

735 words

The Clones

Samantha, Sammy, was going home, her way. She plunged the gear shift of the new sports car into overdrive, thought again how curious that label was and sent her car hurtling over the smooth international expressway surface at a maniac speed. It felt so good!

The desert heat was offset by the open windows, and the wind whipped her hair and anything loose. Dark glasses protected her eyes.

In the rear seat, Ben and Beth clung to each other, wide-eyed in spite of the wind. They had never ridden in a car before.

Samantha seemed immune to their fear, even to their existence.

"Another hour - Oh! How nice!" Sammy mumbled to herself. She expected no response from her companions. She was busy with the landscape.

"Water channel almost in. Good! Planting completed. Winter crop harvest nearly completed. Very good! Look at those fields! I must remember to congratulate Bob." She continued to mumble her approval of the changes.

She went speeding past a road repair crew, taking no notice of them, hitting one and tossing the body up over the side rail.

"Damn! That took out my headlight I'll just bet." She sounded annoyed but had no other reaction.

Ben and Beth held each other tighter and remained silent.

A sea of humanity laboring in the fields appeared to the side amid a profusion of color, the flower harvest now possible in the middle of a desert.

"Nearly home now."

She swung the car easily off at the ramp and continued along a narrow, rutted road.

There were scattered streetlights, and long-dead bodies hung from a few of them. Crude signs declared the reasons for each death. From one hung a hand-fashioned cross. Sammy paid no attention to the distraction that Ben and Beth viewed with terror. Her attention was for the road.

"Damn! This should have been fixed! I told them I was coming!"

Another repair crew, this one with faster reflexes, scrambled off the road as she sped past. The road condition improved.

"Well, well. Back to the fields for them! This is more like it. They should have completed the job sooner. They should have been finished."

She pulled off the road to a long winding drive and up in front of a large, rambling ranch house. An eclectic collection of Spanish and southwest with a little old farm thrown in. New additions were not required to match the old. The result was a unique yet pleasing structure. Pleasing was the operative word. Everything must please.

The front lawn was a lavish display of meticulously kept bluegrass and surrounded with manicured, lush flower gardens. A team of gardeners were adjusting the sprinklers. Shade trees were placed in strategic locations to provide coolness to the inside of the house. Not one leaf was on the lawn.

The patio was freshly hosed and the windows sparkled. In the dusty interior of California, it took a crew of 30 to maintain the pristine outside appearance and dozens more inside.

Sammy stepped out of the car, ignoring her companions. They struggled out, retrieved her luggage, and hurried after her.

Bob Dover beat his sister to the door, rushing out to greet her in genuine affection.

"Sammy! You look great!" A bear hug. Bob stood six foot four, his inactivity showing in his volume.

"Bobby-Joe! I didn't realize how much I missed you! Or, this place."

"How was your trip?" A doorman held the massive carved doors open for them.

"Just fine. I did stop to shop in Monterey."

"I noticed. Probably couldn't resist the bargain!" He nodded at Ben and Beth who were standing in the doorway, clutching the luggage. "We're a bit short anyway."

"The ranch looks good. Better than when Mom and Dad still had it. Wish they could have lived to see it."

A liveried butler greeted them in the parlor with cool drinks. A uniformed housekeeper took Ben and Beth away. Sammy settled into a plush sofa in an immaculate room decorated in white, a daring adventure in what was still considered the new dust bowl.

"The new aqueduct is nearly completed now that the water war is over." Bob settled into his favorite chair.

"I saw. Isn't it wonderful what an adequate cheap work force can do? Not like the old days."

"Indeed. Just think though, what if the courts had decided that clones had rights?"