

It was late. Raymond was sleeping on one of the two beds in the hotel room. Charlie lay on the other bed, and smoked a cigarette. He felt very tired and very sad. He needed someone to love. Someone who loved him. He needed Susanna.

Charlie pulled the telephone towards him.

'Hello?'

'Hello, it's me, Charlie,' he said softly.

There was no answer.

'I . . . I just want to hear . . . that our relationship is not . . .'
Charlie waited for Susanna to say something. When she still did not speak, he said, 'I'm frightened that it's finished between us.'

Finally, Susanna spoke. 'Don't ask me today, Charlie. You won't like my answer. Give me some time.'

'I'm . . . going to get custody of Ray. I've talked to my lawyer and he says that it is possible. Firstly, I have to take Ray to see a special doctor in Los Angeles.'

'Charlie, they won't give you custody of Ray,' Susanna said. 'Dr Bruner has looked after him for more than twenty years. You've known him for four days.'

She didn't understand. Nobody understood his relationship with Raymond. 'Can I phone you when I get back to Los Angeles?' Susanna didn't say yes, but she didn't say no either.

Chapter 8 Las Vegas

The next morning Charlie heard more bad news from the office. They were taking the Lamborghinis away. And Charlie had very little money left. He was paying for everything with his American Express card.

Charlie and Ray sat together in the hotel restaurant. At the next table there was a group of twenty businessmen. They were finishing their meal and asked the waitress for the bill.

Raymond looked over at the table. It was full of plates and cups and different bits of food.

'Of course that bill is ninety-three dollars, forty,' Raymond said.

Charlie laughed. 'How can you know that, Ray?'

'Ninety-three dollars, forty,' Raymond repeated.

The waitress returned with the bill. Charlie read over her shoulder. The bill was for ninety-three dollars, forty.

'How do you do it, Ray?' Charlie asked. 'You can remember every number in a phone book. You can count two hundred toothpicks in under a second. You're like a computer.'

'Today is Thursday,' Raymond said. 'Thursday is coffee and cakes. Same as Tuesday.'

Charlie looked at his brother. Suddenly he had an idea. A really great idea to end all his money problems.

'Raymond,' he asked his brother. 'Have you ever played cards?'



The next day they arrived in Las Vegas. Charlie bought new suits for Raymond and himself. He also bought Raymond a television the size of a small clock. Then he showed his brother how to play cards.

'Do you understand how to play now, Raymond?'

'I count cards,' said Raymond.

'Yes, but you must *never* say that.'

They went into the Golden Casino at four o'clock in the afternoon. They sat down at one of the card tables. Five hours later they got up from the card table. Charlie was very, very tired, but very happy.

He smiled at his brother. 'Raymond, you have won us ninety thousand dollars.'

Raymond did not look up from the television he now carried



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They sat down at one of the card tables.*

everywhere in his hand. 'Eighty-nine thousand, seven hundred and fifty-six dollars,' he said.

And that was only in one visit! 'You're going to make us rich, Ray,' Charlie said.

Raymond looked from his television to his watch. 'Eight minutes to bed time,' he said. 'Eight minutes.'

Charlie smiled. Raymond was still Raymond. 'Ray, we're going to stay in the best room in the hotel here,' he said.

'Tomorrow we're going to come down and enjoy ourselves. Perhaps we'll find you a girl.'

Raymond was watching his television again. 'A girl,' he repeated.

'Yes, why not?'
But first Charlie needed a hot bath and a good night's sleep. And he needed to talk to Susanna again.



There was a knock on the door. Charlie opened it. 'Susanna! Charlie put his arms round the girl that he loved and kissed her.

'Ray, Susanna's here!'

'How did you know we were here?' Charlie asked her.

Susanna spoke softly. 'They told me at the office,' she said.

'I'm sorry they took the cars away.'

'Oh, don't worry about that,' Charlie said happily. 'We have some news to tell you. Ray, tell Susanna what we've done.'

'We played cards,' Raymond said. 'I counted cards and we won money.'

'What?' Susanna asked.

'It's a long story,' Charlie said, pulling Susanna towards the bedroom. 'We'll talk about it later.'



Raymond knocked on the bedroom door.

'Come in,' Charlie called.

Raymond opened the door and stood there with his little television in his hand.

'Six minutes until I find a girl. To dance with,' Raymond said. 'You said ten o'clock.'

'A girl?' Susanna asked. Charlie was getting out of bed. 'I taught him to dance. Now, we're going to try to find him a girl to dance with.'

'Five minutes,' Raymond said.



They walked round the Golden Casino for an hour. It was very difficult to find a girl for Raymond to dance with. To other people Raymond seemed strange.

Charlie pointed to one of the tables. 'This is where we played cards,' he said. Suddenly, he felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned around to see two big men in suits.

'Mr Babbitt?'

'Yes?'

'The boss wants to see you, please,' one of the men said. He did not smile and Charlie guessed that there was a problem.

Charlie turned to Susanna. 'Can you take Raymond back to our hotel room?'

'Of course,' Susanna said.

Susanna and Raymond took the lift back to their room. Raymond was watching a film with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers on his little TV.

In the lift, Susanna looked at Raymond and felt sad for him. 'Raymond, have you ever danced with a girl before?' she asked.

'I've danced with Charlie Babbitt,' Raymond said. 'One time. With Charlie Babbitt.' He did not look up from his TV.

The music from the dancing below came into the lift. 'I like this music,' Susanna said softly. 'Do you want to dance with me, Raymond?'

Susanna stopped the lift between two floors. She moved closer to Raymond and took his hand in hers. They started to dance inside the lift. Raymond watched his television over Susanna's shoulder.

The song came to an end. Susanna started the lift again. 'The other girls have missed a beautiful dance,' she said.

Later Charlie came up to the room. He looked very tired. 'We have to leave here tomorrow,' he said. 'They won't let us play cards here again.'

'Why not?' Susanna asked.

'Because we won,' said Charlie, 'and they don't like people winning. I guess Raymond was too good for them.'

Chapter 9 A Very Good Driver

They left Las Vegas the next morning, and drove back to Los Angeles. Susanna sat next to Charlie in the front of the Buick. Raymond sat in the back of the car and watched another film on his TV. Sometimes he looked out at the desert they were driving through.

Once Raymond drove the car for a few minutes. The road was empty so there was no danger.

'I'm a . . . very good . . . driver,' Raymond said.

Susanna got out at her flat in Santa Monica. Charlie and Raymond drove on to Charlie's house in Los Angeles.

There was a letter waiting for Charlie. It was from Dr Bruner. 'I'm staying here in Los Angeles, at the Hotel California,' the letter said. 'Please come and see me. I think we need to talk.'

That night Charlie went to see Dr Bruner at his hotel.

'Mr Babbitt, I want to stop playing games,' Dr Bruner said. 'My lawyer is talking to your lawyer. He is explaining to him . . . the facts. Raymond will see a special doctor on Friday. This

doctor will decide who gets custody of Raymond. And you are going to lose.'

'I think that is for the doctor to decide,' Charlie said. 'But I have helped Raymond more in one week than you have in twenty years.'

'You *think* you have helped Raymond!' Dr Bruner said. 'But Raymond is still autistic. He will always be autistic! Neither you nor I can change that fact.'

Charlie turned to go. 'I'll see you on Friday, Dr Bruner.'

'Don't you understand, Charlie? Dr Bruner called. 'Even if they give you custody of Raymond, you will not get your father's money. I don't have to pay you anything.'

'Goodbye, Dr Bruner,' Charlie said, walking away.

Dr Bruner called after him. 'I'll give you two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to have Raymond back now.'

Charlie stopped walking and turned round to face the doctor. He shook his head. 'I don't want your money, Dr Bruner,' he said. 'I want my brother.'



Friday came. Dr Marston sat at his desk. Next to him was Dr Bruner. In front of him were Charlie and Raymond. The two brothers were both wearing suits.

'There's no easy way to say this, Mr Babbitt,' Dr Marston began. He did not need to continue. Charlie understood. 'You're sending Raymond back to Wallbrook,' he said.

'They can look after him there,' Dr Marston said. 'They understand Raymond's problems.'

'But Raymond has changed,' Charlie said angrily. 'He has only been seven days with me and already he is getting better. And you don't like that.'

Dr Marston and Dr Bruner sat silently for a minute. Then Dr Bruner turned to Raymond.

'How was your holiday, Raymond? Tell me what you did.'

Raymond held his little TV to his heart. 'I played cards,' he said. 'With Charlie Babbitt. And I drove Daddy's car.'

Dr Bruner laughed. 'You drove a car, Raymond?'

'It was on a quiet road,' Charlie said.

'And I danced with Susanna,' Raymond said.

Even Charlie was surprised at this.

Dr Bruner took a pen from his pocket and wrote something down in a notebook. Then he turned to Raymond. 'Do you want to stay with Charlie, Raymond?' he asked.

'I want to stay with Charlie Babbitt,' Raymond said.

'You see,' Charlie said. 'Raymond wants to stay with me.'

But Dr Bruner did not look at Charlie. He looked at Raymond. 'Do you want to go back to Wallbrook, Raymond?'

'I want to go back to Wallbrook.'

Dr Bruner wrote again in his notebook. Dr Marston also wrote something down.

'But what do you want to do, Raymond?' Dr Bruner asked again. 'Do you want to stay with Charlie? Or do you want to go back to Wallbrook?'

Raymond was now breathing very deeply. He shook his head from side to side, and moved uncomfortably in his chair. 'Wallbrook . . . Charlie Babbitt . . . Wallbrook . . . Charlie Babbitt,' he muttered.

Charlie jumped out of his chair. 'Stop asking him all these questions,' he shouted. 'You're upsetting him.'

Now Dr Bruner looked at Charlie. 'I'm showing you that Raymond is still autistic, Charlie,' he said calmly.

Charlie sat down and put his head in his hands. He saw that they would never give him custody of Raymond. Perhaps they were right. Perhaps they did know how to look after Raymond at Wallbrook.



Dr Marston turned to Dr Bruner for an answer. 'Of course you can visit Raymond,' Dr Bruner answered

But Charlie gave Raymond something they could not give him at Wallbrook. Charlie gave Raymond love. And Raymond, in his way, gave Charlie love.

All Charlie wanted was the best for Raymond. Charlie wasn't the loser. Raymond was the winner.

'Ray, they want you to go back to Wallbrook,' Charlie said slowly to his brother. He looked up at the two doctors. 'Can I visit him?'

Dr Marston turned to Dr Bruner for an answer. 'Of course,' Dr Bruner answered. 'We would like you to.'

Raymond took out his photograph. It was a lovely picture of the eighteen-year-old Raymond and the two-year-old Charlie. Rain Man and Charlie. Brothers. Raymond handed the photograph to Charlie.

Charlie began to cry softly.

'Are you all right, son?' Dr Bruner asked.

Charlie looked up and smiled. Then he turned to his brother.

'I'll come to see you, Ray,' he said. 'And you can drive Dad's car when I visit.'

'I'm a very good driver,' Raymond said.

ACTIVITIES

Chapters 1–3

Before you read

- 1 Look at the picture on the front cover of the book. Describe the two men. What does this picture suggest about their relationship, do you think?

- 2 Find these words in your dictionary.

anxiously *astonished* *expression* *funeral*
lawyer *mutter* *notebook* *upset* *will*

- a Choose the correct answer. A lawyer reads a will after
(i) a birth (ii) a wedding (iii) a funeral
- b Make five sentences. In each sentence use *one* word from each box.

mutter
upset
astonished
will
lawyer

anxiously
notebook
expression
will
funeral

After you read

- 3 Choose the correct answer.

a Susanna

- (i) has always known about Charlie's rich father.
(ii) feels sorry for Charlie.

(iii) talks to Raymond while Charlie is with Dr Bruner.

b Charlie feels angry about the will because

- (i) he hates roses.
(ii) his father has left him nothing.

(iii) he doesn't know who has got the money.

c Raymond

- (i) is about 14 years older than his brother.
(ii) has small, blue eyes.
(iii) has a sad face.

- 4 How does Charlie feel, and why, when . . .

a the bank asks him for money?

b he hears his father has died?

c he finds a coat in his father's house?

d he remembers his father's car?

e Raymond talks to him?

f Dr Bruner tells him about his brother?

Chapters 4–6

Before you read

- 5 Why has Sanford Babbitt left all his money to Raymond, do you think? Do you think he was right? Why or why not?

- 6 Find these words in your dictionary.

breathe *custody* *relationship* *toothpick*

Put the right word in the right space.

a wooden

b police

c quietly

d friendly

After you read

- 7 In how many ways is Raymond different from other people? What examples of these differences can you find?

- 8 Why does Susanna leave Charlie? Do you think she is right or not? Why?

- 9 Work in pairs with another student. Act out this conversation between Susanna and Charlie.

Student A: You are Susanna. Tell Charlie why you think that Raymond must go back to Wallbrook. When he tells you about the money, tell him why you're leaving.

Student B: You are Charlie. Tell Susanna why you don't want your brother to go back to Wallbrook. Tell her about the money. Ask her not to leave you.

Chapters 7–9

Before you read

- 10 What does Charlie think of his brother at the moment? How do you think their relationship will change?

After you read

- 11 Which of these sentences are not true, and why?
- a Raymond eats the same things on Tuesday and Friday.
 - b Charlie wants custody of his brother because he wants the money.
 - c Charlie takes Raymond to Las Vegas without telling anybody.
 - d Raymond doesn't want to go back to Wallbrook.
- 12 Why are these things important in the story?
- a the bath d \$89,756
 - b 21st January 1965 e \$250,000
 - c \$93.40 f The Beatles
- 13 At the end, we read: 'Raymond was the winner.' What does this mean, do you think? Do you agree?

Writing

- 14 You are Charlie. Write a letter to Dr Bruner. Tell him why you think it is better for Raymond to live with you. Tell him about your plans for Raymond, and how you will look after him.
- 15 Charlie tells Raymond: 'You're like a computer.' Write about the special things that Raymond can do.
- 16 You are Susanna. Write a letter to your friend about Charlie. Describe your feelings about him. Say how and why Charlie has become a better man since his father died.
- 17 Write a short story about Charlie's next visit to Raymond in the hospital. He lets Raymond drive their father's car. Where do they go? Do they get into trouble? Does Raymond have a good time or not?