

Looking Up

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Chapter One

Virginia Faulkner was excited. She did not get this excited very often lately. After all, what did she usually have to look forward to? She was a widow and had not worked for almost ten years. She usually lived from day to day.

However, today was indeed a special day. She would have four more kids joining her extended family. She had been anticipating this day for weeks, seventeen weeks to be exact. Four! Usually the Rockland, Arizona Police Department had only one or two new officers graduating from the state police academy and even then only a few times a year.

Therefore, this was indeed an exciting day for Ginny. She looked at the man sitting next to her in the bleachers. Harry Callaway had been chief of police ever since her Leroy had gone to be with the Lord eight years ago. Harry was a good man, but he would never be quite the chief her Leroy had been. No one ever could.

Harry was very tall. At five eight, Ginny was considered to be tall for a woman but she had to look a long way up at Harry when he was standing next to her. At six seven, Harry was taller than anyone else in the department and he wasn't bashful about using that height to his advantage whenever he felt the need.

The bright indoor lighting of the gym was shining off his baldhead. Ginny had wondered more than once, if he polished it every morning. Other than his height, probably his most noticeable feature was his bright blue eyes. Harry had a way of looking at people with those eyes that would make them squirm. And of course, he used that to intimidate when needed.

She laughed softly to herself. The upstart had only tried to intimidate her once over the past eight years and she had set him in his place and had been right quick about it too.

As usual, Harry was wearing his uniform and Ginny was wearing one of her trademark kimono style silk dresses. This one was a dark blue to fit the occasion.

Overall, she felt that since Leroy could no longer be the chief, then Harry would do.

With a smile on her face, she looked out at the large class of new graduates who would be going out to various police agencies around the state. She knew her four well enough to pick them all out of the group. It helped that they were usually together. She had observed before that the recruits usually banded together by the agency that had hired them.

There were her four new kids. She was already proud of them. After all, they had all four just completed seventeen weeks of difficult, intensive training and done it well, she might add. They had all finished near the top of their class.

There were two boys and two girls this time. How nice! She had already begun making her plans for each of the four. She had a boy picked out for one of the girls and she had a girl picked out for one of the boys as well. But that still left a boy and a girl. Hmmm! She would just have to do some more research and observation, not to mention a lot more thinking along the way. But she would get there before too long, you could count on it.

Her four were sitting together on the second row and Ginny's seat halfway up the bleachers afforded her a nice view of their faces.

She looked first at Jake Harper, the only one who was from back east. She had fussed at Harry when told her he hired a New Yorker. One of her complaints about those people was what they did to the English language. She detested contractions and any form of slang. Therefore, she never used either one. Her opinion was that you should say exactly what you intend to say without taking short cuts or otherwise butchering the language.

Harry had only been able to ease her distress somewhat by telling her that Jake was from a small town near Albany, not from that awful city they called The Big Apple. She knew all about that city and she did not want anything to do with it, thank you very much.

Jake, was quite an athletic looking young man with very short dark brown hair. He had a nice smile, but for Ginny's way of thinking, he just did not use it quite often enough. Well, she would fix that soon and that boy would never know what hit him.

She almost giggled. She could say that about the other three as well. They were all now her special projects. They just would not know that for some time. In fact, Ginny took pride in her finished products so much that she always followed up with each couple. She certainly looked forward to doing that.

Next to Jake was the other boy, Tyler Randall, who was from Las Vegas of all places, talk about sinful cities. At least he was not from the east. He was the thin wiry type who was probably much stronger than he looked. His reddish brown hair was very short on the sides but longer on top. He appeared to be a gentle type of boy and Ginny thought she was going to like him quite a bit. In fact, he reminded her of her Leroy at that age.

The two girls were next. Sandy Wells was a cute blond with a pixie haircut. She was a tall and rather athletic looking girl. She was from Tucson which was okay with Ginny as long as the girl did not start cutting down her Sun Devils.

Finally, there was half of Ginny's first project, Donna Parker. The girl reminded Ginny of herself at that age. Donna had long beautiful hair that was such a shiny light brown. It was very much like Ginny's had been when she was young. She still had beautiful hair but it was no longer brown or quite so long. She always reminded everyone that her hair was silver rather than gray, which was so drab sounding.

Then she thought about how young they all were. Jake and Sandy were only twenty-two, barely old enough to become a police officer. Donna was only a year older and Tyler was the oldest at twenty-four.

Now, back to her first project. Ginny already had a boy picked out for Donna. The boy did not know it yet, obviously. However, she knew she needed to work quickly on this one or Bill Coleman, who also happened to be the mayor, would have his son, Bob, married off to a girl that was just not suited for him. Ginny knew that was true since she already had someone else picked out for the girl.

She had just finished her review of her four new kids when the ceremony began. She glanced over at Harry just as he waved at a distinguished looking man in his late forties who was wearing some sort of a sheriff's uniform.

Harry saw Ginny looking at the man and said, "That's Stan Parker, he's a commander with the SO up north and he is Donna Parker's dad."

Ah, that was interesting. Ginny chided herself for not looking at the girls' bio a little closer. She had known Stan Parker for years. How could she have missed something that important about Donna Parker?

Thirty minutes later, the ceremony was over and all four of the new Rockland PD rookies were heading out of the building. Ginny made sure that she and Harry were waiting for them near the exit.

She watched as Stan Parker picked up his daughter in a bear hug and the spry girl swatted him on the shoulder for his efforts. Good for her. Ginny liked her more for that. It certainly showed that Donna Parker had some spunk in her all right. She would certainly need it if she was going to be able to tame that wild lawyer who looked too much like a movie star.

That was okay though. Ginny always did love a challenge.

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Donna Parker looked out at the crowd of people in the stands and easily picked out her father. It wasn't that difficult since he was in his dark brown uniform. At forty-eight, Donna thought that Stan Parker was a fine figure of a man. She had always loved to see him in uniform, especially now that he was a commander with the sheriff's office back home. She admired the two silver stars that stood out on his shoulders.

She turned her attention away from her father when she heard Sandy make a strange sound. She turned that way to see Sandy grinning at her.

“Since I don’t think you’re into older men, then I’d say that guy you’ve been staring at must be your father, the one who couldn’t make it to our family day because of some sort of police emergency.”

Donna smiled back at the woman who had become her friend during their many weeks of training. Then she had the thought that Sandy was now her fellow officer too. That had a great sound to it, didn’t it? Officer Parker, that was her now. She still had to make it through ten more weeks of field training with training officers riding along with her. She would also be on probation until her first year was up which was already one third of the way over.

When the ceremony ended, Donna began making her way toward the exit with the other three new officers who were going to be with Rockland PD. At five four, she felt small in the midst of the others. The men were both around six feet and even Sandy was only a couple of inches shorter.

They were trying to make it to the exit where she could see the chief waiting there with an older woman who had beautiful, silver hair hanging down to her shoulders. Donna had seen that woman several times during her training here. She must be some bigwig with the city of Rockland. That made Donna realize that she would need to learn much more about Rockland. Being from Flagstaff, she never got to know the many cities that surrounded Phoenix. She had never even been to Rockland before her interviews with the PD. It was on the far west side of Phoenix and she’d just never had any reason to go there.

However, her dad had told her that Rockland PD was a good department for her since he knew the chief and said he was a good cop and a fair man to work for. She’d figured that was good enough for her. So she’d applied for one of the four openings they’d posted back in December.

Everyone from down here had told her that she had picked the perfect time to move to the lower desert. In January, when her class had started, it was wonderful with the daytime temperatures usually in the seventies. In spite of that, she was beginning to feel the heat and it was only the first week of May.

Of course, people from down there were quick to tell her that it would get about twenty degrees hotter and stay that way for most of the summer. It was already in the low nineties. It seldom got that high all summer in Flagstaff. Oh well, she’d just have to get used to it. She’d also have to get used to it while wearing a dark blue uniform. Oh, brother!

Before she could stop him, her dad was in front of her and had scooped her up in his arms, giving her one of his trademark bear hugs. When he put her back on her feet, she swatted him on the shoulder.

“Oh Dad. You just have to stop doing that. It’s so embarrassing. Besides, I’m a police officer now. People just don’t go around picking police officers up off their feet.”

She spoiled her scolding by giggling.

Of course that didn’t put him off one little bit. He grinned back at her and said. “I can hug this police officer any time I want.”

Then he leaned down and kissed her on the cheek. There was simply no stopping him, so she ignored his latest transgression, knowing that he might do something more outrageous if she said anything else about his behavior.

They continued to walk toward the exit with her dad now between her and Sandy. Donna could tell that Sandy was giving him a once over.

When they reached the chief and the older lady, the chief stepped forward and held out his hand to Donna’s dad.

“Stan, it’s good to see you. Aren’t you just a little bit proud of this daughter of yours?”

She knew she was blushing when she heard rude sounds coming from the others, especially Jake. After giving him a dirty look, she looked back in time to shake the chief’s hand that was coming at her.

After the chief had shaken hands with all four of them, he turned to the distinguished looking lady next to him and said, "Officers, I'd like you to meet Virginia Faulkner. She's kind of the matriarch of the Rockland Police Department. Her husband, Leroy was the chief for twenty years."

They each stepped forward in turn and took the hand that Mrs. Faulkner offered to them rather delicately. Donna was surprised at the firm handshake from such a thin older woman. There was strength in that hand and that surprised Donna. Delicate? Not this lady.

She looked a little closer at this Virginia Faulkner. She had to be in her early seventies but she looked so vibrant and healthy. The woman was dressed almost formally in a dark blue silk kimono like dress that hugged her still trim figure. For some unexplained reason, Donna suddenly thought that she would like to get to know this intriguing lady much better.

Then she looked closer at Mrs. Faulkner's face and she seemed to be giving Donna a strange look. It was almost a look of approval but then it seemed to be more, much more. Could it be ... pride? That look made Donna feel like she'd taken a test and passed it with flying colors. Interesting!

Just as she finished all those strange thoughts, Mrs. Faulkner giggled like a little girl and said, "Now that the four of you are going to be part of the family, so to speak, you may call me Ginny. All of my friends do."

Once she said that, she turned and walked toward the exit with the very tall chief hurrying to stay at her side.

Outside, they all separated to go toward their individual cars. Donna noticed that Mrs. Faulkner, no Ginny, was still with the chief. She continued to watch as they approached a Rockland PD squad car. The chief opened the front passenger door for Ginny then went around to get behind the wheel.

That was interesting too.

* * *

Bob Coleman was bored. He was bored with the group he was out with tonight, except for his best friend Ken. Most of all, he was bored with the way his life had been going lately. His dad was always on his case about running for city council and getting together with Rachel Anderson. She was a judge's daughter. The judge was his dad's best friend and also a very influential man. Bob was resisting both with all his might.

He didn't want to get married and especially to his best friend's little sister. She was more like a little sister to him too.

Most of all, he didn't want to be in politics. It hadn't really done much for his dad. William Robert Coleman I was mayor of Rockland. Big deal! That didn't mean much in the overall scheme of things. But then, Bob knew that his dad was planning to run for the state senate in the next election.

Politics just wasn't for him. Bob liked the law, at least most of the time. There were those times, though, when he had been forced to take a client that was rather abrasive or clearly guilty. He tried not to take any of those clients and usually succeeded.

But his last case had basically blown up in his face. He'd really believed the guy when he'd said he was innocent. Then when the police had found new evidence that proved the guy's guilt, Bob had really been sent into a tailspin that he was having a difficult time pulling out of.

Another thing that bothered him was that he knew his representing persons accused of felonies never made any brownie points for him with his dad and the judge or with the local police for that matter. It especially bothered him since he had several friends on the police force. But hey, what could he say? Somebody had to do it. Right?

But ... did it have to be him?

His attention came back to the group he was with at the table. He normally didn't do nightclubs but his best friend, Ken Anderson, had dragged him along tonight. Ken was also a lawyer but he was an Assistant County Attorney. Ken had insisted that Bob join him to celebrate a victory in court.

Bob had to pay attention now since Ken was talking to him.

“Hey, man, you haven’t heard a word I’ve said for the last five minutes.”

Bob looked closely at the man who had been his best friend since elementary school. No, Ken didn’t look angry with him. Therefore, he smiled and said, “Sorry, Ken. Guess I was just daydreaming.”

Ken laughed and said, “I have a feeling that it wasn’t about my little sister, no matter what our dads may want.”

Bob shook his head and grinned back at Ken. “No, it wasn’t.” He frowned. “Listen, Ken, you know I love Rachel like she was my own sister and I’m sure she feels the same way about me. But that’s the problem. We don’t think of each other any other way.”

Ken held up his hands between them. “Hey, don’t jump on me. I’m with you on this one. Do you actually think I would want you as a brother-in-law?”

They both laughed then and joined in the discussion going on around the table. But Bob wasn’t much of a baseball fan so he soon grew tired of all the talk about how the Diamondbacks had been in first place for two weeks now. Big deal!

One of the other guys, who was a police officer, spoke up then. “Hey guys, here come two new cops. They just graduated from the academy today. Look at them swagger.

Bob and Ken both turned to see two men in their early twenties passing by their table. They were wearing jeans and t-shirts. They were both around six feet but one had a weightlifter’s body while the other looked like a long distance runner.

As they passed by, a couple of girls at a nearby table seemed to be giving them come-on looks. Bob had to look away. He wasn’t interested in that kind of a girl and he didn’t even want to watch to see if the new cops picked them up. He just wasn’t in the mood. But then, what was he in the mood for? That was a good question, one that he didn’t have an answer to right then.

His phone buzzed with a text message and it was his dad. He wanted to know where Bob was. So, he texted back that he was helping Ken celebrate.

Then he received a text back asking him to stop by his parents’ house. He had something important to discuss. Great! He knew he wouldn’t be able to get out of that one so he agreed.

He turned to Ken and said, “Say Ken, do you know where your sister is tonight?”

Ken grinned when he saw Bob holding his cell phone in his hand. He looked at his watch. “Yeah, she’s just getting off at the hospital about now. What? Are our dad’s plotting again and dragging you over there?”

Bob nodded. “Yeah, I sure hope that your dad didn’t drag Rachel along this time. But I am afraid that our dads are cooking something up again.”

Ken shook his head and said, “You didn’t ask me where my dad was though, did you?”

“You mean he really is with my dad?”

“Yep. Good luck, my man.”

Bob didn’t know why, at the age of twenty-six, he still came running every time his dad beckoned but he did. What was worse was that he didn’t know how to get out of the habit. So he left the club and headed toward his parents’ house like the dutiful son he was most of the time. But not in all, that was for sure.

As soon as he used his key to let himself into his parents’ house, his mom met him at the door. Bob loved both of his parents, but his mom was the one that he could always turn to when he just needed someone to talk to. He knew she would listen to him without attacking him. He really needed that right now. He could tell from the look on her face that she wanted him to follow her into the kitchen, so he gladly did.

Once in the kitchen, she turned to him and said, “Son, you know your father loves you. He just doesn’t show it the same way that I do.”

Now what? How did he respond to that statement? When he didn’t, she continued.

“He and Willard Anderson are in the den right now and I’m sure they’re still plotting how they can get you and Rachel together.”

She rung her hands and looked almost in tears. "I've tried to talk to him about this but it just doesn't do any good. He and Willard are convinced that you and Rachel belong together."

"I know mom. I've heard it from Dad for a long time. But you know that Rachel and I could never get married."

"Yes, Dear, I know that but apparently your father doesn't."

So, with his mom's warning in mind, Bob headed down the long hallway of his parents' rather large home to his dad's den. He knew that two very determined men were waiting on him.

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By the time Donna left the PD after getting the rest of her gear and her schedule for the next three weeks, she was exhausted. She just wanted to go to her new furnished apartment just a few blocks from the station and try to unwind. It sure sounded nice to be able just to relax after the last seventeen weeks of hectic activity.

She had learned that Rockland PD had two patrol teams, and each worked four ten-hour days. For the first three weeks, she would be on the Blue Team, which worked Friday through Monday. She would be on the second shift, which ran from four pm until two am. Oops, she needed to keep thinking in terms of the twenty-four-hour clock. That would be from 1600 to 0200.

Oh dear, she had never really been a late night person. She'd just have to get used to it though. The sergeant had told her that she would be on this schedule for three weeks with one Field Training Officer then she would change two more times, spending three weeks each with two more FTOs then her last week of field training would be spent with a sergeant riding with her.

The only break she'd been given was that since she'd already put in a full day, more or less, they'd told her that she didn't have to report for duty until tomorrow afternoon. That was great. She didn't think she would have been able to keep on going today until two am.

As she parked her car in the parking lot of the building where her new home would be, she thought back to her time with her dad earlier. She had been worrying about him since she had been gone from home for the past few months. Up until then, they'd been together all the time. She had gone to college at Northern Arizona University, which had allowed her to live at home the whole time.

She had felt that her dad really needed her since her mom had died the summer after Donna graduated from high school. They'd both been emotional messes for quite a while.

It took Donna three trips from her car to her new apartment to take in all her things. When she plopped down on the sofa afterward, she was thankful for two things. First, that her apartment was on the ground floor and second that the apartment was furnished and she hadn't had more things to bring in.

She had just gone into the kitchen to get a drink of water when she heard a loud knock on her door. When she opened the door, she wasn't too surprised to see Sandy Wells standing there. However, she was surprised to see another woman next to Sandy, and they looked almost funny together. Sandy was five ten and the other girl looked to be as short as Donna.

"Hey neighbor. I came down to see how you're settling in and I met Rachel here just as she was about to knock on your door."

The other woman who seemed to be about their age, stepped forward and said, "Hi, my name is Rachel Anderson and I live across the hall."

Donna shook Rachel's hand. "Well, come on in, both of you. It's good to meet you Rachel. I assume the tall one there told you who she is."

Rachel giggled softly. "Yes, she did. I understand that you're both new police officers here. I'm sure we'll be seeing a lot of each other, not only here but I'm an ER nurse at the hospital just on the other side of the police station."

Well, that made sense. The woman was wearing scrubs after all.

Donna got a chance to get a good look at Rachel as she and Sandy sat on the sofa while Donna grabbed three bottles of water from her fridge. This was one advantage of a small one-bedroom apartment. The living room and kitchen were all in one extended space with a table in between.

Rachel was short as Donna had immediately noticed but she seemed to make up for it with about the biggest smile Donna had ever seen. The girl seemed to be smiling all the time. She had shoulder length dark brown hair that was in a ponytail.

As Donna sat a water on the coffee table in front of her, Rachel said, "I assume you two have met Miss Ginny since you're new police officers here in Rockland."

Both Sandy and Donna said "Yes" at the same time. But Sandy added, "It sure seems like there's a lot more to that little old lady than meets the eye."

Rachel laughed then. "Oh yes. There certainly is. I've known her all my life and I'm still amazed at all that she seems to be able to accomplish."

Donna was puzzled now. "What do you mean by accomplish?"

Rachel seemed surprised. "Hasn't anyone told you about Miss Ginny yet?"

When both Donna and Sandy shook their heads, Rachel said, "Well, there just isn't very much that goes on around this town without her knowing about it or even more likely, making it happen."

Donna was surprised at first. Then her thoughts about the woman she'd met this afternoon hit her and what Rachel said made more sense.

Rachel was talking again. "I guess the biggest thing you need to know about Miss Ginny is that her husband was the chief of police here for twenty years until he died of a heart attack about eight years ago."

She seemed to be letting that settle in before going on. They already knew that much but Donna was sure there was more to tell.

"Harry Callaway has been the chief since Chief Faulkner died." It seems that Miss Ginny, even in the midst of her grief, hand-picked Harry to be the new chief."

"Oh." That came from Sandy but Donna felt the same way.

Sandy then added. "That would explain why she was at our graduation today and that we also saw her several other times while we were in the academy."

Rachel nodded. "It certainly does. Some people say that Miss Ginny really runs the police department and just lets Harry think he does."

That made Donna and Sandy laugh but when they saw that Rachel wasn't laughing, they stopped and Donna said, "You're serious?"

Rachel giggled again. "I sure am. In fact, some people think that she gives an awful lot of advice to Mayor Coleman too." She smiled mischievously and added. "My dad is the mayor's best friend and he says that it's mostly true."

"Wow!" Sandy waved both hands back and forth then said, "Hey Donna, girl, I'd say that you and I had better get on that lady's good side and stay there."

After that, Rachel left saying that she needed to get some sleep since she'd just finished a double shift at the hospital.

As soon as the door closed behind Rachel, Sandy turned to Donna and said, "What have we gotten ourselves into here girl?"

Donna's cell phone rang and when she looked at the number, she didn't recognize it. Thinking that it might be the PD, she answered it.

"I'm so glad that you are going to be with us now Donna. This is Ginny. We met at your graduation this afternoon. Remember?"

As if Donna could soon forget such a memorable lady. "Of course I remember you Ginny. How are you doing this evening?"

There was what sounded like a giggle on the other end. "I'm just fine Dear. Thank you very much for asking."

Donna could tell from the tone of Ginny's voice that she must have said the right thing.

Ginny cleared her throat and went on. "I called to invite you to a little celebratory gathering I'm having for the four of you at my house tomorrow at noon. Would you be able to make it?"

Donna was surprised. "Why of course. I would love to."

"Good, good. I've already talked to the two young men. Would you ask Sandy Wells for me now?"

"Oh, of course I can. She's sitting right here."

"Oh marvelous. Would you be so kind as to extend my invitation to her too? See you tomorrow then."

Donna was sure she had surprise written all over her face. Sandy confirmed it when she said, "What in the world was that all about?"

Donna tried to smile. "I sure am glad that Rachel warned us about Ginny. She just invited us to a party at her house tomorrow at noon. When I told her you were right here, she seemed to already know it and she didn't even wait to see if you would agree."

Sandy laughed. "Well, if all that Rachel said was true, I'll bet that the old girl already knows what all four of our schedules are."

Donna frowned and rubbed her chin with the back of her fingers. "You know. I just think you may be right. As you so astutely put it before, what in the world have we gotten ourselves into?"

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On the drive to his parents' house, Bob had been expecting the worst and when he got there and his mom pulled him off to the side, he was sure of it then.

So now, as he approached his dad's den, he found the door closed which forced him to knock on it. That was never a good sign. What were those two power brokers up to in there behind closed doors? He didn't really want to know. But it definitely affected him, so he had to go in and find out.

When he knocked, his dad called out and Bob opened the door.

As soon as he passed through the door, Bob went on hyper alert. The two older men were sitting at a small round table on the opposite end of the room from his dad's desk. That certainly didn't look good. That was usually their wheeling and dealing place. Not good! Not good at all.

Bob walked up to Judge Anderson, who stood and stuck out his hand.

"Good to see you my boy."

As he shook the man's hand, Bob looked at the judge. Everyone called him that, even his own family. For such an imposing man, he was only five nine. And at six four, Bob tried not to tower over the short, slightly round man.

Bob's dad pointed to a chair across the table from them and he sat, trying to avoid making eye contact with either one.

He knew the judge very well. After all, the man was not only his dad's best friend but he was Ken's dad too. But more than that, Willard Anderson was a superior court judge and was used to telling people what to do and how to do it, or how long it would take them to do it. Bob almost laughed at that thought.

People always said that except for the twenty-four years' age difference between them, Bob and his dad could have been twins. Sure, he was a couple of inches taller and his dad had put on a few extra pounds but their build, facial features and hair were very much alike. People were right in assuming that Bob grew his thick mustache just so he would look different from his dad.

He was talking now. "Bob, I want you to know that we're not about to try to get you to do something that isn't good for you. In fact, we both agree that this could be quite a beneficial move for you, career wise."

Now what were they up to? Were they going to keep pushing him to run for city council? He began to build his argument in his mind against that possibility. After all, a good attorney should always go into court or any other confrontation, with his argument ready, shouldn't he?

He was so deep in his own thoughts that he almost missed the next thing his dad said.

"The Judge has come over here tonight to inform us that Angela Carpenter is ready to extend you an invitation to join her as one of her ACAs."

As was his habit, Bob's dad dropped that bomb and then sat back to see how Bob received it. He wasn't disappointed either. Bob was so surprised, no shocked, that he was speechless. He knew the other two men were reading his face like a book.

The judge spoke up then in his distinctive rasping voice. "Son, I'd say that this is an opportunity of a lifetime." He chuckled. "Not to mention that you'd now be working with Ken as well."

Still struggling for something to say, Bob knew the judge was trying to appeal to his friendship with the man's son. That made him wonder just why the judge would be so much in favor of Bob becoming an Assistant County Attorney. He knew from much experience that the man didn't usually do anything unless there was something in it for him. Beware!

"Well, Bob, what do you think? Don't you think that this is just the opportunity you've been waiting for?" His dad was now leaning slightly forward. That didn't bode well for Bob either.

Finally, knowing that he had to say something quickly, Bob said, "How is this whole thing coming down?"

The judge laughed a booming laugh. "Angela told me just this afternoon that she intends to call you first thing Monday morning." He snorted. "I'm sure she told me this just so I could prepare you and you'd be able to give her an answer right away."

Before Bob could come up with a response to that, the judge added, "She did indicate that you are her first choice but she does have two others in mind if you would happen to refuse her invitation."

That didn't surprise Bob. He knew that was the way county politics usually worked. The judge was probably right when he said that she was ready to offer the job to someone else immediately if he refused. But the question was did he want that job? Sure, he'd thought about it but that was as far as he'd ever gone. He had certainly never gone so far as to send his resume to the county attorney.

Then that thought led to another. Why was she going to ask him now? This seemed to be rather sudden, didn't it?

"Son? What do you think? You haven't even said a word yet." Bob knew his dad was getting impatient and the judge probably was too.

"Well, here's what I feel right now. This is all too sudden for me even to think about it intelligently, much less give any kind of an answer. I need time to think."

The judge laughed again. "Why do you think Angela told me today? She wants you to have all weekend to think about it."

"Okay. Then that's exactly what I'm going to do."

His dad leaned a little farther over the table toward Bob. "But you will take it, won't you son."

Bob knew that was no question but refused to be drawn into one of his dad's little traps. "It means exactly what it sounds like. I need to do a lot of thinking about it over the weekend."

His dad leaned back in his chair, seeming to have heard what he wanted to hear. "Good. Oh and by the way, Ginny is having a little get together tomorrow at noon for the latest new officers to join the police department. You'll be there of course, won't you."

Bob knew that wasn't a question either but he didn't mind at all. He dearly loved the old lady and always took every opportunity to be with her.

"I'll be there."

With that, Bob stood to leave and neither his dad nor the judge said anything else as he quietly left the room.

Man! Did he ever have a lot of thinking to do!