

THE THIRD TWIN

KEN FOLLETT



BALLANTINE BOOKS

“[A] PAGE-TURNER...

Ken Follett is one of the smoothest suspense writers around, and *The Third Twin* will only enhance his reputation.”

—*Chicago Tribune*

“Follett keeps the tension high.”

—*The Oregonian*

“Follett infuses the book with an irresistible energy.”

—*People*

“His scenes whip along. And his ending is absolutely smashing.”

—*The Virginian-Pilot*

“Follett really knows how to tell a story.”

—*The Atlanta Journal & Constitution*

“In *The Third Twin* bestselling author Ken Follett has woven the contemporary and controversial issues of genetic engineering and test-tube babies into a snap, crackle, and pop story....Well-defined characters charge through a week full of crime, science, sex, and sellouts....Tightly written.”

—*The State* (Columbia, SC)

By Ken Follett:

A DANGEROUS FORTUNE

NIGHT OVER WATER

THE PILLARS OF THE EARTH

LIE DOWN WITH LIONS

ON WINGS OF EAGLES

THE MAN FROM ST. PETERSBURG

THE KEY TO REBECCA

TRIPLE

EYE OF THE NEEDLE

A PLACE CALLED FREEDOM*

THE THIRD TWIN*

THE HAMMER OF EDEN*

*Published by Fawcett Books

THE THIRD TWIN

KEN FOLLETT

FAWCETT BOOKS • NEW YORK

A Fawcett Book

Published by The Random House Publishing Group

Copyright © 1996 by Ken Follett

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Published in the United States by Fawcett Books, an imprint of The Random House Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., New York, and simultaneous in Canada by Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, organizations, and incidents are either products of the author's imagination or used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, organizations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Fawcett is a registered trademark and the Fawcett colophon is a trademark of Random House, Inc.

www.ballantinebooks.com

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 97-90416

eISBN: 978-0-307-77510-8

This edition published by arrangement with Crown Publishers, Inc.

First Ballantine Books International Edition: June 1997

First Ballantine Books Domestic Edition: August 1997

v3.1_r2

To my stepchildren:
Jann Turner, Kim Turner, and Adam Broer
with love

CONTENTS

[*Cover*](#)

[*Other Books by This Author*](#)

[*Title Page*](#)

[*Copyright*](#)

[*Dedication*](#)

SUNDAY

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

MONDAY

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

TUESDAY

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

WEDNESDAY

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

THURSDAY

[Chapter 30](#)
[Chapter 31](#)
[Chapter 32](#)
[Chapter 33](#)
[Chapter 34](#)
[Chapter 35](#)
[Chapter 36](#)
[Chapter 37](#)

FRIDAY

[Chapter 38](#)
[Chapter 39](#)
[Chapter 40](#)
[Chapter 41](#)
[Chapter 42](#)

SATURDAY

[Chapter 43](#)
[Chapter 44](#)
[Chapter 45](#)
[Chapter 46](#)
[Chapter 47](#)
[Chapter 48](#)
[Chapter 49](#)
[Chapter 50](#)
[Chapter 51](#)

SUNDAY

[Chapter 52](#)
[Chapter 53](#)
[Chapter 54](#)
[Chapter 55](#)
[Chapter 56](#)
[Chapter 57](#)
[Chapter 58](#)
[Chapter 59](#)
[Chapter 60](#)
[Chapter 61](#)

MONDAY

Chapter 62

NEXT JUNE

Chapter 63

Acknowledgments

SUNDAY

A HEAT WAVE LAY OVER BALTIMORE LIKE A SHROUD. The leafy suburbs were cooled by a hundred thousand lawn sprinklers, but the affluent inhabitants stayed inside with the air-conditioning on full blast. On North Avenue, listless hookers hugged the shade and sweated under their hairpieces, and the kids on the street corners dealt dope out of the pockets of baggy shorts. It was late September, but fall seemed a long way off.

A rusty white Datsun, the broken lens of one headlight fixed in place with an X of electrician's tape, cruised through a white working-class neighborhood north of downtown. The car had no air-conditioning, and the driver had rolled down all the windows. He was a handsome man of twenty-two wearing cutoff jeans, a clean white T-shirt, and a red baseball cap with the word SECURITY in white letters on the front. The plastic upholstery beneath his thighs was slippery with his perspiration, but he did not let it bother him. He was in a cheerful mood. The car radio was tuned to 92Q—"Twenty hits in a row!" On the passenger seat was an open binder. He glanced at it occasionally, memorizing a typed page of technical terms for a test tomorrow. Learning was easy for him, and he would know the material after a few minutes of study.

At a stoplight, a blond woman in a convertible Porsche pulled alongside him. He grinned at her and said: "Nice car!" She looked away without speaking, but he thought he saw the hint of a smile at the corners of her mouth. Behind her big sunglasses she was probably twice his age: most women in Porsches were. "Race you to the next stoplight," he said. She laughed at that, a flirtatious musical laugh, then she put the stick shift into first with a narrow, elegant hand and tore away from the light like a rocket.

He shrugged. He was only practicing.

He drove by the wooded campus of Jones Falls University, an Ivy League college much swankier than the one he attended. As he passed the imposing gateway, a group of eight or ten women jogged by in running clothes: tight shorts, Nikes, sweaty T-shirts, and halter tops. They were a field hockey team in training, he guessed, and the fit-looking one in front was their captain, getting them in shape for the season.

They turned into the campus, and suddenly he was overwhelmed, swamped by a fantasy so powerful and thrilling that he could hardly see to drive. He imagined them in the locker room—the plump one soaping herself in the shower, the redhead toweling her long copper-colored hair, the black girl stepping into a pair of white lace panties, the dykey team captain walking around naked, showing off her muscles—when something happened to terrify them. Suddenly they were all in a panic, wide-eyed with dread, screaming and crying, on the edge of hysteria. They ran this way and that, crashing into one another. The fat girl fell over and lay there weeping helplessly while the others trod on her, unheeding, as they tried desperately to hide or find the door, or run away from whatever was scaring them.

He pulled over to the side of the road and put the car in neutral. He was breathing hard and he could feel his heartbeat hammering. This was the best one he had ever had. But a little piece of the fantasy was missing. What were they frightened of? He hunted about in his fertile imagination for the answer and gasped with desire when it came to him: a fire. The

place was ablaze, and they were terrified by the flames. They coughed and choked on the smoke as they milled about, half-naked and frenzied. "My God," he whispered, staring straight ahead, seeing the scene like a movie projected onto the inside of the Datsun windshield.

After a while he calmed down. His desire was still strong, but the fantasy was no longer enough: it was like the thought of a beer when he had a raging thirst. He lifted the hem of his T-shirt and wiped the sweat from his face. He knew he should try to forget the fantasy and drive on; but it was too wonderful. It would be terribly dangerous—he would go to jail for years if he were caught—but danger had never stopped him doing anything in his life. He struggled to resist temptation, though only for a second. "I want it," he murmured, and he turned the car around and drove through the grand gateway into the campus.

He had been here before. The university spread across a hundred acres of lawns and gardens and woodland. Its buildings were made mostly of a uniform red brick, with a few modern concrete-and-glass structures, all connected by a tangle of narrow roads lined with parking meters.

The hockey team had disappeared, but he found the gymnasium easily: it was a long building next to a running track, and there was a big statue of a discus thrower outside. He parked at a meter but did not put a coin in: he never put money in parking meters. The muscular captain of the hockey team was standing on the steps of the gym, talking to a guy in a ripped sweatshirt. He ran up the steps, smiling at the captain as he passed her, and pushed through the door into the building.

The lobby was busy with young men and women in shorts and headbands coming and going, rackets in their hands and sports bags slung over their shoulders. No doubt most of the college teams trained on Sundays. There was a security guard behind a desk in the middle of the lobby, checking people's student cards; but at that moment a big group of runners came together and walked past the guard, some waving their cards and others forgetting, and the guard just shrugged his shoulders and went on reading *The Dead Zone*.

The stranger turned and looked at a display of silver cups in a glass case, trophies won by Jones Falls athletes. A moment later a soccer team came in, ten men and a chunky woman in studded boots, and he moved quickly to fall in with them. He crossed the lobby as part of their group and followed them down a broad staircase to the basement. They were talking about their game, laughing at a lucky goal and indignant about an outrageous foul, and they did not notice him.

His gait was casual but his eyes were watchful. At the foot of the stairs was a small lobby with a Coke machine and a pay phone under an acoustic hood. The men's locker room was off the lobby. The woman from the soccer team went down a long corridor, heading presumably for the women's locker room, which had probably been added as an afterthought by an architect who imagined there would never be many girls at Jones Falls, back in the days when "coeducational" was a sexy word.

The stranger picked up the pay phone and pretended to search for a quarter. The men filed into their locker room. He watched the woman open a door and disappear. That must be the women's locker room. They were all in there, he thought excitedly, undressing and showering and rubbing themselves with towels. Being so close to them made him feel hot. He wiped his brow with the back of his hand. All he had to do to complete the fantasy was get them a

scared half to death.

He made himself calm. He was not going to spoil it by haste. It needed a few minutes planning.

When they had all disappeared, he padded along the corridor after the woman.

Three doors led off it, one on either side and one at the end. The door on the right was the one the woman had taken. He checked the end door and found that it led to a big, dusky room full of bulky machinery: boilers and filters, he guessed, for the swimming pool. He stepped inside and closed the door behind him. There was a low, even electrical hum. He pictured a girl delirious with fright, dressed only in her underwear—he imagined a bra and panties with a pattern of flowers—lying on the floor, staring up at him with terrified eyes as he unbuckled his belt. He savored the vision for a moment, smiling to himself. She was just a few yards away. Right now she might be contemplating the evening ahead: maybe she had a boyfriend and was thinking of letting him go all the way tonight; or she could be a freshman, lonely and a little shy, with nothing to do on Sunday night but watch *Columbo*; or perhaps she had a paper to deliver tomorrow and was planning to stay up all night finishing it. *None of the above, baby. It's nightmare time.*

He had done this kind of thing before, though never on such a scale. He had always loved to frighten girls, ever since he could remember. In high school there was nothing he liked better than to get a girl on her own, in a corner somewhere, and threaten her until she cried and begged for mercy. That was why he kept having to move from one school to another. He dated girls sometimes, just to be like the other guys and have someone to walk into the bar on his arm. If they seemed to expect it he would bone them, but it always seemed kind of pointless.

Everyone had a kink, he figured: some men liked to put on women's clothing, others had to have a girl dressed in leather walk all over them with spike heels. One guy he knew thought the sexiest part of a woman was her feet: he got a hard-on standing in the women's footwear section of a department store, watching them put on shoes and take them off again.

His kink was fear. What turned him on was a woman trembling with fright. Without fear there was no excitement.

Looking around methodically, he took note of a ladder fixed to the wall, leading up to an iron hatch bolted on the inside. He went quickly up the ladder, slid back the bolts, and pushed up the hatch. He found himself staring at the tires of a Chrysler New Yorker in a parking lot. Orienting himself, he figured he was at the back of the building. He closed the hatch and climbed down.

He left the pool machine room. As he walked along the corridor, a woman coming the other way gave him a hostile stare. He suffered a moment of anxiety: she might ask him what the hell he was doing hanging around the women's locker room. An altercation like that was not in his scenario. At this point it could spoil his plan. But her eyes lifted to his cap and took in the word SECURITY, and she looked away and turned into the locker room.

He grinned. He had bought the cap for \$8.99 in a souvenir store. But people were used to seeing guards in jeans at rock concerts, detectives who looked like criminals until they flashed their badges, airport police in sweaters; it was too much trouble to question the credentials of every asshole who called himself a security guard.

He tried the door opposite the women's locker room. It opened into a small storeroom. He

hit the light switch and closed the door behind him.

Obsolete gym equipment was stacked around him on racks: big black medicine balls, worn rubber mats, Indian clubs, moldy boxing gloves, and splintered wooden folding chairs. There was a vaulting horse with burst upholstery and a broken leg. The room smelled musty. A large silver pipe ran along the ceiling, and he guessed it provided ventilation to the locker room across the corridor.

He reached up and tried the bolts that attached the pipe to what looked like a fan. He could not turn them with his fingers, but he had a wrench in the trunk of the Datsun. If he could detach the pipe, the fan would draw air from the storeroom instead of from the outside of the building.

He would make his fire just below the fan. He would get a can of gasoline and pour some into an empty Perrier bottle and bring it down here along with some matches and newspaper for kindling and that wrench.

The fire would grow quickly and produce huge billows of smoke. He would tie a wet rag over his nose and mouth and wait until the storeroom was full of it. Then he would detach the ventilator pipe. The fumes would be drawn into the duct and pumped out into the women's locker room. At first no one would notice. Then one or two would sniff the air and say: "Is someone smoking?" He would open the storeroom door and let the corridor fill with smoke. When the girls realized something was seriously wrong, they would open the locker room door and think the whole building was on fire, and they would all panic.

Then he would walk into the locker room. There would be a sea of brassieres and stockings, bare breasts and asses and pubic hair. Some would be running out of the shower naked and wet, fumbling for towels; others would be trying to pull on clothes; most would be running around searching for the door, half-blinded by smoke. There would be screams and sobs and shouts of fear. He would continue to pretend to be a security guard and yell orders at them: "Don't stop to dress! This is an emergency! Get out! The whole building is blazing! Run, run!" He would smack their bare asses, shove them around, snatch their clothes away and feel them up. They would know something was badly wrong, but most of them would be too crazy to figure it out. If the muscular hockey captain was still there she might have the presence of mind to challenge him, but he would just punch her out.

Walking around, he would select his main victim. She would be a pretty girl with a vulnerable look. He would take her arm, saying: "This way, please, I'm with security." He would lead her into the corridor then turn the wrong way, to the pool machine room. There, just when she thought she was on the way to safety, he would smack her face and punch her in the gut and throw her on the dirty concrete floor. He would watch her roll and turn and sit upright, gasping and sobbing and looking at him with terror in her eyes.

Then he would smile and unbuckle his belt.

MRS. FERRAMI SAID: "I WANT TO GO HOME."

Her daughter Jeannie said: "Don't you worry, Mom, we're going to get you out of here sooner than you think."

Jeannie's younger sister, Patty, shot Jeannie a look that said "How the hell do you think we're going to do that?"

The Bella Vista Sunset Home was all Mom's health insurance would pay for, and it was tawdry. The room contained two high hospital beds, two closets, a couch, and a TV. The walls were painted mushroom brown and the flooring was a plastic tile, cream streaked with orange. The window had bars but no curtains, and it looked out onto a gas station. There was a washbasin in the corner and a toilet down the hall.

"I want to go home," Mom repeated.

Patty said: "But Mom, you keep forgetting things, you can't take care of yourself anymore."

"Of course I can, don't you *dare* speak to me that way."

Jeannie bit her lip. Looking at the wreck that used to be her mother, she wanted to cry. Mom had strong features: black eyebrows, dark eyes, a straight nose, a wide mouth, and a strong chin. The same pattern was repeated in both Jeannie and Patty, although Mom was small and they were both tall like Daddy. All three of them were as strong-minded as their looks suggested: "formidable" was the word usually used to describe the Ferrami women. But Mom would never be formidable again. She had Alzheimer's.

She was not yet sixty. Jeannie, who was twenty-nine, and Patty, twenty-six, had hoped she could take care of herself for a few more years, but that hope had been shattered this morning at five A.M., when a Washington cop had called to say he had found Mom walking along 18th Street in a grubby nightgown, crying and saying she could not remember where she lived.

Jeannie had got in her car and driven to Washington, an hour from Baltimore on a quiet Sunday morning. She had picked Mom up from the precinct house, taken her home, gotten her washed and dressed, then called Patty. Together the two sisters had made arrangements for Mom to check into Bella Vista. It was in the town of Columbia, between Washington and Baltimore. Their aunt Rosa had spent her declining years here. Aunt Rosa had had the same insurance policy as Mom.

"I don't like this place," Mom said.

Jeannie said: "We don't either, but right now it's all we can afford." She intended to sound matter-of-fact and reasonable, but it came out harsh.

Patty shot her a reproving look and said: "Come on, Mom, we've lived in worse places."

It was true. After their father went to jail the second time, the two girls and Mom had lived in one room with a hotplate on the dresser and a water tap in the corridor. Those were the welfare years. But Mom had been a lioness in adversity. As soon as both Jeannie and Patty were in school she found a trustworthy older woman to mind the girls when they came home; she got a job—she had been a hairdresser, and she was still good, if old-fashioned—and she

moved them to a small apartment with two bedrooms in Adams-Morgan, which was then respectable working-class neighborhood.

She would fix French toast for breakfast and send Jeannie and Patty to school in clean dresses, then do her hair and make up her face—you had to look smart, working in a salon—and always leave a spotless kitchen with a plate of cookies on the table for the girls when they came back. On Sundays the three of them cleaned the apartment and did the laundry together. Mom had always been so capable, so reliable, so tireless, it was heartbreaking to see the forgetful, complaining woman on the bed.

Now she frowned, as if puzzled, and said: “Jeannie, why have you got a ring in your nose?”

Jeannie touched the delicate silver band and gave a wan smile. “Mom, I had my nostrils pierced when I was a kid. Don’t you remember how mad you got about it? I thought you were going to throw me out on the street.”

“I forget things,” Mom said.

“I sure remember,” said Patty. “I thought it was the greatest thing ever. But I was eleven and you were fourteen, and to me everything you did was bold and stylish and clever.”

“Maybe it was,” Jeannie said with mock vanity.

Patty giggled. “The orange jacket sure wasn’t.”

“Oh, God, that jacket. Mom finally burned it after I slept in it in an abandoned building and got fleas.”

“I remember that,” Mom said. “Fleas! A child of mine!” She was still indignant about it fifteen years later.

Suddenly the mood was lighter. Reminiscing had reminded them of how close they were. It was a good moment to leave. “I’d better go,” Jeannie said, standing up.

“Me too,” said Patty. “I have to make dinner.”

However, neither woman moved toward the door. Jeannie felt she was abandoning her mother, deserting her in a time of need. Nobody here loved her. She should have family to look after her. Jeannie and Patty should stay with her, and cook for her, and iron her nightgowns, and turn the TV to her favorite show.

Mom said: “When will I see you?”

Jeannie hesitated. She wanted to say, “Tomorrow, I’ll bring you your breakfast and stay with you all day.” But it was impossible: she had a busy week at work. Guilt flooded her. *How can I be so cruel?*

Patty rescued her, saying: “I’ll come tomorrow, and bring the kids to see you, you’ll like that.”

Mom was not going to let Jeannie get off that easily. “Will you come too, Jeannie?”

Jeannie could hardly speak. “As soon as I can.” Choking with grief, she leaned over the bed and kissed her mother. “I love you, Mom. Try to remember that.”

The moment they were outside the door, Patty burst into tears.

Jeannie felt like crying too, but she was the older sister, and she had long ago gotten into the habit of controlling her own emotions while she took care of Patty. She put an arm around her sister’s shoulders as they walked along the antiseptic corridor. Patty was not weak, but she was more accepting than Jeannie, who was combative and willful. Mom always criticized Jeannie and said she should be more like Patty.

“I wish I could have her at home with me, but I can’t,” Patty said woefully.

Jeannie agreed. Patty was married to a carpenter called Zip. They lived in a small roomy house with two bedrooms. The second bedroom was shared by her three boys. Davey was sixteen, Mel four, and Tom two. There was nowhere to put a grandma.

Jeannie was single. As an assistant professor at Jones Falls University she earned thirteen thousand dollars a year—a lot less than Patty's husband, she guessed—and she had just taken out her first mortgage and bought a two-room apartment and furnished it on credit. One room was a living room with a kitchen nook, the other a bedroom with a closet and a tiny bathroom. If she gave Mom her bed she would have to sleep on the couch every night; and there was no one at home during the day to keep an eye on a woman with Alzheimer's. "I can't take her either," she said.

Patty showed anger through her tears. "So why did you tell her we would get her out of there? We can't!"

They stepped outside into the torrid heat. Jeannie said: "Tomorrow I'll go to the bank and get a loan. We'll put her in a better place and I'll add to the insurance money."

"But how will you ever pay it back?" said Patty practically.

"I'll get promoted to associate professor, then full professor, and I'll be commissioned to write a textbook and get hired as a consultant by three international conglomerates."

Patty smiled through her tears. "I believe you, but will the bank?"

Patty had always believed in Jeannie. Patty herself had never been ambitious. She had been below average at school and had married at nineteen and settled down to raise children without any apparent regrets. Jeannie was the opposite. Top of the class and captain of all sports teams, she had been a tennis champion and had put herself through college on sports scholarships. Whatever she said she was going to do, Patty never doubted her.

But Patty was right, the bank would not make another loan so soon after financing the purchase of her apartment. And she had only just started as assistant professor: it would be three years before she was considered for promotion. As they reached the parking lot Jeannie said desperately: "Okay, I'll sell my car."

She loved her car. It was a twenty-year-old Mercedes 230C, a red two-door sedan with black leather seats. She had bought it eight years ago, with her prize money for winning the May-fair Lites College Tennis Challenge, five thousand dollars. That was before it became chic to own an old Mercedes. "It's probably worth double what I paid for it," she said.

"But you'd have to buy another car," Patty said, still remorselessly realistic.

"You're right." Jeannie sighed. "Well, I can do some private tutoring. It's against JFU rules, but I can probably get forty dollars an hour teaching remedial statistics one-on-one with rich students who have flunked the exam at other universities. I could pick up three hundred dollars a week, maybe; tax-free if I don't declare it." She looked her sister in the eye. "Can you spare anything?"

Patty looked away. "I don't know."

"Zip makes more than I do."

"He'll kill me for saying this, but we might be able to chip in seventy-five or eighty a week," Patty said at last. "I'll get him to put in for a raise. He's kind of timid about asking, but I know he deserves it, and his boss likes him."

Jeannie began to feel more cheerful, although the prospect of spending her Sunday teaching backward undergraduates was dismal. "For an extra four hundred a week we might

get Mom a room to herself with her own bathroom.”

“Then she could have more of her things about her, ornaments and maybe some furniture from the apartment.”

“Let’s ask around, see if anyone knows of a nice place.”

“Okay.” Patty was thoughtful. “Mom’s illness is inherited, isn’t it? I saw something on TV.”

Jeannie nodded. “There’s a gene defect, AD3, that’s linked to early-onset Alzheimer’s.” It was located at chromosome 14q24.3, Jeannie recalled, but that would not mean anything to Patty.

“Does that mean you and I will end up like Mom?”

“It means there’s a good chance we will.”

They were both silent for a moment. The thought of losing your mind was almost too grim to talk about.

“I’m glad I had my children young,” Patty said. “They’ll be old enough to look after themselves by the time it happens to me.”

Jeannie noted the hint of reproof. Like Mom, Patty thought there was something wrong with being twenty-nine and childless. Jeannie said: “The fact that they’ve found the gene is also hopeful. It means that by the time we’re Mom’s age, they may be able to inject us with an altered version of our own DNA that doesn’t have the fatal gene.”

“They mentioned that on TV. Recombinant DNA technology, right?”

Jeannie grinned at her sister. “Right.”

“See, I’m not so dumb.”

“I never thought you were dumb.”

Patty said thoughtfully: “The thing is, our DNA makes us what we are, so if you change my DNA, does that make me a different person?”

“It’s not just your DNA that makes you what you are. It’s your upbringing too. That’s what my work is all about.”

“How’s the new job going?”

“It’s exciting. This is my big chance, Patty. A lot of people read the article I wrote about criminality and whether it’s in our genes.” The article, published last year while she was still at the University of Minnesota, had borne the name of her supervising professor above her own, but she had done the work.

“I could never figure out whether you said criminality is inherited or not.”

“I identified four inherited traits that *lead* to criminal behavior: impulsiveness, fearlessness, aggression, and hyperactivity. But my big theory is that certain ways of raising children can counteract those traits and turn potential criminals into good citizens.”

“How could you ever prove a thing like that?”

“By studying identical twins raised apart. Identical twins have the same DNA. And when they’re adopted at birth, or split up for some other reason, they get raised differently. So I look for pairs of twins where one is a criminal and the other is normal. Then I study how they were raised and what their parents did differently.”

“Your work is really important,” Patty said.

“I think so.”

“We *have* to find out why so many Americans nowadays turn bad.”

Jeannie nodded. That was it, in a nutshell.

Patty turned to her own car, a big old Ford station wagon, the back full of brightly colored kiddie junk: a tricycle, a folded-down stroller, an assortment of rackets and balls, and a broken toy truck with a broken wheel.

Jeannie said: "Give the boys a big kiss from me, okay?"

"Thanks. I'll call you tomorrow after I see Mom." Jeannie got her keys out, hesitated, then went over to Patty and hugged her. "I love you, sis," she said. "Love you, too."

Jeannie got in her car and drove away.

She felt jangled and restless, full of unresolved feelings about Mom and Patty and the father who was not there. She got on I-70 and drove too fast, weaving in and out of the traffic. She wondered what to do with the rest of the day, then remembered that she was supposed to play tennis at six then go for beer and pizza with a group of graduate students and young faculty from the psychology department at Jones Falls. Her first thought was to cancel the entire evening. But she did not want to sit at home brooding. She would play tennis, she decided: the vigorous exercise would make her feel better. Afterward she would go to Andy's Bar for an hour or so, then have an early night.

But it did not work out that way.

Her tennis opponent was Jack Budgen, the university's head librarian. He had once played at Wimbledon and, though he was now bald and fifty, he was still fit and all the old craft was there. Jeannie had never been to Wimbledon. The height of her career had been a place on the U.S. Olympic tennis team while she was an undergraduate. But she was stronger and faster than Jack.

They played on one of the red clay tennis courts on the Jones Falls campus. They were evenly matched, and the game attracted a small crowd of spectators. There was no dress code, but out of habit Jeannie always played in crisp white shorts and a white polo shirt. She had long dark hair, not silky and straight like Patty's but curly and unmanageable, so she tucked it up inside a peaked cap.

Jeannie's serve was dynamite and her two-handed cross-court backhand smash was a killer. There was not much Jack could do about the serve, but after the first few games he made sure she did not get many chances to use the backhand smash. He played a sly game, conserving his energy, letting Jeannie make mistakes. She played too aggressively, serving double faults and running to the net too early. On a normal day, she reckoned, she could beat him; but today her concentration was shot, and she could not second-guess his game. They won a set each, then the third went to 5-4 in his favor and she found herself serving to start in the match.

The game went to two deuces, then Jack won a point and the advantage was to him. Jeannie served into the net, and there was an audible gasp from the little crowd. Instead of a normal, slower second service, she threw caution to the winds and served again as if it were a first service. Jack just got his racket to the ball and returned it to her backhand. She smashed it and ran to the net. But Jack was not as off balance as he had pretended to be, and he returned a perfect lob that sailed over her head and landed on the back line to win the match.

Jeannie stood looking at the ball, hands on her hips, furious with herself. Although she had not played seriously for years, she retained the unyielding competitiveness that made it hard

to lose. Then she calmed her feelings and put a smile on her face. She turned around.
"Beautiful shot!" she called. She walked to the net and shook his hand, and there was
ragged round of applause from the spectators.

A young man approached her. "Hey, that was a great game!" he said with a broad smile.

Jeannie took him in at a glance. He was a hunk: tall and athletic, with curly fair hair cut
short and nice blue eyes, and he was coming on to her for all he was worth.

She was not in the mood. "Thanks," she said curtly.

He smiled again, a confident, relaxed smile that said most girls were happy when he talked
to them, regardless of whether he was making any sense. "You know, I play a little tennis
myself, and I was thinking—"

"If you only play a *little* tennis, you're probably not in my league," she said, and she
brushed past him.

Behind her, she heard him say in a good-humored tone: "Should I assume that a romantic
dinner followed by a night of passion is out of the question, then?"

She could not help smiling, if only at his persistence, and she had been ruder than
necessary. She turned her head and spoke over her shoulder without stopping. "Yes, but
thanks for the offer," she said.

She left the court and headed for the locker room. She wondered what Mom was doing
now. She must have had dinner by this time: it was seven-thirty, and they always fed people
early in institutions. She was probably watching TV in the lounge. Maybe she would find a
friend, a woman of her own age who would tolerate her forgetfulness and take an interest in
her photographs of her grandchildren. Mom had once had a lot of friends—the other women
at the salon, some of her customers, neighbors, people she had known for twenty-five years—but
it was hard for them to keep up the friendship when Mom kept forgetting who the hell
they were.

As she was passing the hockey field she ran into Lisa Hoxton. Lisa was the first real friend
she had made since arriving at Jones Falls a month ago. She was a technician in the
psychology laboratory. She had a science degree but did not want to be an academic. Like
Jeannie, she came from a poor background, and she was a little intimidated by the Ivy
League hauteur of Jones Falls. They had taken to one another instantly.

"A kid just tried to pick me up," Jeannie said with a smile.

"What was he like?"

"He looked like Brad Pitt, but taller."

"Did you tell him you had a friend more his age?" Lisa said. She was twenty-four.

"No." Jeannie glanced over her shoulder, but the man was nowhere in sight. "Keep
walking, in case he follows me."

"How could that be bad?"

"Come on."

"Jeannie, it's the creepy ones you run away from."

"Knock it off!"

"You might have given him my phone number."

"I should have handed him a slip of paper with your bra size on it, that would have done
the trick." Lisa had a big bust.

Lisa stopped walking. For a moment Jeannie thought she had gone too far and offended

Lisa. She began to frame an apology. Then Lisa said: "What a great idea! 'I'm a 36D, for more information call this number.' It's so subtle, too."

"I'm just envious, I always wanted hooters," Jeannie said, and they both giggled. "It's true though, I prayed for tits. I was practically the last girl in my class to get my period, it was so embarrassing."

"You actually said, 'Dear God, please make my tits grow,' kneeling beside your bed?"

"Actually I prayed to the Virgin Mary. I figured it was a girl thing. And I didn't say tits, of course."

"What did you say, breasts?"

"No, I figured you couldn't say breasts to the Holy Mother."

"So what did you call them?"

"Bristols."

Lisa burst out laughing.

"I don't know where I got that word from, I must have overheard some men talking. It seemed like a polite euphemism to me. I never told anyone that before in my life."

Lisa looked back. "Well, I don't see any good-looking guys following us. I guess we should leave off Brad Pitt."

"It's a good thing. He's just my type: handsome, sexy, overconfident, and totally untrustworthy."

"How do you know he's untrustworthy? You only met him for twenty seconds."

"All men are untrustworthy."

"You're probably right. Are you coming to Andy's tonight?"

"Yeah, just for an hour or so. I have to shower first." Her shirt was wet through with perspiration.

"Me too." Lisa was in shorts and running shoes. "I've been training with the hockey team. Why only for an hour?"

"I've had a heavy day." The game had distracted Jeannie, but now she winced as the agony of the past came flooding back. "I had to put my mom into a home."

"Oh, Jeannie, I'm sorry."

Jeannie told her the story as they entered the gymnasium building and went down the stairs to the basement. In the locker room Jeannie caught sight of their reflection in the mirror. They were so different in appearance that they almost looked like a comedy act. Lisa was a little below average height, and Jeannie was almost six feet. Lisa was blond and curvy, whereas Jeannie was dark and muscular. Lisa had a pretty face, with a scatter of freckles across a pert little nose and a mouth like a bow. Most people described Jeannie as striking, and men sometimes told her she was beautiful, but nobody ever called her pretty.

As they climbed out of their sweaty sports clothes Lisa said: "What about your father? You didn't mention him."

Jeannie sighed. It was the question she had learned to dread, even as a little girl; but it invariably came, sooner or later. For many years she had lied, saying Daddy was dead or had disappeared or remarried and gone to work in Saudi Arabia. Lately, however, she had been telling the truth. "My father's in jail," she said.

"Oh, my God. I shouldn't have asked."

"It's okay. He's been in jail most of my life. He's a burglar. This is his third term."

"How long is his sentence?"

"I don't remember. It doesn't matter. He'll be no use when he comes out. He's never looked after us and he's not about to begin."

"Did he never have a regular job?"

"Only when he wanted to case a joint. He would work as janitor, doorman, security guard for a week or two before robbing the place."

Lisa looked at her shrewdly. "Is that why you're so interested in the genetics of criminality?"

"Maybe."

"Probably not." Lisa made a tossing-aside gesture. "I hate amateur psychoanalysis anyway."

They went to the showers. Jeannie took longer, washing her hair. She was grateful for Lisa's friendship. Lisa had been at Jones Falls just over a year, and she had shown Jeannie around when she had arrived here at the beginning of the semester. Jeannie liked working with Lisa in the lab because she was completely reliable; and she liked hanging out with her after work because she felt she could say whatever came into her mind without fear of shocking her.

Jeannie was working conditioner into her hair when she heard strange noises. She stopped and listened. It sounded like squeals of fright. A chill of anxiety passed through her, making her shiver. Suddenly she felt very vulnerable: naked, wet, underground. She hesitated, then quickly rinsed her hair before stepping out of the shower to see what was going on.

She smelled burning as soon as she got out from under the water. She could not see a fire, but there were thick clouds of black and gray smoke close to the ceiling. It seemed to be coming through the ventilators.

She felt afraid. She had never been in a fire.

The more coolheaded women were snatching up their bags and heading for the door. Others were getting hysterical, shouting at one another in frightened voices and running here and there pointlessly. Some asshole of a security man, with a spotted handkerchief tied over his nose and mouth, was making them more scared by walking up and down shoving people and yelling orders.

Jeannie knew she should not stay to get dressed, but she could not bring herself to walk out of the building naked. There was fear running through her veins like ice water, but she made herself calm. She found her locker. Lisa was nowhere to be seen. She grabbed her clothes, stepped into her jeans, and pulled her T-shirt over her head.

It took only a few seconds, but in that time the room emptied of people and filled with fumes. She could no longer see the doorway, and she started to cough. The thought of not being able to breathe scared her. I know where the door is, and I just have to keep calm, she told herself. Her keys and money were in her jeans pockets. She picked up her tennis racket. Holding her breath, she walked quickly through the lockers to the exit.

The corridor was thick with smoke, and her eyes began to water so that she was almost blind. Now she wished to heaven that she had gone naked and gained a few precious seconds. Her jeans did not help her see or breathe in this fog of fumes. And it did not matter being naked if you were dead.

She kept one shaky hand on the wall to give her a sense of direction as she rushed along the passage, still holding her breath. She thought she might bump into other women, but the

all seemed to have got out ahead of her. When there was no more wall, she knew she was in the small lobby, although she could not see anything but clouds of smoke. The stairs had to be straight ahead. She crossed the lobby and crashed into the Coke machine. Was there a staircase to the left now or the right? The left, she thought. She moved that way, then came up against the door to the men's locker room and realized she had made the wrong choice.

She could not hold her breath any longer. With a groan she sucked in air. It was mostly smoke, and it made her cough convulsively. She staggered back along the wall, racked with coughing, her nostrils burning, eyes streaming, barely able to see her own hands in front of her. With all her being she longed for one breath of the air she had been taking for granted for twenty-nine years. She followed the wall to the Coke machine and stepped around it. She knew she had found the staircase when she tripped over the bottom step. She dropped her tennis racket and it slid out of sight. It was a special one—she had won the Mayfair Lites Challenge with it—but she left it behind and scrambled up the stairs on hands and knees.

The smoke thinned suddenly when she reached the spacious ground-floor lobby. She could see the building doors, which were open. A security guard stood just outside, beckoning her and yelling: "Come on!" Coughing and choking, she staggered across the lobby and out into the blessed fresh air.

She stood on the steps for two or three minutes, bent double, gulping air and coughing the smoke out of her lungs. As her breathing at last began to return to normal, she heard the whoop of an emergency vehicle in the distance. She looked around for Lisa but could not see her.

Surely she could not be inside? Still feeling shaky, Jeannie moved through the crowd scanning the faces. Now that they were out of danger, there was a good deal of nervous laughter. Most of the students were more or less undressed, so there was a curiously intimate atmosphere. Those who had managed to save their bags were lending spare clothes to others less fortunate. Naked women were grateful for their friends' soiled and sweaty T-shirts. Several people were dressed only in towels.

Lisa was not in the crowd. With mounting anxiety Jeannie returned to the security guard at the door. "I think my girlfriend may be in there," she said, hearing the tremor of fear in her own voice.

"I ain't going after her," he said quickly.

"Brave man," Jeannie snapped. She was not sure what she wanted him to do, but she had not expected him to be completely useless.

Resentment showed on his face. "That's their job," he said, and he pointed to a fire truck coming down the road.

Jeannie was beginning to fear for Lisa's life, but she did not know what to do. She watched, impatient and helpless, as the firemen got out of the truck and put on breathing apparatus. They seemed to move so slowly that she wanted to shake them and scream "Hurry, hurry!" Another fire truck arrived, then a white police cruiser with the blue-and-silver stripe of the Baltimore Police Department.

As the firemen dragged a hose into the building, an officer buttonholed the lobby guard and said: "Where do you think it started?"

"Women's locker room," the guard told him.

"And where is that, exactly?"

"Basement, at the back."

"How many exits are there from the basement?"

"Only one, the staircase up to the main lobby, right here."

A maintenance man standing nearby contradicted him. "There's a ladder in the power machine room that leads up to an access hatch at the back of the building."

Jeannie caught the officer's attention and said: "I think my friend may still be inside there." "Man or woman?"

"Woman of twenty-four, short, blond."

"If she's there, we'll find her."

For a moment Jeannie felt reassured. Then she realized he had not promised to find her alive.

The security man who had been in the locker room was nowhere to be seen. Jeannie said to the fire officer: "There was another guard down there, I don't see him anywhere. That guy."

The lobby guard said: "Ain't no other security personnel in the building."

"Well, he had a hat with 'Security' written on it, and he was telling people to evacuate the building."

"I don't care what he had on his hat—"

"Oh, for Pete's sake, stop arguing!" Jeannie snapped. "Maybe I imagined him, but if not his life could be in danger!"

Standing listening to them was a girl wearing a man's khaki pants rolled up at the cuffs. saw that guy, he's a real creep," she said. "He felt me up."

The fire officer said: "Keep calm, we'll find everyone. Thank you for your cooperation." He walked off.

Jeannie glared at the lobby guard for a moment. She felt the fire officer had dismissed her as a hysterical woman because she had yelled at the guard. She turned away in disgust. What was she going to do now? The firemen ran inside in their helmets and boots. She was barefoot and wearing a T-shirt. If she tried to go in with them they would throw her out. She clenched her fists, distraught. *Think, think! Where else could Lisa be?*

The gymnasium was next door to the Ruth W. Acorn Psychology Building, named after the wife of a benefactor but known, even to faculty, as Nut House. Could Lisa have gone there? The doors would be locked on Sunday, but she probably had a key. She might have run inside to find a laboratory coat to cover herself or just to sit at her desk and recover. Jeannie decided to check. Anything was better than standing here doing nothing.

She dashed across the lawn to the main entrance of Nut House and looked through the glass doors. There was no one in the lobby. She took from her pocket the plastic card that served as a key and swiped it through the card reader. The door opened. She ran up the stairs calling: "Lisa! Are you there?" The laboratory was deserted. Lisa's chair was tucked neatly under her desk, and her computer screen was a gray blank. Jeannie tried the women's restroom at the end of the corridor. Nothing. "Damn!" she said frantically. "Where the hell are you?"

Panting, she hurried back outside. She decided to make a tour of the gymnasium building in case Lisa was just sitting on the ground somewhere catching her breath. She ran around the side of the building, passing through a yard full of giant garbage cans. At the back was a small

- [**Fondation \(Le cycle de Fondation, Livre 1\) for free**](#)
- [read online Reunion \(Pip & Flinx, Book 7\) for free](#)
- [read *The Ghost Brigades \(Old Man's War, Book 2\)*](#)
- [read Against the Smart City \(The city is here for you to use\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
- [click The Return \(1st Edition\)](#)
- [click Lean Mean Thirteen \(Stephanie Plum, Book 13\)](#)

- <http://honareavalmusic.com/?books/Preview--PH---May-2016-.pdf>
- <http://www.uverp.it/library/Before-I-Burn--A-Novel.pdf>
- <http://www.shreesaiexport.com/library/Vietnamese-Cookery.pdf>
- <http://hasanetmekci.com/ebooks/Long-Road-Home.pdf>
- <http://unpluggedtv.com/lib/Trend-Following--Updated-Edition---Learn-to-Make-Millions-in-Up-or-Down-Markets.pdf>
- <http://twilightblogs.com/library/No-Surrender--Skink--Book-7-.pdf>