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Qualities for Helen to display in the story

Angel of Peace
Art Angel
Celebration Angel
Fairy of lost keys and missing socks
Feel Better Angel
Filing Information Fairy
Flower Angel
Goddess of Child Care
Goddess of communication
Goddess of enlightenment
Goddess of cats
Green Thumb Fairy
Happy Birthday Fairy
Kitchen Angel
sewing Fairy
Shoe Fairy
Travel Angel

Suggestions for writing of this story

Foreshadow the ending.

Include all the elements logically needed for your conclusion.

Develop the plot as a series of increasingly serious problems.

Coming into Power

Chapter 1

Helen pressed her leg lightly against Joe to get his
attention. However, Helen's musical voice, just by itself, always
caught Joe's attention. "Joe, can I change the radio station? It's
not that I don't love classical music. I do. However, I really do
want to hear when my friend Melody leaves the moon, and is on the way
back to earth. She and the other astronauts have beat Sam Raccetts
record set in 2066 for how long an astronaut has stayed on the moon."
Helen felt energized while sandwiched between her best friends Bob and
Joe.

Joe divided his attention. While part of his mind focused on
driving them to their concert performance in his ancient white camper
truck, another part of his mind focused on answering Helen's question.
"You sure can. I even give you permission." He turned his head
slightly so he could alternately see the road and her reaction.

Helen laughed. "I'm sorry I told you about my fifth grade
English teacher and her 'may I' game." She reached forward and
swiftly punched the code sequence needed for her favorite news station
on the truck radio touch pad control panel.

". . .waiting for the signal to liftoff. It's t minus 2
minutes and counting. Brad, while we're waiting, tell our listeners
why we named the lunar module by the name 'Grayjay'."

After a short period of static, Brad's monotonic radio voice
began. "We gave it the name Grayjay because of the Canadian grayjay.
The grayjay, a cold weather bird, adapted itself to the cold weather
in Canada and along the Rocky Mountains in the northwestern United
States. One of our astronauts, as a child, lived in Canada, and we
decided to name the lunar module after a Canadian bird. The fact that
the grayjay also nests along the Rocky Mountains and this lunar
expedition will explore mountains on the far side of the moon strikes
me as an interesting coincidence."

"Sorry to interrupt, Brad. It's 15 seconds to liftoff.
Countdown will begin right away."

"10...9...8...7...6...5...4...3...2...1..."
". . . Grayjay failed to lift off. Grayjay failed to lift
off." The announcer's voice held the clear tones of tight emotional
control. "We know at this time only that the main engines ignited and
then immediately shut down. This station will make special alerts as
we receive them."

"What!" cried Helen. "Something went wrong. Oh, I hope
they're okay."

Bob shrugged his shoulders. "Well. . . you can't do anything
about it. You should relax. Don't worry about it."

Joe laughed. "Bob, we all cope with anxiety differently.
Helen worries. Not everyone can be as rational as you."

Bob replied, "I don't want her to worry. I'm trying to
explain why she shouldn't worry." He shifted into his objective mode
voice. "Look. Either your friend is okay, or she is not okay. If
she is okay, then we don't need to worry. If she isn't okay then we
can't do anything about it, so why worry about it? We should worry
only if it will help us solve the problem we are worried about. So,
why don't you distract yourself for now? Besides, I believe everyone
can and should be completely rational."

Joe shook his head. "My friend, you don't understand emotions
yet. Emotions motivate our responses to perceived situations. After
we become aware of our response we can choose whether or not we should
follow through with it."

Bob meditated silently for a moment before speaking. "People
can and should learn rational emotions. Your emo. . . "

Helen interrupted, "Joe, you two will never settle that
discussion. So, don't argue with him now. Instead, tell me what you
think happened on the moon."

"Well I can't. We only know that liftoff failed. That
implies something went wrong with either the liftoff engines, or with
the fuel. Perhaps Bob does have a point this time. Let's think of
other things for a while."

Helen glared at him for just a second, but then laughed. "We
can at least check the news after the concert. I want to hear it. I
need to know that Melody is safe."

She paused, then continued. "I know, Bob, you'll just say
it's so I can decide what I should feel. Well . . . I can't help it.
I have to know!"

Bob grinned. "You know me very well. But that's not what I
intended to say. I'm curious about Melody. Tell me how you know
her."

Helen looked affectionately toward Bob. "Thanks for asking.
During my high school years, I formed an anti-nicotine patch organization.
Someone in our small group found out that Melody, already a famous
astronaut, shared our concern about the growing power of United
Tobacco Company. I contacted her and she actually came to our high
school to speak to us. She and some guy named Grant encouraged us by
keeping in touch with us by video phone the rest of the year. They
taught us some history about tobacco use. Cigarette smoking rates had
fallen to about two percent of the population due to the Allen Carr
clinics that appeared in cities all around the world. However, they had no effect on the number of people using nicotine patches. All these
clinics closed after their near total success in curing the world of
smoking.

Within a generation, it became popular for people who never smoked to use the nicotine patches. This happened because people addicted to nicotine, because of the patches, persuaded non-addicts to try them. The problem became significantly worse after the tobacco companies merged into United Tobacco Company."

Bob asked, "Did they tell you how to re-open clinics like the Allen Carr clinics?"

Helen replied, "No, they knew students would not have the time
to run such a clinic. I'm sure they hoped that later we might work
with them to help. But I'm still a student. Perhaps I'll contact
them later."

At this thought, Helen again exclaimed, "Oh, I do hope Melody
can safely return to Earth!"

Joe commented, "If I were you, the first thing I would have
said to Melody is that I liked her name."

Helen looked puzzled. "Why?"

Joe grinned. "Aren't you telling me all the time how much you
like melodies?"

Both Bob and Helen laughed at this. Helen smiled. "Thanks
guys. Now I feel better."

Helen continued, "We must be close to the concert hall. Oh,
there it is!" She pointed straight ahead through the window. "Oh, I
hope we do at least as well tonight as we did last time."

As Joe turned into the parking lot, he responded to Helen.
"Plan on it. You'll keep getting better and better until you perform
perfectly almost every time."

Bob spoke up then. But, if you don't do better tonight,
please don't let it bother you."

Helen smiled. "Thanks, guys."

Minutes later, Helen, by leaning against the heavy door of
the large concert hall, slowly pushed it open. Once inside, she looked
around the room. Pulling a small black box from her pocket, she
pointed it at the far walls. Bob, following her in, very carefully
placed their beloved instruments on the floor next to her. "How does
it look?"

"It looks good, Bob. My sounder box tells me that we'll have
great acoustics."

Bob nodded and pointed to his right. "There's their stage.
It's perfect. We walk up only two steps and we are on stage across
the room from the doorway.. Where's Joe?"

"Right here. It's not easy to keep up when I'm lugging this
heavy archaic sound equipment, and you guys only have to carry one
double oh eighteen sized guitar, my fiddle, and the basket containing
the donation jar and flyers."

Bob turned to Joe. "After we get rich, you could buy some
ultra-light quality modern equipment. That is, unless you are having
fun showing off this hundred-year-old stuff that you inherited from
your ancestors."

Joe responded, "Well, I'm only keeping it now for sentimental
reasons. Besides, it's better quality than anything we can afford."

Helen tapped Joe on his arm to get his attention. "Well, Joe,
you are the tallest and strongest of us. I thought it made sense for
you to carry the heavy stuff." Helen smiled at him.

Joe looked directly into her blue-gray eyes. "Is zat so? Well,
I may be strong, and exactly 188 centimeters tall, which is at least a
centimeter taller than both of you. But I'm no Superman. Which reminds
me, I have in my truck the Superman comic collection you loaned me.
Ask me after the concert about it."

Bob laughed. "Joe, you too? I knew that Helen gushed over
Superman, but I didn't know you cared. Did you try to fly when you
were a kid too?"

"Huh! Well. . . Before kindergarten, I jumped over a log
trying to levitate. Because of that, I got a grass reed stuck in my
throat about a centimeter from my windpipe."

"Bob, don't you ever dream of flying?"

"Sure. One time I dreamed I built my own airplane and flew it
all over town, and people looked up and said, 'Look up in the sky.
It's a plane!' "Bob grinned in spite of his intention to look serious.

She smiled in return. "I never said I thought I really could
fly. It's just that when I'm asleep I forget it's impossible."

Bob shook his head. "I see." He briefly clapped his hands
twice. "Well, enough of this. We need to set up."

Helen saw a small table near the stage, and dragged it to the
entrance. Using both hands, she picked up the donation jar from her
basket and placed it on the table. Next she arranged the flyers that
advertised their availability for future gigs. Helen paused a moment
to pick up one of their flyers to admire it. Bob did a really good
job when he designed this one. Their name, "Vocal Strings", almost
seemed to jump out. She like the way he used musical notes to make up
the letters. Below their band name were pictures of the three of
them. Joe, being the blond handsome guy, stood slightly behind and
between them. Helen ran her fingers over the three figures in the
picture, tracing out Joe's wavy blond hair, Bob's curly black hair,
and her own long straight light brown hair. Sighing, she put the flyer
down. She needed to set up the chairs.

"I see you've fixed your broken strings."

"What?" Helen turned around to see a young man pointing at
the flyer. Helen laughed. "Oh, you mean our name change. Yes, we
are no longer the "Broken Strings." Every few months we change our
band name. We'll probably change it again soon."

Helen walked across the room to get the concert hall's chairs
to set in front of the stage. The young man followed her, and
together they set the chairs in neat staggered rows in front of the
stage. When they had finished, she thanked the young man and asked,
"Could you do me a favor?"

When he responded by looking questioningly at her, she
continued, "Could you point out the donation jar to new people coming
in?"

The young man smiled. "Of course. I'll be glad to do it."

Next, she helped Bob and Joe set up the sound system. While
Bob played his guitar, Helen walked through the rows of chairs,
signaling to Joe how to adjust the sound.

During this testing period more people began entering the
hall. Some sat down immediately while others congregated in small
groups in the back of the hall. Helen looked to Joe to see if he
needed any additional sound checks. Joe signaled the all clear. But
unexpectedly, instead of sitting down to play, he followed his all
clear signal by an exaggerated pointing at the entrance to the Hall.
Helen turned her head to look. Two tall men, dressed in very formal
suits, had just entered the hall. One of the two wore an unusually
bright red vest, while the other distinguished himself by his top hat
and fancy sash belt tied to his side.

Helen quelled the impulse to tell them that they did not need
to have such formal dress for this concert. It would probably only
embarrass them. As she drew nearer Red Vest smiled and waved to her.
She reached them just as Top Hat, addressing his friendly companion,
complained. "Cato, they don't even have an entrance fee! It's just a
donation. What kind of concert is this?"

Helen stood speechless for a moment, wondering what she could
say to such an insult.

Cato's smooth mellow voice showed his agreement with Helen's
feelings. "Will, I think having a donation jar is an excellent
idea." He extended his hand to Helen. "I'm Senator Cato Irving. My
irritating companion is Senator Will Bellum. I'm sure we'll both
enjoy your performance."

Helen's eyes opened wide. She had almost insulted an U.S.
Senator! Even she had heard of the Senator Cato Irving of the ethics
committee. Why were they here? Surely they were not here just to
critique her performance? As Helen shook Cato's hand, she noticed the
time on his expensive looking watch. Smiling at Cato, she apologized.
"Thanks. I don't mean to be short, but now I have to run. It's time
for us to start." As she turned away, she had a second thought.
Turning her head back to look at Cato, she said, "I'll introduce you
after the concert."

As Helen jumped up onto the low stage, Joe's watch chimed to
signal beginning time. He took the microphone. "As senior member of
our group, I get to make the introductions. I'm Joe Athens.
Sometimes we call the guitar player Bob, sometimes we call him Bam,
and sometimes we refer to him as 'just the best guitar player on the
planet'." Joe pointed to Helen. "Helen, our lovely singer, the most
beautiful lady in the world, also answers to the name 'Hat' Can you
guess why?"

Joe paused, then smiling at the audience, said, "I will give
you this hint. Her last name begins with the letter T."

Taking a firmer hold of the microphone, Joe continued, "Today
is Saturday, July first, 2090. Why am I reminding you of this? It's
so that when I tell you that today is both Bob's and Helen's birthday,
you will remember it. Of course, I'm not permitted to tell you what
year she came into the world."

Helen winked at Bob. They had literally run into each other
in the doorway of the music appreciation computer lab. She fondly
remembered being helped up by Joe as she and Bob untangled themselves
in the doorway. Calling them "The Three Musketeers" expressed only
weakly the extent to which their friendship had since developed.

After the concert, the trio took their bow with grace,
accepting the audience's enthusiastic applause. Helen felt warm with
pride in her singing today. She glanced over at Bob, and caught his
appreciative nod; he'd felt it too.

She reached for the microphone stand with one hand. "Now I'd
like to intro. . . Yow!" Helen crumpled to the stage floor as a
monstrous blue spark of light leaped from the direction of the
microphone stand to her fingers.

When she opened her eyes many faces crowded her view. She lay
on some soft mat and darkness still obscured her vision. A commanding
mellow voice filled her awareness. "She's awake! Give her room!"

She felt her head with her hands. "What happened?"
"Some kind of electrical fault knocked you out." Bob, looking
worried and concerned, took her hand. "You scared us a lot by passing
out like that. How do you feel?"

She looked around. She found herself backstage behind a heavy
curtain which blocked most of the light. No wonder she couldn't see
very clearly! She began to feel a bit better. "I'll be fine in a
minute. May I have a glass of water?"

Joe addressed the crowd around him. "Thanks for your concern,
folks. But now we need to pack up our gear and clear the hall."

Except for the young man who had helped Helen place the
chairs, the crowd dispersed. He stood, head slightly bowed, looking
at them as if to ask permission to speak. When Joe nodded his head
slightly, he said. "That electric spark didn't come from the
microphone. I saw it come through the window. It flew in a straight
line past the microphone stand right into her hand."

When he saw that their only responses were looks of
astonishment, he turned, walked slowly away, pulled apart the heavy
curtain, and left the hall.

Meanwhile, Senator Bellum and his companion had walked through
the exit door on the opposite side of the hall. Senator Bellum said
quietly to his companion, "She promised to introduce us. She didn't
keep her promise."

His companion smiled. "You know, Will, you can be such a
jerk."

Will heard the smile in his friend's voice. "Yes. We make a
good investigative team for the ethics committee. I jerk the people
around, and you look for guilty responses. We've caught more
wrongdoers than anyone else has."

Senator Cato replied, "True, but tonight's singer is not
under investigation. We came only to enjoy her singing."

Senator Bellum answered. "You are right. However, we do need
to maintain our reputation."

Helen heard their remarks as a silent voice in her head.
Believing the voices to be only her imagination, she said to her
friends, "Those guy dressed in formal dress were U.S. senators. Why do
you suppose they came to our concert?"

Joe grinned. "Because I invited them."

Chapter 2

Later that night Helen dreamed she flew through the air. She
flew about 6 meters above and along a highway. She looked down at all
the cars and took pride in being able to soar above the crowd.

She wondered briefly what made her different. At that instant
she noticed a blue spark of electricity flying along beside her. From
the way it flew, sometimes hovering, sometimes zipping along, she knew
it was alive. "Who are you?" she inquired.

In answer the spark grew brighter and came closer to her. It
flew straight to her hand, and entered her fingers. She felt it
travel up her arm, into her chest, and then up toward her head. Helen
felt dizzy for a moment. Then the spark flew out through her eye, and
hovered a few centimeters from her. A voice formed in her head. "I'm
an explorer from another world. I followed your trail. I absorbed
you. We are now one person. You fly above the crowd only for this
reason."

"What do you mean? What is your name?"

"My name is what I am. What I am is my name."

"Do you mean you have no name?" Remembering a naming ritual,
she placed her hand above the cool blue spark. "I pronounce you
'Sparky'."

Then she saw her house below her and dove down to fly into the
window. She saw the blue spark follow her in. As she alighted on her
bed, it hovered around her. "Sparky, what are you doing here?"

The blue spark answered silently, "I live here now."

Helen opened her eyes and sat up in bed. She turned and
looked at the clock. 2:35. "Oh brother", she thought. Then she
lay back down and closed her eyes, waiting to go back to sleep.

"What did that dream mean?" She meditated on her brief dream.
Did that electric shock have some permanent effect on her?

"Not in the way you think." The silent voice surprised her.

"Omigosh", she exclaimed, "I'm talking to myself. That
electric shock gave me a split personality."

"No", said the voice. "You are my split personality."

"Hey. I'm the original! How could I be your split
personality?"

"When I absorbed you, I became you. You are now part of me,
but split off from the rest of me."

"Does this mean I've lost my mind?"

"Of course not. You are still you. You still make your own
choices."

"You changed me! You made me into a different person?"

"There's no cause for regret. We are both much greater than
we were before we merged. I'm grateful to you. Before you, I could
barely see your world. Through you I can know everything about your
world."

Helen thought, "So this is what's meant by a lucid dream. I
know that I'm dreaming because what's happening is clearly
impossible."

Helen drifted back to sleep. At the edge of consciousness, she
heard the silent voice again. "Nothing is impossible to us."

Chapter 3

The sunlight reflected glaringly off the beach sand. The trio
enjoyed their regular Sunday morning stroll down their beach. They
didn't really own this section of beach. But Helen thought of it as
their beach because they had searched for it and found it. They
wanted to find a beach where visits by other people would not spoil
the natural beauty of the beach.

They walked north, Helen in the middle, Joe on her right,
nearer the ocean, and Bob on her left. "Look at those seagulls
wading in the surf. How cute they are!" Helen's voice showed her
amusement.

The trio continued to walk up the beach as they talked while
enjoying the ocean breeze. Suddenly, Helen turned, walked up the
steep sandy hill a short distance, and stood still in the loose dry
sand.

Both Joe and Bob stopped walking immediately. While waiting,
Bob entertained himself by looking in all directions, never resting
his eyes more than a few moments in any direction. Joe chose to turn
towards Helen. He admired her beauty, and took a moment to just
stare. Helen had straight light brown hair that came down to her
waist, blue-gray eyes, nicely shaped ears, and a very cute nose. He
especially admired the way her zest for life beamed out from her.

Finally Joe found his voice. "What is it? Why did you stop?"

She gave him a blank look. "I'm just trying to figure
something out." Then on impulse, she kicked the sand, and a coin
flew out, making a soft plop sound as it landed by Joe's feet.

"Wow", Joe bent over and scooped up the coin. "How did you
know about the coin?"

Helen stared at her friends. "I didn't."

Bob replied, "Co-incidences like this happen all the time.
There's no way she could have known about the coin."

Bob noticed the approaching beach-walkers first. "Looks like
we've got company".

Joe turned and looked in the direction Bob faced. He laughed.
"Hey, it looks like our kind of people. They like lonely beaches also.
I wonder how they found our beach? Helen, Are there any valuable
coins in their path?"

As Helen followed Bob's gaze she remembered how Bob had found
their beach. Bob had acquired coastal maps from the national
oceanographic institute and they had all spent several hours scanning
the map of the coastline. Finally, Bob found this one spot that had
not yet been developed and might never be developed. Ever since, they
had walked here each Sunday morning.

Next, Helen considered Joe's last question. She knew Joe liked
to tease her, and wondered how she should respond. Suddenly she had a
clear vision of the people walking in the distance.

Her voice took on an odd, far-away quality. "A man and a
woman . . . we don't know them . . . The man has red-orange hair and
is smoking a cigarette . . . He's wearing white shorts and . . . an
extra large light green t-shirt . . . with Maxwell's physics
equations on it . . . She has short blond hair and is wearing
flower patterned . . . matching skimpy bikini bottom and top."

Bob and Joe looked at each other, then at her. "All that and
no really valuable coins?" Joe joked uneasily.

Helen looked confused. "Huh? I'm not joking. I can see them
clearly."

Joe and Bob exchanged glances again. Bob looked troubled.
"Helen, are you claiming to have super vision now? It's not like you
to tease us like this."

Joe clapped his hands as he responded to Bob's comment. "Just
goes to prove how super Helen really is." Joe's grin turned into a
frown as he thought of another possibility. "Helen, could that
electric spark that hit you last night have made you farsighted?"

Helen answered, "Of course not. I didn't think they were that
far away. However, I did have a strange dream about Sparky last
night."

Joe merely looked puzzled, while Bob exclaimed, "Who is
Sparky?"

Helen continued, "I dreamed I talked to the electric spark
that knocked me out yesterday. I named it Sparky."

Bob grinned. "Now I get it. I bet the spark said it gave you
super powers. Will you show us a new super power every day from now
on?"

At that instant, she felt Sparky speak silently to her. "Since
we became one person, you are as a goddess."

Helen shivered. "What an idea! I thought you didn't read
fantasy. What made you think of it?"

Bob replied, "Well . . . You do sometimes dream about flying.
Also, I knew you were very concerned about your friend Melody up there
on the moon, and the spark giving you super powers would be a wish
fulfillment dream that you could rescue her."

She shrugged. "I don't have wish fulfillment dreams. Freud's
dream theory is just another Freudian mistake."

"Helen!" Joe exclaimed, "You made a pun!"

Helen laughed. "I made it by accident." Helen pointed to the
approaching beach walkers. "Anyway, let's move upwind of those folks
so the cigarette smoke won't harm us."

Bob ran his hand through his dark hair, and shrugged his
shoulders. "The wind's coming from the ocean. We'll have a good
excuse to go swimming and wait until they reach us. Then we'll see
if you are just making this up."

Helen immediately began to wade out into the waves up to her
waist. Bob and Joe followed her.

As the two beach strollers came alongside them, Bob confirmed
her unlikely description. "Gee Helen, even with the recent merger of
the tobacco companies into United Tobacco Company, only 10 percent of
the population are smokers. And those Maxwell equations! What did
you see to guess that? I didn't even know you knew any physics."

Bob paused briefly, then continued, "You don't know any
physics! The only explanation that makes sense is that you knew
these people in advance. You planned this with them! You told them
how to get to our beach. Isn't that it?"

Joe commented, "I don't think Helen would do that. It's less
likely than her guessing everything right.

Helen didn't hear their comments because she had focused
intently on the couple walking by. "Doesn't he know it's against the
law for people to smoke on the beach? I wish he would put that
cigarette out."

As she spoke, a huge wave formed immediately in front of her.
The wave reached chest level on Bob and Joe as it sped to the beach.
The strolling couple turned their heads toward the ocean just as the
wave reached them and doused them.

"Wow!" Joe said, unable to think of anything else to say.

"Well, you got your wish, Helen," Bob laughed. "That
cigarette is definitely out now."

All three friends rushed through the receding waters to the
beach to see what help the soaked couple would need. As she easily
passed the other two, Helen briefly wondered why they struggled so
hard to wade through the water.

She reached the couple first. She observed the man lying on
his back, with his eyes closed, and the woman kneeling by his side,
with her hands covering her face.

As Joe and Bob came up behind her, Helen asked, "Are you
okay?"

The man opened his eyes. He moved his left hand forward as if
to push them away. Then seeing their response, frowned, and said,
"Thanks. I appreciate your stopping. I tried to stop a tidal wave. I
may have broken my wrist again."

Helen said, "Can we get you to a hospital?"

The woman, who had uncovered her face and looked at them
wonderingly when Helen first spoke, now smiled and asked, "Would you
do that for us?"

Bob answered, "Of course. We'll be glad to. We can all fit
in my car. By the way, my name is Bob and my two friends here are
Helen and Joe."

Joe smiled and extended his hand toward the kneeling woman.
"Provided you tell us how you found our beach."

The woman grasped his hand, and pulled herself up. As she
gained her balance, she skillfully turned her grasp of his hand into a
handshake. "Thank you. You are angels to do this for us. I'm Angela,
and this is my husband Victor. He got the map and directions to this
beach from one of his friends."

Bob glanced toward Helen. Did she mean Helen? He asked
Angela, "Who is his friend?"

Angela looked sharply at Bob. "Why would you want to know?
You don't know him."

Bob nodded his head. "Right. Apologies. Now you know that I'm
no angel. But you definitely are. Is Angela your original name? Were
you always a little angel to your mom?"

Angela shook her head. "No, I wasn't." Then she smiled as
she said, "I'm pretty sure she never thought of me as her angel. And,
yes, Angela is my birth name."

Angela continued. "My mom believed God put at least one angel
to live in every community."

Bob looked puzzled. "Then did she name you 'Angela' in honor
of the local angel?"

Angela grinned. "Not exactly. She hoped that, because of my
name, the local angel would pay special attention to me."

Meanwhile, Joe extended his right hand to Victor to help him
get up. Victor extended his left hand and Joe awkwardly helped him to
a standing position. "I'm glad you changed your mind and let us help
you."

Victor's face showed his surprise at Joe's words. Then he
laughed. "Oh no, you misunderstood. When I signed that I tried to
push away the water, you thought I meant to push you away. No, no. I
never intended that."

Joe smiled. Then staring at Victor's bright red-orange hair,
exclaimed "I've never seen anyone before with your color hair. Did you
eat so many carrots that the color went to your head?"

Victor grinned at Joe's question, but didn't say anything.

But Angela did say something. "Joe! If you insult my husband
that way again, I won't want to have anything to do with you."

Immediately Helen reached out to Angela and softly touched her
shoulder. "Angela, I'm sure Joe meant well. When you get to know him
better you'll realize that."

Joe replied, "Gee, Angela, I didn't mean to upset you. I
sincerely hope you give me at least a second chance." Joe smiled.

Angela looked at Joe. His teasing smile puzzled her. He
seemed sincere, but also seemed to be making fun of her. Did she
misinterpret his intent?

Angela shook her head and spoke to the trio. "It's ok. And I'm
so glad you stopped to help us. I can't drive. I didn't know what to
do."

Bob expressed his surprise. "Why not? All you have to do is
steer the car. Anyone can do it."

Angela shook her head. "The first time I tried it, I drove
off the road into a fence."

Bob nodded his head. "Did you figure out why?"

Angela replied, "When I saw the fence, I couldn't take my
eyes off it until I crashed into it."

"Then you knew that the next time you should keep your eyes on
the road?"

Angela paused before answering. "I waited several months
before trying again. The second time when I came to a curve in the
road, and saw the warning sign, I felt dizzy. I drove right into the
warning sign. Victor persuaded me to try again. The third time, we
tried that two lane road into the country side. I had thought that if
we took it, I wouldn't have to worry very much about other traffic.
Ha. I didn't think about the people who live along that road. When
I saw the first car coming toward me, I froze. If the other driver
had not swerved at the last instant, I would have hit her. After
that I decided that I shouldn't drive a car."

Joe said gently, "Is it that you are afraid to drive now?
There are people who can help you with that."

Angela looked troubled. "I think it's more than that. I
remember that my vision blurred when I saw that car coming toward me.
And why did I get dizzy when I looked at the curve warning sign?"

Angela continued, "I don't want to talk about it now. Let's
go."

As they walked, Helen talked with Angela. "We're musicians.
Our band is called "Vocal Strings", but we are thinking of changing it
again. I'm just waiting until I hear a better name. I'm their
singer, and Bob and Joe play guitar and fiddle."

Angela smiled as she replied, "I'm an accountant at the
university union store. Actually I'm part of the accountant team
there. I mainly keep track of inventory and re-order when things get
low."

Helen felt the need to do Angela and Victor a favor.
Irrationally, she couldn't help feeling as if she had caused their
problems. "Angela, would you like me to help you practice driving?"

Angela smiled her delight. "That would be wonderful. Give me
your telephone code and I'll call you when we can get together."

As Bob started his car, the car radio came on. "Grayjay is
still stranded. So far we have no confirmation as to why. We only
have hints that the fuel tanks were damaged. Tune in the 6:00 news
report for more." Victor leaned back, carefully resting his injured
wrist against his stomach. "It's too bad about those astronauts. I'm
guessing rocks from space punctured some of their fuel tanks either
before or after they landed on the moon. It looks like they are truly
stranded on the moon."

"Not good! Do they have extra fuel available?" Helen showed
her worry.

Victor replied, "I don't know. Even if they did, they would
have to fix the leak in their empty tanks before refueling them."

Joe said, "Perhaps we have a spare rocket ready to rescue
them."

Bob chimed in, "Joe, I think it's only in fiction that there
are spare rescue rockets. This is only the 21st century. Safety
concerns still make the rockets so costly that they can't have more
than one at a time."

When they arrived at the hospital, Bob pulled the car up to
the front door of the emergency room. "Victor, you and Angela go on
in. We'll find a parking place."

Helen spotted a possible parking space, and a problem. The
car in the adjacent space straddled the line taking up too much of the
parking space they wanted.

Then she had a wild idea. "Hey Bob, I bet the three of us
could move that car over a little bit."

Bob laughed, "Okay, if you say so. Do you have super strength
now as well as super vision?"

Bob stopped his car just short of the two spaces. Then led by
Helen, the three of them stood, with bent knees, under the back bumper
of the other car, with Helen in the middle. "Now at the count of
three,lift and shift to your right. One, two . . . three."

As Joe and Bob grunted, straining to lift the car, the car
rose and slowly moved about 30 centimeters to the right. Bob and Joe
looked at each other in astonishment.

Helen ran around to the front of the car. "Hey, come on you
guys, don't stand there all day admiring your work. Come help me lift
this end of the car."

Chapter 4

Melody Armstrong, standing on the moon's surface, watched the
dials of the oxygen extractor. They had lost essential oxygen when
the liftoff failed. This oxygen extractor had been one of the new
devices they were to test. Now their lives depended on it working
well.

The oxygen extractor operated very simply. Melody would put
moon rocks into the machine. Then Hydrogen reacted with oxygen
compounds in the moon rocks, producing water. Next an electric
current split water into oxygen and hydrogen. Unfortunately, not all
the water and hydrogen could be recovered.

First some of the water stuck to the walls of the machine and
to the remains of the moon rocks. Second, Hydrogen reacted with other
compounds in the moon rocks. And some of the hydrogen simply leaked
through the supposedly air tight joints of the machine.

Her suitphone rang. Melody smiled when she saw first the
Earthlink signal, and then Grant's face on her phone monitor. "Hello,
Gaunt", Melody said as she opened the connection.

"Hello, Melody. I don't have much to report on my
Anti-tobacco broadcast site as yet. I have made some progress
setting it up, but I'm not having any luck finding someone to program
it." Grant didn't comment on Melody's use of his nickname instead of
his proper name. Grant had gotten used to people first calling him
gaunt Grant, and then eventually, just Gaunt.

Melody expressed her confidence. "I know you'll solve this
problem as quickly and as easily as you solve all problems that come
to you. Did you check out that high school group we worked with
several years ago?"

Grant replied, "Yes. None of them remained activists. It
seems that college life kept them too busy. Even their leader, what's
her name, has filled her days and nights studying music."

Melody laughed. "I'm guessing that you don't have your
computer name directory handy. Otherwise, you'd know her name. It's
Helen Troy."

Melody continued, "It seems to me that many people would jump
at the chance to program an internet broadcast website. Is it true
that you invented the protocols for internet broadcasting?"

"Not quite. The basic rules were set a hundred years ago. I
merely organized and simplified them so that we could license and
control the content of internet broadcasting. And for five more
years,I keep the sole right to grant licenses for internet
broadcasting, provided the courts agree with my choices. But now I
have a question for you."

Melody guessed what Grant wanted to know. "The oxygen
extractor is working well. We should have enough oxygen for liftoff
in a couple of days."

"Great! How is the hydrogen holding up?"

Melody expressed her worry. "I'm only losing about one part
in a hundred of the hydrogen for each cycle of the oxygen extraction.
It looks like we'll have enough hydrogen left for liftoff but just
barely."

"Hmmm . . . It would be good if you found some rocks rich
with water. Then you could obtain more hydrogen and make sure you had
more than enough hydrogen for liftoff. I think that the survey showed
some water bearing rocks about a mile from you."

Melody laughed. "When you read about the presence of water,
you didn't bother looking at how much water was found, did you?"

Grant's face showed his embarrassment. "You are right. I
guess I jumped to the conclusion that it would not have been reported
if it were not of practical importance. Silly me. I should be used
to what other scientists find important by now."

Grant continued, "But you don't really need to worry about
running out of water do you?"

Melody agreed. "That's correct. Lucky for us that we can
recycle our water supply. We could stay here almost indefinitely
except that we would run out of food in one more day. We might have
to go hungry for a day or two before we can lift off."

Grant changed the subject. "Did you discover why the Oxygen
tank failed at liftoff?"

"Sure did. But the oxygen tank didn't fail. The hydrogen
tank is the one that failed. We had re-designed the hydrogen tanks
to cut off if the airflow exceeded the safe amount. However, the
hydrogen tanks still had settings calibrated for Earth. On the
airless moon, because the air initially flows more quickly, we needed
to re-calibrate. We've fixed the problem now."

"Then why did you lose oxygen?"

"Because the oxygen continued to flow into the reaction
chamber until the computer system responsible for monitoring the
reaction shut off the oxygen tank."

"I see." Grant said it in a way that made him sound like an
expert on the moon rocket.

Melody grinned. Gaunt may not be a rocket scientist, but he
definitely knew his electronics. Melody exclaimed, "Hey Gaunt, you
haven't asked me about your invisible alien detectors!"

Grant gave one of his rare smiles. "That's right. I haven't.
That's because I can see from my instruments that you've already
deployed them. I can assure you that no invisible aliens have landed
on the moon anywhere near you."

Melody laughed again. "You know that I don't believe in your
invisible aliens. Unlike you, I never saw a saucer flying toward the
full moon suddenly vanish. I'm surprised that you convinced the boss
to let us bring your detectors to the moon. How are they supposed to
work anyway?"

"They continuously emit low intensity radio waves to get a
radar picture of the surroundings. They monitor the distance between
themselves and points on the moon."

Melody said, "I still don't get it. How will knowing the
distance between the detector and places on the moon tell you if there
are invisible aliens?"

Grant replied, "The way an alien would make itself invisible
would be to make any light or, in this case, radio waves, go around
it. The radar signals would suddenly go a longer distance to reach
their target. It would be as if the background target suddenly moved
farther away. Yet there wouldn't be any corresponding Doppler shift."

Melody said, "Now I get it. You check to see if everything
stays in the same place. If something appears to move, but doesn't
really move, you know an invisible alien has intercepted your radar
signal."

Grant agreed. "Yes. I will let you know if any aliens,
visible or invisible, have landed in your neighborhood."

"Okay, Grant. It's a deal. See you when I get back home."
Melody smiled as she cut the connection. She wondered how such a
brilliant person like Gaunt could believe in such nonsense as
invisible aliens. She remembered again that many times Gaunt had
sold electronic systems to Supermarket chains at cost in order to get
his designs spread across the country. Were any of them alien
detectors?

Chapter 5

Bob sat in the school cafeteria, occasionally taking a bite of
lasagna, as he transposed several sheets of music using his circular
"key changer." Just as he finished transposing the last line, his
cell phone rang.

"Hello Bob, this is Angela. Is Helen there yet?"

"No, not yet? What's up?"

"I needed to tell her, tell all of you, that you can come at
14:45 to make your recording."

"Whoa! What recording?"

"Didn't Helen tell you? I asked Victor to do you a favor, and
make a recording of you three performing your music. Victor thinks he
can give you a chance to earn lots of money by selling your music
worldwide."

Bob hesitated a moment before speaking. "How much would it
cost. We wouldn't be able to pay you any time soon."

"We're not asking for money. You didn't ask for money when
you chauffeured us to the hospital. We're just returning the favor."

"Thanks. That's very nice of you, Angela. I'll tell the
others."

As Bob gathered up his music and shut down his music laptop
computer, he saw out of the corner of his eye that, across the room,
Joe had just entered the cafeteria.

Joe waved, and rapidly traversed the room to sit across from
Bob. Bob pushed across the table to Joe the two milks, peanut butter
sandwich, apple and banana that he'd earlier gotten for him.

Just then Helen strode into the cafeteria to meet her friends.

Bob spoke as she approached. "Hello Helen. Are you going to
get lunch?"

She replied, "I'm not hungry."

Joe teased, "Are you sure it's not just that you don't want to
go down the line because everyone will notice this?" Joe brushed his
hand lightly upward against Helen's mismatched solid yellow shorts and
dark red blouse.

She glanced down at her clothes and smiled. "No, of course
not." Then she frowned as she remembered. "I'm still a bit riled from
getting this speeding ticket on my way over here." She tossed a
yellow slip of paper down onto the orange tabletop.

Joe looked puzzled. "But you don't have a car!"

Helen smiled ruefully. "That's true, unless you count when I
drive Bob's car. The traffic cop interrupted my jogging to give me
this ticket."

Bob picked up the ticket and looked closely at her. "You look
serious. Surely you're joking. Why did he give you the ticket?"

She replied, "I think he got mad when I told him he should
get his speedometer fixed."

Joe looked wondering at her. "And why did you tell him he
should get his speedometer fixed?"

Helen grated out her answer. "It tagged me as jogging twenty
meters per second along the sidewalk."

Joe reached across the table, and took the ticket from Bob.
"Wow. Hey! This isn't really a speeding ticket. It's only a warning
ticket. It says that if you're a public nuisance again, you'll be
subject to a fine. May I keep this ticket for my 'Helen Archives'?"

She smiled at him. "Of course you may. Thank you."

Joe continued, "Did you find any really valuable coins while
you were outrunning a racehorse?"

She looked at him, a look of puzzlement crossing her face.
"Why would I?" As she realized Joe's meaning she grinned. "Quit
teasing me.

Bob changed the subject. "Helen, don't you have some other
news for us?"

"Indeed I do. Remember that guy we met on the beach and took
to the hospital? "She paused as she looked at them to see their
reaction. At Bob's smile and Joe's inquisitive look, Helen continued,
"Victor owns a recording studio, and he's asked us to be recorded on a
disc, free!"

"What!" Joe exclaimed, "How can you be so lucky?"

Bob answered for Helen. "Angela convinced Victor he should do
us a favor."

Joe laughed. "I suppose this illustrates how women run the
world behind the scenes." He smiled his teasing smile.

Joe continued, "So, when do we get to do this recording?"

Helen said, "I don't know. Angela's supposed to call me to
tell me the exact time."

Bob recalled his previous conversation with Angela and
responded, "We're supposed to meet Victor at his home, right after our
next tutoring session, at 14:45. He's setting things up, even as we
speak."

Surprised by this comment Joe stared at Bob. "You sly dog. You
knew all the time, and didn't even tell me!"

Enjoying the moment Bob smiled. Not often did he have the
chance to tell Joe news. "I didn't know until just a few minutes ago.
Angela called me."

Bob looked at his watch and added, "We'd better hurry if we
want to use our scheduled time at the music lab."

The three friends hurried to the music lab. As Helen answered
the pretest questions on the computer, she found herself daydreaming
about the recording she would be doing afterward. She didn't notice
that she'd automatically answered correctly all the pretest questions
about pre-tonal, tonal and post-tonal theory. If she had been more
alert, it would have surprised her because she had not yet studied
the topic.

After the computer session, Helen met Joe and Bob in the
parking lot. Bob already sat in the camper truck on the passenger's
side. Joe held the driver's side door open for Helen so she could
slide in to sit in the middle.

The trio arrived at Victor's exactly on time. "Hello folks.
Glad you could make it. Come in." Victor held the door open for them
with his left hand. While Victor had not put his right arm in a sling,
the trio easily noticed that he tried to not use it for pushing or
pulling.

"Let me show you my equipment." Victor led them into a small
room whose walls were covered with glass cabinets holding electronic
equipment. "I designed the door and walls to make this room
soundproof."

"You will perform there." Victor pointed to three small stools
in the center of the room. Taking care to not bump their instruments,
Bob and Joe each perched on a stool, and Helen stood between them.

"We will be ready in exactly twenty seconds." Victor flipped
a switch, and then pulled a cigarette package from his shirt pocket.

Helen interrupted. "Victor . . . I'm allergic to cigarette
smoke."

Victor looked at her in surprise as he turned slightly and
streched his left arm to flip a switch to his right. He looked at
the cigarettes in his hand, and slowly put them back into his shirt
pocket. "Are you really allergic to cigarette smoke?"

"Actually", she admitted, "Everyone's allergic to cigarette
smoke. It's just that some people don't know it."

Victor stood silently a few seconds. "I wondered about that.
Do you really think I'm killing myself with these cigs?" He looked
expectantly toward Helen.

Helen could only nod her head.

Victor stood silently a few moments as he reconsidered why he
smoked. Finally, he said, "Well . . ., shall we resume the
countdown?" He flipped some more switches. "Twenty, nineteen . . . "
At ten he stopped counting and used his fingers to show the number of
remaining seconds.

Joe and Bob, at the same time, began to play. Helen's lovely
voice harmonized immediately with their playing. Victor smiled as he
listened to their playing. They performed so beautifully! Surely this
would make the top hundred.

With the recording completed, Victor spoke to them. "It's a
very good recording. Thank you all. Now I need to record your
answers to a couple of questions. Next I can submit everything to my
producer. If he likes it, then we all might be a bit richer. I'll
let you know when Grant sends me his evaluation."

Victor led them into another room obviously designed for
photography. He instructed them to sit on a long couch and look
expectantly into the video recording camera.

After they were seated, Victor said, "Now I will ask two
questions, and each of you will answer the question in turn."

"The first question is: 'Why did you become a musician'?"

Bob answered first. "On my 7th Birthday, my grandfather gave
me a piccolo. The next year, in a school play, I used it to play the
ending part of 'The Stars and Stripes Forever.' Later I learned how to
play other musical instruments." Bob turned to Helen, swinging his
open hand toward her as if to say, "your turn."

Helen said, "I've always loved music. My mother sang
professionally, and she sang to me all my life, including before my
birth. That may be why I have a natural perception of intervals. It
wouldn't have made sense for me to go into any other field of study."

Joe grinned at Helen before taking his turn. "I had a high
school sweetheart, a beautiful girl in the church choir. I wanted to
impress her. So I began to study the fiddle. But she moved to
Sweden."

Then Joe smiled as he added, "But now I know how to play the
fiddle."

Victor returned his smile. "Good. "Then he asked his second
question. "What do you want to be doing one year from now?"

Bob answered first. "I have my eye on being an instructor in
the school of music here at the university."

Next Helen answered. "I see myself as joining some opera
group. I had expected that when I finished school, I would become an
opera singer. If that doesn't work out, I can always support myself by
teaching music."

Finally, Joe answered. "I haven't thought about this yet. I
will be out of school. Perhaps the three of us would continue to play
as a band, and support ourselves by playing at various special
events."

After the interview, Victor gave Joe the first disc already
made by his recording equipment. "Here's your copy of the recording of
the music and interview. Later today, I'll email a copy to Grant so
he can evaluate your performance."

Joe replied, "Thank you, my good friend. We appreciate your
faith in our music."

Victor combed his red-orange hair with his hand. "I wanted to
do you guys a favor for helping me out yesterday. And it looks like
I'm doing myself a favor also. Thank you again."

Bob turned to Helen, "Are you ready to go?"

"You and Joe go ahead. I promised to give Angela some driving
lessons."

Bob smiled as Angela suddenly appeared in the doorway. "And
here she is. She must have known we were done. Helen, you are just
too good for your own good. See you later at Joe's place for our
regular practice session?"

"Sure. See you in a few hours." She gave them goodbye hugs.

As the guys drove away, Joe asked, "Bob, will you help me
locate opera singer prospects for Helen?"

Chapter 6

Helen asked Angela, "Did you have any particular place in mind
for test driving?"

As Angela hesitated, Victor started to clasp his hands
together. Then as pain coursed up his right arm, he decided to skip
the sign language. "Why don't you practice at the abandoned military
school."

"That's a good idea. Let's go, Angela." Angela picked up her
round baggy white purse and led Helen out the door to Victor's dark
green pickup truck.

Helen noticed a large cardboard box in the back of the truck.
"Is it okay if we leave that box in the truck?"

"Sure. That's only an empty box Vigor, I mean Victor, planned
to take to the recycling place later."

Angela's face flushed red as she apologized. "I sometimes
forget and use my pet name for Vigor, . . . oops, there. I did it
again!"

Helen smiled her understanding. "I like it! How did you find
Victor?"

As they climbed into the cab of Victor's truck, Angela
answered, "I didn't. He found me. Six years ago, he attended a
summer engineering music conference in Belgrade, Brazil at the hotel
where I worked as a maid."

Helen interrupted, "Belgrade? I knew about the Belgrade in
Europe, but I didn't know Brazil had one."

Angela paused, then replied, "It's not a very old city. I
think they built it about thirty years ago and named it after the
European city."

Angela continued her story. "Vigor had forgotten some
important papers in his room and had rushed back to get them. I had
just finished straightening the blankets on his bed. He walked in
just as I walked through the door to leave. We ran into each other.
When he saw me, he stopped just in time, but I didn't. Maybe I
wanted to run into him." Angela smiled at the memory.

Helen echoed Angela's smile. As she made herself comfortable
sitting in front of the inset steering wheel, she noticed that the
truck had one long couch seat just like the newer models had. She
asked, "Angela, did this couch seat come with your truck originally?"

Angela replied, "I don't know. We bought it second hand. The
couch seat and the three seat belts were in it when we bought it."

Helen acknowledged Angela's answer by nodding her head. Then
she pointed to the drive buttons on the dashboard. "If you wish to
go faster, push the forward button. If you want to go just a little
bit faster, then just jab it. It you want to go a lot faster, hold
it in. If you need to slow down, push the back button or step on the
brake. But be careful with the back button. If you use it to slow
down by holding it in, after you stop, you'll find yourself going in
reverse. It's better to stop by stepping on the brake. And this red
button on the left is the off button. Press it after you've parked
the car to turn off the engine."

Helen waited while Angela mentally processed the information.
"Seems simple enough. Actually Vigor explained that part before. He
even told me that I could start the engine by giving three quick jabs
on either button. Also, he told me I should never hit the panic
button." Angela pointed to a three centimeter by three centimeter
square set in the middle of the dashboard.'

Helen frowned slightly as she looked at Angela. "Well, if
you see yourself about to run into another vehicle, you should hit
the panic button. It tells the truck's computer to take over
driving the vehicle. You usually want to do this in case of
emergency. The computer can decide how much to brake or speed up
quicker than any person can. After the emergency is over, the
computer stops the car so that the driver can resume control."

Angela acknowledged by nodding her head back and forth. "But
what I need help on most is actually driving."

"Yes, of course. Let's go." Helen gave the forward button
three quick jabs.

A computer voice responded, "You are not authorized to drive
this vehicle."

Both Helen and Angela laughed out loud at their forgetting
about this lock on the truck. Through her laughter Angela managed to
address the computer. "Attend to me computer V S."

The truck computer answered. "You have my attention, Angela"

Angela replied in a formal voice. "Please authorize the
current driver to drive this vehicle today and all future days."

The computer acknowledged, "Authorization is granted."

When they arrived at the abandoned school, Helen stopped on
the side road that ran around the parking lot. Helen opened her door,
and looking at Angela, moved her hand in a counterclockwise motion to
signal that they should change places.

As Angela climbed into the drivers seat, she asked, "Now what?
what should I practice doing?"

"Since you know the basics, let's just drive on this side road
that runs around the parking lot until I tell you to stop."

"Okay", Angela agreed. "Remember, you promised to not
criticize my mistakes."

"Of course. I'll merely have you repeat until you get it
right." Helen smiled to show her friendly intent.

Angela pressed the speed forward button on the dashboard, "I
hope I don't run off the road."

Helen looked sharply at Angela. "Angela, please focus your
complete attention on the road where you want the truck to go. This
is very important."

Angela gave Helen a weak smile. "I'll try." After she'd gone
half-way around the circle, she turned her head to talk to Helen. As
she did so, sudden dizziness made her jerk the steering wheel.

Alarmed, Helen reached out to tap Angela on the Shoulder.
"Angela, stop!"

Angela stepped hard on the brake, and the truck lurched to a
stop."

Helen spoke as calmly as she could manage. "You just did the
first brakes test. Let's see if we can stop more smoothly."

Helen got out of the parked truck and removed the large empty
packing box from the back of the truck. She placed this on the ground
about a meter off the road.

Helen walked over to where Angela still sat in the driver's
seat. She placed her right hand on Angela's shoulder and looked her
directly in the eye. "Angela, please don't take this as criticism.
I want you to stay calm, keep your eye on the road, and keep control
of the wheel when you have to turn your head."

Suddenly, Angela felt something flow from Helen's fingers.
She felt it travel upward from her shoulder into her neck, then
disappear. Angela felt an amazing calmness. "Helen! What did you
just do to me? I don't feel nervous anymore."

Helen stepped backward in surprise. "I didn't do anything.
But I'm very glad you aren't nervous anymore. Are you ready to start
again?"

At Angela's nod, Helen said, "Drive around the circle.
When we come back here, stop at the box."

The first time Angela stopped at the box with a noticeable
jerk. Over the successive tries her stops become smoother. Finally,
Angela said, "I've got it".

Helen replied, "Indeed, you do." She smiled at Angela. "How
come this truck runs so quietly at idle?"

"You noticed that?" Angela showed her vicarious pride, "Vigor
takes very good care of his truck. What do we do next?"

"Drive into the parking lot. We'll practice pulling into
parking spaces."

Angela consistently parked over a line, putting half the
truck in the adjacent parking space. After four such tries, Helen
asked Angela, "Angela, how are you deciding when to turn the wheel?"

Angela replied, "I turn the wheel when I see the first
boundary line go past."

"I see. Angela, next time I want you to try this. Pick a
parking space. Try to see both the first and second boundary lines at
the same time. Turn the wheel when it will put the truck exactly
midway between the boundaries. Drive as slowly as you need to do
this."

After ten more tries, Angela felt confident. "Hey, I've got
it. Thanks Helen. I'll practice driving as much as I can this week.
Come next week and I'll show you how much better I've gotten at
driving."

"Sure. You can begin your practice by driving back home."

Angela began the familiar drive back home. After only a few
blocks, she saw a man trying to hitch a ride. Her previous practice
still sharp in her mind, Angela stepped gently on the brake pedal.
The truck slowed and stopped.

Helen lowered her window, and asked the man, "Where are you
going?"

The man leaned over to peer into the cab. Then he
straightened up and addressed Helen. "Just throw me your purse."
As he pulled out a wicked looking gun he added, "And be quick about
it."

As Angela jabbed the forward button, and held it in, Helen
heard a silent voice in her mind saying, "It's okay now." At the
same time the man apparently threw the gun at her. She flinched,
but the gun had already vanished.

"Good going Angela!" Helen looked back toward the man as the
truck continued to accelerate away. The man just stood there staring
at the truck. After a few blocks Angela slowed the truck, pulled
over to the side of the road, and stopped. White-faced, she turned
toward Helen. "I think I need to lie down for a moment. He might
have shot us."

Helen opened her door as she faced Angela, "slide over and
lie down while I drive us back."

As she walked around the truck to the driver's side, she
wondered about their escape. It had been impossibly easy. "That's
because I took his gun away from him and ate it." Helen stopped in
mid-stride. Then thinking the silent voice to be just her
imagination, she resumed walking.

"I am real. Think of some tests to prove it to yourself."
Helen smiled at this. How sophisticated could her imagination get?

Chapter 7

As they drove back home, Angela recovered her spirits. "Helen,
could you stop at the Vanity Shop? I'd like to buy a replacement for
a mirror I broke last week."

Helen glanced over at Angela. Angela smiled as she sat up and
refastened her seat belt around her. Helen replied, "Just tell me
where to find the Vanity Shop."

Angela pointed through the windshield. Just turn left at the
light, and go about a block to the shopping center on your right.

Helen replied, "I remember it now." She looked ahead to the
traffic light. It looked strange. She saw the red arrow for the left
turn signal but also saw, as if in a tunnel, a sequence of red arrows
that at the end of the tunnel changed to green. Bemused and
distracted by the strange looking red light, Helen didn't stop for it.
She drove into the intersection just as the red arrow signal changed
to green left arrow.

Their truck entered the intersection at the same time as
another car. Angela screamed, "No! No! No!" as she saw the car
headed right toward them. Almost by accident she swung her arms
around and swatted the panic button on the dashboard. Immediately,
All the side windows rolled down.

Meanwhile the passenger in the front seat of the car, Mike
Long, reached out calmly and pressed the panic button while the
driver, Dan Austin, belatedly pressed the brake pedal as hard as he
could.

Mike watched the action as if in slow motion. He barely
noticed the windows of the car swiftly roll down. He did notice two
women in the green truck and watched the driver put her left hand
through her open window as if she could stop Dan's car with one hand.

Mike stared at Helen, fearful that the next second would see
her hand crushed. Instead, both vehicles, under control of their
computers, attempted to avoid the collision.

The car made a 450 degree counterclockwise turn. At 180
degrees through its 450 degree rotation, when it faced away from the
truck, the car accelerated forward briefly. At 360 degrees through
its rotation, Mike felt the brakes take hold. Mike stared forward at
the truck. The car completed its 450 degree rotation, and he needed
to look through his open side window to keep the truck in view.

The truck made a full 360 clockwise degree rotation. At 90
degrees through its rotation, it accelerated away from the car for a
brief instant. At 270 degrees through its rotation, the brakes took
hold.

Both vehicles had slowed significantly, but not enough to
completely avoid collision. Mike could see it now. In another half
second the side of the truck would strike their car. He attempted to
slide as far as he could away from his side window, but his seat belt
jerked him to a stop.

The expected impact never came. Mike, catching his breath,
looked wonderingly through his open side window at the green truck.
Both vehicles had stopped. He could see Helen and Angela through the
truck's open side window. They were staring at him. Mike did not
notice that Helen's hand rested lightly on his open window ledge.
Mike grimaced, and weakly waved to Helen.

With the vehicles stopped, Dan saw that they needed to clear
the intersection. He triple punched the forward button on the
dashboard to start the engine. He looked to his right to check on
the truck. He noticed the driver of the truck holding on to their
window, while staring at Mike. He thought to warn the driver to
remove her hand, but immediately forgot about it because the need to
clear the Highway intersection dominated his thoughts.

Dan glanced upward at the traffic light. It flashed red in
all directions. Of course! The car's computer had transmitted the
emergency code to the traffic light.

Dan drove his car forward through the light, turning left,
back the way they had come, so he could park his car in that shopping
center they had just passed.

In a daze, Helen started the truck, followed Dan, and parked
the truck in the adjacent space to the right of the car. She looked
to her left to meet Mike's stare.

Dan opened his door, and walked around his car to address
Helen. "Are you alright?"

Helen broke off her stare with Mike, and looked at Dan.
"We're fine. Both of us are fine. We were all extremely lucky this
time. We should take it as a lesson for next time."

Angela quickly opened her door, so she could get out to face
Dan. "You drove very recklessly! We could have all been killed!
It's a miracle that we're not all dead! Your guardian angel won't
always be there to save you." Turning to inspect Victor's truck she
said, "I don't understand how we escaped the collision?"

Helen wondered too. What really happened? Then she heard or
imagined she heard a quiet voice within her say, "I stopped the
vehicles from colliding." She snapped her head sideways to get rid of
the voice. Could anything be done to stop her silent auditory
illusions?

Mike and Helen emerged from their respective vehicles at the
same time. All four of them now stood in front of the two vehicles.

Mike addressed Helen and Angela. "I'm Mike Long, and my
companion is Dan Austin. Dan is the CEO for United Tobacco Companies.
I'm his right hand man, responsible for public relations and shooting
any trouble that arises. We came a week early to vacation before the
big event."

Helen frowned, but politely asked, "What big event?"

But Angela, excited, answered. "Oh, you must mean the big
Shoppe Faire next Monday at the fairgrounds. Almost everyone who has
anything to sell will be there advertising their wares. I myself will
be there representing the university Union store. Helen, you should
come to my booth at the Faire."

Helen shook her head. "First I've heard of it. I don't think
I'm interested in the faire."

Angela turned toward Helen. "You won't be free that day?"

Helen replied, "Oh, I'll come see you, Angela. But I have no
intention of seeing these two gentlemen ever again."

Mike responded, "I understand. We almost killed you. I'm
sorry. I don't blame you for never wanting to see us again."

Helen shook her head. "No. That's not it at all. I hate
tobacco and cigs. I won't have anything to do with people selling the
cigs. I wish you understood that cigs kill people."

Mike started to respond, but then changed his mind.
He signaled Dan and they both got back into their car. Helen and
Angela watched them drive out of the shopping center.

Angela turned to Helen. "Now I feel relieved. Helen, what do
you think just happened? How come we aren't dead?"

Helen frowned. "I don't know, and I don't want to think about
it. Let's go buy your mirror."

As they approached the Vanity Shop, they saw a small boy
sitting on the sidewalk in front of it. As the boy looked up at them,
they saw the tears in his eyes. Helen asked, "What's wrong?"

The boy started to cry again, and through his tears explained.
"I came to buy a present for my mom, but just as I got here, the wind
blew my M-note out of my hand. I couldn't see where it went. Now I
don't have any money to buy my mom's present."

Helen smiled. "I think I can fix that." She reached into her
pocket and pulled out a flat wallet. Opening it, she pulled out her
last M-note. Giving it to the small boy she said, "This will replace
the one you lost."

The boy looked up at Helen, and smiled his thanks. "Oh, Thank
you very much! Are you the Goddess of Beauty?"

"What?" Both Helen and Angela spoke as one.

The boy pointed to a billboard behind them. "Isn't that you?"

Helen and Angela quickly turned to look in the direction he
pointed. They saw the billboard set about four meters off the ground
on the edge of the parking lot. On it a picture featured a woman
dressed in a toga like an ancient Greek citizen. She cradled a
shallow dish of white stargazer lily flowers in her two hands while
looking up at the night sky filled with stars. The Caption at the top
of the Billboard read, "The goddess of beauty shops first at the
Vanity Shop."

Angela exclaimed, "Oh my goodness Helen, she looks just like
you!"

Helen addressed the young boy. "No, that's not me. I think
the goddess isn't a real person."

Angela added her comment. "Sometimes Helen acts like an
angel, but I know that she's a real person."

The boy nodded his head. "That's what I thought. But when I
saw you, I wanted to make sure." The boy turned to go into the shop.
Helen and Angela followed him in.

As they entered the shop, Angela rushed over to speak to the
woman at the checkout desk. "Who was the model for your goddess of
beauty ad?"

Surprised, the woman looked up at Angela. "We didn't have a
model. My husband paid a friend of his to find the most beautiful
woman in the world. Myself, I think it's kind of silly, and haven't
paid any attention. Why do you ask? Do you know someone who it looks
like?"

Chapter 8

Later Helen met Bob and Joe for music practice, greeting them
with the announcement, "I almost got killed today, twice."

Stunned silence greeted her announcement. After a few moments
Joe replied, "I'm very glad you survived."

Bob followed with "What happened?"

Helen replied, "I ran a red light, and almost drove Angela's
truck into another car. Luckily the truck's panic computer programs
saved us. I don't quite understand how. Earlier than that, a gunman
threatened to shoot us if I didn't give him Angela's purse."

"And I daydreamed Sparky talked to me again."

Bob laughed at this. "And what did Sparky tell you?"

"Sparky claimed to have eaten the gunman's gun and to have
blocked the collision. Sparky also said we should do some tests to
prove it exists."

Bob commented, "Well, perhaps your subconscious suggested
these tests because it wants to exorcise this Sparky."

Joe added, "Have you thought of any tests to prove or disprove
that Sparky is real?"

Bob responded, "I know some tests. They won't prove anything
for sure, but they may help show how unlikely Sparky is."

Bob continued, "Helen, will you cooperate with us in these
tests?"

At her nod, Bob said, "Okay, what I want you to do is pretend
you know Sparky is real, and you can talk directly with Sparky. I'll
ask Sparky some questions, and you tell us its answers."

She nodded assent. Bob asked, "Sparky, can you do
arithmetical calculations faster than Helen?"

She said, "Yes, I can." Helen looked surprised at her own
words.

Bob echoed her surprise. He paused a moment. "Tell me what's
eight to the eighth power."

"Sixteen million, seven hundred seventy seven thousand, two
hundred and sixteen."

Joe grabbed a pen and his notebook. He wrote down a number at
random and showed it to Bob. "Ask her to factor this number."

Bob looked at the number and took the pen and notebook from
him. "Sparky, tell me the prime factors of 9823862349264."

"Sixteen divides it. The odd prime factors are three, twenty
three, and lastly, eight billion, eight hundred ninety eight million,
four hundred twenty six thousand, and forty one."

Bob, pen still in hand wrote down the numbers as Helen spoke.
Then both of them looked at Helen in awe. Bob said "Joe, will you
have your calculator confirm these numbers?"

Joe picked up his pocket calculator from his work desk,
punched in 9823862349264, and then pressed the factor button. The
calculator confirmed Helen's answer.

Joe turned off his calculator, and turned to her. "Well super
lady, which is it? Are you a super fast calculator, or does Sparky
really exist?"

Helen frowned. "I don't think either of those are possible. I
don't know."

Bob said, "Well I'm out of ideas for the moment. Joe do you
have any suggestions?"

Joe replied, "This is a toughie . . . Wait, I have it. Let's
ask Sparky to prove itself."

Bob turned to her, "Okay Sparky, what can you do that would
prove to us you exist?"

In answer, Helen yelled as she began to float toward the
ceiling. Bob stared at her as she floated upward. "This is not
happening. This is not happening. I'm dreaming it."

When she reached the ceiling, Joe voiced his question.
"Helen, how did you do this?"

She yelled down, "I'm not doing this! Hold on a minute."
For a long while they watched Helen floating near the ceiling with
her eyes closed and an expression of total amazement on her face.

Finally, she floated back down to stand between them. "Bob, it
helped tremendously that you had me pretend that Sparky is real. It
help make it possible for me to accept that Sparky really is real."

"Sparky really is a person. Sparky can control
gravito-inertial and electro-magnetic fields. I see everything much
more clearly now. I am Sparky! Sparky is me! Yet, Sparky is more
than me."

Bob raised his eyebrows. "Really? why did Sparky evolve the
ability to levitate?"

Helen looked forward without seeing. "Sparky's family lived
in a neutron star. Their metabolism is based on sub-atomic particle
interactions."

Bob said, "I see . . . Just kidding."

Joe said, "Then you really did have supervision yesterday!
How well can you see now."

Helen replied, "I can see in all directions at the same time.
Whenever you move, I actually see where you will be in the next few
seconds. I realize now that's part of the reason I had the collision
accident. I saw the green light in the future, before it turned
green. At the time, I didn't know how to interpret what I saw."

Bob responded, "It's not possible to see into the future!"

Helen replied, "You're right. I don't really see into the
future. It's just that I see what I anticipate, and I can anticipate
very accurately almost everything now."

Helen continued, "And I can see or feel the exact distance
between objects that I look at. You and Joe are standing 78.125
centimeters apart. I notice so many details that I never noticed
before!"

"All my senses are hyper! I hear your heartbeat. I can tell
you the chemical composition of things I smell or taste. I caused
the ocean wave that sprained Victor's wrist again. And I cured
Angela's proneness to dizziness. I didn't realize it at the time."

Helen continued, "And I know everything there is to know about
human biology! When Sparky absorbed me, I learned everything that
Sparky learned. Sparky learned the complete basis of life."

Bob voiced his skepticism. "Maybe Sparky knows everything
about your biology, but I doubt he knows everyone's."

Helen reaffirmed her claim. "Sparky understands all possible
variations of my biology. Now I also know every emzyme that might
have been used in any person's body and I know how they work together
to maintain life."

Joe stared at Helen, wondering if this person before him still
remained the Helen he knew and loved. He addressed Helen, "If you and
Sparky are now one person, are you still a woman?"

Helen smiled warmly at Joe. "Would you still love me if I
weren't? But you don't need to worry. Sparky has not changed my
gender. Sparky is neither male nor female. However Sparky does feel
feminine to me. But of course, she should. Sparky is me!"

After a pause, Bob said, "Well . . . Either I'm dreaming
this remarkably lucid dream, or we have a very interesting time ahead
of ourselves."

Helen laughed. "How can it be your dream. It must be my
dream."

The three friends stared at each other for a few seconds.

Finally, Joe broke the silence. "Glad to hear that you are
still the most beautiful woman in the world. Now you truly are the
goddess of beauty."

Sudden insight came to Helen. "Joe! You were the one who
arranged for my picture to be on the billboard by the vanity shop!"

Joe grinned. "Indeed. I thought it only fair for your face
to launch a thousand sales."

Helen blushed. "At least my name isn't on the billboard.
Most people won't know its a local person."

Bob interjected, "Unless you become famous because of your
superpowers. What can't you do?"

Helen paused. "I don't know. But I feel that I can do
anything that I can imagine doing. Why don't you test me?"

Joe said "Could you make us rich by crushing coal to diamond?"
She paused a moment with the blank look in her eye. Then she opened
her hand out toward him palm up, fingers curled slightly. A small
diamond immediately took shape in her cupped hand. She shook her
hand gently, as if she were rolling dice. Joe watched, fascinated,
as the diamond slowly grew larger than any diamond anyone had ever
seen. He did not expect it when Helen tossed the diamond toward him
and he almost missed the catch. He lifted the diamond closer to
study it carefully. "Tomorrow we'll take this to the jewelers for
evaluation!" He put the diamond in his pants pocket.

Bob said with evident tension, "We see you can levitate and
make things from nothing. Sparky told you it could manipulate
electricity and magnetism. Can you, for example, make Joe's phone
ring?"

Joe's cell phone rang. Joe looked at Bob, shrugged his
shoulders and pulled his phone from his pocket, and placed it to his
ear without bothering to look at his caller ID. "Hello . . . "

"Hello", said Helen's voice on the phone. Joe spun around and
stared at her.

"This is fun", said Helen and the phone voice at the same
time. "Now I can carry my cell phone in my head. I'll let the
telephone tracking system know where I am anytime I travel so that
everyone will be able to reach me any time of day or night, no matter
where I am."

Joe stared at her a moment longer, then sighed and pressed the
disconnect button.

Helen continued. "Thanks guys. Earlier I had hoped you would
help me forget about Sparky. I didn't expect you to prove to me that
Sparky not only exists but has also become one with me. Thank you
again for helping me. Bob, earlier you suggested that I dreamed
sparky because I wanted to make sure Melody is safe. But now I
really can make sure Melody is safe." She smiled her gratitude.

Bob stared at her for a few more moments. Then he turned to
Joe. "This is too much for me. I need a rest. I'm going home. Our
practice session tonight is canceled. Please call me tomorrow
morning. Helen, do you want to stay awhile, or do you want me to give
you a ride home?"

She smiled. "Maybe I'll just fly home."
Bob's laugh showed his tension. "You do that . . . On
second thought, if people see you fly, they will be asking you to
teach them how. Maybe you'd better learn how to be invisible first."

Helen said, "Invisible." Then she began to turn transparent
and fade from view.

"No! This can't be happening." Bob yelled as he clenched his
fists. He spun around and walked out of the house without saying
another word.

Joe, although excited, spoke more calmly. "Helen! Are you
making the light go through you?"

She reappeared. "No. Sparky said the light goes around us."
Then Joe and Helen walked out to his porch, just in time to see Bob
drive away.

Helen sighed as she said, "Well . . . I know how Bob feels."
She turned to look at him. "See you tomorrow morning."

Joe reached out to catch Helen's hand. "Bob made a good
point. You shouldn't let everyone know about your powers. With your
good nature, you'd be doing super favors for everyone in the world,
and have no time for yourself."

Helen paused, thinking it through. "Perhaps You're right.
But I think I don't really have cause for worry. Who would believe
that I'm practically a goddess now?"

Joe smiled. "You've always been a goddess to me. But be
careful. If someone who has public credibility discovers you, and
announces you, you'll have thousands of people asking you for favors.
You've always done anything people have asked of you, provided it
fell within your power. And now you have apparently unlimited power.
Please be careful. Please keep your powers a secret."

Helen nodded, pulled Joe to her, and gave him a lingering
goodbye hug. Then she fell upward into the sky and faded out of
sight in seconds. Only a slight breeze signaled her departure.

Chapter 9

Melody watched the group assemble into the main chamber of the
moon rocket. Abner, the team leader, looked worried. Melody wondered
what could possibly worry Abner. She had thought Abner never worried.
The other three astronauts took their places. Carol sat directly
across from her, next to Abner. Calvin sitting on her left showed
his impatience by shifting his weight almost constantly. Jonathan,
sitting on her right, simply looked forward directly at Abner.
Melody imagined that anyone but Abner would have felt nervous at
Jonathan's stare.

Abner cleared his throat. "I've just received an update from
Earth. They want us to lift off a day early." Abner held up his
hand to ward off the expected questions. "I know that you think this
isn't possible. But it is, provided we change our flight plan and
leave non-essential gear on the moon."

"We'll take a coasting orbit back to earth. Instead of
taking a direct path back, we'll simply reach moon escape velocity,
and fall into orbit around Earth. Then it will be a simple matter to
refuel the Grayjay from the Earth orbiting space station."

Calvin jumped to his feet so quickly that he had to grab a
support to avoid flying to the ceiling. "But why? We wouldn't get to
Earth any sooner. If we waited until we had more fuel, we could go
faster. We might even get there quicker if we waited." Calvin looked
toward Melody as he said this last.

Melody nodded slightly to indicate that Calvin had the right
of it. Then she asked Abner, "What's the real reason we are asked to
leave a day early."

Abner's face turned slightly pink. After a few moments, he
sighed, and said, "The president wants to make an Independence Day
speech as we lift off. He wants to use our liftoff as part of his
speech."

Melody turned to look at her neighbors. Jonathan scowled his
feelings. Calvin looked pensive. Carol seemed about to ask a
question, and Abner's face showed his readiness to tackle their
objections.

When Abner turned toward Carol, she blurted out," But why?
We'll have to coast three days in this small craft just so the
president can make a nice speech!"

Abner nodded his head affirmatively. "Consider this to be
only a request. The final decision is up to all of us. Think it
over. Let me know later what you decide."

Chapter 10

Early the next morning, Helen, sitting on the roof of Joe's
apartment, patiently waited for him to wake up. At last he stirred,
opened his eyes, rolled out of bed and dressed. Only then did she
float down through the ceiling into Joe's bedroom.

"Wow", said Joe as he noticed her floating down. "So, now you
can go through things."

Helen's feet touched the floor. "Not exactly. Sparky eats the
things we go through, then afterward restores them as they were.

Joe pulled the diamond out of his pants pocket. "I've had
second thoughts about trying to sell this diamond. The clerk would
want to know where it came from." He handed the diamond back to her.
"Here. Take it back."

She took the diamond in her hand. Joe stared at the diamond
as it slowly sank into her open hand and vanished.

"So . . . How come you're here so early? If you had come
any sooner, I would have still been in bed."

She smiled, but didn't mention her waiting for Joe to wake
up. "I didn't go home. First I visited the university union store.
Some people will be a little disappointed that now the store's out
of cigarettes." Helen grinned. "Then I flew to the memorial hospital
and secretly cured everyone in immediate danger of dying."

"Wow! And how long did that take? Did you do any surgery? I
wonder how much money the store lost on the cigarettes. "

"I converted the cigarettes to 'Helen's super nutritious
chocolate covered peanut butter patties'. I also converted the
display cases to accurate plastic representations of healthy and
unhealthy lungs. The store didn't lose any money. I made enough of
the peanut butter patties to exactly pay for the cigs I took away."

"Gee, Helen. Don't you know there's no such thing as super
nutritious chocolate covered peanut butter patties?"

She grinned, "Not until I invented them."

Helen continued her story. "At the hospital, none of the
serious patients were in need of surgery. Besides, with today's
technology, if surgery were the answer, they wouldn't be in danger
of dying. For most of the patients, I only needed to make minor
improvements in their metabolism and give them the particular
nutrients they needed. After taking a few minutes to cure the
serious patients, I helped the other less serious patients."

Helen paused, then looked directly at Joe as tears began to
form in her eyes. "Joe, I want to visit the hospital regularly from
now on. Two of the patients would have died of emphysema. Cig smoking
caused their emphysema. I don't want anyone else to die from
emphysema like my uncle Ed did."

Joe stepped forward and wrapped his arms around Helen and
held her until he felt her move to disengage. As they separated,
Joe held her shoulders and looked her directly in the eyes. "You
know, Helen, now that you can do just about anything, you can do
something to stop people from smoking."

Helen's face lit up. "Thanks Joe. You are right! I will do
something! But right now, I want to give you a present."

Helen held out her hands palm up. Joe watched in amazement as
several tiny copies of musical instruments grew in her hands.
After a few seconds, Helen handed them over to Joe. "I remembered
your wishful look when we looked at instruments like these last
month."

Joe smiled his biggest most sincere smile. "Thank you Helen.
But please don't make a habit of granting my every wish. I could get
spoiled that way."

Helen laughed. "Oops. Perhaps when my powers aren't such a
novelty, I'll be more careful."

Joe grinned. "But since you do have these fantastic powers, I
have an idea how we can use them to earn some petty cash."

Helen looked puzzled, and waited for Joe to continue. "Since
you can make these tiny instruments, you can repair busted musical
instruments and equipment. We can repair musical stuff at less than
half the price of any competitor. How does that sound to you?"

Helen laughed. "So now you want me to make full sized musical
instruments and equipment! Should I start with your sound equipment?
I can make it a lot lighter now. Do you want me to advertise for
you?"

"Ah, no. Not yet. And I don't need or want the whole world
to know. I'll just tell a few of my friends on campus, and let them
know they can tell others about us. I don't want this to be a big
business. We can ask Bob if he wants in on it too. Oops, I'm
supposed to call Bob right away."

When Joe made the call, Bob answered on the second ring. "Hey
Joe. I'm sorry I didn't make it out to your place last night. I must
have forgotten. Well . . . I didn't totally forget. I had one
heck of a dream about being at your place!"

Joe echoed, "A dream?"

Bob answered, "Yah. I picked up on Helen's dream. I dreamed
she had gained all sorts of super powers. Can you imagine? I never
dreamed impossible things like that before."

Joe paused, wondering what he could say. "Eh Bob, did you know
you left your guitar at my house?"

Bob responded, "I don't think so. I think its here."
He looked on the shelf where he usually put his guitar. "It's not
here!"

Joe replied. "That's because it's here."

Bob responded, "Thanks for letting me know. Don't yet
remember when I left it. Why else did you call me?"

Joe replied, "You aren't awake yet, are you? Today's our
fourth of July gig. Do you want to meet us over here, or should we
come pick you up?"

Bob remained silent a few moments. "Might as well come pick
me up. I'll be finished with breakfast by the time you get here."

Joe replied, "Okay. See you in about twenty minutes."

When Joe and Helen reached Bob's home, they saw him studying
his guitar books and swinging on his front porch swing. Bob jumped
up and gathered his books when he saw them. He then dashed out to
the white camper truck. Helen opened the door for him, and he leaped
into the cab.

"I've figured out some possible songs for us to do." Bob
named his candidates and asked them their opinions about it.

Helen said, "Well those are all good classical fourth of July
songs. I like the lyrics of some of them. And I want to start off
with a couple of songs I just wrote." She handed Bob some music
sheets. "And here are the music sheets for them."

He took the sheets and put them in his folder while still
looking at her. "Tell me how you came to write these songs."

"Remember, on the beach, when Angela felt insulted by Joe's
comment about Victor's hair? Well, I thought about it, and decided
to make up songs about insults and friendship.

Bob looked at the songs she'd just handed him. He nodded in
appreciation. "Yes. These are good. I'm surprised you didn't
include some anti-cig songs."

Helen nodded her head. "Yes. I wanted to include some, but
couldn't figure out how to fit them into the fourth of July theme."

Bob replied, "Yes. I see how that would be difficult. You
said you liked the lyrics of some of the songs I chose. Does that
mean you won't sing the ones you don't like?"

"Which would you rather I do: Change the lyrics of a song I
don't like, or not sing it?"

Bob replied, "I would rather you not sing it of course. If
you change the lyrics, then you should change the tune also. And of
course you should sing your own songs first. Which of my songs do
you like the lyrics to?"

"I like 'Designs in the sky', 'Whose birthday is it', 'Our
Country's Birthday", and 'Yankee Doodle'."

Bob moved those songs to just below her music sheets. After
he did this, he asked, "Joe, do you agree with her about the choice of
songs."

He answered, "Sure do. I agree with almost everything Helen
does of course." He smiled at both of them.

As Bob closed his folder of music sheets he looked out the
window. "Here we are at the park already. I wonder if the stage
will be out by the lake like last year."

Joe turned onto the one lane driveway that entered the park.
"We'll know in a couple of minutes." They followed the driveway down
and around the park until they reached the parking lot by the lake.

"Well, look at that! They didn't put the stage by the lake,
but on the lake! How are we supposed to get out to it?" Joe didn't
answer his rhetorical question. The arrival of a busload of park
service employees to the lake dock answered his question for him.
Joe shook his head once in a "come this way" gesture, and led the way
down to the dock.

As they came to the dock, the park service employees prepared
a ferryboat for use. After about fifteen minutes, one man started
the ferryboat's engine, and all but six of the employees left the
dock to prepare the rest of the park for the holiday programs. The
remaining six employees stepped onto the ferry, and found seats for
themselves. One of them took the pilot's seat.

Immediately after boarding Bob moved to the back of the
ferryboat where, by standing up, he could get a good view of the
ferryboat's forward direction. He remained standing and supported
himself by one of the metal bars connecting floor and ceiling. He
stared in the direction of the floating stage in the middle of the
lake.

Joe called out to him, "Hey Bob, are you in a hurry to get
to the stage. We are early you know. Besides, nothing will happen
until we get there."

Bob replied, but Joe could not hear his reply. Turning to
Helen, he said, "I can't hear him. Is it because he's in the back
of the boat?"

Helen replied, "Yes. He said that he's looking at the
stage." Let's go to him.

Bob turned to watch his two friends walk up to him. "I'm
just thinking about their set up." He pointed to the stage. "It
looks as if they set up the sound equipment yesterday. One advantage
of a big gig like this is we don't have to bring any of our own sound
equipment. Of course the disadvantage of a big gig like this is we
aren't allowed to use our own more familiar sound equipment." Bob
grinned.

Helen laughed. "Maybe I should personally inspect their
sound equipment to make sure it is up to par."

Joe added, "We will have plenty of time to do that. We are
scheduled to begin in about 40 minutes. Although I suspect we should
just stay out of the way while the park guys run the sound checks."

Bob replied, "Bet they won't do it as well as you and Helen."

Helen giggled. Why Bob, you actually made a compliment."

Bob traded glances with Joe, then replied, "Oh, you noticed.
Bob Paused, then continued. "Actually I made it accidentally. Did
you like it? If you did, then after the concert, I can figure out
lots more."

Helen Laughed, "Bob! You surprise me. Are you taking
silliness lessons from Joe? But you can flatter me some other time.
There's something I need to do as soon as possible. I'll leave right
after our gig. What about you two?"

Joe guessed what she had to do. "I didn't have any plans for
myself. I presume you are leaving immediately after the gig to make
sure your friend Melody gets back to Earth safely."

She smiled. "Yes. I won't need you to give me a ride of
course, so you are free to stay here all day or not as you please.
I'll be back maybe this weekend and we can talk then about the
astronauts' safe arrival back on earth."

Bob looked strangely at her, but said nothing. His face
showed the conflict in his mind. Did Helen really have super powers?
No, of course not. That's a silly dream!

Joe also noticed Bob's discomfort. "Hey Bob, what's bothering
you?"

Bob shook his head, started to say something, then shook his
head again. He looked toward them and saw that both were looking
expectantly in his direction. After a few moments, Bob said, "Helen,
are you . . ." His voice trailed off as he found it impossible to
continue.

"Bob, you didn't just dream about Sparky giving me
superpowers. Sparky really does exist."

Bob shook his head negatively. "That's impossible!"
Helen smiled, and pulled her friends into a three-way hug. "Let me
show you Sparky's story."

An image formed in both Joe's and Bob's mind at the same time.
Musical food in the form of light and motion swirled all around them.
Helen's silent voice-over carried the information they needed to
interpret the images. Both Bob and Joe feel they are Sparky. They
feel the feelings Sparky felt. It's as if they are the ones living
in the neutron star.

They live in the neutron star of Sparky's original home. But
the star will soon collapse into a black hole. It's necessary to
leave. The neutron star is so close to collapse that to escape,
everyone must fly directly upward away from the center of gravity.
It's lucky that we discovered contra-gravity fields before final
collapse.

It's time to leave. One of Sparky's friends tries to follow
their path. As they fly away from their star, the friend is lost
from view.

The image shifts. Suddenly the neutron star is no longer
visible, and stars are whizzing by. A dim star appears directly in
front. They plunge directly into it. The food isn't as rich here as
at home, but it will do. They slowly travel all the way through the
star. As they exit the star, they hear a music that reminds them of
their home star. This is impossible. Nothing lives in this section
of the galaxy.

They follow the music trail. There is a slightly thicker
cloud of matter at its source. Helen's thought explains that they
are looking at the Earth. They plunge into the cloud that contains
the source. It's just ahead of us. The music stops. No matter,
we've located the source. Now to absorb it so we can examine it.

The images faded from Bob and Joe's mind. Helen smiled at
them as they looked groggily at her. "Sparky thought she traced the
source of the music to me. The music that Sparky heard came from the
Earth itself."

Bob studied Helen carefully. "You look the same as always.
This is still so incredible. Are you sure you haven't changed?"

She returned the smile. "I've changed a lot, but basically
I'm still the same person. The only difference is that now I can do
anything I can imagine. I refused to believe it myself until you and
Joe proved Sparky to me. Then I had to believe. Now I understand.
I am Sparky. Sparky is me. Now I can fly to the moon to make sure
my friend Melody is safe."

Chapter 11

The Grayjay had launched successfully. They were now coasting
through space, falling into orbit about Earth. It will take two and a
half days to complete the fall.

Melody released her restraints and prepared to float around
the cabin in zero gravity. She had prepared for this moment. From the
storage bin next to her bunk she pulled cloth and metal wings that she
had made the previous day. Attaching the wings and looking upward,
she launched herself toward the ceiling.

Seconds later she bumped against the ceiling. Using the wings
to push against the air, she swam into the center of the room, and
pivoted. She had placed herself exactly where she wanted, over two
meters away from any wall.

For a while, Melody just enjoyed spinning and moving through
space using the makeshift wings. She looked down. In the absence of
gravity, down meant in the direction of the floor. She saw Calvin
walking across the room using the magnetic shoes to keep himself on
the floor. Abner, Carol, and Jonathan were seated at their
workstations.

Melody heard her phone ring. She had left it on her bunk. So
she called out, "Calvin, could you toss me my phone?"

Calvin grinned, changed his direction to walk over to Carol's
bunk, carefully picked up Carol's phone, and pitched it to her with an
expert baseball like pitch. It landed exactly in the palm of Melody's
outstretched right hand.

As she very slowly spun around from the impact of the phone,
Melody pressed the receive button. Grant's image formed on the cell
phone monitor. "Hello Gaunt, What's up?"

Grant said, "I'd like you to do me a favor. Pull the TV
monitor out of the wall and open the back panel. Find a red toggle
switch and flip it."

Melody replied, "I will, after you tell me why."

Grant sighed. "Ok. The red toggle switch will activate the
invisible alien detector inside the Grayjay. I didn't expect it to
ever be used, so I put the switch for it in the back."

Melody laughed. "I shouldn't have been surprised. Ok, I can
toggle your switch, but tell me anyway why you put the invisible alien
detector circuit in there in the first place?"

Grant said, "I can explain that part easily. I use a
prototype circuit for all my devices. Long ago I constructed a
general circuit that does almost everything that I would like a
monitor system to do. Naturally I incorporated some of my alien
detectors into it. Whenever I need to design a new monitor system, I
start with my prototype circuit, and make minor adjustments to
customize it."

Melody hovered her finger over the disconnect button. "Oh, I
almost forgot. Why do you want to turn on the invisible alien
detector inside the Grayjay?"

Grant paused. Then he said, "Just before the Grayjay
launched, my instruments, the ones you deployed earlier on the moon,
observed an invisible alien land on the moon, and approach the
Grayjay. I couldn't detect it at launch or after launch. I'm
considering the possibility that you have an alien stowaway on
board."

Melody laughed again. "I guess I didn't really need to ask.
Ok, I'm on my way." She ended the call, placed the phone on her belt
hook, and looked for the closest wall. Propelling herself to the
nearest wall, she lazily landed feet first, then used the brace of the
wall to propel herself speedily back to her bunk. There she put the
wings back in the storage bin. She would have fun with those later.

Slipping on her magnetic shoes, Melody went to the TV monitor,
disengaged it from the wall, turned it around, and found the red
toggle switch. She flipped it, and the put the TV monitor back in its
wall space.

The word "scanning" showed briefly on the monitor. Then a
picture of the inside of the cabin showed from the point of view of
the monitor. Consequently, the monitor looked like a mirror.

Only now the monitor showed a pink globe about two meters in
diameter floating near the ceiling right next to where Melody had been
playing in midair.

By now the others had noticed Melody's antics and were staring
at the monitor.

Calvin looked at the monitor, looked up at where the pink
globe supposedly floated, and saw nothing unusual. He nodded at
Melody, and then removed his phone from his belt and casually pitched
it in the direction of the pink globe as shown on the monitor.

The pink globe image on the monitor easily evaded the
corresponding image of the thrown phone. Calvin's phone bounced off
the ceiling, struck a wall, bounced off the floor, and returned to
within his reach. He retrieved his phone and stuck it back in his
belt.

Calvin looked at the others. "Anybody else have any ideas?"
Everyone except Carol just stood there staring. Carol shook her head
in the negative.

For a few more seconds everyone stared at the space above.
Then a vibrant feminine musical voice startled everyone. "I have
decided to speak with you. I didn't at first intend that you know my
presence. Now I must reveal myself more than you have already seen.
Know that my intentions are peaceful. Perhaps you can pretend I'm not
here."

Nobody moved. They all waited to see what would come next.
And then they saw a ghostly form of a young lady, standing on the
floor near the center of the cabin, slowly become more and more solid.
Finally Helen stood fully visible before them.

Melody yelled, "Hel . . .", when she recognized Helen. She
cut her exclamation short because she thought she should wait to see
if Helen wanted the others to know her name. How did Helen gain the
power to become an invisible alien.

Jonathan nudged her elbow. "Melody, I've never heard you
curse before. Although I admit that the situation merits it. Myself,
I'm inclined to think she's an angel from heaven rather than a demon
from hell."

The both turned their attention to Helen as she smiled and
said, "I let you see me because I didn't want you to worry. Originally
I thought I could just ride along invisibly until you landed safely
back on Earth."

Helen continued, "I know you have questions. If I can answer
your question, I will." She looked over to Melody, wondering what her
reaction would be.

Calvin spoke first. "How did you get here? How did you make
yourself invisible?"

Jonathan got his question in before Helen answered Calvin's
question. "How can you survive in space without a spacesuit?"

Helen smiled. I flew to the moon from Earth, and entered your
craft just as it took off from the moon. I make myself invisible by
making the light go around me. I don't need a spacesuit because I can
make a bubble of air all around me."

Calvin grinned. "Care to elaborate on that? Why can you do
these things?"

Helen returned the grin. "I absorbed an alien from another
world. The merger extended the abilities of both of us."

Calvin's face showed both frustration and amusement. He
slowly nodded his head affirmatively. "Just like that? Are you going
to tell us what's so special about this alien? "

Melody echoed Calvin's feelings. "I do hope you will explain
more. Are you one of Grant's invisible aliens?"

Helen laughed. "Melody, it's good to see you again! Sparky
is alien, but doesn't have any flying saucer. Although we could make
one if we wished."

Helen looked serious as she continued, "If Grant believes I'm
an alien, he might announce it to the world press, and it could cause
trouble for me. I'd prefer that Grant not know about me being here. I
seek your friendship to ensure that he doesn't find out about me being
here."

Abner took a step toward Helen, turning his head slightly so
he could see both Helen and Melody at the same time. "Melody, do you
know this young lady?"

Melody paused. Looking thoughtful she said, "Her name is
Helen Troy. I met her six years ago. I don't have any idea how she
came to be our invisible alien."

Jonathan spoke up. "You say that you want to make friends
with us so we won't tell Grant. Isn't that kind of risky. What's to
stop us from telling everyone about you"

Helen turned to face Jonathan. "Well, unless you tell Grant,
who might be one of the few people who'd believe you and would be
believed by a lot of people, I'm not worried. I hope that you will
choose to not tell Grant about me. But whatever happens it will be
your choice. I will do no more than ask."

Melody suddenly remembered the Scanner. "But Grant's seeing
you right now on his scanner!" She turned toward the scanning
monitor.

Helen replied. "No problem. The scanner isn't seeing me.
Now that I'm aware of the invisible alien scanner, and how it works,
I can make myself invisible to it."

Jonathan walked forward to Helen, and extended his hand. "You
have my promise. I won't tell." When Helen extended her hand, and
gave him a firm but gentle handshake, Jonathan expressed his surprise.
"I do believe you are just what you seem to be, a quite human young
lady."

Then Carol spoke, "You said you intended to ride invisibly
until we were safe on Earth. Did you come here to make sure we made
it back?"

Helen smiled. "I didn't know your risks until I got here. I
prepared myself for almost everything except Grant's monitor showing
my presence. Then I decided that it would be better for you to know a
little bit about me than for you to be worried sick over invisible
aliens."

Then Abner voiced his concern. "What story are we to tell on
Earth? Grant has his recording of an invisible alien aboard our
vessel.
Do you want us to deny his recording? What do you want us to say?"

Helen looked at Abner, and then at each of the others before
answering. Then she spoke slowly and carefully. "I won't ask you to
outright lie. I ask only that you refrain from telling what you see
and hear from me right now. Grant is mistaken. I'm still very much a
human being. I don't want Grant to think I'm an invisible alien. I
don't even want him to know of my existence. I give you a dilemma that
only you can resolve."

Calvin unhooked his phone and pitched it toward Helen. Helen
instinctively caught it and then smiling, pitched it back in perfect
imitation of Calvin's pitch. Calvin smiled, and then said, "You
passed the test. Do you still wish to ride with us until we reach
Earth?"

Helen's smile widened. "Yes, of course I do. What test did I
pass?"

Calvin tapped his phone. "When I threw the phone at you, you
didn't duck. And you tossed it back to me just as if we were two kids
playing baseball. I'd say that pretty much shows your humanity, or at
least your friendliness."

Helen smiled. "Thanks. How about the rest of you? Will it be
ok with you?" As she saw answering nods and smiles, she added,
"Great!"

Chapter 12

Angela slowed her pace as she approached the entrance to the
student university union store. She no longer noticed the computer
door security monitor and took it for granted that the door would open
automatically as she approached it. As she entered, she quickly and
systematically examined the shelves for the cursory inventory that she
did every day she had worked here.

Everything seemed to be in order. She pivoted on her toe and
started to walk to her office. Then she saw the new items behind the
salesclerk's counter. What in heaven's name is that? She strode
quickly around the counter to take a closer look at the racks of candy
peanut butter patties that Helen had left there two nights earlier.
Where did these come from?

Just then Angela's supervisor entered the store. Angela waved
a peanut butter patty at her. "Betty! Look at this!"

Betty took the patty from Angela, and held it up to read the
inscription on it. "Helen's super nutritious peanut butter patties."
She opened it and took a bite. "Its delicious. You should try one.
Or did you already try one when the order came in?"

Angela shook her head. "But I didn't order these. I don't
know how they got here!"

Betty took a step backwards. "How is this possible? You are
the only one, besides myself, authorized to actually place an order.
Besides, we both stayed here Monday until we closed at noon for the
independence day Holiday. These must have appeared between noon on
Monday and now."

Betty looked around. "Is anything missing?" She spied the
plastic replica of a blackened lung. "What is that? And, where are
the cigs?"

Angela felt her heart beat rapidly. "Some thief broke into
the store and replaced the cigs with this display during the holiday!"

The supervisor nodded her head affirmative. "Yes, that's the
way I figured it also." She turned and strode rapidly to her glass
enclosed office behind the main sales counter.

Once there she clicked on her computer, and typed in the phone
code for the local branch of United Tobacco Company. As soon as she
heard the answering "Hello", she spoke rapidly, "Clint, someone broke
unto our store and stole all the cigs!"

Clint's voice showed his disbelief. "What? Have you checked
your alarm recording system yet? Email me the pictures of the thief.
But why didn't the alarm system alert the police when the thief broke
in?"

Betty replied, "That's what I'd like to know. I'll call you
back when I have the pictures."

Angela showed puzzlement on her face. "What pictures?"

Betty pointed to the middle of the far wall. There is a
hidden camera in the wall. Actually the camera is not there. Only
the lens is there. The camera is in another building. A fiber optic
cable connects them."

"Why? Wouldn't it have been cheaper to have the camera here
in the store?"

Betty agreed, "Well, yes. But the university security
advisors suggested it. They reasoned that if someone had
sophisticated electronic equipment, they could break into the store
without triggering the alarms. If they could do that they could also
detect any active camera in the store and disable it." Betty pointed
to the wall. "The recording system we have doesn't radiate any
energy, so a thief would be less likely to discover it."

Betty sat down at her desk, and invoked the computer program
for the alarm recording system. "I'll start it at closing time last
Monday. The program skips over the part where nothing is moving.
We'll see results almost immediately."

Angela bent over to get a closer look. The screen filled up
with a yellow background. Then large black letters appeared,
proclaiming, "Ultimate Security System: Copyrighted by Grant
Richardson, January 6, 2075."

Then they saw the recorded action. Someone slowly descended
from above, as if supported by an invisible rope. Angela took a quick
look behind her at the ceiling. It looked normal. She returned her
attention to the screen. The figure on the screen had her back to
them. Her long light brown hair hid the small bit of her profile
caught by the camera.

Angela thought, "From the back, she looks like Helen."

Betty spoke then. "I'm running this in record mode so I can
send a copy to Clint and to University Security."

They watched silently as the figure on the screen stood in
front of the shelf where the cigs had been. The figure hid most of
the cig cartons from view.

However, one cig carton, slightly to the left of the
mysterious figure, remained in view. They saw the figure reach out and
pick up the carton, and after a moment put it back. No. She had put
back a carton of peanut butter patties, not the cig carton.

The last scene showed the mysterious figure pulled upward
again as if by an invisible rope." Angela looked again at the ceiling
above the checkout counter. Nothing unusual there.

Angela thought, "I need to talk to someone about this." Going
to her office, she opened her computer phone program, and typed
Victors Phone code. When she heard the recorded message saying that
Victor's phone had been busy for five minutes, she hung up. Angela
decided to wait five minutes and try again.

While she waited, Angela kept thinking about the mysterious
thief. Why did the thief take only the cigs? Angela laughed as she
imagined Helen's smile when Angela told her about the cigs being
stolen.

Angela tried again to call Victor. When she heard the busy
signal recording, she hung up. She'd wait a few more minutes.
Angela begin to pace back and forth in front of her desk.
Is there anyone else she could call? Yes. She could call Helen, and
talk to her until Victor got off the phone.

Angela called Helen. On the fifth ring, Angela heard Helen
answer. "Hi Angela. What's up?"

"Glad I caught you." Excitedly Angela spoke about the
mysterious woman stealing the cigs and replacing them by peanut butter
patties. Angela paused so that Helen could answer.

Angela waited for Helen's expected response. Finally she
heard Helen's question, "How did you know it was a woman?"

Angela answered "We had pictures of the back of the woman who
did it. She had long hair just like yours"

Three seconds later Angela heard Helen's response. "Angela,
thanks for telling me. I need to think about this. May I call you
later?"

Angela quickly replied, "Sure! I didn't mean to bother you if
you're busy. Call me when you're free."

Angela sat back in her chair and pondered a moment. She
really didn't have anything else she could tell Helen when they met.
Did Helen have any ideas about it?

Suddenly Angela connected "Helen's super nutritious peanut
butter patties" with Helen. Could it be? It did look like Helen from
the back. No, it's only a coincidence. It must be only a
coincidence! Lots of people are named Helen. Besides, if she did it,
why would she have used her real name on the wrapping for the peanut
butter patties?

Up on the spaceship, still only about a third of the way from
the moon to the Earth, Helen pondered her recent conversation with
Angela. She needed to figure out what she wanted to tell Angela.

Helen interrupted her concurrent conversation with Melody. I
just now spoke with my friend back on Earth. I think I may be in
trouble."

Melody looked surprised. "What did you do?"

Helen answered. "Last Monday night I broke into my university
campus store and took all the cigs off the shelf and destroyed them.
My friend Angela works as an accountant at the university union store.
She just phoned me and said they had pictures of me doing it, but they
don't know it's me because they only had pictures of my back."

Melody stared at Helen. "Why did you do it?"

Helen responded, "I did no harm. The cigs would do harm if
the store sold them. I made sure the store lost no money by replacing
the cigs with something of equal monetary value."

Melody frowned. "Couldn't you have just bought the cigs?"
Surely with your powers you can find some other way to solve the cig
problem. Why don't you deal directly with the cig company?"

Helen considered her friend's words. "I could do more. And
I did wrong to break into the store that way. And you are right. I
should deal directly with the cig company."

Melody asked, "What are you going to do?"

Helen answered, "I'm already working on it. Right now I'm
composing an email to send to the manager of the local branch of the
cig company."

Melody replied, "How will that help? What are you telling
him?"

Helen replied, "I'm telling him that he can't deliver cigs to
the union store anymore. And I should let Angela know what's going
on, so I'll copy the same message to her."

Down on Earth, in the university union store, Angela, sitting
back in her chair with her eyes closed, attempted to make sense of
recent events. Suddenly the computer announced, "Incoming text
message." Angela opened her eyes, and pressed the accept key for the
message.

To: Clint@cig.Eastside.VA.US.com
CC: Angela@Eastside.USEVA.us.edu
From: Aunt.Izciguf.Ana.Tic@Eastside.USEVA.us.edu

You have a problem.

I'm responsible for your problem.

Your problem is that you won't deliver any more Cigarettes to
Eastside Campus.

Since I'm responsible for your problem, I offer you some alternative
solutions.

(1) Leave in the warehouse the cigarettes that you would have sent to
Eastside Campus. I will buy them from you at Cost. This would be
only a temporary solution.

(2) Shut down your production of Cigarettes and start up a different
more useful business to people. I will help you get started.

(3) Close your business. I will individually help you and each of
your employees get other jobs at least as personally satisfying as the
current job.

(4) If you have any other suggestions for how I may help you in light
of my preventing you from delivering Cigarettes to Eastside, I am
listening.

Aunt.Izciguf.Ana.Tic

Angela read the text message over twice. She still found it
incredible. She pressed the print option, stood over the printer as
it printed the message, and then ran with the printed copy to her
supervisor's office. She dashed directly to her supervisor's desk,
handed her the paper and gasped, "You've got to read this!"

The supervisor suspended her emotional reaction until she
could read the paper. As she scanned the paper, she called Clint
again. . When Clint picked up, she said, "Clint! Please check your
email immediately. Our mysterious thief just sent you an incredible
message."

Clint's voice came through loud enough for Angela to hear.
"I'm already looking at it." With grim humor evident in his voice, he
added, "Well Betty, I don't think any insanely arrogant fanatic will
stop me doing business with you. I'll turn this over to my legal
advisors. We'll be ready in case this fanatic tries to intercept our
delivery to you next Monday. Thanks for your concern."

Chapter 13

Grant Richardson held a phone log in his hands, and read
though it a third time. On July 5th, two days ago, someone had called
from Eastside University to the moon shuttle, nearly 270,000
kilometers out from earth. Privacy laws prevented him from knowing
that the log referred to Angela calling Helen.

Grant remembered he knew someone from that area. He relaxed
to try to remember who. Now he remembered. It's Victor. In fact,
Victor had recently sent him a recording of a new band.

Grant opened his file of potential new musicians. Just last
Monday Victor had sent a recording of a band named Vocal Strings,
consisting of Helen Troy, Bob Mercury, and Joe Athens.

Seeing Helen's name, Grant remembered that Melody had
recommended Helen for programming his anti-cig broadcast. Grant
incorrectly guessed that perhaps Helen had been the one who had called
Melody. Grant kept this guess as a working hypothesis, in spite of
how surprising it seemed. Ordinarily, citizens were prevented from
calling astronauts in space.

Grant pondered a few moments. Perhaps Helen called Melody
because she's ready to fight the cig company again. He should ask
Helen to program his anti-cig broadcast. He made a note in his
reminder file to call Melody after she gets back and have her invite
this Helen Troy and her band to perform at Melody's next house party.

The fall into Earth orbit went as smoothly as expected. And
their orbit nearly paralleled the orbit of their replacement fuel,
which now could be seen on their outside monitor. About seven hours
earlier, the shuttle that carried it had launched by automatic pilot
from the nearest Earth orbit space station.

They planned a simple and foolproof procedure for retrieving
the new fuel tanks from the nearby rocket. Calvin and Melody would go
outside. Calvin would jump to the carrier rocket, extract the fuel
tanks and throw them directly to Melody. Then Calvin would jump back
and help Melody place the fuel tanks where they were needed.

When Calvin and Melody completed their work, and were back
inside, Helen said to them, "Very good. I would have helped you if
it were necessary. You did everything with no problems?"

Calvin caught the question tone in Helen's last statement,
and he laughed. "No, Ms. impossible lady, we didn't need your help.
Earlier you didn't really answer my question about how you can do the
things you can do. What can you tell me? Should I believe in magic
now?"

Helen looked at Calvin in Alarm. "Please don't. There is a
natural explanation for how I do things."

"Could you teach other people to do what you do?"

Helen frowned. "That's not possible."

Calvin looked puzzled. "You said you don't use alien
technology. You say you can't teach anyone else. Yet it's not magic.
What is it?"

Helen nodded her head affirmatively. "Yes. There is only one
Sparky. No-one else in the world has an alien from a neutron star
inside them."

Calvin sighed. "Very well . What you say is incredible, but I
guess I won't get any more information. I'm glad that at least you
affirm that there is a scientific explanation."

Calvin continued, "In about two minutes, the rest of us need
to be strapped down. I hope that it's unnecessary for you because we
don't have the extra bunk for you." Then Calvin grinned as another
thought came to mind.

"Although I suppose that you could snuggle in with one of us
if you wished."

Helen grinned back. "Nope, it won't be necessary for me to be
tied down during your splashdown."

The splashdown went according to plan. Helen prepared to
leave.

As Helen made her farewells to the group, Melody asked, "Will
you be able to come to our astronaut's open house on July 22?"

Helen smiled, "Yes. May I bring my friends?"

Jonathan and Melody both exclaimed, "yes!" at the same time.

Helen replied, "It's a date."

As she sank through the floor of the cabin into the water
below, she concentrated on forming a bubble of air around her. Once
below the surface she surprised herself by knowing the species name of
the first fish she saw. Amused by this, she let herself sink all the
way to the bottom of the ocean, naming the fish she passed as she
sank.

At the bottom of the ocean, she saw a Yellowtail Rockfish.
Helen smiled as she said, "Hello Sebastes Flavidus." As she made her
way to the surface she continued to amuse herself by reviewing the
species name, family name, and likely habitat of each fish she passed.
How did she know these names and facts? Did she know other things
like this?

Helen asked, "Sparky?"

Sparky's silent voice confirmed her suspicions. "We are fully
integrated into your world wide computer system now."

How could she test herself? Joe had kidded her for not taking
that advanced math tutorial. Did she know all about that math now?
Nothing came to mind right away. Perhaps she needed to ask the right
question. What did Joe call that course? Calculus? That's right! Now
she had it. She knew the fundamental theorem of Calculus and all about
taking derivatives and integrals without having to take the course.

As she broke the surface of the Ocean, she made herself
invisible, and then flew toward home. She needed to set up a meeting
with Angela tomorrow so they could talk about the university union
store not selling cigarettes anymore.

She used her power to call a phone number by thinking it.
Angela answered on the second ring. "Hello Angela, this is Helen. I'm
back in town. I'd like to meet with you to discuss your mysterious
cig thief. When could we meet?"

Angela responded, "Tomorrow is Saturday. There won't be as
many students. So, we could meet at 11:30 at the student cafeteria."

"Sure. Ok. 11:30 tomorrow at the cafeteria. It's a date.
Oh, I almost forgot. Is it ok if I invite Bob and Joe to come along?"

Angela almost laughed. "Of course. I expected you to bring
them with you."

Chapter 14

Angela laid the three copies of her email from
Aunt.Izciguf.Ana.Tic on the orange tabletop in front of her. On each
copy she had handwritten Clint's final comment about Aunt Ana being an
insanely arrogant fanatic. She looked up toward the entrance to see if
they were here yet. Nope. Not yet here. To distract herself, she
readthe email for the fifth time.

On the fifth reading she began to think about similarities
between Aunt Ana and Helen. Both wanted to end the tobacco company.
If Helen could break into the store, would she do this? Silly!
Helen couldn't have done it.

Just as Angela thought this, she looked up to see the trio,
arms linked, with Helen in the middle, standing just at the opposite
edge of the table from her. She smiled, and motioned them to sit down
with her.

As they sat down, Angela eagerly handed the copies of the
email to them. Helen glanced at it as she took it, and instantly
apprehended everything on it. Tears came to her eyes as she realized
the import of Clint's last words. She really had been an arrogant
fanatic.

Neither Bob nor Joe noticed, but Angela did. She had focused
her attention on Helen because she especially wanted to know what
Helen would think about all this. She noticed that Helen had glanced
at the email, and put it aside as if already familiar with it.

Angela started to say something to Helen about it, but then
she saw Bob's frown and Joe's smile as they read the emails. None of
them were responding the way she expected. Did they all know
something about this that she didn't?

Bob spoke before he finished reading. He asked Helen the
question that Angela had wanted to ask. "Helen, what do you think
about this?"

Helen replied. "Clint is right. Auntie is indeed an insanely
arrogant fanatic."

Joe responded, "Take it easier on your . . ." Joe paused,
but then continued, "on Auntie. She must have had some good reasons
for writing this."

Helen said, "Yes, she might have had some good reasons, but
not good enough. She should have taken a different approach."

Bob replied, "I'm glad you think so. What do you think Auntie
will do?"

Helen replied, "I don't know. Perhaps she should visit
Clint in person and get his side of the story."

Joe turned his head slightly to look intently at Helen. "Would
Auntie like to have her friends come with her?"

Angela almost yelped in surprise. Helen had barely glanced at
the email, but she evidently knew everything in it. How did she know?
And what did Joe mean? How did he know whether or not Auntie had
friends helping her, and why did it matter?

Angela spoke her puzzlement. "What do you guys know about all
this?"

Helen understood Angela's puzzlement. "Angela, you deserve to
know what's going on. I am Auntie."

"What!" Helen's statement shocked Angela. Her suspicions were
correct! How is this possible? "Prove it to me!"

Helen said, "I will prove it by sending you an email from
Auntie right now."

Angela's cell phone rang. When she pressed the respond button
on it, the phone announced, "incoming text message." Then it scrolled
the text message across the tiny screen, "Apologies to all. Auntie."

Angela stared at the screen for a few moments. Then she
looked up at Helen. "How did you do that? Did you have an accomplice
send me this message just now? If you want me to believe you, why
don't you send me a message that an accomplice wouldn't know to send."

Helen pondered a moment. "OK. Pick a number between 1 and
100, and tell it to me."

Angela's cell phone rang as she said the number to Helen.
Immediately, she pressed the respond button. The phone announced,
"Incoming voice message."

Then Helen's voice came from the phone. "Your number is 42."

Angela dropped the phone on the table. In astonishment, she
asked, "Do you want to tell me how you did that?"

Helen looked at Angela, but said nothing. After a few
moments, Bob responded for her. "If I had been in your place, I would
have thought that we'd preprogrammed the computer to send you the
voice message. We could have preprogrammed everything except the
number. Then we could have transmitted the number to the computer as
soon as you told it to us."

Both Helen and Angela, surprised, looked at Bob. Angela
asked, "Is that how you did it?"

Helen shook her head negatively. "Bob is very clever. But
that's not how I did it."

Angela thought about it for a few moments. Then she said,
"It's ok. I don't really need to know how you did it. It's enough
that you have proven to me that you can do it. I suppose it's also
easy for you to break into the university union store at night without
triggering any alarms."

Helen's face turned red as she nodded her head affirmatively.
Angela felt troubled. "Helen, why did you do it? Why didn't it seem
wrong to you? Why . . . ?"

Helen responded before Angela could finish her questions. "I
wondered the same thing myself. In the future I will think things
through before I act."

Angela smiled. "Good. I'm glad you said that. For a moment
you seemed to be more like a devil than an angel. I'm glad you
decided to stay an angel."

As Angela's words echoed in her mind, she wondered if she
spoke more truly than she intended. Could Helen actually be an angel?
No, it couldn't be. Unlike her mother, she didn't really believe
angels walked the Earth, did she?

But how does Helen do these things? She'd like to stay and
find out more, but she'd planned to keep this meeting short so she
could get her weekly grocery shopping done on time.

Angela stood up. "I'm sorry to run off, but I need to go to
the supermarket to buy some groceries."

Helen replied, "Angela, I want to tell you more, but I need to
figure how how. Can you wait a few more minutes?"

Angela reconsidered. She couldn't really wait. But there were
alternatives. "Would you like to come with me to the store?"

Joe grinned. "Sure, we'd like to come with you. I want to
see you show off your driving skills."

Angela laughed, and led the way to Victor's truck. As she
approached the truck, she suddenly stopped. "Oh, I just remembered.
There's only room for three people in the truck."

Joe laughed. "Not a problem. Helen can sit in my lap. I'm
sure she won't be too heavy."

While Angela drove to the supermarket, Helen pondered how to
tell Angela about her powers in a way that would not upset her more.
The supermarket appeared in front of them by the time Helen worked out
her strategy. Angela looked for a place to park and decided to park
in the empty place next to the post that marked where to return empty
shopping carts.

Helen chose that moment to speak to Angela. "Angela, last
week something strange happened to me. Part of me is an alien from
near the center of the galaxy."

Concentrating on parking the truck, Angela seemed not to hear
what Helen had said. Then as she pulled into the parking place, she
replayed in her mind what Helen had said. Her hands let go of the
steering wheel as she turned and stared at Helen. Suddenly, a very
loud bang interrupted her thoughts. Angela had run into the shopping
cart post.

Angela looked through the windshield at the bent shopping cart
post. She imagined the huge dent it must have made in the truck. She
buried her face in her hands. Vigor would be so disappointed! Tears
rolled down her face.

Then she heard Bob's voice. "It's ok now."

Angela looked at Bob in wonder. "What do you mean?"

Bob pointed through the windshield. "Look."

Angela looked where Bob pointed. "Helen stood by the shopping
cart post. Amazingly, she saw no damage to the post. Angela got out
to inspect the truck.

Not a scratch! Not a dent! Angela turned to Helen. "Didn't I
hit the post?"

Helen answered. "Yes you did. I fixed it. Besides, it was
my fault that you hit the post."

Angela looked at Helen. "You could have just told me that I
only imagined that I'd hit the post. I would have believed you.
Helen,are you really an Angel? I mean, like the supernatural kind."

Helen laughed. "No. Please don't think there's anything
supernatural about me. I can do some amazing things now, but there's
a natural explanation for everything I can do. So, let's just forget
about the shopping cart post, and go buy your groceries."

Angela slowly nodded her head affirmatively. As they walked
into the store, she addressed Helen. "Just before I hit that post you
said something about being possessed by an alien."

Angela's words surprised Helen. "I didn't say possessed. I
said that part of me is alien. The alien part provides me with
amazing abilities. But please let this be our secret. I want to be
thought of as just plain Helen Troy."

Angela pulled a shopping cart from the rack. As she pushed
the cart down the first Aisle, she thought that no one would ever
think of Helen as plain.

Certainly she'd keep Helen's secret. It's not like anyone
would ever believe her anyway.

After Angela finished filling her shopping cart she looked
for a short checkout line. She spotted one and headed directly for
it, oblivious of another lady heading for the same checkout line.
Angela got there first.

The other lady yelled at Angela. "Excuse me! You saw me
heading for this line. You cut me off on purpose!"

Angela responded. "No I didn't. I didn't see you. Why are
you in such a hurry anyway?" Suddenly Bob stepped between her and
the other lady.

Bob spoke gently to them. "Hey now. There's no problem." He
pointed to the adjacent checkout line. "This next checkout line just
now opened." Addressing the other lady Bob added. "Why don't you
take it? You'll be done sooner."

The other lady smiled, and thanked Bob. Angela looked at the
other checkout line cashier. Helen stood there dressed in the uniform
of the store! Angela watched amazed as Helen calmly processed the
groceries for the previously upset lady.

Joe, standing at her side, commented. Helen is amazing!
She's expends so much time and effort just to help someone avoid
feeling bad.

Angela spoke to Joe. "Helen told me to keep her amazing
abilities a secret. Aren't any of you worried that someone will think
it strange that Helen suddenly became a checkout clerk?"

Joe answered. "Well, I just hope that everyone here is too
busy to notice." In fact, Joe's hope is almost justified. Only the
computer managing system noticed. And it noticed only to the extent
of adding the appropriate wage to the last registered checkout clerk
to use that register.

Chapter 15

Helen, Joe and Bob were ushered into Clint's office by the
petite blond secretary. Clint rose, and reached over his desk to
shake hands with each of them. "How may I help you?"

Before Bob could give his prepared speech, Helen blurted out,
"I'm Helen Troy. I'm the insanely arrogant fanatic that planned to
stop you from delivering your cigarettes to the university union
store."

Clint laughed in surprise. "That planned? Are you no longer
planning it?" Clint looked intently at Helen. "So you are the thief
who broke into the university Union Store and stole all the cigs. How
did you do it?"

Helen replied, while looking directly into his eyes, "Yes. I'm
the insanely arrogant fanatic that threatened to block your
distributing cigs. How I did it is not important. What's important
is that I won't do it again because I don't wish to be insanely
arrogant."

Client stared at Helen for a few moments. "You're right. I
don't really care how you did your magic trick. I do care that you
don't do it again. But I don't believe it's just because you don't
want to appear arrogant. What other reason do you have? How can I
believe you?"

Helen replied, "That's why we are here now. We want to hear
your side. Why are you selling cigs?"

Clint opened his mouth to reply, but unable to say anything,
he closed his mouth after a few seconds. Then he shook his head
negatively, and sank back into his chair closing his eyes.

A few seconds later, he opened his eyes to look at the three
of them seated in the soft red velvet high-backed chairs that his
secretary had provided. Then he said, "My grandpappy managed this
business. My dad worked here. I inherited this business on my 25th
birthday. I never expected to do anything else."

Joe said in a soft manner, "Do you think about whether your
business is helping people or hurting them?"

Clint turned to Joe, incipient anger visible on his face.
"Sometimes. I don't know whether I'm helping people or hurting them.
However, I do know that I give people what they want."

Clint leaned back in his chair, relaxing. Then he said,
"Besides, I don't need to apologize to you for what I do."

Bob caught Joe's eye. When Joe nodded his head slightly, Bob
said, "We don't intend to argue with you. We are here to listen to
you."

Clint sat up straighter, then said, "If that's so, then listen
well. I don't like you to question my business. As long as people
want to smoke cigarettes, I will sell them."

Helen smiled. "Suppose too few people wanted to smoke
cigarettes. Would you quit selling them then?"

Clint laughed. "And how would you arrange for that? Yes.
If not enough people bought cigarettes, I would be forced to go into
another business."

Then Clint added, "This is just a hypothetical question,
right? There's no way you can persuade all my customers to quit. But
if you did somehow persuade my customers to quit, I couldn't blame
you, for after all, it is the customer who chooses to buy or not
buy."

Helen's smile grew. "Thank you very much. We may talk again
some day. You probably feel you never want to see or hear from us
again. But, perhaps you should save my email address in case you wish
to get in touch with me again."

Clint showed his surprise. "Is that all? You don't want to
question me more? What will you do now? Are you giving up so easily?"

Joe grinned. "No, we haven't given up. We will just figure
out how to persuade people to quit buying cigarettes. Get in touch
with us when you notice that your sales have dropped."

Clint laughed again. "Gee, you sound like you mean it."
Clint reached across the desk inviting Joe to shake hands with him.
"Ok. May the best side win."

As Joe and Clint shook hands, Bob concluded, "Yes, the best
side will win."

Then Bob and Helen each shook hands with Client, and everyone
smiled as they left Clint's office.

Clint sat back in his chair, satisfied that he'd managed
everything very well. He congratulated himself on his public
relations skills. His phone rang.

Clint glanced up at the phone monitor. It's Angela, calling
from the Shoppe Faire. Angela and Victor had been good friends since
the first day the couple had moved to town. Victor had wished to
check out the local branch of United Tobacco Company and had come
directly to his office.

Clint had given them a tour of his business, showing off the
warehouse, re-packaging equipment, delivery trucks, and his four room
office building. He had gladly answered all Angela's questions, even
though she did not limit her questions relevant to the tour. Her
questions reflected her primary concern of adjusting to life in the
United States.

Angela had appreciated Clint's helpfulness. She had expressed
her gratitude by inviting him to have dinner with her and Victor.
Over time, the friendship that Angela had presumed, became actual.
Each time Clint visited, he brought Victor another two weeks supply of
cigs. Nowadays, when he did not visit quite so often, he personally
made sure Victor received a steady supply of cigs. Perhaps after he
finished his call with Angela, he should call Victor to see when he
needed another delivery.

Clint picked up his phone. "Hello Angela."

Angela replied, "Hello Clint. My friend Helen Troy said she
planned to visit you today. Are they there now?"

Client replied, "They just left. They took only a few minutes
to say what they wanted to say."

"How did the meeting go?"

"It went very well. I don't think I need to worry about
Ms Troy and her friends. So she is your friend also. What can you
tell me about her?"

Angela suddenly felt that she didn't know Helen at all. What
could she say about Helen? "What can I say? Helen does the
unexpected. She wants you to not sell cigs. She intends to persuade
you to stop.

But I don't know what she will do if she can't persuade you.
She might decide to force you to stop. In the short time I've known
Helen, she has amazed me. She is an angel or a magician. I think you
should avoid being on her wrong side."

Clint showed his amusement. "I fail to see what she can do.
When she left, she and her friends spoke of persuading my customers to
quit smoking. I don't see how she has a chance."

Angela paused. "Maybe not. But, watch out for her. If she
gets sufficiently frustrated, she may pull one of her magic tricks on
you."

After she completed the conversation with Clint, Angela placed
her cell phone in its holder on the wall of her Shoppe Faire booth.
She glanced at her watch, and waited patiently for Helen. She had
promised to come by.

"Hey there!"

Startled, Angela looked up. She saw Mike Long approaching her
Booth.

"Not many customers yet, eh? I left Dan to take care of the
booth. Too few customers to need both of us."

Angela frowned. "So you run into me again. Were you looking
for me, or did you just happen to find me?"

Mike laughed. "I wanted to find you. You work at the
university Union Store. We sell cigs at your store. I need to make
sure I'm not on your bad side."

"It won't be easy. Almost killing me doesn't make a good
start."

Mike stepped forwards. "Hey, take it easy. I want to make
amends."

Angela paused. "Remember when my friend Helen said she wished
you understood that cigs killed people?"

Mike looked carefully at Angela. "So?"

Angela paused. Should she say anything? Why not? "I think
that if you don't put yourself out of business first then Helen
will."

As Mike started to reply, he saw Helen out of the corner of
his eye. "I don't think that's very likely. But here she is now.
I'll ask her myself."

Angela spun around and looked in the direction Mike faced. She
smiled as Helen walked up.

Mike addressed Helen. "Hey. Your friend thinks you can put
us out of business. When do you start?"

Helen paused before answering. "I've already started."

Mike laughed. "So, what have you done?"

Helen looked pointedly at Mike. "Just before coming here, I
bought up all the cigs at the university Union store. Your customers
in this area won't have easy access to cigs for another week. I hope
some of them decide to quit rather than go out of their way to buy
more cigs."

This time Mike laughed so hard he had to bend over for a
mement. "Are you going to be our biggest customer? Think! Even if
you were able to buy up all the cigs locally, it wouldn't matter. Our
customers are loyal. They won't think twice about walking a mile or
more to get their cigs."

Helen frowned. "Perhaps. But if they do, it just shows their
addiction. But I'm working on that too. I visited Clint at his
office today and after talking with him, decided to persuade all the
smokers in Eastside to quit smoking."

Mike laughed again. "Ha! I'll have to ask Clint to notify me
when you succeed." Mike's continuing amusement showed on his face.

Angela shook her head. "I just called Clint. He's not
worried either, but I think he should be."

As Clint broke the phone connection with Angela, he said to
himself, "First I'll call Victor before I forget." Clint punched in
Victor's phone code.

Victor answered on the third ring. "Hello Clint. No, I don't
need any more cigs. Don't bother to send me any more. I'm quitting."

Surprised, Clint replied. "why are you quitting?"

Victor paused. "Why do you need to know? It doesn't have
anything to do with you."

Clint replied, "Does it have anything to do with Helen Troy?"

Victor replied with a puzzled tone in his voice. "Why yes, it
does. How did you know? I don't think that she knows that I'm
quitting."

Clint answered, "She and her friends came to see me today.
She wants to put me out of business and when she left she planned to
persuade all my clients to quit. Is your quitting only a
co-incidence?"

Victor considered the question. "Yes and no. Last week Helen
unintentionally pointed out to me that I'm really killing myself when
I smoke. I knew that. I should have quit long ago. I realize now
that I don't really enjoy smoking the cigs. I didn't know that she
planned to make people quit. She didn't tell me to quit. I chose to
quit because she made it clear to me why I should."

Clint replied. "I see. Thank you very much Victor."
As Clint hung up the phone, he thought out loud, "This Helen Troy may
be more interesting than I thought."

Across town, immediately after Victor broke the phone
connection, it rang again. Seeing the video attachment light up, he
punched the video option. He smiled when he saw the tall thin man on
the video. "Grant! So you finally got my message. What do you
think of the singer?"

Grant looked directly at the camera, which meant that he also
looked directly at a corresponding image of Victor on a television
monitor. "She has promise. The two guys aren't bad either. I'd like
to meet all three of them in person someday. In the meantime, I'll
forward the recording to the advisory committee."

Victor replied, "Great. I'll let them know."

Grant reached to disconnect, then paused. "Oh, you can do me
a favor. Please ask Helen Troy to call me. I want to ask her some
questions."

Victor said, "Sure. I'll do that." As Victor hung up the
phone, he considered, perhaps he should let Angela tell Helen the
good news. She'd enjoy that.

Meanwhile, Helen pursued her own questions to Angela.
"Angela, I want to ask you a favor. Joe had this idea for making some
money. Before now I thought I'd use the money to buy up all the cigs.
Now I understand that I'll need to use the money some other way to
stop the sell of cigs."

Angela looked at Helen in surprise. Turning to Mike, she said,
"Mike, we'd appreciate it if you leave. We need to plot stategy."

Mike stepped forward a step. "Then I should hear it."

At Angela's fierce look, he paused. "Ok, I know when to
retreat. I'll talk to you another time."

After Mike left, Angela asked Helen, "What is Joe's idea? How
does it involve me?"

"Joe wants to repair broken musical instruments. Can you open
a repair shop department within the Union store? People can drop off
their broken instruments at the union store. You can advertise one
day service."

Angela looked serious. "Well yes. I'm very sure that my boss
will agree provided you give us ten percent of your revenues. In
fact, it gives me another idea. Betty would not let me drop the cig
orders without a good reason. If you bring in enough business to the
store, then I think I can persuade her to drop the cig orders. You
need to do enough repairs to match the revenues she gets from sales of
the cigs."

Remembering what she had discovered about Helen's amazing
abilities over the weekend Angela added, "Do you want to restrict the
repair to musical instruments? If you wish, we could advertise to
repair anything."

Helen paused. "Ok. But Joe wants to restrict customers to
students and faculty. Please make a sign in the store window your
only advertisement."

Angela agreed. "What do you want the sign to say?"

Helen smiled. "I'll show you." She brushed her hand across
the window ledge of Angela's booth. Angela watched, fascinated, as a
cardboard sign grew, line by line, right there on the window ledge.

Angela picked up the sign. She admired the elegance of the
sign. Three rows of pictures conveyed its message. The top row of
pictures showed a person accidentally stepping on his music cd, and
then bringing it to the union store for repair. The second row of
pictures showed a guitar player become frustrated at her new guitar
and bringing it to the union store repair shop for adjustment. The
third row of pictures showed a puzzled man examining a toaster oven,
being inspired to bring it to the union store repair shop.

Bold letters at the bottom of the sign proclaimed,

"Bring me your worn out gadgets, your broken jar,

Your crumpled mats yearning to stretch free,

The wretched refuse of your household store.

Send these, the useless, time ravaged to me.

Repair all at this space in the union store."

Chapter 16

Betty stared at Angela and Helen. "Angela, Let me get this
straight. You say that this is the thief that stole our cigs! And
you want her to open a appliance repair department within our store!
And you want us to not honor our commitment to Clint because she can
make more money for us than the cigs!

Helen boldly stepped forward. "Yes, Ms Bennigan. My name is
Helen Troy. I won't enter your shop again without your knowing. I'm
sure we can work out a deal fair to both of us."

"Fair to both of us, eh. How about if you work for me. I pay
you minimum wage or ten percent of what you make for me, whichever is
smaller. At the end of the week, I'll let you buy any left over cigs
with the money you earn from me."

Helen thought about it. She needed a better deal. But this
would be a start. Helen addressed Betty. "I agree to your deal."

Angela, shocked, exclaimed. "But Helen, you don't get any of
what you need. The store will still sell all the cigs it did before!
And you won't get your fair share of the money you earn for the
store!"

Helen looked toward Angela. "Yes, I know. But I should earn
her trust before I try to make a better deal with her."

Betty looked at Helen in surprise. "Earn my trust? Those are
words that a responsible person would say. Now I believe you when you
say that you won't break into the store again."

Angela looked hopeful. "Does this mean you'll give us a
better deal."

Betty paused before replying, "Let's wait and see."
Addressing Helen, Betty added, "Forget what I said before. I'll give
you that space over by the window to do whatever you wish. After two
weeks, we can discuss this again, and as you say, make a deal fair to
both of us. Whatever deal we make depends on what happens during the
next two weeks. Do you both agree?"

Helen agreed, and after a few moments, Angela reluctantly
agreed.

Angela added, "I need to ask a favor from you."

When Betty looked expectantly toward her, Angela added, "I'd
like to go with Helen today to help her. Is it ok if I take the
morning off?"

Betty almost smiled. "Is that all. Okay. Make sure you
record it on your vacation log."

Angela and the trio paused at the entrance to the local
smoketorium. Helen expected to persuade everyone here today to quit
smoking. She would turn the smoketorium into a clean air building.

Joe announced to the group, "This small step we take today,
on a summer day in the year 2090, shall mark the beginning of the end
for United Tobacco Company." He stejpped forward to enter the
smoketorium.

Almost every town had a smoketorium. They were the only
public places left where people could smoke. They had become special
clubs, and sometimes had tobacco shops within them.

As they entered the smoketorium, Helen made a breeze blow
from her in all direction, creating a bubble of fresh air around them.

They walked up to the back of the smoketorium where a heavy
table had been pushed against the wall.

Helen turned and examined the people in the room. There were
five people around the pool table. One guy leaned against a column in
the center of the room watching the other four guys play. Helen
observed the one ping pong table in use. Two expert ping-pong
players showed off their skill. Most of the people were gathered
around the chess tables. There were ashtrays built into the edges of
the chess tables. Pressing a button sent the ashes to a disposal unit.

Helen looked around the room and studied the distribution of
smoke around the room. She focused her attention on the smoke. It
became brightly colored, and began to form into bold letters and arrow
signs pointing to herself. Helen made the arrow signs take on a
sequence of colors and move backwards and forward to emphasize where
she and her friends stood. The letters spelled out the words ACT NOW,
BE BOLD, and ENGAGE FREEDOM.. The bright colors were caused by the
smoke slowly burning into carbon dioxide and water. While other toxic
gasses were also produced, they caused no problem because Helen
removed them as they formed.

After the last brightly colored arrow sign burned out, Helen
collapsed the bubble of fresh air she had been maintaining. She didn't
need it any more because now all the smoke in the room had been
eliminated. While some people still had lit cigs, she could easily
remove the smoke from them as quickly as it formed.

Several people stopped what they were doing and looked her
way. One person sitting at the chess table stood up and clapped.
"Very good trick. I haven't seen a magic stunt like that since
October 85. I hope what you have to say is as good or better."

Helen, smiling her thanks, addressed everyone in her clear
musical voice that easily carried across the room. "I'm here to solve
your biggest problem. Your biggest problem is cigs. Cigs are
enslaving you. I can help you. Who here has tried to quit smoking?"
Helen looked around the room for responses.

After several seconds, one of the ping-pong players raised his
paddle and said, "Sure lady. I've tried to quit. I've tried several
times."

Bob replied to him. "Don't give up hope. Each time you try,
the next time will be easier. Remember: Partial success is not
failure. Try again until you succeed. You needed to know that
smoking the cig alters your metabolism. Your body adapts to it in
various ways. The problem is that your body removes the nicotine you
get from the cig quite rapidly. Within four hours less than one
percent of the nicotine remains. Now the body has to adapt again,
this time to the absence of nicotine. If you don't know this about
cigs, you might think that you need the next cig to restore yourself
to normal. Don't take that next cig. Just wait until your body
adapts back to not having those poisons in your body."

Joe added his comment. "The so called withdrawal symptoms are
caused by your body re-adapting to normal. When you feel those
symptoms, be glad, for they signal your success at quitting."

One of the pool players banged his cue stick on the edge of
the pool table. "Hey, what about us guys that never tried to quit.
Are you going to convince us that we should?"

Helen replied, "That's up to you. There are good reasons to
quit smoking. Whether or not you quit is up to you. If you wish to
quit, I can help you. Even if you don't wish to quit, I want to know
why you don't."

The pool player responded, "I can tell you why I don't want to
quit. I need the cigs to relax, to give me confidence."

Joe laughed. "What you really mean is that you think you need
the cig to get back to the way you were before you started smoking.
You can relax and have confidence without smoking. In fact, if you
quit now, you will regain your natural relaxation and confidence."

Surprise flashed across the pool player's face. "You'd say
anything to get me to quit, wouldn't you."

Joe only smiled, and shrugged his shoulders.

Helen spoke up. "Joe told you the truth. The cigs don't
relax you. Your body adjusted itself to the poison in the cigs, and
you fell into the trap of thinking you needed those poisons to feel
normal."

A young man by the nearest chess table stood up, and took a
step toward Helen. "I'm not addicted to the cigs. I smoke only
because I enjoy smoking."

Joe replied, "Prove to yourself that you are not addicted.
Stop for a week."

The young man replied, "I don't need to make any such test.
I enjoy the cig smoking. That's the only reason I smoke."

Helen sighed, "This is going to be more difficult than I had
hoped."

Joe added his comments. "We can convince you only if you
wish to listen to us. I'm sure you've heard all the good reasons for
quitting many times. Here are some reasons you've not heard very
often."

"The most important reason to quit smoking is that you will
cope better with stressful situations. You may think that cig
smoking helps you cope with stress. This is an illusion. Cigs reduce
your mental and physical abilities, making you less capable of
resolving unfavorable situations."

"In fact, as we will show you, quitting will not only enable
you to cope better with unfavorable situations, it will enable you to
have much more fun in life."

One of the chess players said to his companion, "I don't need
more fun. My chess games provide me all the fun I need."

Helen heard his comment, and responded, "Would you find it
more fun if you played a better game? If you let us help you, I
assure you that you will play a much better chess game."

The chess player stood up and addressed Helen directly. "I
challenge you to a chess game. If you win, then I'll listen to you.
If I win, then you will quietly leave and never bother us again. Do
you accept?

Angela whispered to Helen, "Have you ever played chess before?
Do you have any chance?"

Helen smiled. "Every Chance. Even though I've never played,
I know the complete play of millions of chess games, and can calculate
all the important consequences of a move before I make it."

Helen spoke to the chess challenger. "I accept your
challenge."

As they set up the chessboard to play, the challenger
introduced himself. "My name is Ralph. I'm the best chess player in
the county, so don't feel too bad when you lose." Ralph smiled as he
said this.

Helen reached across the table to shake hands with Ralph.
"Thank you. My name is Helen. Perhaps I'll surprise you."

Angela, standing directly behind Helen added her comment.
"Definitely, Helen will surprise you."

After fifteen minutes of play, neither side had found
opportunity to safely capture a chess piece. Ralph commented, "You
really are a good chess player, but you won't win this game if you
only play the defensive."

Helen replied, "I'm beginning to realize that. Thanks."

A few minutes later, Ralph exclaimed, "Now I have you!" He
moved a pawn diagonally to capture one of her pawns. She countered by
moving a rook up to capture the pawn. He took her rook with one of his
own rooks. She captured his rook with her other rook. Immediately,
he captured her second rook with his remaining rook. She took his
remaining rook with one of her knights. He captured her knight with
one of his own knights.

Now Helen had captured a pawn and two rooks. She had lost a
pawn, two rooks and a knight. Angela squeezed Helen's shoulder. "Do
you still have a chance to win?"

Helen gave Angela's hand a reassuring squeeze. "The game
isn't over yet." She reached for her remaining knight, and moved it
to attack, at the same time, both his king and queen. "Check, and
checkmate in seven moves."

Ralph replied, "Not so fast." He moved his king to the next
square giving his red bishop a clear path to her queen. "Now my queen
is protected and there's nothing you can do. . . Wait!" Ralph gasped
in surprise. "Darn. Now I see it. You tricked me. Good job."
Ralph reached across the table to shake Helen's hand. "You've earned
my attention to whatever you have to say."

Ralph stood up, and indicating Helen with a wave of his hand,
addressed everyone in the room. "Folks, This young lady has earned
the right to address us about our smoking cigs. I feel that out of
respect to her none of us should light any cigs while she's here. Do
you all agree?"

There were many voices of agreement, and while most, but not
all, people in the room voiced agreement, none voiced disagreement.
Ralph smiled, and waved for Helen to continue her speech.

Chapter 17

Helen smiled. "I wish to sing a song for you." Helen and her
friends returned to stand next to the heavy table on the back wall of
the smoketorium. Bob and Joe picked up their instruments, and as they
began to play, Helen begin to sing.

Oh where do you wish to live?

Wish you to live in fresh air?

What are you willing to give,

what are you willing to dare,

For abundant life to live?

One day to Sally said Fred,

"I would like to be your friend."

Responded Sally to Fred,

"We will be able to blend,

if your cigs I need not dread.

One day Fred said to his Aunt,

"I would like to visit you."

To Fred responded his Aunt

"Your cigs I must never view.

On your visit, smoke you can't."

To his employer said Fred,

"I'd like to work in Sales."

His employer said to Fred,

"Any salesman who smokes, fails.

For smokers do our clients dread."

Said Fred to his good doctor,

"Now what do I need to do?"

To Fred Said the good doctor,

"There is nothing you can do.

Death is standing at your door."

Revelation came to Fred.

It's cigs have done this to me.

I should have already pledged,

to quit the cigs, to be free.

But lack of cigs I did dread.

Advice for quitting, Fred sought.

I must get through this, I must.

Spent he many days in deep thought.

So many things did he adjust

Too many items had he bought.

For nothing did work until

Found he this better method

to quit the cigs that did kill.

Now he teaches the method

But does not send clients a bill.

F. A. I. T. H. you need

"F" refers to the first word

of a list you need to heed.

"H" refers to the last word

of a list you need to heed.

"F" is for faith you feel,

in your body, mind and soul,

that soon yourself you will heal.

Poisons to you cigs did dole,

to which you did justly deal.

You did adapt very well

to the poison nicotine.

Now you feel very unwell

with the lack of nicotine,

and may even think cigs swell.

To the lack of this poison

must you now fully adapt.

other people, Don, Jon, Ron

can tell how they did adapt

to become free of poison.

"F" also refers to fear

which feeds the daily torment,

that you must make disappear.

Lack of cigs is not like Lent,

for cigs subtract from life dear.

"A" refers to actual

which means to say, know what is,

what is truly factual.

Cigs do not make you a whiz,

do not help you with your gal.

Cigs hinder you, handicap you.

But mostly, they play a trick.

You think they help you to do

those things which you need to click,

to handle things that are new.

But actually you must know,

if not dependent on cigs,

you would everyone show,

that you can do all the gigs.

Nothing to cigs do you owe.

Know nicotine for its trick.

After you adapt to cigs,

which first hit you like a brick,

you feel you need cigs for gigs.

This is nicotine's big trick.

To adapt to lack of cigs

requires work requires courage,

not the stubbornness of pigs.

speedy progress you can gage

by disinterest in cigs.

"A" is for anticipate.

Look forward to being free.

Within three weeks pangs abate.

then you will be truly free,

no nicotine on your plate.

"I" is for your interest.

Search to do things which you love.

Then life will be at its best.

Your work will fit like a glove,

Killed is the nicotine pest.

"I" also stands for inside.

Look fully inside your mind.

Many ideas there do abide.

Don't let nicotine you blind,

or trick you to suicide.

Permit your ideas to grow,

and then before you expect,

your many ideas will flow,

to what you could not project,

to great creations you know.

"T" is for the time it takes

for you to truly be free,

for changes your body makes

to be normal, to be free,

free of cigs, for goodness sakes.

"T" is also for the trap,

that cigs almost always spring.

None escape being a sap,

by the trap that cigs do bring.

Throw this trap across a gap.

"H" represents the word heal.

To relax yourself, do learn.

With all tensions learn to deal.

Make your primary concern

Love, truth, rest, and your next meal.

"H" also represents harm,

which cigs do much too often.

Don't let those cigs from the farm

ever enter your own den.

Don't let them do yourself harm.

Fred now exclaims and explains,

Smoke another cig I won't.

No more will cigs cause me pains.

Do I miss the cigs? I don't!

Now in my life, joy still reigns.

Oh where do you wish to live?

In slavery, in freedom?

Don't any part of life give

to cigs that remove freedom.

Affirm it's your life to live.

To Sally, Fred did exclaim,

I shall never smoke again.

Against cigs I've taken aim,

for I've very much to gain,

when to live well is my aim.

To Fred Sally gladly said,

if for you cigs have ended,

I need not remain a maid,

You and I may be blended,

after the preacher is paid.

To his aunt, Fred did admit,

Never did I enjoy cigs,

not even one little bit.

Fred's aunt felt like dancing jigs.

Fred, you may in my house sit.

Said Fred to his employer.

Never shall I smoke again.

No more will cigs I order.

Said Fred's boss, we shall much gain

with you as our sales rover.

To his doctor Fred did brag,

The cigs I have just now quit,

and know that this is no gag.

The doctor showed his quick wit.

"Your body will not more sag."

This story here does not end,

for worry did the doctor,

and then for Fred he did send.

"No disease do you harbor!

This I do not comprehend."

Chapter 18

Some people clapped in appreciation. Others sat silently
thoughtful. Ralph spoke to Helen, "I like the song, but I don't see
how it makes things any different for us. We've heard those
sentiments hundreds of times."

Helen replied, "As I said before, cigs are your biggest
problem. They reduce your ability to respond to stressors. In
addition, each time you smoke a cig, you are damaging your own health
and the health of your neighbors. I want to help you quit smoking so
you can have a good life and have it more abundantly. It also works
the other way around. The best way I can help you quit smoking is to
show you that you can do better work and have more fun in life if you
don't smoke cigs."

Ralph nodded his head. "Yes. I heard you both times. It's
just that I don't believe cigs are hurting me. The medical problems
you are blaming on cigs are just part of growing older. I'm already
perfectly happy with my life."

Helen stepped forward. "If you don't want to quit smoking, at
least quit making smoke to harm other people. And I'm here to make
that possible. I'm here to sell you a superior cigarette, a smokeless
cig. And for those of you who wish to quit smoking, these smokeless
cigs will help you quit. Who would like a free sample?"

One of the chess players who wore a bright button-down blue
shirt looked up. "Did you say free?"

Helen nodded her head affirmatively, and then she tossed a
pack to him. He caught it easily since Helen had aimed it expertly.
As he opened the pack, he commented, "They look just like regular
cigarettes. What makes them superior?"

Helen replied, "Try it."

He took out one of the cigarettes, and put it in his mouth.
He turned on his cigarette lighter and raised it to his mouth. As
soon as the flame touched the tip of the cigarette, it said "OUCH!"

The man jerked the cigarette out of his mouth, and yelled at
Helen, "What the hell is this? What kind of joke are you pulling?"

Helen winked at Joe before replying. It had been his idea to
put that feature in. "That is just to remind you that you don't need
to light these cigarettes. Puff on them as if they were already lit.
These are smokeless cigarettes. You won't ever need your cigarette
lighters again. And you have no ashes to worry about."

The man replied, "I never worried about ashes anyway." He put
the cig back in his mouth, and took a few trial puffs. "Hey! It does
smell like regular cigs. It's not quite as good as a regular one
though."

Suddenly, a voice issued from the cig. "sixty seven point
four four five percent of initial adult lung capacity."

"What the hell?" Did this cig just talk to me?

Bob answered. "Yes. It just told you what percent of your
normal lung capacity you have left. If you quit smoking, your lung
capacity will gradually improve."

"Iszat so?" He took a few more puffs. "When will it tell me
again?"

Joe answered this time. "After you tap the cig on the end."

The smoker tapped the cig on the end. After a few more puffs
it again told him his current lung capacity percentage. "This is
neat! Hey Ralph, why don't you try one?" He handed a cig from the
package to his companion sitting across the chess table from him.

Ralph took a few puffs. "Eighty one point two two two percent
of initial adult lung capacity."

In a clear voice that carried across the room, Bob said,
"These cigarettes carry no toxin, not even nicotine. If you use these
instead of regular cigs, you'll be able to taste your food again, and
your smoker's cough will go away. Even if you don't use these cigs to
help you quit, you can occasionally use them to check your lung
capacity score. You win when your lung capacity increases."

Joe jumped forward to add his comments. "These smokeless cigs
have been designed to taste and feel almost like regular cigarettes,
but that is only an illusion to minimize the effort it takes to
switch. Another reason is that these cigarettes will last, on the
average, ten times longer than a regular cigarette. As you puff on
this cigarette it will shorten just like a real cig that burns.

When the cigarette reaches the size of a cigarette butt, put
it back in the cigarette pack, and in an hour's time it will lengthen
to its regular size.

Notice that before the first time you use it, the side of the
cigarette has the number 10 written on it. After one usage, that
number will change to 9."

With only a slight pause, Joe continued, "And now, Here's
Bob". He beckoned Bob forward with wide sweeping motions of his arms.

Bob stepped forward. "Some more of you may want to quit the
smoking curse. These cigarettes will help you quit. One pack will be
more than enough to help you quit."

"This is because these cigs contain no nicotine. One pack
will last longer than the three weeks it takes for your metabolism to
revert to normal. As long as you avoid taking in any nicotine, your
body metabolism will stay normal. In fact, it will be very important
that you avoid nicotine because your body now knows how to adapt to
it, and one exposure could put you in the trap again. However, please
remember the good news. By making a strong commitment, you can get
out of that trap. It merely requires you knowing that your body
metabolism will revert to normal within three weeks if it is not
exposed to nicotine"

Bob stepped back, and motioned Helen forward. As he did this,
he said, "Helen can tell you some additional reasons you should quit."

Helen stepped forward. "I have a short video clip to show
you" She gestured toward the ceiling above the center of the room.

A series of scenes played out on the ceiling. The first frame
presented the title of the story. "A tale of two quitters." Next,
the viewers saw two cartoon characters walk into the foreground. The
character on the left looked sad and stressed. The one on the right
looked happy and enthusiastic.

The sad one introduced himself. He pointed the the Q1 hat on
his head. "I'm quiter number one. You may call me by my name, Q1. I
have quit cigs many times. I know I should never smoke again, but I
can't help it. I know that I'm addicted, and that I'm doomed to die
from that addiction."

The happy one introduced himself. "I'm quiter number two. I
quit cigs just once. Once is all it took. I did not need will power.
I just finally realized how silly it is to poison myself everyday just
to feel the way I felt before I had my first cig. My name is Q2."

Q1 swelled into the foreground. "Here is a typical day for
me" Q1 rolls out of bed and reaches for his cig pack. He turns back
toward the bed and sees his wife still in bed. The audience knows its
his wife because they see her name, "Q1 wife". Q1 pauses. He
remembers a scene.

Q1's head fades from view and the scene he remembers moves
into the foreground. Q1 wife is pleading with Q1. "Please don't
smoke while my sister is visiting. It will hurt her yet to be born
baby. If you don't smoke for a long enough time, we might even have
a baby of our own."

The remembered scene faded, and Q1 expanded again into the
foreground. Q1 grabbed the cig pack and put it in his pocket. "I can
get my cig fix at the smoketorium just before I go to work. The boss
won't mind if I'm a little bit late."

The image faded from the ceiling.

Helen spoke to regain her Audience. "I'll summarize the
reasons now, and go into more detail later. Smoking is an addiction
that is killing you slowly. But you can quit, and I can help you. The
cig smoke is hurting all your friends as well as yourself. For men,
Cig smoke damages your sperm and, for pregnant women, interferes with
development of the baby in the womb."

"Why did you begin to smoke? Why do you continue to smoke?
Do you enjoy each cig as you smoke it? Some of you claim to do so,
but do you really?"

"Or is it that you continue to smoke only to avoid the
withdrawal symptoms. You don't need to. You can easily ignore those
withdrawal symptoms if you understand what they are. Every night,
while you sleep, almost all the nicotine is removed from your blood
circulation. Ignore that empty feeling you get when you feel the
impulse to smoke. It is caused by your metabolism reverting back to
normal. Don't smoke any more cigs, avoid taking nicotine in any
form, and within three weeks, your metabolism will be back to normal."

Helen again pointed to the ceiling in the middle of the room.
"Here's the next part of the tale of two quitters."

Q1's boss frowned at Q1. "Why are you so late?"

Surprise flashed across Q1's face. "I had to stop at the
smoketorium to get a smoke. Surely, it's better that I'm a few minutes
late and work efficiently, than it would be to be on time, but work
inefficiently because I haven't had my morning cig."

Q1 boss stepped up close to Q1, and said very carefully and
slowly, "It would be much much better if you did not believe that you
need the cigs to work efficiently. I strongly suggest that you not
smoke another cig. You should quit like Q2 did." The boss twirled in
place and strode rapidly back to his office.
Q1 stumbled toward his office. "At the break, I'll go back to
the smoketorium to smoke another cig. I need it to calm myslef."

The image on the ceiling faded from view and Helen's voice
took on ringing oracle tones. "Avoid the temptation to smoke when
under slight stress. It may feel like the cig is helping you cope
with stress, but that is only the cig trap at work. You will feel
slight stress as your metabolism reverts to normal. Invite this
stress. Be glad for this stress. It shows your progress at escaping
from the trap."

$ "Avoid the temptation to smoke when you feel bored. It is the
same trap. Smoking cigs uses up energy you might use for more
worthwhile projects. This is how cigs make it more likely that you
will be bored. Preventing your metabolism from reverting to normal
frees up some of your energy and creates the illusion that the cig
relieved your boredom. But, observe yourself closely. Do you have
enough energy to actually do more than smoke the cig? Instead of
being bored, doing nothing, you are being bored while smoking a cig."

"Avoid the temptation to smoke when you need to take an exam
or concentrate your attention on some problem to be solved. In fact,
smoking cigs starve the brain of oxygen and reduces your ability to
concentrate. The illusion that cigs help you to concentrate comes from
being distracted by that feeling associated with your metabolism
returning to normal. Recognize that feeling. Be glad of that feeling,
and allow yourself to not be distracted by it. Your concentration
will improve immensely once you are cured of having to smoke cigs."

"Avoid the temptation to smoke when you want to relax. The
nicotine in cigs increases your heart rate. Cigs do not relax you.
This illusion that cigs relax you is caused by the fact that you feel
a slight stress as your body metabolism tries to revert to normal.
Recognize this stress and welcome it. It is a sign that you are
escaping from the trap. If you instead smokea cig, you are preventing
your body from recovering. By preventing your body to do the work
necessary to bring your metabolism back to normal you reduce your
overall stress, causing you to think the cig relaxed you. Don't allow
yourself to fall into this trap over and over again."

"If you allow yourself to stay in this trap, you'll eventually
reach the stage where when you are not smoking, you'll feel impatient
until you have a chance to smoke, and when you are smoking, you'll
wish you didn't have to. Escape from this trap now. Make your last
cig be the last cig you smoke."

"I'll tell you five tactics available to you to help you
through the short time it takes for your metabolism to re-adjust to
not having the nicotine poison in your body. You can remember these
five tactics by remembering the five letter word, FAITH."

"The first letter, F, is for faith. Have faith that your
body can heal itself. Nature has given us marvelous bodies that
adapt amazingly well to unexpected circumstances. When you smoked
your first cig, your body adapted to the presence of nicotine and
other poisons. When you choose to have smoked your last cig, your
body will adapt to not having those poisons present. It is only your
ignorance of your body's adaptability that keeps you in the cig trap."

"The second letter, A, is for accurate. Have an accurate view
of what is actually happening. Instead of thinking that you are
suffering withdrawal pangs or cravings, rejoice in the certain
knowledge that your body's metabolism is returning to normal."

"The third letter, I, is for interest. Find interesting
things to do to keep your mind busy. Doing interesting work or play
releases stored energy and speeds your recovery."

"The fourth letter, T, is for tap. Tap resources available to
support your commitment. Talk to your friends, meditate on feelings
of well being, remember all the supporting reasons why you should quit
smoking, read and ponder advice that may help you. There are more
resources available to you than I could possibly list. Please feel
free to phone me any day of the week, any time of day. I'll be glad
to facillitate your escaping from this cig trap."

"The fifth letter, H, is for heal. Heal yourself. Teach
yourself to relax muscles in your head, arms, chest, etc at will.
Remember joyous and pleasant feelings to release energy for healing
your body."

"If right now you make the commitment to quit smoking, then
you will have already smoked your last cig."

Helen stepped back to exchange places with Joe. Joe then
added his remark. "Do you care about money in the long term?
Calculate how much money you'll release for useful purposes over the
rest of your life if you quit now. Do you care about money in the
short term? These smokeless cigs, which will help you escape the cig
trap, last 10 times as long as a regular cigarette. And the cost is
exactly the same. Effectively you pay only one tenth as much for
them."

Joe added, "And if you finish the pack, and still feel the need
for more to escape the nicotine trap, you may return the used
smokeless cigarettes to us in order to get a new pack at half price.
So, after the first pack, you really pay only one twentieth of the
price per pack. Think of it this way. You would get a full pack for
what you now pay for one cigarette "

Joe paused, then continued, "And incidentally, you may trade
regular cigs for our cigs. If you give up your pack of cigs to us, we
will give you one pack of ours for free. For each regular cig that
you give to us, we will give you one of our smokeless cigs."

Joe stepped back to invite Bob to exchange places with him.
Bob spoke clearly, using his announcement voice. "It is important
that you don't think you need willpower to quit. To stop smoking, all
you have to do is to stop smoking. The cig does you no good. It
doesn't relax you. It doesn't help you concentrate to solve problems
or to do work. It doesn't relieve stress. It doesn't give you
enjoyment. It doesn't relieve boredom. The cig does not help you in
any way. You don't need willpower to overcome those false cravings.
You need only a clear understanding of what is happening to you. You
will find it easy to stop."

"Beware of another trap you might fall into. Once you
discover that it's easy to escape the cig trap, you might think that
it's ok to smoke on occasion because you can escape again. This is
another subtle trap. Remember that every cig you smoke is not good
for you. There is no reason to subject yourself to that punishment.
If you should smoke another cig, you'll have to choose between staying
in the cig trap the rest of your life, or being miserable for a while
during the escape process. Commit yourself to never smoking another
cig for the rest of your life."

The chess player with the blue shirt replied, "You give a good
argument. However, I don't think any of us here are ready to quit our
habit. Besides, you yourself said these cigs have no nicotine. So
really they are fake cigs."

Angela showed her presence by immediately responding, "They
aren't fake cigs, they are anti-cigs. If you replace your regular
cigs with ours, then you'll automatically free yourself from the cig
trap."

Blue Shirt replied, "So what. I have no interest in giving up
smoking."

One of the remaining two guys playing ping pong spoke up. "Speak
for yourself, Sam." He addressed Helen. "I want to quit. You
impressed Ralph with your chess playing, but you haven't impressed me
yet. How well can you play ping pong? It will impress me if you play
a good game. If you can beat me in a game of ping pong, then I'll buy
several packs of your smokeless cigs. I'll even give all but one pack
to my buddies and tell them all about you and the smokeless cigs. Are
you game?"

Helen strode to the ping pong table and picked up a paddle.
"Ready when you are."

The challenger replied. "I'm ready. Be prepared to lose
because I haven't lost a game in six months. By the way, my name is
Long Arm Tom."

They started to play. As Helen returned Tom's first serve,
she realized that she could have easily returned the ball in such a
way that Tom would have found it impossible to hit. But she had
decided that that would be an unfair use of her powers. So she
returned the ball where Tom could easily hit it back to her.

After a few volleys, an onlooker jeered, "Why are you being
so soft on her Tom? When are you going to start slamming?"

Tom glanced up, then focused his attention back to the game.
Carefully, so as to not disturb his concentration, he replied, "Relax
Red. It'll be very soon. It won't be worth cam-cording for your news
show."

Tom saw his chance. He moved his paddle under the ball and
slammed it down on Helen's side of the table. He then relaxed,
confident that Helen would miss. But Helen didn't miss. She saw
exactly where the ball would be and had her paddle ready to gently
return it to Tom's side of the table. Since Tom did not expect her to
return the volley, he watched in surprise as the ball bounced gently
twice right in front of him.

At this Red turned his head, and announced loudly to everyone
in the room. "Hey folks, come and watch. This lady is a table tennis
pro also!" Red lifted his camcorder to record the rest of the game.

Alarmed, Tom decided to try the trick slam. He begin a series
of easy volleys on the right hand side of the table. After he felt
that Helen probably expected his next volley to be on the same side of
the table, he slammed it to the edge of the left hand side of the
table. He then relaxed, watching for her look of consternation.

Instead Tom showed the look of consternation when Helen,
having zipped over to the other side of the table, with an incredibly
long reach, gently returned the ball to his side of the court. Tom
made a valiant try to return the ball, but the paddle slipped out of
his hand just as he hit the ball, and the ball went off the table.

This sequence of events repeated several times. After a few
volleys. Tom would slam the ping pong ball down on Helen's side, and
not expect her to return it. When Helen did return it, Tom could not
respond in time.

When the score became six to zero in Helen's favor, Tom put
down his paddle. "I concede. Give me several packs of your cigs, and
I'll be your salesman for a week."

As Tom took the packs from Helen, he said, "In fact, I'll
start right now." Taking his cell phone from his cell phone holder,
he punched in a local phone number. "Hey Clint, I've got something
really hot for you. I think you should send it up to the big boss."

Chapter 19

Monday July 3 Cigs stolen from Union Store

Tuesday July 11 1st episode local Smoketorium

Wednesday July 12 5 cancellations

Thursday July 13 3 cancellations

Friday July 14 5 cancellations

Saturday July 15 2 cancellations

Sunday July 16 2 cancellations

Monday July 17 8 cancellations

Tuesday July 18 2nd episode local smoketorium

8 cancellations

Wednesday July 19 4 cancellations

Thursday July 20 5 cancellations

Friday July 21 3 cancellations

"Look at this chart!" Clint's voice showed his worry. "If
this keeps up much longer, I won't have any customers left!"

Mike spoke calmly to Client. "I don't see anything to be
really worried about. How many customers do you have in this town?
About twenty thousand? In the worse case, you'd still have eighty
percent of your customers after a year's time. I'm sure we can find
ways to eliminate your threat way before then."

Mike continued, "But you must be patient. This is a only a
local threat, so I can't devote too much time to it."

Mike ignored Clint's look of disappointment, and added,
"However, we are very glad you brought this to our attention. I
expect that we can find some chemist to testify that her smokeless
cigs are dangerously toxic."

Clint shook his head. "I think Helen would not push toxic
cig substitutes. She must believe they are safe. But how would she
know? Where did she get them? She's only a music student at the
college."

Mike shook his head. "That's a mystery I hope to solve soon.
I've hired a detective agency to report to me everything they can find
out about ms Helen Aphrodite Troy."

Clint nodded his head in satisfaction. "Good. I wonder
what's she's doing right now."

Helen landed softly on the walkway leading up to Melody's
Home. As she landed she released Bob and Joe. She had had her right
arm around Joe, and her left arm around Bob as she flew the three of
them to the Astronauts' party in Houston Texas. Both Bob and Joe,
each protected from changes in air pressure by a bubble of air, had
chosen to carry his musical instrument in its case strapped across his
chest. Helen had offered to shrink their beloved instruments to
pocket size, and expand them later, but neither wanted to take her up
on her offer.

Joe glanced at the beautiful marble walkway and beautifully
landscaped yard. He started to comment on it, but Helen and Bob had
already moved along the walkway to the front door. As Bob stepped on
the doorstep, a computer voice said, "Please state your name clearly
and distinctly."

Before Bob could respond, Joe rushed forward and said, "We are
the impossible trio. You scheduled us to entertain for today's
party."

The computer replied, "Response accepted. Please enter." As
they entered the opening door, Joe explained, "I called Melody earlier
to tell her the new name of our band."

Melody greeted them as they entered. "Calvin and the other
astronauts are already here. Helen, please introduce me to your
friends."

Joe stuck out his hand for Melody. "I'm Joe Athens." Then
indicating Bob, he said, "This is Bob Mercury, and of course you
already know Helen."

Melody said, "Thank you. Let me first show you where you will
be performing." She led the way down a long wide hallway with fancy
artistic silk-screened pictures hanging on the walls.

After walking through the hallway they entered a large room.
The entire wall on the other side of the room seemed transparent, for
they could see a beautiful lake and garden beyond it.

Melody led them directly across the center of the room to the
transparent wall. She observed Joe looking intently at the lake scene
through the wall.

She laughed. "Do you think this is just a picture window?
Let me show you what a real picture window this is." She held up a
remote control, which she handed to Joe. "Press any channel button."

Puzzled Joe pressed a button at random. Suddenly the
beautiful lake disappeared to be replaced by a view of the moonscape
as photographed by the astronauts in 2060.

"Wow" exclaimed Joe as he handed the remote control back to
Melody.

Bob, equally impressed, asked, "How many scenes do you have
for this window?"

Melody replied. "This remote has the capacity for selecting
4095 different views. I think we have about 500 of them programmed."

Just then Calvin and Jonathan, each smiling and waltzing to
inaudible music brought light swivel chairs for them to sit in. They
set them down next to the picture window. They then turned to greet
the group.

Melody introduced the trio to them. "Calvin, and Jonathan,
this is Joe, and Bob. And of course you remember Helen." Melody
waved her hand briefly toward each person as she said the name. Then
she observed, "I'll have to introduce you all over again to the
latecomers."

Just then Abner walked up. "Then why don't you wait until they
start to play to introduce them? Abner smiled at Helen. "I'm glad
you brought your friends." He shook hands with Helen, then Joe and
Bob.

Helen observed, "The only one of your group that we haven't
greeted yet is Carol."

Melody replied, "Carol is bringing out the punch bowl."

Just as Melody said this, they all heard a loud crash and a
yell of disappointment.

They looked toward the sound and saw Carol sitting down in the
long hallway with gallons of punch flowing away from her and shards of
broken glass all around her.

Helen ran toward Carol to help her up. As she approached
Carol, the punch and glass shards in her path vanished. She helped
Carol up.

Then she said, "Let me help you with the rest. Where did you
want the punch bowl set up?"

Carol replied, 'It's too late. I broke our only punch bowl
and spilled the last of our punch mix."

Helen smiled. "Show me anyway. Pretend you never dropped the
punch bowl."

Carol frowned, then remembering that Helen had previously done
seemingly impossible things decided to go along, wondering what
miracle she might do now.

With a wave of her hand, Helen absorbed the remaining glass
fragments in the hallway and followed carol to the refreshment table
back in the large room. Carol touched the edge of the table and said,
"I intended to put it on this table."

Helen replied. "Ok." She then stood next to the center part
of the table and placed her cupped hands over the table. Soon she had
recreated the punch bowl and placed it onto the table. She next held
her arm above the open bowl. Punch poured out of her arm into the
bowl.

Calvin came up to her. "Do you know how many different laws
of physics you just violated?"

Helen replied, "Actually I haven't violated any laws of
physics. It just seems that way."

Calvin laughed. "I'm glad to hear that. So should I think of
you as just a super stage magician?"

Helen looked at Calvin in surprise. "Yes. That's a very good
way to look at it. Thank you."

Later when almost all the guests had arrived, Melody signaled
to Joe that they should begin. Joe spoke to the audience. Our first
song is called 'Where do you live?' Helen wrote both the lyrics and
score for it. After this song, we will take requests from the
audience."

Joe sat down and swiveled to face Bob, already sitting. They
began playing and Helen began to sing.

Abner, leaning against the wall, prepared to wait out the
song. After hearing a few lines of the song, he stood up and moved
slightly closer to insure he heard every word of the song.

When Helen finished her song, she turned to speak to the
audience. "Ok folks, time to challenge us. What would you like to
hear us perform?

A tall thin man who had just entered spoke up. "Please sing
'On the other side of the moon.' It's my favorite song."

Melody gasped in surprise. "Gaunt! That's not fair. When
you taught me that song you told me that it dropped off the charts
over 60 years ago. These kids are too young to know it."

Helen spoke then. "It's ok Melody. We can do it. We have
the sheet music for it. Helen reached into her pocket and pulled out
two rolls of framed plastic paper. She handed one to Joe and one to
Bob.

As Joe took it he whispered to Helen, "Neat trick. No one
would have suspected that these rolls of sheet music were made on the
spot."

Helen whispered back, "or that I didn't even know the song
existed until he requested it."

The rolls of sheet music unrolled automatically and then grew
legs. Bob and Joe weren't the only ones whose gasp showed their
surprise while the rolls of sheet music became music stands. After a
few moments, each of them began to play while Helen sang.

After the performance, Grant came up to examine the music
stands. Picking one up, he carefully bent portions of it and watched
it spring back into shape. Putting it down, he smiled at Helen. He
said, "That's a very clever application of memory wire. Even though I
invented memory wire, I never would have thought of this application."

Helen extended her hand. "Thank you."

As they shook hands Grant said, "You're welcome. If you can
program memory wire this well, I'd like to hire you to program a
broadcast web site.

Joe leaned forward to shake hands with Grant. "My name is
Joe." Pointing to Bob, he added, "And this is Bob."

Bob stepped forward to shake Grant's hand. "Glad to meet
you.

Grant turned his head to find Melody, and waved for her to
come over. As Melody walked up, he asked her, "This group is very
impressive. I already knew they were good. But tonight, they
exceeded all my expectations."

Bob immediately asked, "You already knew? How? Did you see
us play before today?"

Grant answered, "Yes. Victor sent me your first recording.
I've endorsed you, and you have a very good chance of earning free
world wide advertisement. If or when that happens, you'll have a
steady supplementary income forever."

Grant added, "But I had first met Helen through video phone
several years ago, although she might not remember me."

Bob and Joe both turned to look at Helen. She responded, "I
do remember Grant. He worked with Melody to support my anti-cig club
that I started my sophmore year in high school. He called me again
last year to tell me that he and Melody were working together on a
project against the tobacco Company, and asked me if I were interested
in working with them. At the time I turned them down. My music study
kept me too busy."

Just then Abner walked up. "Helen, I'm really impressed by
your song, 'Where do you live'. What inspired you to write it?"

Helen smiled, then replied, "I'm on a crusade. I want to free
everyone addicted to cigarettes so that cigarettes won't be made any
more."

Abner stepped back a step, astonishment lighting up his face.
"That's a pretty big ambition, maybe even for you. How will you do
it?"

Helen replied, "I've started small. In my hometown Eastside,
Virginia, I've gone weekly to the local smoketorium and attempted to
persuade some smokers to quit. I wrote the song so I could sing it at
the smoketorium."

Joe commented. "I bet you'd be even more impressed by Helen's
smokeless cigs!"

Grant leaned forward, addressing Helen. "So you do still
care! It's perfect. Would you like to have your performances at the
Eastside smoketorium broadcast all over the world?"

Helen looked at Grant in surprise. "That would be very good.
How much work would it be for you? It sounds like it would be too
much to ask of you."

Grant paused. "Actually, I've already set it up. I'm just
looking for someone to manage it."

He pulled a small computer phone from a holster on his belt,
and rapidly punched keys on its keypad. "Now I just need to know your
email address."

Helen smiled. "Wonderful." She reached into her pocket and
pulled out a card. "Here's the email address I use that's dedicated
to the antismoke issue."

Grant looked at Helen's email card. "How did you come up with
an email name like Aunt.Izciguf.Ana.Tic@Eastside.USEVA.us.edu?"

Helen laughed. "So it's not so obvious after all. It's
Ant-ti-cig-f-fana-tic. I threw in some extra letters to complete the
syllables, and confused things by moving first or last letters of a
syllable to an adjacent syllable."

Grant shook his head. "I see that I didn't really need to
ask." Looking at the card, grant quickly keyed in her email address.
"I've set up a web page dedicated to the broadcast. I've programed in
one week already, and it repeats itself every week. The broadcast is
24 hours per day, 7 days per week. I've also set up a way for people
to ask you questions and make comments to you in response to the
broadcast. I need you to program variations of the content so people
will find it interesting enough to subscribe to."

Grant pulled a card from a clip in his shirt pocket and handed
it to Helen. "Here's my web address and email address. Log in to my
web address by using any part of your name as ID and your email
address as password. You may change your id and password anytime you
wish. It's ready for you to assign a broadcast structure and upload
the content files. Just make sure the content is relevant to the
smoking issue. Email me if you have any difficulties."

Grant's swift action impressed Helen. Thank you very much!
We will make use of your web site very soon. Is there anything we can
do for you in return?"

Grant answered, "Joe, you said something about smokeless cigs
that Helen has. Are they props you use for explaining the effects of
cigs?"

Joe laughed, "Ha. Not at all. Her smokeless cigs are
substitutes for the real cigarettes so that people could feel they are
still smoking while they break their addiction. They are miraculous
cigs."

Grant looked at Joe in astonishment. "So you say. Could you
give me some so I can have my lab analyze them?"

Helen reached into her pocket. she focused her attention on
generating the required genetic structures. After a few seconds, she
pulled out a jar containing a green jelly. "Here. With this you can
grow your own smokeless cigs."

In astonishment, Grant took the jar. "Grow my own? How?"

Helen replied, "The smokeless cigs are organic. The wrapping
of the cig, instead of being made of paper, is made of fine hairs that
weave themselves together as they grow. A very sophisticated network
of nerves and nutrient vessels grow throughout the cig as it develops.
The nerve network carries the logic program needed for the cig to do
its work."

Helen continued, "Just feed the cig jelly with regular foods
like milk, fruits, meat and veggies. Add sprinkles of water, tobacco,
and iron or copper filings. The tobacco is needed so that the cig can
mimic the tobacco taste. After awhile, depending on how much food and
light it has, it will grow a smokeless cig. The cig will come to the
surface of the jelly when it's fully grown. It will remain alive
until you use it up, or for about a month if you don't use it."

Grant held the jar up to look closely at it. "You must be
kidding me. No lab on Earth could possibly calculate the required
genetic structure."

Grant pulled an eyeglass case from his pocket. Taking the
glasses in both hands, he pressed key points on the frames, and
converted them into a powerful microscope. "This is one of my early
applications of memory wire. My glasses convert to any shape I need."

Grant opened the jar, and with a thin wire, pulled out a tiny
bit of the jelly to put under the microscope. After peering at it
through the microscope a few moments, he commented. "This appears to
be some kind of protoplasmic jellylike fluid. I felt quite sure that
nobody on Earth could possibly make it."

Suddenly, Grant's face lit up in a very wide smile. "Say! If
you folks aren't pulling my leg, you probably know how to contact the
Aliens."

Chapter 20

Helen took the last bite of her lunch and looked across the
campus cafeteria table to her two friends, Bob and Joe, "I've just
examined the first batch of requests for the smokeless cigs from our
worldwide broadcasts."

Joe replied, "I bet it's a lot. Maybe even several thousand.
How will you deliver them? You can't mail them because the post
office stopped delivering tobacco products. Even with the extra money
coming in from your repair shop in the university union store, we
couldn't afford to have Federal Express deliver them."

Helen replied, "We certainly need help. There's not enough
time in the day for me to make and deliver them at the rate I've been
doing it."

Bob looked surprised. "Not enough time in the day? Just how
many orders came in this first batch?"

Helen looked apologetic. "About a quarter million."

Joe whistled softly. "How are we going to handle this?"

Helen sighed. "I think I need to ask Grant for help."

Bob and Joe exchanged glances. Joe spoke first. "If Grant
works closely with us, he's sure to discover your superpowers."

Helen sighed again. "I know. I've failed to think of any
way we could handle this ourselves. I might be able to package the
cigs in time, but there's no way I could deliver this many of them in
time. Besides, I haven't grown enough cigs yet. It'll take another
three days to grow the cigs I need for just this first batch of
orders."

"The customers are expecting delivery within three days. We
made a mistake by not planning for this before I reprogrammed Grant's
anti-cig broadcasts. Without Grant's help, it'll take too long to
deliver the cigs. We need Grant's help to avoid disappointing our
customers."

Bob replied, "The only way to find out if Grant can help us
quickly enough is to call him." Bob looked toward Joe, but Joe had
already taken out his cell phone and begun to punch in Grant's phone
number.

Just before Joe finished placing the call, his cell phone
rang. Astonishment tinged Joe's voice as he looked at his cell phone
caller id. "Grant is calling us!"

Joe accepted Grant's call. "Hello Grant! What's up."

Grant replied, "I need your help. How do I turn off the cig
growing jelly?"

Surprised, Joe said the first thing that popped into his mind.
"Just don't feed it."

Grant answered, "I know that of course. But it doesn't help
me. I anticipated that you'd want to grow lots of cigs after the
orders started comming in. Immediately after you gave me the cig
jelly, I had one of my larger warehouses, number seven, emptied so
that I could grow the cigs in it. I hired a company to carefully
prepare a garden on the warehouse floor consisting of the standard
bacterial medium and to continuously pipe in nutrient fluid containing
the proteins and minerals needed by the cig jelly. They put a large
elevated tank just outside the warehouse to hold the nutrient fluid.
They finished in four days."

Joe glanced at Helen as he answered, "I still don't see why
you should have any problem. Even if it had a continuous supply of
food, the amount of cig jelly we gave you shouldn't produce more than
about 10 cigs a day."

Grant answered, "I have a lot more than that now. You should
have told me that it reproduces itself exponentially if the food
supply is available. Now the floor of my warehouse is completely
covered with cig jelly and with your smokeless cigs."

Helen reached for Joe's phone. Joe saw Helen reach for the
phone, and since he knew that Helen, with her super hearing, had heard
both sides of the conversation, he quickly handed Helen the phone.

Helen spoke excitedly into the phone. "Grant, we need those
cigs. We were just about to call you to ask you to help us deliver our
first order of cigs."

Grant replied, "Sure I can help. I have a very efficient
independent distributor for my electronic equipment. But it won't be
exactly easy to apply it to this many cigs."

Grant continued, "When can you help me with my warehouse
problem? Do you have some fast way to harvest your cigs from the
jelly?"

Helen replied, "Sure, but what happened. We gave you only a
small jar of the jelly. What did you do to get your warehouse floor
covered with it?"

Grant replied, "After the company finished making the garden
for the jelly on the floor of the Warehouse, I requested that they
disperse the small jar of jelly throughout the garden. They did this
very well. Only microscopic traces of the jelly ended up in any one
spot. When I came back to check on the results, three days later,
meaning today, July 29th, green jelly covered the entire floor of
warehouse seven, except for a few square meters near the entrance."

Helen responded, "Grant, your problem is part of the solution
to our problem. If I harvest the cigs for you, will you be able to
package them and deliver them within two days?"

Grant responded, "That is asking a lot. I'm not sure I can do
it. Let me think about it. When can you come to harvest the cigs?
How will you do it?"

Helen replied, "Right now. Are you at the warehouse?"

Grant replied, "Yes. When I saw how things were going here, I
called you by the first phone number I could remember."

Helen laughed at this. "We're very glad you called. Wait for
me. I'll meet you at the warehouse in two minutes."

Astonishment tinged Grant's voice. "Did you say two minutes?
You must have meant two days."

Helen spoke calmly. "No, I really did mean two minutes. I'll
explain when I get there. Bye for now." Helen handed the phone back
to Joe.

Grant said "Wait! Do you know where the warehouse is?" Not
hearing any response from Helen, he looked at his phone to check if
they were still connected. As he looked at it, the display changed to
"call ended". Grant pondered what Helen had said. She would be here
in two minutes. How far could she travel in two minutes? Had they
been on the way to see him when he called them?"

Grant looked again at the floor of the warehouse. He bent
down and picked up a few cigs lying on the surface of the green jelly.
How would Helen harvest them? Perhaps he could show a token effort to
help her. He had brought a few unassembled boxes with him to the
warehouse and stored them on a rack next to the entrance. He could
assemble a few of those. He turned around to fetch a box to assemble.

He saw Helen. She appeared to suddenly materialize in front
of him. Startled, Grant said, "I didn't hear you come in."

Helen smiled. "I just flew in."

Grant looked beyond at Helen, then beyond her. "Where are
your friends?"

"They're still in Virginia."

Grant looked puzzled. "But you talked to me through Joe's
phone!" Grant shook his head, then as another thought came to him, he
said, "Did Joe transfer me to your phone? Or maybe you two were
already talking to each other, and he added me in as a third link."

Helen shook her head. "Nothing so complicated. A few minutes
ago I did speak to you from Joe's phone in Virginia. I flew here in
two minutes."

Grant voice showed his astonishment. "What do you mean? How
could you fly from Virginia to here in two minutes?"

Helen replied, "Like this." As she said this she shot up to
the ceiling of the warehouse, then slowly floated back down, but
stopped before reaching the ground.

Grant gave voice to his wonderment. "How are you doing
this?"

Helen answered. "If I tell you, will you promise to keep it a
secret, and not tell anyone?"

"Ha." Grant almost laughed. "So that's why you denied
knowing the Aliens! You were afraid that I'd blab. Then why did you
let me see you do this technological magic? But don't worry. I never
had any intention of telling anyone. I just wanted to know for
myself."

Helen looked at Grant. "Thanks. I really do need your help.
You were bound to discover my secret anyway as we worked together.
Besides, it doesn't feel right to hide my powers from you anymore
since you have become our good friend by helping us so much. I do
hope you can avoid telling the news media about me. I worried that
you would be so tempted to tell because you'd think you had the first
proof of aliens on Earth and it would make you famous."

Grant smiled. "Become famous? I'm already famous. And it
would make no difference if I said that I had proof that Aliens were
on Earth. Those who believe already believe. Those who don't believe
would not believe I had proof. There's no reason for me to tell the
news media about you. Besides, I don't want to interfere with you as
you help me fight the tobacco company. If the news media should
become interested in you, they might take up too much of your time.
Besides, we are friends now, and I don't want to cause you trouble."

Helen looked affectionately toward Grant. "Thank you. I
really appreciate it. Grant, I want to explain about the aliens.
There is only one alien on Earth, and it's inside me. "

Grant showed his surprise by his sudden lifting of his head
toward Helen. "When did this alien come to Earth?"

Helen replied, "About four weeks ago, on the evening of my
birthday, July first."

Grant shook his ahead. "I can't believe it. Besides I have
proof that some other Alien exists. My instruments recorded it
entering the Grayjay as it left the moon."

Helen laughed. "I know. You also saw me inside the Grayjay
after you had Melody turn on your invisible alien detector."

Grant replied, "You know that because, at the astronauts
party, Melody told you all about it." Grant paused, as he became
fully aware of Helen's words. "What do you mean by that I saw you?
Are you claiming to be the alien on the Grayjay?"

Helen replied, "Yes. As I said, there are no other aliens.
And I'm not really alien. It's just that Sparky, the alien, is inside
me. It's because of Sparky that I have these amazing powers."

Grant replied, "I still can't believe it. How do you know that
your Sparky is the only alien on Earth? But no matter. Maybe you can
prove it to me some other time. For now, let's focus on getting this
work done.

Helen agreed. "Ok. Let's start assembling some of the boxes
that you brought. Then I'll fill them with the cigs."

Grant stifled his laugh. "How long do you think it'll take
you to pick up all the cigs in here?"

Helen looked at him, and said in her musical voice, "About
fourteen hours."

"Fourteen hours!" Grant expressed his surprise. "I expected
it would take more like fourteen weeks unless we got a lot of people
to help us." Grant paused, then continued, "But, of course, you have
alien technology to help you."

Grant focused his attention on assembling the first box. When
he finished assembling it, he looked up to ask Helen how many boxes
she needed. He forgot his question as he saw cigs flying through the
air in tight formation. Grant alternately stared at Helen as she
waved her hands around like a conductor on a music stage and at the
six boxes where the cigs stacked themselves up neatly.

Within a few minutes, the cigs had completely filled all six
boxes. Helen apparently had assembled five boxes in the time he'd
assembled one. How did she do it? Immediately, he saw the answer to
his question. Several of the unassembled boxes flew off the rack and
begin assembling themselves.

Grant glanced at his cell phone clock. They needed to fill
several hundred boxes with cigs, and even at this fast rate, they'd be
here several hours. "I advise that we find a different way to do this
work. As fast as you fill these boxes, it won't be enough. If, as
you said, it takes fourteen hours to harvest all these cigs, you won't
have any time left over to do any other work. Let's stop a few
minutesand plan some way to automate this process."

Grant took out his combination cell phone and computer. Helen
continued to assemble boxes and fill them with cigs as she watched
Grant work out some design on his computer.

After about half an hour, Grant looked up and said, "I've got
it. Come look at this."

As Helen looked over Grant's shoulder at the display on the
small computer screen, Grant explained the details. "The body of the
robot is a very light very small helicopter. It'll be able to carry
up to thirty cigs. It'll be powered by electricity stored in a
rechargable battery. The computer circuitry and its memory for its
instructions are built into the outside shell of its body. I could set
up the equipment to mass produce these in about a week."

Helen answered. "I can start making them right now." As she
spoke, she placed her open hand in front of her, palm up. After about
a minute, a small helicopter following Grants design appeared in her
palm. Almost immediately it flew up out of her hand, swooped down to
pick up cig after cig until its cig bin became filled. It then
deposited the collected cigs neatly into one of the unfilled boxes.

For the next two hours, Helen made the small flying helicopter
robots while Grant assembled boxes and placed them along the wall of
the warehouse. At the end of that time, Grant decided to take a rest.
He leaned against the wall of the warehouse, and contemplated his
lunch.

Helen watched Grant leaning against the wall. "You look
thirsty."

Grant looked up in surprise. "You seem to know a lot about
me. You knew how to find my warehouse, and now you can tell when I'm
thirsty just by looking at me. How do you know?"

Helen grinned, "Because you are not sweating as much as
usual."

Grant nodded his head. "Yes. I presume you are just stating
a fact, and not intending to insult me. Should we take a break and go
get some lunch?"

Helen answered, "We can have lunch here." She focused her
attention on making a vinyl plastic blanket. She held her hands out
in front of her. Grant watched, amazed, as a green yellowish blanket
begin to flow out of Helen's hands and settle to the warehouse
entrance floor.

Grant asked, "Where is the blanket coming from?"

Helen answered, "I'm making it from stored energy."

Grant shook his head. "It's not possible to store that much
energy. You must mean accessible matter and energy, not just stored
energy. But no matter. If you can make a blanket that quickly, then
you should have been able to gather up and package all these cigs in a
heartbeat."

Helen replied, "I don't yet see how I could have done that.
Helen sat on the blanket. She touched a spot on the blanket next to
her. "Here we can have a pitcher of water." As she slowly raised her
hand, a pitcher of water formed in the spot she'd indicated. Next she
created two medium sized glasses, and placed them next to the pitcher.
Turning toward Grant she asked. "What would you like to have for
lunch?"

Grant replied, "How about a turkey beef cheese sandwich with
tomato paste?"

Helen put her hands together, and slowly pulled them apart.
As she pulled her hands apart, Grant's wrapped sandwich formed between
her hands. As Grant took the sandwich he commented, "I can't even
begin to guess what kind of technology you're employing to do this."

As they ate their lunch, Grant said, "Now we need to figure
out how to automate putting your cigs into packages and labeling them
with the names and mailing address."

Helen replied, "Right. As they come in, the names and mailing
addresses are automatically stored in a file on the website. We'll
need another kind of robot to package the cigs, and several printers
to print the labels."

Grant took his last bite of sandwich and took out his computer
phone. "I can start the printing right now. I presume that the
address file will be accessible only from our login?"

Helen replied, "Of course. I followed the privacy
protocols."

Grant logged in, found the address file, and invoked a
printer program to print the addresses. "Twenty five printers are now
printing your addresses very quickly." Grant looked again at the small
display screen on his computer. "Your file should be printed in about
an hour."

Grant added, "Now we need another kind of robot to put the
mailing labels on the cig packages. The mailing labeling robot can
work either here or at the main office where my printers are."

Helen replied, "Can we move the printers here so that next
time everything can be done here?

Grant looked around the warehouse. "Well, right now almost
all the available floor space is taken up by the cig jelly. I suppose
we could grow the cigs on shelves instead of using the floor. Then
we'd have much more space for the jelly, and also have room for the
printers and anything else we need."

Helen smiled. "Grant, that's a wonderful idea.I'll make the
shelves for next time. But before I do that, shouldn't we design the
robot to put the cigs into packages for us?"

Grant nodded his head. "Right, you do want to get this first
batch out as soon as possible." Grant activated his computer and
begin to work out a design. After a couple of minutes, he looked up.
"Hey, Helen, I don't really need to do this."

Grant responded to Helen's puzzled look. "Because if you can
have the cig jelly grow the cigs ready made, why can't you grow them
already packaged?"

Helen opened her mouth to speak, then brought her hand up to
cover her mouth. Quickly recovering from her astonishment, she said,
"Grant, you are an absolute genius." Immediately, Helen flew along
imaginary grid lines over the cig jelly. As she flew, she pointed her
fingers downward, almost touching the cig jelly. The RNA and DNA that
flowed from her finger tips merged into the jelly, causing it to
mutate. Helen finished her task in less than five minutes.

Helen hovered in the air next to Grant, then gracefully
settled to earth, standing besides him. "By tomorrow morning, the
mutation will have taken hold, and from then on, only packaged cigs
will be produced."

Helen spoke again. "Grant you've inspired me. I see that I've
been working nowhere near my full speed. I've figured out how I can
very quickly package all the cigs that are already made. Watch."

"First I'll make the packaging material." Helen held out her
arms in front of her, and sheets of the packaging material begin to
flow out and stack up in front of her. In a little over twenty
minutes, when she had finished, the stack of packaging material stood
over three meters high.

Grant had quietly watched Helen create the stack of the
packaging material. "That's a pretty big stack. How long will it
take to use it up?"

Helen said, "Watch". About a dozen sheets of the packaging
material flew from the top of the stack. Each sheet broke up into
two hundred pieces and each piece assembled itself into an open
package ready to receive twenty cigs. The assembled packages, open at
the top, floated in midair for a few seconds.

Fifty thousand cigs shot into the air and grouped themselves
into groups of twenty. Each group of cigs fell into a waiting cig
package. Then the top of each cig package sealed itself closed.
Finally, the packaged cigs zoomed over to completely fill five boxes.
Helen moved the five boxes outside the warehouse to rest against the
warehouse wall. The entire process took about ten seconds.

Grant expressed his amazement. "Wow! You'll be done long
before fourteen hours. While you're packaging these cigs, I'll go get
the labels."

Helen replied, "Good. Even though I'll have to make more
boxes, it'll take me less than twenty minutes to finish this. After
that, I'll come help you with the labels."

Grant replied, "In that case, why don't I wait for you. I can
work on making a robot to put the labels on the packages while I wait.
I want to completely automate this process so you won't have to worry
about doing this every day. Besides, it's best if United Tobacco
Company thinks I'm doing all the production and delivery. We don't
want them to get the idea that you have some kind of technological
magic."

Chapter 21

Alphonse studied the campus map that he'd only minutes earlier
obtained from student services. Alternately, looking at the map and
the landscape, he identified the music building, the library, the
cafeteria, and the union store.

Folding the map and putting it in his small travel bag, he
strode rapidly toward the union store. He had almost reached the
entrance when a man and a woman exited the store, speaking excitedly
to each other.

Alphonse heard the woman say to the man, "Helen is absolutely
amazing." Waving a small coffee pot she held in her right hand, she
continued, "I brought this coffee pot to her yesterday to remove the
dents in it. She said that she'd have it ready for me today. It's
amazing that she could remove the dents so completely. It's almost as
if it's a new coffe pot."

The man replied, "That's not half as amazing as what she did
for me. "I thought she exagerated in her ad that showed she could fix
broken CD's. Yesterday, I brought her my personal song CD on which I
had recorded several of my private songs, and which my nephew had
accidentally broken in half. I didn't really expect her to be able
to fix it. She completely amazed me when she took it without
complaint, and said she'd have it ready today. When I came to pick it
up, she played it for me to prove that she had fixed it.

Alphonse stopped, standing absolutely still as he pondered
their comments about Helen's amazing feats. Last week he had watched
a video of her playing ping pong with an expert ping pong player.
Helen had performed incredibly well at the game. He had also learned
about her beating the local chess expert in a chess game. What kind
of superwoman is this Helen Troy?

Inside the union store, he started to look around for the
manager, but paused as A woman about his own height approached him.

"May I help you?"

Alphonse recognized this lady with the short blond hair to be
Angela Septavious, the store's chief accountant. He had intended to
interview her after he had interviewed the manager, Betty Walters.

Alphonse looked at Angela. "Ms Septavious, I'm Alphonse
Meeter. I'm a private investigator from United Tobacco Company. Is
the manager in?"

Angela frowned. "You must be here about the break-in over the
holidays. You don't need to see the manager. I can tell you anything
you need to know." Angela did not say the thought uppermost in her
mind, that she knew her good friend Helen had been the one who did it.

Alphonse shook his head. "I want to talk to both of you. I
had hoped to talk to ms Walters first, but if she's not here now, I'll
talk to you first."

Reluctantly, Angela agreed. "Ok. Ask me your questions, and
I'll answer them the best way I know how."

Alphonse took out his small notebook and a pen. Holding the
notebook in his left hand, he put the pen to the notebook. "How long
have you known Helen Troy?"

"What! Why are you asking about Helen? You don't need to
know anything about Helen. I won't tell you."

Alphonse quickly wrote shorthand code in his notebook for a
short sentence. "Angela is Helen's Close friend." He closed the
notebook, and returned his pen to his shirt pocket penholder. "I see.
Can you tell me when ms Walters will return?"

Angela shook her head. "No, I can't." She pivoted, and
pointed to Betty's office. "She's in conference with a staff member."

Alphonse looked through the glass wall of Betty's office. He
saw Betty sitting on the far side of her desk, waving her hands
excitedly. He could not see the face of the person she talked to. He
could wait.

He looked around for a comfortable place to wait. He had just
decided to lean against the wall over by the outside window when Betty
came out of her office.

Betty spied Angela immediately. "Angela, Helen and I've have
reached an agreement. We won't sell the regular cigs anymore.
Instead we'll stock Helen's smokeless cigs. You or some other staff
member will collect the items for the repair shop. Helen will come in
after hours and use her amazing unique talents to repair them."

Angela smiled. "I'll call Clint immediately." Then she
thought to warn her supervisor about Alphonse.

Alphonse had not waited to be introduced. He addressed Betty
the instant she'd finished speaking. "Ms Walters, I'm Alphonse
Meeter. I'm a private investigator for United Tobacco Company. I'd
like to ask you some questions."

Betty showed her surprise. "The police closed the case. We
have nothing more to add."

Alphonse nodded his head. "Yes, I know. I'm not
investigating the break-in or the stolen cigs. I'm here to find out
everything I can about Helen Troy."

Helen stepped forward. "What do you want to know about me?"

Alphonse smiled. "I'm so glad you're here, ms Troy. Is there
a place we can sit comfortably while we talk?"

Helen glanced at Angela's frown and Betty's carefully
constructed lack of expression, then said, " Perhaps we could go to
the school cafeteria."

It took only a few minutes for them to arrive at the
cafeteria. As they sat down at an orange topped table, Alphonse
commented, "I will try to use everything you tell me against you. So
you should be careful what you tell me. I'll understand if you don't
want to tell me something."

Helen shook her head. "Why would you tell me this? Doesn't it
make your job more difficult?"

Alphonse grinned, "In fact, it usually makes my job easier.
People get nervous and reveal more than they intended. I see that it
won't work with you, so we can proceed informally."

Alphonse continued, "I wish to find out what United Tobacco
Company can do to stop Grant Richardson's interference with them. Why
did he wait until he hired you?"

Helen almost laughed. She stared at Alphonse for a few
seconds. "If you quit selling cigs, then we'll quit interfering. You
can guess why Grant waited until now."

Alphonses tapped on the table lightly with his right hand
fingers. "You know they won't do that. They need the income from cig
sales. If I could guess why Grant waited, I would not have asked you."

Alphonse remembered Betty's comments about Helen's amazing
unique talents, and about her repairing the CD and coffeepot. "I
think there's something special about you."

A service robot rolled up to the table. "Did you tap, sir?"

Startled, Alphonse started to say, "no", then realized that he
had tapped the table. "Yes, could you bring us drinks?"

Alphonse glanced at Helen. "Now where were we? Ah yes. I
think that there's something special about you. You must have
exceptional talents. Why wouldn't Grant have hired one of the
thousands of available student secretarial programmers?"

Helen replied. "I'm exceptional only for the extent to
which I want to end the sale of cigs. Grant knew I would be
dedicated to his cause."

Alphonse stared at Helen for a few moments. Then he said, "
I'm sure you have abilities beyond the normal person."

At Helen's puzzled look, Alphonse continued. Hundreds of
queries come to Grant's website every hour. Almost all of the queries
are answered immediately. We've interviewed dozens of Grant's
subscribers who sent in queries and compared the times of message
receipt. Sometimes you have written thousands of lines of text all
within the space of a few minutes. We assumed that you had programmed
the computer to handle most of the queries. It seemed the only
possible explanation, even though all the people we interviewed
insisted that you gave responses that could not have been anticipated
or programmed into a computer."

Helen smiled. "Yes, I am more efficient than most people
witth using the computer."

Alphonse looked closely at her. "Grant's amazing success with
his website is primarily due to the seemingly personal replies to
queries that you have made. I believe that no one but you could have
done it." With that thought, Alponse opened his notebook, and wrote
in his private shorthand code, "Find a way to keep Helen too busy to
respond personally to their subscribers."

Helen saw him write his note, and calling on the vast store
of knowledge that sparky had pulled from the internet, she recognized
and understood what he wrote, but made no comment.

Alphonse placed his small travel bag on the table top, and
pulled a collapsed computer monitor from it. By pressing a couple of
switches on the side of it, he expanded it to full viewing size. "Are
you ready to talk directly to Mike now?"

Helen showed her surprise as she agreed. Alphonse pressed two
more switches, and Mike Long stared at her from the view screen.

Mike reached besides him and shoved a photo onto the screen.
"Do you know who this is?"

Helen examined the photograph. She recognized herself in it,
even though it showed only the back of her head. "How did you get
this? Never mind. I know how you got it. Betty gave the pictures of
her store's break-in to Clint, and Clint gave them to you."

Helen continued, "Mike, please listen to me. I want you to
quit making and selling cigs. I understand that you believe that the
cigs are the only way you can sell your tobacco. This is not true.
We can give you hundreds of alternatives."

Mike smiled pleasantly. "Surely you exaggerate. I suppose
one of your alternatives is for us to take over distribution of your
smokeless cigs. I'm not interested in any of your alternatives.
You've not given me any compelling reason to be interested."

Mike continued, "How were you able to break into the campus
union store without triggering any of the floor alarms?"

Helen said, "I flew over the store and dropped through the
ceiling."

Mike laughed. "Ha. So you won't tell us. It doesn't matter.
We've worked out a plausible theory. Your friend Angela arranged for
the doors to open which automaatically unset the alarms.. Then with
special equipment you climbed up the wall to the ceiling, and then
dropped down to the display. That's how you made it look like a
mysterious break-in."

Mike continued. "If the store manager had not dropped all
charges, we would have hauled you into court by now. You won't always
be so lucky. We'll be watching you." Mike reached toward his screen,
evidently ready to turn it off.

Alphonse interrupted, "Wait Mike, what about the ping pong
game? Clint gave you a copy of the video that Red gave to him. It
showed her playing incredibly well. She impressed Long Arm Tom into
working for her. I think you should take a closer look at Ms Helen
Troy."

Mike replied. "It's of no consequence. We finally figured
out that Helen and Long Arm Tom were in cahoots. It became obvious
when we noticed that in one of the shots Helen ran around the table
to intercept the ball even before Tom hit it."

Mike started to reach for the turnoff switch again. Helen
interrupted him. "Wait Mike. In fairness, don't you think you should
tell me what you would consider to be compelling reasons to listen to
me?"

Mike rested his hand slightly above the cutoff switch as he
replied. "I can't, because such compelling reasons do not exist. You
have made it quite clear that your only interest is in destroying us."
The screen went blank.

Chapter 22

"Helen, this is Angela. I hope you can do a favor for me. I
just found out that my mom fell and broke her hip. Can you take me to
her?"

Helen responded, "Angela, certainly I will take you
immediately. I'll be at your home in two minutes.

As Helen floated down toward the entrance to Angela's house,
Victor and Angela came out. They watched her gracefully descend out
of the sky to stand before them.

Victor said, "Helen, thanks for coming. So it's really true.
You do have strange powers! I had to see it for myself."

Angela said nothing. She clutched a small travel bag tightly
and looked toward Helen anxiously.

Helen extended her hand and spoke calmly to Angela. "I'll
need to hold on to you as we travel." Turning her head toward Victor,
she inquired, "Victor, are you coming also?

Victor replied, "No, I have too much to do here. I know
Angela will be ok with you to watch after her."

Victor watched as Helen embraced Angela and slowly rose with
her into the sky. Then they accelerated swiftly. It would be more
correct to say that they fell in their direction of travel. As with
any falling object, the force of acceleration applied to all parts of
their bodies equally. Hence Angela felt no acceleration. Angela
screamed once, then closed her eyes to avoid mounting panic caused by
uncontrolled fear of falling, and concentrated on the image of just
floating in space. Within only minutes they were descending into the
back yard of the villa where Angela's parents lived.

As soon as she touched ground, Angela ran up to and through
the swinging back yard screen door. Helen heard Angela's father
exclaim. "Meu Deus! How did you get here?"

Angela, thinking of her mother, said, "My angel brought me.
Where is Mae?" Without waiting for an answer she continued to run into
the master bedroom.

Angela's father looked toward the still swinging screen door,
and in response to curiosity, stepped through it to meet Helen walking
toward the house. "Ah, so you are Angela's angel. Please be welcome
in our home."

As they walked through the short hallway toward the master
bedroom, Angela's father said, "Manners. manners, where are my
manners?" He stopped and half turned to Helen. "Friend, my name is
Alfred Covar Mco de Ferro e Cunha de Almeida Abreu Tellus. How may
I call you?"

Helen understood that Alfred had just asked her for her name.
"My name is Helen. Thank you. "

They entered the bedroom to see Angela embracing her mother.
Angela sensed that her father and Helen had entered the room, even
though neither had spoken. Angela cast a pleading look toward Helen.
"Helen can you . . . " Instead of completing her sentence Angela
helplessly waved her hand toward her mother.

Helen nodded her head affirmatively. "Of course!" Helen
strode to the bedside and offered her hands to Angela's mother.
"Senora...", Helen paused, waiting for Angela's mother's response.

Angela's mother grasped both of Helen's hands with both of her
own hands. "For you, the angel of my daughter, meu nome is Bonita
Mulher de Rua Presente Aos Homens Mae de Anjo. Can you heal me?"

Helen did not hesitate. "Yes, I can heal you. I will need to
place my hands on your hips for a few minutes." At Bonita's nod,
Helen did so.

Focusing her attention on the structure of the broken bone she
saw that it would not be sufficient to simply mend the break. It
would be necessary to remold the entire hip to make it not brittle.

Helen reviewed the vast store of biological information
imparted to her by Sparky, gained only because Sparky had absorbed and
remade her.

Now Helen paused a moment. Which strategy to use? Slow is
best. After mending the broken part of the bone, Helen focused on
infusing the hip area with the nutrients that would be drawn on to
remold the hip, and with the enzymes that would speed the mending
process.

After a few minutes, Helen smiled, and sat back. Bonita
smiled in return. "I felt the magic flow from you as you worked on
me. I know I have been healed. Thank you."

Lifting her head to face Alfred, Bonita said. "Let the angel
check you to make sure you have no problems."

Alfred grinned. "I know I have no problems. But, if the
angel wishes, I shall be glad for her to examine me.

Helen began the examination by placing her hand over Alfred's
heart. By monitoring which emzymes floated through the blood stream
she hoped to get an overview of Alfred's general health. After a
while, she said, "There may be a minor infection or a cancer
somewhere. Helen slowly moved her hand upward toward Alfred's neck,
tracking the relevant emzymes. "I found it. It's only a minor skin
cancer. It might have gone away by itself. I fixed it anyway."

Neither Angela nor Bonita said anything. Their stares
conveyed their overwhelming gratitude to Helen. Helen got up and
backed up to stand in the bedroom doorway. At that, Bonita found her
voice. "My angel, please don't leave yet. We must introduct you to
our friends."

Angela almost shouted. "Mae, please. We don't want everyone
to know about Helen."

Bonita looked surprised. "Why not. The whole world should
know of our wonderful angel. We should be proud, not ashamed."

Angela looked toward Helen, "Perhaps we need to go now. I'm
sorry I'm causing you this trouble." Glancing toward her mother,
Angela added, "When will my mother be able to walk?"

Helen replied, "she can walk now. She should walk at a
relaxed pace at least an hour each day for the next few weeks."

Bonita smiled at this news. She gingerly got out of bed, and,
with Alfred by her side, followed Angela and Helen out to their
backyard.

Bonita wondered how they were going to leave. Did the angel
fly her daugher here? As she watched, Helen and Angela embraced, and
vanished.

Bonita turned to Alfred. "It's not enough that we tell our
friends what happened. We need to make sure that all the church
community knows about our daughter's angel. It would be wrong not to
proclaim this great miracle."

Chapter 23

Mike Long and Alphonse Meeter together walked into Dan
Austin's office. Dan greeted Mike with, "So this is your wonder field
worker who has researched our problem and come up with several
recommendations for us."

Mike merely nodded his head affirmatively, and waved Alphonse
to the chair nearer Dan's desk.

Alphonse handed Dan a sheet of paper. "This pages lists my
recommendations, and why. You don't need to look at it now. It's
only to refresh your memory after I've told you my reccommendations,
and you've had a chance to ask me clarifying questions."

"Thank you. I appreciate it."

Alphonse sifted his weight in the chair to make himself more
comfortable. "You are losing mostly your older customers. For a long
time, your advertisements were geared to maintain customer loyality.
In my opinion, unless you change your ad strategy to target teenagers
as new customers, your company is doomed. Therefore, my first
recommendation is that you get your ad writers busy dreaming up new
advertisements."

Dan looked toward Mike. Mike responded, "Alphonse, we agree
with your first recommendation. We have already assigned it to our
ad writers. However, we need to find a loophole in the Federal laws
which block such ads." At seeing the expression on Alphonse's face,
Mike added, "Don't worry. I'll think of something."

After a short pause, Alphonse continued, "For decades you have
maintained the ability to influence the U.S. Congress, both the Senate
and the House. It's quite clever the way you've identified the most
powerful Senators and Representatives and hired them to provide
information to you. My second recommendation is to use this influence
to ask Congress to pass laws detrimental to your new competitor."

Mike whistled. "That will take some doing. I'll think about
it. I can schedule an appointment with Senator Heedly next week.
He's our main man in the Senate."

Third, many of your customers are quitting because Helen has
convinced them that with her help it's easy to quit and that they
should quit for their health. So I suggest that you introduce your
own substitute smokeless cig. Make candy bars and soda's look like
cigs. Advertise them as the safe cigs. Make them have just enough
concentration of nicotine to make it difficult for them to quit the
addiction.

Mike frowned, "I'm not sure I like that idea. It's seems too
much like a concession to our opponent. Still, it does need to be
considered."

Alphonse acknowledged Mike's comment by a nod of his head,
then continued, "Your main antagonist is Helen Troy. Without her
special talents for programming the broadcast,, Grant's broadcasts
would not be a bother to you. So, my next recommendation is to find
ways to distract Helen. I list a few suggestions."

"First, Helen has had dreams of becoming an opera star. Use
whatever influence you command to have one or more opera companies
express interest in Helen."

"Second, we could work on damaging people's trust in Grant's
smokeless cigs, and in Helen. Can you have credible testimonies that
the smokeless cigs harm people? Look for ways to make Helen look bad.

"Third, Grant has a reputation in some quarters as being
fanatic about aliens. He has made extraordinary effort in locating
aliens so that we could use their superior technology. We can claim
that their smokeless cigs are alien technology, and that Helen is an
alien." At seeing the surprise on Dan's face, Alphose added, "I got
the idea when I saw your lab report that Grant's smokeless cigs could
not be reverse engineered."

Chapter 24 Chapter 25 Chapter 26 Chapter 27 Chapter 28 Chapter 29 Chapter 30 Chapter 31 Chapter 32 Chapter 33 $ Not yet the end $ Next few chapters are pieces to be fit together into the story. Chapter

The young blond lady opended the door to Anthony Abbot's office. Anthony looked up as she entered. "So you're the new advert writer that we might hire. What do you have to show me?"

Young blond lady replied, "My name is Cindy Lewis. This demo video shows some work I did for a previous clint." Cindy placed the video in the player.

Words too small to read began to form on the screen. Gradually the words became larger and bolder. An over-voice read them out loud, "The real thing." The words slid off to the right, leaving a copy behind. A third and fourth copy formed the same way. The words moved counterclockwise, forming a spiral moving up, and then down.

Then the over-voice asks, "What's the real thing?"

A series of pictures flash on the screen, each picture up for a tenth of a second or less. Among the brief scenes are a rodeo cowboy riding a bucking horse, a canoe traveling over the rapids, a farmer slaving over a tobacco crop, A beautiful lady making a swan dive into a swimming pool, An airplane taking off from LAX, an ice skater making a very fast spin, a glorious sunrise, cigarettes dropping into a bin for packaging, a middle aged lady giving a piece of apple pie to a young man, a seven year old boy tasting a piece of chocolate, A young lady reading poetry, cartons of cigarettes being delivered to a retail store, etc.

Next, the words "A little bit of history" popped up on the screen. The words appeared first in outline form, and gradually filled in with red and green colors in each letter. Suddenly the letters disappeared, and scenes from movies of long ago flashed across the screen. Each scene stayed on the screen for two seconds and showed a person smoking a cigarette. At the end of the succession of scenes, the over-voice said, "Cig smoking has had a long and famous history."

The video screen flashed a blank white screen for a fraction of a second, and then went completely black for about one second. Next it showed another succession of scenes. The first scene opened showing a Bellboy at a Hotel in the costume last seen over a century ago. The bellboy cupped his hands to his mouth, and yelled, "Call for Philip Morris." In quick succession, over thirty different cigarette commercials from the previous century jumped onto the screen. "I'd walk a mile for a camel." ""You've ccome a long way baby." "Enjoy blissful regressions from vexatious depressions" etc. Each commercial showed appealing graphics but looked as if they had been photographed instead of computer generated. Chapter

Then the picture zoomed up to a media announcer holding a microphone. The announcer strode up to a young couple. "Here are two young people. Is that an engagement ring you have on, young lady?"

The young lady smiled and proudly held up her hand to the camera. "He proposed to me this morning."

The announcer faced the camera as he smiled. "Ah, very good. Tell me your names."

My name is Cindy Lewis, and my boyfriend's name is Dean Olsen."

"And how did you two meet?"

"We met at the smoketorium. I went there because I felt bored, and then he showed up." Cindy turned to Dean as she said this, the smile of love evident in her face.

Dean took Cindy's hand gently into his own. "And I'm very glad I went to the smoketorium. I would never have met Cindy otherwise."

The announcer took out a pack of cigarettes. Cindy reached out her hand, and took the cigarette as the announcer placed it in her hand. Dean gallantly took out his lighter, and as Cindy placed the cigarette in her mouth, Dean lit it for her.

The focus shifted back to the announcer. "And there you have it folks. Another success story." Chapter

The screen went black again for a second, then the interior of a smoketorium came slowly into focus. A young man sitting at a table looked bored. Suddenly, two young women walked in together, but separated, and went to tables on the opposite sides of the room. The one that went to the man's left had dark brown hair and combed it with her fingers as she walked to her table. The other lady, walking as if she were proud of her light blond hair, cast an appraising eye at the young man.

The young man looked at each of them in turn, clearly wishing to go to both of them but undecided who to go to first. Then the choice became clear. The blond took out a smokeless cigarette, and began to inhale. She looked around and noticed the young man looking at her. She smiled, and beckoned him with a wave of her hand.

In the meantime, the darker haired lady took out a cigarette, and lit it. Smoke curled up around her face. The young man got up to go to the blond, but before he took two steps, he noticed the smoke from the other lady's cigarette. In mid-stride he turned and went to the darker haired lady with the smoking cigarette. Chapter

A stream of water began to run down the middle of the screen. The stream widened, and became a river. The camera's eye followed the river downstream to an area of rapids. Then the screen image rotated until the announcer and his interviewee were in the foreground.

The announcer began, "So you are a pathfinder. Tell us about the paths you have made."

"Yep. I've been path-finding for years. I'm proud of it. Although, don't know why they call it path-finding. It would be better to call it path inventing."

"What do you do when you path-invent?"

"I hack away with this little hatchet you see here." The pathfinder held up his hand to show the hatchet. "I cut away underbrush and sometimes vines to make an easy path to walk. It may take me several hours just to clear a good path for a short walk. Before we open up the trail to tourists, we must treat the ground. We must get rid of all those troublesome bugs before we let the public walk on the trails."

"Why did you choose to take a job like this?"

"I've always liked to blaze my own trails. It's like cigarette smoking. My father didn't smoke. In fact he forbid me to smoke. I decided to decide for myself. So on my tenth birthday, I sneaked in a few cigs with the help of some friends. I still remember the pure pleasure they gave me. I recommend that everyone be bold and blaze their own trails."

As he said this last, he started to cough, but the camera cut away immediately and didn't show his coughing fit. Chapter

with the usual disclaimers that yes we knew that cigs had serious health effects and were addictive. But in a free society we were still a responsible company who gave adults who chose to smoke what they wanted.

From a close-up of Alan, the camera zoomed away to show him sitting at a table watching Helen on video. The video screen split to show Helen on the left half, and Alan on the right half. Alan had a cell phone to his ear while he spoke. "Some of us have a complaint. Your smokeless cigs don't have that rough taste we expect to have in a real cigarette."

Helen smiled. "Exactly. That rough taste of the cig that you refer to is what tells you that the cig is killing you. No way would I want to duplicate that! The purpose of my smokeless cigs is to facilitate your quitting smoking the cigs that are killing you and those around you."

The video Alan looked surprised. Then he said, "But suppose we don't wantto quit. What good are your smokeless cigs then?"

Helen frowned. "If you don't use them, then of course they are no good to you at all. However, if you do use the smokeless cigs, it will be very beneficial to your friends, and when you are able to quit cigs completely, the smokeless cigs will have been useful to you."

Video Alan looked pensive for a moment, then said, "Thank you very much." The interview over, Alan's side of the video vanished as Helen's image expanded to push it off the screen. Perhaps we can set up an ongoing denial of service attack on her web site. Chapter recognized the background of the Jerry Terry Show. Jerry glanced toward the camera, and then turned toward his guest. "Today my cameo guest is Senator Heedly. Senator, you recently made a little known, but important amendment to this year's education allocations bill that President Carothers signed into law yesterday. Can you tell me about that amendment?" The Senator looked stern. "Yes. This very important amendment makes it illegal to sell products that haven't been patented. We must protect the public from frauds and unproven and untested products." Jerry looked a little skeptical. "Just because it doesn't have a patent doesn't mean that it's a fraud. But haven't courts protected us with the existing laws? Why do you need this law? Aren't you worried that it would conflict with individual rights ensured by the tenth amendment in the Bill of Rights?" Surprised, the Senator glared at Jerry. "Not at all. The courts will understand who I intend the law to apply to." "And who do you intend the law to apply to?" "An enemy of our economy has come to my attention. This person sells an unpatented product to smokers. Every time this unpatented product is sold instead of an authorized tobacco product, it's a loss to our economy." "An important segment of our economy is based on tobacco. Even though only about ten percent of the public smoke, that is still millions of people. But it's not just the people who smoke who depend on tobacco. Consider the plight of the farmers who grow the tobacco." The Senator waved his hands in the air. "I know, I know, the farmers aren't U.S. Citizens since all the tobacco is grown in Indonesia. But consider the plight of the people who produce the fertilizers and insecticide needed to grow the tobacco. Many, if not all, of these people could be ruined financially if the tobacco economy fails." Jerry shook his head in disbelief. "And what penalty would you give for people who violate this law?" The Senator paused to reflect before replying. "The amendment didn't specify specific penalties. Rather it specified that selling an unpatented product is a felony. Whatever punishment is accorded to felonies is the penalty that the seller faces." Jerry's face showed his concern. "Aren't you being somewhat harsh? Don't we all know that it would be a good thing if people quit smoking? The health benefits would outweigh all other disadvantages." The Senator laughed. "You do like to play devil's advocate. We can't legislate morals. We don't infringe on people's right to choose, even if they choose badly. But that's not the issue here. The issue here is that someone is selling an untested product to the public, and must be stopped." Jerry paused to marshal his thoughts. Then he asked, "Wouldn't it h ave been sufficient to have required proof of harmlessness before the product could be sold?" Senator Heedly snorted. "Ha! In this case I don't think that would be possible. On my own initiative I had some chemists analyze these cigarette substitutes. They reported to me that these substitutes contain a few compounds in the amino acid group, and several well known compounds that have no beneficial effect at all." The Senator continued, "I went even farther. I had my office conduct a health survey of the people who have been using these cigarette substitutes. The survey proved that, on the average, people who use these substitutes are less healthy than the normal person." Jerry paid no attention to the answer because he needed to quickly come up with his next question. "How does the cost of these substitute cigarettes compare to ordinary cigarettes?" The Senators face showed annoyance. "That's another thing. This company is obviously selling far below cost in order to create a monopoly. And you all know what monopolies do once they have the power!" Jerry, mindful of the time, hurried on with his next question. "What's the name of this company? Who do you bring to court?" The Senator frowned. "One of the spokes-persons is the space engineer who sponsored their web page and distributes their cigs. The other is an extraordinarily beautiful young lady who they hired to be their web programmer and personal relations person. Well, this young lady will regret working for them when she is arrested for selling illegal and probably harmful products." Jerry laughed. "What makes you so sure that this young lady is only a personal relations person, and not the CEO?" The Senator looked surprised. "Surely you don't think that a young woman, barely out of her teens could be head of a large devious company like this!" Jerry glanced at the clock above him. "We have time for one more question. What brought your attention to this issue?" The Senator froze. After a few seconds, he relaxed, and said, "Why some of my constituents, who happen to be smokers, alerted me to the danger. And I'm glad that they did!" Jerry stared into the camera. "And that's all folks. This is Jerry Terry saying Good Night, and may all your troubles be small ones." Chapter Jerry Terry nervously looked for the tenth time at the printed email confirmation in his hand. Five minutes till air time and his guest hadn't yet arrived! Perhaps he should call them to make sure they were on the way. Turning away from the doorway, he dialed the number. Joe walked in just as he dialed the number. He immediately guessed that Jerry had called their number. So Joe, not waiting for Bob and Helen, immediately walked up to just behind Jerry. After a couple of rings of the distant phone, Joe said "hello" in Jerry's ear just the way he would have said it on the telephone. Jerry said into the phone, "Why the hell aren't you here?" Then Joe teasingly said, "But I'm here. Look behind you." Jerry spun around, facing Joe, and by this time, Helen and Bob. Seeing Helen's glorious smile, Joe's grin, and Bob's look of surprise, he burst out laughing. Jerry led the way into the studio. He spoke to Bob and Joe. "You guys have the couch seats. Helen will sit there next to me since she's the main attraction. But don't worry. We will give you guys a chance to answer some questions also." Jerry led the trio into the stage wings, and gave brief instructions. "First my aide will call me out to the stage. Then I'll call you three to join me on stage. Then all of us will take our interview seats, you first." All went exactly as Jerry described. As soon as he sat down, Jerry turned to Helen and said, "So tell me the real story. Did you see my interview with Senator Heedly?" Helen smiled. "Yes I did. That's why I emailed you to request a follow-up interview." The grin on Jerry's face increased in intensity. "I remember receiving it. Probably, at the time, everyone in the building heard my yell of delight. I'm very glad you are here. I want to give you the chance to tell your side." Helen spoke calmly and quietly in spite of her strong feelings. "For as long as I can remember I knew that cig smoke harmed everyone exposed to it. A month after my tenth birthday my uncle Ed died from cigs. I'm very glad that recently it became possible for me to work to remove cig smoke from the world." Jerry interrupted, "This is a very ambitious task. How long do you expect to take? It's not like you can wave a magic wand, and command the cigs to vanish." Helen smiled ruefully. "That's true. I won't destroy the cigs overnight." As she said this, Joe laughed. Jerry turned a quizzical look toward him, but Joe waved his arm in dismissal, and said, "Private joke." Helen continued, "An engineer friend in the space program set up a broadcast web site for me. I could send my message to all the smoketoriums in the world from it. A small percentage of people responded favorably. Most people ignored it. However, as time goes on, more and more people respond." Jerry pursed his lips as he paused a moment to choose his words. "According to Senator Heedly, you are doing more than sending a message. You are selling something called smokeless cigarettes that haven't been patented and have not been tested for safety." "I know that they are safe. I know they are beneficial. I know they work. I know because I have seen the results of their use." "My earliest customers have quit smoking. This means that they don't smoke cigs nor do they still use my smokeless cigs. They are cured of their addiction." Jerry nodded affirmatively. "Very good. I suppose you can count on those customers to support you if it ever came to a court battle?" Helen looked surprised. "Perhaps. I never thought to ask. I'm primarily concerned with helping them cure their addiction." Jerry again nodded his head affirmatively. "I understand. Have you had any backsliders. People who stopped smoking for a while, and then resumed?" Helen paused. Then she said, "None of my customers have resumed smoking. we keep in touch with all of our customers and counsel them as long as they wish. About eighty percent are satisfied with a single counseling session. Ten percent require about three counseling sessions. Another ten percent wish to continuing conseling indefinitely. There is no charge for the conseling." Jerry's voice raised in surprised. "A hundred percent success! What's in those smokeless cigs?" Helen's face echoed the tinted light from the neon bulb behind Jerry. "The main ingredient isn't in the smokeless cigs. The main ingredient is my message. I get my customers to think about their life. I ask them if they want cigs to always rule their life. I composed a song to catch people's attention about the danger's of cigs." Jerry said, "Wait a moment. I really want to hear your song, but first I need to follow up on the active ingredients in your smokeless cigs. How do they work? What makes them work?" Helen sat up straighter as she answered. "The reason people become addicted to nicotine or similar drugs is that the drugs change their metabolism. You don't feel good when your metabolism ungoes change. But nicotine is unusually swift in its action on the body. It also leaves the body unusually fast. Within four hours of smoking a cig, almost all the nicotine has left your body. Cig smokers don't know that they have this opportunity every day to quit smoking." Helen continued, "Once the nicotine has left the body, its metabolism slowly reverts to normal. Within three weeks, if the person does not take in any more nicotine, the metabolism will return to normal." Jerry paused, then said, "You haven't answered my question. What makes your smokeless cigs work?" Helen replied, "I did answer your question. The smokeless cigs work because they do NOT contain any nicotine. My task is to motivate people to commit themself to escaping the cig trap." Jerry smiled. "Very nice. So how do you motivate people?" Joe picked up Bob's guitar from the floor and tossed it over to him. "That's our clue." They both played their instruments while Helen sang her song, "Where do you live?" Helen continued singing until she'd sung all the verses. When she had finished, Jerry sat stunned for a few moments. Finally shaking his head, he said, "That's very powerful. I can believe that anyone hearing that song would want to avoid cigs completely." Helen smiled as she replied. "Thanks. I wished the song really did have that effect. But people already addicted tend to not hear it." Jerry paused a few seconds and a frown crossed his face. "But now I need to ask you a difficult question. I'll understand if you can't answer it." As Helen looked puzzled, Jerry asked, "Just over a year ago you seemed a typical music student at Eastside, Virginia. Suddenly you are a key figure in what apparently is a very powerful corporation. How did this come about?" Helen paused, wondering what she could say. Joe stood up to answer for her. "She grew up." An amazed look flashed across Jerry's face at Joes response. Then he replied, "Wonderful." Turning toward the camera, he said, "That's all folks. But before we leave, I want to appeal to all of you. Help our guests end this burden on society. Please send donations to the anti cig company care of the Jerry Terry Show. This is Jerry Terry signing off, and may all your troubles be small." Chapter Mike Long again counted the panels on the wall of Senator Heedly's living room while he waited for him. The Senator had promised to appear in a few moments after he wrapped up some research in his library room. Finally the Senator's head appeared in the doorway from the library. He opened the door just enough to squeeze through, and left the door slightly ajar as he entered the living room. The Senator quickly moved to sit in the comfortable chair adjacent to Mike. Mike stared intently at Senator Heedly. "There are reasons why you shouldn't sponsor the ban on cigs from Indonesia. Now I will tell you some you haven't heard yet." Mike handed the Senator a folder containing three booklets. The Senator looked at each of the booklets in turn. "Why don't you just tell me what you want me to know from these booklets." Mike wondered briefly if the Senator ever read anything. Then he looked the Senator in the eyes and said, "Sure. One of those papers explains our plans to smuggle cigs into the country should the import ban pass congress. Don't think you can block us. And don't think we've incriminated ourselves. The smuggling tricks hinted at in this paper are well within the law. We have other tricks that you won't catch us at. The black market will net us a greater profit anyway. But don't expect to benefit from that." Mike continued, "The second paper details the change to our donations to the senate if the ban is passed. I think you and several other senators would have a hard year ahead while you learn how to spend less money." "The third paper explains in detail why five federal judges believe the ban isn't right and would declare it unconstitutional if it were passed. I've added my own comments about that at the end of the paper." Looking Mike directly in the eye, the Senator took the papers. "First, I don't care if you smuggle in the cigs. Second, I don't need your money any longer. Your past donations will keep me in good shape the rest of my natural life. Third, I don't care if the law is declared unconstitutional. The folks who matter will know that I tried." Mike stared at the Senator while he tried to think of a reply. After a few moments he closed his eyes and tried to invoke inspiration. Nothing came to mind. He opened his eyes and leaned forward toward the Senator. The Senator moved backwards to avoid Mike's forwardness. Consequently he fell off his chair. Mike jumped up to help the Senator. But Senator Heedly had already recovered, and stood up just in time to see Mike rushing toward him. Alarmed, he began backing up, and backed into the slightly open door leading to the library. Mike, still approaching the Senator asked himself, "What's wrong here? Why has the Senator turned against us?" Mike unconsciously continued to press toward the Senator while he tried to think of the right questions to ask. Senator Heedly, forced to back up into his library, stopped only when he bumped into his computer. The whole event took only seconds. Mike and the Senator found themselves in the library room, and neither quite knew how it had happened. The Senator had backed up as far as he could. He had reached his computer console. Mike suddenly became aware then of how little space separated him from the Senator. He leaned backwards a tiny bit to give the Senator more space, and reconsidered. One question dominated Mike's mind. What changed the way the Senator felt? Suddenly Mike became aware of the computer monitor and several pictures posted on the walls. The Senator's computer showed icons of Helen Troy roaming across the computer desktop screen. The walls of the room showed at least a dozen printed pictures of Helen. Mike smiled and relaxed. Now he knew what to do. Obviously the Senator had fallen in love with Helen. $Not Yet The End $ Helen develops and sells hundreds of alternative use tobacco products, including A protein filter based on a tobacco plant mutation $ Mike conspires with the senate to steal the right to sell these alternate use tobacco products. $ Helen secretly cooperates so that Mike can steal them. $ Now selling the alternative products are bringing in more profits than are the original cigs. $ Pressure builds from within the United Tobacco Company to phase out the sale of the addictive cigs.