

Driving through the wealthy subdivision in the town of Carmel, due north of Indianapolis, Laura noticed that her 1987 Mustang was by far the oldest car in the neighborhood. Although having been around the well-to-do occasionally, she still marveled at the sized of all the houses, which were mansions to her. The two-story house on the corner caught her admiration, with eight pillars along the front. She took in the beautiful Bedford stone walls and nearly missed her turn as she quickly spun the steering wheel, narrowly missing a red Porsche parked along the curb. Slowing down, she held the directions in her left hand as both hands held the wheel. Seeing he mailbox on the right with the name JONES on it, she pulled into the drive and stopped behind on of three cars. Upon opening her car door, she noticed a young girl bouncing down the front steps and across the lawn to the driveway. Noticing a big smile on the girl's face, Laura smiled back.

"Hello, my name is Katherine Elizabeth Jones, and you must be the woman Father was telling us about."

"Hello, Katherine Elizabeth Jones. I'm Laura Marie Stiley," responded Laura, amused at the formality in the speech of such a young girl.

"When Father said you were coming to dinner, I expected someone older, and not pretty. You know... the lawyer type?"

"Well, I'm glad I disappointed you, Katherine Elizabeth Jones. And please call me Laura."

"I am glad, also. Do you play tennis, Laura?" as the thirteen-year-old spoke, her long blond French braided hair bobbed up and down. "We have a tennis court. I have had lessons for four and a half years and am considered one of the best young talents in the area in my age bracket."

"I'm very impressed. And yes, your father suggested I bring my racket for later tonight."

"Well, you are on my side, and we will play against Father and Randy, or Bradley, whoever stays home. Come on in. Mother said we could eat as soon as you came."

Laura reached into the back seat and grabbed her athletic bag and tennis racket, and followed the youngest Jones into the house. The living room, which turned out to be the formal living room, looked like a page out of a home magazine. The white grand piano caught her attention from across the room, and she wondered which Jones could play. The next room was the dining room, where she saw a beautiful table with high back Victorian chairs, and six place settings with plates and glasses that her own mother would only get out once a year at Thanksgiving when the Stiley family would gather from across the country at her home. Bradley, seventeen and a high school senior at Carmel High, was already seated across the table, and reading a sport magazine.

"Bradley, this is Laura, the one Father told us would be joining us for dinner. Laura, this is the brat of the family, Bradley." As the girl spoke, Laura noticed the fondness attached to the kidding.

"Thanks, Kate. Nice to meet you Laura." The young man politely stood and shook hands across the table. "I see you've met my baby sister. Isn't she a wonder?" The

brother smiled sarcastically at his sister. “She wants to be the next Princess of Monaco. She’s even working on an English accent. Are you married, Laura?”

“Bradley, you have a girlfriend,” exclaimed his sister.

“Yeah. But not one who’s going to be rich working for Dad.”

“Well,” answered Laura, “I’m not going to get married until I have my first million in the bank...so if you can wait a couple decades...”

All three laughed just as Nancy, the mother of the household, entered the dining room with a large plate of filet mignon, grilled to perfection.

“Oh, you’re here,” she exclaimed as she set down the platter in the middle of the table. Walking around the table she took Laura’s right hand in both of hers. “I am so delighted to meet you dear. Randall has told me all about you. I know you will be discussing business later, but I trust you will stay the evening so we can all get to know you better. Have a seat and I’ll be right back with the potatoes.”

“Don’t worry about Mom,” explained Bradley as his mother exited into the kitchen, “She comes on strong like that with everybody. It’s really not a put on. If Mom likes you, you’ll know it, and if she doesn’t like you, well, Mom likes everybody, and everybody who can stand to have her like them ends up liking her.”

“That’s everyone, Brad, not everybody,” corrected the sister. “Besides, you are just jealous because everyone likes Mom and no one like you.”

The sports magazine barely missed the ducking French braid. Judge Jones and the oldest son, Randall Jr., entered the dining room through the archway directly behind Bradley, and they both saw the guest at the same time.

“Laura, so glad you could come,” said the judge. “I see you’ve met the rest of my children. This is my oldest son, Randy. Randy is a third year law student at IUPUI.”

“A pleasure to meet you, Laura,” he stated as a slight gleam came from his eyes as he absorbed the cute brunette’s characteristics of femininity, grace, and confidence as she stood before him. Randy, twenty-four, had his father’s five foot eleven inch height and similar athletic build, only without his father’s slightly bulging stomach.

“Nice to meet you,” replied Laura, realizing the men of the family all resembled each other with the finely chiseled face and the sandy hair, which undoubtedly the judge had before the grey set in.

Nancy came back in with the potatoes as everyone was sitting down. The judge sat at the head of the table, with his wife at the other end, and Bradley and Randy on one side across from their sister and Laura. The judge reached for the steaks and was about to say something when he noticed Laura bowing her head. An awkward ten seconds of silence followed, and then all the talk and noise of eating began again as Laura looked up from her silent prayer.

“Dear, when do the hearings begin?” started Nancy.

“Well, with the new cases just now being heard by the Supreme Court, both parties want the confirmation to go rapidly. I will have to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee two days from now, for no more than one day’s worth of questions, and then they present me to the floor of the Senate the following day.”

“I will need to be there, won’t I?”

“Not only would you, Nancy, but it would be important to have the entire family present.”

“We will have to coordinate their missing school for that day, then,” said Nancy as she retrieved a pen and paper from the drawer of the hutch behind her. Nancy was famous for making lists of procedures and coordinating her family’s lives.

“They won’t put you through what Justice Thomas went through when he was becoming U.S. Supreme Court Justice, will they?” wondered Bradley. “My class at school saw a video of that Senate hearing, and a lot of the guys even blushed through that. The teacher had to turn it off after a while.”

“I don’t think these proceedings will be that big of a deal. It is really only a local event, so the media will be calm. I’m not really a political party man, so the liberals won’t be able to do any real dirty work on my political philosophy. Craig Jeffries, the Senate Minority Leader told me on the phone today that he personally would vote for me. Don’t get me wrong. I am not taking this lightly. That’s why I have Laura spending the next two days researching to help me prepare for the hearings. Also,” adding a touch of sarcasm, “I’ve never even met Professor Hill.”

The reference to the woman who brought the harassment charges against Justice Thomas nearly caused Bradley to choke on a piece of meat.

“I certainly hope not, dear,” offered a wide-eyed Nancy as seriously as she could without betraying the smile underneath her napkin.

“What...” asked Katherine.

“Never mind,” said Randy, waving his hand back and forth at his sister.

“Dad, are you going to hire Randy when he graduates?” wondered Bradley.

“We just finished having a discussion about that very subject in the den. You want to tell them, Randy?”

“I’ll probably start working part time whenever Dad is confirmed. The State House is only a few blocks from campus, and I can have my own desk there where I can study. The State Law Library is down the hall from the Supreme Court chambers. So, it will be beneficial to me in several ways. By next May, I’ll know if being on the staff of a Supreme Court Justice is my forte or not.”

“In other words,” his Father concluded, “if our ideals do not clash to where one of us kills the other, he just my stay on.”

“So, Randy and Laura will be working together. How nice,” said Nancy, glancing at Laura and then at her son.

“Well, not for a couple of weeks,” said the judge. “I have Laura working alone on research projects, and Randy needs two or three weeks into the semester just to get into a routine. Besides, I need some time acclimating myself as a Supreme Court Justice without some lawyer-to-be know-it-all harping about how great the System would be if we would all just go with the flow of Globalism.”

“Dad, I’m not that bad,” stated Randy, glancing at Laura.

“No, but you’re bad enough. You just cannot see it from my perspective, that’s all. You still haven’t realized that the lonely one person has rights in spite of how he disagrees with the System.”

“But Dad, the System will fail if we let the indiv...”

Nancy cut in to the conversation. “Your Honor, I respectfully object to this line of discussion. If it would please you Honor, and the Prosecution, would the court entertain an objection that states the reminder of the meal will be carried on in light conversation? After all, the Judge and Prosecutor can retire to chambers to debate their equally great

and different political philosophies. Maybe we could appeal to a higher court for a decision as to who is right, namely the tennis court.”

“Objection sustained, counselor-darling,” said the judge hitting his hand on the table in the fashion of a gavel.

Everyone laughed at this exchange between husband and wife. The conversation for the rest of the meal shifted to the food at hand and Bradley’s prowess as quarterback on the number one ranked football team in the state.

The rest of the evening found all the arguments won or lost of the other court while Nancy did the dishes. The other five settled in a match of “New Zealand Doubles”, thought up by Bradley.

“It’s a lot like Australian Doubles, only you have five instead of three. The one who sits out come is for someone on the losing team, and everyone keeps their own personal score. First person to ten points win the match.