

Sample translation from

Martin Suter

Melody (Melody)

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At five to eight Tom left his apartment and stepped onto the landing. A narrow strip of light cut across the parquet floor, which was otherwise dark. It came from a door that was slightly ajar. As he sauntered past he peered in. From what he could make out through the crack it appeared to be a sewing room. On the section of wall that he could see were embroideries, and in front of an armchair he noticed a stand with a tambour.

Tom had been an inquisitive child, as his mother always said. And later, when his father found out Tom wanted to study law, he said, 'Curiosity is part and parcel of the lawyer's trade. But so is discretion. And that doesn't go well with curiosity.'

He'd become discreet and remained inquisitive. Carefully he pushed the door open a bit more.

Beside the tambour stood a small, round three-legged table. In the middle was a picture frame with the black-and-white photograph of a young woman. She was sitting in front of a wall of bookshelves and looking up from the book on her lap.

The oil painting in the hallway had been copied from this picture.

Tom went downstairs. Operatic music boomed out of the wide-open door to the sitting room.

Dr Stotz was waiting for him by the fireplace. Two champagne glasses stood on a small table. Letting go of the right handle of his rollator, Stolz reached down unsteadily, took one of the glasses and passed it to Tom. Then he picked up the other glass, toasted his guest and said, 'Welcome! Here's to our collaboration!'

They sat down and Dr Stotz remarked casually, 'A Blanc de Noirs. White makes me twitchy.'

Both of them took a swig. Tom got the impression that the old man's skin was immediately taking on some colour.

'The first secret I have to tell you is that I'm rather disorganised. It's your job to make me appear an orderly person after I'm dead. The second secret about me is that I don't lack vanity. All my life I've tried to maintain a certain image to the outside world. Your job will be to preserve this for posterity.'

Dr Stotz took another pull; Tom followed suit.

'The third secret, well it's not a secret for you anymore. I'm a garrulous old man.' He emptied his glass and felt with his foot for the bell beneath the rug.

'Now it's your turn.'

But before Tom could open his mouth a tall, elderly man entered the room. He was wearing a black dinner suit and bow tie. Without saying a word he went over to the ice-bucket, took out the bottle of champagne and refilled the glass.

'This is Roberto,' Dr Stotz said. 'He's been looking after me for over forty years. And this evening he'll be looking after you too.'

Roberto confirmed this with a formal nod. When he'd left the room Dr Stotz explained, 'When he was a young man he was the maître d' at *Excellence*. I poached him. One of the smartest things I ever did.' He smiled. 'Right, over to you.'

'I don't have any secrets,' Tom replied. 'Although my father had many.'

'Such as?'

'The biggest was that he was broke.'

'The second biggest?'

'The thousands of secrets that led to this.'

Dr Stotz must have pressed the bell again because Roberto – could he be called a butler? – came in. Stotz gave him a sign, he stepped forward, helped him out of the chair and escorted him out of the room.

‘Please excuse me for a moment.’

The opera had finished and the ensuing silence was broken only by the crackling of the fire; a flame had shot up from the embers.

Taking a sip of his champagne, Tom allowed his gaze to roam. This was more like a library than a sitting room. It was as if over the years the books had taken possession of it, as nature occasionally does of civilisation. Simple bookshelves in different styles had been added to the two walnut ones fixed to the walls that matched the low wood panelling. They must have displaced the original furniture and were now encroaching on the pictures on the wall. Swiss art from the 1980s. Tom thought he could identify a Martin Diesler, a Dieter Roth, a Fischli/Weiss and probably a Meret Oppenheim.

A single, narrow console table stood between two of the shelves. A few objects were on the table and a small spotlight lit up a framed photograph on the wall above it. Tom stood up and went over to see if his suspicions were correct.

Yes, it was the young woman again. On the shelf lay a simple tortoiseshell hairclip, a silver Dupont lighter, a pair of pearl ear studs and a stiletto heel.

The door opened and Roberto brought Dr Stotz back in.

‘Maybe that’s my secret,’ Tom said, slightly embarrassed. ‘That I’m inquisitive.’

‘A lawyer ought to be,’ Dr Stotz replied. ‘So long as it’s paired with discretion.’

Tom was taken aback. ‘Apart from my father, nobody’s ever said that to me.’

They sat down once more.

‘Please excuse the interruption. It’s something you’ll have to get used to. I don’t have a stomach anymore.’

‘Oh,’ Tom replied, unable to think of anything else to say.

‘But don’t worry, you won’t have to take me to the loo. I can go on my own too. Now, back to your inquisitiveness.’ Dr Stotz raised the glass to his lips. ‘You want to know who the young woman is.’

‘Yes. My inquisitiveness.’

Dr Stotz drank a mouthful of champagne and put the glass back down. ‘It’s a long story. I’m going to have to tell it to you. But not right now.’

Roberto came in and said in English, ‘Dinner is served.’

They got up and Dr Stotz muttered to Tom, ‘Sometimes he says, “Your table awaits.”’

Tom pushed the rollator over to him, but his host said, ‘If you wouldn’t mind,’ and took his arm instead. ‘In certain situations I try to preserve my dignity and that’s not easy with this thing.’

They followed Roberto into the dining room.

Tom wasn’t particularly tall – around 1.78m – but the old man only came up to his shoulder, even though he stood astonishingly erect. His hand clasped Tom’s forearm as tightly as a pair of pliers. At such close proximity, Tom was able to detect a subtle fragrance through the tobacco smoke. He thought he recognised it, which unsettled him somewhat: Knize Ten, an old-fashioned eau de toilette that his father had used.

There were bookshelves in the dining room too, which Tom could see hadn’t always been here. He also noticed another picture of the young woman straightaway. This time it was a large, photorealistic portrait, showing the woman smiling, her long, black hair flowing over her shoulder and a large hibiscus flower behind her right ear.

Dr Stotz looked up at Tom. ‘Yes, that’s her again.’

They sat at the table. From a decanter Roberto poured a finger of red wine, which was almost black, into Dr Stotz’s glass. Then he nodded. ‘Unlike my stomach, my palate still functions. If you’d rather have white with the starter, just say. I only drink red. It goes better with Mariella’s food anyway.’

Tom went for the red.

During dinner Tom's eyes kept drifting to the bookshelves.

'I suppose you're wondering whether I've read them all?'

'Have you?'

'Most of them. I've read all my life. I don't enjoy academic books but I devour novels. I'd like you to record the opposite for posterity, please. I very much prefer fiction to reality. How about you? Do you like stories?'

Tom had to think about this briefly. Dr Stotz didn't give him time to answer.

'A good lawyer ought to be more committed to literature than to the truth.'

Now Tom said, 'Yes, I like stories.'

'That's good for you, because I fear I'm going to tell you plenty of them.'

After dinner – penne alla Norma and orate al forno con patate – they returned to the armchairs by the fire. Somebody had put on more wood, which was now blazing away.

'I'm able to think more clearly with a fire. It's like a living being that keeps me company. Although you have to feed it like a dog, you don't need to take it out for a walk.' Dr Stotz gave a curt laugh. 'I know that fire is just a chemical reaction, but I feel as if I'm speaking to it. Marielle thinks I'm talking to myself, but I'm chatting to the fire. It might only answer with the occasional crackle or hiss, but I prefer taciturn listeners to talkative ones.'

After a brief pause, he added, 'Don't get me wrong, of course you may ask me questions. I wouldn't have sought out a lawyer otherwise.'

'Alright, then. Here's a question about the fire: How do you cope with it in high summer?'

Stotz pointed upwards. 'Air conditioning. And now I've got a real person to keep me company and listen to me.'

Tom must have been feeling the effects of the wine, otherwise he wouldn't have said, 'A paid listener.'

Dr Stotz hesitated only momentarily. 'The fire is paid for too, although it's cheaper.'

The old man lit the pipe he'd filled.

'This is another little fire I sometimes talk to. Do you mind if I smoke?'

'No, I used to smoke when I was younger.'

Dr Stotz found this so funny that he bared his teeth. They were remarkably white for an elderly pipe-smoker.

Roberto appeared, summoned no doubt by the foot bell. 'The thirty-eight please,' the host said.

On each of the small tables beside the armchairs Roberto placed a brandy snifter, went out and came back with a bottle.

'Armagnac,' Stotz said. 'From the year of my birth. Try it.'

Tom raised the glass to his nose, inhaled, swirled the dark-brown liquid inside the bulbous crystal, as his father always used to with cognac, and took a sip. The taste that filled his mouth was mild, round and soft. Only when he swallowed the Armagnac did he feel that pleasant burning sensation.

'Not the best vintage,' Dr Stotz observed, 'but it's been perfectly adequate for me.'

He put the glass down and handed Tom the document that was beside it. 'This is my official instruction to you as a lawyer. Please sign it, which will mean you're sworn to secrecy.'

It was long past midnight when Tom went to bed for the first time in his new abode. He wasn't tipsy, he was drunk.

Dr Stotz had insisted on making him try better vintages. And to round the evening off he then had to compare the last two turn-of-the-century Armagnacs. Neither man was surprised that the 1900 vintage was considerably superior to the 2000.

The alcohol didn't appear to have had a discernible effect on his host. The colour in his cheeks was a touch more vivid, but his speech hadn't changed, only his stories which had become more elaborate.

He'd interrupted his flow for the occasional trip to the loo. Here there was no evident effect either. On the contrary, he no longer needed Roberto's help and Tom fancied he was walking more steadily too.

After his last visit to the loo Dr Stotz caught his guest giving a barely suppressed yawn.

'There are a variety of reasons for yawning,' he said, smiling. 'You can't have caught it from me because I haven't yawned. Perhaps my faithful little fire has consumed too much oxygen? Or is it boredom? I hope not. I'd like to put it down to tiredness. A long day, a move and a whole host of new impressions can certainly tire out a young man. Please feed my nice companion a couple more logs, I'll tell you another secret and then let you go to bed.'

Tom put two logs on the embers and sat back down.

After taking a sip of the 2000, Dr Stotz began, 'The topic is reason, that demure maiden. She's overshadowed me all my life. She's ordered me around like a governess.

And, fool that I am, I've always obeyed her. She's turned me into a different person from the one I wanted to be.'

Stotz paused for effect. 'Do you know what I really wanted to be?'

Another dramatic pause.

'An artist.'

A silence pregnant with expectation.

Tom countered this with a surprised, 'Really?'

'I was rather good at drawing when I was young, a decent piano player, especially jazz and – had Auntie Reason allowed me – could have scraped a living as a pianist in some bar. I had a lively imagination and could dream, tell stories and write them too. But I wasn't able to act any of this out.'

He lay his pipe, which had gone out, on the ashtray and continued.

'It wasn't my parents who prevented me, not at all. They were simple people, my father a low-ranking civil servant, my mother a housewife who earned a little on the side as a seamstress – she was proficient and fast. No, my parents never interfered in the question of what I would do. They were only interested in what sort of person I was. I had to be upright, honest and polite, and stay that way.'

Dr Stotz paused before adding, slightly startled, 'Why am I already telling you this? It's only our first fireside chat. You must think I've drunk too much. Maybe. But it's not just that. Most of all it's because the person charged with ordering my estate and,' he said smiling, 'giving it a slight sugar coating, needs to know from the outset who they're really dealing with.'

Dr Stotz raised his soft voice. 'Herr Elmer, before you is an artist.'

'I understand,' Tom said.

Dr Stotz's foot felt for the bell. 'You were born in '92 – shall we try that one? As a nightcap?'

'When does work begin tomorrow?'

'Nine o'clock. English. Breakfast at eight.'

'I'd better turn in, then.' When Tom got up he noticed he wasn't quite so steady on his legs.

Dr Stotz noticed this too. 'Yes. *You* ought to go to bed.'

'What about you?'

'I'm going to try your vintage and have a chat with Colonel Fire here, my patient friend. Please treat him to another log or two. You don't need so much sleep at my age.'

A light was still on in the sewing room off the landing. Tom opened the door fully and went in.

It was an embroidery room rather than a sewing room. On a shelf were tambours in various shapes and sizes, some already stretched with nets, two with work already started. The walls were full of embroideries; it was obvious these hadn't been copied from templates but created. Little works of art, abstract or figurative. All distinct and full of expression.

He went over to the image of the young woman and asked rather awkwardly, 'What's your secret, then?'

He didn't sleep well on his first night in this unfamiliar place. The room was like the bedrooms of his childhood, which had felt strange as soon as it turned dark.

Tom had been an anxious child. In his early years apparently he cried every night, telling his parents about the ghosts on the walls and the demons beside the bed. Even

when he was seven or eight he still heard footsteps and voices at night, movements behind curtains, laughter in the silence.

When his parents went out for the evening they always had to organise a babysitter. And when they separated his father was forced to appoint nannies. They came through various London agencies and never stayed long. Tom didn't know why, but later suspected that the reason might have been his father.

The most modern room down here was the wine cellar. It was kept permanently humidified by a device that hummed softly and flashed drowsily, and the temperature was kept between twelve and fourteen degrees by an air-conditioning unit. The floor was made of cork. The well-stocked shelves were the same as those a rich acquaintance of his father's had once proudly shown him. They were equipped with sensors that could read the code on the bottles. The data was transferred to the computer that kept a precise record of bottles removed and added, arrivals, storage times, ideal maturation and anything else the oenologist needed to know about his wine.

The second most modern room was the utility room. Water-repellent white, it housed a hi-tech, professional washing machine and tumble dryer, and was about twice as large as the communal laundry room in the building of Tom's old flat.

The most old-fashioned room was the archive, which looked as if it hadn't been decorated in decades. It was stuffed with metal shelves screwed to the walls, all full of colourful files with either handwritten or typed labels.

The only source of warmth in the room was an electric heater that had probably been bought specially for Tom; he would be working here, for some of the time at least.

Beside the heater was a shredder that also looked brand new.

Looking contrite, Mariella apologised for this workspace and took Tom back upstairs. 'The dottore is waiting for you in his study.'

Watched over by ebony carvings from across the world, Dr Stotz was sitting at a huge mahogany desk piled with files. Loose files were also heaped on the floor and every surface.

Looking up from his book, Tom's boss put down the magnifying glass. 'That's your place,' he said, pointing to the glass-topped desk, the front of which was pushed up against the mahogany desk. On it was a computer.

'Apple for you, am I right?' Dr Stotz asked.

'Absolutely. How did you know?'

'Apple or Windows, Frisch or Dürrenmatt, the Beatles or the Stones – I usually guess correctly. Please take a seat.'

Tom sat on the office chair and looked around. This room too was more like a library than a study. One of the bookshelves was full of files, another housed encyclopaedias and academic books, while the rest was literature. There wasn't much space for art here either. Another console table looked like an altar with the image of a saint: the young woman yet again, flanked by flowers and surrounded by objects from a life. One of these was a real saint: a small black Madonna with a crimson plastic coat. She and the baby Jesus on her left arm were wearing golden crowns. Around her neck was a chain with a cross; she held another in her right hand. Both were painted golden, as were the braids of the gowns worn by mother and child.

Noticing Tom gazing at the altar, Dr Stotz said, 'Later.' Then he continued seamlessly: 'As you can see, there's a document shredder in both of the places you will work. I urge you to use them zealously. Most of the documents that have been accumulated can be shredded. But before they're destroyed I'd just like you to cast a critical eye over every one. You will decide if it might be suitable for the archive of the businesses I've managed, or if it should be shredded. Or if it could be useful for someone who might like to write about me some day. While I don't believe this is ever likely to

happen, I've come across so many uninteresting biographies in my life that I can't rule it out altogether.'

Mariella came in with coffee and a few amaretti. Dr Stotz waited until she'd left then said, 'In this little case beside your computer you'll find a list.'

Tom took out the list, which was in Dr Stotz's handwriting.

The stages of my life

Infancy

Childhood

Schooling

Study

Military

Doctorate

Management Consultancy

Guild

Partner

Mandates

Directorships

Politics

Culture

Social Engagement

‘For each of these headings I’ve noted down what you should mention and document.

Everything else...’ He pointed to the shredder.

Tom merely nodded.

Seeing the expression on his face, Dr Stotz said, ‘We’re not talking about falsifying history here. It’s historical emphasis. History has always been selective, as I’m sure you’re aware.’

Tom nodded again. “‘Not telling the whole truth isn’t lying.” Something else my father told me.’

‘He appears to have been a smart man.’

‘Not in every respect.’

Dr Stotz smiled. ‘Like all of us.’

He returned to the matter in hand. ‘You may have noticed that some files, the blue ones, are typed. These were compiled by my personal assistant, Chantal Favre. When she retired she sent a whole truckload of them here. I’m assuming they’re all very well organised and thorough. Too thorough no doubt. I’m less concerned about the historical omissions here than avoiding – no, that would be asking too much – than *mitigating* potential boredom.

Frau Favre, such a loyal soul, worked for me for over thirty years. Unbelievably efficient and precise. If you have questions I can’t answer – and I’m sure there will be many – she’s the person to turn to. The woman is a walking encyclopaedia. And a dangerous bearer of secrets. I’ll introduce you to her. She’s coming for lunch tomorrow. That is alright, isn’t it? I thought we could have lunch together on occasion. As you saw yesterday, Mariella’s a fabulous cook.

When Tom hesitated for a second Dr Stotz added, 'Whenever you don't feel like it or have other plans just let us know the day before.'

'That won't happen often,' Tom assured him. 'Not the way she cooks. Although I am losing weight at the moment.'

'Me too,' Dr Stotz grinned. 'It's just that in my case it's not by choice.'

'With me it's a case of preventative action.'

'You ought to have seen me at your age.'

Tom had, when he googled Dr Stotz. He'd been a stocky, heavy man. Tom was slim by comparison. But not quite as slim as he'd like. He'd regularly been on diets since he turned twenty. Like now, for example – in theory. He was a victim of the yo-yo effect.

Bracing himself against his desk chair, Dr Stotz reached for the rollator. 'Please excuse me. I suggest you begin in the archive downstairs. I'll expect you for lunch at 12.15. Then I'll answer your most pressing questions.'

He pointed to the picture of the woman and made for the door that led, as Mariella had told him, to Dr Stotz's private rooms.

Tom spent the rest of the morning in the archive, embarking on his tedious work.

Tom entered the sitting room at the same time as Dr Stotz. The light-blue suit the old man had changed into was slightly baggy and he concealed the expanse of his shirt collar with a colourful scarf.

‘Before lunch I usually permit myself a little sherry. Will you join me?’

‘I only drink at lunchtime when I’m not working in the afternoon,’ Tom replied.

‘I used to follow that rule too. But with exceptions. Let’s make one today.’

Tom wavered but Roberto took the decision out of his hands. He entered the room carrying a silver tray with two small glasses of sherry.

Dr Stotz took one and Tom the other.

‘I’ve always thought of sherry as a drink you have standing up. And I’ve stuck to this even though I find standing up more difficult these days. It’s not a drink you chat over, you knock it back *en passant*. A casual stimulant for the stomach. With a smile he added, ‘When I used to have one. Cheers.’

The sherry was cold and smooth. They put the empty glasses back on the tray. Roberto had been waiting with it; he knew the procedure.

Applying the brake on his rollator, Dr Stotz asked for Tom’s arm. They went into the dining room and sat at the table.

‘Would you be so kind as to pour the wine?’

Tom got up and served them from the carafe. He only gave himself a little glass.

‘A 2015 Grande Cerzito from Campagnia. I don’t get out into the sun much anymore so I have to enjoy it through sunny wines.’

Mariella came in with the starter. Wafer-thin celeriac ravioli with olive oil and a generous sprinkling of parmesan. Four for Tom, two for Dr Stotz.

‘And?’ Tom’s new boss asked when he’d eaten the first one.

‘Wonderful,’ Tom replied. And meant it.

‘Mariella can cook quite sophisticated food too, but the older the two of us get the more we’ve turned to simple sophistication. These days she pretty much only serves up the dishes she used to cook when she was a young woman. She came to me when she’d just turned twenty, you see.’

‘And she never married?’

‘Yes, she did. She arrived with her husband, a Sicilian seasonal worker. When it became clear she couldn’t have children he left her. After that she wanted to have no more to do with men. She moved into this house and has been here ever since. All these years she’s been building a house in Sicily where, as she’s always said, she’ll move the day she retires. Which will be in almost exactly a year from now. Good timing.’

Although Dr Stotz had only eaten one of his ravioli, Roberto came in and cleared the plates away. There must be another bell beneath this table.

The second course was a dish of lentils with small diced carrots, celery and courgettes. On top were seared scallops. Once more, four for Tom and two for Dr Stotz.

‘Also wonderful?’

Tom put his thumb and forefinger together and raised his hand appreciatively to his face, like a chef on an advertising hoarding outside a country inn.

After lunch Tom escorted the fragile man back to the sitting room. They sat by the fire that had been lit, Mariella brought in two cups of espresso and poured two cognacs without being asked.

Tom tried to imagine the sturdy Mariella as a young woman. Her snow-white hair had retained the sheen it must have had when it was still black. Beneath the wrinkles on her face he could easily make out the traces of classical features. Her prominent nose was shapely and she always held her head up.

Dr Stotz must have been watching Tom because when Mariella left he said, ‘Yes. She was a beauty. But unapproachable.’ They clinked glasses.

‘This is now my third exception,’ Tom said.

‘And there’ll be many more, I hope. We have the time. A year is long, or at least it is at your age.’

‘Sometimes I already feel old. The longer I went on studying the greater the age difference grew between me and the others.’

‘But believe me, the body feels different later on.’

Dr Stotz raised the snifter he was coddling in both hands to his nose, held it there for a moment, then took a sip. ‘Now to the woman in the picture.’

And without further ado he began to talk:

On Stadttorstrasse there used to be a bookshop – it still exists, in fact, but it’s called something different now. Back then it was Bücher am Stadttor, now the shop bears the name of the international chain that bought it. Aglaia, you must know it. It was a large bookshop with a very good academic section. As a student and later too I went there under the pretext of looking for academic books, but bought lots of fiction. I was a regular customer.

One hot summer's day – 16 August 1980, I was on leave and wearing my major's uniform which was far too hot for the weather – I was going to buy some books. I was served by a young bookseller I'd never seen before.

When she approached me and asked, 'Can I help you?' I couldn't think of what to say. I was an experienced forty-two-year-old man who'd never been tongue-tied in the presence of a beautiful woman. But on this occasion I was unable to utter a single word. I was – I can't put it any other way – spellbound.

After a while – no idea how long – I stammered, 'I'm looking for a book.'

Rather than smiling at my stupid answer, she asked politely, 'What sort of book?' I was about to say, 'Any book,' but thought hard and managed to recall the name of the novel I'd just read for the second time: *The Great Gatsby*. As she went to fetch it I gazed at the woman. Her black hair came down to her waist and her graceful way of moving made it swing gently.

She vanished behind the shelves and when she reappeared I'd remembered which books I'd actually intended to buy. She brought me all of them, one by one.

Not only was she beautiful. On the name badge above her chest, which I didn't dare look at, it said MELODY.

Melody! That's precisely what she was: music floating through the room, causing everyone to dream. First and foremost me.

From then on I visited the bookshop as often as I could and tried to get served by her.

I had to admit to myself, I had fallen in love.

This was a new feeling entirely. Until then I'd had the odd love affair – a bachelor needs to for his reputation, or people might get the wrong idea, if you know what I mean.

But career, army and social standing always came first. All the same I had my physical needs, you understand. Forgive me. At your age I always found it disgusting when old men talked about sex. Do you feel that way? I hope not. It's my intention, you see, to be absolutely open with you. In your job you will have to find out everything about me. I mustn't have any secrets from you. You'll learn things you don't want to know. Personal, private, intimate things even. And you'll have to keep them to yourself. Because you're bound to secrecy.

There were women I liked very much, very, very much even. But was I in love with them? So in love that you think you're floating, so in love that you're first thought on waking and last before you fall asleep is of her? I'd never experienced that. Nor had I ever anticipated it. Love had taken me completely by surprise. Is it something you're familiar with?

Dr Stotz wasn't expecting answers to his occasional questions. Their only purpose was to ensure Tom was paying attention. His role was a silent one. Nodding, shaking his head in disbelief, voilà.

I began courting Melody. This was also something new for me. Up till then my love life had been uncomplicated. Direct and without 'saying something stupid like I love you'. Do you know the Sinatra song?

But now those three words were on the tip of my tongue the whole time.

I started buying romantic novels from her. *Anna Karenina*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Thorn Birds*, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, that sort of thing. I already had many of these on my shelves, without ever having read them. But now I did.

One evening I plucked up courage and waited for her after work. It took a long time for her to leave the shop. She was wearing a summer dress. Over her arm holding her handbag she'd draped the light cardigan she'd been wearing in the bookshop. She crossed the road briskly, her hair bobbing up and down. Two men chatting and smoking on the pavement turned their heads to stare at her and I actually felt a pang of jealousy.

When Melody saw me she smiled. Not in surprise, but as if she'd been expecting me.