

THE SHYSTER

Levi S. Peterson

Arne met Leanne Holburn at church during his final year in an MBA program at the University of Washington. He found her very attractive. Of medium height, she had sculpted cheeks, an aquiline nose, and bright, intelligent eyes. Arne was tall and had a thatch of sandy hair and placid blue eyes, and by moments he supposed they might make a pair. He altered that supposition abruptly one evening when they were assigned cleanup duty following a Sunday School party. During the conversation that accompanied their work, Leanne let him know that she intended to go by her maiden name after marriage. “It’s a lot of work to change your name on all the public records,” she said. “Even worse, it’s demeaning to take on a man’s surname. It messes with a woman’s identity. It demotes her. It makes her a junior partner.”

She paused to place a serving tray into a cupboard. “If I am asked to pray in public,” she went on, “I address my prayer to Heavenly Father. But I don’t understand why I have to. I think it’s wrong to leave Heavenly Mother out of our prayers. I address my private prayers to her, and if I ever have any daughters, I will to teach them to do the same.”

She was a feminist and proud of it. He might have guessed that from the fact that she was in her final year in law school. He respected feminists at a distance, but their battle wasn’t his, and he certainly couldn’t see marrying one. Having been raised in a proper Latter-day Saint home and having served a mission, he had firmly in mind a wife like his mother, maybe more culturally aware and more attuned to urban life than his mother but, like her, fully in accord with the authorities of ward, stake, and church.

A couple of weeks later, Arne saw Leanne at a study table in the main university library. Impulsively, he took a seat beside her. She looked up and broke into a broad smile, and they exchanged a few words. Law students typically studied in the law library. Maybe she had switched to the main library on the chance of running into him. The thought pleased him—but seconds later, as he left the library, he became worried. He recognized that his attraction to her was stronger than he had believed. It required conscious restraint on his part—deliberate choices aimed at avoiding her at church and on campus.

This proved hard to do. Following sacrament meeting the next Sunday afternoon, Arne saw Leanne as he prepared to leave the church parking lot. She gave him a cheerful wave and he rolled down a window and offered her a ride. It seemed barbaric not to. As she got out of the car at her apartment building, she said, “Do you want to do pizza and a cheap movie Saturday night? Dutch, of course.” What could he say but yes? He couldn’t fault her for asking. Being forthright, taking the lead, went with feminism. But he assured himself this Saturday night date would be absolutely the first and the last. If he had to, he’d stop attending church for a while.

Things didn’t turn out as planned. After the movie he parked the car in front of her apartment building and they walked to the entrance to the building, where he figured on saying goodnight. However, she invited him in for cookies and milk. It would have been rude to refuse. The cookies tasted good. She said her roommate had baked them. Being a law student, Leanne didn’t cook much. After they had finished the snack, he said he guessed he’d better get going. She followed him out of the apartment to the front door of the building. As he turned to say goodbye, she stepped close and kissed him. The unexpected kiss anchored to something inside him.

At the car, he looked back. She was still in the doorway. “It was nice,” she called. She was thanking him although it was he who should be thanking her. It was she who had suggested the Dutch evening out

and who had just provided the nightcap of cookies and milk. She radiated signs that she liked being with him. With that thought, his reserves crumbled and he accepted that he was in love with her. What did being in love consist of? It consisted of being addicted to the presence of the loved one. Arne wanted to live with Leanne. He wanted to kiss her goodbye in the morning and come home to her at night. He wanted this despite her fixed views on going by her maiden name and addressing her prayers to Mother in Heaven. He could regard those as foibles, and love demanded tolerance for one another's foibles.

From then on, they dated steadily, usually taking in an inexpensive event on the university campus on Saturday night and, like a married couple, always sitting together in sacrament meeting and gospel doctrine class on Sunday. A couple of months before their graduation, Arne asked her to marry him and she accepted with a simple yes, not requiring, as Arne noted, express confirmation that he accepted her prerequisites. That went without saying.

After Arne got to his apartment on the evening he proposed to Leanne, he steeled himself and phoned his parents back home on a wheat farm in eastern Washington. His mother murmured a sad disapproval when he told them Leanne intended to go by her maiden name. His father said, "Well, it's easy to see who'll have the upper hand in your house." It hadn't occurred to Arne that he needed to worry about having the upper hand. Leanne didn't strike him as wanting to boss anybody. She just didn't want to be bossed.

"I'm going to remind you of something, Arne," his father went on. "You hold the priesthood. A priesthood holder is supposed to be in charge in his household. There isn't any ands, ifs, and buts about it. It's the way the Lord set things up."

Arne proceeded then to let them know she intended to be a lawyer. After a long silence, his father said, "Are you sure you want to marry this woman?"

"Yes sir, I am." He hoped he sounded confident.

“You know what I think about lawyers.”

“Yes sir, I do.”

“I don’t say all lawyers are shysters, but most of them are. They’re deceitful and on the take.”

“She won’t be that kind,” Arne said. Nonetheless, for a moment he regretted having become engaged.

Arne graduated from the MBA program and Leanne from law school at the June commencement. A week later they were married in the Seattle temple, located in the nearby suburb of Bellevue. With them were both sets of parents, one of Leanne’s sisters, who served as her bridesmaid, and a friend of Arne’s from their Seattle ward, who served as his best man. Following the ceremony, there was a photo shoot in front of the temple. They were standing in the flower garden in front of the imposing white structure, whose single steeple featured a golden Moroni blowing his trumpet toward the late afternoon sun. While the photographer was taking a picture of Leanne and her bridesmaid sister, Arne felt a touch on his elbow and, turning, saw his mother-in-law.

“I hope she’s given up on that notion of going by her maiden name,” she said with a nod toward Leanne.

“No ma’am, she hasn’t.”

His mother-in-law shook her head dismally. “I don’t know where it came from. It struck her about the time she started attending Mutual. I want you to know she didn’t get it from me.”

“It’s okay,” Arne said. “It’s just the way she is.”

“I’m just grateful a good, upright Mormon man would have her,” she finished, giving his elbow a squeeze as she turned away.

Arne was left with the enigma. How could Leanne have derived from a mother like that? Her feminism defied her genetic line, it defied the culture she was born into.

As the wedding group melted toward the parking lot after the photo session, Arne found himself walking beside his father. Arne’s father was

a short, solid man with sun-tanned cheeks and a pale upper forehead where his hat shaded him from the Palouse sun.

“Well, you’ve tied the knot,” he said to Arne. “I hope you make each other happy.”

Arne knew his father meant to be kind to Leanne, and he was grateful for it. Nonetheless, he knew his father hadn’t changed his view on who ought to have the upper hand in their household. Ironically, he and Leanne had to deal with the issue of someone having the upper hand within several hours of the foregoing conversation. As they sat on the edge of their nuptial bed, still dressed in the clothes they had worn to the wedding supper, Leanne mentioned some wording in the temple ceremony that instructed a wife to obey her husband’s counsel as he obeyed the counsel of the Lord.

“I guess that means you are in charge,” she said. There was an edge in her voice.

“I don’t know what it means,” he said, “but I’m not in charge.”

Neither of them said more about it, but Arne couldn’t stop worrying. A married woman had to approach the Lord through her husband—is that what came of a woman being married in the temple? That didn’t seem just. But undoubtedly it was acceptable to Leanne’s mother and his mother too—to say nothing of their fathers. One thing was for sure: it wasn’t going to work in his marriage.

Arne and Leanne went on a three-day honeymoon in Victoria, Canada. Predictably, the aforementioned issue festered in Arne’s mind, and by the time they returned to take up residence in a small apartment in the Fremont district of Seattle, he had devised a helpful procedure. As they sat to their first meal in the apartment, Arne laid a quarter on the table. “You flip and if it’s heads, I say the blessing. If it’s tails, you say it. And after that we take turns.”

Leanne said, “Okay,” and when it came up tails, she said the blessing.

Before their evening meal that evening, Arne proposed they determine who would offer family prayer by again flipping a coin. “Don’t bother,” Leanne said. “You do it tonight. I’ll do it tomorrow.”

Arne was relieved and a little proud of himself for so deftly disproving his father’s predictions of discord—though of course Arne had to accept his wife’s addressing her blessings and prayers to Heavenly Mother. Given that he did accept it, they settled down to a busy but happy first summer as a married couple, Arne taking a bus downtown to work at an exporting firm and Leanne catching another bus to the university to cram for the Washington state bar exam.

As things turned out, Arne did a lot of the cooking and cleaning though Leanne pitched in and helped on weekends. When it came to making decisions, either of them was as likely as the other to take the initiative. Arne could see that they were operating their marriage like a New England town meeting without a mayor to convene it and establish its agenda. One of them would say, “What do you think? Should we do such and so?” or “Hadn’t we better do this or that?” making it easy for the other one either to agree or else to object in a polite way. Leanne behaved in this way without apparent forethought. Arne, for his part, granted it was a happy, stress-free way to live, yet from time to time he wondered whether his father was right in believing the truly righteous Mormon household had to operate like a subsidiary of the Church, with a priesthood holder distinctly in charge.



Leanne passed the bar exam in late July but had no luck in finding a position in Seattle. There was an opening for a researcher in a large legal firm, but she wanted a position that would give her trial experience. When a position for public defender in Hampton, a town down in Pierce County, came open in mid-September, Leanne asked Arne how he would feel if she applied for it. He said he was okay with the idea. Having two

salaries, they could buy another car and she could drive back to Seattle on one weekend and he could drive down to Hampton on the next.

On the day of Leanne's interview with the mayor and town council, Arne wrangled a day off from work and drove her to Hampton. Although he didn't say so, Arne had growing doubts about a commuter marriage. They would be apart five days out of seven. Maybe being physically apart would foster being emotionally apart. Given his reservations about Leanne's maverick ways, maybe he'd succumb to getting along without her.

While Leanne was in her interview, Arne went into a convenience store at a truck stop to pay for gasoline and saw a sign that said a general manager was wanted for the truck stop. It was a big place—separate stations for gasoline and diesel fuel, ample parking for semis, a truck repair shop, and a large convenience store with an attached restaurant. Arne saw its implication instantly and applied for the job. It didn't pay much, and neither did Leanne's, for that matter. Together they wouldn't be making much more than he had been bringing home in Seattle. But at least they could live together year-around. Also, an old van went with the truck-stop job, which meant they wouldn't have to buy a second car.

Both of them being successful in their applications, they rented a small house in Hampton and, after they had finished the moving process, settled into a routine close to the one they had followed in Seattle. They got up at five and went for a jog, had breakfast, and went to work by seven. Leanne thrived on her heavy load of cases. Arne found managing the truck stop challenging, though in a different way from his former job. He especially got a kick out of relating to the personnel of the truck stop. He learned a lot from the mechanics in the repair shop and early on found the guts to fire one of them, who had been missing a lot of work on account of a drug problem. In the evening, Arne usually got home first and prepared dinner. After their meal, they worked together in the kitchen, Leanne reviewing legal documents at the cleared table while Arne washed the day's accumulation of dishes. He didn't mind

cleaning up and he liked to listen to her elaborate on the documents she was perusing.

On Sunday, of course, they went to church. The Hampton ward was large, and Leanne and Arne had their membership records transferred there immediately after their move. The members of the ward gave them a warm welcome but, unlike the members of their more liberal Seattle ward, they were obviously troubled that they couldn't say the customary, "Good morning, Brother and Sister Jarvis." Since it didn't seem natural to say, "Good morning, Brother Jarvis and Sister Holburn," they mumbled something like, "Good to see you," or "Hope you're doing well." Arne envied Leanne's indifference to their discomfort. As for himself, he felt to some degree like an oddity in the ward.



A couple of months after they had moved to Hampton, Arne became aware that a house just across the road from the truck stop was more than the massage parlor it claimed to be. According to his head cashier in the convenience store, all its employees were young women, and it drew an all-male clientele from nearby cities like Tacoma, Auburn, and Puyallup. The place was inordinately busy around noon on weekdays. A quick massage at lunchtime, it seemed, was just the thing to soothe the nerves of a harried businessman.

Once Arne became aware of this interesting situation, he began to keep a tally of condom sales in the convenience store, which proved more than a person might expect in an ordinary convenience store. Having become sensitized to this fact, Arne began to feel uneasy about selling condoms. There was something unsavory about the promotion of prostitution, which his retail trade in condoms facilitated. It made him an accomplice, as it were, in an evil held by Mormon doctrine to be second only to murder.

He talked this over with Leanne, who failed to take his view of it. She could understand his scruples, but she didn't think he ought to quit selling condoms. That wouldn't stop illicit sex. It would just make more people take a chance on having it without the protection of a condom. If out-of-town businessmen fueled the local economy by buying their condoms in his convenience store, that was all to the better. This struck Arne as a little callous on Leanne's part. However, one evening, a day or two after they had talked the matter over, she admitted that the proximity of a brothel made her uneasy.

She said, "Does it ever cross your mind to have sex with somebody other than me?"

"No," he said. Then he said, "Well, it crosses my mind, but that doesn't mean I'm going to do it."

He was placing dishes in the dishwasher while this conversation went on. She was at the table studying court documents.

"When you need sex," she said to Arne, "please get it from me."

It was true her job as public defender had taken its toll on their sex life. They had developed a routine of making love only on Saturday and sometimes on Sunday. He hadn't complained about it. He figured sooner or later her work would become less strenuous and things would go back to the way they had been in Seattle. He was therefore unprepared to hear her say, a little later that night, after they had got into bed and turned out the light, "If you want to tonight, it's okay."

From then on, thanks to the presence of the massage parlor, Arne's side of their sex life improved considerably. Once in a while mid-week, Leanne would be in the mood for being emotionally engaged, but usually it was otherwise, in which case Arne got the business over with in a hurry. No drawn-out foreplay, no romantic utterances, just plain, quick sex so she could relax and go to sleep.



After dinner one rainy Friday evening, Arne drove back over to the truck stop to tidy up a quarterly business income tax report. On his way home—it was around ten-thirty—he saw police cars parked with flashing red and blue lights in front of the massage parlor.

“I guess there’s been a bust over at the massage parlor,” he told Leanne when he got home.

The bust was mentioned in priesthood meeting on the following Sunday. The president of the elders’ quorum, Jerome Milson, was a member of the Hampton police force. He had been in on the bust and was eager to talk about it. People called him Spud. Arne wasn’t sure why. Arne could tell the bust had been a lark for him. He was chewing gum rapidly, and his eyes sparkled with pleasure. There were seven prostitutes, plus the madam—a big haul. “Been working on it for months,” Spud said. “A real sting. Better than the ones you see in the TV shows. Worked like a charm.”

The next day, the documents that had come in by fax to Leanne’s office over the weekend included, as usual, the docket for the present day’s court sessions. The docket listed two cases carried over from trials begun during the prior week. It listed a transient charged with both public drunkenness and public lewdness because the arresting officer had seen him pee on a sidewalk. A man from a trailer court was charged with assaulting his wife. As for the ladies from the massage parlor, the madam who ran it had hired a lawyer and posted bail on the night of her arrest. The seven young women who worked for her were still jailed and awaiting arraignment, indicating that they lacked the means to hire a defense attorney. That meant Leanne was obliged to take on their defense.

Arne found out all this at mid-morning when Leanne phoned him at his office at the convenience store and asked him to lend her a hand. Leaving his head cashier in charge, Arne drove to the town hall. When he arrived, Leanne handed him a clipboard and asked him to take notes while she talked to the seven prostitutes, who by now were sitting in a

row just outside the courtroom. Guarded by a single policeman, they wore orange jail coveralls but weren't handcuffed or chained.

They were an odd assortment. With the exception of a tall, willowy, somewhat older blond named Elsa Holst, they were short and young—girls rather than women. Two of them, Le Hahn and Nguyen Cam, were from Vietnam and spoke broken English. The willowy Elsa appeared to have taken them under her wing. According to her, their given names were Hahn and Cam, it being Vietnamese custom for the family name to come first. Elsa wanted it known their given names had meanings. Hahn meant “good conduct” and Cam meant “orange blossom.” Elsa also wanted it known that Hahn and Cam had green cards, the permits that allow aliens to reside and work in the United States.

Another of the girls, Adell Miller, was African-American. There were two Latinas, Flora Gonzales and Luz Trujillo, who spoke fluent but accented English. The seventh, an Anglo girl named Vivian Parker, was obviously embarrassed by her upper incisors, which had grown in crooked, with the result that her lips became wet from saliva when she spoke.

Leanne spoke briefly with each of the prostitutes, glancing at the police report on each as she spoke and relying on Elsa to help her understand Hahn's and Cam's fractured English. Then, addressing them as a group, she said that, although they might already be familiar with the process of arraignment, she was going to go over it with them. She intended to take them before the judge one at a time, and she wanted them to plead not guilty so that she could have some time to study the charges and see if there were mitigating circumstances. She hoped each of them could muster \$90 for bail, that being the sum the local bail bonding company was likely to require by way of a fee. In conclusion, she said it was possible she would turn some of them over to other lawyers. “Trying to represent all of you might pose a conflict of interest for a single attorney,” she said.

Mid-afternoon, after each had been before the judge and bail had been arranged, Leanne warned them to show up promptly at the pre-trial hearing, set for the following Friday, being sure to dress in sober, modest attire such as they might wear to church. Finally, she told them she hadn't had time to decide whether she would represent all of them. She would be letting them know about that on Friday.

Elsa responded to this statement by shaking her head. "We don't want any other lawyers," she said. "We all like you." The others murmured their agreement.

Later Arne asked Leanne how she felt about their faith in her abilities. It was after dinner and they sat on opposite sides of the dining table, she working on a thick sheaf of documents, he tabulating receipts from sales at the truck stop.

"Their confidence in me won't last," she replied. "They were caught red-handed in a misdemeanor. The penalties for a misdemeanor are ninety days in the county jail or a one-thousand dollar fine or both. The best any lawyer can do for them will be a plea bargain of some sort."

With that, they settled down to a period of silent work, broken a quarter-hour later when she snorted and said, "I can't believe this!" She pulled her cell phone from her briefcase and made a call.

"Is this Spud?" she said into the receiver. Then: "I'm reading the police reports on those women from the massage parlor and I'd like you to verify something. In two of the rooms you found men in bed with the ladies, but you didn't arrest the men. You let them go. You just arrested the women!"

There was a pause and then Arne could hear Spud's deep voice resonating from the receiver. Spud went on and on, obviously trying to head Leanne off at the pass somehow. Eventually, she turned off her phone and replaced it in the briefcase.

"I'm plenty steamed," she said to Arne. "They staked that place out for six weeks and saw nobody but men going in and coming out and when they did their bust, in a couple of rooms they found a man in bed

with the girl and they told the man to get dressed and clear out so they could arrest the girl. That does steam me!”

Leanne came to bed that night somewhere in the wee hours, around three o'clock, Arne figured. She tugged at his shoulder till he woke up, then said, “You can't guess what I've discovered. I'm going to get them off, all seven of them.” He was too groggy to ask for details, but later he could recall her repeating, “Who would have thought it?” three or four times before he went back to sleep.

When Arne got up, she was already at the table with her laptop, typing furiously. When he took a shower, he saw no sign she had had one. Moreover, when he came out, she didn't offer to help make breakfast, being still busy at her laptop. A little later she paid no attention to the eggs, toast, and milk he set beside her computer before placing his own on the opposite side of the table. “Come take a look at this,” she said. “Come and sit by me so you can see this screen.”

When he had positioned himself beside her, she read from the screen. “A person is guilty of prostitution if such person engages or agrees or offers to engage in sexual conduct with another person in return for a fee.”

“That's the way the state law reads,” she said. “But a municipality has the right to pass its own law prohibiting prostitution, which supersedes the state law.”

She scrolled down a notch on the screen. “This is how Hampton's law reads. ‘A person is guilty of prostitution if such person engages in or agrees to engage in sexual conduct with another person in return for a fee.’ Can you see what's missing?”

“Just a couple of words, *or offers.*”

“What that means is it's not against the law to offer to engage in sexual conduct for a fee in Hampton. But that's what the police have charged them with. It's *all* they have charged them with! The town doesn't have a case. The judge will have to dismiss the charges.”

Arne was doing some soul searching, and his face showed it. It was wrong, just plain wrong, for her clients to get off with no penalty whatsoever.

He could feel Leanne bristle. “The thing is,” she said in a tone of exaggerated patience, “the police have staked them out for six weeks and watched all kinds of men walk in and out of the place, and even caught two of them in bed with girls on the night of the bust, and they let them go scot-free. As far as I’m concerned, if the men go scot-free, the ladies go scot-free too. Fair’s fair, I say.”

Arne knew it was time for him to demonstrate family solidarity if he had an interest in preserving his domestic tranquility. “I can see your point,” he said. “What’s sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.”

Legally, she was in the right. Due process—the strict adherence to the protocol established by law—was one of the most sacrosanct principles of American jurisprudence. As Leanne herself had passionately declared to Arne while she prepared for the bar exam, it was better that a few guilty persons go unpunished than that the public at large be susceptible to false accusations and coerced confessions. But at best, as Arne could now see, due process dealt in approximate justice, justice for the largest number of persons in a world where, realistically speaking, absolute justice was an impossibility. That didn’t keep a person from regretting that impossibility. Leanne seemed all too pleased, all too vindictive, about discovering the gap in Hampton’s law forbidding prostitution. Arne knew he still had things to learn about his wife. He hoped they would be good things.



On the day of the pre-trial hearing, Leanne again asked Arne to help her by supervising the girls in the hall while she took them one by one before the judge to confirm their acceptance of her procedure. When Arne arrived, the girls were seated in the hall, dressed in blouses of

subdued colors and in skirts with hems below the knee. Leanne was explaining that she had gone over the police reports carefully and found no conflict of interest in representing all of them. Going on, she outlined her procedure.

She had decided to expedite matters by filing for a single group trial of all seven of the girls. Also, even though she could present her case for dismissal of the charges at the pre-trial, she would instead ask that the case go forward for trial and enter a plea for judgment with prejudice—"judgment with prejudice" being a legal term indicating that if the charges were dismissed, amended charges could not be re-filed, as they might be if she were to request dismissal at the pre-trial hearing. Finally, she would ask for a bench trial, that is, a trial by a judge without the involvement of a jury, because a zealous prosecutor could play upon the prejudices of the members of a jury, whereas a judge in a bench trial would be likely to stick to the facts of the case. Although the girls were bewildered by the details, they obviously trusted Leanne.

Near the end of her explanation, a couple arrived. "That's her," Leanne said to Arne. "Havana Thomas, proprietor of the massage parlor. I don't think that's her real name. That lawyer with her is Douglas Reid from Seattle. He isn't cheap." The woman paused a moment as she came abreast of the girls. The girls shifted uneasily under her gaze. It was as if she held them accountable for the bust. The lawyer touched her elbow and they moved on.

While Leanne accompanied each girl into the courtroom, Arne had time for more soul searching. He wasn't sure what the girls thought of him. He wore a sports shirt and a billed cap featuring the logo of the truck stop. Assuming he and Leanne shared the same surname, they called him Mr. Holburn. He saw no advantage in correcting them.

He glanced down the hall toward Havana Thomas from time to time. He wondered how much of the girls' nightly take she had allowed them to keep. He could see no hint of generosity in her frowning face. He wondered whether the girls found any enticement in their work beyond

the money they were paid. He found it hard to believe their *métier* satisfied their own sensuous needs. They certainly didn't exude the saucy impudence of prostitutes in certain famous movies. With the exception perhaps of Elsa, they struck him as depressed. He wondered whether they found a vicarious gratification in their clients' gratification—a matter of giving good measure for value tendered. Likely not, he decided.

He felt a twinge of guilt for pondering such a topic. However, he returned to it shortly. He wondered how the girls had got into the profession in the first place. Were they shanghaied, like sailors in the era of sailing vessels? Why did they stick with it? Was it because they assumed their moral taint was visible to the naked eye and no decent employer would hire them? Or was it simply a matter of getting a job in an economy that offered few opportunities to young, uneducated women? In any event, Arne found himself feeling sorry for them—a sentiment that, upon reflection, disturbed him a little.

At the end of the day, Leanne reminded the girls to show up promptly and again to be respectably dressed for their trial on the following Friday. She also inquired where they had been staying. She was particularly interested in whether they had nearby relatives. As it turned out, none did. Having decided to stick together, they had rented two rooms in a motel in Enumclaw, about seven miles up the road from Hampton. Their rooms had no kitchen facilities, and they were buying prepared foods in a supermarket and eating in their rooms.

Leanne asked about their finances.

"It's all okay," Elsa said. "Our finances are fine."

Adell shifted uneasily. Vivian frowned. Hahn and Cam looked distressed.

"It looks like your finances aren't okay," Leanne said.

Cam broke into tears, and Vivian's frown turned into a scowl. "Hahn and Cam are free-loading," she said. "They're living off the rest of us."

"It's all okay," Elsa insisted. "We don't mind."

"Is there a reason why they're broke?" Leanne said.

Their distress mounting, the seven fell into a tight-lipped silence.

“Okay, don’t tell me,” Leanne said. “Have you got any other problems that need to be dealt with?”

“The library won’t give us a card,” Elsa said. “They won’t let us check out books and magazines to take to the motel. They won’t let us use the computers.”

“Did you try talking to the director?”

“He’s the one who said we couldn’t have a card. He doesn’t like us. His desk is close to the entrance. He frowns when we come in.”

Leanne called Arne aside. “Would you take them back to Enumclaw in your van?” she asked. “And maybe go into the library and lean on that director to treat them like human beings.”

Arne hesitated. Squirring these young women about struck him as an impropriety. He was, in fact, surprised that Leanne would ask him to.

“Please,” she said.

He said nothing and she laid a hand on his arm. “Pretty please,” she said.

He couldn’t resist that. He would just have to depend on his propriety outweighing their impropriety in the judgment of anyone they might encounter.

“Thank you,” Leanne said.

She left her hand on his arm, restraining him while they watched the girls file toward the entrance. After a moment, she murmured, “I do love you. You may not think so when I’m all strung up, but I do.” It was an odd place to be told that his wife loved him, but he was grateful for it.

Releasing him, Leanne closed her briefcase. “It occurs to me,” she said, “that Hahn and Cam haven’t any money on hand because Havana Thomas has been keeping their entire take to pay off somebody for smuggling them into the country. If that’s the case, I don’t want to know about it.”

Arne pondered this statement as he drove the girls toward Enumclaw. Was Leanne acting the part of a shyster? He felt guilty for entertaining the

thought. As he understood the law, defense attorneys had an obligation to report evidence of hitherto unrevealed felonies on the part of their clients—murders, assaults, or other serious threats to persons or property. But a forged green card likely wasn't an offense of that sort. Maybe it was just a matter of Leanne not wanting unnecessary complications.

The girls were pleased with the ride. They had obviously got around to feeling comfortable with Arne. They seemed to regard him as a father figure, a role which upon reflection he decided had both its pros and its cons. As requested, he stopped at the library before he took the girls to their motel. He asked them to wait in the van while he went in.

The director was sitting at his desk. He was a small, balding man who parted his thin hair precisely in the middle. He began to shake his head before Arne had completed his request. "I know who those creatures are," he said. "I know what they do for a living. We don't tolerate that kind of thing in Enumclaw."

"Justly so," Arne agreed. "But they aren't pursuing that line of work anymore. They've been busted. My wife is the public defender in Hampton municipal court. These young women are her clients. She wants to help them reform. She wants to help them figure out a better way to make a living."

The director pursed his lips tightly. The scornful disbelief in his eyes angered Arne. Arne was standing immediately before the desk. Gripping the edges of the desk, he leaned forward and thrust his face close to that of the director. Alarmed, the director rolled his chair back.

Speaking slowly and distinctly, Arne said, "My wife has asked me to drive the girls from the court back to their rooms here in Enumclaw. I'm a businessman—a respectable businessman. I operate the truck stop in Hampton. I regard it as my duty to help these young women straighten up, and I regard it as your duty too. I want you to extend full library privileges to these young women, all seven of them, and I'm not going to leave until you say you'll do it."

The two men stared into each other's eyes for a long minute. The director flinched first. "All right," he said, "tell them to come in. I'll give them cards."

Returning to the van, Arne was astonished by his tough talk—also disturbed that he really was behaving like a father to the errant girls. There was no guarantee that, with the case dismissed, they wouldn't go right back to prostitution. His suspicion was reinforced when, on the drive between the library and the motel, he discovered that a scheme was afoot. Elsa was proposing that, following their dismissal at the trial, the seven of them start a massage parlor in Prosser, a town in southern Washington where Elsa had a friend who would rent them a small house at a reasonable price. Forming a co-op, they would slip out from under Havana Thomas's net and keep their proceeds entirely for themselves. She didn't say whether she meant for them to stick strictly to massaging. Prosser was a town of maybe five thousand people. It was on an Interstate, about fifty miles southeast of Yakima and thirty-five miles west of the Tri-Cities. Obviously, travelers on the Interstate wouldn't be stopping for massages. What frequent travelers like truck drivers might stop for, as word of mouth made its availability known, was the service extraneous to massaging for which the girls currently stood indicted.

Only Luz appeared to favor Elsa's proposal. The other Latina, Flora, said she wanted to go home to the barrio in Pasco and get married. Adell wanted to go back to Seattle because there would be more customers there. Apparently, she had the massage business in mind. Vivian made no comment on Elsa's proposal other than to doubt Havana would let Hahn and Cam go. "They haven't worked off half what they owe her," she said. With that, someone in the back emitted a slight hiss and a sudden silence fell on the others, as if Vivian had inadvertently mentioned the unmentionable in Arne's hearing.

Arne began to whistle "Rock of Ages," hoping to appear totally blanked out on the conversation he had just overheard. He knew Leanne would want to know about Elsa's proposal for establishing a co-op mas-

sage parlor in Prosser. As for Vivian's confirmation of Hahn's and Cam's illegal status, Leanne had already said she didn't want to know about that.

That evening, Arne was surprised when Leanne shrugged her shoulders over the possibility of the girls returning to their illicit trade. "I hope they don't," she said. "But I can't stop them."

Later, after they had gone to bed and Leanne had gone to sleep, Arne found himself troubled by the degree to which his wife was forced into ethical neutrality by her role as a defense attorney. With a rising distress, he realized that he himself was being forced to set aside his scruples. He liked to think of himself as a representative citizen, the sort of ordinary, everyday, run-of-the-mill person who makes a democracy function. But now he had Hahn and Cam on his hands, and he had strong reason to believe they were illegal immigrants and had forged green cards. If acquitted, they would likely go back to prostitution, and even if they chose to pursue the respectable occupation of masseuse, they would compete directly with poor citizens or the bearers of authentic green cards. Obviously, the easiest way to forestall either of those eventualities—also, the *just* way—would be to inform the US Immigration Services of the girls' illegal status. But after threshing restlessly about for a while, Arne realized he wasn't the person to rat out Hahn and Cam. It was the father-figure thing. The girls looked for assistance and protection from him as well as from Leanne. So he'd just have to put up with feeling guilty about aiding and abetting a couple of illegal aliens. Having decided that, he went to sleep.



Trial lawyers have a protocol called *discovery*. Discovery means that by a given deadline—a certain number of days before a trial is scheduled—the prosecution and the defense have the obligation to furnish each other with the complete details of their argument at the trial. In the case of the seven prostitutes, with the trial set for the following

Friday, discovery was required by Wednesday. Having worked on her brief over the weekend, Leanne filed her discovery on Tuesday, a day early. That evening, Spud Milson rang the doorbell and asked Arne to step out for a private conversation. Spud was in uniform, complete with badge, pistol, and handcuffs.

“I took a look at that brief on those whores your wife is defending,” he said. “She is fixing to turn them loose. Did you know that?”

“Well, yeah, I know she has it in mind.”

“And you are okay with that?” he said belligerently. “She’s a shyster, that’s what she is.”

Arne winced at the word *shyster*. “She’s just doing what all defense attorneys do,” he said lamely. “They are supposed to do the best they can for their clients.”

“We charged them with solicitation,” Spud went on in an agitated voice. “We went into the place one at a time in plain clothes and asked for a massage. We went to a lot of trouble to look different from each other. I looked like a Fed Ex driver. As soon as the so-called masseuse asked the one who had gone in if he wanted the premium service for fifty bucks more, he arrested her and then just stayed in the room with her while another one of us came into the place and went into a room with another girl. By the time the fourth one of us had done that, the madam was getting edgy so this fourth guy radioed our uniformed guys to come in and bust the rest of them. Like I say, we charged them with solicitation. Now your wife says Hampton’s law doesn’t say anything about soliciting sex for a fee, and she means to let all seven of them go. That just won’t do, Arne. We caught two of them in bed with clients. We caught them red-handed. And she’s going to let them all go. And you tell me you’re okay with that!”

Arne sighed and rubbed an eye with the palm of his hand. “I didn’t say I was okay with that. I just said defense attorneys are supposed to do the best they can for their clients. That’s what they are trained to do.”

“If you’re not okay with it, then I’ll tell you what I think you ought to do. You ought to lean on your wife and tell her to back off.”

Arne swung his head back and forth. He was between a rock and a hard place.

“You know the reputation of the Church is at stake, don’t you?” Spud said loudly. “People in this town know Leanne is a Mormon. They know I’m a Mormon. Come on, Arne. Man up!”

“It wouldn’t work,” Arne said. “I don’t have that kind of influence over Leanne. I’d just mess up my marriage if I tried. She’d accuse me of trying to exercise unrighteous dominion.”

“Unrighteous dominion! Boy, has she got you brainwashed.”

Arne’s stomach was in a roil when he went back into the house. He went to the sink and went on rinsing dishes and placing them in the dishwasher. Leanne was at the table working on the case of the fellow from the trailer court who had given his wife a black eye. The wife had decided not to press charges, which didn’t please Leanne. She figured he needed a penalty that would make him hesitate to hit her again.

Arne could feel her eyes on his back. He knew she wanted to know what Spud was after. He couldn’t think of a way to let her know that wouldn’t make her angry.

“So does he want you to do something in the elders’ quorum?” she said.

“He’s peeved,” Arne said at last. “He went over to the prosecutor’s office and took a look at your brief for the massage parlor bunch.”

“Peeved?”

Arne rummaged in the dishwasher, repositioning a couple of plates so that he could crowd a third one in.

“Why didn’t he come inside and talk to me?” Leanne said in an insistent voice.

“I guess he’s afraid of you,” Arne said. That idea had just now occurred to him. There *was* something about Leanne that challenged the average male’s instinctive sense of superiority.

“What does he expect you to do for him?”

“He thinks it’s wrong to turn the girls loose without any punishment.”

“But what does he expect you to do about it?”

Arne said, “Well, I told him I couldn’t.” With that, Leanne dropped the matter, much to his relief.

When Leanne got home the next evening, she heaved her briefcase onto a chair and disappeared into the bathroom. When she came out, she said, “I’m wondering now just exactly what you told Spud last night,” she said. Her voice didn’t sound angry, just curious.

Flustered, Arne didn’t respond immediately. He had brought lentil soup from a deli. He was presently chopping a salad. When they sat down to eat, he spoke. “Spud said the whole town knows he’s a Mormon and you’re a Mormon. He said you getting the girls off without any penalty will do the Church damage. He said I should lean on you to change your mind, and I said it wouldn’t work, it would just mess up my marriage. I said you’d accuse me of trying to exercise unrighteous dominion.”

She eyed him askance. “That’s exactly what I’d do. Damn old Spud! He knows very well I can’t change the brief. The judge wouldn’t allow it at this point. Spud is just trying to punish me for ruining their bust.”

For a while she concentrated on her soup. Eventually she said, “Chantal came to see me today.”

Arne could smell trouble, Chantal being Spud’s wife.

“She also wanted me to change my brief,” Leanne said. “I explained why I couldn’t. I told her it’s out of my hands. Then she said I dishonor womankind. I said I didn’t agree. I said the men who pay money for those girls’ services are the ones who dishonor womankind. She left in a huff, but just before she did, she said, ‘I pity your husband.’”

Leanne ladled more soup into her bowl. “Am I hard to live with?” she asked.

He was flustered again.

“You don’t have to answer that question.”

He rallied and said, “I knew how living with you would be. I’m okay with it.”

She reached across the table and squeezed his hand. “I’m grateful,” she said.

As Leanne prepared to leave the house on Friday, the day of the trial, she told Arne that from things she had heard on the previous day, she expected the entire police force would be present at the trial and maybe some townspeople, too, by way of putting pressure on the judge—and on her too, of course. Arne asked her if she wanted him to come to the trial, which was scheduled for 1 p.m. He said he’d dress up in a suit and tie. She thought a moment and said, yes, she’d appreciate the moral support. Accordingly, he showed up in front of the town hall about a quarter to one. A uniformed woman stood at the courtroom door. Several people sat on the nearby bench. “She won’t let you in,” one of these said, nodding toward the guard. “The place is packed.”

Arne returned to his van and phoned Leanne on her cell phone. “Looks like I can’t get in,” he said.

“Yeah,” she said. “It’s a can of sardines in here. Most of the front row is occupied by cops in uniform. A couple of deputy sheriffs are with them. The bailiff let them in, guns and all. The back row is packed with townspeople, also the standing space behind the back row. Somebody has gone all out to let the judge know he might not get re-elected if he doesn’t support the police in this matter. I’ll let you know how it goes tonight. But I’m not worried. Also, for your information, this morning Havana Thomas was acquitted of all charges except keeping the back door locked during business hours—which isn’t going to lighten up the mood of the cops any.”

Arne went back to the van and put the key into the ignition, thinking he’d go back to the truck stop. He sat a while without turning the key. It was cloudy and raindrops spattered the windshield. He was depressed and wishing Leanne was a nurse or a school teacher or, since she was

ambitious, a university professor—anything but a lawyer. In any event, he was glad he wasn't inside watching the drama unfold.

That made him even more depressed. He owed Leanne his support. She was his wife, he was her husband.

Glancing at the litter of discarded mail in the footwell of his van, he saw an opened manila clasp envelope from the manufacturer of a line of diesel additives. This sort of envelope, he abruptly realized, might be passed off as containing documents relevant to the current trial. Carrying it, he could likely get inside, where he might be able to worm his way into the standing space behind the rear spectator benches. He wished he hadn't thought of that. Nonetheless, flourishing the large envelope, he returned along the hallway. When he came to the uniformed woman at the courtroom door, he said, "For Ms. Holburn," and the woman opened the door and he went in.

He found himself standing beside an armed policeman. As Leanne had said, the place was packed. He'd have to stand right where he was, alongside the guard.

A railing separated a spectator section from the court proper. The spectator section contained two rows of benches divided by an aisle. Uniformed officers and several respectably dressed citizens occupied the front row. Other respectably dressed citizens occupied the second row. A similar number stood in the space between the benches and the wall. It was clear how the citizenry of Hampton felt about letting the prostitutes go unpunished.

Although no one appeared to be looking at him, Arne felt conspicuous and was within a few seconds of retreat. Then Leanne saw him. She was standing at her desk with a sheaf of papers in her hand. Immediately behind her were the seven defendants, seated in chairs placed along the railing. Leanne pushed through the gate and approached Arne. "Is that for me?" she said, nodding toward the envelope.

He stepped close to her and said in scarcely more than a whisper, "It's a fake—just something to get me past the bailiff. I shouldn't have done it."

"That's okay," she said, taking the envelope.

"I'll clear out of here," he said. "There's absolutely no space anywhere."

"Oh, don't go. Just stay right where you are. It's good to know somebody's got my back." She returned to her desk and, after seating herself, completed Arne's charade by pulling a couple of sheets from the envelope and laying them among her other papers. In the meantime, heads turned among the spectators to regard Arne. Among those spectators was Spud, who, having caught Arne's eye, gave a frowning shake of his head.

Shortly, the judge entered, and the clerk called for all to rise. There was a scraping of chairs and a shuffling of feet, then sudden silence. The judge, duly robed in black, had pouches beneath his eyes and a downward dip at the corner of his lips. He struck Arne as a man who found his present duty to be particularly distasteful.

Having allowed those in attendance to sit, the judge shuffled a few papers and announced that at the request of the defense attorney and her clients, this was to be a bench trial. He paused, then, directing his words to the spectators, said the accused had the right to a bench trial, and as they had requested it, he had no alternative but to grant it. Arne took it that there had been requests from persons among the spectators for a jury trial.

The judge shuffled a few more papers, then looked at the prosecutor and said, "Please proceed, Mr. Hill."

"Thank you, Your Honor," the prosecutor said. Holding a clipboard in his hand, he stepped from behind his table and stood before the judge. A handsome, well-dressed man, he was an associate in an Auburn law firm, contracted to serve as Hampton's municipal attorney and prosecutor.

The prosecutor began, stating that by a clerical error or some other oversight, the recorded ordinance forbidding prostitution within

Hampton town limits failed to specify that solicitation was unlawful. Accordingly, the defense would insist that the charge against the accused be dismissed. However, any person of an untrammled and objective mind could only consider this an egregious miscarriage of justice

Arne was impressed. This Hill fellow was articulate, and he had a baritone voice somehow suggestive of wisdom and insight.

Sweeping a hand from front to rear of the courtroom, the prosecutor went on to declare that at the court today was the complete embodiment of the rule of law in Hampton. Present were members of the town council, law officers, court officials, and a large delegation of prominent citizens representing a cross section of professions, churches, and service clubs. Other citizens awaited in the entrance hall for the outcome of this trial. The presence of all these officials and citizens constituted a silent plea for justice. Their collective sense of morality held that prostitution was an evil, and their collective sense of equity demanded that this evil be punished. It was their earnest desire that the magistrate of this court make amends for the oversight of the municipal ordinance and find the accused guilty as charged. With a final burst of eloquence, the prosecutor urged the judge to be daring and to break with the expected and find not according to the timorous stance of due process but according to the grand principle of justice.

With the flourish of a hand, the prosecutor sat down, as if exhausted by his short but emotional appeal. As far as Arne was concerned, the prosecutor had hit the nail squarely on the head. It simply wasn't right for the accused—young, unwitting creatures though they might be—to go without some sort of punishment.

The judge sighed and shuffled through several documents absent-mindedly. Rousing himself, he said, "Have you anything to add, counsel?"

"No, Your Honor," Mr. Hill said.

Turning his regard toward Leanne, the judge said, "Ms. Holburn, your presentation, please."

Leanne rose and stepped in front of her desk. Though she often wore a dress to court, today she wore a black pantsuit with a white blouse. Arne judged a pantsuit to be more active, more assertive of strength, than a dress.

After consulting a clipboard in her hand, she began, “My clients are Nguyen Cam, Flora Gonzales, Le Hahn, Elsa Holst, Adell Miller, Vivian Parker, and Luz Trujillo. They have been charged with solicitation, that is, with offering to engage in sexual conduct for a fee. However, at present it is not a misdemeanor to offer to engage in sexual conduct for a fee in the town of Hampton. The town council, which created the existing law forbidding prostitution, had the option of relying on the law as written by the state of Washington. The law as written by the state of Washington reads: ‘A person is guilty of prostitution if such person engages or agrees or offers to engage in sexual conduct with another person in return for a fee.’ However, as it had the right to do, the town council chose to create its own law prohibiting prostitution, which supersedes the state law. The law approved by the town council reads: ‘A person is guilty of prostitution if such person engages or agrees to engage in sexual conduct with another person in return for a fee.’ Notably absent from the law as written by the town council is the word ‘offers.’ I therefore request that Your Honor dismiss this charge and to do so with prejudice so that an amended charge cannot be filed.”

She turned, stepped back to her desk, and exchanged the clipboard for a yellow pad. “The prosecutor,” she went on, “has just urged Your Honor to ignore the actual wording of the municipal ordinance against prostitution and interpret it as if it explicitly forbids solicitation. He has just urged Your Honor to violate due process on the presumption of a collective sense of justice that supersedes written law. I am wondering what difference there might be between such a presumption and vigilante law. I can see none. Hasn’t due process come into being precisely because of the cruel inequities of vigilante law?”

Leanne paused to glance at her pad. "I find the prosecutor's plea an affront to Your Honor," she said and promptly sat down.

The judge buried his face in his hands for a moment. When he looked up, Arne saw Leanne had won her case. A man who looked as doleful, as anguished, as downright haunted, as this judge wasn't about to render a judgment favorable to the prosecutor.

"I am cognizant of the many persons who have shown special interest in the present case," the judge said. "Their presence testifies as to the high level of morality in our community. I am cognizant of the integrity and zeal of our municipal police force. I am cognizant of Mr. Hill's stellar service as municipal attorney and prosecutor. All the more reason, then, that I regret to say that Ms. Holburn is correct. According to the law of the town of Hampton, solicitation is not an infraction, and solicitation is what the defendants have been charged with. I have no alternative but to dismiss this case with prejudice. If I failed to do so, my verdict to the contrary would be overturned in the appellate court and I would be sanctioned for rendering a frivolous verdict. Moreover, the defendants' court costs would be charged against the town of Hampton."

The judge directed his gaze toward the defendants. "Young ladies, you are free to go. I recommend that you take advantage of this opportunity to amend your ways."

He redirected his gaze toward the spectator section. "I advise the town council to call an emergency meeting and remedy this faulty law at once."

With that he pounded his gavel, gathered his papers, and left. A buzz of angry conversation now filled the room. Arne glanced at Spud. Grimacing, Spud shook his head—a gesture Arne took to be an accusation of rank betrayal. Spud mouthed, "Damned shyster," silent but unmistakable. Startled, Arne realized Spud was including him in that pejorative term. And with that, he also realized he had made a serious tactical error by attending the trial. As if fleeing, he stepped forward,

pushed through the gate, and joined the girls, who stood in a smiling knot around Leanne.

“Wait till the courtroom clears,” Leanne said to the girls, “and Arne will drive you back to your rooms.”

Eventually, the spectator section cleared of all persons except, as Arne now recognized, Douglas Reid, Havana Thomas’s high-power Seattle lawyer. He waited as the seven girls filed through the gate. As Leanne came through, he said, “Well done, counsel.”

“Thank you,” she said.

“Our firm is looking for an associate,” he said. “Consider applying.”

“I will,” she said and walked on.

Before she allowed the girls to enter the van, Leanne asked about their plans for the future. Five of them hoped to find work as masseuses, Elsa and Luz in Prosser, Flora in Pasco, and Adell and Vivian in Seattle. Hahn and Cam stood apart, on the verge of tears.

“Dig out your green cards,” Leanne said to the Vietnamese girls, “and maybe Arne will hire you at the truck stop till you can find something better.” Leaving Arne speechless, she hugged each of the girls and headed off across the street to her office.



Arne ended the afternoon at the truck stop. Arriving home around six, he went on a short jog, hoping it would calm him. It didn’t. It seemed, in fact, to merely stir agitating thoughts. Spud said Leanne was a shyster. He said Arne was a shyster too. Arne had to agree. Being a shyster was built into Leanne’s job. She had to adhere to due process. It was her duty to get the girls off. But she seemed to have no regret whatsoever for securing the dismissal of their case. She seemed to sympathize with them as if they were total victims of a sexual crime rather than co-perpetrators of it. Arne admitted that it was wrong for the men who visited the girls to go without punishment, but that didn’t justify the exoneration of the

girls, nor did it justify Leanne's taking a vindictive pleasure in taunting the police for their botched arrest. The police, after all, had been merely carrying out their sworn duty in making the arrest. Moreover, the respectable citizens of Hampton were in the right to protest their exculpation. As for Arne, he was a shyster by complicity, first for continuing to shelter Hahn and Cam, and second for simply having been at the trial. Everyone took his presence at the trial as an open declaration of support for his wife. Nobody knew about his reservations, not even Leanne.

After the jog, Arne prepared a supper of lasagna and salad. Lasagna wasn't the easiest dish in the world to prepare, and he ordinarily took some pride in the seasonings he had learned to add. But on this occasion it merely added to his agitation. Generally he liked to cook, and he didn't mind doing other kitchen work in the evening when Leanne was present to discuss her current cases. However, there was a dubious word for a fellow like Arne—househusband. It was obviously a take-off on housewife, and it likely hadn't been coined to carry a pejorative connotation—which brought Arne back around to Spud. There was no question Spud scorned Arne. His contempt—and undoubtedly Chantal's contempt as well—would double if they knew the extent to which Arne played the role of househusband so his wife could practice law. Spud was a man's man. Arne wasn't—that's all there was to it. Arne's father was a man's man, too. His contempt would equal that of Spud and Chantal if he knew the extent to which Arne's domestic life failed to fit the model of a proper priesthood-led household.

By the time Leanne came home, the supper was ready. As soon as she had freshened up a bit, they sat down.

"Whose turn is it to say the blessing?" she asked.

"Gosh, I've forgotten," Arne replied. "It's been a while."

"Shall I do it?"

"Yes, please," he said.

As usual, she addressed her request for a blessing on their food to Heavenly Mother. She ate the lasagna with relish. “Nobody makes it like you do,” she said warmly. “Not even my mother.”

After they had finished the meal, she helped Arne clear the table and wash the dishes. She reviewed the trial with obvious satisfaction. She announced that she planned on attending the city council meeting at which the faulty law against prostitution would be amended. “I am going to gloat in their presence—pure and simple, just gloat!” she said.

She also mentioned Douglas Reid, the high-power lawyer from Seattle, who had invited her to apply for a position in his firm. “What do you think?” she said. “Should I do it? Or should we just stay here and I could go off the pill and we could start a family?”

Arne was speechless. He couldn’t respond to eventualities of such moment without time to ponder.

At bedtime she was in the mood for languorous, romantic love making, during which Arne set aside his perturbations. Afterward, she fell asleep quickly. Arne, however, lay wide awake, his perturbations very much revived. Her talk of starting a family—wasn’t that the straw that broke the camel’s back? Arne had all along assumed he and Leanne would have children. But only now did it bear in upon him that they would be inevitably conditioned to a heretical manner of worship. Sons and daughters alike—all of them would grow up believing it acceptable to address prayers to Heavenly Mother. Maybe they’d grow up believing it was not just acceptable but preferable to worship Heavenly Mother. And with that, a bolt of shock went through him and an eventuality he had been evading all evening broke to the surface. Didn’t all this perturbation add up to divorce?

At three-thirty, he could no longer tolerate lying abed with an adrenalin-fed anxiety pumping through him. He got up and went to the truck stop, where he tried to distract himself by ordering parts for refurbishing a hydraulic lift in the repair shop. He quickly realized that he was grieving, as if he took separation from Leanne as inevitable. For

all his disapproval of her practice of the law and her manner of prayer, there was no doubt whatsoever that he was still in love with her. Divorce would amount to a death, a burial.

As the first hint of dawn began to show at his office windows, he realized images from his wedding day had been recurring to him during the last hour or two. He had paid them no heed, as if they were simply a part of the random mixture of memories his distraught mind was churning up. But now he wondered whether they had a premonitory significance. The temple wedding ceremony had ordained that a wife should approach Deity through her husband. As they prepared to enter their nuptial bed, Leanne had protested and Arne had concurred. It was wrong, just plain wrong, to consider a priesthood holder as superior to his wife in any respect. Wasn't it also possible, Arne suddenly allowed himself to think, that it was similarly wrong to restrict worship only to Heavenly Father? And with that thought, he saw the way to erase the abrasions of living with Leanne. It was to convert, to go over completely, to her way of viewing matters.

A little after dawn, he went into the restaurant and ordered breakfast. After eating, he sat a while, working out the articles of his new faith. He wanted them broad and inclusive. He could stop thinking of Leanne (and himself by association) as a shyster. Accepting her stance on due process, he could admit that the deliberateness of established law should calm the anarchic outrage of a morally offended community. Moreover, he could acknowledge that the premises of Leanne's feminism were sound. She was right to be angry. Women *were* suppressed and there was no civilized justification for it. Hampton's policemen *had* committed a serious injustice when they arrested only the girls and let two men go uncharged. Going further, Arne could stop feeling ashamed of not being a man's man like Spud. He could accept himself as a househusband who also held down the job of a man's man by managing a large truck stop. Going further yet, he could adopt the worship of both Heavenly Parents. For him as well as for Leanne, prayers addressed to Heavenly Father or to Heavenly Mother or to both at the same time would be equally acceptable. Granted

it would be a private mode of worship, done in the confines of their own household. It would be for now and in the future when they might have children, whom they'd help master the nuances of worshiping only the divine male parent at church and both divine parents at home.



Arne got home around ten-thirty. Leanne was up, reading the newspaper while she finished her breakfast. It was the latest she had slept in on a Saturday morning for months. Having taken note of the clear, sunny sky, she proposed an outing. "Let's drive up to the Paradise visitor center on Mount Rainier and see how deep the snow is, and on the way home have dinner somewhere."

An hour later, they left in their aging compact sedan with Arne at the wheel. It was the car Leanne ordinarily drove but when they went somewhere together, Arne took the wheel. It was an arrangement that had persisted from before their marriage, the auto being the one Arne had courted her in.

While they drove, Leanne hummed snatches of songs and repeated, "What a day!" over and over. The sun was bright, and puffy white clouds floated in the azure sky. For a while their road went through farmland and pastures spotted by grazing cattle and horses. The snow pack circling Mount Rainier glistened in the noonday sun. Eventually, the highway entered a towering fir forest, offering only momentary glimpses of the mammoth peak. At the Longmire entrance to the national park, wild flowers lined the highway, but soon the ascending road became banked with snow. At the Paradise parking lot, snowplows had heaped a high bank of snow around its perimeter.

Accoutered with jackets and sun glasses, Arne and Leanne trekked up an icy trail to the snowfield where heavily burdened climbers were departing for Camp Muir, from which, after a few restless hours in their sleeping bags, the climbers would launch their bid for a pre-dawn summit on the towering peak.

On their return, Arne and Leanne had dinner in a rustic café just outside the park boundary. Dusk was falling outside and electric lanterns cast an intimate light upon the log walls and plank floor. Soft, melodic music hummed from a speaker above them. Arne glanced at a menu and made a quick decision. He watched Leanne study the card. She was relaxed, at ease, happy. He perceived anew how tense, how on guard, she generally was during the workweek. By all appearances, she thrived on adrenalin. But the tension had been gone all day—since the night before, actually. She was on furlough just now.

She looked up suddenly and, seeing his eyes upon her, smiled and again reached for his hand and gave it a squeeze. The lantern light shadowed her sculpted cheeks and aquiline nose. The day had been a furlough for Arne too. It had confirmed the decision he had reached early that morning at the truck stop. Harmony would reign in the household of Leanne Holburn and Arne Jarvis, not only now but later when it might be filled with children.

A few days later, Hahn and Cam showed up at the truck stop with their green cards and Arne hired them as clean-up girls in the restaurant and convenience store. He found them a small studio apartment over a garage and paid their rent as a part of their pay package. With Leanne's help, he got them enrolled in an English-as-a-Second-Language course that met two evenings a week at the community college in Enumclaw. Arne calculated that he suffered a considerable net loss of income by doing all this for them but, following a suggestion from Leanne, he made up for the loss by shifting funds from their tithing account. At their next tithing settlement, they told the bishop they'd have to pass on getting a temple recommend for the coming year.

As for Spud and Chantal, they never again spoke a word to either Arne or Leanne. However, Spud wrinkled his brow in a dark, dour way when he met them at church, which told them what he thought of them. That was just fine with Arne. He didn't suppose Leanne was losing any sleep over it, either.