

The hall had an inlaid marble floor (no Oriental rugs). Reaching its end she entered a paneled library (this one filled with books). There he was, sitting at his desk.

Julian R. Eastman rose. He looked stern. And very proper. He wore a gray business suit with a vest, a striped tie. His shoes were shined. He limped as he walked toward her, not the crooked limp of Doctor Sikes, just a small limp, a painful limp. Again Turtle was gripped by panic. He seemed so different, so important. She shouldn't have kicked him (the Barney Northrup him). He was coming closer. His watery blue eyes stared at her over his rimless half-glasses. Hard eyes. His teeth were white, not quite even (no one would ever guess they were false). He was smiling. He wasn't angry with her, he was smiling.

"Hi, Sandy," Turtle said. "I won!"

## 28 ♦ *And Then...*

Turtle never told. She went to the library every Saturday afternoon, she explained (which was partly true). "Make your move, Turtle, you don't want to be late for the wedding."

The ceremony was held in Shin Hoo's restaurant. Grace Wexler, recovered from a world-record hangover, draped a white cloth over the liquor bottles and set a spray of roses on the bar. No drinks would be served today.

Radiant in her wedding gown of white heirloom lace, the bride walked down the aisle, past the tables of well-wishers,

on the arm of Jake Wexler. Mr. Hoo, the best man, beamed with pride at her light footsteps as he supported the knee-knocking, nervous groom.

A fine red line of a scar marked Angela's cheek, but she looked content and lovely as ever in her pale blue bridesmaid's gown. The other bridesmaid wore pink and yellow with matching crutches.

The guests cried during the wedding and laughed during the reception. Flora Baumbach smiled and cried at the same time. "You did a good job altering the wedding dress, Baba," Turtle said, which made the dressmaker cry even harder.

"A toast to the bride and groom," Jake announced, raising his glass of ginger ale. "To Crow and Otis Amber!"

The heirs of Uncle Sam Westing clinked glasses with the members of the Good Salvation Soup Kitchen, sobered up for this happy occasion. "To Crow and Otis Amber!"

Apartment 4D was bare. For the last time Judge Ford stared out the side window to the cliff where the Westing house once stood. She would never solve the Westing puzzle; perhaps it was just as well. Her debt would finally be repaid—with interest; the money she received from the sale of her share of Sunset Towers would pay for the education of another youngster, just as Sam Westing had paid for hers.

"Hi, Judge Ford, I c-came to say g-good-bye," Chris said, wheeling himself through the door.

"Oh, hello, Chris, that was nice of you, but why aren't you studying? Where's your tutor?" She looked at the binoculars hanging from his neck. "You haven't been birdwatching again, have you? There will be plenty of time for birds later; first you must catch up on your studies if you want

to get into a good school." Good heavens, she was beginning to sound like Mr. Hoo.

"Will you c-come to see m-me?" Chris asked. "It g-gets sort of lonely with Theo away at c-college."

The judge gave him one of her rare smiles. He was a bright youngster ("Real smart," Sandy had said), he had a good future (Sandy had said that, too), he needed her influence and the extra money, but she might smother him with her demands. "I'll see you when I can, and I'll write to you, Chris. I promise."

Hoo's Little Foot-Eze (patent pending) was selling well in drugstores and shoe repair shops.

"Once we capture the Milwaukee market I'll take you to China," James Hoo promised his business partner.

"Okay," Madame Hoo replied, toting up accounts on her abacus. No hurry. She had many friends in Sunset Towers now. And no more cooking, no more tight dresses slit up her thigh. Her husband had bought her a nice pantsuit to wear when they called on customers, and for her birthday Doug had given her one of his medals to wear around her neck.

The secretary to the president of Schultz Sausages was back on the job. Her ankle mended, Sydelle Pulaski had discarded her crutches. She had all the attention she could handle without them; after all, she was an heiress now. (It wasn't polite to ask how much, but everyone knew Sam Westing had millions.) Of course she could retire to Florida, she said, but what would poor Mr. Schultz do without her? And then one unforgettable Friday Mr. Schultz, himself, took her to lunch.

Jake Wexler had given up his private practice (both private practices) now that he had been appointed consultant to the governor's inquiry panel for a state lottery (thanks to a recommendation by Judge Ford). Grace was proud of him, and his daughters were doing well. In fact everything was fine, just fine.

Hoo's On First was a great success. Grace Wexler, the new owner, offered free meals to the sports figures who came to town, and everyone wanted to eat where the athletes ate. The restaurant's one windowless wall was covered with autographed photographs of Brewers, Packers, and Bucks. Grace straightened the framed picture of a smiling champion, signed: *To Grace W. Wexler, who serves the number-one food in town—Doug Hoo.* She certainly was a lucky woman: a respected restaurateur, wife of a state official, and mother of the cleverest kid who ever lived. Turtle was going to be somebody someday.

A narrow scar remained, and would always remain, on Angela's cheek. It was slightly raised, and she had developed a habit of running her fingers along it as she pored over her books. Enrolled in college again, she lived at home to save money for the years of medical school ahead. She had returned the engagement ring to Denton Deere; she had not seen him since Crow's wedding. Ed Plum had stopped calling after ten refusals. Angela had neither the time nor the desire for a social life what with studying, her weekly shopping date with Sydelle, and Sundays spent helping Crow and Otis in the soup kitchen.

"Study, study, study," Turtle said.

Angela saw little of her sister, who was either at school, in Flora Baumbach's apartment, or at the library. "Hi, Turtle, how come you're so happy today?"

"The stock market jumped twenty-five points."

The newlyweds, Crow and Otis Amber, moved into the apartment above the Good Salvation Soup Kitchen. The storefront mission had been renovated and expanded with the money from the inheritance. Grace Wexler had supervised the decorations: copper pots hung from the ceiling, the pews were padded with flowered cushions and fitted with hymnbook pockets and drop-leaf trays. There was meat in the soup and fresh bread every day.

## 29 ♦ *Five Years Pass*

The former delivery boy danced into the Hoos' new lakefront home. "Let's give a cheer, the Ambers are here!" Otis came to celebrate Doug's victory wearing the old zippered jacket and aviator's helmet. He had even let a stubble grow on his chin. The only thing missing was his delivery bike (they had come in the soup-kitchen van). "Thank you for the generous donation, Mr. Hoo. God bless you," Crow said. "Otis and I distributed the innersoles among our people. It helped their suffering greatly." She looked worn, her skin pulled tight against the fragile bones, and she still wore black.

Mr. Hoo, on the other hand, was stouter and less angry. In fact, he was almost happy. Business was booming. Milwaukee loved Hoo's Little Foot-Eze, and so did Chicago and New York and Los Angeles, but he still had not taken his wife to China.

Theo Theodorakis, graduate of journalism school, cub reporter, held up the newspaper, hot off the press:

### OLYMPIC HERO COMES HOME

Four columns were devoted to the history and achievement of the gold medal winner who had set a new record for the 1500-meter run. Theo had not actually written the article on the local hero, but he had sharpened pencils for the reporter who did.

"Take a bow, Doug," Mr. Hoo said, beaming.

Doug leaped on a table and thrust his index fingers high in the air. "I'm number one!" he shouted. The Olympic gold medal hung from his neck, confetti from the parade dotted his hair. The Westing heirs cheered.

"Hello, Jake, I'm glad you could come," Sunny (as Madame Hoo was now called) said, shaking the hand of the chairman of the State Gambling Commission.

"Boom!" Jake Wexler replied.

"Hello, Angela." Denton Deere had grown a thick moustache. He was a neurologist. He had never married.

"Hello, Denton." Angela's golden hair was tied in a knot on the nape of her neck. She wore no makeup. She was

completing her third year of medical school. "It's been a long time."

"Remember me?" Sydelle Pulaski wore a red and white polka dot dress and leaned on a red and white polka dot crutch. She had sprained her knee dancing a tango at the office party.

"How could I ever forget you, Ms. Pulaski?" Denton said.

"I'd like you to meet my fiancé, Conrad Schultz, president of Schultz Sausages."

"How do you do."

"Judge Ford, I'd like you to meet my friend, Shirley Staver." Chris Theodorakis was in his junior year at college. A medication, recently discovered, kept his limbs steady and his speech well controlled. He sat in a wheelchair, as he always would.

"Hello, Shirley," the judge said. "Chris has written so much about you. I'm sorry I'm such a poor correspondent, Chris; I found myself in a tangle of cases this past month." She was a judge on the United States Circuit Court of Appeals.

"Chris and I were both chosen to go on a birdwatching tour to Central America this summer," Shirley said.

"Yes, I know."

For old times' sake Grace Wexler catered the party herself and passed among the guests with a tray of appetizers. She owned a chain of five restaurants now: Hoo's On First, Hoo's On Second, Hoo's On Third, Hoo's On Fourth, Hoo's On Fifth.

"Who's that attractive young woman talking with Flora Baumbach?" Theo asked.

"Why, that's my daughter Turtle. She's really grown up, hasn't she? Second year of college and she's only eighteen. Calls herself T. R. Wexler now."

T. R. Wexler was radiant. Earlier that day she had won her first chess game from the master.

### 30 ♦ *The End?*

Turtle spent the night at the bedside of eighty-five-year-old Julian R. Eastman. T. R. Wexler had a master's degree in business administration, an advanced degree in corporate law, and had served two years as legal counsel to the Westing Paper Products Corporation. She had made one million dollars in the stock market, lost it all, then made five million more.

"This is it, Turtle." His voice was weak.

"You can die before my very eyes, Sandy, and I wouldn't believe it."

"Show some respect. I can still change my will."

"No, you can't. I'm your lawyer."

"That's the thanks I get for that expensive education. How's the judge?"

"Judge Ford has just been appointed to the United States Supreme Court."

"What do you know, honest Josie-Jo on the Supreme Court. She was a smart kid, too, but she never once beat me at chess. Tell me about the others, Turtle. How's poor, saintly Crow?"

"Crow and Otis are still slopping soup," Turtle fibbed. Crow and Otis Amber had died two years ago, within a week of each other.

"And that funny woman with the painted crutches, what's her name?"

"Sydelle Pulaski Schultz. She and her husband moved to Hawaii. Angela keeps in touch."

"Angela. And how is your pretty sister, the bomber?"

Turtle never knew he knew. "Angela is an orthopedic surgeon." Julian R. Eastman was an old man, but suddenly his mind, too, was old. For the first time since the Westing game he was wearing the dentures with the chipped front tooth. He had turned back to his happiest times. Sandy was dying, he was really dying. Turtle held back her tears. "Angela and Denton Deere are married. They have a daughter named Alice."

"Alice. Doesn't Flora Baumbach call you Alice?"

"She used to, she calls me T. R. as everyone does."

"How is the dressmaker, Turtle? Tell me about them, tell me about all of them."

Flora Baumbach had given up dressmaking when she moved in with Turtle years ago. "Baba is well, everyone is well. Mr. and Mrs. Theodorakis (remember, they had the coffee shop in Sunset Towers), they retired to Florida. Chris and his wife Shirley teach ornithology at the university. They're both professors. Chris discovered a new subspecies on his last trip to South America; it's named after him: the something-Christos parrot."

"The something-Christos parrot, I like that. And the track star? Has he won any more medals?"

"Two Olympic golds in a row. Doug is a sports announcer on television."

"And how is Jimmy Hoo's invention going? I gave him the idea, you know."

"It looks like a real winner, Sandy." Mr. Hoo, too, was dead. Sunny Hoo finally made her trip to China, but returned to carry on the business.

"And tell me about my niece, Gracie Windkloppel. Does she still think she's a decorator?"

"Mom went into the restaurant business, has a chain of ten. Nine are quite successful. I keep telling her to give up on Hoo's On Tenth, to cut her losses, but she's stubborn as ever. I guess she hangs on to it because it's in Madison, to be near dad. He's now the state crime commissioner."

"He's well qualified for the job. And your husband, how's his writing coming along?"

He had remembered. "Theo's doing fine. The first novel sold about six copies, but it got great reviews. He's just about finished with his second book."

"And when are you two going to have children?"

"Someday." Turtle and Theo had decided against having children because of the possibility of inheriting Chris's disease.

"If it's a boy we'll name him Sandy, and if it's a girl, well, I guess we can name her Sandy, too."

The old man's voice was barely audible now. "Did you say Angela had a little girl?"

"Yes, Alice, she's ten years old."

"Is she pretty like her mother?"

"I'm afraid not, she looks a lot like you and me."

"Turtle?"

"Yes, Sandy."

"Turtle?"

"I'm right here, Sandy." She took his hand.

"Turtle, tell Crow to pray for me."

His hand turned cold, not smooth, not waxy, just very, very cold.

Turtle turned to the window. The sun was rising out of Lake Michigan. It was tomorrow. It was the Fourth of July.

Julian R. Eastman was dead; and with him died Windy Windkloppel, Samuel W. Westing, Barney Northrup, and Sandy McSouthers. And with him died a little of Turtle.

No one, not even Theo, knew her secret. T. R. Wexler was understandably sad over the death of the chairman of the board of the Westing Paper Products Corporation. She had been his legal adviser; she would inherit his stock and serve as a director of the company until the day she, too, would be elected chairman of the board.

Veiled in black she hurried from the funeral services. It was Saturday and she had an important engagement. Angela brought her daughter, Alice, to the Wexler-Theodorakis mansion to spend Saturday afternoons with her aunt.

There she was, waiting for her in the library. Baba had tied red ribbons in the one long pigtail down her back.

"Hi there, Alice," T. R. Wexler said. "Ready for a game of chess?"