

The PAINTING
and the CITY

Robert Freeman Wexler



Introduction by JEFFREY FORD



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I
The City

ONIGHT, FOR ALL ITS MAGNIFICENCE, THE CITY projected a claustrophobic attitude in which barren and cheerless buildings huddled for companionship, creaking across streets and alleys to confer with their neighbors. The sky had the brittle look of overripe fruit, all lumpy apples and oozing bananas, while the air felt more July than May, sodden and heavy, attacked by the aroma of uncollected refuse that overflowed its containers like some rain-swollen tropical river, and the faces of the homeless shone with brown light.

In summer, rancid haze clings to the buildings, a coating of torpor that drives out all who are able to leave, for a weekend, for a month, two months, all who own the means of leisure, while the rest take what ease they can, shunning the subways, avoiding the lifeless underground air weighted with the bones of past generations, whose inability to speak shackles the city, at its worst in the dead time of heavy summer. Breezes of shaved concrete crumble through the open windows of anyone unfortunate enough to lack air conditioning, and nightfall carries no release, as the trap laid by the day clamps down, vengeful and loathsome.

But Jacob Lerner always remained in town and worked, his sculptures gaining life from summer's breath.

Returning to the city from his Friday sculpture seminar at Rutgers, he had slept, miles of train-sleep, and dreamed a dream of which he could remember only disconnected scraps, forests of monolithic ferns with grasping, rubbery leaves; the dream had resumed on the F train, more confining—the ferns grew higher, closely packed, trapping him; he woke when the train stopped, and left the car without thinking. He emerged at 2nd Avenue and Houston, one stop from his intended destination of Delancey.

Outside again, the thick air of the city enveloped him. Dusty hands of brick applauded his passing, hissed their approval. Arches opened to allow unimpeded passage. Fountains emerged to quench his thirst and send sparkling drops into the air, drops that darted among the moonrays, careening and laughing. He hitched a ride on a droplet of iridescent green, sending it off into the depths of darkness, using its stored moonrays to light his path, a trail that wound in geometric randomness past alcoves and minarets, along streets of glass and towers constructed from grains of sand, until, satisfied, they dropped him at the door of his friend Gary Freed's apartment and the party it contained.

Lerner worked alone, hours in the studio bending and pounding metal or shaping clay. The solitude eventually filled him with a craving for contact, but the suffocating press of people in a small space, after his time alone, was a difficult transition. Tonight he felt sociable. Though his sculpture seminar had tired him, it had also left him craving more human interaction.

He pressed Freed's buzzer a few minutes before 10 p.m. He would be at the party for at least an hour before seeing the painting. Though not a memorable party, everything that happened prior to that moment crystallized, as if his first sight of the painting merged both immediate past and far future into one ineradicable memory.

"Hey Jacob, have a mojito," Freed said at the door. "It's Cuban. Hemingway drank them."

Lerner thanked him and took the drink. Freed looked the way he always did: sleek, healthy seal nicely-groomed and dressed in something stylish and appropriate, suitable and proper appearance for a successful plastic surgeon. Seeing him, Lerner remembered that he had planned to go home and change before the party, but hadn't even gotten on the right subway to do so. The train-dream had thrown everything off.

A man and a familiar-looking woman stood nearby. The man was talking with his mouth close to the woman's ear, his gaze moving from her face to her breasts, not large but well-exposed by the cut of her top. Lerner caught a few words about sweet locations and options to buy.

"Seminar Day go okay?" Freed asked. They chatted for a minute, then Freed moved off to join a woman standing in front of a series of black and white photographs showing the steel frames of skyscrapers under construction. Freed, an art collector, also owned an early piece of Lerner's, a small bronze with the appearance of a distorted cage, burst open at the top from the inside, as though whatever it once housed had tired of captivity. (Lerner had done cages years ago, moved to other themes, and returned.)

"Did I hear you say something about making clay things?"

Lerner turned toward the familiar-looking woman and recognized her—Foul-Mouth Juliet—an actress he had seen in a modernization of *Romeo and Juliet* (now with black hair, which had previously been red). He had met her several times but she never remembered him. Once, he had told her he worked as a zeppelin pilot in Tanzania, bringing supplies to remote regions, and was in New York recovering from surgery after a near-fatal attack by airship pirates.

Showing unexpected interest, she asked Lerner about his seminar, but the man interrupted. "Did I just hear you say you only have to work one day a week! I had no idea teaching was so lucrative. You artists have it made, government grants, teaching gigs. If you worked *two* days a week you could buy a vacation home in East Hampton. I'm in the wrong fucking business!"

Lerner stared at the man's face for a moment, then responded: "That

isn't what I said. I teach one day a week. I work more than that. A lot more. I'm working right now, talking to you . . . there's a shadow on the wall behind you, I don't know from what, that's not important. The shape is the important thing. What form would that shadow take in three dimensions?"

Without waiting for a reaction, Lerner walked off. While crossing the room, he intercepted a man carrying a tray of drinks and exchanged his empty for a new one.

Two women stood near his old sculpture; one of them had set her empty glass in the middle of the cage. The base of the cage was a thin layer of concrete. Lerner had cut down an assortment of plastic tubs, using them as molds for ready-mix concrete, in which, after drying, he would drill holes for the bronze rods. For his current work, he used a bronze disk as the base, welding the rods to it.

Groupings of random syllables rose from the women, growing ordered and distinct as Lerner drew closer. Their voices intertwined, sometimes repeating the same phrase as though each was talking to herself.

"Up a quarter point. Not advisable. Too much for too little. We told him but he wouldn't listen. We told him. After the market closes. Always after the close."

One of them said something else, and both laughed, identical laughs, a crackling that sounded forced and studied, as if, lacking a natural means of expressing mirth, they had taught themselves to approximate. The duo had the coppery-hair, dark suit-dress look of financial advisors. They hovered, leathery-winged, between Lerner and his art. Their too-white skin stretched along unsmiling faces that expressed no welcome.

"I . . . excuse me," Lerner said. "I was just coming to see the art." He indicated the sculpture, and the women glanced at it.

"Is *that* what this is?" one of them asked.

"Of course. Don't you remember that seminar we went to? What was it, 'Art Investment through Market Fluctuations.'"

"Right right. I see, there's the name, Jacob Lerner. Is he blue chip?"

“I wonder if he’s blue chip?”

They spoke in identical, flat voices that vacuumed oxygen from the room.

“I hope this is appreciating at a commendable rate,” the first speaker said. She directed her attention to Lerner. “Are you thinking of investing in art?” Though her glance at his frayed khakis said she had doubts.

“I made my investment years ago,” he said.

“Oh look,” the other one said. “He must be an artist. Gary always has a few around.”

“You’re so correct, look at the hole, there, just above the knee.” She pointed. “No one else would come to a party dressed so. . . .”

“Indiscriminately.” They laughed their dry, tinderstick laugh, and left Lerner alone with his sculpture.

Emblems of migratory impulses collide amidst the ruins of unimagined civilizations. Paths overgrown by decay, blanched by summer heat, yet never obliterated. Remnants. If found, they bring quite a price at auction. But what of art? Art binds, art guides. The leaders of nations understand this. Even Hitler was a painter. Perhaps the source of the problem lies there, for if an art lover could also be a monster, then far safer for the world if its leaders reject such things. Business is the Lord, art is what remains after vultures pick the carcass of society.

Lerner turned away from the graceless curves of his immature metal.

Across the room, Freed pointed out a painting to several guests, including the financial women. Obviously a recent acquisition—whose would it be, *this* new banner of wealth and taste?

Wishing to avoid the group viewing Freed’s new painting, Lerner entered the kitchen, a modern, magazine feature of steel and stained concrete. Freed’s caterers had been using the oven and restaurant-quality stove; the temperature change hit him a few feet in, but he found the heat pleasant after the chill of the other rooms. And, even more pleasing, he saw his friend Buddy Drake.

“I know, I know, but I’m a sucker for twang and pedal steel,” Buddy said to his companion, a young black woman.

“Truckstop sentimentality,” the woman said.

“Buddy likes anything that sounds like Mississippi,” Lerner said when he reached them. Buddy was a photographer; they had met in art school and over the years had shared a series of decrepit apartments in the East Village and Lower East Side.

“Hey Jacob, have you met Liz Crandell? We just finished shooting some publicity photos for her new novel.”

“That’s why I’m wearing make-up. Though, turns out, women are supposed to wear it all the time.”

“I was just telling Liz that this band, Blind Revenant, wants me to go with them, take pictures. Their first European tour. And why not? It gives me a good excuse to get out of the city this summer.”

They talked about their work. Lerner described his recent twisted metal cages. Liz Crandell’s second novel was due out in the fall, but she said she wasn’t expecting much of a response from critics. “My problem is,” she said, “I’m a hopeful surrealist in an age of neo-conceptualism and irony.” She laughed. “Sorry, I’ve been practicing lines for interviews.”

Freed tapped Lerner on the shoulder. “Hey, I want to show you guys the new painting. Come on.”

They followed Freed to the hall where Lerner had seen him with the investment women. Lerner couldn’t have known, as he took those first steps toward the painting, that time would stop, would become an inconsequential monolith dedicated to its own absence. Depths of forgotten dreams, years traced in lines on faces, the maze of lines, maze of minds, maze of bodies on the street, walking without listening, without seeing, all oblivious to the suffering beneath the surface.

Closer to the painting, coils of frosty air tugged at Lerner. A warning, perhaps an attempt to save him. He stood at the wide end of a long, dark funnel. Nothing existed outside the tube, and its tapering walls directed him to a scene so delicate that at first all he could see was the glow of a painterly candle. His breath stopped. Water covered him, clear water that didn’t distort the canvas. In the foreground a woman sat facing the viewer; a candelabrum on the low table before her illumined the dark-

ened room. Lerner floated, alone, no one in the world but himself and the painting. The eyes of the woman met his. He smiled, for her face bore the beauty of Diana, of Athena. But what was that in the doorway?

Walking, walking, but mud ensnared his feet . . . he looked down; the mud, a brilliant blue, blocked his way. It mounded in front of him, a thick wedge dotted with stiff peaks. Mounds of other colors and hues lay nearby. A hum filled the air, and Lerner glanced up to see a shape descending, a vast wedge of stiff fibers. The fibers enveloped him, scooping him up with the blue mud. He rose and rose, to an impossible height. Then it dashed him against a fabric wall. From there, he looked out at Freed's apartment, looked out from the painting, his body flattened into the web of canvas.

Freed's voice broke through the buffering muddy layers that surrounded Lerner. "Philip Schuyler. Dutch-English. I'm told it's quite rare, that he usually painted outdoor scenes, markets and such."

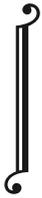
From his perch within the painting, Lerner sensed unrest. In a doorway behind the woman, a man stood, so indistinct he might have been a shadow, save for the candle he held, his hand shielding the light so that it exposed no more than his face. His expression displayed such malevolence that Lerner had to force himself to look elsewhere, at the velvety red drapes, Oriental rug. The woman—her serenity implied she carried no sense of the presence behind her.

Voices mingled. Clinical discussions of imagery, or technique . . . but . . . what of the woman, the sweet, unsuspecting woman?

"Jacob. Jacob . . . are you okay?"

He found that he had slumped against Buddy Drake. His collapse, or whatever it was, had turned him from the painting, and outside its influence, calm resumed.

"Tired," he said. "Long day. Got up early to teach my class. Guess I should be getting home."



2

Lessons in Urban Planning

IN THE MORNING, LERNER'S CLAY—SOLIDIFIED RIVERS packed in neat plastic bags—waited to be transformed. Shapes, concepts, the honesty of dirt and metal, a churning lump moving onward . . . davits of circling swollen bronze, in the night forlorn, silent, but they crash, monumental. Foreshortened renderings that convey a misplaced sense of development. Furnace howls, raging, committed to nothing but its task. Entrusted with the primal elements, fragments of journal entries revolve, evolve. Incoherent streams glow and vibrate. Which of these breaks the barriers of hate, of racist fear? On the street, a deathwatch, flesh and fantasy interweave in a stupendous dance. Homeless vagrant immigrant nonentities prowl the nightmares of the inheritors, who fortify themselves in opposition to the encroaching swarms. *Their* sidewalks accommodate only the new and the shiny. Vinyl circles rage against stultification . . . you make me nervous and I crawl the floor . . . a fight without end, a fight always co-opted, forcing the revolution to lie dormant before one day, one distant day metamorphosing anew. *The Shelf Life of Revolution*—that would be the title of this piece.

Heat pulsed through his loft. Having fired a group of clay figures

shaped earlier in the week, he shut down his electric kiln and moved away from the circular mold that he had just filled with molten bronze.

Most of his bronze he commissioned from a foundry in New Jersey, one- and two-foot strips that he could bend and hammer into the shapes he fancied. But on occasion, he needed something special, a disk to use as the base of the cage, or a ring. These, he made himself, melting bronze ingots with a blowtorch, then pouring the metal from the crucible into rough molds of clay. Hot and dangerous work (on the floor near his worktable, hardened plotches of bronze illustrated the need for care).

The rush of activity and concentration ebbed, and fragmentary images of Freed's painting drifted through the stale air of Lerner's studio. Saturdays, he didn't usually work, but the need to complete his current piece had overtaken him. Now that he was finished he couldn't stop thinking about the woman, and the man's threatening pose. What had that artist intended? Looking at his newly-shaped clay figures, he saw the faces from the painting.

His loft occupied the third floor of a former garment sweatshop at Crosby and Howard, a narrow space, but with windows on three sides (though the rear windows opened onto an air shaft, providing negligible light). His door, a steel slab wide enough to allow passage of sweatshop machinery, opened into the studio, which he had set up in the corner with the best light. Past the studio was a sitting area, then the kitchen, and the bedroom and bathroom in the rear. With the help of friends, he had laid sheets of plywood over the existing concrete floor, sanded them smooth, and stained them a light golden color. As was common in the city, he paid for all renovations himself.

Garment sweatshops still flourished around him, on the floor below his and in the neighboring building; mornings and late afternoons Chinese workers jammed the sidewalks. Every morning on the corner, a woman sold Thousand Year Old eggs from a cart. The determination and honesty of the garment workers, Lerner's conception of it anyway, formed the basis of his current sculptures, a series of twisted metal cages surrounding clay figurines.

When Lerner first discovered his neighborhood, he had been captivated by the way workers moved finished clothes from the third- or fourth-floor sewing factories by stringing a cable from the window to the waiting truck. Walking east on Grand Street, he had first seen the fluttering dresses, heard them swoosh down the cable. The sight continued to thrill him.

Tired, satisfied with his day's work (before the questioning and doubt that always lurked beyond his sight pushed its way forward), he stood gazing down at the sidewalk, a moment of indecision, of rest, between what has been and what has yet to be, idle time, drift of thoughts, of vision; afternoon passage of Chinese school kids, tourists, workers loading and unloading delivery trucks. A boy—ten years old? twelve?—stopped to cross the street. On his back he bore another boy, smaller, but not a real boy, a strange doll made of reddish glass, which gazed up at Lerner from its perch, blank eyes reflecting the sun.

Deciding he had to see the painting again, today, Lerner called Freed to set up a visit. Lerner and Freed had known each other since junior high, meeting at Zionist summer camp in the Texas Hill Country, during the 1970s of their youth. They had lost touch sometime during high school, intersecting again briefly during Lerner's one year of college in Texas, then again in Manhattan, drawn by their shared past, needing each other's contact in some instinctive, unspoken way, as a touchstone in a city where natives were the only ones admitting to a prior history.

Like many, Lerner had come to New York to attend art school, where he found a congeniality of creation rare in less concentrated cities. Art, music, and literature entwined. And after the usual succession of group shows and independent exhibits, he had found Rezinsky. "The arch-devil," as named by one of her long-time artists, the nearly-blind painter Claus von Sem. Rezinsky always referred to Lerner as "that Jew from Texas" because she hadn't thought it possible for there to be Jews anywhere in the U.S. but New York, especially from someplace as distant

and exotic as Texas. She had been good to Lerner for a time, before alcohol and indifference drained her motivation. During Lerner's final exhibit there, Rezinsky's one remaining assistant disappeared while she was in Europe. She closed the gallery a few months later, instead showing art out of her Upper East Side apartment.

Lerner had found his current gallery because of Gary Freed's patronage, liberating him from his enslavement at Rezinsky's.

Lerner strolled east on Grand, passing through what had once been Bunker Hill. Instead of following the terrain, along curving depressions, sharp rises, or streams, the city had always ploughed itself level, eating inconsistencies and shitting them out the sides to increase the island's girth. Leveled long ago, the hill's banished earth called out to deaf passersby. Sometimes, when traffic stilled in one of the rare, uncanny gaps amongst the flow of citystreetnoise, the amputated hill could be heard, a wheeze and grumble like shifting sand.

Beyond Bowery, Lerner stopped to eat at a Vietnamese noodle shop, then continued east, past the Kosher bakery. On the next corner, he overtook a man and woman. They were about Lerner's age. The man wore a yarmulke. Lerner caught the end of what the man said: "It was so good it was like eating trayf!"

The *VillageVoice* had recently run an article about the younger generation of orthodox Jews moving into the Lower East Side, reclaiming territory once inhabited by their immigrant ancestors.

One of Lerner's summers at Zionist camp, the counselors had organized a theatrical production, a musical about immigrant life in the late 19th Century Lower East Side and the growth of labor unions; young Freed had been the star. For Lerner, camp had meant softball, hiking, and later, girls. The other aspects had washed off, no re-awakened religious fervor for him. Others had absorbed the teaching and moved to Israel. Lerner's parents were functionally religious: they attended a suburban Houston synagogue, mostly for bar and bat mitzvahs of relatives or the

children and grandchildren of friends, abstained from pork, lit candles on Friday nights. Lerner's disinterest in both religion and money troubled them. They would have preferred that he had taken Freed's path: why not a doctor *and* an artist? But he disdained such divisions.

Nearing Freed's, a transmogrified and updated tenement building dating from 1887, Lerner came upon an old and failing structure. A distended belly of a place, its walls bulged, groaning with a wet slurry sound.

All buildings in Manhattan, all old ones, possess a unique voice. In 1997, a structural engineer named Reginald Meisner studied the voices of buildings, using listening devices originally developed for Cold War espionage. Meisner arranged a dozen of the devices in a building for a month, recorded, then moved on to the next. Meisner's team worked its way through locations generated randomly by a computer that had been fed the addresses of all buildings aged 125 years or more. Initial setup involved isolating and identifying all human and mechanical noises, then eliminating them. Something found to be common was a low, dry chuckling, an old man or woman's rasp, the laugh of a vaudevillian weak with age and illness, yet with humor intact.

Lerner stopped and pulled his sketchbook from his satchel so he could capture shape and detail. Grayness clung to the afternoon air, to the sickly building, a sullen ocean gray that made breathing difficult, and with each breath, the odor of gray, like potatoes left too long in a cellar. The building's windows and door were blocked by plywood sheets, and he wondered how long before it was demolished in favor of new condominiums, stifling its laugh forever.

And later, reconstructing the painting in his memory as he walked along the gray-choked sidewalk, past the gray man sprawled face down on a stoop, past a boutique selling \$500 designer handbags in neon colors . . . the woman: her dress a rich wine, her skin and hair dark. Of the room, he remembered little. The horrid face of the man in the doorway—he

was the fulcrum that swung the attention. Discrete random variables intruded on his review of the painting. He needed to see it again, commit its shapes to memory.

“I’m going out,” Freed said. “When you’re finished, make sure the door is closed all the way. It’ll lock automatically.”

Lerner stood in the entryway, suddenly apprehensive about viewing the painting again. His stomach jumbled, as though he was about to greet a new lover, still in that bloom of early romance, before repetition dulled the excitement.

The woman leaned forward, a gentle tilt to the chin that spoke of expectation, of patient waiting for the return of a devoted companion. But the figure in the doorway—he was *not* the expected one, and his unknown advance indicated danger. The man’s posture was that of one accustomed to devious acts accomplished in shadow. Their surroundings, the cushions and drapes, indicated comfort, a lifestyle of repose.

Something about the composition was off, though, an object misplaced, an element added later perhaps, which canted the balance in a disturbing way. But that sort of mistake seemed unlikely from this artist; his grasp of technique was impressive.

The red of the drapes—had it been so bloody before? Like pillars of rich, flowing blood, the drapes framed the darkened window. They had a moist quality, a hue sickening in its accuracy, as though the artist meant to convey the full flood of life within the woman, thereby magnifying the hidden threat of the shadowy figure. Lerner knew this truth with a startling certainty, though interpretation of scenes had never interested him.

But there it was, in such painterly detail he found himself sucked into the complexity of brushstroke and daub, the foundation on which the scene took shape. The role of each player, though ill-defined, formed a moment frozen for over 150 years. Lerner arched forward, letting his gaze dissect the shadowy figure. Close in, the face became a blotch of competing marks and colors. Stepping back, Lerner could see the

suggestion of something under the man's coat, a bulge signifying the hidden threat, handle of gun or knife. Though would this man take such a messy approach? His type was more that of a garrotter.

Nausea pounded at Lerner, and he lurched backward, finding himself, with a confusing suddenness, seated on an oak bench in Freed's hall. He remained there for several minutes, inhaling and exhaling, a purposeful, regulatory breath. The painting still called, and from the bench, out of the canvas's direct line, he dared a glance. From this angle, he couldn't see the shadowy figure, and its absence calmed him. The woman appeared serene, a goddess of her parlor. Perhaps she had vanquished the intruder.

Lerner got up and navigated his way to the kitchen; on the pad by the telephone, he jotted a note for Freed: "Call me. Let's meet for lunch tomorrow. I need to know more about the painting."

He would find out where Freed bought it, trace it to previous owners, and research the artist, Philip Schuyler, discover who the woman had been, whether portrait study or merely a model used to enact a scene of the imagination.

Later, at the library Lerner found a book called *Art in Manhattan: A Look Back at 150 Years*, published in 1938, that referenced a journal by Schuyler. The author had a dubious opinion of Schuyler's journal, dismissing the (as he put it) erratic descriptions of secret societies, kidnapping, and intrigue (including aid from Charles Dickens, in New York during his 1842 trip to America) as "the ramblings of an unstable mind." And the author could find no record of the portrait that Schuyler allegedly had been brought to New York to paint.

The library didn't have a copy of the journal itself. Lerner wrote a note and asked a librarian to leave it for Simon Hoff, who oversaw the New York Public Library's art and architecture collection. As an undergraduate, Lerner had taken art history classes from Hoff, and they had become friends. If an accessible copy of the journal existed, Hoff would be able to locate it.

Lerner checked out a thin book, printed in 1948, called *The Candlelight Paintings of Philip Schuyler*, which showed a series of dim streets dotted with market stalls, women carrying baskets of produce, mothers holding their children's hands, everything depicted at night among glowing candles.

A day of exchanged notes and messages—on returning to his apartment he played back a call from Freed: “So yeah, I’m leaving in the morning, going for a week with my new lady friend. Why don’t you join us for dinner tonight. . . .”

The offer of dinner presented a conundrum . . . Lerner picked up the phone and called Tansy Jenkins.

“Hey . . . would you mind coming here instead of me going to Hoboken?”

Tansy was a costume designer on the faculty at Rutgers. They had met through friends, had become friends themselves over a three-year period. Then, during a week spent at a rented house on the Jersey shore with a group of several others, they had sex for the first time, an event that surprised them both and had since continued, though neither were interested in living together or even seeing each other more than once or twice a week.

“You never want to come here unless it’s from Rutgers—you Manhattan types can’t seem to leave your island.”

“You’re probably right.”

“I’m always right.”

He told her about the painting. “Something about it has gotten into me. I have to talk to Freed about it some more. So there’s a legitimate reason. It’s not just my phobia about stepping off the island.”

“A painting? It’s not going anywhere, even if Freed is. I don’t appreciate being stood up for your obsession.”

“Come on,” he said. “I’d love to see you. You can charm Freed’s ‘new lady friend’ while I get what I need from him.”

“Fuck you. I’m not your wife. I don’t have to help you with social engagements.”

“I didn’t mean it that way . . . I know you hate crap like that.”

They had both been married once, Lerner to Beth-the-cellist, a condition that had lasted less than a year, and Tansy to Jonathan-the-fake-writer—who did actually write, and had received considerable attention for it recently—but fake because of the way he scammed himself into Important parties, where he expected Tansy to supply the charisma he was incapable of and which, for a time, she did. When Lerner and Tansy first met they had talked about their marriages; neither wanted another, but Tansy said she wanted a child at some point. Lerner didn’t, and he knew that this would eventually cause a rift.

“Maybe after dinner. I don’t want to spend the whole evening with them. When I’m done I’ll go to the PATH.”

“Your loss, sweetie. I have to be somewhere in the morning anyway. It’s actually better this way. I can get to bed early.”

“I’m sure this won’t take very long. I’ll call you when I’m done with dinner.”

“No. This is better.”

He knew that tone—no swaying her decision now. Tansy Tansy red-headed Tansy. . . . “I’m beginning to think I’m making the wrong life choices,” he said.

“Make it up to me next week. We’ve got the thesis plays. Run along to your obsession then.”