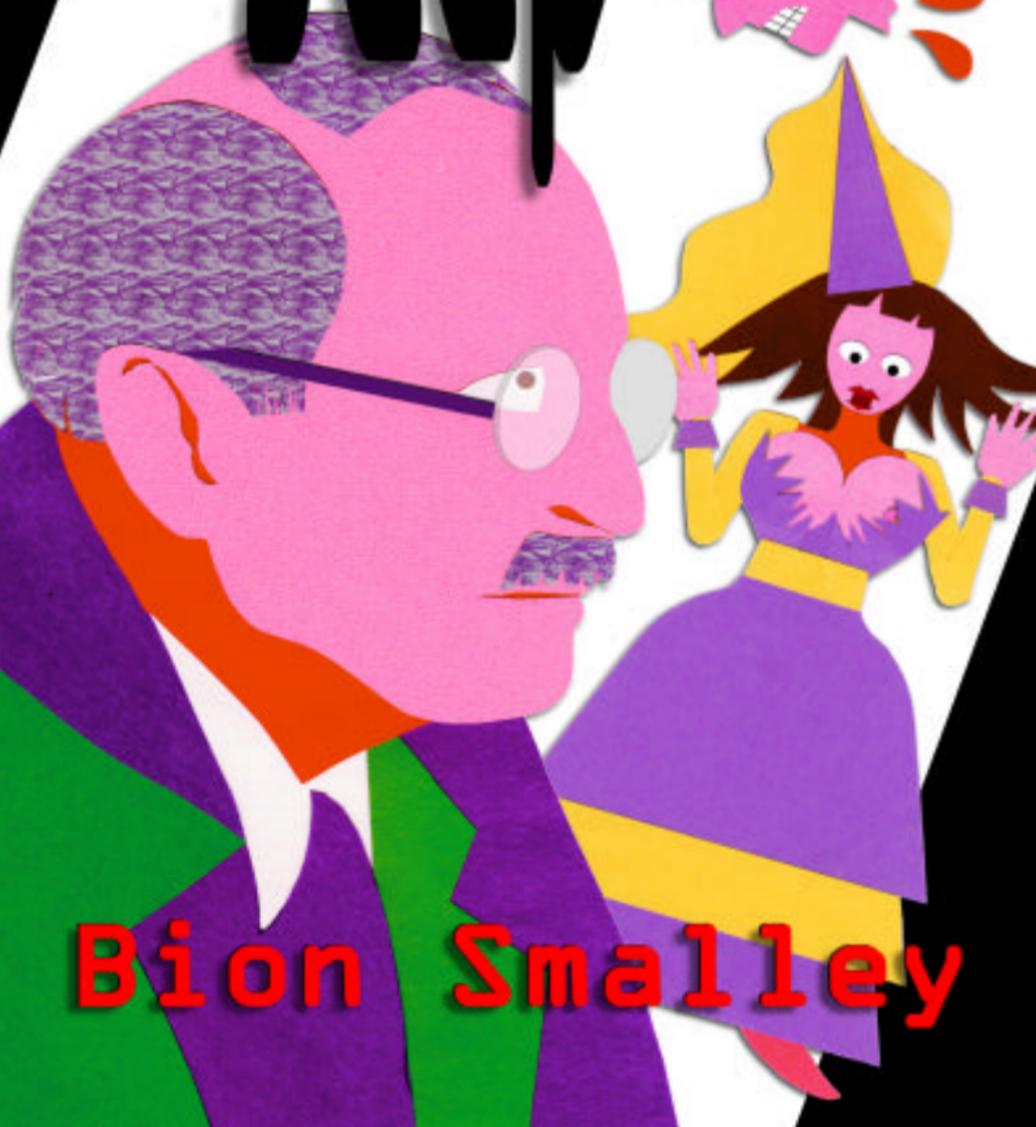


In

A Timothy and Alix
gonzo science mystery

Deep Jung



Bion Smalley

IN DEEP JUNG

by

Bion Smalley

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Dreams contain images and thought associations which we do not create with conscious intent. They arise spontaneously without our assistance and are representatives of a psychic activity withdrawn from our arbitrary will.

— Carl Gustav Jung
*The Relations Between the
Ego and the Unconscious*

*** ONE ***

Dr. Timothy Legend planted his feet under his desk and shoved against the floor, scooting his chair violently backward until the wheels chunked up over a phone cord and his fingertips could no longer reach the computer keyboard. A few of his students in the Dorsalbird Computer Center looked up briefly before returning to stare myopically at their own monitors. He massaged his eyeballs with his knuckles. It was closing on three o'clock in the afternoon. He collected his briefcase, hastily stuffing in notes and papers without regard for order. When he was ready to leave, he snorted. Timothy had been festering all afternoon, ever since he'd discovered the note in his box. He dug it out of the wastebasket, uncrumpled it, and read it again:

Dr. Legend, Please stop
by my office this afternoon
if you can, 3:00PM. It's
urgent that I speak with
you.

Porter Templeton
#107 Blevins Wing

Porter Templeton! The man was a psychiatrist for God's sake—well, a psychologist anyway, a Jungian psychoanalyst. And there was only one reason Timothy could think of for a Jungian psychoanalyst to

want to see him: Alix. It was all Alix's doing. It had to be her. But how could she have betrayed him so soon? It only happened last night. She hadn't given him a fair chance.

Timothy rose from his chair and forced his arms into the sleeves of his herringbone jacket. It barely fit over the bulky Irish sweater Alix had given him for his birthday—his *fortieth* birthday, which, unfortunately, seemed to lie at the heart of the problem. Outside, the Lake Shore campus was sodden under a clammy drizzle. With one hand shoved into the pocket of his tan slacks, Timothy balanced his briefcase on his head and picked his way among the puddles in the direction of the Blevins Wing and Clinical Psychology.

The Blevins Wing was a graystone Gothic monstrosity with leaded windows and drooling gargoyles. It seemed fitting that Jungians should make this their lair. The name Blevins Wing belied its obsolescence. The building it was formerly a wing of had long since been demolished to make room for the new featureless edifices that constitute all modern universities. And Lake Shore University was modern. Nestled snugly beside Lake Michigan, just north of Chicago, it prided itself in high admissions standards, multicultural curricula, superior faculty, and generally struggling athletic teams.

Mounting the gray stone steps to the arched entrance, visions of the previous night's disaster assaulted Timothy's mind and he whined out loud, "I don't *know* what's wrong, love. This has never *happened* to me before." An elderly woman descending the stairs, her hair wrapped in clear plastic, peered at him oddly.

What disturbed him most was the fear that this kind of thing would go on happening from now on, now that he was forty. Forty isn't that old, is it?

Naturally Alix had been wonderful about it, which made it even worse. She'd done everything she could. In fact, some of the weapons in her erotic arsenal, techniques she'd been saving for special occasions (she claimed), were astounding. And yet, if he could believe her, it really hadn't mattered that nothing had worked.

But if it didn't matter, why did she want him to see a psychoanalyst?

* * * TWO * * *

Normally Dr. Alix Fitzsimmons would have been in her office at the mathematics department by this time. But today, determined to end three months of procrastination, she stayed behind in the apartment she shared with Timothy Legend to finish an article on topological supercompactifications. Within minutes, though, her eyelids began to droop. It took the UPS driver's laying on the doorbell to jerk her awake.

She tore open the plain brown carton and chuckled when she discovered an authentic Balinese Passion Sling inside. She and Timothy had seen an ad in the *Suburban Libertine* a few months back and on a whim sent off a check.

With Timothy across campus teaching his Introduction to Computers class—or was it a graduate seminar?—the sling offered an irresistible opportunity to surprise him. He desperately needed something. Since turning forty he'd been behaving like a frenzied neurotic: "I read somewhere that people can have sex well into their eighties. That's twice forty, isn't it?" or "Grandma Moses didn't even *start* painting until she was seventy-eight. And you know about Pablo Picasso, virile to the very end?" The culmination came the night before when he was so paralyzed with anxiety he could hardly move, much less make love. Alix's patience had been stretched to the limit.

She tried in every way to calm him down—calm him up, rather—without success. Which was why this was the perfect time for the Balinese Passion Sling.

It took longer to locate her electric drill and the rest of her tools than it did to install the sling. Within an hour she had the sturdy hooks and braces—all thoughtfully included with the kit—fastened to the ceiling above the bed with toggle bolts. She went on to attach the various pulleys, slides and counterweights. She could almost hear her trans-feminist group applauding her competence with tools at the next show-and-tell. Alix took her trans-feminism seriously. Trans-feminists had gone beyond feminism, as the name implied, by simply declaring themselves equal to men and leading their lives accordingly. No whining, no begging, no political posturing. Those who didn't agree, especially men, might just wake up one day to find both of their feet shoved down their throats sideways. Like the Jesuits, the trans-feminists believed that if you want to be something, behave as if you are and you will become. Trans-feminists did not *want* to be equal, they *were* equal.

When the sling was in place Alix noticed that both she and the bed were sprinkled with plaster dust. She shook the bedspread out the window before retiring to their vast English style bathtub for a soak, hoping that Timothy wouldn't return before she was ready for him.

*** THREE ***

A young, attractive Ms. Whittaker ushered Timothy Legend into Dr. Porter Templeton's office. Timothy sagged onto the couch facing the desk, directing his eyes everywhere but toward Templeton. Like a damned museum, he thought, examining the dense collection of sculpture and paintings. He felt crowded. And some of the pieces had creepy penetrating eyes that seemed to see right into him and know his shame. When he finally worked up the courage to face Templeton, he decided the man's eyes, too, were creepy and penetrating. Dr. Porter Templeton was slight and middle-aged—*a lot older than I am*, Timothy assured himself—a neatly groomed blond with pale, sensitive hands that wound nervously around each other on top of the cluttered desk.

"Thank you for coming, Doctor Legend," Templeton said. "I hope when I've explained the gravity of the situation you won't think I've presumed too much."

"No," Timothy said absently. He sighed. "Oh, no. Unfortunately I already know."

Templeton seemed startled. "You do? But how—?"

"Let's just say I have a finely honed intuition."

"You certainly must, but—"

Hoping to preserve perspective, Timothy added, "Before you start, I just want to state for the record that it's never happened before. This is something entirely new."

"New? Of course it's new. But believe me, if my predictions hold up it will soon become so commonplace you'll find it wherever you go."

This brought Timothy to horrified attention. A sharp cramp pierced his side and he gulped down a bubble. "Wherever I go?" he said in a hoarse whisper.

"Sometimes the enormity of it overwhelms me, too. But then I think of all the suffering it will alleviate and I know it's the right direction. We can't go on clinging to the past, can we? Where's the progress in that?"

"Suffering?" Timothy glanced at a replica of Clodion's *Satyr and Bacchante*, mythical lovers provocatively entwined, and swallowed back a humorless laugh. Was it true? Was Alix suffering? Chuckling maniacally now, he tugged a blue bandana from his hip pocket and pressed it to his mouth. Absurd. How could it be? How could a whole year of gloriously wild and energetic sexual gymnastics have been solely for *his* benefit? No, it was nonsense even to imagine that now that he was growing old and beginning to falter she was actually *relieved*. Complete nonsense. But suppose it was true. What if Alix hadn't the heart to tell him and wanted someone else, a professional, to do it? Yes, now that he thought about it, it could be, it might be! Oh God. At least in one respect it meant she cared about him. But still—suffering?

"Doctor Legend, are you all right?"

Abruptly Timothy straightened and fixed Porter Templeton with a defiant glare. "No more games, Doctor. I can stand the truth. Tell me exactly what I can expect. I mean, you look like you must've gone

through it yourself, being so much older than I am. A week ago I thought too much sex was when you couldn't get it up one more time, and too little was when you could still get it up but couldn't find anywhere to put it. Are you saying now—boom!—you turn forty and suddenly it's all over, limp noodles dangling off into the sunset? And on top of that I'm supposed to accept that Alix is *relieved*?" Emptied of breath and gasping, Timothy verged on hyperventilating.

Porter Templeton stood with alarm and took a step backward, anxiously fingering the knot in his maroon silk tie. "Doctor Legend, I assure you I haven't any idea what you're talking about. Who's Alix?"

"Don't coddle me! I'm talking about the bitter ravages of time. I'm talking about the inevitable—eh, did you say, 'Who's Alix?'"

"I really think we should postpone this for another day. I can see you're not in any mood to—"

"You did! You said, 'Who's Alix?'"

"Offhand I don't think I know any Alix."

Timothy leapt to his feet and pounded a fist into his open hand, the crisp slapping of which only caused Templeton to cringe farther into the corner. Timothy chuckled. "Alix didn't phone you at all, did she? This hasn't anything to do with me—*or* Alix!" The dislodged chunks of the universe, his dear, rational universe, tumbled back into place and Timothy was suddenly delirious with relief. How could he have doubted? "Hah!" he barked and danced excitedly in place. Of course! Alix hadn't betrayed him after all, and this poor fellow Templeton had simply called him in for a consultation, just as a lot of the faculty did when there were problems that couldn't be solved through 'official channels.' Ever since his and Alix's

success solving the Carrot Boy murders everyone seemed to regard them as some kind of supersleuths.

By now Templeton was eyeing the office door, calculating his chances of escape. Timothy smiled with a reassuring rush of embarrassment. Then, as if he were donning an iron mask, he set his jaw, firmed his brow, and sat down again. Shoulders square, arms folded across his chest, he announced matter-of-factly, "You asked me here because you have a problem, Doctor Templeton. I assure you I will do everything within my, um, considerable power to help. Tell me what's bothering you. Leave out no details, however insignificant. In my experience, it always comes down to the details."

*** FOUR ***

It took Timothy a few tense minutes to convince Dr. Porter Templeton to return to his desk and relax.

Face still pale, Templeton said, "I understand you do—I mean, you've done some, well, you've had some experience in investigating. Of a sort, I mean."

"Investigating."

"You know. Checking into unusual things."

"Oh, you mean *investigating*." Now that Timothy's concern over Alix had vanished he was anxious to get on with the adventure of life, but Templeton seemed like the kind you had to drag things out of. Bor-ing. Timothy hated shilly-shallying. "Well, Doctor, it depends on what you mean by 'unusual things,' but yes, Alix and I have been known to turn over the odd rock in the cause of justice."

"Who's this Alix, again?"

"Doctor Alix Fitzsimmons—in mathematics."

"Ah yes. I didn't know Doctor Fitzsimmons' name was Alix." He paused thoughtfully. "Eh, I've been assured that you can be trusted to—"

"Discretion informs my every breath, Doctor Templeton. Can we get on with it?"

Having concluded, however tentatively, that Timothy wasn't mad, Templeton's story came out slowly. "The issue here is espionage, Doctor Legend,

or possibly even sabotage. I'm assuming you know something about Jungian analysis."

Timothy nodded sagely though he really hadn't much of a clue. From the little he'd heard, Jungian analysis was a lot like playing fantasy video games for money, though that simplification didn't quite square with the enormous number of popular books he'd seen on the subject. Wisely or unwisely, being a computer scientist, Timothy usually left the reading of books with lots of words and no formulas or diagrams to people with nothing better to do. He agreed with himself to listen further only because the words 'espionage' and 'sabotage' crackled so tantalizingly through his brain.

"Then you're aware that it's a rather time-consuming process," Templeton continued. "Not that there's anything wrong with that, per se. But the fact is, with the ever more frantic pace of the new millennium, we Jungians find ourselves squarely on the threshold of obsolescence.

At the mention of pace, Timothy lowered his gaze pointedly to his watch. Now that he knew Alix hadn't abandoned him to professionals he was anxious to get back to her and perhaps engage in some kind of impromptu forgiveness ritual. His pulse gave a little jog when he pictured it.

"The Master—" Templeton paused to smile sheepishly. "Carl Gustav Jung, I mean, was born into a time when craftsmen carved chairs by hand, doctors made house calls—"

"Right, right. Now it's all sound bites, drive-in funerals and your pizza in thirty minutes or it's free. I know all that, Doctor Templeton. Can we get to the espionage?" Erotic visions of Alix were beginning to distort Timothy's perceptions. Were the nipples on the small plaster bacchante really moving in circles?

Templeton regarded him sourly before continuing. "Yes, well, recently I had the good fortune to stumble upon a potentially powerful tool, a psychoanalytical method uniquely suited to the electric pace of the times. Do you know anything about lucid dreams?"

Timothy arched his left eyebrow as high as it would go. "Dreams you can see through?"

"Dreams in which you are fully conscious. In a lucid dream you know you're dreaming. With training and practice you can actually control your dreams."

Timothy perked up at this, though at first he didn't know why he should. It just seemed instinctively that there were possibilities here. Templeton was definitely piquing his interest.

"Let me show you something," Templeton said, craning his neck forward, his eyes shining. He unlocked a drawer in his desk and riffled through some files before withdrawing a handwritten letter. He smoothed it out in front of him. "About a year ago I received this from a young man named Fritz Zimmerman, from California. I should warn you, it's largely muddled. I'm afraid Mr. Zimmerman had been ingesting a variety of drugs and chemical products at the time—did I say he was living in California? For some reason the phrase 'lucid dreaming' caught my eye. Since much of Jungian analysis is based on the interpretation of dreams I thought I'd better wade through what Mr. Zimmerman had to say, just in case. I get chills when I remember how close I came to throwing the letter away

"You hear about the 'Aha!' experience, but until you feel it yourself you really don't know what it means. As I read further, I realized that I was holding in my hands the opportunity of a lifetime." He shrugged, indicating an oil portrait on the opposite

wall of an elderly man with lively eyes and rosy cheeks—Carl Jung, Timothy supposed. "There was even a moment when I imagined an empty frame hung there beside the Master, waiting to receive my own likeness when I'd verified my discovery." He blushed shyly. "Now such hubris seems almost shameful, but I promise you, that's how important the concept is."

This kind of self-revelation always made Timothy squirm. Unused to baring his own soul, he considered it vaguely subversive in others. When was Templeton going to get to the good stuff? Alix, delicious Alix, was waiting.

"And now, here's where you come in," Templeton intoned gravely, and Timothy thought, *Thank God*.

"I needed to run some lengthy and expensive experiments to verify Zimmerman's claims. Naturally I had the option of applying for a grant, but then I would have had to reveal what I was doing. And you know the academic business. No matter what your field, no matter how recondite or specialized, there's a researcher somewhere close by who—well, let's just say publishing preliminary results is tantamount to giving them to the competition."

Timothy found himself cautiously warming to Templeton. The man took a pragmatic approach that echoed Timothy's own unsavory maneuverings, the immense satisfaction he felt whenever he cheated the university out of its due. "You're telling me you managed alternate funding and began your experiments on a, let's say, less than official basis."

Templeton's excitement assumed a pneumatic quality. His overstuffed chair wheezed as he bounced up and down. "Exactly, exactly. And we've proved, essentially, that Zimmerman's naive suspicions were

correct. And today—tonight—we're planning to take our research even farther. We're actually going to—"

The intercom buzzed. He reluctantly punched the speaker on.

"Doctor Templeton," his secretary's voice squawked, "Dean Fretter's office phoned to remind you of the freshman orientation assembly this evening—seven o'clock at Wembly Hall. Oh, and Martin Star is here to see you."

"Thank you, Miss Whittaker. Have Martin wait. I'll be out in a few minutes." Templeton switched off the intercom and clucked with annoyance. "Damn the freshman assembly! I'd forgotten all about it. Now we'll have to postpone the testing until tomorrow night. I suppose you'll be there—the assembly."

"Not if Dean Fretter has anything to say about it. He thinks I'm a bad influence."

"On the freshmen?"

"On the world. Go on, Doctor, you were talking about experiments?"

Following a brief knock, the office door opened and a particularly handsome young man with long black hair entered. "Knock knock," he said, smiling broadly. Without noticing Timothy on the couch behind the half-open door, he crossed quickly to Dr. Templeton's desk and made his way around it with a flourish. "Ah, Porter, my love. There you are."

"Martin, what—?"

"I couldn't stand being away from you for a single moment longer."

"Have you gone insane?" Templeton demanded, flushed and bewildered. He tried to indicate Timothy's presence but wasn't quick enough.

Martin lowered himself into Templeton's lap. "Oooh, come here my wittle wovey dovey," Martin cooed. He puckered his mouth and wrapped his arms

around the astonished psychologist, kissing him full on the lips and forcing a tongue into his defenseless mouth.

"Pfaah!" Templeton sputtered, struggling away. "What the hell is this all about?" He clamped a handkerchief to his mouth and swabbed at it angrily. "I'm sorry, Doctor Legend. I seem to have an unforeseen problem here. I hope you don't think—"

At the mention of Timothy's name, Martin stood and wheeled around. His finely chiseled features assumed an awkward simulation of contrition, though there was still enough mischief in his eyes to prompt Timothy to grin. "Hi, Martin," Timothy said with a little finger waggle. "Nice to meet you." He'd heard that psychologists were weird, but this was the first time he'd had the fact graphically demonstrated. It was funny, though, how disturbed Templeton was. For Timothy this was merely another experience. He liked to think of himself as the ultimate liberal except in cases of nonconsensual violence and the sharing of toothbrushes.

"Martin," Doctor Templeton said stonily, straightening his collar with exaggerated precision. "Whatever it is you think you may have accomplished by barging in here—"

"Why don't I leave you two to settle this," Timothy said. He rose, took one last look at the symbolic artwork, and edged toward the door.

Templeton stood. "No, wait Doctor Legend. Perhaps we could meet later this evening—after the freshman assembly? We do need to finish our discussion. It's extremely important, believe me."

Timothy was already halfway out of the room. He leaned back in to offer a bogus business card from his pocket, the first of many that came to hand. It read, "Tim Legend—YOUR SEPTIC TANK CLEANED

CHEAP." "Tonight is fine. Phone me at this number, not at the one in the University Directory. I'm hardly ever there."

"Again, I am sorry Doctor Legend."

Timothy shut the door, free, finally, to track down his beloved Alix.

*** FIVE ***

Almost before the door had closed, Porter Templeton, startling himself as much as he did Martin, pounded his fist on the desk so hard that the pens and pencils sprang from the little cup he kept them in and skittered to the floor. "What in the *hell* was that all about? How *dare* you come here acting like that! And I warn you, no excuse will suffice. There *is* no excuse for such abominable behavior."

"But Porter, dear, I didn't think a love like ours needed an excuse."

"Damn it, it's not funny. What's gotten into you? Do I have to call campus security?" Templeton felt the veins throbbing in his neck. It frightened him because he couldn't remember ever being this angry before. This was new territory. Briefly he wished he could stop and jot down his impressions.

Martin's sudden loud cackling set Dr. Porter Templeton even more off balance. He gaped as the young man erupted in spasms of laughter.

"The proper question," Martin said when he could speak again, "is not 'what' but 'who'—who's gotten into me?"

"Make sense. What does 'who' have to do with it?"

"Everything my dearest. It has everything to do with it. What do you say? Now that I have alternate equipment can we get it on? You've always been so

cold around the lab when I'm my usual self, I just figured you were, you know—oh, come here you little darling."

Martin backed Templeton up against his desk and attempted to smooch him again, grabbing a fistful of crotch with such force that Templeton yelped and had to hike himself up to relieve the pressure. He nearly toppled over the desk trying to get away.

"You *have* gone insane!" And this was not merely a reflexive utterance. The Martin Star he knew was a gentle, almost timid young man, not this crazed lunatic. With mounting fear Templeton glanced toward the telephone, and Martin's eyes followed.

"All right, Porty-poo," Martin said in a conciliatory tone. "Truce. Fun's over. I'm a sport. I can take no for an answer." He found a pack of Doublemint gum on the desk and idly folded several sticks into his mouth. "From now on you're safe from me no matter what equipment I've got. And now I'll let you in on the secret." He opened his palms at his sides and pivoted through a complete turn. "See, it's really me." He shrugged expectantly, as if the meaning of this absurd statement should be obvious.

"What are you talking about?"

"It's me, Porter, your esteemed colleague, your partner in crime. I did it. It works. It really works."

Porter Templeton watched Martin snap his chewing gum in an insolent and totally uncharacteristic manner, and suddenly he felt as if he'd been kicked in the chest. His heart seemed to stop beating for a moment. His next breath came with force. Because now, staring into those familiar but oddly foreign eyes, he understood exactly what had happened.

*** SIX ***

To Porter Templeton, Martin Star was like Michelangelo's *David* somehow come vividly to life. His deep brown eyes, square shoulders, lovingly chiseled nose and jaw, were impossible to look away from, and when he spoke, his lips quivered slightly, to Templeton infinitely alluring.

Only, the beautiful young man standing in Templeton's office was not the Martin Star he knew.

"Surprised, Porter?"

"Phyllis?"

"Isn't it fantastic?" This strange Martin flattened his palms against his cheeks. "I can hardly believe it myself. It worked, it actually worked."

"We were supposed to do it together—tonight. We're a research team. Teams do things together."

"Oh, don't be testy, Porter. I was over-excited. I couldn't wait."

Now that the initial shock was wearing off, Templeton felt himself growing furious again. "Testy! I'm a lot more than testy. What gave you the right to go ahead without me? What if something had happened? We could all have been ruined. Not to mention the cavalier way you made an ass of me in front of Doctor Legend."

"I'm *sorry*, Porter. My mistake. But as you can see nothing did go wrong."

This Martin-but-not-Martin tried to embrace Templeton again but he fended him off.

"Damn it, no! This is absurd. Where are you, anyway?"

"Where do you think?"

"Well let's go there. I can't talk to you like this—it's too—unsettling." Templeton located a plump bunch of keys in his desk and stalked out the door with Martin trailing behind.

Barely more than a closet, the room where their research went on was just down the hall from their offices. Templeton glanced nervously in both directions before opening the three deadbolt locks. None but the principal investigators were allowed in here.

A single twin bed occupied most of the floor space. A deeply tanned woman lay asleep on it, wearing only a lace-trimmed bra and panties. Covering the top half of her face was a black-studded leather hood that looked medieval and sinister despite the few locks of curly red hair peeking out. Attached cables draped heavily over the edge of the bed. The woman was snoring.

Martin edged in past Templeton. "Not bad, am I?" he said, rolling the wad of gum around in his cheek. "I mean, for a middle-aged broad with a lot of miles on her. God, I snore like a seven-forty-seven, though."

"Shut up and get in here." Templeton seized him by the collar and yanked him inside, locking the door behind him.

Though there was barely enough space to maneuver, Templeton managed to squeeze in to where the file cabinets and the electronics console stood. Pretending to trip, he grabbed the handle of a file drawer to steady himself. It gave slightly, indicating that it was not locked. This particular cabinet had been designated his alone, and he was supposed to

have the only key. Again! This was yet another in a disturbing series of indications that something was wrong: the way the computer settings seemed to change slightly from day to day, the way the hood was sometimes moved from where he'd left it, even though neither he nor Phyllis should have been in the lab in the interim. These incidents and more had prompted Templeton to involve Dr. Legend. Clearly someone was spying on their experiment, even sabotaging it for all he knew. He had contemplated discussing the matter with Phyllis, but now, after what she'd done, he wasn't sure he could trust her.

Facing the computer—a Gamma 2000, the latest model lucid dreaming facilitator from Oneironics Systems—Templeton studied the control panel and made a minor adjustment. "I don't know how this is going to work, but I'm giving you fair warning: you're about to wake up."

"Better let me sit down then. I wouldn't want to get any unsightly bruises on your god-like catamite."

"Jesus, Phyllis," Templeton said, "Martin is not—" He halted, shaking his head. Exasperated, he leaned over the sleeping woman and slapped her cheeks lightly while Martin slipped down to the floor with his back against the wall, watching with amusement. "Come on, wake up. Wake up."

Gradually the woman stirred. Martin yawned deeply. He closed his eyes. Moments later he was asleep, breathing regularly, and Dr. Phyllis Klein-Gooseberry was sitting up.

"Wow, that was really something," she said. She carefully peeled off the hood and shook out her thick red hair. "Oh, hi, Porter. What are you doing here?"

"Don't, Phyllis, just—don't. Get dressed. You've already caused enough trouble."

She leered at him. "What's the matter, honey? This old broad too much for you?" Thumbs hooked in her bra, she flashed him her full nut-brown breasts and laughed. "Poor man doesn't know what he's missing."

"Please, Phyllis, this is a scientific project. We're supposed to act like scientists."

"All right, yes. You're right. I'm just a little giddy from the experience." She located her clothing alongside the bed and began to dress. "Well, don't you want to hear about it?"

Dr. Porter Templeton did want to hear about it—desperately—because Dr. Klein-Gooseberry's success meant that the project itself was about to become an astounding success, a revolution. The problem was with his immediate anger. This woman, whom he had foolishly trusted, had gone ahead with careless disregard for his feelings, his authority and even his integrity. And without sounding like a neurotic whiner, how could he explain that her little stunt had robbed him of the much-anticipated excitement of discovery, that first rush that makes the tedium and the aggravation and the disappointment worthwhile? His only consolation was that, now that he knew the rules, he could eventually even things up with her. And he would. Count on it.

Templeton inspected Martin sleeping angelically against the wall. What was he was going to tell his student?

"Why did you pick Martin?" Templeton asked. "That was so stupid of you."

"I wanted to surprise you. I did, didn't I?"

"Yes, you certainly did surprise me."

"Besides, I've always been curious about what he looked like naked. Porter, you wouldn't believe—"

"That's quite enough, Phyllis."

"In any case, you'll be happy to know that you were right about the fifth sleep. I was afraid—I admit it. Scared the hell out of me, but I did just what you said and it worked. You're a genius."

"Save the kiss-ass until we take care of Martin. I don't want him waking up in here."

"Whatever you say."

Risking a sidelong glance, Templeton had to concede that Phyllis Klein-Gooseberry was an attractive woman—at least in a cheap, campy way. In her late forties, she was inappropriately dressed, as usual, in a tight-fitting black suit, skirt too short, peek-a-boo cutout at the bosom that was more peek than boo. With her curly red hair gathered in a pink ribbon and muscular legs from hours of tennis she looked decades younger than her age. Templeton knew for a fact, though, that the sunbathing responsible for her deep tan had forced her to have her eyes and neck done more often than she would have preferred.

Martin's inert body presented an ungainly weight. With Phyllis' help, Templeton just managed to jockey him out into the hall where they propped him against the wall until Templeton could relocate the door.

"Ah, there you are, Porter," Dr. Mortimer Blech, the department's third Jungian, called out. "Your secretary said you were around here somewhere. Hello, Phyllis."

Their colleague was a tall man, totally hairless, who exuded a ruggedness that did not match his navy three-piece suit and rimless glasses. He spoke slowly, his large, articulate hands opening and closing as if they were serving the words one by one.

"Hello, Mort."

A brief panicky look flickered between Porter Templeton and Phyllis Klein-Gooseberry when Blech gestured past them.

"Isn't that Martin Star?" Blech said. "What's the matter with him?"

"We're not sure. He fainted."

Blech touched Martin's forehead. "Dry. No temperature. Color good. Almost seems like he's asleep." "Well, he fainted," Templeton reiterated, hoping that Blech hadn't registered the way the corners of Martin's mouth were turned up in an impish grin, just as Phyllis had left them when she vacated. "We were about to move him to my office."

If Templeton were forced to choose a single word to describe Blech, that word would have been "adequate," and its application would have been generous. Mortimer Blech epitomized the man who, in popular parlance, "didn't get it." He was always next in line when the last ticket was being sold, forever booking passage in the caboose of life. No wonder that his latest appeal for tenure had been refused. His surname, for better or worse, said it all. And of course he had the loser's habit of forcibly endearing himself with no encouragement whatsoever. It had been astounding, then, to discover that he was an effective Jungian analyst, especially with a particular class of neurotic—losers like himself—an instance, perhaps, of the childhood adage that it takes one to know one.

"Very unusual," Mortimer Blech observed, leaning close to Martin, "the way he's completely oblivious to us. Don't you think it's unusual?"

"Yes, it's unusual, Mort. It's unusual that he fainted. It's unusual that he's oblivious, even though people who faint are normally oblivious. If you don't mind—"

Blech straightened. "Yes, well. I was passing by and I thought I'd say hello." He glanced at the door to

the laboratory. "What's in there, anyway? Was Martin in there?"

"There's nothing in there but patient records, Mort. My office files were beginning to overflow so I moved some cabinets there. It's a storeroom."

"Oh." Angling closer, Blech drew his head between his shoulders and lowered his voice as if he were about to offer them some cut-rate pornography. "I thought maybe it was that secret laboratory all the graduate students are gossiping about." After an uneasy silence he exploded in raucous laughter that caused Templeton and Klein-Gooseberry to flinch. "Can you imagine, a secret laboratory? When you hear that kind of gossip you know somebody has too much time on his hands. Right?"

Apparently he wanted a reply, because he repeated, "Right?"

"Yes, Mort. The idea is absurd."

"Of course it's absurd. If there were a secret project I'd be in on it, wouldn't I?"

"Yes, of course you would, Mort. But there's no secret project."

"Unless whoever's been trying to hold me back is in charge of it."

Without looking, Templeton knew that Phyllis was rolling her eyes. Blech's paranoia was a running joke in the department.

"I don't know," Blech said, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "To tell you the truth I could use a secret project to help get me out of the cellar with the administration. I haven't been able to get much published lately." He fell silent for a moment until his frown abruptly reassembled into a determined scowl. "Well, if all else fails I can say I'm working on a secret project anyway, can't I? I wouldn't be any worse off than I am now."

Templeton wondered why the man wouldn't take the hints and leave. That was the problem with Blech. He was a human booger you could never seem to flick away.

"Mort," Phyllis Klein-Gooseberry said. "You look tired. Are you feeling all right?"

Smoothing back his naked scalp out of some vestigial habit, Blech laughed nervously. "Does it show? Actually, I'm not feeling all that well. Might have picked up this bug that's going around."

Templeton noticed now that there were bruisey patches under Blech's eyes, and he seemed unusually pale. "See a doctor, Mort. Or just go home and get some rest."

"Oh, don't worry about me." He backed away, touching a finger to his forehead in salute before turning to leave. "If anyone needs a doctor it's Martin there. You said he fainted?"

"Yes, he fainted. Go home, Mort."

"I will. I was just on my way to have Anna make me some soup. I think I'll go to bed and try to sweat it out."

"Take all the time you need," Templeton said.

A trio of undergraduates passed by, appearing lost in the corridor, casting curious glances at Martin on their way. Blech fell in behind them, and Templeton and Klein-Gooseberry watched until they were out of sight.

Dr. Klein-Gooseberry exhaled loudly. "Damn, he suspects."

"Don't you go paranoid now. One around here is quite sufficient. Personally, I don't think Blech is bright enough to discover what we're up to. If everything works the way we planned, he'll hear about it afterward when there's nothing he can do."

"That's one possibility," Dr. Klein-Gooseberry said. She straddled Martin's legs and positioned herself to lift. "Actually, I'm wondering if there might not be some way to get rid of him entirely."

"You mean remove him from the department?"

"Of course, Porter," she said. "What else would I mean?"

"I see. Like riding him mercilessly until he quits, the way you got rid of Evangeline Krebs?"

The look she shot him nearly frosted his corneas.

Templeton hadn't intended to resurrect the issue of Dr. Evangeline Krebs. It just slipped out. Krebs' offense had been nothing more than that she was an outstanding analyst. Phyllis resented the competition, especially from another woman. After bearing months of unconscionable back-stabbing and screaming confrontations, Krebs had done the only thing a civilized Jungian could do: she quit to go into private practice. Templeton had felt guilty ever since. He could have stepped in, should have. Unfortunately, he'd been stalled in his own professional doldrums at the time and had had neither the courage nor the will. According to the latest gossip, though, Dr. Krebs was doing well. Knowing this soothed his conscience to some degree, but it struck him that if Evangeline had stayed and Phyllis had left, his life now would be infinitely less complex.

"We'll discuss it later." Phyllis said icily. She bent to hoist Martin's legs while Templeton hooked a hand under each armpit.

Templeton explained to his secretary that Martin had fainted and asked her to bring some water. With Martin resting comfortably on the broad leather couch in his office, Templeton faced Phyllis. "I don't want you here when he wakes up. We'll talk later."

*** SEVEN ***

"What are you doing home?" Anna Blech asked her husband as he hung up his coat. She immediately regretted it.

"I live here," Dr. Mortimer Blech snapped. "I own the place. I can do whatever I like."

"Yes, dear, of course. I didn't mean to say—"

"If you don't know what you mean to say, then don't say anything."

Anna knew from past experience that Mortimer would be like this for a while—usually two or three weeks. It happened whenever his latest appeal for tenure was turned down, which seemed to occur with frustrating regularity, though this was, for better or worse, the last appeal allowed under university rules. She squeezed her hands together to keep them from jerking with nerves.

"I don't feel well," Blech grumbled. "Flu I think. I'm going up for a nap—"

"Yes, dear."

"And I don't want to be disturbed—by *anyone*. Is that clear?"

"Yes, dear. Not by anyone."

"And have dinner ready when I wake up."

Anna sighed. She'd fallen into another of those countless traps from which she had neither the wit

nor skill to escape. Numbly she started, "What time—?" and cringed even before she could finish.

"When I damn well wake up! Are you an idiot?"

"Yes, dear."

Face hot, lips trembling, she watched him thump up the stairs.

*** EIGHT ***

Dean Fretter stood facing the window nearest his desk. He blinked his bushy-browed eyes and yawned. Rain droplets drew together on the windowpane, racing down in streaks whenever they acquired critical mass. Outside, a dour smudgy sky continued to piddle over the Lake Shore University campus, coaxing out umbrellas and otherwise complicating the autumn ritual of moving in. Vans, station wagons, family automobiles hitched to rented trailers, all fought polite duels for position along the twisting paths that led to the dormitories. "The changing year's successive plan / Proclaims mortality to man," the dean quoted silently, flexing his classicist's muscle. He clasped his hands behind his back and rocked his round bulldog frame gently on his heels, savoring the anticipation of another year. Despite the weather, he found himself enveloped in the warm glow felt by every man fortunate enough to be doing what he loves best.

And yet, today a few frigid spots marred that warm glow. For example, the freshman welcoming assembly, during which a representative from each of the departments would deliver a commercial advertisement for his chosen field, was scheduled for seven o'clock this evening. The problem was, Miss Kirchlich, the dean's secretary, had just brought in a

message concerning Hamilton, head of the computer science department. Hamilton had taken a sabbatical in some godforsaken little country in the Balkans where he was now stranded because the only airport had been destroyed by terrorists and trains were under aircraft attack. Which meant, to Dean Fretter's horror, that Dr. Timothy Legend might have to deliver the department's welcoming address.

"Shall I phone Doctor Legend, then?" Miss Kirchlich asked. "I believe he's on campus."

"Absolutely not," Dean Fretter snapped. He began pacing in a sharp oval in front of the window, first clockwise, then counterclockwise so as not to overwind in either direction. "I can't risk having Legend there. Can you imagine Legend speaking to the incoming freshmen?"

"Yes, sir."

He stopped pacing abruptly. "What?"

"I mean, I can imagine how awful it would be."

"Yes, it certainly would be. Legend is the most amoral degenerate ever to smear chalk on his coat."

"Definitely amoral—"

"Has he ever once satisfied his contractual teaching load?"

"Never."

"And those rumors about him and all those women—"

"Disgusting."

"And he's a shameless *agent provocateur*. I'm convinced he's the driving force behind all this campus anarchy lately." Fretter resumed his precise rounds. "How many times have I tried to have him dismissed on the grounds of ethical misconduct?"

"Eleven."

"Excuse me?"

"Eleven times, Dean. You've tried to have Doctor Legend dismissed eleven times. I'll bring in the files if you—"

"No!" the dean snapped, and paced through one more turn before repeating, "No, no, no. It's always the same. I can still hear the university president—"

"Doctor Legend's contributions to the prestige of the university, particularly regarding his brilliant shepherding of the Weisenheimer Project, far outweigh any minor peccadilloes—"

The dean whirled and thrust a pudgy finger at Miss Kirchlich's nose. "Minor peccadilloes?" he roared and quickly realized that she had only been quoting the president. He backed away, dropping his arms to his sides. It was hopeless. Damn Legend and his project. Unfortunately, Weisenheimer was the most ambitious and successful artificial intelligence project in the country—in the world, for that matter. Certainly it was the shiniest jewel in the crown of Lake Shore University. Which meant it was impossible to get rid of Legend. "But I don't have to approve of his speaking to the freshmen," the dean said, finishing the thought out loud.

"Of course you don't, Dean Fretter."

He examined his secretary carefully now and compressed his lips, shaking his head. "Just bring me a list of the graduate students in the computer science department—doctoral candidates only. It'll be much safer to let a student give the speech."

"Much safer."

"And there's the possibility that Legend will be insulted when he finds out he's been passed over for one of his students. I certainly hope so."

"So do I, Dean Fretter, so do I."

Dean Fretter could tolerate just so much obsequence. He glared at Miss Kirchlich until she flut-

tered and turned on her heels. "I'll be getting that list, then." She shut the door softly behind her.

And now, inexplicably, in the midst of savoring his minor victory over Timothy Legend, Dean Fretter felt overwhelmed with fatigue. He yawned so deeply that for a frightening moment he thought he might turn himself inside out. What in the world had come over him? Was he ill? No, not ill, just terribly, terribly sleepy. Odd. Very odd. He crossed to his desk and plopped down in his seat, looking at his watch. It was nearly four. He punched the intercom button. "Miss Kirchlich, I don't want to be disturbed for a while. No visitors, no calls. Please take messages." He sank back heavily into his padded leather chair. Perhaps if he shut his eyes for a moment he'd feel better.

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