

AUNT PRISCILLA'S WILL

By Annie Warren



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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AUNT PRISCILLA'S WILL

By Annie Warren

It had been a long, hot summer. I had come home after getting my bachelor's in literature. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of positions available for short, willowy, red headed men with that degree, especially when they look more like boys.

I had sent out what I felt was an uncountable number of resumes but had netted no jobs, not even a query. So that I did not totally starve, I had managed, through some rather loose connections, to get a local job at the bank where I was, I thought, one step above the floor polishers. It was about as exciting as listening to hair grow, but it did bring in some money so that I did not feel totally depressed and dependent on my Mom. How do you measure one step above totally depressed anyway? My life was about to change, I just knew it, it just *had* to, but I did not know the when or how or where.

It was on an early September day when I came home from work about as excited as a clam with lockjaw. However, a heat spell had broken, and not only was it cooler, but I also had a letter. It was a long ordinary envelop with an ordinary paper automatic postage machine stamp on it but with a sort of fancy return address: "Coleman, Peterson, Jacobson, & Kraus, Attorneys at law". I knew it must be important as it had a special delivery number on it, *and* on the back were the tabs left over from a "return reply card" that must have belonged to the special delivery. For the life of me, I did not remember ever sending any resumes to any law firms anywhere, but still, my hope for a job, a real job, picked up but not enough to get excited..

Since I was sure it was not someone I had sent a resume to, I was in no great hurry to open it, though the special delivery aspect piqued my curiosity. I took it into the cool of our living room and flopped down on my favorite easy chair, dropping my brief case next to it. I carried that case not to carry important papers; more often than not, I carried my lunch in it since I didn't want to carry a paper bag to the bank. Besides, the most important paper I had was my resume and see how much it had done for me. It made me feel better to at least have a self image of more importance at the bank by emulating the "real" executives. Everyone there knew my position so there was no fooling them. And besides, it was large enough to hold a decent lunch that was sufficient and did not cost that much compared to the purchased meals others often ate (most of whom could afford it).

I sat there a few minutes just relaxing and letting my muscles and mind unwind a bit. Then I shook the envelop down, feeling the papers hit the end, and then tore off

the other end of it and fished out a crisp letter. I noted the crispness as it was on a fine paper, not the economy brand that I used in my computer. I had bought a ream of this higher quality paper for my resumes and their cover letters and by now it was almost gone. This letter was on at least twenty pound linen bond paper and even felt official as I opened and read it. The opening and closing was quite standard, but the body, the meat of the letter was clear and, shall I say, eye opening!?!

"I regret to inform you that your Aunt, Priscilla Jacobson, Late of Johnstown, has passed away and has named you in her will. You are the major beneficiary, receiving the bulk of her considerable estate, if you comply with some stipulations and conditions. The reading of the will is going to be held on 5 October in our offices. Failure to attend the reading, as per her instructions, will bar you from receiving any of the estate. Also, one of the stipulations is that you come alone without bringing any relatives. I urge you to attend or to notify us immediately of any difficulties with that date so that it can be rescheduled at your convenience. If we do not hear from you, we will assume that the date is adequate and we will expect to see you in our offices at 2 p.m. in the afternoon for the reading."

It was signed by a John Jacobson. I noted it was one of the names in the letter-head, a partner or whatever. This *must* be a sizable estate for a partner to make reading invitation!

To say that I was surprised would be an understatement. I read it through several times and then sat back and tried to remember any Aunt Priscilla. I didn't remember my mother having a sister by that name. I thought I may have remembered an Aunt Jane but no Priscilla. I'm afraid that I was too tired from a long day and a long warm walk home to get excited at that point. Besides, it hadn't sunk in yet that it was true that I was going to get an inheritance, a windfall for one beat puppy, or that was how I felt.

As I sat there musing and cooling down, Carey, my sister, came in the front door, checked the table and went out to the kitchen after glancing over at me and giving me a quick "Hi". She was two years older than I was and yet was sort of petite as girls go, but still an inch taller than I was though Mom said I was due to grow "any moment now". Whereas I was willowy, Carey had a really dynamite figure with lots of sizable bulges in the right places, just like Mom, but, well, she was my sister and I noted those marvelous qualities but that was about all.

When I chose my major, she had argued with me. When I failed to get a winning job, she had the "I told you so" attitude that riled me up, but I couldn't hit my sister. Besides, she may be petite but was an inch taller than I was and, more importantly, was more athletic. As she came in and passed through, I said an echoing "Hi" and then closed my eyes and rested. It is what she had seen for the past few months and so was nothing new and elicited no comments.

I sat there a few minutes until I heard the rustle of her dress and the soft clicking of her high heels on the thin carpet of the hallway as she came back in. I opened one eye and looked at her as she entered.

"Hey, Kid, Mom told me you got a special delivery letter. Was it a job offer?"

I sat up and realized I still had the letter in my hand. I looked at it and then at her. "You know of any 'Aunt Priscilla' somewhere in our family? It seems she has kicked the bucket and left her 'fortune', whatever that may be, to me."

She sat down in “her” chair and mused, “No, I don't know of any Aunt Priscilla on Mom's side of the family. Uncle Fred was Dad's only relative and they more or less went together when Fred's plane crashed.” A bit more brow wrinkling and then, “I think Mom had several brothers, but I've never heard of a sister. I thought she was the only girl in her family.”

“I thought there was an Aunt Jane or something.”

“Oh yeah, now I remember. She married some sod buster and moved to Canada. I think we get a Christmas card from her every fourth year or so. Far as I know they never struck it rich and she never changed her name to, what was it? Priscilla?”

I looked at the letter. “Yeah, my ‘Aunt Priscilla’, apparently from or near Johnstown. That's not far away, but I never heard of her.”

“So, anyway, what did she leave you? Huh? A million dollars, a yacht and a Mediterranean villa? What did she leave you?”

“I don't know. The reading of the will is next month and I have to attend to find out, much less get it.”

“What do you mean?”

“If I don't attend the reading, I get nothing. They even said that they'd reschedule the reading if I could not make it on the date they set up. That reading must be important.”

“Gee if it is that important, can I go too.” There was hope in her voice.

“Sorry, but you are explicitly excluded. Here, read for yourself.”

I handed her the letter and she read it. Then handed it back with an odd look on her face.

“Golly, I wonder what that means. Why should some old bat not want any other relatives there? Does that mean you are the only relative to get anything? How did she pick you? Did you ever do anything for her? I didn't know we even had an aunt with that name.”

“I didn't either; I never heard of her. This looks official enough not to be a hoax. Let's see what Mom knows about this.”

We got up and both went into the kitchen where Mom was preparing dinner.

“Mom, do you know anything about an ‘Aunt Priscilla’?”

As soon as I said the name, she immediately stopped what she was doing, turned and looked at me.

“Where did you hear *that name*. It is not to be mentioned in this house.” There was a sharp edge on her voice that stopped both of us in our tracks as she turned back to her dinner preparations.

I then looked down at the letter and told her.

“It seems that she died and left her estate, whatever that was, to me.”

“Died, eh? Well it was about time. You don't want any part of that estate.”

"But they say it is a `considerable estate'," I read out of the letter.

"You still don't want any part of it, believe me."

"Why not. It could be enough to start me in a business or to help you, if nothing else."

"I have enough from your father's insurance to last me as long as I shall need it. Gene, you are old enough to fend for yourself, but my advice is to stay away from anything that the will offers." The voice had softened, but still had a definite crispy edge to it.

"Why? This could be just what I need."

She stopped again and turned to me. There was still a cloudiness to her face. "I have told you what I think. I don't want to hear any more about it. If you want to go, that is your doom. I advise against it and that's the last line."

"But..."

"No more. Now you two set the table, dinner is almost ready."

We looked at each other. I'm sure the question in my face was echoed by the same question I saw in hers. But there was "no more" to be said so we went out and set the table. In low tones, we discussed the will and Mom's attitude and reaction. It was a loss to both of us as to what it meant and/or who this now not totally unknown but, nonetheless, unmentionable aunt was.

Dinner turned out to be a somewhat silent affair. Neither of us had any new news to discuss and the letter was a forbidden topic. After dinner we watched TV for a while until Mom went to bed.

As soon as she heard the door close, Carey turned to me, her eyes twinkling and sparkling..

"Well, Kid, are you going?"

"Huh? Go where?"

"To the reading, Dummy. You going to go and get your stash?"

"Oh, that... What would you do?"

"Me? I'd go for sure. If nothing else, I'd like to know who this mysterious Aunt is. You saw how Mom reacted to the name. She must be some harlot or worse. We've both looked at the family albums often enough to know there is no Priscilla in them anywhere... I don't even remember photos of Aunt Jane. Apparently our Mom never got along with her sisters all that much and this one not at ALL. So, you gonna go?"

"I guess so. I'll let you know who she is if they tell me."

"Maybe I should go with you and wait to see you until after the reading?"

I looked at her and smiled.

"You *are* curious, aren't you?"

By now she was sitting on her feet, hands on knees, her broad hips over shadowing them and her big breasts bouncing as she bounced on the sofa on which she was sitting, the picture of enthusiasm though thwarted.

When I spoke she stopped bouncing and leaned into the back of the sofa.

“Oh, I was just pondering it.” She suddenly tried to look disinterested, but I knew differently. This was a family mystery, perhaps a skeleton in the closet, and she really did want to know, of that I was sure.

“Nah, that's not necessary. I'll let you know as soon as I can.” I thought I'd leave her on a hook. I too was curious but not to the degree that she apparently had been hauled in on.

The thing that was drawing me there was the possibility of getting the money or whatever the estate held. The letter had hinted, no, stated out right that it was “considerable”. I had no idea what “considerable” for an estate measured but wanted to know.

Carey had found a good job and was making enough to live well. With her good looks and great body, it was probably only a matter of time until she got married and moved out. I had a miserable job with no prospects of any immediate advancement. Here in the will was most likely Advancement with a capital A. Besides, if I wanted to, I knew that I could turn it down, whatever it was.

But I was going.

I put in for vacation for the fourth and fifth with no problems or even questions asked. See how important my position was? I figured I'd go up a day early to prepare myself for the meeting. I'd rest and relax, find out where the office was and generally have a fun time.

When I told Mom that I was going, she almost begged me not to, but still would not give me the reason why she was so against it... against what? I tried to pry it out of her with Carey's help, but to no avail. She was against but would not say against what.

I packed my one good suit, my best shoes, a tie and a white shirt to make a good impression but wore my Levies, tennies and a soft, short sleeved shirt for comfort.

As I was going out the door, Mom made another impassioned plea for me not to go, but again did not say why. The closest was that I might become like her, but she would not explain. I was her son, of course I'd be like her, how could I help it?

Or did she mean like Aunt Priscilla?

I don't remember the words, but, if it meant with an estate that could be deemed “considerable”, well, it was supposedly waiting for me if I wanted it. I didn't understand her and so left with no new pieces to the puzzle.

Johnstown was several hour's drive from home and so I took it very leisurely in my ancient wreck of a car that had actually survived school. When I arrived, about mid-day, I got a low priced hotel room and installed my meager belongings before going out and exploring the town. I found where the office was, in an impressive looking

building, and did a lot of window shopping before going to a movie, getting out late, and returning to my hotel for a good night's sleep.

Next morning I arose and dressed casually, as the day before, and had breakfast. I didn't exactly eat at a fast food restaurant, maybe a step above? My mind was still on "think first, act carefully, and spend economically", and I was. After spending a leisurely morning watching people and birds and squirrels in the local town park, I returned to my hotel, put on my best duds, the suit and tie and all, and went out for lunch, this time a bit more expensively. I thought to myself that I should have brought my briefcase for appearances but shrugged it off as I had nothing I could have put into it except maybe an extra pair of socks. I left a good tip as I headed off to the lawyer's office.

At 1:45 I was at the door. The receptionist told me to wait in the waiting room, and she would call me when the time came. To my moderate surprise, the waiting room was empty. I had expected others to be at the reading and had also expected them to be there. If they had, I might have been able to eke out more about who this mysterious woman was. But, no one was there, and so there was no one to ask. So, I browsed through some rather interesting **National Geographic** and **Nature** magazines. These were fairly recent issues that hadn't been pawed to death yet. This must be a high class lawyer; there wasn't a single sports magazine in the lot.

At five to two a young woman was ushered in. She was absolutely beautiful. She smiled at me with a smile that I'm sure would melt hardened steel but did not say a thing, sort of ignoring me once she sat down. I couldn't help but look at her trim figure with well proportioned breasts and hips separated by a really slender waist. She sat primly, picked up a magazine and leafed through it. Her short skirt displayed gorgeous nyloned legs above sparkling high heeled shoes. Carey, who was no sluff when it came to clothes, was a poor second to this beautiful woman. I wondered who she was and what or if she had anything to do with the will but was tongue tied in her presence and only stole glances when I got the chance.

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In what seemed instantaneously since her arrival, at 2:00 on the dot the receptionist came and got the both of us, leading us into a large, sort of musty office. It fit the stereotype of a lawyer's office with walls of very fat law books and in front of them a large somewhat ornate desk, but behind it sat a surprisingly youthful man with reddish hair like mine. He looked totally out of place in such an "old" office.

He stood up as we came in and extended his hand to me. When I took it and shook it, I found that he had a most surprisingly firm hand, at least for a *lawyer*. Then he turned to the woman who had entered with me but started by addressing us both.

"Ah, Mister Thompson and Ms Carcieau." He offered his hand to her and took it without even closing his fingers over it, sort of holding it gently. "*Bon jour, Mademoiselle*. I trust you had no trouble finding my office."

"Ah, *bon jour, Monsieur Jacobson*. I had no problems; your directions brought me here directly." She spoke with a touch of an accent but not a thick word bending one.

I wondered if she was Canadian or French. I watched again as she delicately and primly settled herself in a padded chair in front of the desk as he stood behind and adjusted it to her comfort.

Then he walked back behind his desk, and only then did he and I sit.

“Mister Thompson, I have asked Ms Carcieau to attend the reading as she is directly involved in it though not necessarily as a direct recipient as you shall see.”

He picked up some papers and scanned them through steel rimmed glasses that seemed to remind me almost of Truman. The lines in his somewhat squarish face seemed to almost emphasize his piercing eyes. Looking at his hands I could now see clearly that they were somewhat muscular, like a man who worked out regularly, yet he held the papers lightly, looking down at them through his glasses almost as if they were merely reading glasses. He looked up at me over the tops of his glasses and, seeing that he had my attention, began to read.

“I, Priscilla Jacobson, being of sound body and sound mind do declare the following to be my last and final will and testament. Realizing the nature of my desires, I have some conditions that are necessary for fulfillment. At the reading of this document are to be the reader, Mister Jacobson, Gene Thompson and Yvonne Marie Carcieau. No others are allowed to be present, specifically excluding any and all relatives of Gene. If Gene will decline to come, then the properties and moneys will be distributed as I have outlined in the first addendum. Under no circumstances are any of Gene's relatives to receive anything at all, directly or indirectly. Such receipt will constitute a breach of terms of the will, and it will be abrogated.”

He paused to look up at me.

“The provisions of this will are very specific as to any and all relationships with your family. I know that she was against them but was not against you, but this is the first condition that she has stated.”

He looked down again and continued.

“Subject to acceptance of the terms I will give below, I hereby will my house and its lands, all of my fortune, approximately ten million dollars at the time of writing, my part of the investment firm I founded, and all of my additional investments that have increased my fortune so well over the years.

“Gene, if you are there, then listen to this. I was ostracized by your family at an early age but managed to make a lot of money in spite of them. To this day they have nothing to do with me and I nothing with them. I have made sure that they will have none of my money. It is for this reason and others that I have made the following conditions or terms of your acceptance. You will either accept all the conditions or you too will receive nothing.”

Again he paused.

“This has been clarified to Mister Thompson. It means that you will accept all of the conditions or none. The `none' means you refuse to accept the bequest of your Aunt Priscilla and will go away with nothing. Do you understand what that means?”

“You mean that there's a house, land, money, investments that are mine ONLY if I accept ALL of her conditions. If any one of the conditions is refused, they are all refused and all is lost to me, is that it?”

“Very succinctly stated, Mister Thompson.” Once more he looked down at the document. “These are the conditions.” He continued reading.

“The conditions that I set forth are these:

1. You shall live in my house, which will then be your house, for one year without contact with your family other than that which is specifically approved by Yvonne. This period is adjustable depending on how you adjust as judged by Yvonne and my lawyer. Attempts to contact them without her approval will cause the will to be abrogated with the loss of all benefits. This condition starts upon hearing this read, whether or not the final terms are accepted.”

I looked at Yvonne who sat smiling, unmoved by the statement. Did she understand it? How could she be unmoved by a statement that involved her so closely. I then looked at Mister Jacobson.

“In other words, if I want to accept, I can tell no one anything about it, especially my family? I can't call them and ask their advice on acceptance or refusal?”

“Exactly, Mister Thompson, unless Yvonne specifically allows it.” He then turned to her and asked, “Would it be possible for him to call his family and ask their advice?”

Without really breaking her smile, she answered him simply, “*Non*, it is a decision that he has to make for himself.” She didn't even look in my direction.

“Very well. To continue

2. The house, properties, investments, et cetera, shall not be disposed of for a period of at least ten years unless agreed to by Yvonne and my lawyers at the time. The incomes should be sufficient to allay any and all expenses based on condition 3.

3. The purse strings will be controlled by Yvonne or by your lawyers for this ten year period. The second addendum, to be retained by the lawyers, contains the conditions and directions desired for your education, deportment, etc. At the end of the ten years you may do with the land and money as you wish.”

This time when I looked at Yvonne, she was smiling at me with a definite twinkle in her eye. I almost thought that she was flirting as I now noticed that her skirt was drawn high and much of her legs was almost provocatively showing. I didn't know exactly what to think.

“4. Yvonne will serve as your personal maid for this period and will have primary control. Refusal of her is refusal of the will at any time for the ten years after acceptance.

“Although you may not like nor understand all of these conditions, remember that you have to accept them, all or none. You will now be given one hour to make up your mind.”

I think my eyes must have crossed a bit at these conditions. I looked at Yvonne with her pretty smile and then at the lawyer who looked intently us, back and forth.

Finally, after a minute or so, the lawyer smiled as he handed me a piece of paper.

“Here, Mr. Thompson. You can go out into the waiting room, Yvonne will go with you and help you make your decision, if you want her to. This is a copy of the conditions for you to consider; I don't want you to make a decision based on only one reading.” He then looked at Yvonne, “Yvonne, would you help Mister Thompson?”

She got up, brushed her skirt down and stepped over to me, offering me her hand.

“*Mon Cher Jeanne*, would you like to come with me or have you already made up your mind?” The name she said sounded like a French variant on “Gene”. It was, but I did not know it was actually a French version of the sound-alike “Jean”...

I stood up, a bit shakily. “Uh, no, I have not made a decision. This is very heavy and not an easy decision.”

“*Oui*, I can well imagine. Let us go where we can discuss it.”

Why was it that she used French only at the start of a sentence? I took her hand lightly, feeling the softness of it. For a maid, I would have expected a more callused hand, but hers was not. She led me out of the office and into the waiting room that was still empty. I sat down and she pulled a chair in front of me, almost knee to knee. To look up was to look into her smiling face. To inhale was to inhale her delicate yet heady perfume.

“Ms Carcieau, just what is your role in this thing?”

“*S'il vous plait, Jeanne*, call me Yvonne. If you wish I can call you master, *Monsieur*, or whatever you wish. If you decide to accept, then I shall be your personal maid, at your beck and call.”

“Except that you have control. How can a maid have control over the master?”

“I shall control the money and a few other things, but you are the master. That is how I was trained, to follow Madame Priscilla's wishes.”

“Just who is this Aunt Priscilla? I have never heard of her and my mother won't speak of her or even hear her name.”

“Madame Priscilla was an outcast from your family. They threw her out when she was young and needed help and support. She has never forgotten those acts and thus has cut your entire family out.”

“If she is such an outcast, why then did she select me? What did I do to deserve such a bequest.”

She smiled another warm smile.

“When she knew she was going to die, she looked at your family, all of them. You she saw as being the closest to her when she was thrown out, single, independent, with a mind of your own. She decided to help you, but to do it you must throw out your family. Through her own efforts she amassed a lot of money that is yours if you accept.”

“Then she really was my Aunt?”

“In a manner of speaking, yes. Perhaps I can tell you her full story some time later at the house. I can speak no more of it now.”

“How will I live? What if you cut off my money?”

“Oh, *Mon Cher, Jeanne*, I would only cut off any moneys ONLY if you disobey her wishes or decide to contact your family or turn out wicked or evil. You will probably want for nothing and live in the lap of luxury. The house has at least three floors, is fully staffed and merely awaits your return as the master. There is nothing you will lack that lies in the realm of the conditions.”

I looked at her. For her French accent and occasional French words, she had a remarkable English vocabulary and command of the language, almost as good as mine and I had studied it intently! I then looked at the conditions.

“What does it mean you will be my personal maid. How can a maid have control over the master?”

“Once again this question. Madame Priscilla had a succession of maids during her life time. A year and a half or so ago, she found out that she had incurable cancer and had under two years to live. But even before then, I had been recruited and brought to this country by her and trained by her and her maid at the time who was getting on in years. Unfortunately that maid died or else she would have been in the will. I had been a maid before and knew a lot of English and economics. Needless to say, I learned a lot more, very intensively. I am dedicated to being a maid but also know how to run the finances, investments, and so forth. These things you will have to learn eventually, but you will have ten years to learn and advance, if you so choose.”

“But what if I fire you?”

She laughed lightly, her eyes still sparkling.

“You cannot until the ten years are up. Madame Priscilla made other provisions for me outside of the will but which still bind me to the ten years as your maid. After that time, you can fire me if you wish, but she and I believe you will not. I came to love Madame very much, *Mon Cher*, and would do anything for her in memory of that love. You, if you accept may step into her place.”

Her smile melted the buttons on my coat, well almost.

Well, in these few lines, you have the sum and essence of all of the information I got from her. Change the sentence order or such, but I got no more than you just read. As the hour passed, I spent some time thinking, just thinking about it. She, of course was there, smiling, waiting on my every question or comment. When I got up, she got up. When I sat down, she sat down, again in front of me. I don't know if she was supposed to really help me or to form a major distraction.

I thought of the no contact. It would probably be expected by Mom, but poor Carey would suffer greatly from unrequited curiosity. She had hopes of my solving a mystery, and I would just vanish.

But the thought of ten million dollars was mind boggling. Just the interest in ten years was boggling the same part of my mind. The house sounded like the equivalent

of a chateau. Fully staffed meant I could give up lawn mowing, washing windows, setting the table, sweeping up and who knows what else... forever! I could grow whatever I wanted or nothing at all. I could indulge in reading anything I wanted and could purchase, I hoped, any books I wanted. This part of it sounded like a paradise on earth, but, what did she want of me. I suspected that there was more in this whole thing than met the eye (or ear), some hidden price, but I could not pry any of that part of it out of her. Nor what it was that my aunt had done to get ostracized.

The questions whirled about in my head. When I looked at her smile, the questions slowed some and bent toward accepting. But to give up all I had wanted to do? Pausing, I wondered, what had I wanted to do? I had no real answer to that, but living as she probably wanted me to was not a part of it. I was torn internally. What to do. Was it really the poor starving poet versus the mechanical world? There was no one to ask for advice except her, and I knew what her advice would be, it was written in her face and her beautiful body, uh, language... accept!

When the hour was up, the receptionist opened the door and said that Mister Jacobson was waiting for us in his office.

We arose and went in.

He arose again as we entered and, as before, adjusted her chair for her as she sat. As before I waited for him to return to do his throne (yes it was a large and elaborate chair) before I sat. He immediately fixed me with a stare, bowing his head lightly as if (but not) looking over his glasses.

“Well now, tell me, Mister Thompson, have you made a decision?”

“May I ask a simple question first? If I accept, will I be able to tell my family of my decision so that I to do not just disappear?”

“If you accept, your family will receive a letter from me stating that you have accepted the conditions of your aunt's will and because of those conditions you will have to remain incommunicado for the time being. From what I gathered from your aunt, that is what they would be expecting. If you refuse, you can tell them yourself as you will be returning to them in the state that you left them, having lost only a day or so.”

“In that case, though it will drive my sister crazy not knowing what is happening, I accept the conditions.”

“Very well. In that case there are a number of documents that *have* to be signed before you can leave for your new home.” With that he called in a woman I had never seen and pushed a sheaf of papers at me. “You must sign all of these as conclusive proof of your acceptance. Failure to sign any one of them will abrogate the agreement and you will have refused the bequest. Do I make myself clear?”

“Yes sir.”

I looked at the first paper that was several pages long. It was an iteration of the conditions of the will spelling out in more detail (in more legalese) what they were and what would happen if I refused. In essence, as I saw it, it was a power of attorney over my legal rights being signed over to Yvonne for a period of 10 years. Knowing

the consequences of not signing, I signed it. When I had done this, the woman took it from me and, with seal and all, witnessed my signature, notarized it and handed it to the lawyer who put it into a file. Speaking of signed, sealed and delivered...

The second form was about the same giving her power over such medical and/or surgical means as may be necessary for my health, welfare and fulfillment of the conditions. I almost balked at that, but did sign it. What *was* I letting myself in for.

There were insurance forms, some other medical forms I did not quite understand and finally, at the very bottom, when I was almost on automatic for signing anything put in front of me, was a petition for change of name from Gene Thompson to Jeanne Louisa Jacobson. I balked.

"What is this for? Am I supposed to take on her name too? And to be a `Jeanne Louisa'. That is a girl's name."

"You will be able to change it back, if you wish at the end of the ten year term. She wanted to have a `relative' to carry her name. That was the name she chose. If you cannot live with it, then we can tear up the papers and you can go home."

He had opened the folder and lifted all of the forms up a bit, ready to tear.

I looked at Yvonne. She smiled and every so lightly but obviously, but with only slight movements, nodding her head "yes". Like a fool, sort of "if in for a dime, in for a dollar", I signed that last form, watched it be notarized and countersigned and then finally added to the rest of the papers.

"Mister Jacobson, you will receive copies of the final papers once they have been filed with the appropriate clerks in the city and state." He arose and stretched forth his hand to me. I took it and shook it. The grip for some reason was lighter than before, but I did not understand why. "I trust you will enjoy your new existence and," he winked, "your new maid. Not every fellow gets to have a personal maid, you know." He winked again. "Well, Yvonne, he's all yours."

She took my arm and lead me out the door and out into the lobby of the building. There she requested my car keys, house keys, identification, more or less emptying my pockets. I told her where my car was and in which hotel I had been staying. She wrote these down in a notebook and then tore out the page. As we exited the building, a tall woman came over to us and greeted Yvonne and then signaled with her arm.

Almost immediately, a large limousine pulled up and the chauffeur got out and opened the door for us. Before she got in, Yvonne told the woman the details I had just told her and she saluted me and said that all would be taken care of. Yvonne then got in front with the driver, also a woman, and I was left in the spacious back as we drove off to my new home and new life, as it were.

As you may well expect, the house was a good distance out of town. I don't know on how many acres it sat, but no buildings were visible as we passed what looked like a gilded wrought iron gate that swung smoothly open as with approached it. Above it was the name "Jacobson" emblazoned in a polished bronze band that made a smooth arc over the road with what looked like cherubim intermixed with the letters.