was ripping apart. "Why am I panicking?" she thought. "Why am I panicking? I'm still going into a convent. I'm still going to worship God. It doesn't matter what Peter does." The monastery was standing placidly at the highest point on the cliffs. "Just a little bit more to go," said Peter. They had come out of the trees and were now in a grassy area. The footpath had disappeared and it was a matter of trudging

up the hill. Peter let go of her hand.

Fifteen minutes later they stood at the front doors of a large but simple square stone building which disappointed Hadassah who had been expecting more of a castle or a fortress. They rang the doorbell and waited.

A greying middle-aged man wearing a long dark robe answered.

"Can I help you?" he asked.

"Uh, yeah," said Peter. "Can my friend and I have a look around? I'm planning on joining a monastery someday and I was thinking about this one."

The man looked at Hadassah pointedly.

"She's going to join a convent," said Peter.

"This isn't a convent," said the man.

"Yes, I know," said Peter.

"You can come through. I'm afraid your friend will have to go around and meet you in the back."

Peter looked annoyed.

"Is that OK?" he asked turning to Hadassah.

"Oh that's fine," she said. She desperately wanted Peter to be able to get inside and feel the spiritual fulfilment that no doubt must permeate the walls of the building.

"I'll just walk around."

The door closed behind Peter and the man. Hadassah started around the building. There was no path, as it was quite apparent that most people did not bring their female friends along to the monastery. The grass was tall and Hadassah couldn't help but notice that there were no flowers or shrubbery. She wondered whether the men ever came outside to appreciate the scenery.

Behind the building Hadassah climbed up some decaying wooden steps onto a small patio that overlooked the water and had a stunning view of the curving coastline. She could see Fine Point and if she looked hard enough, she thought she could see the town that she and Peter lived in.

The back of the building was deserted and Hadassah wondered how the men could stand to stay inside on such a beautiful day. There were windows on the back wall, but most of the curtains were drawn. Something inside Hadassah was twinging. Yes, this was a monastery, but it didn't feel like a monastery. She had expected cobblestone paths and men in brown, hooded robes walking along in lines to mass with some Gregorian chants in the background, maybe bells pealing in the distance to announce prayer time. She expected to feel a holiness in the air, but all she felt was a slight shiver from the brisk sea air.

After about fifteen minutes, Peter emerged through the single back door without the man.

He smiled when he saw her.

"Sorry to keep you waiting," he said. "You wouldn't believe the number of rooms in that one building."

"Rooms for what?"

Peter stepped up onto the patio and joined her by the rail.

"Mostly study rooms. Bedrooms, of course. A small library."

"What do people do?"

"All the men I saw were studying."

"Do they pray?"

"Yes, they have prayer rooms."

"Is it like a chapel?"

"Oh, no. It's nothing like the movies where the monks have an ancient cathedral with stain glass and a choir. They just have little rooms where they can say their prayers."

"That seems kind of..." Hadassah didn't want to say, "disappointing".

"Yeah." Peter understood. "You've got to really be committed to just studying and not doing much else."

Suddenly Hadassah realized that whenever she thought about a convent, she always pictured the one in The Sound of Music. That's what was wrong with this place. It had the hills, but it didn't have anyone running out into the fields to sing at the top of his or her lungs. She had a tight feeling in her chest that she felt could only be relieved by a good cry or a piercing scream.

"Oh God," she said holding her head.

"What?" said Peter, sounding concerned.

She started breathing more rapidly and her body started shaking.

"Oh God," she said again running a cold hand through her hair.

"What?" Peter put his arm around her. She pushed him away and started to run. Flying around the building, she kept going until she was running as hard as she could through the fields in front of the monastery. She kept going until finally she just collapsed on the ground. Peter, who had only been a few feet behind her, was going too fast to stop, tripped, and fell beside her. He reached out his arms and before she knew she was crying on his chest.

"Oh Peter! Oh Peter! This isn't at all what I expected!"

"I know! I know! It's OK!"

He let her cry until there was nothing left inside and they could get up and go home.

CHAPTER THREE

SIGNIFICANCE IS INTEREST

"I used to think that religion was simple." I run my fingers through my hair. "There was God and I just sort of knew he was up there."

It is a Monday morning in the wood-panelled dining hall of Union University, Union, Ontario, Canada. This room can be stress-inducing during the peak of meal hours with its rows and rows of students putting away food like starving cowboys, but right now it is a pleasant post-breakfast interlude and there are only a few students scattered around the room with their books and cups.

"Want more coffee?" Judith gets up from her chair.

The small number of Theology majors at Union stick together. My freshman year I was a Journalism major and then just for the heck of it, I took Principles of Theology my sophomore year, met Dave, and ended up switching my whole curriculum. Like people say, love is a religious experience, and I'm living proof. All of my friends deal with God differently as if God is everything to all men. For Judith, who only majored in Theology because she says she needs more of a soul, God is Creator of Harry Connick Jr. "How are things going with Dave?" says Judith when she gets back.

"OK."

"Only OK?"

"I dunno." I run my fingers through my hair, a habit I've got to break because I read somewhere that it's a sign of insecurity. "I'm worried about it."

"Why?" Judith looks sympathetic.

"Just once I'd like to have a relationship with a guy who spends time with me."

"But you spent all of Sunday with him," says Judith.

"Yeah, with him and his bike."

"Oh well," Judith says, our generic term for anything we can't solve.

She glances at her watch and gulps her coffee. "We should get to Old Testament Study."

We stand up, sling our bags over our shoulders and exit the dining hall. The smaller theology classes are relegated to the outer extremes of the campus so we have to hike half a mile on a gravel path to some trailer-like classrooms that were built right beside the forest that marks the end of campus property and the beginning of wilderness territory.

Dave brings five sharpened pencils to this class so that he can make copious notes in the margin of his Bible since Old Testament Study is his favourite class. The fact that it's taught by a bona-fide rabbi is his definition of fleshly ecstasy and I love this class because Dave gets so absorbed in it that I can just sit and watch him.

"Hi!" he greets me when Judith and I take our seats. A blond wave has fallen into his eyes and his mouth is slightly open in anticipation of spiritual morsels.

We're in the book of Ezra, all about Ezra and the Jews who returned to Jerusalem after the captivity to rebuild Jerusalem. Dave is taking notes like he's Ezra being instructed by God on what the dimensions of the temple should be. I'm wondering what it would be like to be married to one of the Levites returning to Jerusalem. Did they actually walk all the way back from Babylon? Judith is writing down musical notes in her margins.

I don't bother waiting for Dave because he likes to stay and talk to Rabbi Hirshel and I've got to get to my Reporting for Mass Media class which means jogging back to the main campus.

I've wanted to be a journalist since I was six so I kept Journalism as a minor. When

I was eight I started a weekly family newspaper and went around with a pad of paper and a pencil interviewing my parents and my brothers on things like what they had done that day and what they thought of the new tablecloth. Then I wrote it all up and my mother photocopied it for me. I charged five cents an issue and since I was the baby of the family everyone bought one.

Today we are doing an assignment about a train derailment in Fenton and it ticks me off that we waste so much time with these local stories. I want to write about world events, so I switch Fenton, Ontario to Nice, France and CPR to the Train a Grande Vitesse.

"What's this?" my teacher, a retired editor from a local newspaper, says to me when I hand my story in.

"Just giving the story a little more significance," I say airily.

"How many times do I have to tell you that significance is local?" he says.

"Significance is interest," I say.

We have this conversation every time I hand something in. I don't know how this man made it through journalism school thinking that Ontario is the world.

"I don't think Dave realizes that the word 'love' can be used in the context of a relationship," I say to Judith Tuesday night at dinner. The room is packed because most people live on campus and the nearest McDonald's is seven miles away. I am yelling to Judith who is across from me, but to the person beside me who also has to holler to be heard, it probably sounds like a whisper. "I asked him yesterday what he thought love was and he said, 'what's love? God is Love. If I can barely understand God, how can I understand love?'"

"Why do you stick with him?" says Judith.

"Because he's very good-looking. Also, I prefer pain to boredom."

Tom comes up to the table with a tray and sits beside Judith.

"Hey gorgeous," he says to her. "What do you want to do tonight?"

"I've got to study Biblical History," she says.

"I kept falling asleep during Bib History today," I say. "I don't understand it because it's my only class on Tuesdays and Thursdays. That man shouldn't have slide shows so early in the day, though. I tried to open my eyes for every slide and I kept thinking I saw Demi Moore on the screen."

Tom looks at me like I just confessed that I wear fig leaves instead of underwear. He's thin and tanned with tight curly brown hair and today he's wearing chinos and a khaki-coloured shirt that matches his eyes. About the only thing that impresses me about him is that he wears a Rolex, but he whines too much to have any other redeeming qualities.

Dave comes up with his tray and sits down across from Tom.

"I want an army commander," he says abruptly to me ignoring everybody else.

"Really?" I say.

"Yeah, think about it. So many men in the Old Testament had army commanders, Saul, David, Absalom."

This conversation is visibly making Tom nervous. He would not hang around us if he weren't going out with Judith. In fact, he tries to spend as little time with Dave and me as possible.

"Man, you're right!" I say grinning. "What are you going to do?"

"I dunno, I'm working on it."

Dave has a plateful of bread that he spreads honey on from the honeybears on the table. Manna was supposed to be like wafers and honey. It's a wonder he hasn't started eating locusts. He totally refuses to eat quail after that incident in the wilderness when the Israelites complained that they weren't getting enough meat and God sent them so much quail they ate it to death.

The table is quiet. I don't care. I know that Dave doesn't notice these things because he's always so preoccupied and since I've forgotten how to make conversation I stare at the wall.

"Do you want to go back to my dorm and study?" says Judith to Tom.

"Yeah!" Tom jumps up.

How they ever started going out I will never know. Tom wants to be a CEO and Judith claims that he is a considerate and loving person, but why that would be attractive to Judith, I have no idea. The truth is, Tom comes from a moderately well-off family and represents a regular income to someday support Judith's musical ventures.

"Sooooooo," I turn to Dave.

He looks up at me.

We spend the remainder of the evening discussing the ramifications of building a Temple on the Mount in Jerusalem and reinstituting sacrifices. Ever since becoming a Theology major, I've secretly wanted to be a prophetess. Deborah seemed so cool, sitting under her palm tree with all the Israelites coming to her for wisdom and judgement. If I had lived in Christ's time, I would have wanted to have been Mary, the sister of Martha, who sat at his feet and listened to him talk.

Dave is waiting for the Messiah. I'm waiting for a message.

"How's weight training going?" Dave asks me at lunch, biting into an apple. He's done a Hebrew word study into the fruit that was on the tree in the Garden of Eden and it wasn't an apple or else he wouldn't be eating one.

"Great!" I say. "Don't I look toned?"

I took weight training this semester because although "bodily exercise profits little" I thought physical perfection might get Dave's attention.

"Can't tell," says Dave, shaking some salt on his bread. "Your clothes would have to be rent."

In Old Testament Study we're covering the book of Esther. Dave loves it because it gives the origins of Purim.

"Can I keep the Sabbath with you again?" I say to him after class.

"Yeah, sure," he says. "Every week if you want. You just gotta memorize the blessing."

I already have.

On Fridays I check the newspaper to see what time the sun sets so I know when to meet Dave. I haven't bothered getting a head covering since I like wearing his bandanna. Dave suggests that we start having a kosher dinner as part of the service and since he didn't specify any further, I take it upon myself to bring bread and salt. Dave has some wine -- at the expense of being kicked out of college since there's prohibition in the dorms but I don't think he considers little human ordinances like that.

The ceremony has become more intricate. After I light the candles and say the "Baruch Ata Adonai", Dave does a prayer over the meal. Then there is the reciting of the verse which comes from Proverbs 31 and Dave says it's called the Eshet Chayil, a woman of valour.

"Who can find a virtuous wife?" reads Dave. "For her worth is far above rubies."

I'm sitting right here, I think.

"The heart of her husband safely trusts her..."

My mind wanders as this ideal woman gathers wool, brings food from afar, rises early, buys a field. I mean, I can't very well start knitting Dave wool sweaters, getting him food from Tanzania, waking up early when we don't even sleep together for him to notice or buying him some Ontario farmland.

"She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms."

Another reason for weight training.

The next part, however, requires that I learn how to work a spindle and make scarlet garments for my household and purple silk tapestries for myself, not to mention selling fine linen to the local merchants.

I tune out until my favourite part which is at the end.

"Many daughters have done well," says Dave, "But you excel them all. Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."

"Beautiful," I say.

"Yeah," says Dave putting down the Bible. "Time for the Kiddush."

I stand up even though Dave tells me, I could stay seated if I want.

In a low voice Dave says, "Vayhi erev vayhi voker..."

Dave picks up his wine.

"Sav'ri maranan v'rabotai. Baruch Ata Adonai, Elohenu Melech ha-olam, boreh pri hagafen."

He takes a sip of the wine, passes the cup to me so I can take a gulp.

"We have to wash our hands now," says Dave. We go out into the lobby of his dorm where there is a small bathroom. It is an intimate moment, both of us rinsing our hands in that one little sink.

We go back into the lounge and Dave says the challot, the blessing on the bread.

"Birshut maranan v'rabotai. Baruch Ata Adonai, Elohenu Melech ha-olam hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz..."

He's got this totally memorized. I cannot even conceive of remembering that much in English, never mind Hebrew.

After the challot, we uncover the bread, break it, and eat it.

"Next time bring two loaves," says Dave putting bread in his mouth. "You've gotta have two loaves to indicate that the Sabbath is especially abundant. It symbolizes the double portion of manna that the Israelites got in the wilderness."

He gets away with a lot having the bone structure of a Greek god.

One Friday evening, Dave decides to add singing to the ritual. "We're supposed to sing the 126th psalm," he says.

"What? You mean, we're just going to open up the Bible and sing from it?" I say, my eyes widening in horror.

"Sure," he says. "Why not?"

"Well, we don't know the tune, for one thing."

For another, I only sing in the shower.

Dave is carefully reading over Psalm 126.

"Hmmm," he says. "Let's see..." He starts to sing, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream."

He doesn't seem to be following any particular well-known melody. I come in on the second verse, sort of a droning chanting.

If this weren't me, I would be in hysterical laughter right now.

"Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing..."

I wonder if God appreciates this joyful noise? Dave ends on a high note, I end on a moan.

"That was great!" says Dave.

"Yeah!" I say.

Judith is sitting on her unmade bed when I return to the dorm after classes. The radio is on and she's leaning against the wall staring at Harry Connick Jr., looking as if she is experiencing indigestion.

"What's the matter?" I ask.

She gives me an acute look.

"He's so damn good," she says.

"Who?" I say.

"Harry," she says. She points to the radio and I assume that the soulful piano-playing is the man himself.

"I mean, he's so great," she says. "He recorded that when he was only nineteen. He had his second album out by twenty. I'm twenty and what have I done with my life?"

That's one of the good things about being a journalist, you don't have to be a child protegee to be respected.

"That was Love is Here to Stay," says the throaty radio announcer. "Continuing with our special Harry Connick Jr. hour we have a classic for you from the movie When Harry Met Sally, here's It Had to Be You followed by On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe."

I lie down on my bed. When the songs are over and a commercial comes on, Judith turns to me.

"I want to have that kind of impact," she says. "I want to make a difference. I want to write music and sing in a way that carries on the tradition."

Judith is talking about the great Jazz tradition. Another reason I don't understand her relationship with Tom is that he likes Top 40 music.

"Yeah, I know what you mean," I say. I can say this with all sincerity since Judith has given me many extensive deeply-personal lectures on the Joy of Creating Truly Soulful Compositions that Recreate the Blues in Such a Way as to Render Them Even More Meaningful and Beautiful.

"Like, just look at him!"

She holds up her "She" CD and a tasteful black and white Harry Connick Jr. stares intensely at me.

"He has it all together. He's found The way."

Judith allows me to think about this.

"Do you see God as a source of artistic inspiration?" she asks suddenly.

"Sure," I say on my back as I examine a tiny crack in our ceiling that seems to have appeared from nowhere.

"Yeah, me too. Like, I figure, if he made my mind, he could expand it too."

"I agree. I mean, it's pretty logical."

The only thing that I ever see Judith studying for is her Psalms of David class. She could also tell you every place that musical instruments are mentioned in the Bible.

"We're going to finish up with an uninterrupted Harry Connick Jr. piano medley," says the radio announcer, "starting with Sunny Side of the Street." Judith closes her eyes and clutches her pillow while I think about Dave. I haven't talked to him since last Sabbath, three days ago. For some reason he didn't go to classes today. Maybe it's a High Holy Day or something. I get up from my bed, walk down the hallway to the study and phone his dorm. He isn't there. I go back and lie down on my bed. Just as well. I don't know what I would have said.

"You and Tom doing anything tonight?" I say.

"Watching Memphis Belle", she says. Harry's acting debut. This would be about Judith's eleventh time seeing it since buying it.

"Doesn't Tom mind that you like him so much?" I say.

"He doesn't know," she says. "He thinks I just like the movie in general. I don't think he's noticed that Harry Connick Jr. is in it."

Like the way he probably hasn't noticed him in Little Man Tate and Hope Floats, Judith's second and third favourite movies. I cannot even conceive of revering any man but Dave. Sometimes I wish I could just have a life-size poster of him on my wall and say to everyone, "Yeah, I totally love the soon-to-be rabbi, Dave Dian. Like, he's my total hero." And I could read fan magazines about him and cut out all the good pictures and eat pomegranates for breakfast because he does. My biggest fear would be that he'd get a girlfriend before meeting me, so I'd travel to his city and hang out in his neighbourhood hoping to see him. And I'd write him hundreds of fan letters because I know he'd never get them and I could say whatever I wanted in them.

"I'm thinking of getting a tattoo," I say to Dave at lunch on Wednesday.

We're sitting alone at the end of one of the long tables.

He chokes on his bread.

"Don't do that!" he says looking at me. "It's forbidden in the Torah."

wouldn't you know that my little flippant conversation starter would be forbidden in the Torah. So much for Dave getting my name tattooed on his arm.

"Oh, I know," I say. "I mean, I would never do it."

"I'm glad," he says. "I like you the way you are."

He returns his attention to his bread. My whole body breaks out into a sweat. How am I supposed to take this? Should I say thank you? Does he mean he really likes me? Or does he just like me because God made me the way I am?

He just likes me because God made me the way I am, I decide.

Judith and Tom are sitting across the room. He is talking animatedly and she is nodding politely.

A sudden need to have an intense conversation hits me.

"I want to know God," I say suddenly.

Dave looks up.

"Really? That's good." He sounds sincere but I don't think he senses my urgency.

"I mean, what's it like to know God?" I say.

"The Israelites met God," he says pulling out his Bible. He flips through it. "Here, in Exodus 19." He begins to read.

"Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all of the people who were in the camp trembled."

Dave looks up. "I would do anything to have been there," he says.

He continues, "And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain."

His voice is so mellow, he's going to make an amazing rabbi.

"Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice."

Dave closes his Bible and puts it back in his bag.

"Yeah. So what did he say to them?"

"He gave them the ten commandments."

"Oh." I think about this. It'd be cool to talk to God, but I really want to know God.

Dave gets up.

"I'm going back to read a bit in my dorm," he says.

Our next class is Old Testament Study in 30 minutes.

"Sure," I say with forced casualness. "See you in OTS."

"Yep." He walks away with his tray.

I need a life. I have too much time to think. I should get a job or something to keep me busy. Looking around the dining hall I see some girls in white aprons from the kitchen taking a coffee break. They look cool.

Getting up, I return my tray and go back through the swinging doorway into the kitchen. It's chaos. Men in white are rushing around carrying pans of food. Guys in aprons are manoeuvring carts of plates and glasses out to the line. Every available counter space is being used for a different culinary purpose. This commotion would crowd out all thoughts of Dave.

I walk into the office.

"I'd like to work here," I say to the older lady sitting at the desk.

"I beg your pardon," she says.

"I'd like to apply for a job," I say.

"OK," she says.

"Do I need to fill out an application?" I say.

"No," she says. "Just give us a schedule of when you can work."

It makes me slightly nervous to work for a department that hires that easily. I mean, I have no experience working in a kitchen.

The next day, I hand in a schedule saying I'll work Tuesdays and Thursdays after Biblical History until dinner. I leave weekends open just in case Dave wants to get together. I can't help it.

"Wonderful," the lady in the office says. "Will you be working today?"

"Sure," I say.

"Just put on an apron and report to Mr. Samuels," she says.

I wander around the kitchen until I find the shelf where the aprons are. Mr. Samuels, the head chef -- a tall, gaunt man who doesn't look like he eats the food he makes -- leads me to a foot of counter space and six boxes of potatoes.

"Peel," he says. "Then oil."

I'm bored already.

"I'm working in the kitchen now," I say to Dave at dinner.

"No way," he says. "Why?"

"Fulfilment."

"Do they have any kosher food back there?" he says.

"Not that I've seen."

I have come to the conclusion that my body hates me. The noise of my stomach rumbling in class is directly related to whether or not I sit beside Dave. I missed breakfast and I'm in Principles of Theology. My stomach rumbles loudly once and Dave just snickers. But if it does it again he's going to think I have a problem. I do not remember what the lecture is about because I spend the whole class telling my stomach that if it makes the slightest sound I am going to personally remove it from my body and pulverize it. Miraculously, it does not make another noise.

Dave turns to me after class and says, "Do you want to go to a movie tonight?"

I stare at him. Even though we hang out together on campus, he never asks me out.

"Sure," I say.

"OK," he says, getting up. "Catch you later."

I spend all of weight training in a daze. I can barely lift ten pounds. Like, the man of my dreams asked me out. I guess I expected a new world order, or something, because I'm kind of disappointed that no one asks me during the day what I'm doing tonight.

"Going out with Dave," I want to be able to say casually, as if we do it all the time.

After OTS, Dave tells me he'll pick me up at six at my dorm.

Reporting for Mass Media is a wasted class since I spend the whole time trying to decide what I'm going to wear. After trying on every piece of clothing in my mind, I'm mentally exhausted. I look at my watch. In three hours, providing that I don't have a heart attack between now and then, I'm going to be with Dave. I skip dinner because I don't feel like food.

When Dave comes I'm wearing black jeans, an oversized navy-blue sweater, and Keds. I have realized that what I wear is irrelevant since Dave won't notice.

He's wearing faded Levi's, a white shirt, and leather sandals.

"What are we going to see?" I say.

"Whatever's playing."

I was expecting him to say, Ben Hur is at the dollar theatre or that he'd rented The Ten Commandments. Is it possible that he just wanted to go out?

The movie is lame. Some chick who leaves the family farm in the midwest and moves to New York City for a bit of excitement. I don't care though. Dave has his arm around my chair and whispers periodically throughout the movie, much to the annoyance of the people behind us. Never anything related to the film. Just things he read in the paper about the latest Arab-Israeli conflicts.

Afterwards we stop off at McDonald's. I order a Diet Coke and he has a salad, fries, and a chocolate shake.

wouldn't this be great, I think, if we did this all the time, if we were just an average couple that likes being together and doing things together.

"So," I say. "Tell me about your childhood."

He grins as he stuffs four fries into his mouth.

"In one word?" he says after he's swallowed.

"Sure."

"Typical," he says.

Then what went wrong, I want to say. When did you stop being typical?

"Typical parents," he says. "Typical neighbourhood. Typical school. Typical WASP."

"When did you get into Judaism?"

"When I got tired of indifferent religion. When I picked up a Bible and started reading and realized that it all began with the Jews. And that the Jews actually practice what's in the Bible."

"But there's a lot of churches that read the Bible and believe it," I say.

"Judaism appeals to me," he shrugs. "It's like a calling."

Didn't I tell you I suspected as much?

When we get back to campus, Dave drops me off at my dorm.

"See you tomorrow," he says.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Let's start a revolution of thought," says Eddie suddenly. He and Hadassah are in the lounge of his dorm watching Quantum Leap reruns. The advertisements have just come on -- some lady in a conservative pale pink suit discussing the advantages of solar heating for your home and sounding very professional although Hadassah is sure she has seen the same woman in a cat food commercial. "An intellectual movement, or something."

"OK," replies Hadassah agreeably. "Actually I've got this idea I want to bounce off you." She twists around in the sinking couch to face him. "If time travel is going to be possible in the future, why don't we have a headline in The New York Times saying, PLEASE COME AND VISIT US. Then they'll find it in the future and come back to us. And the cool thing would be that they would appear instantly since they've already gotten it, if you know what I mean."

"What if no one came?"

"Then we'd know man's blown himself up."

"Interesting," says Eddie. His tone suggests he is just using the word to acknowledge her statement, not because he actually finds it riveting.

Hadassah reflects for the moment how ironic it is that she and Eddie hang out. They have next to nothing in common except for the ability to hang-out well together. There are so many times when they part for the evening and Hadassah is left with the feeling that no meaningful communication has occurred. They both have their meaningful ideas, it just seems impossible to convey them to each other.

They met in line for registration.

"This is really the pits," he had said looking down at his registration card. "I can't believe I'm a theology major."

"You must be Catholic," she said cheerfully to him, to which he grunted a yes.

"Why are you then?" she asked. Her registration card was filled with courses she was dying to get started with -- Old Testament Women, The Role of Women in the New Testament Church, Studies in Mary, Feminist Interpretations of the Bible.

"It beats a seminary. My parents said that if I don't join the priesthood I'm going to rot in hell for my sinful youth. I managed to convince them that credits from Union would transfer to St. Andrew's Seminary. By graduation though, I'll have moved to California."

"That's too bad. Haven't your parents heard of repentance for sins?"

Eddie shrugged.

"They don't think I've repented."

He looked down at her registration card.

"You look like you've got a lot planned."

"Yeah, well, I want to be a theology major."

He examined her, appraising her long dark hair, casual white t-shirt and cut-off jean shorts with a raised eyebrow. For figure he'd give her an 8.5, for face a 9.2.

"I guess you don't look too freaky."

"I suppose you think that everyone who likes theology is a Jesus-freak."

He shrugged and turned back in line. It was her turn to appraise him. Dark hair, dark eyes. Italian blood? Maybe Irish since he was wearing an old U2 concert t-shirt with his black jeans. Intriguing enough, but she much preferred the guy in the line beside her who was positively angelic looking and reading his course catalogue with an intensity she reserved for sacred scripture. By tilting her head slightly she could read the name on his registration card. Dave Dian.

"Dave, man!" Eddie waves his hand in a friendly welcoming gesture as Dave appears at the doorway. "Hadassah and I are starting an intellectual movement. Wanna join?"

"Your gnostic knowledge won't save you," says Dave coming in and sinking into a chair. He's got a travel brochure for Israel under his arm like a Parisian carrying his loaf of French bread.

"Listen to who's talking," says Hadassah grinning at him. They have a flirtatious relationship, as flirtatious as someone can be with a man who wants to become a rabbi. "As if you're the Alpha and the Omega."

"Don't talk Greek to me," says Dave. "I don't know why you aren't more proud of your Jewish blood. I mean, I know more Hebrew than you do."

"You want to know why?" says Hadassah leaning forward as if she were sharing a secret on a rush hour subway car even though they were the only ones in the room.

"It's because I believe Christ was the Messiah."

"Really?" Dave is interested. Eddie is watching the TV screen. "Why?"

"Because I believe that the women who followed him, Mary Magdalene, Mary the sister of Martha, and all of the others, knew what they were doing. A woman can tell things about a man that other men can't. They can see his potential."

"Yeah, but a woman can follow a total jerk around too."

"Not for the rest of her life and not after he's dead. We're talking about women who saw the man die, who watched him being crucified, and then became pillars in the church that he had started. And, I mean, for those women, Christ was It. They were widows, or not married, and they laid down their life for his cause. They didn't look around for another man to take his place. He was irreplaceable."

"That's very interesting," says Dave. "But if he was the Messiah, how come more Jews didn't catch on to his ideas?"

"They were waiting for someone to overthrow the Roman government then, not for someone to come and magnify the law and talk about a future kingdom."

"So now you're waiting for the second coming?"

"Yep. And you're waiting for the Messiah?"

"Yep."

They grin at each other.

"Let's see," says Hadassah pointing at the travel brochure that has fallen onto Dave's lap. He hands it to her.

She flips through the brochure examining the tour options.

"From Dan to Beersheeva in 5 days," she practically snorts.

"That's just for the people who want to tell their friends they've been to Israel," says Dave.

"It's funny how North Americans go over there with this tourist mentality of seeing all the important sites and as they do, checking them off in the guidebook. Church of the Nativity," she says as she stabs at a picture. "Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Garden Tomb. I mean, they do it all over the world. See the Eiffel Tower, a beerhall, the Leaning Tower of Pisa and you've seen Europe. See Ayers Rock and a kangaroo and you've seen Australia."

"You practically have to live in a country to really see it," says Dave.

"You do. Hey, Dave. If you ever go to Israel..."

"When I go to Israel," interrupts Dave.

"OK, when you go to Israel, seriously consider trying to get on an archaeological

dig. I was on one when we were there last summer and archaeology just defies modern technology. It's great. If a consulting firm from the west came on the site they'd be appalled by the inefficiency. People move dirt around in buckets and form human chains when they need to get them over the bulks and out of the locus. Then the dirt is dumped into a wheelbarrow and someone stops digging to wheel it to the designated dump spot. After further theorizing by the archaeologists, this huge mound of dirt may turn out to be the most likely spot, for say, the archives of the city." Hadassah was clearly enjoying this topic. "In that case, the big pile of dirt has to be moved before even beginning to excavate that location. It could take, no joke, thousands of years to excavate a city. All the computer chips in the world don't speed up the process of actually sifting through the dirt. That's what I love about archaeology. And archaeology is at the heart of Israel..." "Let's start our intellectual movement tomorrow," says Eddie who has been reading the television guide. "Blade Runner's on TV tonight."

CHAPTER FIVE

SEDER

Judith has decided she wants to have a baby. She relays this information to me while I'm studying for a Reporting test in the kitchen of our dorm.

She sits down in our lime-green kitchen, complete with standard white refrigerator and the frequently-used black microwave that can be found in most college dorms, a counter with bread crumbs, cheese bits, and cola stains, a sink of dirty plastic dishes, two pastel green love-seats, and one square wooden coffee-table that also serves as a foot-stool. Someone's contributed a cotton tea-towel commemorating Canada's 125th Birthday which hangs on a peg on the wall.

"I need that element in my life," she says smoothing her hair with her hand. "I need to feel like I'm doing something worthwhile."

"So, are we talking a virgin birth?" I say. "Or has Tom agreed to be the father of your child?"

"I don't really care."

The microwave starts pinging. I lazily get to my feet to retrieve my cup of hot chocolate.

"Is it that late?" Judith has caught sight of the time on the microwave and jumps up. "I was supposed to meet Tom for dinner ten minutes ago."

She's been doing this a lot lately and considering that punctuality is next to Godliness with Tom, I think it's subconscious relationship suicide.

I see Dave at dinner.

"Sit down," he says, pulling out the chair for me. "This Monday is Seder and we've got to celebrate it."

"What?" I say.

"Seder," he says. "The feast that celebrates the Israelites leaving slavery in Egypt."

He pulls a thin paperback book out of his bag.

"I've got this recipe book of how to make a Sephardic Seder. It might be hard, so we could do it together."

It's already Thursday. As I flip through the book I think, I'm a Theology major, not a Home Ec major. All I know how to make is Kraft Dinner.

"Charoset Fruit and Nut Spread," I read. "Baked Fish with Cloves and Bell Peppers, Passover Vegetable Soup, Matzo Ball Soup, Mediterranean Vegetable Salad, Yemenite Lamb with Garlic and Chives, Ashkenazim Potatoes, Almond Cake with Fruit Sauce..."

"Sure, Dave," I say. "If we do it together."

I'm working on the principle that love conquers all obstacles.

"OK," says Dave. "We'll go shopping Sunday and make the food on Monday."

Holy days, apparently, come before classes.

On Sunday, Dave picks me up on the motorcycle and we drive to Haven, a larger town 20 minutes west of Union that has a small outdoor plaza including a grocery store and a liquor store. I'm wondering how easy it's going to be to find things like dried pitted dates and fresh fava beans.

"Look!" Dave points excitedly at a sign in the window. Visit our Kosher section.

The excitement is diminished somewhat by the Kosher section being two shelves, most of which is taken up with matzos.

"Well, we need matzos anyway," says Dave choosing a box.

"So what exactly are we going to make?" I say, pulling out the recipe book.

Dave takes the book and opens it.

"OK," he says. "Let's try to get the things for the baked fish." We spend an hour and a half in the grocery store trying to find ingredients, or equitable substitutes, and another half hour in the liquor store finding the perfect Passover wine.

It's not easy driving on a motorcycle with several bags of grocery and it's even harder when we add a bottle of wine to the whole collection. Somehow we manage to get everything back to campus. I help Dave bring the food back to his dorm and put it in the fridge.

"What time should I come over tomorrow," I say.

"How about ten?" he says.

I don't complain. I'll get to sleep in before spending the day with my Hebrew god. Dave is in the lounge flipping through a thick leather book when I arrive.

"Oh, hi," he looks up. "I'm just trying to figure out how to do this. Passover is very complicated."

We go into the study where he pulls a thinner book off his shelf.

"The Haggada," he says. "I've also got the cooked egg." He holds it up.

Evidently this is supposed to please me.

"We've got to ask a blessing on the egg and a piece of matzo," he says, standing up.

"It's called an eruv tavshilin."

After wrapping the egg and matzo in a bandanna, he opens the Haggada and begins to pray.

"OK," I say when he's done. "What now?"

"We can make some of the food that doesn't need cooking."

He picks the recipe book off his desk and skims it.

"Like we can start with the Haroseth."

We were able to get all of the ingredients for the Charoset fruit and nut spread but Dave is going to have a lot of leftover spices since we had to buy whole containers.

"Great," I say, reading the recipe. "We're supposed to do this with a food processor."

"Oh well," says Dave. "We'll just have to mash."

The fruit and nut spread turns out very lumpy. The Mediterranean Vegetable Salad is a lot easier. Dave's desk is starting to look messy though.

Eddie, one of Dave's roommates, walks into the study.

"Whaccha doing, man?" he says.

"Seder," says Dave.

"Yeah, later," says Eddie, wandering out with a notebook.

"That's all we can do now," says Dave picking up the salad. I follow him into the kitchen where he puts it in the fridge. "Everything else has to be cooked. But we've still got to get some lamb."

"Lamb?"

"Yeah," says Dave grinning. "We've got to find a lamb so that we can slaughter it and roast it over a fire. Preferably on the front lawn of the dorm."

"Dave!" I say.

"Just kidding. We just need a small piece of bone with some meat on it as a symbol."

"And where are we going to get a small piece of bone with some meat on it?" I say. Dave shrugs.

"You work in the kitchen. Don't they keep any bones?"

"Not with meat on it," I say.

"What are they making for lunch?" asks Dave. "Maybe there'll be something with bones."

We make our way to the dining hall, avoiding the classrooms where the classes we should be in are going on.

Lunch is spaghetti.

"Oh great," says Dave. "What now?"

"We could check in the walk-in," I say. "They may have leftovers."

When the line ladies aren't looking we duck behind the line and through the door into the kitchen. Casually and confidently, I try to walk as if I'm coming in for a work shift and hope that any supervisors just think that Dave is a new dishroom boy.

Inside the walk-in refrigerator are shelves and shelves of silver well pans.

"Carrots, beans, spinach, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes," I start going through the well pans.

"I'm never going to eat in this dining hall again," says Dave looking in one of the pans. "What's this?"

I look over. "Refried beans."

"Oh sick! How about these?"

"Leftover pancakes."

"You mean they reheat them?"

"Yep."

"Sick!"

"Aahhh! Here's something!" I say. "Leftover chicken. Can we use chicken?"

"Are you sure there isn't any lamb?"

I look exasperated.

"OK. OK. we'll take chicken."

"Any particular piece?" I say, peeling back the cellophane.

"Breast," he says.

I throw it at him.

He catches it.

"Uuuuhhhh! Cold chicken!"

"Did you expect it to be hot?"

He retaliates by ripping open the half-pan of pancakes and throwing a handful at me.

Pancakes fly everywhere. I hurl a spear of broccoli at him. He ducks and it hits Mr. Samuels who has just walked in.

"Don't you work here?" he says to me.

"Yes sir," I say.

"You're fired." He turns around and walks out.

"I'm sorry," says Dave when we're leaving the kitchen. In the midst of the mess he has managed to pick up the chicken breast.

"It's OK," I say sniffing because of the temperature change from cold to warm. "It was a boring job."

We walk back to the dorm.

"We can set the table now," says Dave going into the study, opening the bottom drawer of his desk and pulling out a small white table cloth. Underneath are plates and cutlery.

He carries the table cloth and I carry the plates into the lounge.

"I bought this in a little Jewish store back home," says Dave. "It was weird because it was before I was interested in Judaism. But I was in a Jewish neighbourhood and I saw this tablecloth. Mother's Day was coming up and I bought it for my mom."

"Did she like it?" I say.

"She pretended to."

After setting the table we start on the fish. I open the box of matzos and break off pieces to eat while we try to figure out the difference between regular cooking time and microwave time. I wonder if young Jewish couples do things like this.

"We'll just heat it a bit and see how done it is, and then keep doing it until it's cooked," says Dave.

"OK," I say. "But you have to do the tasting."

We start by heating it in five-minute intervals, and when it becomes apparent that this could take awhile, we up it to twelve-minutes.

"Twelve is a holy number," explains Dave.

When the fish is finally cooked, we put it in the fridge to reheat later. I'm starving right now. Dave gets so excited about these things that he forgets to eat and I'm worried that I'm going to devour the whole box of matzos before the sun even sets.

"Dessert," says Dave.

"Almond Cake with Fruit Sauce," I reply reaching for the bag of almonds and sticking a handful in my mouth.

Dave refused to buy any instant microwave cakes because they all had yeast in them. So once again, we are faced with making a gourmet item by trial and error. It comes out very flat. We put it in the fridge along with everything else.

The soup is easy since we bought an instant broth. All we have to do is chop up some onion, cloves, celery, leeks, artichokes, and throw in a few fava beans. I have no

idea where Dave got all these bowls and trays that we're using.

"OK," says Dave. "Now the Seder tray."

He takes one of the plates and puts the blessed hard-boiled egg on it and then goes to the fridge, pulls out the charoset and smears some on the plate.

"Where'd the chicken go?"

"It's sitting on your desk."

The previously chilled cooked chicken breast has warmed to room temperature and left a grease stain on the wooden surface. Dave carefully rips out a bone that has some meat attached and adds it to the egg and charoset.

"Do we have any onion left?" says Dave. I hand him a slice and that goes on the plate.

"OK, one more thing, the karpas. We just need a green vegetable."

"Uuuhh," I look around. "How about parsley?"

"Good enough."

Dave takes the plate into the lounge and puts it on the table while I go to the fridge and pull out the salad.

"Wait!" says Dave. "We can only have the Seder plate and some salt-water on the table for the first part." He gets a cup of water, puts salt in it, and places it on the table.

Three matzos are piled on a plate and Dave separates each of them with a napkin.

We wait until it's dark outside to start. Thankfully Dave's dorm is pretty quiet so the traffic through the lounge is minimal. Plus, they all know Dave and generally stay out of his way when it's clear he doesn't want them around.

You'd think that with all the candles and wine that a Seder would be a pretty romantic meal. Instead, we alternate the Haggada back and forth, reading out loud and eating at the appropriate times. Dave insists on reading his portions in Hebrew so I spend most of the time focusing on his earlobes since it's a part of his body I never really looked at before.

Of course the evening wouldn't be complete without singing, which is a lot easier to do after half a bottle of Jewish wine, so I don't mind.

The Seder ends with the traditional words, "This year slaves, next year free; this year here, next year in Jerusalem," and Dave reads it like he really means it.

CHAPTER SIX

MICHAL'S SORROW

"Dave!"

Hadassah drops her tray and books down and slips into the seat across from him. Dave, who has been reading Hebrew poetry, looks up carefully, sees who it is and smiles.

"Did the Seder yesterday. I don't suppose you bothered."

"Do I sense antagonism?"

"No, just righteous indignation."

"Well, for your info, I did light a few candles."

"What's that?"

He points to the sheets of paper on top of her books.

"A paper I just wrote for my OT Women class. You'd like it. It's about your namesake." She snickers.

He takes a swig of milk, wipes his mouth and picks the paper up.

"Michal's Sorrow; Bathsheba's Success," he reads.

"Yes," says Hadassah. "I like the apparent irony in King David's relationship with his first wife, Michal, and one of his later wives, Bathsheba. Despite that Michal's marriage to David was totally kosher, you know, she was given to him by her father Saul for the 100 Philistine foreskins, it wasn't a happy one, especially for Michal. Bathsheba, however, first meets the king in an adulterous encounter and later loses her husband so that David can marry her. Despite the rocky beginning, she's extremely successful in the royal court."

"And no doubt you have presented a solution to this paradox?"

"I would say much of this seeming paradox can be attributed to the different ways the two women approached King David -- Michal loved him, Bathsheba respected him."

"A succinct way of putting it," says Dave, his eyes scanning the paper.

"Also, Bathsheba was loved whereas Michal loved. Perhaps that was the most fundamental difference between the two women. Michal saw David and wanted him, David saw Bathsheba and wanted her. I think for Michal, David was the romantic giant-slayer and no doubt her love was more of an infatuation. The Hebrew word for

Michal's love in 1 Samuel 18:20 is ahab which is a broad term that includes attraction and desire. David isn't recorded as returning the sentiment, but instead told her brother, Jonathan, 'your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.'

"Nothing too unreasonable about that," says Dave, grinning. "After all, it was Solomon who said 'one man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all those have I not found.'"

"Also," continued Hadassah, ignoring him, "Bathsheba became wealthier through her union with David whereas Michal expected more. Bathsheba gained much more materially by advancing from Uriah the Hittite's wife to David, King of Israel's wife, but Michal couldn't gain much more being the King's daughter. Her happiness was depending on David's love."

"But she shouldn't have been looking for love," says Dave. "Marriages in upper class families were arranged for political purposes and Michal was merely an object to be negotiated between the two men. King Saul wanted David in his household so that he could keep tabs on this charismatic new hero and at first even offered his eldest daughter to David."

"Those are the facts, yes. But I'm talking about the emotions behind it all. Each woman handled her marriage so differently."

"But the Israelite ideal of marriage was based on the concept of God's love for Israel..."

"Yes, but marriage to a polygamous warrior like King David must have fallen short of the ideal for both Bathsheba and Michal. But Bathsheba was practising something that was brought out later by the apostle Paul, namely the idea of wives submitting to their husbands as if they're the Lord. When she came to David on his deathbed, she bowed and did homage to him before making her request."

"Well, he was king..."

"Yes, but Michal, a King's daughter, would never do such a thing. When she wanted David to know how she felt, she let him know. You know all that stuff where she says, 'how glorious was the king of Israel today, who uncovered himself in the eyes of the handmaids...' She mocked him the way a woman in love lashes out at the man who has let her down. King David's priorities in life were God, Israel, and everything else, which meant that dancing in the streets to the Lord was perfectly acceptable. For a neglected wife watching from the window, who has been dragged away from a second husband who clearly loves her, David's actions would be unbelievably irritating."

"Love can be awful, can't it?" says Dave suddenly.

Hadassah looks at him, surprised.

"I always thought it was more horrible for women. They give their whole soul to love."

Dave doesn't say anything to this, so Hadassah adds a tid-bit of information.

"Michal is the only woman in the Bible recorded as loving a man."

"The point being, look what happened to her?"

There hadn't really been a point but Hadassah feels the need to defend a woman's love.

"Well, even if it's an implicit message, there's the Song of Solomon to counter-act the idea that love is painful and not worth pursuing."

"The Song of Solomon just reinforces the idea that love isn't worth pursuing!" says Dave, now looking at her in surprise. "Everybody's coming and going and missing each other and longing for each other and nothing's happening. No consummation of the love. No assurances anything will come of it. It's very frustrating..."

Hadassah is struck by his vehemence.

"Well, in a way, Bathsheba and Michal were up against that but again, they handled it differently," she said. "Bathsheba was confident whereas Michal was jealous. It was very hard for Michal. David started out with one wife, her, but by the time he became king over Judah in Hebron he had six wives. She was the one who had had to lower him down in a basket to protect him from her angry father and then not see him for all those years. And then when he does finally come back, he's acquired a few more women along the way. No wonder she's bitter and jealous. It's funny how her words reflect the same emotions as her father's when David was cheered by the women for killing his ten thousands and the king only his thousands."

"It's ironic that it was Bathsheba's son who wrote the words, Love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave. And that from the book you said defends

love."

Hadassah has the delicacy to realize this is not entirely an exegetical discussion and doesn't point out that saying that love is as strong as death is certainly a defense of love.

"Bathsheba," she continues, "on the other hand, knew what she was getting herself into. By the time she married the king, he had at least a couple of wives, and probably several concubines. But she still went ahead and sent her message to him saying she was pregnant and then remained passive as he arranged to have her husband killed. Whereas Michal resented David, Bathsheba used him. Ultimately her mission was to see that her son, Solomon, was crowned king. I don't doubt she had an affection for David, but it's pretty clear that her love for her son was stronger and her relationship with Solomon was deeper, if you go by the beginning of Proverbs 31. If King Lemuel is Solomon, Bathsheba refers to him as the son of my womb...the son of my vows.

"And Michal never had a child..."

"Exactly. She had no one to give her intense love to so instead, a resentment towards David built up because he could not provide all of her emotional needs, not when he had so many other problems to contend with, like his already large family, and his growing kingdom, not to mention that he was a man of war, defending and conquering most of his life. There's no evidence that Bathsheba resented David's lack of attention. She had been conquered and was willing to remain in the background until it was time for her to come forward to press for her son's enthronement and ultimately, it was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, not Michal, the daughter of King Saul, who played a greater role in the history of Israel since the nation reached its zenith under her son Solomon. It was also Bathsheba's son who carried on the Messianic line."

"I'll ignore that about the Messianic line."

"My point is, she knew her role and she played it."

"Why do you call it a role?"

"Because in the kingdom of God there will be no male or female."

Dave sighs.

"Sorry," says Hadassah grinning. "Couldn't help it."

"OK, if a woman isn't a wife, I mean, if she never gets married, what's her position?"

"At that point, she's pretty much free to define her own role."

"Which is what you do," says Dave smiling and handing her back the paper.

"Exactly."

"So, what's a man without a woman?"

"A man without a helper."

"Does it bother you that you're just a helper? I mean, where's your power coming from?"

"Dave, Dave," Hadassah shakes her head. "You have a very male-oriented perspective when you read the scriptures. Women used their feminine charm to empower themselves. Esther saved a kingdom by flirting with a king. Ruth married Boaz and got security for her and her mother-in-law. Jael charmed a general into her tent and stabbed him in the head with a tent pick. Delilah seduced the strongest man in Israel and sold him to the Philistines."

"So that's what the patriarchal system is all about! Don't you have any respect for the historical authority of men?" He is speaking lightly, his eyes glimmering with challenge.

"Dave, I have no respect for the patriarchal system and there's nothing in the Hebrew scriptures to indicate it's some great achievement in government. As a matter of fact, I think the Bible deliberately makes patriarchy look defective. Think about it. Tamar's rape by her half-brother. The other Tamar having to sleep with her father-in-law to have a child. A concubine being gang-raped and mutilated after her lover throws her out to the men of the city. If those stories aren't smears on the patriarchal system, I don't know what is."

Dave is momentarily quieted by her strong opinion.

"So, all things considered, do you suggest women still use their charms today?" he finally asks.

Hadassah shrugs.

"It's an option. However, a quick reading of the New Testament will show that women are more service-oriented than charm-oriented. I mean, a lot of the women in the Old

Testament were beautiful, but the New Testament doesn't even mention how they look."

"Which way do you prefer?"

Hadassah thinks about it.

"Well, I think Christianity is more liberating. Women in the New Testament aren't mentioned in relationship to men as much. I mean, there are single women, widows, and people like Mary and Martha who had their own household. There's nobody like Mary, who sat at Christ's feet and listened to him teach, in the Old Testament."

"I like your sandals," says Dave looking down at her feet.

"Thanks. I got them at an Arab stall in the Old City last summer."

"You were in the Arab section?" Dave asks. "Isn't that kind of dangerous?"

Hadassah shrugs.

"I don't really look Jewish. Besides, Arab men are hot."

Dave holds his head in his hands.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RUTH PLAN

The next day I skip Bib History to sleep in. Now that I don't work, I've got the whole day free again. I could probably do homework, but it seems irrelevant after spending an evening in Egypt coming out of slavery. Instead, I grab a notebook and pen and walk into Union.

To get to Union, I follow the road that runs outside of the school -- a two-lane highway that is basically just a paved country road. There's forest on one side and fenced-in fields on the other.

Despite the very North American landscape, I'm pretending that I'm in Jerusalem, working for the Jerusalem Post, and I've been sent out to cover a minor Israeli-Arab scuffle at a local diner. Do they have diners in Israel?

"Good morning," I say to the lady behind the counter. "I'm with the Post and I'm doing a story on the fight that broke out here earlier this morning."

Actually, what I really say is "Good morning, I'll have a coffee and an orange juice."

"Yes," she says. "It was awful. Mostly Jews come in here. But this morning an Arab boy..."

"About how old would you say he was, ma'am?"

"About seventeen, maybe older. I don't know why he came in here, but he did. Came up to the counter and ordered a juice."

"What kind of juice, ma'am? My readers like details."

"Regular-sized orange. All the Jewish men were eyeing him, waiting for him to do something, or say something. But he didn't. He just drank his juice."

"How did the fight break out?"

"On his way out he kicked the back of one of the men's chairs. It may have been an accident, but it's hard to tell. All the men jumped up and surrounded him."

"I've read the hospital report, I know the rest. What nationality are you ma'am?"

"I came from America five years ago. I love Israel, but I hate the bloodshed."

"Thank you ma'am. You've been helpful."

I take my juice and coffee to a booth by the window. The diner is empty. Staring out the window at the empty parking lot, I wonder if it would be possible to start over and pretend I never met Dave. I could just go back to campus, ignore him and see if he notices. I'd be so ticked off if he didn't do anything.

There's a newspaper sitting on a table beside me so I flip through the world news then turn to Ann Landers. A long letter about being nice to your pets. A question about what to do with an aging parent who refuses to go to a nursing home. I think about what my question to Ann Landers would be.

Dear Ann, I'm in love with an aspiring rabbi. I'm not Jewish, but neither is he. Do you think I have a future with this man? Signed, Considering Conversion.

When I get back to campus it's lunchtime. Dave is sitting at a table of guys, all of them Theology majors. The conversation looks intense so I go and sit with Judith and Tom.

"Hey! Where've you been?" says Judith. "Dave's been looking for you."

"No way!" I say. "I walked to Union."

"Why?"

I shrug.

"Why not? What did Dave want?"

"Something about you accidentally taking his haggis."

After four glasses of wine anything's possible, though I don't remember waking up with a Haggada in my bed.
 I get up and go over to Dave.
 "Hey Dave!" I say, clearing my throat. Dave turns around.
 "Hi!" he says.
 "Hi!" I say. "I don't think I have your Haggada."
 "Oh, I know," he says. "It's just that I wanted Judith to know that it was important that you got back to me."
 I nod.
 "Good idea."
 "Well, anyway, how are you?" he says. "Here, sit down." He pulls out the chair beside him. The guy who was sitting there is at the salad bar.
 "I'm fine," I say. "Really good, actually."
 "Yeah, me too. Last night was amazing."
 "Yeah, it really was," I say.
 "Really moving."
 "Yeah, really."
 We're talking quietly but I have no doubt the other guys can hear us. I am thrilled that they might be led to believe that Dave and I engaged in a fornicative act last night.
 The guy from the salad bar has come back and is standing behind his chair.
 "Yeah, well, I'll just go back over there," I say nodding my head towards Judith and Tom.
 "Yeah, OK," says Dave. "We'll talk." He turns back to the group discussion.
 I sense things happening between us though I'm not sure what.
 "Business skills are so important," Tom is saying to Judith when I sit down after getting my food. "Even for jazz musicians."
 Judith nods.
 "Have you considered taking any business courses, Judith?"
 "No," says Judith. "I don't have the time."
 Their conversations bore me to death. Judith is really an interesting person, you'd just never know it listening to her and Tom. They're the only couple I know who has no middle ground when it comes to mutual interests.
 "I spend all my spare time composing," says Judith "You know that."
 Tom shrugs.
 "What d'ya wanna do tonight?"
 "I thought we were going to the concert."
 There's a small jazz festival going on at the Union Community Centre.
 "Oh, right."
 Last night they watched an intra-mural basketball game for Tom.
 Sarah, a girl in my weight training class, sits down beside me.
 "Have you studied for the test?" she says to me.
 "What test?" I say.
 "The one on body muscles."
 "I didn't know we had a test."
 Then I remember that I skipped yesterday's class. I think I should be exempted from tests in that class since I only take it for the physical benefits.
 Going back to the dorm, I study my few weight training notes. Nothing goes in because all I can think about is Dave and every time the phone rings I get up to answer it because I'm thinking maybe 'we'll talk' means tonight.
 But he doesn't call and I get more depressed as the evening drags by. Finally I just go to bed.
 We're sitting in Principles of Theology the next day, when in comes a messenger from Administration. He hands a note to the instructor.
 "Dave Dian," says the instructor, waving a hand for him to follow the man.
 Dave puts his books into his bag, brushes past me and exits with a neutral look on his face.
 Oh God! What's happened? Administration only calls you in to tell you someone's died or to kick you out. I panic. I imagine life without Dave. I'd need a psychiatrist. Stay calm, I tell myself. If I'm lucky maybe his great aunt passed away or something.
 I try to phone Dave before weight training but there's no answer. The only reason I go to weight training is because exercise is supposed to relieve stress but I only

end up failing a test.

Dave isn't in OTS. Having no idea what Rabbi Hirshel is talking about, I read the Psalms for encouragement the entire class.

I find out at dinner via Anna, a girl who works in Student Services, that Dave was called in about the empty wine bottles he carelessly tossed in his trash bin. Characteristically, he doesn't mention this to me the next day at lunch, nor does he tell me how he got around prohibition. I pretend nothing happened.

It's Friday afternoon and I'm getting ready to go over to Dave's dorm when Judith comes in.

"I don't know how to say this," she says.

"What?" I say, turning around.

She looks upset.

"What's the matter?"

"I think Dave is seeing someone else."

"What?!"

"Yeah. I didn't want to say anything until I knew more, but I was talking to Amy Rosenthal and she says he's been going out practically every night with Tara Levin."

This, as far as I'm concerned, is below the belt because there is nothing I can do to change the fact that I am not Jewish.

"So..." I finally say. "Does he still want me to go over there tonight?"

"I dunno," shrugs Judith.

I lie down on my bed and feel nothing. Kind of like when someone you love dies and you're body refuses to accept it at first.

When I get up, I put on a little black dress and carefully do my make-up.

"Hey El!" says Dave when I arrive. "You look great!"

"Thank you," I reply.

The Sabbath has become a routine for me. I have the ritual memorized. My only change to it has been that in addition to bread, I bring cheese and vegetables and whatever else I feel like so that we can have more of a real dinner. It was ridiculous just eating bread since I read some stories about Jewish families and they always have huge Friday-night dinners.

What makes this Sabbath unique is that I am looking for signs in Dave that he's changed, or that he feels guilty. But he's just the same. When we're eating the bread, I want to start talking about faith and trust, but instead I talk about an independent study I have to do for Reporting for Mass Media and how I'm going to do it on the Gaza Strip.

Dave nods a lot, but his mind seems to be on other things.

I feel like a married woman who knows her husband has a mistress but doesn't know how to work it into the conversation. When I stop talking, the room is silent. Dave settles back into the chair, eats his bread and sips his wine.

"Are you happy?" I say to him after awhile.

"Yes," he says smiling at me. And I can tell he really means it.

"The thing is," I say to Judith that night in the dorm. "He could have been happy at that moment, or he could have been happy because he was thinking about Tara."

"He doesn't treat Tara any better than he treats you," says Judith. "Amy was telling me that all they do is drive down to Lake Melbourne and Dave just asks her questions on what it's like to grow up Jewish."

"Really?"

"Uh-huh. And Tara's getting worried 'cos she's running out of things to tell him."

"He'll dump her when she does," I say as I start to laugh. It's suddenly become clear to me that Dave is only using Tara. Sure enough, Amy reports to Judith the next week that Dave isn't calling up Tara anymore. Tara is devastated.

I want to say something sarcastic to him like, "Oh did I tell you that I'm changing my name to Naomi Goldberg?"

"You just gotta do something to get his attention," says Judith. We're sitting on our respective beds and Judith is examining her legs for the little varicose veins that look as if a blue pen has accidentally brushed the flesh without the writer realizing she has left a mark. "Something totally out of the ordinary that will impress him."

"Yeah but what?" I say.

"OK, say some woman in the Old Testament wanted to get a man's attention, what would she do?"

"I dunno," I say. "Lie at his feet?"

"That's it!" says Judith looking up. "Do what Ruth did! Lie at his feet!"

"How?" I ask leaning forward, "I mean, Boaz had fields and threshing floors. It wasn't like he lived in a room with three other men."

"We'll think of a way," says Judith, uncrossing her legs. "You have to admit it's a great idea."

"Yeah," I say, staring at the wall as I think about this new idea. "It's pretty good. Actually, it's very good. It will definitely get his attention if I can pull it off."

"OK," says Judith. "The key would be to get his roommates out of the room for the night."

"Yeah, so say we did. How do I get into his dorm?"

"Take his key."

"OK, so say I get into his room. What if he wakes up and hears someone?"

"He'll think it's a roommate coming in."

"OK, but what if he wakes up when I lie at his feet?"

"Be very careful."

I have images of being attacked by Dave mistaking me for an intruder. I decide I wouldn't mind.

"So how do we get the roommates out of the room?" I ask.

"First of all, who are they?"

"Eddie Prince, Joseph Paige, and David Richler."

"I'll have a party and invite them."

"It's gotta be for all night though," I say. "I'm supposed to lie at his feet and fall asleep."

Judith and I decide we'll keep working on it. I don't know how we're going to do it, but the more I think about it the more I know it's got to be done because there's no other way that I can get Dave to take me seriously. I've come to the conclusion that he needs a girl to make an impact on him because it's not as if he's actively looking for a girlfriend.

Knowing that I've got the Ruth plan makes it easier for me to deal with Dave being surrounded by girls when I see him in the dining hall on Monday. I take a chair kitty-corner to him and check out the competition. Not too threatening, except for two of the girls being Jewish and I figure they have a limited number of childhood stories to tell him. It's funny how the same girls who renounce their Jewish heritage to date Gentiles suddenly turn orthodox around Dave.

Dave is asking Rebecca if she follows the purification rites after menstruation. She turns red.

"Uuhh, that's not really important unless you're married," she says.

Dave nods as he takes a bite out of his bread.

"Hey!" he says smiling at me like he's just noticed me.

"Hey!" I say.

"What's up?"

"The ceiling."

He grins.

"You little Gentile."

"Yeah, well, I'm thinking of changing my name to Goldberg."

The two Jewish girls look annoyed.

"If you want to convert, I've got all the info."

"I'm still waiting for my calling."

The next day, after Bib History, I walk into Union and go to the diner. I have a story to write for my Mass Media class and it's got to be local. I've decided I'm going to do it about the diner just to make a point about being asked to do a news story on something that isn't newsworthy.

After ordering a coffee at the counter, I tell the woman I'm doing an article for my school newspaper and ask her how long the diner's been open.

"Since six a.m., honey," she replies. Even though that's not exactly the question I want answered I decide to include it in my article.

"What kind of people come in here?"

"Oh, all sorts."

"What would you say is your best item on the menu?"

"Probably the grill cheese. Maybe the pecan pie, when it's in."

"What would you like to be remembered for?"

I expect her to say their coffee since every small town diner seems to want to be known for their world-famous coffee.

"I want to be remembered for organizing a society for the betterment of mankind," she says. She's serious. She's standing there in a baby blue polyester dress with white trim serving hamburgers in a small town and she wants to be known for organizing a society for the betterment of mankind.

"Thank you ma'am," I say writing this down as she refills my coffee cup. I carefully make note of the menu and the prices, as well as the daily special since I have a feeling that my article is going to need a lot of filler.

I've been spending most of my time trying to come up with a way of getting Dave's roommates out of the room for a night and apart from drugging them all, which I'm seriously considering, I haven't thought of anything.

Back in the dorm Judith suggests it might be easier to just get Dave out of the room. So it becomes an issue of how to drug Dave, take him somewhere appropriate, preferably someplace that has a lot of straw, and then hope he comes out of it before morning. We decide we'll keep working on it.

Judith is getting ready to go out. She's curling her hair which means she must be doing something special.

"Bill Harrison rented when Harry Met Sally and we're watching it at his dorm," she says.

"You're curling your hair to watch a movie?" I say. Then it hits me. `We' doesn't include Tom.

"Wow," I say. "Congratulations."

"Oh, it's nothing like that," she says. "It's just that Tom is sick of the movie and since Bill asked me I thought, what the hey?"

"I'm going to pray you fall in love," I say. "He plays the piano doesn't he?"

"Yeah, but he's into old jazz, like Louis Armstrong, not modern jazz."

I roll my eyes.

When she's left I pick up the Bible and turn to Ruth.

"Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons..."

I read the whole story of how Ruth married one of the sons only to have him die. Then she refuses to leave her mother-in-law Naomi, and goes back with her to Judah where she works in Boaz's wheat fields. Well, Boaz turns out to be a relative of Naomi's and rumour has it that he likes Ruth. So Naomi tells Ruth when Boaz will be at his threshing floor and how she should go and lie at his feet. When he wakes up, he finds her there and agrees to marry her. After a little bargaining they're married.

Believe it or not, I wouldn't mind being married to Dave. My conversion to Judaism probably wouldn't be too sincere, but I'd do it anyhow and if we ever moved to Jerusalem I could specialize in the Middle Eastern conflict and send articles to Western papers and magazines.

When Judith comes back she tells me she's going to have a party a week from Saturday night and she's going to invite Eddie, Joseph, and David.

"I talked it over with Bill," she says.

"You talked it over with Bill?!" I say.

"Oh I didn't tell him why you want Eddie, Joseph, and David to stay out all night. He didn't ask. He just said it sounded like fun."

"Well how're you going to do it?"

"What?"

"Keep them out all night."

"Bill says he'll mickey-finn their drinks."

"Where're you having it?"

"Bill says we could probably do it in one of those old portable classrooms that aren't used anymore."

They're in a far corner of the campus close to where Old Testament Study is held and I think that most of the faculty has forgotten that they even exist.

"If that doesn't work, Bill will lock them in the bathroom."

Thank God she met Bill. Tom would never do this.

The next day I see Judith talking to Joseph Paige in the dining hall at the drink

station. Since she never talks to any of Dave's roommates, she's trying to build a casual rapport between now and the time she says, big one at old classroom five. She comes and sits with me.

"What did you say to him?"

"I said, I like your tie."

Dave comes into the dining hall, goes straight to the salad bar and comes to sit beside me with his plate full of raw vegetables.

"Hey!" I say. "What's up?"

"God's throne."

Tom comes and sits beside Judith. I'm glad to see that there's no look of joy on Judith's face. I really do hope she gets together with Bill. For one thing, he's from New York City and Dave and I could visit them on vacation someday since I've always wanted to visit New York.

"Hey babe," Tom says.

Judith smiles briefly at him. Only I notice that her attention has been diverted by Bill walking through the dining hall.

We're up to Song of Solomon in Old Testament Study. I think Dave and I both get something different out of the class. I'm like, I hope he's taking this in and planning to use it in some way but I look down at his notes and see that he's writing down all the spiritual interpretations of the lover's words. If Song of Solomon doesn't affect him I wonder if I have what it takes to.

In Reporting for Mass Media I hand in my article about the diner. The headline is, LOCAL DINER THE HEADQUARTERS OF SOCIETY FOR THE BETTERMENT OF MANKIND. I'm expecting a D even though it's well-written.

Judith isn't sitting in our usual spot at dinner because she's on the other side of the dining hall eating with Bill and David Richler. They all look they're having a great time. When she gets up to go to the drink station I meet her there.

"Hey!" she says grinning. "Guess what? David's really into jazz too. So we're making it a jazz party Saturday night."

She's really excited and tells me how they're going to co-ordinate all of their CDs since she's got a lot of modern, Bill's got old, and David's got be-bop. They're thinking of making it a flapper's bash with tons of wine instead of beer. She shuts up when Dave comes to the drink station with a plateful of bread and cooked vegetables. They're serving ham on the line.

So as not to offend, I have a salad for dinner. Actually, I stopped eating pork after Dave referred me to the Levitical clean and unclean meats. I also stopped mixing meat with milk -- which isn't something I do often anyhow. I'm just careful not to eat cheeseburgers, at least around Dave.

"What's your favourite colour, Dave?" I ask to make conversation when he comes and sits across from me.

He stops to think.

"Blue, no, purple."

"Favourite secular book."

He thinks for awhile.

"A History of Jerusalem."

"How about fiction?"

"Exodus by Leon Uris."

"Favourite song?"

"Exodus the theme song. I saw the movie too."

"What do you look for in a woman?"

He grins.

"Teeth like a flock of sheep, lips like a thread of scarlet, temples like a piece of pomegranate."

He was taking it in during OTS.

"What's your favourite colour?" he says.

"Red."

"Favourite secular book?"

"The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau."

"Fiction?"

"Murder on the Orient Express by Agatha Christie."

"Song?"

"Happy Birthday to You sung by Marilyn Monroe."

"What do you look for in a man?"

"Earlobes, he's definitely got to have good earlobes."

"Do I sense sarcasm?"

"No. My favourite colour for apples is red and when I was five I loved The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau."

"Hey, do you want to do something tonight?"

"Sure," I say, unbelievably casually.

"Let's go somewhere on the bike."

After we finish eating we drive to Lake Melbourne which is only twenty minutes away. Lake Melbourne is in between a forest and a clearing with some cottages randomly scattered around it. Since the summer residents haven't come yet, we pick a dock to sit on and stare out at the still water. I want to push Dave in just to see what he'd do. It's like, I'm tired of spending my life on the shore, let's just get in and swim around a bit.

I wonder how he started conversations with Tara. Did he just say, tell me about your childhood? I mean, it's hardly like he's interested in my childhood since he's just looking at the lake.

"It'd be cool to come fishing here," says Dave suddenly. "Except that I don't have a fishing rod, and if I did, it'd be awkward on the bike."

I nod.

"Yeah."

"I mean, I grew up in suburbia and we never did things like go fishing. The most we ever did was go on a picnic in the park."

"If you have kids, do you want to take them out fishing?"

"Yeah, I guess. I don't know. I'll probably be busy."

I'll take them fishing, I want to say. But I know that's not the point. We've got to take care of the here and now first.

I take off my shoes and stick my feet in the water. Dave lies down on his stomach beside me. We'd make an amazing photo, you know, one of those black-and-white pictures where you look at it and think, wow, they're so beautiful, I bet they're really happy. It's a sad disillusionment to find out that it's not enough to just look good together.

After an hour or so we go back to campus.

"Thanks," says Dave when he drops me off. "I had a good time."

I look forward to Tuesdays and Thursdays because that's when I walk into Union and go to the diner. This Thursday I bring a book along, The History of Jerusalem, which I've checked out of the library. I order a complete meal, which I've never done before. Grilled cheese, chips, and a dill pickle. I go all out and have a malted milk too.

The History of Jerusalem, although not exactly the most enticingly-written, is certainly informative. I can only read a chapter at a time there's so much to be taken in. Turning the book over, I order a coffee, and slouch down in the vinyl booth chair.

The decor is pale blue with a white and grey tile floor. I like the lady who works here because she doesn't feel any obligation to talk to her customers beyond taking their order. Instead she sits behind the counter with a newspaper and a cup of coffee.

She only looks about thirty-five, but seems older. Tired. I imagine her husband to be about forty with a beer belly and a job as the high school janitor, or something. When she goes home after a long day in the diner, she probably has to face a hungry family and a man in a white undershirt.

When I get back, I work on some homework before going to dinner. Since neither Judith nor Dave are in the dining hall, I sit with some girls from my weight training class. If I hadn't taken an all-girls phys-ed class, I wouldn't have known any females on this campus apart from Judith.

"What are you doing for the summer," asks one of them.

Don't remind me that it's only three weeks away.

"I dunno yet," I say.

They talk about their plans.

I may go home. Or, I may go to New Orleans with Judith for awhile since she keeps telling me I should get a job with a local newspaper while she checks out the music scene. She's composed quite a few pieces, and although I don't think she knows exactly what she's going to do with them, she wants to do it in New Orleans.

Dave is from Manitoba and I still haven't come up with a plausible reason for spending my summer there.

Judith is lustily singing along to one of my old Duran Duran CDs when I come back to my dorm.

Turning down the volume, Judith tells me that she ran into Eddie Prince in the library and they had a long conversation about what it's like to be one of the few Gentiles majoring in Theology. It was an instant bonding since Eddie, although forced by his strict Catholic parents to become a Theology major, said it's really deepened his outlook on life. Although he's more into rock music, he's especially into groups with a social conscience. His walls are covered with U2 posters.

"So I told him about the party and he said he'd be there for sure," says Judith. "He said it sounded really cool."

"Anyhow," she says. "I've gotta go. Bill and I are going to the music department so I can play some of my pieces for him on the piano."

Yet despite this she maintains that she's still going out with Tom. Ten-to-one says Bill shows up in New Orleans this summer.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HANGING OUT

"Did you go to synagogue as a child?" Dave asks abruptly, looking up from his Hebrew book. Hadassah assumes the question is meant for her since Eddie, who is sharing the couch with her, has probably never even seen a synagogue. She has come over to their dorm lounge to help Eddie with a paper for his Themes in Theological Studies class.

"Sure, on high holy days."

"How come not regularly?"

"My parents weren't the most religious people. Very career-oriented, which of course means that I'll probably be uncareer-oriented since these things skip a generation."

"Did you guys ever talk religion?"

Hadassah turns her book, *women of Thessalonica*, over onto the soft couch.

"Well, once I asked my dad how Christ could be Jewish and Christian. He explained to me, and I think he was kind of having fun, that Christ was a transitional reformer of Judaism. And I said, well what's the difference between Jews and Christians? And he said the Jewish faith still believes that they are God's chosen people, whereas the Christian faith believes that Christ's coming terminated that position and they are now God's instrument. I asked him if he thought he was one of God's chosen and he told me it referred to religion, not race, and that religious struggles are always tricky because people tend to be dogmatic."

"How did your parents explain something like the Holocaust to you?"

"My dad said that when you have two distinct communities, like Judaism and Christianity, that are forced to function in the same economic and political system you're going to have friction. He told me to read up on Jewish-Christian relations over the last 2,000 years so that I could get an overview instead of just focusing on one frightening episode as if that represented a culmination of history."

"Did you?"

"Yeah. It's a shame because it seems like when it comes to individuals, Jews and Christians can get along reasonably well. It's the ruling authorities that have a problem with it."

"So, was it the reading up on Christianity that made you believe Christ was the Messiah?"

"Oh no! In fact, I believe that Christ is the Messiah despite Christian history. No, I just picked up a Bible in my dad's study one day and started reading the Gospel of Matthew and was struck by the whole philosophy of this man who I had always thought was a wimp from the pictures I'd seen of a pale, bleeding man on a cross. But then I started thinking about it. He was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth. I've been to Israel enough times to know that the men there are built. I mean, they are hot. There's no way Christ could have been pale since he would have been sunburnt all the time, and there's no way he could have been so thin if he were a carpenter."

"So your calling was based on the fact that he was probably good-looking?"

"My calling was based on the fact that if I had been in Jerusalem in the first century, I know I would have spent the rest of my life following him around, listening to him and later joining his church."

"If this is about some women's rights issue -- Christ as the liberator of women of

his time..."

"That is an entirely different issue. You know that's an entire field of study by itself. And, no, that's not what I'm talking about. I'm a woman living 2,000 years after the time of Christ with all the rights I need to live a successful life so I wasn't looking for a liberator when I read about his life. I was struck by the timelessness of his message.

Dave shrugs.

"I won't deny he was an effective teacher. Original and all that. But I still think this is about women's rights." He grins.

"If you want to talk about women's rights," says Hadassah. "I was reading this article about Old Babylonian marriage contracts and there was this one from about the 18th century B.C. that said if a wife wanted a divorce, her husband could shave her and put her on the slave market."

"Well that's not too unreasonable..."

"But get this, it could work in reverse! If it was the man who wanted a divorce, his wife could shave him and make him her slave. Not only that, he had to make sure she always had wool and oil. Isn't that hilarious?"

"I really don't find that funny," says Eddie who is sprawled on the couch, his feet on Hadassah's lap, with a notebook, pen, and bottle of non-alcoholic beer.

Hadassah smiles at Dave.

"What if they both wanted a divorce?" he asks grinning. "Would they shave each other and both be slaves?"

"You would have had to have been an idiot to file for a divorce," says Eddie, turning a page in his notebook.

"I think that was the point," says Hadassah. "It kept people together."

"Can I interrupt to ask what systematic theology is?" asks Eddie.

"It's the study of dogmatics, you know, universal truth, what you know as opposed to what you believe," replies Hadassah. "Why? How are you going to work that in?"

"I dunno," says Eddie thoughtfully, taking a swig of his drink. "It just sounds good, systematic theology."

"OK, my turn to ask you questions," says Hadassah to Dave, shifting in her corner position to pull her legs up onto the couch. "What do you see in that girl you're always hanging out with?"

"Which one?" asks Dave grinning.

"Well I don't mean your Jewish harem. The Gentile one. With the long hair. I mean, does she have a meaningful inner philosophy?"

"El? I dunno. I never asked her." Dave turns back to his Hebrew book.

"Well, she's got to believe something. What do you guys talk about?"

"Oh, you know, just Jewish stuff."

It's hard to tell whether he's being genuinely indifferent.

"But she's not Jewish. Why would she want to talk about Jewish stuff?"

"I don't know. Why don't you ask her?"

"Because I never talk to her. Like I'm just going to go up to her and say, Hi. I know I don't know you, but I'm wondering why you talk to Dave Dian about Jewish stuff when you're not Jewish."

"Why not?" Dave shrugs.

"Dave, you're in your own world."

CHAPTER NINE

IN SEARCH OF A GOOD NEWS STORY

I decide to freak out Dave and learn a bit of Hebrew. At lunch I go to our recently remodelled three-story, fluorescent-lit library that now looks like it could serve fast-food at the circulation desk and take out a book about Jewish living that has a list of Hebrew and Yiddish sayings in the back. During Reporting for Mass Media, I memorize all the ones that may be useful. The lecture is about grammar, which if I haven't learned at this point in my academic career, I probably never will.

"Gut Shabbos, Dovid!" I say when I arrive at his dorm with the customary loaves of bread.

"Shabbat shalom," he replies.

After we light the candles, I ask him how easy it is to become a gyoret. He doesn't seem too impressed that I know the word for a female convert.

"Much the same as a man," he says. "Except no circumcision, obviously. You've got to petition three times to a rabbi and learn enough about Judaism to become Jewish."

"Is there a ceremony?"

"Yeah, the mikva which is like a bath. Then the rabbi writes you up your sh'tar gerut which is your official certificate of conversion."

"Then what?" I say.

He shrugs.

"You're a real Jew. A lot of gyorets take on the name Ruth as their Hebrew name since she was a convert too."

It's a sign.

"It's something you've got to be serious about though," says Dave. "'Cos it's not like you can go back on it."

"Chalila!" I say. Translation: God forbid.

Dave grins.

"Yeah. Really."

"Maybe I'll just be a chasidei umot ha-olam."

"A friend of the Jews," Dave nods.

I pull out the bread and some sparkling grape juice.

"B'teavon," I say.

Dave looks puzzled.

"Bon appetit."

I've used up all my words except mazzeltov and I don't know how I'm going to work 'congratulations' into the conversation.

Dave suggests a walk after the bread. We head to the outer perimeter of the campus to avoid the Friday-night partyers, ironically ending up at the old classroom complex. Dave sits down on some steps outside one of the doors.

All I know is that Dave has two older sisters so I ask him about his family. I mean, what was a typical day in the Dian household?

He shrugs.

"Mom worked. Dad worked. Sue was always with her boyfriend. Gina studied a lot."

"Did you eat dinner together?"

"Yeah, practically every night. If you want an example of traditional Christianity that's my family. We went to church every Sunday. We even went to church picnics."

"My parents never went to church," I say. "I think that's why I took Principles of Theology."

"Do you believe in God?" he asks.

"Yeah."

"Why?"

Because you couldn't have evolved, I think.

Out loud I say, "It's a faith I have."

"I'd love to know what it's like up there," says Dave looking up at the sky.

"What do Jews say about life after death?"

"They don't. The Old Testament doesn't directly mention it. There's a lot of different ideas though. Some people say you go to a place like the garden of Eden, Gan Eden."

"What do you think?"

"I like that idea."

Any other guy would be getting pretty romantic now, alone in a deserted part of campus. Dave seems content to stare up at the sky. I guess I admire his depth.

"Hey Dave!" I want to say. "What do you think of us?"

But I know it would ruin his evening, so instead I look up at the stars and ask him if he can find Orion.

I spend Saturday morning in bed with a cup of coffee, a bag of cookies and a book on how to have a Jewish wedding.

I decide I want a Jewish wedding whether or not I convert just because there's this one part where the woman circles the man seven times to signify that he is the centre of her universe, which aptly describes my relationship with Dave.

Judith is humming You Didn't Know Me When as she sorts out her closet. She's been noticeably happy lately, more specifically, since she started to spend time with Bill.

"What are you going to do today?" she asks me.

"I don't know."

"Have you started studying yet?"

Finals are in a week.

"I can't concentrate on studying before the Ruth plan," I say.

"Like you'll really be able to concentrate afterwards," she says.

She turns back to her closet and starts to sing, "with imagination, I'll get there..."

I drag myself out of bed and decide she has a point about concentrating. If I don't study now I could fail my junior year. Principles of Theology is my best study choice, followed by OTS, because if I have any questions I can call Dave.

By dinner time I've memorized the themes and meanings of the names of all the minor prophets, as well as significant scriptures in each.

"How can two walk together except they be agreed?" I say to Dave at dinner. "Hosea 3:3."

"You're right," says Dave nodding.

"What are some things two people have to agree on to walk together?" I say.

"Religion," he pauses. "Maybe politics." Pause. "Music, clothing, what you take in your coffee." He grins.

And to think that before I met Dave I seriously did judge guys on music, clothes, and whether they took sugar in their coffee.

"What are you doing tonight?" I ask.

"Going to bed," he says. Dave is not an adherent to the belief that you have to party on a Saturday night. I'm glad because it'll make the Ruth plan easier.

I go back to the dorm with every intention of studying. Judith is on the phone. When she gets off she asks me if I want to go out on a double-date.

"Who's my lucky man?" I say.

"Bill."

I give her a look.

"Tom wants to go to a movie and I said that we should bring you guys along."

"So have you talked to Bill?"

"Yeah, I just phoned him. He said it'd be great."

"Does he know I'm his date?"

"Of course," says Judith airily.

The movie turns out to be the same one Dave and I saw. Just my luck. I never go out to movies but when I do, I see the same one twice.

Judith and Bill end up beside each other with me and Tom on either end. I sit and try to remember everything that Dave said to me during the movie. Most of it comes back verbatim. If I could apply the technique I use in listening to Dave to my classes I'd never have to study.

Tom seems oblivious to Judith and Bill talking throughout the film and I'm surprised Bill doesn't put his arm around her seat.

Afterwards we go to the diner. Coffee for me, Coke for everyone else. Judith and Bill are laughing and joking about the lousy background music in the film, something which is only funny to them. Feeling sorry for Tom I turn to him and try to start a conversation.

"So, you're a business major, eh?"

"Yeah."

"Do you like it?"

"Yeah. I want to get into management."

I nod.

"That's cool. So, what do you do in your spare time?"

He gives me a look, like, why is this chick talking to me?

"I play a lot of sports," he says.

"What is it now?" I say. "Baseball season?"

"Yeah."

"Do you like baseball?"

"Yeah," he says.

"Me too," I say. "I'm a Laker's fan myself."

I heard some businessman say that once.

"That's basketball," he says.

"Oh," I say. "Do you like basketball?"

"Yeh," he says.

"Better than baseball?"

"Uh-huh."

"How about hockey? I went to a hockey game in Montreal once."

"I'm not into hockey," he says.

"Well, not everyone is, I guess," I say. "What do you think of soccer?"

"It's OK." He seems to be getting bored with this conversation, so I stop and we

listen to Bill and Judith talk about Frank Sinatra's influence on Harry Connick Jr. Don't ask me how they got from the movie to Frank Sinatra.

There's a different woman behind the counter. She's younger. Probably just works in the evenings. A man sitting at the counter with a cup of coffee is enjoying talking to her about the latest tornado down in Texas.

When we get back to the dorm I ask Judith what she's going to do about Tom.

"I don't know," she says.

It kills me that I'm breaking my back to get a man and she has her choice of two. I set my alarm for eight o'clock on Sunday so I can get up to study, but I end up snoozing until ten. Then I remember that I have to do laundry and that takes till lunchtime.

"Do you want to study for finals together?" I ask Dave at lunch.

"Study what?" he says, biting into his hamburger.

"Principles, OTS."

"I doubt if I'll study for those," he says. "I usually review it enough after classes to know it."

"Do you have anything to study for?" I say, not daunted. Dave's not blowing me off. His candidness is just more developed than his relationship-orientation.

"Yeah. Hebrew for sure. Maybe Pentateuchal Studies."

"Well come over and study at my dorm," I say.

Dave brings over all his Hebrew notes after lunch. I was sure that he already knew Hebrew but he tells me he only knows the alphabet, the lettering, and limited passages.

I pick up a sheet of paper that has the Hebrew alphabet on it and try to memorize it. When I do, I recite it to Dave.

"Very good," he says. "Now you just have to learn the lettering and what it means."

He is translating a lengthy paragraph from Hebrew into English lettering and then into English. I'm embarrassed for having just recited the measly alphabet so I get up to make some coffee.

When I get back Dave has switched to his Pentateuchal Studies which is basically the study of the Torah.

"What's your favourite book in the Torah?" I say.

"Exodus," he says. "It's exciting that a whole nation just picked up and went into the wilderness."

"How was it organized?" I ask, pouring him some coffee.

"By tribe," he says taking the cup. "There were twelve and they marched out under their banners."

"What if some girl from one tribe was going out with a guy in another tribe?" I ask as I hand him a creamer that I had snagged from the dining hall.

Dave shrugs.

"It'd probably be better to like someone in your own tribe since you marched together and camped together. But you could get married and then obviously you'd both be in the man's tribe."

"Marriage seems to be the obvious solution," I say.

"Yeah," says Dave. "Could you pass me some sugar please?"

We max out in weight training on Monday. After that, the teacher makes us run for a mile out on the track. I arrive sweaty and red for lunch. Dave is sitting across from his roommate David, who is sitting beside Bill, who is not surprisingly across from Judith. The topic of conversation is the synchronization of rock elements with jazz which is good for me since Dave has no significant contributions to make to it and focuses his attention on me when I take the chair beside him.

"Been running?" he says.

"No," I say. "I just covered my face with blush and then sprayed myself with water."

"Hmmm," says Dave grinning into his sandwich. "You're in a good mood. Must be that time of the month."

"Actually," I say, "I have been running. I should congratulate you on your excellent perception."

"No problem," he says.

Frivolously I ask him if he knows the theme of Malachi.

"Apostasy," he says.

"Very good."

"What does the name Malachi mean?" he asks.

"My messenger."

Dave nods.

"Who was Malachi written to?" I ask. I found this out after some in depth textbook reading.

"The people living in Palestine," he says without hesitation. "Especially the people who worshipped at the temple in Jerusalem."

"Oh," I say. "Very good."

I get my newspaper article back in Reporting for Mass Media with a C and `different' scrawled across the top. The girl sitting beside me got an A for reporting on an extra-mural softball game.

It's not that I object to conventional journalism. Someone's got to do it. I just don't want to be the one.

Instead of a final exam, our teacher gives us an assignment to write a feature story on the topic of our choice.

"I suggest you take this seriously," he says looking at me. "Get the facts and make sure they're facts worth getting."

"Does it have to be local?" I say putting up my hand.

"That's probably your best bet since I doubt you want to get on a plane and fly to Iraq for a good news story."

A polite titter runs through the class.

The next day I walk to Union in search of a good news story. Somehow I think I've exhausted the diner as a story source so I cross the quiet main street and go into the hardware store.

I'm in a dim room with a wood-slatted floor and two aisles of unrecognizable small objects in wooden boxes.

"Hi there," I say to the older man wearing a plaid shirt who has his elbows propped on the counter and is reading a paper. "I go to Union and I'm doing a journalism assignment. Do you have any hot stories?"

"Well," he says pushing the paper aside thoughtfully. "We had a robbery."

"Really!" I say. "When?"

"About a year ago."

I wonder if it would be unethical to change the date to a few days ago.

"Can you think of anything more recent?"

"Well, there's a rumour going around that Tessy Mills left Union to have a baby."

"Tessy Mills?" I say.

"Her father is the head of the board of directors for Union bank."

"How old is Tessy?" I ask trying to restrain my excitement since I don't think it's professional to look as if I revel in the sordid details.

"Oh, I would say about thirty, thirty-two."

I was expecting sixteen. Still, I don't think anyone's ever done a newspaper article on a thirty year-old woman leaving town to have a baby.

"Is she married?" I ask.

"Yes, ma'am. To the shoe salesman at Frederick's."

Frederick's is the small department store at the end of the street.

"Then why'd she have to leave town?"

He lowers his voice.

"Because her husband isn't the father of the baby."

"Does anyone have any idea who is the father?"

"No, but don't think people haven't been speculating. The latest rumour is that it's a Union student."

How perfectly wonderful. I can't get much more local than that.

"Thank you very much," I say. "You've been most helpful."

My next stop is the beauty parlour where I pull open the door and a tingle of bells announces my arrival. I'm in a bright floral waiting room, complete with vinyl couches and a small plastic table covered in old Harper's Bazaar magazines.

"Yes dear? what can I do for you?" An older lady with voluminous curly white hair and a pink tent-dress comes out of the backroom carrying a plastic box of foam rollers.

"I'd like a shampoo please," I say. This is probably one of the few places in the world where it still seems normal to go to the hairdresser's to get your hair-washed.

"Certainly, sweetie. Take a seat over there and I'll be with you in a minute." She waves to the sink and the chair with the curved neck rest.

The only other patron is a middle-aged lady who's sitting on one of the barber chairs, her hair in permanent rollers while she flips through a magazine. She glances up at me and smiles.

"Hi," she says. "I've never seen you before."

Before she can ask me where I'm from, the older lady returns and says, "OK honey. Just slide down a bit and lean your head back."

While she's washing my hair I casually ask her if she's seen Tessy Mills around lately.

"No," says the lady. "She's been gone for two months now."

"Only seven to go," calls out the lady in permanent rollers from her magazine.

That's the great thing about a small town. People take personal questions in stride instead of being suspicious.

"I'd say more like five since she had to be at least two months when she left. Is she a friend of yours, dear?" asks the lady doing my hair.

"I've been living here for two years now," I say evading the question. "So I know a lot of people."

"Are you a Union student?" says the lady in rollers.

There's no point in attempting to hide anything from these women.

"Yes, ma'am."

"They say it was a Union student."

"What do you mean?" I say.

"Oh, I'm sorry," says the lady as she rinses my hair and prepares to condition it.

"We didn't tell you. She left town to have a baby."

"No!" I say.

"Yes," says the lady. "Sad, but true." She doesn't look very sad. "They say the father goes to Union."

"Do they have any idea who he is?" I ask.

If they say a blond theology major I'll freak out.

"No one really knows for sure," the lady says hesitantly. I have a feeling that this latest revelation was developed right here in the beauty parlour and based more on sensationalism than fact.

"Probably a senior, dear," says the lady in rollers. "Watch out for those seniors. They have too much pent-up energy."

It's hard to talk over the blow dryer but I figure I've gotten as much information as I can from the beauty parlour.

Next stop is Frederick's where I walk on pale grey tiles that I suspect were once white and through aisles of appliances, stationary, candy, underwear, and clothing that have probably been hanging on the silver metal hooks since I was born. I go straight to the shoe department.

"If I can be of any help, just let me know," says the shoe salesman, a pale man of about thirty-five.

"Thank you Mr. Mills," I say.

"How'd you know my name?" he says. He's wearing a brown polyester-cotton blend suit with an orange and brown plaid shirt and a solid brown tie, but no name tag.

"Oh, I know your wife," I say casually, pretending to examine a child's pair of black patent dress shoes.

It would probably be more accurate to say, know of.

"Oh, Tessy," he says, sounding rather sad. "Yes. She's out of town for awhile."

"Really?" I say. I find that I have instinctively picked up a box of children's rainboots in an attempt to look like a serious customer.

"Yes, her mother's sick. They don't know how long she's going to last."

"How awful," I say. "But I thought Tessy's family lives in Union."

"Her father and her step-mother do," he says clasping his hands together. "But her mother lives about an hour's drive north of here. Would you like to try those on?"

He glances at the pink rubber boots.

"Do you have any sandals," I ask, putting the boots down quickly.

"No," he says. "But we have some nice tennis shoes."

"That's OK," I say. "It's been nice talking to you Mr. Mills." I walk away quickly before he can ask me my name.

Now I have the moral dilemma of do I do a sensational article about a Union student getting a local housewife pregnant, or do I do an article on Mrs. Mills leaving town to visit her sick mother? I decide to mull it over with a cup of coffee.

"Hi!" I say to the lady behind the counter of the diner.

She smiles a tired smile.

"What'll it be?"

"What's your best pie?"

"I like lemon meringue myself."

I order a piece of lemon meringue pie and a cup of coffee and take it to my booth.

"You come here often," says the lady. "How come?"

"I just like it," I say. "It's got atmosphere."

She smiles at me like, these college students, I can't figure them out.

"Hey," I call out. "Did you hear the latest about Tessy Mills?"

"Yeah," she says. "I'm her sister."

"Oh!" I say. "I'm sorry."

"No problem. Hey, you know what? They're not rumours."

"No way!" I say. This is a total gift for a journalist. Straight from the sister's mouth. "By a Union student?"

"Tessy only wishes. No. It was just some guy passing through a couple of months ago. Here to visit relatives, or something."

"So your mother isn't sick?"

"No. She told everyone that, but Dan's the only one who believed it. It's true that she did go home to mom though."

"How many people did she tell?"

"Just me as far as I know," she shrugs. "Now you know. But I figure the whole town seems to know anyhow."

Now I have a story. A story worthy of National Enquirer, but a story nonetheless.

I'll have enough discretion to change the names though.

I feel sorry for Dan. Hopefully Tessy will come back in five months, having given up the baby for adoption, saying that her mother made a miraculous pull through and the Mills will be able to resume their life.

By the time I get back to campus it's the middle of the afternoon. I write the story while it's still interesting to me and then go to dinner.

Ted Stevens sits down across from me before I can tell him that the seat is saved.

"Hi!" he says looking embarrassed and happy at the same time.

"Hi, Ted," I say and try to smile. The last time I talked with Ted was when I ate dinner with him to boost my morale.

"How're you doing?" he says.

"OK," I say.

"How's that Theology major coming along?" Ted is a Journalism major and we met in the Intro to Mass Media class our freshman year.

"Great," I say.

"Why'd you switch to Theology anyhow?" he says.

Like, because, I love Dave Dian.

"Because," I pause to think. "I believe that God is important."

"Oh yeah," says Ted. "I agree."

If I were the proselytizing sort, I would make it a personal challenge to see if I could get Ted to change his major.

"So what area of journalism do you want to go into?" I say instead. I don't really want to talk about God with any guy but Dave.

"I like politics."

"North American?"

"Yeah."

"Columnist or feature-writer?"

"Probably feature-writer. I dunno. I especially like covering elections and things."

I stifle a yawn.

"Really, Ted?"

Dave walks by with a tray, gives Ted a strange look and then keeps going. He sits at a table beside Tara Levin and Amy Rosenthal. I can only hope he's going to ask them about purification rites after childbirth.

"Well, Ted." I've got indigestion from trying to eat so quickly. "What are your plans for the summer?"

"I have a job back home at a car wash."

"Where's home?" My eyes are on my food, my voice strained.

"A little town about an hour north of here called Hazeltown."

"Maybe you'll meet my friend Tessy Mills," I say.

"who?"

"No one," I say and sigh. I have about five forkfuls left and Ted still has a full plate. My second dilemma of the day. Do I stay until he's finished?

Mercifully, a girl from my weight training class comes and sits beside me so I introduce her to Ted and then flee.

"I just had another great talk with Eddie Prince," says Judith when I get back to the dorm.

"Oh, you've got three men now," I say.

"No, it's nothing like that," she says. "He's just a nice guy. Asked me if I needed any help setting up for the party."

"Yeah, how are the plans for that coming?" I'd almost forgotten that Saturday night was either going to be the best or worst experience of my life.

"Great. So far we've got about fifty people coming."

"Fifty! How'd you get so many?"

"Oh, Bill and David and Eddie are all inviting friends. I haven't even talked to the people I want to invite."

"How are you going to fit more than fifty people into one classroom?" I say.

"It'll be standing room only, I guess. We'll just turn the whole thing into one dance floor and stick the wine in the corner."

"Yeah, how are we going to get the wine?"

"I dunno 'cos the nearest liquor store is in Haven and no one I know has a car."

"Then we've got to invite someone to the party who has a car so they can go with us to buy the stuff."

"who?"

"Dave's got the bike."

Judith sighs. "So get Dave to buy the alcohol for the party that we're having for the sole purpose of getting his roommates out of the room so that you can lie at his feet."

"I'll keep my eyes open for someone who has a car who's not doing anything on Saturday night," I say.

CHAPTER TEN

ECCLESIASTES

Hadassah is having lunch with Roger Cardon, theology major and Union's representative of the agnostic punk movement. Actually, Hadassah is finding him quite philosophically sound -- most of his ideas have come straight out of Ecclesiastes.

"Why did you become a theology major?" she asks him, after they have a rousing, and almost cheerful, discussion on how everything is just vanity of vanities.

"I had this burning desire to know what's next," he says leaning forward, his pale face slightly flushed with the intoxication of an invigorating exchange of ideas. "I mean, we all live our lives and at the end of 70 years we die, and a lot of us think about death, but we don't talk much about where we're going. I mean, heaven seems like a joke. It's a farce. Hell was an invention to keep the masses under control. To me, the most fundamental question is, what's next? It's something that all the science and technology in the world can't answer."

"That's so true," says Hadassah. "It's such a tricky question that Jews don't even touch it much."

"It's like, it's the biggest test of faith," says Roger. "You know, not to panic. But it's kind of like being on a roller coaster because there's no way off of it and you know that big hill is coming up."

They're silent for a moment.

"What's your big theological question?" asks Roger.

"Why does God allow suffering?" says Hadassah without having to pause to think. "The inability to answer this question adequately has been the failure of organized religion. I mean, philosophers since Plato have attempted to create an explanation to answer the question if God is all powerful and God is all good why is there such incredible human suffering? But it's like, in trying to provide an answer, they shrink from the issues of day-to-day pain and theorize in an effort to defend God."

"Yeah, I know what you mean," says Roger. "Augustine developed two basic inceptions of evil, the privative and the aesthetic. Leibniz said that this is the best of all possible worlds. Maybe because it's the only world. David Hume said that man was not created to live a hedonistic life. Mary Baker Eddy said that evil is an illusion."

"My favourite is that without evil, there wouldn't be good," says Hadassah. "It's almost sadistic. Or, almost as bad, suffering builds character. Tell that to the young Muslim woman who's raped by three Serbian soldiers at gunpoint while her family's forced to watch."

"Augustine traces evil back to the fall of man and says that it originated in angel's and men's free will to turn away from God," says Roger taking a sip of his black coffee.

"That theory answers when evil was introduced into the physical realm, but it's lacking for me because the farthest back we can trace evil to is the fall of Satan. But since God created Satan, does he have the potential for evil too?" Hadassah leans forward in her chair. The lunchtime crowd is dispersing and she and Roger are probably late for a class but they don't notice. "Since God is good, Matthew 19:17, we know he is not evil. He does however, possess the knowledge of good and evil since he created that tree, along with the tree of life. Eternal life and the knowledge of good and evil are hallmarks of God, Genesis 3:22. But the origin of evil still remains a mystery."

"Actually," says Roger rather slyly. "It says in Isaiah 45:7, 'I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.'"

"No way!" says Hadassah, pulling open her knapsack and searching for her Bible. "Ah, here it is." She turns to Isaiah and confirms the scripture. "I never noticed that before." She pulls out a pen with micro pigment ink and circles the scripture.

"I think that the difference between a trial and an act of evil is that the trial doesn't involve sin, whereas an act of evil is a direct violation of God's law."

"You know, I think you're right," says Hadassah placing her Bible on the table, carefully avoiding an unidentifiable orangey remnant of food about an arm's length away from her tray. "Like in Ecclesiastes when the oppressor brutalizes the oppressed. That's evil. Solomon says that the only ultimate solution is to fear God and keep his commandments which is, in essence, replacing evil with good, Romans 12:21. It's also allying yourself with God, who is strength and protection."

"You know," Roger is leaning forward, and getting excited. "Thinking back to that tree of the knowledge of good and evil versus the tree of life thing, God clearly told man to choose life, Deuteronomy 15:30. Man, however, has not chosen life."

"Yeah!" Hadassah is leaning forward too. "You know, maybe we shouldn't be asking why God allows suffering which sounds like God is at fault somehow. God has nothing to do with it. Man simply oppresses man. It isn't God's world. From the moment Eve picked the fruit she chose to make her own choices. Choosing the knowledge of good and evil made man like God and basically negated the need for him. It stinks, but that's just the way it is."

"That's scary," says Roger. "It's like there are no barriers to evil."

"I know. When I was little and first heard about Nazi concentration camps my anger at God must have lasted for about a month. I wasn't ready to chuck everything that I believed back in his face because of my sense of self-preservation. I mean, I want to be on the side of strength in this frightening world. But then I started to realize that my indignation at God for permitting Jews to be killed was self-righteousness. I could not possibly love those people more than God does. As a matter of fact, I only think I have deep sympathy for them because I'm terrified that something like that could happen to me. If I can't even love some of my fellow students here at Union, what makes me the champion of the oppressed?"

"Maybe our job is just to cry for the world," says Roger as he sticks his finger in the bottom of his coffee cup and stirs the sugary remains. He licks his finger.

"And you know what the biggest theological question of all is?" says Hadassah. "It's why? why life at all? why the earth? why the universe? why everything? Even if there's a purpose, why that purpose and not some other purpose?"

"Someday there'll be a gigantic cosmic orgasm," says Roger slowly. "When all the why's that have ever been asked become one universal yes!"

There's a pause until Roger looks up at the clock and realizes his class on the other side of the campus started ten minutes ago.

Fool's Gold

Chapter One

Sweat stung his eyes and trickled down the middle of his back. His legs cramped, but he dared not move. A fly buzzed around his nose, boldly landing on his unshaven chin. Luke Catlin squinted at the sun shimmering above a barren horizon. Two hours. Even as he cursed the cowardice that kept him crouched behind the rock, he knew there was nothing he could do. No cover lay between his hiding place and his captured horse, over a hundred feet away. The closest help lay at least twenty miles to the southeast, but the Soldiers at Camp Bowie wouldn't be patrolling this far from the Butterfield stage route. Camp Grant was to the northwest, but those troops were kept busy protecting the settlers in San Pedro Valley from the Coyotero Apaches.

A tortured scream riveted his attention on the scene below. He swallowed a dry heave and frantically studied the Indian sentry for some sign of waning attention. Catlin's winchester looked menacing in the hands of the sentry. If he hadn't been in such a hurry to prove himself by finding gold first, the gun would be in his hands now.

Another scream echoed off the rocky slope. His fingers brushed the rough handle of the pick nervously. Any attempt to rescue Ramsey would be suicidal. He counted six Indians. Might as well be sixty, he thought bitterly. He silently cursed his ignorance of the west and lousy sense of priorities that had put learning mining skills before survival. Ramsey was the one who knew all about this uncivilized country. Ramsey - his cousin and lifelong friend. But Ramsey had made a poor choice of partners.

Catlin scraped a dry tongue across cracked lips. Squeezing his eyes shut, he tried to exorcise the broad painted face of the savage with the knife. But closing his eyes didn't shut out the image of Ramsey's face contorted with agony. The taste of salt in his mouth was not from sweat alone. Could death be any worse than the certainty of a lifelong anguished conscience?

At that moment Ramsey screamed again. The inhuman sound robbed Catlin of all reason. His fear was replaced with an uncontrolled frenzy of rage. His fingers clenched around the pick handle of their own volition. He stood.

"NO!" he screamed in a voice that was unrecognizable as his own. "You filthy, murdering, cold-blooded . . ." A barrage of obscenities and accusations erupted from his lungs. He staggered down the slope on legs numb from lack of circulation. For a moment the Indians stared at him, too surprised to react. A rifle cracked. One of the Indians yelped and crumpled to the ground. The remaining Indians abandoned their victim and dove for cover.

Catlin's first priority was retrieving his weapon. As he darted forward, the Indian turned and fired. The impact of the bullet knocked Catlin back, but some unknown strength kept his legs moving. A steady flow of poison had been feeding his brain for the last two hours. He must have vengeance. He swung the pick viciously, an inane laugh escaping his throat at the terrified expression on the face of the savage. And then the pick was crunching through the chest of the Apache, silencing his unearthly scream in a gurgle of blood.

Catlin stood over the corpse for a moment and then numbly retrieved his rifle. A bullet struck the ground at his feet. Survival instincts drowned out the shock and he dived behind a boulder. Feeling returned with a vengeance as pain engulfed his body. He struggled to get into firing position, casting a glance toward Ramsey. He squinted through blurring eyes. Was Ramsey still alive? The rifle cracked again, sending another savage to his reward. Catlin strained to identify the mounted figures approaching through the heat waves. His fingers could no longer hold the rifle and it clattered down the rock to the dusty ground. Black spots impaired his vision as his body followed the rifle. Unable to stop his fall, the hard ground leaped up to catch him. The hot sand vibrated with the weight of galloping horses. Catlin gripped the heavy rifle stubbornly as blackness surrounded him.

Through the pounding in his skull, he gradually became aware of the bouncing wagon bed beneath his aching body. The wagon made a final heave and then came to a stop. Flies hummed around a blanket covering what he feared must be the body of Ramsey. The dusty blue uniform of a soldier shadowed the sun from his eyes.

"He's comin' 'round," the soldier called to someone, and then spit a brown stream at the ground beside his horse. The soldier shifted the chew in his mouth. "We're goin' to leave ya here with the doc." He nodded at the blanket. "We'll bury yer partner fer ya. Sorry we didn't show up sooner. Fact is, we wasn't supposed to be in the area at all. Jist happened to be lookin' fer water an' you was camped close to the only water in a twenty mile area. Don't you know better than that, boy?" Catlin sat up with a groan. "Obviously not," he answered tersely. His eyes were involuntarily drawn toward the blanket. "I'll bury him. He's my cousin. Just help me out of this box."

He grabbed the edge of the wagon, fighting a wave of nausea. The desert shimmered and he sank back. Dark spots gradually blotted his vision until there was only blackness.

When he opened his eyes again, he was laying on a cot in a small room, his chest bound with clean strips of cloth. The sheets felt cool against his fevered body. Above his head a window was open to the night air. A full moon stared down at him. For a few moments he returned its blank regard, trying to recall where he had bedded down last night. This must be the doctor's house.

As his eyes adjusted to the dark, he made out the adobe walls and earthen floor. Other than the bed, the only other furniture in the room was a tiny washstand and a wooden chair with some clothing piled on it - his clothing, by the look of them. He sat up slowly and lowered his bare feet to the floor. The smell of the water in the pitcher lured him from the bed in spite of his pain. Even his feet ached as he limped across the floor. He groaned as he put the pitcher to his dry lips and eagerly gulped the tepid water. Then he poured some of it in the bowl and splashed it on his face and arms.

The door to the room creaked open, and he turned to see the robed figure of a young woman holding a lamp. He glanced down self-consciously at his long johns and moved quickly to grab the blanket from the bed . . . too quickly. He cursed as his knees buckled. This time it was hard-packed earth that caught him. waves of weakness and nausea washed over him as he struggled to pull himself to the edge of the bed - tugging him to the floor and holding him there.

Strong gentle hands helped him into the bed, and a calm voice urged him to lay still. He craned his neck to see her. "Are you the doc?" he managed between gasps of agony.

Her soft chuckle was as soothing as her cool hands. "No, I'm the doctor's daughter. Now try to relax. It's almost morning. Would you like something to eat?"

Catlin nodded as he tugged at the sheets. He glanced longingly at his clothing on the chair. The woman followed his gaze and smiled.

"You won't be needing those for a few days. You need a lot of rest. The bullet barely missed your heart. You were lucky that it went clear through without hitting a bone."

Catlin sank back to the pillow obediently. "I didn't mean to wake you."

Her bare feet made no sound as she moved gracefully across the room. She paused at the door, looking back at him. "You didn't wake me. I'm always up by now." She disappeared through the door and soon the rattling of pans was followed by the welcome smell of bacon and coffee. Before long she brought him a tray of food. Smiling sympathetically, she left him to devour his meal in silence.

The food gave him strength. He propped himself against the cool metal headboard, watching the desert emerge from the darkness. Somewhere in the distance a coyote bade the night good-bye, and a rabbit nibbled at some grass in the corral - probably as much for the morning moisture as nutrition. A horse snorted and stomped a fly off its fetlock. His horse? It was all so peaceful - until the memory of the previous morning returned.

It had been a dawn identical to this one when he slipped from their camp and raced the morning sun over the ridge to a secret cleft in the rocks. He had found the vein of gold shortly before dusk the previous night and quickly chipped off enough to fill a rawhide bag. In high spirits, he had stashed the gold with the idea of retrieving it in the morning. As a practical joke, he planned to line the frying pan with gold while Ramsey slept. The next morning he found the vein again and couldn't resist chipping a little more gold before digging up the sack. He had chipped only a few pieces of gold-laced quarts when he heard the first rifle shot. That was when the fun and games had stopped - and the nightmare began.

Ramsey had been so sure that the only thing they need fear in this godforsaken land

was rattlesnakes and heat. Catlin had assumed Ramsey knew what he was talking about, but why would he? Ramsey had been in the Arizona Territory less than a year before he invited Catlin to join him. At nineteen, they were two typical greenhorn kids trying to convince themselves that they could conquer the world. Two months ago, when Catlin had received the letter from Ramsey inviting him to help work a claim, Catlin had taken the first train west. The farm in Pennsylvania was green and lush, but it lacked the excitement and adventure of the west. Besides, since childhood, Ramsey and Catlin had been a team, hunting and fishing together. Both were excellent trackers and the game they brought home testified to their accuracy with a winchester. With their invincible sources pooled, how could they fail in this new endeavor?

Somewhere in his musing, he fell asleep and began dreaming. This time Ramsey crouched behind the rock with his pockets full of gold ore and watched the scene below. Now Catlin was tied down, staring up into the icy black eyes of his captor. The Apache backed away, the tip of his shiny knife stained with blood. Pain wrenched at Catlin's side. Apparently the black-eyed devil had stabbed him. And then the savage grabbed Catlin's shirt, ripping the skin from his chest. Catlin woke with a gasp, sweat oozing from every pore on his body. A gray-headed man was leaning over him, tugging at his bandages. The old man grunted. "You'll heal."

The woman entered the room again, carrying another tray of food. She was dressed in men's clothing, but they failed any attempt to hide a mature figure. She was tall and slim - probably close to his age. Her skin was smooth and darkened by the sun. Her features were not beautiful, but suggested a calm strength. A few curls escaped the bun at the nape of her neck and hung shiny as a raven's wing. Her large hazel eyes returned his study openly. She was very attractive, he decided. The doctor straightened up, regarding his daughter with mild amusement. "This is my daughter, Eleanor. We all call her Ellie." He paused, looking at Catlin inquiringly. "I'm sorry, I didn't get your name."

"Catlin. Luke Catlin."

The doctor nodded. "I'm Dr. Duncan." He offered his hand, and Catlin silently accepted it. Dr. Duncan pointed out the window with a gnarled finger. "The soldiers buried your partner out there. As soon as you're well enough, I'll show you his grave."

Catlin stared out the window and replied in a choked voice. "He was my cousin. We were best friends." He chopped the words off, again overwhelmed by anger. Dr. Duncan nodded, his faded blue eyes filled with compassion. "It's a hard country, boy. I lost my wife in a dust storm nearly five years ago." He shook his head. "You stay out here long enough, you're bound to lose someone close. Best to put it all behind you and get on with your life." He tucked some scissors into a black bag and turned wise old eyes on Catlin. "Strange thing, the Apache taking the time to torture like that. You boys do something to get them stirred up?" Catlin stared at him. "Of course not. We didn't even know they were anywhere near."

Dr. Duncan rubbed his chin absently. "Well," he finally said, "I've got to deliver a baby at a homestead, so I'll be gone a few days. I'd appreciate it if you'd look after my daughter while I'm gone."

No doubt the doctor was trying to give him something to take his mind off Ramsey. After all, what help could he possibly be in this condition? Of course, he was in no condition to do the doctor's daughter any harm, either. He favored the old man with a weak smile.

"I'll do my best."

Dr. Duncan nodded. "I figured you would." He clutched his bag and nodded at his daughter before he left the room.

Ellie lowered the tray of food to his lap and sat on the edge of the bed. Catlin smiled at her.

"I'm grateful for your help," he said, "but I'm afraid I have no way to pay you." Ellie shrugged. "Dad helps people whether they can pay or not - even Indians. He says once you get below the skin, people are all the same." She leaned forward, peering into the other room. "Anyway," she continued on a lowered voice, "it isn't like you don't have anything of value."

The fork paused halfway to his mouth and he stared at her suspiciously. He shot a quick glance at his clothes. Had she gone through his pockets?

She dug the gold ore from her pocket and held it up. "Here it is. It fell out of your pocket when I put the clothes on the chair." She offered the nugget to him. He shook his head. "You can have it, and welcome to it." He attacked the food on his plate. If she had intended to steal the gold, it would have been simple to pretend she had never seen it. Still, her obvious interest in the gold troubled him.

Ellie held the gold-laced quartz up to the light. "You must know where a lot more of this is."

"Fool's gold," Catlin answered curtly between bites as he continued with his meal.

"No, it's real gold," she corrected positively.

Catlin put his fork down and frowned at her sternly. "My friend is dead because of that gold. We had big plans, but dead people don't need money. I'd give all the gold in the world if I could bring him back." He shook his head and picked up the fork again. "I was a fool to leave my rifle in camp while I went looking for gold. When Ramsey needed me, I wasn't there."

"That's not what I heard," Ellie said softly, watching him with unveiled admiration.

"Captain Brown said you charged down that hill, outnumbered six to one. Even after you were wounded you didn't stop."

Catlin pushed the tray away and wiped his mouth. "Did he also tell you I covered behind a rock and watched for two hours before I worked up the nerve to defend Ramsey?"

Ellie shook her head, regarding him with wide eyes. "No, but I'd say that was when you were using your head. What could you do . . . besides get yourself killed?"

Catlin eased his stiff body back down on the bed. "I'm not going back after that gold. Now go on and let me get some rest."

Ellie tossed the rock into the air and they both watched the sun sparkle off the gold ore as it arched and fell back to her waiting hand. "Well, you'll change your mind. You just need a little time." She retrieved the tray from the bed and left the room.

Chapter Two

Five long days passed before Catlin could walk to Ramsey's grave - ten before he was allowed to do enough work to justify his existence. Sitting around wasn't his idea of promoting the healing process, so he finally convinced Ellie to let him do some work around the place. He started with small jobs like fixing the hinges on the barn door and worked up to cutting wood. Work was the best medicine. Inside of a month he was feeling well enough to be on his way.

"I need to get a job," he confessed to Ellie one day as he was splitting wood.

"It looks to me like you have a job," she responded with a sly grin.

He stopped, smiling wryly. "I mean a moneymaking job. Enough to buy a ticket back to Philadelphia."

She sobered immediately and frowned. "Why, are you getting homesick?"

He stared at her. Why the bitter tone? Surely she must have known he would leave as soon as he was well. She should be glad to get him out from under her feet. Of course, he was someone to talk to, and he did help around the place. He lifted the ax for another swing and her words froze the ax in the air.

"If your family is so eager to see you run home with your tail tucked between your legs, then why don't they send you the money to get home?"

He glanced at her sharply. Why was she angry? He let the ax fall, splitting a log cleanly. "I'm not running home with my tail tucked between my legs. There's simply nothing left to keep me out here." He glanced around at the parched landscape with its sparse vegetation. Everything had thorns instead of leaves. Even the wood he was splitting had to be hauled in from the mountains. The only way a

down-at-the-heal rancher had to pay the doctor for delivering his sixth child.

Ellie looked disappointed. Probably thinking about that gold being lost forever. She kicked at a chip of wood and gnawed at her lip. Finally she lifted her face and studied him with large pleading eyes. "You belong out here - not back in

Pennsylvania."

Catlin laughed without humor. "I'm a tenderfoot, and we both know it. The best thing for me to do is drift on back where I belong before I get someone else killed."

Ellie eyed him sourly. "You're determined to kick yourself around over it, aren't you? There was nothing you could do. Even a seasoned . . ."

"I know," he cut her off sharply. "But two rifles might have given the Apaches

second thoughts about attacking. If I'd had my rifle with me - if I'd even given a thought to any of it, instead of racing off to the hills like a kid still wet behind the ears." He hacked at another piece of wood.

She rolled a block of wood over and stood it on end. "Even Dad says you're unusually mature for your age. Everyone makes a mistake now and then, and nobody was born knowing everything. Anyway, you can't change what happened." She pulled the scarf from her throat and brushed sawdust off the block. Setting down on the wood, she eyed him expectantly. "So what's back in Pennsylvania that you can't live without?"

She was hanging on to that gold as though it were life itself. He rested his hands on the ax handle and squinted off into the shimmering distance. "Before Ramsey sent me that letter, I planned to save some money and buy a little piece of property I've been fond of for some time."

She dimpled. Why that fact pleased her he couldn't say, but the smile was welcome - and decidedly attractive. She rested her elbows in her lap and supported her chin with her palms. "If it's land you want, there's plenty out here. You wouldn't have to . . ."

"You call this land?" he cut in. "Everything out here stings or bites. There isn't enough water to keep a scrawny mule alive, and the sun bakes your brains out."

Her brows arched indignantly. "It isn't all like this. There are some beautiful valleys up in the mountains, and even some of the desert is beautiful. With the money from your gold mine, you could buy cattle and build a fine ranch."

Catlin picked up a block of wood and positioned it. "I don't have a mine," he answered crisply as he swung, using the sharp crack of the ax as a punctuation mark to his statement.

Ellie was silent for a moment. "If it belonged to your cousin, and you're his only partner and kin, then it's yours now."

Catlin silently split several more logs before he trusted his voice. Finally he stopped and eyed her critically. "Is that why you helped me? Is that why you're so determined to get me to stay?"

She stood, her face growing red. "Of course not, but the gold is there. I don't understand why you don't get it to buy a ranch. Wouldn't Ramsey have wanted it that way?"

Her logic was sound - as far as it went. If Ramsey had known about the gold, that was exactly how he would have wanted it. But Ramsey died without knowing - died because his partner was more concerned about gold than his friend. No, that wasn't true - not yet. And it wasn't going to be. The gold was still buried in the earth - like Ramsey. Nothing could be done to bring Ramsey back, but no one should benefit from his death, either.

Ellie sighed deeply. "I suppose it would be dangerous to return to the mine, though. Maybe after the Apache are under control . . ." Her voice trailed off as she watched him work.

He ignored the instinctive desire to deny his fear of the Apaches. That was another subject altogether. Ellie wanted that gold and the desire for gold made people say and do a lot of stupid things - like leaving camp without a gun. He had always considered himself a careful man until now. He had changed, slowly but surely. And gold had been the cause.

As it had many times in the last weeks, the face of the Indian he killed haunted him. Again he was filled with shame for his barbaric act and his hatred for another race. He, who could not understand why anyone would hate the Negroes for the color of their skin, now hated Indians. He had to get back to civilization - away from the evil lures of the west before he was completely devoured by them.

Ellie stood abruptly. "If you must find work, the BAR B ranch needs some help." As an afterthought she asked, "Can you ride?"

"I can ride, and I learned to rope some, but I've never worked cattle on a ranch." He picked up the ax and split another log.

Ellie watched him work for a moment. "The way you swing that ax, I'm sure you could handle any ranch work they have. You're smart. You can learn." With that she turned and walked briskly to the house.

Catlin stared after her. Was she actually giving up on the gold, or did she have some other plan now? As he watched her graceful figure disappear into the building, he idly wondered how well she would adapt to Philadelphia. He shook the cobwebs of desire from his head and swung the ax again. What did he have to offer anyway? A

dream?

The BAR B was a small operation that employed no more than a half a dozen men most of the year. Tom Bates was a graying Texan who hired Catlin without question when Ellie introduced him as a "good man". Bates was obviously smitten with Ellie, despite the difference in their age. Though he was a fine specimen of a man and looked a good seven years younger than his fifty, Ellie was clearly uninterested in him as a suitor. Once her part of the introductions was done, Ellie wasted no time with idle conversation. She didn't even say good-bye to Catlin before she left. She had been downright cool toward him since their conversation about the gold. It smarted some to think she considered him a coward, but he'd made his decision about the gold. No pouting woman was going to send him back after it.

The job turned out to be a good one though, and for that he was thankful. The days passed quickly into a week and then a month. He had enough saved for the ticket, but Bates was short handed, so he decided to stay on for a while.

Catlin threw another fork full of hay into one of the stalls. A boot scraped gravel behind him, and he turned to find Bates watching him.

"Hullo, Catlin. You seem to be fit."

"Never felt better," Catlin admitted.

Bates leaned on the fence. "I need someone to ride into town and pick up some supplies."

Catlin nodded. "Now?"

"Tomorrow mornin' will be good." He looked up at the sky. "Too late to start today." He continued to lean on the fence, and Catlin went back to his work.

"You don't seem to mind this work," Bates commented.

"Raised on it," Catlin answered. "I always did like working with stock. It feels good to work with my hands."

Bates snorted. "Don't let any of my boys hear you say that. They'll give you no rest. Thing of it is, that's why they're cowboys, and I own the ranch. It's a lot of work." He paused, obviously considering his words. "Not that punching cows ain't work. It's just a different kind than running a ranch. You ever thought of ranching?"

Catlin laughed without humor. "All my life, but it takes money I don't have."

Saying the words out loud made him think of the gold. He pushed the thought from his mind. A trip to town was exactly what he needed. The gold had crossed his idle mind all too often in the last few weeks - the gold and Ellie. No doubt about it. He had completely recovered from his wounds.

The next morning he started out for town with a buckboard, a list of supplies and a crude map Bates had drawn. The town was a good twenty miles away, through rough and lonely country. A winchester and several boxes of shells were his only companions. He followed the trail over the mountain to the town in one day. A sign outside of town hung lopsided by one piece of rope. The first three letters were so faded that he could barely read them. It read ". . . come to Kenston."

The first thing Catlin did when he got to town was what he was sent to do - purchase supplies. As he loaded the supplies into the wagon, he noticed a man lounging in a chair beside the saloon. Only two chair legs touched the boardwalk. The back of the chair rested on the unpainted wall behind him. The man was dusty, but his boots and clothes looked relatively new. On his boots were the largest pair of spurs Catlin had ever seen. He tossed the last bag of flour into the wagon. He was hungry, but something about the town made him feel uneasy. Maybe it was the lack of women and children on the streets. It was about suppertime. Maybe they were otherwise occupied. He removed his hat and wiped the sweat from his forehead with his shirtsleeve. Probably left a trail of mud. He took a long drink from his canteen.

"I'll buy you a drink." The voice spoke from behind him.

Catlin glanced around. The man with the spurs walked like a cat. "Thanks, but I'd best be getting back." He'd like to fill his canteen before leaving, but he was reluctant to leave the wagonload of supplies unattended.

"Ain't seen you before. Are you one of them nesters?"

"Nester?"

The man nodded. "Yer not wearin' a gun and you talk like one of those Easterners. Matter of fact, you look like a clod buster to me."

The man wore his gun low and tied down. He was smiling - if you could call it that.

The smile failed to reach his cold black eyes.

"Like I said," Catlin answered as he tucked the canteen back into the wagon, "I need to be getting back to the ranch." His rifle lay only inches from his hand.

"How 'bout a friendly game."

"Thanks, but it's getting late." From the look of the man, the only wager Catlin was willing to make was that the rifle would do him no good in this situation. He grabbed the side of the wagon and hauled his body into the seat. Unwrapping the reins from the break, he released it. The horses needed rest, but now wasn't the time. At least they'd had their fill of water from the horse tank.

"It's too late to go very far," the man insisted. "I reckon yer one of those nesters from outside of town. You tell them they ain't no use hangin' around here. This is ranchin' country. We don't want our ground plowed up so's it can blow away."

Catlin barely contained a laugh. Cattle country? And who would even consider putting a plow to the land - a cactus farmer?

"Have a nice day," he said as he slapped the reins to the horses. The wagon lurched forward. The aroma of cooking stake made his stomach growl. He was tempted to ask about a place to eat. He urged the horses to move faster. That hard wooden seat could shake sense back into a man.

As the sun faded, he searched for a good campsite along the mountain trail and finally found a cleft in the mountains where a spring seeped into a pool. He watered the horses and traveled a half-mile or so down the trail to a place where there was enough grass for the horses. The tiny box canyon was protected on three sides by steep rock walls. He unhooked the horses and hobbled them. Then he made a fire with limbs from a dead pinion tree. Opening a can of beans with his knife, he set them on a rock near the flames to heat.

A coyote howled and he stiffened. The lonely sound reminded him of the last night with Ramsey. He wiped the knife blade on his pants and slid back away from the flames. The night was unnaturally still. Only the crackling of the fire broke the silence. The faint sound of a hoof striking stone sent his hand to the rifle. This time he wasn't going to be caught without it. He carefully made his way to the other side of the wagon where the flames wouldn't hamper his night vision.

His pocket watch ticked the minutes away slowly. Could the sound be heard more than a few feet away? Something rustled in the pine needles nearby. He jerked the rifle barrel in that direction. Probably a ground squirrel - maybe a deer. If he was going to be this jumpy, he should have stayed in town. Nothing was out there - nothing but miles of wild country. Of course the night was silent, and he was the reason. In this wild country, he was the unnatural element. He lowered the winchester and stepped around the wagon, wiping sweat from his brow with his shirtsleeve - in spite of the cool evening.

He stopped abruptly, whipping the winchester level, and stared hard at a dark form barely outside the circle of firelight. Even in the dim light, the unique high moccasins of the Apache were identifiable. All warmth drained from his face, taking with it the remaining moisture in his mouth. His throat constricted - which was probably all that kept his heart from flying out his mouth. He willed his voice to show no fear. "Sit down and have some coffee."

The savage stepped into the firelight, holding a palm outward as he spoke.

"Friend," he stated as he cautiously moved toward the fire.

Catlin shot probing glances into the woods while he kept the Indian in front of the gun. "A friend doesn't walk into another man's camp unannounced."

"I apologize," the redskin spoke in a conversational tone. "Most time Indian not welcome."

Catlin stared at him. Apologize? What kind of language was that for an uncivilized savage - and why was the redskin wearing a holster around his hips? Other than the holster and forty-five, the savage was dressed almost identical to those who had attacked Ramsey.

The heathen carefully squatted beside the fire. "I am alone. Now one follows."

Catlin moved toward the fire, keeping the gun barrel pointed at the Indian. "No one follows but you?" he said in a sarcastic tone. "What do you want?"

"Food. I smell your coffee miles away."

Catlin used one hand to search the wagon for another tin cup, never taking his eyes off the savage. His fingers found the cold metal, and he tossed the cup to the Apache. "Help yourself. Pour me one while you're at it." He felt around and found another can of beans, and tossed it to the Indian as well. "Who are you?"

"Joe Lipan," the Apache answered, deftly catching the cup, and then the can with one hand. He tipped his head to indicate the wilderness. "I travel alone." His black hair hung straight and shiny from a red headband - hair as black as his eyes. But there was something in those eyes Catlin couldn't identify. Something that made him feel uneasy. Maybe it was the fact that they held no expression.

Catlin watched Lipan use the potholder to lift the coffeepot from the flames. "You travel alone, but you found your way to my camp. Do you live off the country? . . . or hapless travelers?"

The savage poured two cups of coffee and held one out to Catlin. "I live off country, but sometime I stop and see why traveler camp so close to town. Maybe you not so honest."

Having his honor questioned by an Apache was nothing short of ludicrous. Catlin laughed without humor. "What would an Apache know about honesty? I've heard your people even steal from each other."

The dark eyes studied him with frank disdain. Lipan swished the coffee around in his cup and took a sip of the hot liquid. Finally he shrugged, watching Catlin intently. "You think all Indian should love each other like white man does?"

With the war between the states barely behind them, the import of his question was obvious. "It's one thing to fight over a principle. It's different when you're just fighting to have something to do." What was he doing arguing with a savage? The Apache couldn't possibly understand the difference anyway. When the lazy savages ran low on food, they simply raided their nearest neighbor - whether that neighbor was an Apache village or a couple of harmless miners.

Lipan picked up the can of beans, and his movements were slow and deliberate as he unsheathed his knife and began opening the can. So much for his claims of living off the land. He opened the can with the expertise of a seasoned trail hand.

Not far away a puma screamed. The horses snorted and stomped their feet in alarm. Lipan lifted a brow. "You want I should sleep close to horses tonight?"

"You sleep right here where I can keep an eye on you," Catlin responded, keeping the rifle trained on the Apache. He could run the redskin out of his camp, but nothing could keep him from sneaking back and stealing the horses. There would be no sleep for him tonight. The savage probably had plans to ransack his supplies. Had the wagonload of supplies belonged to Catlin, he would have offered the Apache a few of them and sent him on his way. But the supplies belonged to Bates, and Catlin was responsible for every one of them.

Catlin squatted and picked up a stick. Balancing the rifle across his knees, he carved a rough spoon. Moving his hot can of beans away from the fire, he scooped some of the contents in his spoon. He winced as the hot beans burned the roof of his mouth, and he sucked cool air in around them.

One of the horses snorted and bucked. At that instant the puma screamed again from the bluffs overhead. Catlin lunged to his feet, letting his attention drift from the Apache for an instant. That was all the time the savage needed to draw his gun.

Catlin swung the rifle back on him, but he was already looking down the bore of the forty-five. They might both die here and now, but the Apache wasn't getting the supplies.

They stood for a few moments facing each other, neither willing to back down. Finally the Apache smiled sardonically.

"No good we shoot each other. Panther get horses, and Bates lose good man." He turned his gun in the direction of the bluff. "Up there."

Catlin stared at Lipan. "Bates? You know Bates?" He squinted at the Apache in the dim light. "And how did you know I was working for him?"

Lipan shrugged. "First we kill cat. Then we talk."

Of course. The cat had to be dealt with before it killed one of the horses. For the first time since the arrival of the Indian, Catlin consciously diverted his attention from the Apache. If the Indian had intended harm, it was obvious he could have done so before now.

Lipan disappeared into the darkness and after a moment's hesitation, Catlin moved into the shadow of the trees as well. It would be an opportune time for the Apache to steal the horses, but if something wasn't done about the cat soon, Catlin would probably lose one of the horses anyway.

Catlin took a position with his back against a large pine and waited for his eyes to adjust to the darkness. Above him the bluff made a dark outline against the starlit sky. As he watched, something moved along the bluff. He lifted his rifle and

waited. It might be the Indian. He held his breath as the dark form crept closer to the edge of the bluff - and then the puma screamed again. Catlin threw the rifle to his shoulder and took aim as the puma leaped. The night came alive with a cacophony of rifle fire and the furious scream of the cat. The puma writhed, trying to right itself, but the bullet had found its mark. The great cat lacked the strength to rise. The puma crashed through the brush and hit the ground with a resounding thud. And then the night was deadly silent.

Catlin ejected the spent shell and counted to twenty before he moved. The last thing he wanted to do was go into the brush after a wounded puma. Cocking the rifle, he advanced slowly. Apparently the cat was dead. Brush cracked beside Catlin and he whirled, ready to fire. At the last second he jerked the rifle toward the stars and stared angrily at the Apache. "You have some kind of death wish?" he snapped.

To his surprise, the Indian grinned. "I watch you. You make sure before you shoot." He sobered instantly. "Why you worry if you kill Indian?"

Catlin turned on his heel and started for the cat again, speaking gruffly over his shoulder. "I only kill in self defense or for food." Of course, that wasn't true. Hadn't he already killed one Indian for revenge? The now familiar feeling of sickness engulfed him again. Would he ever forget that moment when he had totally lost control? Should he forget?

The puma lay on its side, its life snuffed out by a single bullet. More than once Catlin had heard hunters comment on the excitement of finding their kill. Though he had killed many deer, he could honestly say that excitement wouldn't describe the emotion that gripped him when he came upon his kill. Sadness would better describe the feeling. Sure, he was happy to have the food, but wildlife was far more exciting alive. In this case it was doubly sad, because the cat was a female and obviously suckling cubs. That much was clear in the moonlight as the knelt over her.

Lipan tugged at the carcass until the head was facing east. Then he walked around the animal, approaching it from behind. There was something ritualistic about the Apache's actions, so Catlin stepped back and watched.

First the Indian removed the skin from one side, taking pains not to step over the animal or straddle it, and then he cut the meat from the bones. After that, he removed the entrails and set them aside. The Indian rolled the cat over and completed the removal of the hide. Placing the entire hide over the animal, he stepped back and bowed, saying something in a language that was unfamiliar to Catlin. Lifting the hide, the Indian finished cutting the meat off the other side, and then wrapped all the meat in the skin.

Obviously the Apaches had more respect for animals than humans did. Catlin could attest to the fact that their ferocious reputation was well earned - and yet this touching display of homage. It was out of character. As he followed the Apache back to camp, Catlin wondered if his knowledge of the Apache was all that accurate. After all, how could an entire race be corrupt? Surely they too must love their wives and bounce their children on their knees. Were the differences between the red man and the white man actually insurmountable?

The memory of the way Ramsey had been tortured chased that idea away. What had Ramsey done? He had been minding his own business, certainly posing no threat to the Indians. Yet the Apache had attacked mercilessly. No, he had to go along with the idea that Indians in general were incompatible with the civilized world. If they wanted to be peaceful and settle down, they should have ever chance. But those who caused trouble should be hung or thrown in jail - the same as any white man.