

Jade Cassidy aims her motorized wheelchair at the entrance of the Hard Ware House, parting a sea of Saturday morning handy persons in the California coastal town. The regal invalid disappears into the hardware mecca in a flutter of silk dress and blonde hair. Outside, her uniformed chauffeur, Oliver Ruiz, buffs his nails and leans on a Silver Cloud Rolls Royce. A young boy studies his reflection in the chrome grill of the vintage car.

"You rich, mister?"

"My boss is."

"Who's he?"

"She is the founder of Global Net."

"Makes nets for globes?"

"Makes millionaires, kid."

Inside the store, the millionaire-maker corners a sales clerk, herding him down the Screw & Nail aisle, a stray calf in a roundup.

"How is anyone supposed to find anything?" Jade groans, putting on gold-rimmed glasses and scanning the towering shelves. "Why is one to find anything in this self-service nightmare?":

"What kind of nails or screws you want, lady?"

"Screws! I want screws that won't rust or wear in extreme cold for 100 years."

The clerk gulps, peering at the merchandise. "I'll have to get the manager, and.... lady?"

"Oliver!," hollers Jade halfway across the parking lot, "Get ready for my chair."

The chauffeur watches his boss steer through traffic. She pushes his outstretched hand

away as she nears the car.

"I'll do it myself," says Jade, sliding onto the back seat. "Let's get out of here, but don't say "I told you so."

"Very well, Ms. Cassidy."

"And no Jeeves the Butler imitations today, Oliver."

Jade nods drowsily as Oliver drives to the mansion built a decade earlier on a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. She feels limp in his arms as he lifts her into a wheelchair and pushes it into the vaulted entrance hall. They wait in silence as the elevator descends; she grimacing at this glaring appendage to the winding staircase. The elevator cage shines under a chandelier of cut glass and gold.

"I will swim after I rest."

Oliver turns the mistress of the house to the care of nurse Bridget Avery, a Brit whose perched lips suggests a confrontation to come

"Not now, Bridget," said Jade. "We'll tell me what we should have been doing later, won't we?"

"As you wish, Ms. Cassidy."

Oliver's eyes follow Bridget's long-legged stride down the hall until she turns the corner and disappears into the West Wing. Jade's boudoir reveals a fondness for brass-trimmed mahogany and lace that Bridget welcomes as comforting reminders of her family's home in York, England.

The lace canopy above the four-poster bed, lace curtains and vanity skirt bear delicate designs one could stare at for hours at a time. Bridget also knows from months of first hand experience the patterns in a thick green carpet and chaise lounge by the balcony.

As Jade drifts into sleep, Bridget's eyes move across a collection of crystal perfume bottles. The curious young woman listens to the din of her employer's ringing phone, answering machine, and fax unit in an adjoining office. She wanders to the doorway for word from the marketing front.

"The Chicago event should draw 60,000 distributors, Jade baby, nearly half of them yours," whoops Stuart Wittle of New York. "Expect several of your Silver execs to make Gold, and some Golds to make Diamond by conference time. We'll want to plan the Caribbean cruise for your people to meet my people, so call back soon, doll."

"Your Zurich leg topped \$10 million in business volume last month," said a female voice in a German accent. "With development bonuses and dynamic fusion, I am buying that villa for the research center. Already, I secured dossiers of doctors for the staff."

"Ms. Cassidy, you missed your appointment again this morning," says a voice from Dr. Fado's office. "The technician said you must come in this afternoon for the radiation or he will not guarantee against a relapse."

"Mom, how could I see you this weekend and be in Paris with my piano teacher?" whines Jade's 19-year old, only child, Zoe. "You come to my concert for a change."

The nurse tut-tuts over the last message, crossing the room to her stirring patient.

Bridget leans forward and feels Jade's damp forehead. "The pain-killer's not working?"

"It must," said Jade. "I've got so much to do."

"The doctor wants you to..."

"I heard," Jade pulls her legs to the side of the bed, and signals for her wheelchair. "I don't have a moment to waste on that doctor. We know what to do and in a very short time, too."

"I still don't think it's legal, Ms. Cassidy," said Bridget, frowning as she pushes the wheelchair into the office and settles Jade into a space behind a mission oak desk. Far beneath the mansion's Japanese garden and grounds that extend to a cliff, ocean waves break. The roar is muted beyond the French doors now open to the balcony. As Jade makes notes from the calls, a marigold calico kitten lifts its head from a pool of sunlight on the balcony, stretches and ambles to her mistress. Jade lets the cat walk across the desk and step on the pushbuttons of her answering machine, erasing the lot.

"Emily Dickinson, you are my sunshine with your foggy cat's feet," said Jade, kissing the kitten, steering her to a corner of the desk, and speed-dialing around the globe.

No matter the hour, everyone takes calls from Jade Cassidy. She dispatches her Caribbean cruise plan with Whittle in 45 seconds, selecting the newest Paramount Line vessel for the third week in January, and approving the hiring of top international motivators and nightclub entertainers in his directory. "Done!"

Bridget hears Jade instruct the Swiss business agent to proceed with her purchase of a villa near the Austrian border, due east of Interlaken.

"And recheck my spot at the Jungfrau Glacier," said Jade, conscious of Bridget's perplexed stare. "Make sure they can guarantee it won't be buried in an avalanche or ..."

Jade stiffens. "What do you mean they probably won't guarantee it."

The millionaire motions Bridget out of the office. "Then get them to sign an agreement to dig it out at their expense." Jade huffs. "Now, let's recap Plan A."

"You want me to arrange for the equipment to be transported to the glacier and confirm medical staff to conduct the cryogenic procedure," says Ingrid Rumpel.

"Yes, with a bonus for secrecy and a steep penalty for leaking the story," said Jade. "I

don't need some reporter nosing around about my business."

"We can divert attention... at least for awhile."

"That's not going to be my problem, right Ingrid?"

"Ms. Cassidy, I will see that nothing gets out about your affairs."

"And I will see you are paid handsomely for as long as it takes."

The next call is put on hold by the receptionist at her California physician's office. As Jade waits, she strokes the calico and hums Vivaldi's "Winter," the music floating from the speaker phone.

"You're waiting for?" interrupts the receptionist.

"Hell to freeze over."

"Excuse me?"

"Tell Dr. Fado that Jade Cassidy will not be keeping anymore radiation appointments."

"I am sure the doctor will want to speak to Mrs. Cassidy."

I do not have time to waste holding on," Jade stabs the speaker phone button, ending the call."

"Avignon Academe!"

"Yes, I want to talk to Zoe Cassidy."

"This Cassidy, she is not here for one week."

"Really! Well, when she gets there, tell her that her mother called and is so sorry she could not spare the time to visit."

Jade buzzes Oliver and closes her eyes. Soon, the faint swish of the pendulum in the office's grandfather clock is drowned out by her labored breathing. Jade paws in the desk drawer for the bottle of painkillers and ornate silver flask. She shoves three pills into her

mouth, gulping brandy as Oliver knocks. Jade sits back. "We are going camping, Oliver."

She savors the startled expression on her chauffeur's face. "Order tents, sleeping bags, cooking gear, steaks and... a portable telescope."

"Where do you want to camp, Ms. Cassidy?"

"Red Rock Canyon in the Mohave," said Jade, struggling to her feet before remembering she cannot stand very well. She sinks back and examines the diamond and jade rings on her fingers, like a cat observed in an awkward landing, aloof to any hint of disgrace.

Nurse Avery enters as Jade continues talking to Oliver. "It's near Bishop. We can even fly over Pacoima if you want to wave down at your Mamacita."

"Senora Cassidy, por favor," Oliver stiffens. "My mother owns a beach condo in Oxnard."

"Well, excuse me."

"Do you want to go for your swim now?"

"Yes, but not in the pool," she says petulantly. "Take me to a lake, Oliver."

"You want to go to a lake and then go to a desert?"

"Right, and you have to grant me any wish I want or, or..."

Jade is reeling from brandy and pills. Oliver and Bridget look down at the shadows under the woman's eyes. Her neck and shoulders seems very frail. She shakes her finger at them.

"Thou shalt not pity a multi-millionaire."

In the library, Oliver unfolds a map of California, closes his eyes and stabs his index finger down, choosing a lake about 100 miles to the southeast. He arranges for Jade's

helicopter service to fly to the mansion pad. Bridget waves half-heartedly at Oliver as he and Jade head for the helicopter. She is pouting.

"Cheer up, Bridget," Jade calls out,. "Tell Aquino I want crab legs, salads and champagne."

Bridget pictures Jade's next feast.

"Enough for you, too. Let's get it catered for the cook, the housekeeper, the gardeners, the maids...and pilot," shouts Jade as she is wheeled to the helicopter. "For everyone!"

Later, Jade resolves not to shiver as Oliver's strong arms lower her into the blue dollop of mountain lake. As they enter the water at the nearly deserted beach, she concentrates on the way the sun glints on the cross around Oliver's neck. She hugs his neck, more sensual recall than an experience in the present. She remembers swimming as a teenager in a far cooler mountain lake of the Northeast, gliding next to handsome young men just as strong. Men like Zoe's father, who drifted away from her side long ago, leaving barely a ripple in their lives.

Oliver handles Jade like a porcelain doll. He had helped her undress with near monastic indifference, not sure how his boss would feel about being observed.

"If we stay still, the fish will swim over to investigate."

"I'm not sure I'll like that," said Oliver, starting to twirl Jade lazily

"Mommy, twirl me," Jade heard a little voice pipe up nearby. She closes her eyes and sees herself holding a fearful young Zoe in Lake Champlain. The child shied away from deep water, from high mountains, from any seeming test against nature. Zoe, still angry her mother expected so much of people, maybe drove her father away, and surely pushed

her too hard.

A disappointed Jade now shivers in the water. Last to admit she is driven, she wonders why Zoe lies to her. She could trace her credit activity for her whereabouts, but tires at the thought.

"Home, Oliver!"

"That's it?"

"Set me down on the blanket and swim if you like."

"Thank you, Ms. Cassidy," smiles Oliver. "I'll do that."

* * *

The mansion dining hall opens onto a slate veranda facing the garden and pool - a site of legendary parties for Jade's multilevel marketing network. The flamboyant millionaire-maker hosted gala events to reward her down line for every success. Jade's household staff always marveled at the men and women milling about on Silver, Gold & Diamond Recognition parties. From all walks of life, they had faced down the contempt heaped on their unorthodox business route. "One of those pyramid things?" No matter that Harvard University had offered courses in networking. Most people thought better of a hassle-free, bigger paycheck. Jade said it took steel will to answer suspicious questions over and over until 30 percent of the people invited to look at the business saw what they could achieve. Three percent of that group bothered to do it. Jade's "three percenters" create enormous wealth, and she reaps the benefits of every transaction

With relentless positive thinking, Jade's people showed up polished, primed and awake for their own lives. Laughing and smiling on the buffet line and at skirted tables dotting the patio, the guests readily befriended the mansion staff. The title and role of

millionaire became them.

"We create our own reality," said Jade at the speech portion of every event, "accepting ourselves and others unconditionally if we hope to succeed."

Tonight's seafood and champagne feast is subdued by networking standards. Waiting in the shadows, Jade pictures livening things up for the staff and visiting helicopter pilot who had brought her home from the lake. She flicks a switch and classical music swells throughout the mansion and garden. The staff shuffles into the dining room self-consciously, congregating at one end of the long teak table set by the white-jacketed Aquino with Irish linen, cobalt plates and goblets. He fusses over Jade as she wheels herself into the room, dressed in a bronze sequined gown and diamond tiara, a black velvet cloak draped around her shoulders.

Impulsively, the little gathering applauds Jade. She acknowledges them with a fevered blush.

"Sit, sit," she commands them. "Innkeeper, water for my horses, wine for my men," calls out Jade with a sweeping gesture before turning her attention to the cook. "Aquino, you are to sit at your beautiful table, and let the caterer serve you. That's an order."

Grayed-haired Aquino is at Jade's side, ready to bolt to his gourmet kitchen at the sound of one clattering tray, but yielding to the gentle pressure of Jade's hand on his arm. He notices she eats next to nothing as she sips champagne.

Theodore Hoyt, the lanky helicopter pilot, observes his dining companions amiably.

Hoyt had been on call for Jade for six years. She routinely asked his boss for "the one with the ponytail." It made no difference to Hoyt that he had never been more than that since she had failed to stir his interest in her business

Earlier in the day, Hoyt was stunned to see how dramatically illness altered Jade's body. The energy drained more quickly. The eyelids struggled to stay open. But tonight, despite weight loss and the pained expression that passes her over face, Jade seems buoyant and in control. Her voice sounds the same as it had on countless flights when he had overheard her straight talk about business. Hoyt approves of her assertiveness. A person has to chart a course and stick to it.

Offered a guest room for the night, Hoyt digs into the crab legs and champagne. He listens to Nurse Avery and Aquino talk about food. It dawns on Hoyt that the nurse, except for her youth and short-cropped hair, bears a striking resemblance to her forty-something patient. His glance travels from Jade to Bridget.

"Hoyt, the name of the place is Red Rock Canyon," said Oliver, downing a forkful of salad. "You know it?"

"Near Bishop," nods Hoyt.

Oliver stops chewing. "They got snakes there?"

"Rattlers, probably," said Hoyt. "It's no wimp camp."

"You coming along, Nurse Avery?"

Bridget stiffens. "No, Captain."

* * *

Jade snuggles in a blanket as Hoyt builds a fire and Oliver pitches their tents in the gathering dusk. Red Rock towers over them, a tumble of shadows and mountain. Boulders and pebbles spread beneath it, remnants of earthquakes. A handful of other campers also pick this place to stay the night, and their voices drift to Jade's campsite. Without hookups for water or electricity, showers or restrooms, Hoyt is right. Red Rock

is not for wimps.

Jade chose Red Rock for the clear view of stars that rose overhead. Against his better judgment, Hoyt had followed her orders when they landed the copter near dusk, setting up the telescope before making camp or a meal. He is amused by her childlike delight as the wealthy woman adjusts her vision to the night, ready for the parade of stars. He fills plates with potatoes, corn, steak, salad and bread

"Smells so good," sighs Jade about steak she could not eat. Looking at the sky, she smiles. "Thank you for helping us, Hoyt."

Oliver finishes setting up the tents and dives to sit by the fire, eyes darting beyond its light. "I've never been anyplace so dark," he shudders

"Nice, isn't it," say Jade and Hoyt in unison. They smile across the campfire.

Hoyt sits on a smallish boulder, intent on his meal.

"Let the fire die so I can see the stars," said Jade.

Oliver flees with a lantern to his tent, promising to return when she calls to bed down.

Jade pats the blanket in invitation to the pilot, who sits at her side. Peering into the telescope, she travels with Hoyt through the night sky, nodding as they each name a constellation and spot shooting stars. Jade marvels at how many hours she had spent at his side and not noticed his rugged profile. Jade also realizes often it was Hoyt waiting for her at the airport after business triumphs. Privy to large swatches of her life. Yet she had struggled to recall his first name.

Their kiss is as natural as breathing. It ends in her muffled sigh. Again, they gaze at the stars in silence. They hear laughter from a distant campsite. Jade shivers. Hoyt lifts her in his arms and carries her to his tent. Oliver sleeps on.

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By morning as they break camp, a cool Jade resolves to make her next moves. As the copter lifts from the desert floor, she composes letters of recommendation for staff she would dismiss later in the day. Dear old Aquino wins praise for his skill and devotion. She hails the gardeners for artistry. The housekeeper earns high marks, too. She describes Oliver as impeccable, careful, discreet. Hoyt could not win more praise in Jade's letter to his boss informing him she will not require his company's services again. Only Bridget Avery would be spared the axe. Given her ill humor upon the camping party's arrival, she would have left Jade's employ on her own. There is the matter of her expiring green card as a foreign worker that gets in the way of new employ

Later, Bridget is alarmed by the shock waves rolling through the mansion like a point seven on the Richter Scale. She hugs Aquino, leaning on the counter of his kitchen island and staring at Jade's farewell note. The startled gardener's wife stashes Jade's generous check in her apron pocket and weeps. A fuming Oliver paces in front of the Silver Cloud, cursing at the sky. He packs a bag and flies away with Hoyt.

Bridget finds Jade at the potting table in the central greenhouse, her gloved hands pressing soil around a twin Peace Lily. Other plants wait to be potted. She digs space for the lily in silence. Bridget stares out at the rose garden where a gardener is gathering up his tools.

"Why..."

"It's time for me to head east, Bridget, and for you to take up the role we discussed."

"Someone will find out."

"Not if we are careful," said Jade, tapping down the soil. "Not if we hire a new staff for

you, Ms. Cassidy, and you stay in this house until Ingrid Rumpel instructs you to leave."

"I feel sad about the others."

"Bridget, I've taken care of them," sighs Jade, again tapping down the soil. "We've gone over the whole thing, and you know everyone's going to be fine."

"They love you, you know."

"I'll be needing to pack for a few weather zones, Nurse Avery," said Jade with finality, pushing herself away from the potting table. "Right now, I need my pills. Now!"

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The cab driver whistles as he drives to a nearby airport with the woman in London Fog raincoat, scarf and dark glasses. Jade is determined not to cry as they wind their way along coastal Route 1. The rolling mountains paw the edge of the sea like lion cubs, golden haunches set to pounce on the rocks and waves.

Being at home in California had been a dream, part of a rise to the top she had pictured and made happen. Only recently had she envisioned this ending, secreting herself away from a nearly deserted mansion, leaving behind a fretful stand-in, an uncertain body-double who would or would not play her part. Jade dislikes her lack of control over Bridget Avery, her risky Plan B. So she travels east to confirm the even greater gamble of Plan C.

Plan C is operational and five years old. Should Bridget waver over time, Jade could control her company through Plan C and someday again take the reins in her own hands. Jade feels a stab of pain and bends forward to open the bar door. She remembers this is not her limo, pulls the silver flask from her carry on bag, and gulps the scotch it holds. "Nice flying weather," observes the driver, spending more time looking up than Jade

thinks wise on this curving road.

"You fly often?" she asks.

"Went back to the Midwest to see my folks when they had their 35th Anniversary."

"Where you from, driver?"

"Columbus, Ohio."

"What a great place!" Jade smiles. "I have associates in Columbus. Cincinnati, too."

And she is off, talking shop. Jade could network in a can of sardines. "Start by making 30% profit retailing plus up to 15% more as sales volume takes off," she said in answer to the driver's question. "If you build an organization-teaching other people to do the same thing, you earn overrides on their profits and on the profits of people they invite into the business, five levels deep plus building bonuses, expenses, etc."

"This one of them pyramid scams or something?"

"Well, I teach people to teach people, and we get checks in the mail " said Jade brightly.

"You work hard enough for three to five years then kick back, let the organization churn on its own."

"So it's a good business," said the driver. "How do I learn more about it?"

Jade scribbles the date and place of a local weekly briefing on her business card.

"Thanks, Ms. Avery, " said the driver. "I'll tell them you sent me."

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At the Gatwick Airport Custom's Gate outside London, Jade's chief aide and confidante, Ingrid Rumpel, sees her hunched over in the wheelchair. The custom's agent notes his infirmed woman's distress, barely glancing at the doctored passport and other papers Jade unfolds on his table. Ingrid watches the agent's cursory inspection. He motions the

luggage through. An attendant pushes the wheelchair to the gate and Ingrid swoops down upon his charge.

"You have painkiller?"

Jade nods, gripping her raincoat across her chest. "In the carry on, which was on the custom's cart for far too long."

"Here you are," said Ingrid. "Now we'll drive to the hotel and you can rest."

Clogged traffic gives them time to catch up on events as their taxi lurches, down shifts, and coasts toward London.

"The chamber arrived in Zurich to be inspected and, for security reasons, is being transported roundabout through Geneva, and back across to Interlaken," said Ingrid, referring to her notes. "The doctor will see you first in Zurich and then at the site, which is quite isolated, not likely to be tampered."

"Good, Ingrid," said Jade, rummaging through her purse. "Here. I brought rust resistant screws to seal the chamber."

They ride in silence

"Did you meet with the child, Ms. Cassidy?"

"At the Albany airport."

"What was that like?"

"She is the image of me," sighs Jade. "Duly living my childhood in the Adirondack outdoors."

"So it has worked and things are going as planned?"

Jade laughs. "I've brought my clone plan as far as money can."

"Her guardians will do what they must," said Ingrid. "They have your motivational books

and tapes, the albums, the instructions."

"Well, maybe it won't come full circle," said Jade breezily. "The doctors could find a cure before she even grows up, thaw me out, and I can go back to running my network."

"All very possible," Ingrid nods. "With the money you are putting into research, you will be the first one."

"No one can run my business the way I can," said Jade. "Given the chance, I could run it for a hundred years."

"So, collect profits on your clone's organization when you do thaw out," Ingrid laughs.

"Start a new business cloning Diamond Executives."

"I have a better chance with a little Jade II clone than my own daughter," she said. "For now, I have to do my global call, or people will think I'm already out of the picture."

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The teleconferencing monitor is set up by the luxury hotel's camel back sofa where Jade sits. She checks her makeup and hair a second time before the phone rings.

"Curtain time!"

One after another, the Diamond executives introduce themselves from around the world.

The company has grown so swiftly Jade does not know new Diamonds except by name.

Talk revolves around the Chicago event and introduction of ten new products to "blow the company's competition off the map!"

The executives show deference for Jade, a grand dame of networking who could still run an efficient conference call. To Stuart, she is the "Technobabe." Before they degenerate into too many people talking at once, Jade tells them to look beyond Chicago to an Asia Pacific event she scheduled for Indonesia in six months.

"Pardon me if I keep a low profile for now, " said Jade. "I'll be leading the conga line at the Jakarta Imperial Hotel."

Stuart Whittle laughs loudest from New York and promises to host a party in her honor.

"You have friends, doll, a lot of people who can thank you for making so much happen."

"Hear, hear!" said Damien Campbell of Edinburgh. "Fare thee well, Ms. Cassidy."

* * *

The city of Zurich laces up in the morning light, all business, its streets lined with gray facades and crowded with gray-suited people. Ingrid wheels Jade into medical offices where she undergoes tests for her cryogenic procedure. Jade read the research and knew the odds were questionable for this last-ditch effort to buy time by freezing. Systems failed from simple mistakes, human error, from electrical power shortages leaving computerized controls and refrigeration chambers offline. Thawing tissue had to be treated with care or would die. Jade is comforted by the thought that, at least, she would not likely thaw in a glacier chamber until the doctors could halt her illness and try to make her well. It is a gamble she is willing to take to be in charge again.

"Ingrid Rumpel is in possession of my authorization papers, Dr. Chan," said Jade to the head of the medical research team about her trusted Gold Executive ally. "Fortunately for us, she has the constitution of a horse and a family history of longevity." said Jade, patting Ingrid on the arm. "She will know how to proceed when you have a cure or tell you the name of her successor. For the sake of security, everything is to funnel through Ingrid. Tell that to your successor."

Elizabeth Chan nods and smiles. "I understand why you do not want too many people knowing your status. I will handle your case personally and use only my most trusted

technicians to monitor your chamber."

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Jade spends her last day outdoors, gazing at three waterfalls flowing into the steep valley at Lauderbruenner. The valley floor around her picnic blanket fills with campers in late afternoon. At dusk, Jade sits in a chalet dining room, sipping hot chocolate and remembering her night in the desert with Hoyt. She ignores an urge to call him, wondering if he hates her and always will.

Jade has one more call to make from an Interlaken hotel room, and that, to Zoe. But the music academy receptionist says Zoe finished with her rehearsals in Paris and is in Holland.

"It shouldn't surprise me that I won't get to say goodbye to Zoe," said Jade to Ingrid.

"You will give her my letter and her Swiss account code?"

"Of course."

"Ingrid, go to Zoe's recital, will you?" asks Jade. "She's quite a good pianist."

"I will tell her you said that."

* * *

Ingrid did not make it to Zoe's recital. A few days after Dr. Chan froze Jade in a snow white chamber, Ingrid's plane fell from the sky outside Paris, killing all passengers. The bodies, fuselage and burned possessions gelled in a nearly unidentifiable mass. Jade, on ice in a clear-domed cryogenic chamber, remained oblivious to the immediate unraveling of her plan.

A continent away, nurse Bridget Avery idles long hours at the mansion, waiting for instructions from Ingrid. Bored, she takes to watching Jade's business videos each day,

the stirring speeches, training sessions, product exhibits and gala networking events that made up the history of a dynasty. Bridget plays the tapes so often she can recite long sections of them, and does so in front of the boudoir vanity mirror, dabbing her neck with perfume.

Soon Bridget is hooked on the networking business. She engages the help in discussions about it. First, the new housekeeper's brother in San Diego signs up, followed by the bread delivery man and his nephew in Wisconsin. All of them are directly under the new, younger Jade Cassidy. She checks Jade's files and assigns contacts in their home towns to teach them the business. It booms, multiplies, and booms again.

The new lady of the manor relishes her role. Her hair grows to the length of the millionaire's hair and she casts away the wig she had been instructed to wear. N.J., New Jade, as she dubbed herself, works on her diction, flattening her a's to fit the woman from Bolton Landing, N.Y. who lay frozen solid 10,000 miles away.

Months pass as N.J. wears the clothes and lives the life of her former boss, gardening in the greenhouse, swimming in the pool, eating gourmet meals cooked by a Mexican woman. Except for occasional twinges of restlessness, loneliness and homesickness, she takes well to her Jade phase.

Connecting with Oliver Ruiz becomes an obsession. She daydreams of his walk, his crisp uniform, handsome face, and undeniable interest in her legs. Late one night in her canopy bed, she remembers a passing comment Oliver made, and rings up his mother in Oxnard. Days later, he returns the call from his new employ in Beverly Hills. His voice is wary and cautious.

"I want you to come back, Oliver," instructs the voice of Jade firmly. "I made a terrible

mistake letting you go."

A few days later, the new Jade tells the new butler to send Mr. Ruiz to her boudoir.

Oliver enters the room and accustoms his eyes to the shadows.

"Come closer, Oliver."

Oliver sees what he expected, Jade Cassidy. He nods. Then he realizes the woman is Bridget.

"You better get out of there before she comes back," whispers Oliver, grabbing at her bare arm and filmy nightgown.

"I suppose I will have to work on my looks if you can tell that quickly," said Bridget with a frown. "However, no one is coming back, so relax."

That is how Oliver came to hear of Bridget's curious assignment.

"So no one is to know that Jade Cassidy is not in this house."

"But I want to do something," said Bridget. She takes Oliver's hand in hers. "You're the only one I could trust."

"I'm not sure what you can do except stay here," said Oliver. "Unless, I drive you places Ms. Cassidy might go, and hope people see what they expect to see like I did."

"Oh, let's!" Bridget sits up and impulsively hugs Oliver. He returns the embrace.

"We could try a quick trip to Chicago," said Oliver.

"She's expected on a cruise in January!" pipes up Bridget.

"One step at a time," said Oliver, again concentrating on their embrace. "You've got her accent down, so we can check you out on the phone...tomorrow."

Stuart Whittle's secretary falls for Bridget's call as Jade. The same proves true of executives in Philadelphia and D.C. Oliver holds his breath when Stuart calls back.

"Stuart, baby," said the New Jade. "I'll be in and out of Chicago, but I want to make sure I said good luck with the trainings."

"That's sweet of you, doll," said Stuart. "But I'll take the wheel like I promised. Don't you worry about anything. Heck, rest and stay home if you want."

"See you in January if I miss you at the convention."

"That sounded okay," said Oliver. "We could go to one of her favorite restaurants in Carmel."

"Help me pick out something to wear," said Bridget, spinning around in front of the brimming clothing closet.

"Where is she anyway?"

"She went east to get treatment," Bridget shrugs. "A woman named Ingrid from Switzerland is supposed to let me know."

"How long has it been?"

"Three months."

"I say we find Ingrid," said Oliver, entering Jade's office and fishing through a tall pile of faxes.

"Let's fax something to this number for her in Zurich," said Oliver. Bridget keys a note from the Office of Jade Cassidy on the computer.

The fax reply is swift. "We regret to inform you Ingrid Rumpel was killed in an airplane crash three months ago. Her affairs are in the hands of the Bank of Switzerland, Zurich."

Before Oliver and Bridget can speak, the voice phone rings. Oliver presses the speaker phone button and Bridget says a cautious hello.

"Mom?"

"Is that you, Zoe?"

"You sound funny, Mother. Have you a cold?" asks Zoe, proceeding without a pause to the purpose of her call. "I haven't gotten any money in my Paris account for weeks, and the concierge is threatening to toss me out of my flat. Then I got a statement from a bank in Switzerland, but I don't have a code or anything."

"I'll take care of it."

"You missed my recital," said Zoe darkly. "Everybody liked it."

"Sorry."

"Business!"

"Your address again, Zoe?" asked Bridget. "So I can get money to you."

"108 Avenue Jean Baptiste." said Zoe. "And I don't think I can make it home for Christmas because some friends invited me to go skiing in Austria."

"Another time, then."

* * *

The new Jade Cassidy renews her passport in the tenth year with her amorous chauffeur, traveling the globe for brief jaunts to major cities, calling up local networkers and just missing them for events and dinner engagements. Word in the organization spreads that Jade appears fine, looking better than ever, and equipped with a seeming new vigor to network. Some said it was fast becoming her decade for making billionaires.

Dr. Elizabeth Chan leads the research team funded at the center Ingrid started. Thirteen years pass when she basks in the medical world's praise, ready to bring forth her protocol for a cure. The chamber containing Jade is to be thawed as soon as the doctor has authorization from Ingrid Rumpel. Since Ms. Rumpel is long among the missing, Dr.

Chan plans to step around procedures and thaw Jade without permission. Her attorney counsels her to rethink the move.

"If you thaw her and the cure fails, you'll be hit with a suit," he warns her. "Find an authorized representative, get a notarized copy of the form, and then go wake up Jade Cassidy."

Soon after, the bored clone Jade Cassidy II of Bolton Landing, New York, sits in her parent's living room and again watches a film of Jade Cassidy I outlining her adult role as a multimillionaire. The eighteen year old bites her nails and frowns, absorbed in details of dynasty-making far beyond her capacity

"Honey, it'll get easy as you do it," says her father from his recliner. "This is your chance for the good life, and mother and I will help you get there."

"Get where?"

"First, to our mansion in California." said Jade's mother, looking up from her knitting.

"Then we'll make sure you get that cure in Switzerland like she said so you'll never feel as sick as Jade Cassidy I did."

"What about my friends and college?"

"You are going to take up your job as a multi-millionaire networker," announced her father. "You like people and you'll make thousands of new friends." }

"Not that much," said Jade moodily. " I don't like but a few people that much, and California has earthquakes."

* * *

Not long after, Oliver and Bridget usher young Jade Cassidy II and kin into the mansion. The parents stare intently as Bridget rereads the clone contract signed years earlier by Jade Cassidy I.

"So you are supposed to run the network in the future?"

Young Jade shrugs and gnaws her thumbnail.

"But I built it up since this letter was written," said Bridget to her parents. "I've added thousands of people to the network and I should get my share."

"And I helped her do it," echoes an irate Oliver.

"Course you did," Bridget nods. "Don't we need to talk to Jade Cassidy I, and find out what she wants?" asks the teenager's mother. "At least we can call this Ingrid Rumpel, and ask what to do."

* * *

It is awkward getting the many Cassidys to Switzerland. They opt to travel as a mother and daughter, and aunt and uncle, leaving Oliver behind. Once in Zurich, they travel to Ingrid Rumpel's bank. The banker looks through his records.

"Are you Zoe Cassidy?"

"That's your 32-year old daughter," whispers Bridget to the teenager.

"There is a joint foundation account with Jade Cassidy funding the Ingrid Rumpel Research Center near Interlaken," said the banker. "Perhaps they would know where you should go next."

* * *

Dr. Chan is startled by the appearance of young and old Jade Cassidys at the center and leads everyone into her office. She promises to examine young Jade for evidence of the disease which led to her very existence, and asks who has authority to order that Jade Cassidy be thawed.

No one knows what the doctor is talking about. Bridget leaves young Jade with Dr. Chan and returns to the banker for the Rumpel estate

"You mentioned Zoe Cassidy," said Bridget. "I need her address, matter of life or death."

"Her address is a post office box in..." he said, watching the computer scroll to the data,

"Porte Christo, Majorca."

* * *

The taxi from the airport of Majorca passes olive groves along the western edge of the island to its southern tip. At Porte Cristo, Bridget finds a table in the biggest cafe near the docks.

"Americanos?" she asks the waiter, who stares at her dully. "Si?"

"Zoe Cassidy?"

The waiter shakes his head

"Musica," said Bridget excitedly, mimicking piano playing.

"Ah, si," smiles the waiter, joining her charade. "No."

"Libra de telephono, por favor," asks Bridget. And that is how she finds Zoe Cassidy's address."

The taxi stops at a red-tiled roof house overlooking the Mediterranean. Bridget opens the gate and enters a courtyard where a fountain sprays mist into a pool. Birds drinking at the fountain pool flee skyward. Bridget hears the sound of a Chopin sonata playing

inside, and walks toward the arched doorway. A child, holding a doll on the tile floor of the living room, stares back at her.

"Momma!" calls the child. "Momma, come quickly!"

The music continues.

"It's all right, I won't hurt you," said Bridget, kneeling in front of the little girl. "What's your doll's name?"

"Madeline."

"What do you want?" asks Zoe at the doorway. "Who are you?"

"You are Jade Cassidy's daughter, Zoe." said Bridget, moving toward her

Zoe laughs, motioning her daughter out of the room. "I suppose you could say that."

"Jade needs your help," said Bridget, breathless in her explanation of the strange circumstance. "She needs your signature on a document or she won't be brought back to life."

"Interesting, but I don't believe you," said Zoe. "You must leave now."

"I am telling the truth," insists Bridget. "I've been masquerading as your mother for years."

"*She* was masquerading as my mother for years," said Zoe with a grim stare. "Never wanted me for a daughter or thought I was good enough."

"That can't be right," pleads Bridget. "Didn't she give you all this?"

"So I would leave her alone," said Zoe. "Well, I did."

She leads Bridget to the courtyard. "Whether Jade Cassidy is frozen or not doesn't matter to me. Find someone else for your miracle cure."

Shaken by her encounter with Zoe, Bridget calls Oliver in California.

"Did you find her?" he asks. "Or are we just going to hold onto all the money we made?"

Bridget describes Jade's frozen state and Zoe's chilly reception.

"Well, I'm not losing out to a Jade Cassidy again," sulks Oliver. "A real or fake one."

"I love you, babe," sighs Bridget in mock Stuart Whittle. "Couldn't have done it without you."

Flying home, Bridget dreads that a solution for Jade will mean an end to her life as a millionaire. She flip flops in her resolve. So, what if Jade did not wake up? Who would care except Jade? Certainly not Zoe. Jade might just toss her and Oliver out. Next, Bridget pictures Jade II and parents taking over the empire she built, and she shudders at how fast it would fall.

Arriving at the airport, Bridget hops on a cart for the drive to her helicopter, and then ducks under the whirling blades. Theodore Hoyt looks at her and smiles.

"So that's what you did," said Hoyt. "Oliver told me, but I had to see for myself." Hoyt shakes his head. "You look terrific, Nurse, what was your name?"

"Avery," says Bridget, watching the landscape recede as Hoyt flies along the California coast.

"How do you come to be here, Captain?"

"The long way. Transfers to and from Brazil. I had changed companies after the old one folded ten years ago." He looks at Bridget again. "Oliver said he thought I could be useful, but just what is happening?"

Bridget tells Hoyt about Jade Cassidy's frozen state.

"Always thought that woman was a pioneer."

Hoyt enters the mansion with Bridget and greets Oliver. They go up to Jade's office. The

old calico stretches and attempts to jump up on the desk, not quite making it. Oliver lifts the cat and sets her in the middle of the desk. Hoyt lets the cat jump in his lap. It nudges him for a scratch under the chin, and he squints at her nametag.

"Emily Dickinson, pretty impressive name."

"What do you suppose this means?" asks Hoyt.

Bridget comes around the desk and reads the back of the nametag.

"Plan D."

Bridget, Oliver and Hoyt pry open hardcopy file cabinets and riffling through computer disks. Hoyt finds a disk in a dusty box marked "Plan D," and opens the computer file.

Bridget jots down the address of the California bank and the number of the safe deposit box.

Oliver reads the location of the box key for Plan D and walks to the central greenhouse. He scans the long tables and plant shelves, running his hand under each surface, fearing someone had long ago tossed the key out. But it is held fast by a magnet to the bottom of a small potter's cart.

Oliver brings the car around for Bridget and Hoyt. Hoyt and Bridget enter the bank's safe deposit box area and open the document labeled Plan D. Hoyt smiles. Bridget is less sure of how she feels to be holding the paper instructing its bearer to order the thawing of Jade Cassidy. They walk outside to Oliver

"Maybe we should wait awhile," said Oliver. "Serves her right keeping everyone in the dark."

"Remember Jade II, Oliver?"

"Think I'll go to Switzerland with you," said Hoyt in the car. "I want to be there when that lady opens her eyes."

* * *

The solar-powered computers hum in Jade Cassidy's alpine chamber as they had for thirteen years. From the observation booth, Hoyt can see his sleeping beauty in a transparent dome, a crystal glaze over her body. He stands with Bridget as Dr. Chan and her technicians initiate a slow meltdown, calling out readings on Jade's reviving system.

"We're good at this," Dr. Chan calls out. "Haven't lost a nose or toe yet."

Dr. Chan awakens a 40-something Jade and tells her they have found a cure for her disease.

Jade is covered with blankets and takes her first sip of warm water. Bridget and Hoyt smile when the technician comes to the front of the booth to relay Jade's first words.

"I'm trapped in the Alps, Doctor, " she said. 'Shouldn't this be hot chocolate or maybe brandy?'"

For weeks, Hoyt stands by Jade as she drifts in and out of consciousness, enduring the treatment to reverse her illness. He thinks of years he spent shuttling heli-hikers to scale barren peaks of the Andes Mountains and explore the Amazon Jungle, as far away from Jade Cassidy as he could arrange. But starry nights reminded him of the desert and her. Dr. Chan takes to explaining each day's medical events to Hoyt, and instructing the man to hold Jade's hand, and speak to her about something she likes. Hoyt talks about the stars. It is weeks before Jade opens her eyes fully, her plans (Alpine to Disaster) a success.

Jade agrees to pay for Zoe to be examined. Dr. Chan says Jade II is now disease-free.

"She's gone to the states."

"I miss home," Jade says to Hoyt. "Fly me home."

As Jade gains strength in her mansion, she checks network accounts in the sunny office.

Calico Emily sits on her lap, permanently purring. Jade is thrilled to see the network thrived under the Brit's rule. Bridget unfurls the month's networking printout - 75 feet long with the names and profits of people she and Jade had taught to prosper.

"Stay on as my partner," said Jade. "You've created several new legs and increased profitability and I say keep a good thing going."

"As long as Oliver is part of the picture," said Bridget.

"Fine, and let's see Jade II get something for her troubles."

"Pay for her college, buy her parents a nice retirement home," says Bridget. "And talk to Zoe about bringing your grandchild here."

"Hmm. Plan Z?" says Jade. "Zoe's a question mark, but there's hope of reaching my grandchild."

She looks at the fog beyond the balcony. "What made you bring me back?"

"Nothing noble, I'm afraid," Bridget says. "It was you or the crew from Bolton Landing.

Young Jade II is no three percenter. Wouldn't be a network diamond in a million years."

"This business isn't for everyone. Ask Hoyt."

Hoyt welcomes the calico into his lap. "The pyramid thing," he shrugs, "Oh, maybe in time."