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TURTLE'S TRIAL

HOO WAS FURIOUS. "Haven't we had enough game-playing," he complained. "And led by a confessed bomber, no less."

Judge Ford rapped for silence with the walnut gavel presented to her by associates on her appointment to a higher court. Higher court? This was the lowest court she had ever presided at: a thirteen-year-old lawyer, a court stenographer who records in Polish, and the judge in African robes. Oh well, she had played Sam Westing's game, now she would play Turtle's game. The similarity was astounding; Turtle not only looked like her Uncle Sam, she acted like him.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Turtle began, "I stand before this court to prove that Samuel W. Westing is dead and that Sandy McSouthers is dead, but Crow didn't do it."

Pacing the floor, hands behind her back, she confronted each of the heirs in turn with a hard stare. The heirs stared back, not knowing if they were the jury or the accused.

Grace Wexler blinked up at her daughter. "Who's that?"

"The district attorney," Jake replied. "Go back to sleep."

Now frowning, now smiling a secret smile, Turtle acted the part of every brilliant lawyer she had seen on television who was about to win an impossible case. The only flaw in her imitation was an occasional rapid twist of her head. (She liked the grown-up feeling of shorter hair swishing around her face.)

"Let me begin at the beginning," she began. "On September first we moved into Sunset Towers. Two months later, on Halloween, smoke was seen rising from the chimney of the deserted Westing house." Her first witness would be the person most likely to have watched the house that day. "I call Chris Theodorakis to the stand."

Chris lay a calm hand on the Bible and swore to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. What fun!

"You are a birdwatcher, Mr. Theodorakis, are you not?"

"Yes."

"Were you birdwatching on October thirty-first?"

"Yes."

"Did you see anyone enter the Westing house?"

"I s-saw s-somebody who limped."

Good, now she was getting somewhere. "Who was that limping person?"

"It was D-doctor Sikes."

"Thank you, you are excused." Turtle turned to her audience. "Doctor Sikes was Sam Westing's friend, a witness to the will, and his accomplice in this game. On the day in question he limped into the Westing house to build a fire in the fireplace. Why?" Her next witness might answer that.

Judge Ford instructed the witness to remove his aviator's helmet. His gray hair was tousled but barbered. "And place your gun in the custody of the court."

"Oh my!" Flora Baumbach gasped as Otis Amber unzipped his plastic jacket, pulled a revolver from his shoulder holster and handed it to the judge, who locked the gun in her desk drawer.

Turtle was as startled as the other tenants. "Mr. Amber," she began bravely, "it seems that we are not all who we say we are. In other words, who exactly are you?"

"I am a licensed private investigator."

"Then why were you disguised as an idiot delivery boy?"

"It was my disguise."

Turtle was dealing with a practiced witness. "Mr. Amber, who employed you?"

"That's privileged information."

The judge interceded. "It would be best to cooperate, Mr. Amber. For Crow's sake."

"I had three clients: Samuel W. Westing, Barney Northrup, and Judge J. J. Ford."

Turtle stumbled over her next question. "What were you hired to do and when and what did you find out? Tell us everything you know." It was unsettling to see Otis Amber act like a normal human being.

"Twenty years ago, after his wife left him, Samuel W. Westing hired me to find Crow, keep her out of trouble, and make sure she never used the Westing name. I assumed this disguise for that purpose. I mailed in my reports and received a monthly check from the Westingtown bank until last week, when I was notified that my services were no longer needed. But Crow still needs me, and I'll stick by her, no matter what. I've grown fond of the woman; we've been together such a long time."

"How and why did Barney Northrup hire you?"

"Amber is second in the phone book under Private Investigators; maybe Joe Aaron's phone was busy that day. Anyhow, Barney Northrup wanted me to investigate six people."

"What six?"

"Judge J. J. Ford, George Theodorakis, James Hoo, Gracie Windkloppel, Flora Baumbach, and Sybil Pulaski. I made a mistake on the last one; I wasn't aware of the mix-up until I looked into Crow's early life for the judge. It seems I confused a Sybil Pulaski with a Sydelle Pulaski."

"Would you please repeat that," the court stenographer asked.

"Sydelle Pulaski," Otis Amber repeated, then turned to the judge. "I couldn't tell you about Crow's relationship to Sam Westing—conflict of interest, you understand."

Judge Ford understood very well. Sam Westing had predicted every move she would make. That's why Otis Amber, with his privileged information, was one of the heirs; that and to convince Crow (the queen) to play the game.

Turtle had more questions. "Are you saying that Barney Northrup didn't ask you to investigate Denton Deere or Crow or Sandy?"

"That's right. Denton Deere turned up in my report on Gracie Windkloppel—the Wexlers. Barney Northrup said he was looking to hire a cleaning woman for Sunset Towers, good pay and a small apartment, so I recommended Crow. I don't know how Sandy got the doorman's job."

"Mr. Amber, you were also hired by Judge Ford, I assume to find out who everybody really was. Did you investigate all sixteen heirs for the judge?"

"I didn't investigate the judge or her partner."

The judge bristled at the reminder of her stupidity.

"Therefore," Turtle continued, "you have never investigated the man we knew as Sandy McSouthers for any of your clients?"

"Never."

"One more question." It was the question she had planned to ask before learning that Otis Amber was not who he seemed to be. "On the afternoon of Halloween, when we were watching the smoke in the Westing house chimney, you told a story about a corpse on an Oriental rug."

"I saw it," Grace Wexler cried, "I saw him."

Turtle forgot the rules of the court and hurried to her mother. "Who did you see, mom? Who? Who?"

(Terrified by the who's, Madame Hoo slipped away.) "The doorman," Grace replied, lifting her dazed face to her husband. "He was dead. On an Oriental rug, Jake. It was awful."

Jake stroked his wife's hair. "I know, Gracie, I know."

Turtle returned to her witness. "Mr. Amber, did you tell that spooky story to dare one of us to go to the Westing house that night?"

"Not really. Sandy told me the story that morning, and we decided to scare you kids with it, being Halloween."

"Thank you, Mr. Amber, you may step down." (Step down was a term used in court; the floor was level here.) Turtle turned to her baffled audience. "A fire was started in the fireplace to call attention to the deserted house. Then a spooky story was told to dare someone to go into the house. That someone was me. I sneaked in the house, followed Dr. Sikes' whispers, and found the corpse of Samuel W. Westing in bed. I now call D. Denton Deere to the stand."

Turtle stared at her most unfavorite heir. "Intern Deere, you saw the body of Samuel W. Westing in the coffin. Did he appear to have been poisoned?"

"I could not say; he was embalmed."

"You are under oath, Intern Deere. Do you swear that the body of Samuel W. Westing was embalmed?"

What kind of a trick question was that? "I cannot swear to it, no. I did not examine the body in the coffin."

"Could the body in the coffin, which you did not examine, have been no body at all? Could it have been a wax dummy dressed in the costume of Uncle Sam?"

"I am not an expert on wax dummies."

"Yes or no?"

"Yes, it's possible, anything is possible." What's the brat driving at? Or is she just trying to make a fool of me?

"Intern Deere, you may not be an expert in wax dummies, but you are an expert in medical diagnosis, and you did examine the body of Sandy McSouthers. Correct?"

"Yes to the first question, no to the second. I did not examine Sandy; I tried to make him comfortable until help arrived. He was still alive when Doctor Sikes took over."

Turtle turned quickly to conceal her smile. "But surely you saw enough symptoms to make one of your famous diagnoses." She peered at the judge from the corner of her eye. That last word didn't sound right.

"Coronary thrombosis," the intern diagnosed, "but that's just an educated guess. In simple language: heart attack."

"Then Sandy could not have died of an overdose of lemon juice, which is what I saw Crow put in his flask?" Turtle could have called on Angela to testify to that, but she didn't want her screwy sister confessing all over the place.

"I never heard of anyone dying as a result of lemon juice consumption," the expert replied.

"One more question, Intern Deere. "Do you swear that Sandy had a bruise on his shin resulting from a kick?"

"Absolutely. I should know, having been the recipient of such a kick myself."

"You may step down."

"I call Sydelle Pulaski to the stand. SYDELLE PULASKI!" Overcome with excitement, the secretary had to be helped to her feet for the oath-taking.

"Ms. Pulaski, I must compliment you on your good thinking in taking down the will in shorthand."

"Professional habit."

"This looks professional, all right. The typing is perfect—well, almost perfect. It seems you left out the last word in section three:

The estate is at the crossroads. The heir who wins the windfall will be the one who finds the

"Finds the what, Ms. Pulaski? Finds the what?"

Sydelle squirmed under Turtle's hard stare. Leave it to the brat to discover my one error. "There was so much talking I couldn't hear the last word."

"Come now, Ms. Pulaski, you claim to be a professional."

Hounding the witness and doing it quite well, Judge Ford thought, coming to the secretary's defense. "I don't think anyone heard the word, Turtle. Mr. McSouthers made a joke about ashes at that point."

"You are excused, Ms. Pulaski," Turtle said offhandedly, her eyes on the will. The judge was right. Sandy had joked about ashes scattered to the winds. Winds, Windy Windkloppel, no, it still didn't make sense. It is not what you have, it's what you don't have that counts—maybe no word was ever there. She read on:

FOURTH. Hail to thee, oh land of opportunity! You have made me, the son of poor immigrants, rich, powerful, and respected.

So take stock in America, my heirs, and sing in praise of this generous land. You, too, may strike it rich who dares play the Westing game.

FIFTH. Sit down, your honor, and read the letter this brilliant young attorney will now hand over to you.

"Judge Ford, could you introduce as evidence the letter that brilliant young attorney handed over to you?"

"It is just the usual certification of sanity, signed by Doctor Sikes," the judge replied as she removed the envelope from her files. But the letter was gone; the envelope now contained a receipt:

Check received, November 1. \$ 5,000

Check received, November 15. +5,000

Total amount paid by Judge Ford \$10,000

Cost of educating Josie-Jo Ford — 10,000

Amount owed to Sam Westing 0

"I'm afraid the original letter has been replaced by a personal message. It has no bearing on this case, and. . ."

"Yes, please." A trembling Madame Hoo stood before the judge. "For to go to China," she said timidly, setting a scarf-tied bundle on the desk. Weeping softly, the thief shuffled back to her seat.

The judge unknotted the scarf and let the flowered silk float down around the booty: her father's railroad watch, a pearl necklace, cuff links, a pin and earrings set, a clock. (Grace Wexler's silver cross never did turn up.)

"My pearls," Flora Baumbach exclaimed with delight. "Wherever did you find them, Madame Hoo? I'm so grateful."

Madame Hoo did not understand why the round little lady was smiling at her. Cautiously she peered through her fingers. Oh! The other people did not smile. They know she is bad. And Mr. Hoo, his anger is drowned in shame.

"Perhaps stealing is not considered stealing in China," Sydelle Pulaski said in a clumsy gesture of kindness.

The judge rapped her gavel. "Let us continue with the case on hand. Are you ready, counselor?"

"Yes, your honor, in a minute." Turtle approached the frightened thief. "Here, you can keep it."

With shaking hands Madame Hoo took the Mickey Mouse clock from Turtle and clutched the priceless treasure to her bosom. "Thank you, good girl, thank you, thank you."

"That's okay."

The heirs were anxious for the trial to continue. They pitied the poor woman, but the scene was embarrassing.

One half hour to go. Turtle was so close to winning she could feel it, taste it, but still the answer eluded her. "Ladies and gentlemen, who was Sam Westing?" she began. "He was poor Windy Windkloppel, the son of immigrants. He was rich Sam Westing, the head of a huge paper company. He was a happy man who played games. He was a sad man whose daughter killed herself. He was a lonely man who moved to a faraway island. He was a sick man who returned home to see his friends and relatives before he died. And he did die, but not when we thought he did. Sam Westing was still alive when the will was read."

The judge rapped for order.

Turtle continued. "The obituary, probably phoned in to the newspaper by Westing himself, mentioned two interesting facts. One: Sam Westing was never seen after his car crashed. Two: Sam Westing acted in Fourth of July pageants, fooling everybody with his clever disguises. Therefore I submit that Sam Westing was not only alive, Sam Westing was disguised as one of his own heirs.

"No one would recognize him. With that face bashed in from the car crash, his disguise could be simple: a baggy uniform, a chipped front tooth, broken eyeglasses."

Sandy?

Does she mean Sandy?

The judge had to pound her gavel several times.

"Yes, ladies and gentlemen," Turtle went on, "Sam Westing was none other than our dear friend Sandy, the doorman. But Sam Westing did not drink, you say. Neither did Sandy. I used his flask on Halloween and there was a funny aftertaste in my pop, but not of whiskey; I know how whiskey tastes, because I use it for toothaches. It was medicine. Sandy was a sick man, and the flask was part of his disguise, but it also contained the medicine that kept him alive."

Turtle surveyed her stupefied audience. Good, they bought her little fib. "As I said earlier, I saw Crow fill the flask with lemon juice in the kitchen, but I saw something even more interesting on my way back to the game room: I saw Sandy coming out of the library. Sam Westing, as Sandy, wrote the last part of the will after the answers were given, then locked it in the library desk with a duplicate key.

"But what about the murder, you ask," Turtle said, even though no one had asked. "There was no murder. The word murder was first mentioned by Sandy, to put us off the track. I did not die of natural causes, the will says, My life was taken from me—by one of you! Sam Westing's life was taken from him when he became Sandy McSouthers. And Sandy died when his medicine ran out." Turtle paused in a pretense of letting the heirs mull over her last words, trying to figure out what to do next.

Why did Turtle leave out Barney Northrup, the judge wondered. She knows Northrup and McSouthers were the same man because of the bruised shin. Either she doesn't want to confound the jury, or she has no more idea than I have why Sam Westing had to play two roles.

Why did Sam Westing have to play two roles, Turtle wondered. He had a big enough part as the doorman without playing the real-estate man as well. Why two roles? No, not two, three. Windy Windkloppel took three names; one: Samuel W. Westing, two: Barney Northrup, three: Sandy McSouthers.

The judge had a question. "Surely Mr. McSouthers could have had his prescription refilled, or are you implying he committed suicide?"

"Pardon me?" Turtle was searching the will.

The estate is at the crossroads. The heir who wins the windfall will be the one who finds the

FOURTH.

That's it, that has to be it: The heir who wins the windfall will be the one who finds the fourth! Windy Windkloppel took four names, and she knew who the fourth one was! Keep calm, Turtle Alice Tabitha-Ruth Wexler. Slowly, very slowly, turn toward the judge, act dumb, and ask her to repeat the question. "I'm sorry, your honor, would you repeat the question?"

Turtle knows something. The judge had seen that expression before. Sam Westing used to look like that just before he won a game. "I asked if you consider Sandy's death a suicide."

"No, ma'am," Turtle said sadly. Very sadly. "Sandy McSouthers—Sam Westing suffered terribly from a fatal disease. He was a dying man who chose his time to die. Let me read from the will:

SIXTH. Before you proceed to the game room there will be one minute of silent prayer for your good old Uncle Sam.

"Ladies and gentlemen, heirs (for we all inherited something) let us bow our heads in silent prayer for our benefactor Sam Westing, alias Sandy the doorman."

"Crow!" Otis Amber leaped to his feet as Ed Plum led the cleaning woman through the door.

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A HAPPY FOURTH

HIS AVIATOR'S HELMET again flapping over his ears, Otis Amber danced up to his soup-kitchen companion, flung his arms around the taut body, and squeezed her tightly. "Hey Crow old pal, old pal, old pal."

"They said I was innocent, Otis. They said I was innocent," she replied vaguely.

Angela, too, wanted to hug her in welcome, but closeness was not possible for either of them. Instead, Angela offered a crooked smile. Crow nodded and lowered her eyes, only to raise them to Madame Hoo, clutching a Mickey Mouse clock. "Things very good," Madame Hoo said, extending her free hand and shaking Crow's hand up and down.

"It was all a regrettable mistake," Ed Plum explained to the judge. "Can you imagine, that sheriff wanted to arrest me, not Crow—me, Edgar Jennings Plum—he wanted to arrest the attorney! Fortunately, the coroner determined that Mr. McSouthers died of a heart attack as did Samuel W. Westing."

"Then Turtle's right," Theo said. "There was no murder. The coroner was part of the plot."

Ed Plum had no idea what Theo was talking about. Masking his ignorance with arrogance, he continued. "I had my suspicions about this entire affair from the start. I came here for one reason only: to announce my resignation from all matters regarding the Westing estate, with sincere apologies to all concerned."

"Wasn't there a last document?" Judge Ford asked, knowing that Sam Westing had to make his last move.

"Yes, but as I no longer take a legal interest . . ."

"Please turn it over to the court."

Baffled by the word "court," the lawyer set the envelope on the desk and found his way out of Sunset Towers.

Without once clearing her throat, Judge Ford proceeded to read the final page of the will of Samuel W. Westing.

SEVENTEENTH • Good-bye, my heirs. Thanks for the fun and games. I can rest in peace knowing I was loved as your jolly doorman.

EIGHTEENTH • I, Samuel W. Westing, otherwise known as Sandy McSouthers and others, do hereby give and bequeath all the property and possessions in my name as follows:

To all of you, in equal shares, the deed to Sunset Towers;

And to my former wife, Berthe Erica Crow, the ten-thousand-dollar check forfeited by table one, and two ten-thousand-dollar checks endorsed by J. J. Ford and Alexander McSouthers.

NINETEENTH • The sun has set on your Uncle Sam. Happy birthday, Crow. And to all of my heirs, a very happy Fourth of July.

Judge Ford set the document down. "That's it."

That's it? What about the two hundred million dollars, the heirs wanted to know.

"We lost the game," the judge explained, staring at Turtle, her face a mask of sad, childlike innocence as she nestled once again in Flora Baumbach's arms. "I think."

Turtle rose and walked to the side window, seeking the Westing house, which stood invisible in the moon-clouded night. (Hurry up, Uncle Sam, I can't keep up this act much longer. The candle must have burned through the last stripe by now.)

Behind her the discontented heirs grumbled: He made fools of us all. He played us like puppets. He was a g-good man. He was a vengeful man, a hateful man. Windkloppel? He tricked us, the cheat. A madman, stark raving mad.

"Oh my, oh my, just listen to you," Flora Baumbach said. "You each have ten thousand dollars more than you started with and an apartment building to boot. The man is dead, so why not think the best?"

BOOM!

BOOM!

BOOM!

"Happy Fourth of July," Turtle shouted as the first rockets lit up the Westing house, lit up the sky.

BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM.

BOOM!!!

The heirs gathered around Turtle at the window.

BOOM! Stars of all colors bursting into the night, silver pinwheels spinning, golden lances up-up-BOOM! crimson flashes flashing blasting, scarlet showers BOOM! emerald rain BOOM! BOOM! orange flames, red flames leaping from the windows, sparking the turrets, firing the trees. . . .

"BOOM!" cried Madame Hoo, clapping her hands with delight.

The great winter fireworks extravaganza, as it came to be called, lasted only fifteen minutes. Twenty minutes later the Westing house had burned to the ground.

"Happy birthday, Crow," Otis Amber said, reaching for her hand.

The orange glow of the morning sun had just begun its climb up the glass front of Sunset Towers when Turtle set out to collect the prize. She pedaled north past the cliff, still smoldering with the charred remains of the Westing house. Reaching the crossroads she turned into the narrow lane whose twisting curves mimicked the shoreline.

The heir who wins the windfall will be the one who finds the fourth. It was so simple once you knew what you were looking for. Sam Westing, Barney Northrup, Sandy McSouthers (west, north, south). Now she was on her way to meet the fourth identity of Windy Windkloppel. She could probably have figured out the address, too, instead of looking it up in the Westingtown phone book—there it was, number four Sunrise Lane.

A long driveway, its privacy guarded by tall spruce, led to the modern mansion of the newly-elected chairman of the board of Westing Paper Products Corporation. Turtle climbed the stairs, rang the bell and waited. The door opened.

Turtle felt her first grip of panic as she confronted the crippled doctor. Could she have been wrong? "I'd like to see Mr. Eastman, please," she said nervously. "Tell him Turtle Wexler is here."

"Mr. Eastman is expecting you," Doctor Sikes said. "Go straight down the hall."

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

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

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

28

AND THEN . . .

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

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

Radiant in her wedding gown of white heirloom lace, the bride walked down the aisle, past the tables of well-wishers, on the arm of Jake Wexler. Mr. Hoo, the best man, beamed with pride at her light footsteps as he supported the knee-knocking, nervous groom.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Oh hello, Chris, that was nice of you, but why aren't you studying? Where's your tutor?" She looked at the binoculars hanging from his neck. "You haven't been birdwatching again, have you? There will be plenty of time for birds later; first you must catch up on your studies if you want to get into a good school." Good heavens, she was beginning to sound like Mr. Hoo.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

respected restaurateur, wife of a state official, and mother of the cleverest kid who ever lived. Turtle was going to be somebody someday.

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

"Study, study, study," Turtle said.

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

"The stock market jumped twenty-five points."

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

29

FIVE YEARS PASS

THE FORMER DELIVERY BOY danced into the Hoos' new lake-front home. "Let's give a cheer, the Ambers are here!" Otis came to celebrate Doug's victory wearing the old zippered jacket and aviator's helmet. He had even let a stubble grow on his chin. The only thing missing was his delivery bike (they had come in the soup-kitchen van).

"Thank you for the generous donation, Mr. Hoo. God bless you," Crow said. "Otis and I distributed the innersoles among our people. It helped their suffering greatly." She looked worn, her skin pulled tight against the fragile bones, and she still wore black.

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

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

OLYMPIC HERO COMES HOME

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

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

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

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

"Boom!" Jake Wexler replied.

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

"Hello, Denton." Angela's golden hair was tied in a knot on the nape of her neck. She wore no makeup. She was completing her third year of medical school. "It's been a long time."

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

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

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

"How do you do."

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

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

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

"Yes, I know."

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

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

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

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

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THE END?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Some day." Turtle and Theo had decided against having children because of the possibility of inheriting Chris's disease. "If it's a boy we'll name him Sandy, and if it's a girl, well, I guess we can name her Sandy, too."

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

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

"Is she pretty like her mother?"

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

"Turtle?"

"Yes, Sandy."

"Turtle?"

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

"Turtle, tell Crow to pray for me."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

About the Author

ELLEN RASKIN was born and raised in Milwaukee and educated at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where she majored in art. She now lives and works and reads in an old brick house in New York City.

In 1966 she gave up a successful career as a free-lance artist to write and illustrate children's books. Her first book was the still-popular *Nothing Ever Happens on My Block*. Fifteen picture books followed, including *Spectacles* and *Twenty-two, Twenty-three*.

As her fans grew up, so did her books. *The Mysterious Disappearance of Leon (I mean Noel)* was her first full-length novel. Then came *Figgs & Phantoms*, a Newbery Honor Book; *The Tattooed Potato and other clues*; and now *The Westing Game*.

Wildly imaginative, her books nonetheless touch on the autobiographical. Although Ellen Raskin is not rich and never has been rich, she still has hope—if only the stock market would play her game.