

Louis Creed, who had lost his father at three and who had never known a grandfather, never expected to find a father as he entered his middle age, but that was exactly what happened . . . although he called this man a friend, as a grown man must do. He met this man on the evening he and his wife and his two children moved into the big white frame house in Ludlow. Winston Churchill moved in with them. Church was his daughter Eileen's cat.

The search committee at the university had moved slowly, the hunt for a house within commuting distance of the university had been hair-raising, and by the time they neared the place where he believed the house to be—all the landmarks are right . . . like the astrological signs the night before Caesar was assassinated, Louis thought morbidly—they were all tired and tense and on edge. Gage was cutting teeth and fussed almost ceaselessly. He would not sleep, no matter how much Rachel sang to him. She offered him milk even though it was off his schedule. Gage knew his dining schedule as well as she—better, maybe—and he promptly bit her with his new teeth. Rachel, still not entirely sure about this move to Maine from Chicago, where she had lived her whole life, burst into tears. Eileen promptly joined her. In the back of the station wagon, Church continued to pace restlessly as he had done for the last three days it had taken them to drive here from Chicago. His yowling from the cat kennel had been bad, but his restless pacing after they finally gave up and set him free in the car had been almost as unnerving.

Louis himself felt a little like crying. A wild but not Unattractive idea suddenly came to him: He would suggest that they go back to Bangor for something to eat while they waited for the moving van, and when his three hostages to fortune got out, he would floor the accelerator and drive away without so much as a look back.