

the UNSEEN

CELESTINE

book 2



johnny worthen

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the UNSEEN

C E L E S T E

book 2

CHAPTER ONE

Eleanor glanced behind her, wishing she could see the highway, knowing David was there. He sat in his little car a half-mile away at the end of the Batton's dirt road waiting for her. She thought of her mother, Tabitha, parked in the same place in a borrowed car just two years before, waiting, like him, for this strange ritual that kept Eleanor alive and invisible.

A white wooden lattice hung against the house and tamed a climbing white rosebush. She worked her way to the wall. Thorns tugged at her clothes, but she moved slowly and methodically, patient and eager. She reached the trellis and began to climb it like a ladder as she had in past years.

Anyone looking couldn't help but see her. In the August moonlight, she was as exposed on the trellis as if she were a target on a wall. But the window was open, and her life had new meaning. She was excited to see what lay inside the room, what new image she would take from the girl inside.

She reached up to grasp the windowsill just above her head and felt the betrayal beneath her. The rains that had made the Nebraska corn tall had also weakened the woodwork. The plains were still alien to Eleanor and she struggled to identify the subtle odors and pollens her senses delivered to her. Different or dangerous, she realized too late. The trellis had rotted since she had last clambered up. All at once, in a splintering crash, it crumbled like a house of cards and dropped Eleanor to the ground, wrapped in clinging rose vines.

The noise bounced off the barns and rolled across the cornfields like thunder. Inside the house, a dog went wild, barking and snarling through a window, trying to see into the bush where Eleanor lay trapped.

Hours before, she'd crept from the cornfield to a parked tractor and then scurried between outbuildings and silos, ever watchful of danger. A bright half moon shone clear in the late summer sky. A steady, southeast, night breeze carried earthy scents of tilled and irrigated land; corn, horses, and ripening fruit. It had been welcoming and lovely and, she thought, portentous of good things to come.

She'd seen no movement in the house for hours. The corn, tall and lush, promised of a healthy harvest. They'd had the good water year Jamesford had not. She'd waited until she was sure no one was awake and then she'd begun her spirals around the house.

Inside she'd seen the father, the mother, a young boy around five years, a baby still under a year, and Celeste Batton, the girl whom she'd come to visit. Celeste still had the room in the front corner on the second floor, the one above the rose bush. She'd left her window open.

Because they had seen it in a movie, Eleanor had worn black clothes for the affair: dark jeans, a long sleeved black turtleneck, and a wool cap to hold her hair. She'd balked at the shoe polish for her face and complained of looking stupid. David had said she looked like a burglar and so was appropriately attired. "To hide in the dark, look like the dark," David had said sagaciously. But against the white roses, beneath the shattered white trellis, and under glowing moonlight, the black outfit did anything but hide her.

Lights blinked on inside the house. Noise of movement, alarmed and hurried. Voices in shades of worry, surprise, and anger. Clatter, shouts, footsteps. Eleanor struggled against the vines, but the thorns gripped her stupid outfit like Velcro. The thousand scrapes and cuts she suffered were nothing to the anguish she felt over her stupid carelessness. She'd been incautious and optimistic; too convinced that her run of recent good luck would continue through this annual ritual.

From upstairs in the far back, to the middle of the house, to the front, Eleanor watched with rising panic as the lights approached ever nearer the porch.

Suddenly, the door flew open, casting light onto the porch like a net. A yipping dog shot out of the house like a homing missile and ran right at Eleanor.

Following the dog, silhouetted against the porch light, framed in the threshold, came a man. The glimmer of steel in his hands was unmistakable and final.

He stepped off the porch and, led by the baying dog, quickly found Eleanor struggling for escape in the broken roses under the window.

He flicked off the safety, chambered a round, and lifted the rifle to his shoulder. Eleanor froze, feral memories of guns and fear paralyzing her. The dog fell silent in anticipation. The man lined up the sights in the moonlight, steadied the barrel, and took aim at the trapped and helpless prowler.

CHAPTER TWO

“Goddammit, Celeste. Not enough you break our hearts, you’ve got to break your neck?”

Eleanor blinked. The man lowered his rifle.

“I ought to tan your hide for this. You know how close you came to getting shot? What were you thinking, girl?”

“Uhm,” she said.

“What is wrong with you? Where were you going? What do you think is out there? See? This is exactly the kind of stupidity I was talking about. You don’t know anything.”

“What is it, Wayne?” A woman with a flashlight stood on the porch in a flannel robe and curlers.

“Our daughter is playing *Mission Impossible* down the rose trellis. Trying to escape, like this is some kind of prison.”

“Is she hurt?”

“Probably,” he said. “Hopefully. Maybe it’ll teach her something.” Eleanor could sense his anger rise instead of ebb with each syllable.

“Don’t be so hard on her,” the woman said. “Help her out of there.”

“She can get herself out. She’s so independent.”

“Wayne!”

The dog hopped and yipped excitedly. Eleanor was surprised to see that the dog, for all its loud and raucous barking, was no bigger than a cat. It was a dachshund, a wiener dog. It darted forward and licked her face like they were old friends.

The man laid the gun down and offered a hand to Eleanor. She reached up and took it. He pulled her out none too gently, and thorns ripped her shirt and cut into her side.

“Are you all right?” he demanded.

“I guess so,” she said, addressing the comment to the ground.

Had she been looking at him she could have ducked. His hand came up

so fast, so unexpectedly, that the slap caught her full across the jaw. She heard it before she felt it. It knocked her to the ground.

“Wayne!” cried the woman.

The man stood over Eleanor, a towering shadow in the moonlight.

“You’re an ungrateful little girl,” he yelled at her, emphasizing his words with a finger in her face. “After all we’ve done for you. I knew you’d try something like this. You ungrateful brat!”

The woman tried to get to Eleanor, but the man held her back.

“Desiree, you’ve got to back me in this. This is what your daughter thinks of us, thinks of the things we give her, the life—the good life—we’ve given her.”

The woman stayed back.

“I should just let you go,” the man roared at Eleanor. “You’d learn quickly how cruel the world is, how good you’ve had it. You think because we’ve put up with you, that because we’ve loved you, that the world will? Do you think the world will care about you the way we do?”

Eleanor stood up but was unsteady on her feet. The blow had dazed her, the situation more so.

“That’s enough, Wayne,” the woman said sternly. “We’ll talk about this in the morning, and Celeste won’t be the only one offering an apology.”

The woman slid her arm around Eleanor’s waist and ushered her forward into the house. The little dog followed, tail flipping like a whip. The man remained outside, standing slump-shouldered in the yard, bathed in cold moonlight.

The smack had nearly sent her running, not from fear of the man, but from fear of what she might do in retaliation. The thing inside her had stirred from the blow, awoken, and began to edge itself into her mind and skin with claw and hide and survival fury. She’d fought it back, but it had scared her more than she’d admit.

The woman marched her through a hallway up a flight of stairs, not speaking a word. She steered her to the left then opened a door.

“Go to bed, dear,” she said. “Your father isn’t himself right now. We love you. He’ll regret what he’s done.”

Eleanor looked inside and saw a dark room and an empty bed. Among the odors of perfume and dust came familiar smells: her breath and sweat, her borrowed skin. Hers, but not hers. Moonlight streamed in the open window, and pale lace curtains rustled in the night breeze. She stepped inside, and the woman pulled the door closed behind her.

Eleanor turned around. Standing against the wall, hidden by the door, stood a tall, auburn-haired girl. The face that stared at her with wonder and excitement she knew very well, because it was the face she wore.

When the girl didn't cry out or move, but only watched, Eleanor raised her hand and made an awkward little finger wave.

"Hello, Celeste," she said. "How ya been?"

Celeste's finger shot to her lips. Her eyes grew even wider, which Eleanor didn't think was possible. She gestured her to move. Eleanor heard it then in the hall, someone approaching the door. She moved as directed. Celeste stepped forward just as there came a timid little knock.

"Ceely?" It was a small voice, a young boy's. "Ceely, you okay?"

"I'm fine, Nugget," she said, opening the door a crack and peering out. "You go to bed. You'll get in trouble for being up so late."

"But I heard noise, and everyone else is up."

"Go to bed," she said sternly.

"Can I sleep with you tonight?"

"No. Now go to bed."

Celeste gave the boy a hard glare, and then Eleanor heard him leave.

Eleanor studied Celeste in the light from the hall. She had changed so much from last year. She had grown inches taller, filled out in all the right places, and added six inches to her hair. She noticed the traces of eyeliner, painted fingernails, and a mark on her arm. She wondered if her father had given her that bruise.

Celeste closed the door, and the finger returned to her lips. Staring at each other in the moonlight, they waited and listened. In a few minutes, they heard the heavy tread of the man coming up the stairs and going into a room on the other side of the house.

"Not now, Desiree," Eleanor heard him say. "Save it 'til tomorrow. Just

don't.”

“Humph,” the woman snorted.

The two girls regarded each other in silence for several minutes, then Eleanor heard a low snore from across the house. Celeste pulled a robe on over her pajamas, opened the door, and beckoned Eleanor to follow.

Eleanor glanced at the window. She knew she could survive the fall. She'd done so once already, and for a long moment, she thought of jumping to escape. But she wasn't so afraid. Celeste hadn't revealed her. Celeste seemed excited, surprised—happy even—to see her. As much as she could at that moment, Eleanor felt welcome. Besides, she still didn't have what she came for.

When Eleanor didn't immediately follow her, Celeste rolled her eyes and waved her over. Finally, she grabbed Eleanor's hand and pulled her out the door.

Celeste led Eleanor out of the room and down the stairs. She deliberately stepped over the fifth step and made sure Eleanor did the same. Together they went to the back of the house through the kitchen. The little dog looked up, wagged its tail, and curled up in its basket. They left through the back door.

Outside, Celeste let go of Eleanor's hand and walked quickly away from the house. She stopped several times to look back to make sure Eleanor was following her and that no one else was. She made a beeline for the barn and opened the small man-sized door in the side. The barn was as big as an aircraft hangar and needed motors to operate the big doors. The little one on the side was unlocked.

Inside, Eleanor saw a yellow combine harvester, its engine splayed open, black oily parts set out on plastic tables among tools and lubricants. Celeste closed the door and switched on a light. It was a single bare bulb above the door, a porch light, but on the inside. It would be undetectable from the house. It offered just enough light to lead someone to another light switch farther on, perhaps to the switch that would ignite the rows of fluorescents hanging high above the floor.

Eleanor didn't like being inside and lingered close to the door in case she needed to bolt. She didn't want to be trapped. There were windows in the barn, but they were high up, and it would require serious effort to reach them.

Outside, Eleanor heard the sounds of the quiet farm, the sounds she had

listened to all night before she'd tried the trellis. She heard the wind rustle the corn stalks, bending them gracefully in waves with a sound not unlike the folding of tissue paper. A frog croaked, a cricket chirped, an owl hooted far away.

"Who are you?" The question was asked so suddenly, so loudly, that Eleanor jumped. "I thought you were make-believe!" Celeste said. "I can't believe this is real. That you're real. Are you my twin? Does my mom know? Who are you?"

Celeste was shaking in excitement. Her face was flushed, and she even hopped up and down.

"I'm your twin," Eleanor stammered.

"No, you're not," said Celeste. "You're lying. My God, I can tell you're lying because you did that thing with your eyes like I do, where you look up just for a second. You did that same thing."

"Um," Eleanor said, pulling off her wool cap.

"You look just like me," said Celeste. "Or at least like I used to. I haven't had my hair that short since last year. You look like I did last year when you came. What are you?"

"Celeste—" Eleanor started.

"You're about to lie again," she said, pointing at Eleanor's eye.

Since she was very little, Eleanor had always approached Celeste at night, in the dark, usually without even waking her. She'd steal a kiss and be gone. Occasionally Celeste stirred, came half awake and even said hello once. It had never been bad. Eleanor deliberately made the visits as brief as possible, just long enough for her to sample the growing Celeste, to gather the pattern she needed to change so she could appear to age. She'd always felt a deep kinship with Celeste, but it was distant and secret.

Celeste bounced on her heels impatiently, waiting for Eleanor to speak.

Eleanor felt the familiar pangs of fear and confusion, the urge to fight or flight. She tensed her legs and shuffled her feet. Her eyes flickered around, searching for dangers and escapes. She looked at Celeste and bit her lip, struggling to remain, forcing herself to stay upon the new path of trust that David had led her to.

"I'm not sure what I am," Eleanor said finally. "I look like you because I

can look like anything. Sometimes I think that means I'm nothing."

"Whoa," she said. "Do I sound like that? Hey, you've visited me before, right? I wasn't dreaming it?"

"Every year about this time," Eleanor admitted.

"I saw you in a bathroom once."

"Yes, that was the second time."

"When was the first?"

"Yellowstone," Eleanor said.

"I don't remember that time."

"Yes, you do," she said glumly.

"When?"

"I was the coyote who licked you."

"That was you?" she said slowly, taking a step backwards as if shoved by the words. "Seriously?"

"I needed to be human again. I found you. You were so sweet. I kissed you and became you. I'd still look exactly like you did then if I hadn't come back and found you later."

"Are you dangerous?"

"Not to you," she said.

"Because we're connected somehow and you can't hurt the person you look like?"

"No," Eleanor said, amused. "I'm not dangerous to you because I like you."

"So, no supernatural thing? No psychic connections and all that?"

Eleanor shrugged her shoulders. "I may be a supernatural thing. I mean, what else can I be? But I'm not a vampire or werewolf, though I suspect my kind were once identified as those."

"Your kind? There're more of you?"

"I had a family once," she said. "They're all dead, but my mother talked like we were a clan. Like there were more of us. Or had been at least."

Celeste finally tired and slumped onto a bale of straw, shaking her head. Eleanor sat next to her. She let the silence settle over them like a shroud.

Celeste, almost talking to herself, said, “You come every year, sneak into my room, and give me a kiss.”

“I need to taste you,” Eleanor said. “That sample and my observations are what I use to make the pattern to change.”

“Show me,” she said.

“It can take a long time,” she said. “And it hurts.”

“Oh. Okay,” she said.

Eleanor heard the disappointment in her voice but left it unattended.

After a while, Celeste said, again, almost to herself, “I honestly thought I had imagined you. No one I told ever believed me. I stopped trying ages ago. You were my special twin.”

“You’ve grown so much this last year,” Eleanor said, studying her.

“You just want a kiss?” Celeste asked.

Eleanor nodded.

“Did I really look like this?” Celeste said.

“You did a year ago.”

“And now you’ll look like me again?”

“If you’ll let me.”

“What if I don’t?”

“I don’t know,” Eleanor said. “I can’t believe it’s worked this long.”

“What would you do if you couldn’t sample me?” Celeste asked.

“I don’t know,” she said. “Before, I’ve always been ready to run. Every other time I came here I had a plan to disappear and start again somewhere else if I failed. But this time, I didn’t. If I had, I’d be long gone by now. I can’t believe I let your mother walk me into your house.”

“And you let my dad hit you,” she said. “I saw it all from my window.”

“I didn’t have much choice in that,” Eleanor admitted. “I wasn’t looking.”

“So what changed? How come you didn’t run?”

“I have a life now. I’ve put something together, something I probably don’t deserve. I have it because I have you. If I didn’t have you, if I lost you, I’d lose that too. It’s so fragile that just thinking about it can paralyze me with fear.”

“And you have your life because once a year you kiss me?”

Eleanor nodded. “It’s allowed me to look like a ...” she paused and then forced herself to say it. “To look human,” she finished.

“Where do you live?”

“I shouldn’t tell you.”

“Why? Don’t you trust me?”

She hesitated.

“You don’t trust easily, do you?”

“No,” said Eleanor. “I can’t afford to.”

“You can trust me,” she said earnestly. Eleanor wanted to believe her and looked for guile and deceit in the familiar face and saw none. She meant to keep whatever confidence they’d share, but still Eleanor hesitated. She’d already said too much. It had all come out too easily. She realized she’d spoken so frankly to Celeste because she felt she owed this girl a debt she could never repay. As payment or penance, she’d given her a deserved peek at the most valuable thing she possessed.

“I can tell you’re scared,” Celeste said. “I’ve always sensed it. From the beginning, I’ve sensed you were afraid. I never thought you were dangerous, but I always knew you were scared.”

“It’s a terrible way to be,” said Eleanor. “I feel like I’m on borrowed time. Any second I’m going to be found out and then ... then I’ll be dead or I’ll have to run.”

Celeste leaned over and kissed Eleanor on the cheek.

“There,” she said. “We got that out of the way. You can relax.”

“I’ve got to kiss you,” Eleanor said ashamed.

Celeste puckered up her lips and leaned in to her. It made Eleanor laugh. “Go on,” Celeste said.

Eleanor kissed her. It was just a peck, a taste of her lip that let her sample the skin before drawing it back to deposit a cluster of molecules in a pocket in her throat.

“Thank you,” Eleanor said.

“I’m Celeste Batton. What’s your name?”

Eleanor looked at her, studied her face in the dim light, subconsciously memorizing scars and lines, smells and feelings.

“Your hair is so long,” she said.

Celeste stared at her pleasantly. Eleanor recognized the expression, knew it intimately.

“Yes, I was avoiding the question.” She laughed. “I call myself Eleanor. Eleanor Anders. It’s not my real name, not my original name. I don’t remember my original name. I got this one from a woman named Tabitha who died last year. She was my mother. My foster mother.”

“She knew about you?”

“Yes,” she said.

“And you can change into other people?”

Eleanor nodded.

“And animals? Birds? Fish?”

“I think so,” she admitted.

Because she knew that face so well, its expressions and tics, she knew Celeste’s mind was whizzing in a million directions. A dark expression passed her face and made Eleanor look away.

“I know I’m a monster,” Eleanor said. “It’s why I never wanted to talk to you. I didn’t want you to know.”

“I didn’t say that.”

“You’re thinking it,” Eleanor said.

“No I wasn’t. I was thinking how cool it would be to be you.”

“It’s lonely,” she said.

“How many people know?”

“It was just Tabitha. Now there’s a boy named David. He’s wonderful. He’s the real reason I came tonight. I’m afraid of losing him.”

“And now there’s me. That’s two people in the whole world besides you.”

“Just two people,” Eleanor said. “I’m not a person.”

“No. You’re better,” Celeste said. “I’m glad you trust me.”

“You won’t tell?”

“What are friends for?”

“We’re friends?” Eleanor asked.

“I’d say we’re more than that.” Celeste giggled. “Sisters at the very least. Where do you live?”

“I live in a little town in Wyoming. It’s called Jamesford. It’s tiny.”

“Can’t be smaller than this.”

“Okay, it’s bigger than this, but I think I’d do better in a bigger city. Easier to hide. It’s hard to keep a big secret in a small town.”

“I can see that,” Celeste said. “So what’s keeping you?”

“David,” she said. “And I’m—we’re still young. When we’re eighteen, we can go places.”

“So next year?”

“I’m sixteen,” Eleanor said.

“Well I’m seventeen,” Celeste said. “How does that work?”

“I only look like you,” she said sheepishly.

“Yeah, of course,” she said. “Still, you’re freakin’ amazing. I wish I were you. I’d be so gone from here. Sometimes I feel like all this corn. Planted and stuck. I’d rather be an owl, or a hawk, or an eastbound train. This place is a dead end. Nothing happens here. How is it in Jamesford?”

“Things happen there, and I wish they wouldn’t.”

“I met this guy who’s a gypsy,” Celeste said excitedly. “His family lives out of an RV, and they just move from place to place. Doesn’t that sound great? When you get sick of somewhere, you just turn on the engine and go? See new things all the time.”

“Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose,” Eleanor said, quoting an old song Tabitha had liked.

“Maybe,” she said. “But I’m not going to be another corn stalk.”

The first rays of sunrise appeared as a yellow glow in the high windows.

“I should go,” Eleanor said. “David’s waiting down the road. Doesn’t your family get up early?”

“Yeah, but I don’t want to—”

“We can’t let anyone see us together,” said Eleanor.

“No, I guess not,” sighed Celeste.

“Celeste, I can’t thank you enough.”

“You know, when I get really sick of this place I sometimes think of you and think that I’m actually living two lives: one interesting and rewarding, the other in Nebraska. I find it comforting.”

“Glad you’re getting something out of it,” Eleanor said.

In the distance, in the house, muffled by walls and distance, Eleanor could just make out the sound of an alarm clock going off.

“Your dad’s getting up,” Eleanor said.

“Yeah, it’s five,” Celeste said suddenly in a hurry to get back. “I’m sorry my dad hit you.”

“I’m more sorry he hit you,” said Eleanor. “He was trying to hit you.”

“Well I was being a dork, trying to climb the rose trellis. What was I thinking?”

They both laughed.

“My dad will cool off,” Celeste said, looking at the house as they walked. “But he’ll be in a fury if I’m not in my room when he checks.”

Light appeared in a small window, a bathroom Eleanor figured.

The moon was still up, but the ground was aglow in predawn light. They walked together slowly to the back door. Eleanor knew it was time to go, but she lingered. She saw Celeste felt the same, saw on her face how she looked when one side of her tugged her away while another tried to stay rooted. It was surreal, she thought, seeing herself like that.

“You’ll come back?” Celeste said.

“If I can,” Eleanor promised.

A light came on in Celeste’s room and a half beat later came the roar, “Goddammit, Celeste!”

They ran for the house. Celeste opened the door to the kitchen and stepped inside. She stopped and looked back at Eleanor. Before running into the cornfield, without a word or a sound, Eleanor waved good-bye, and Celeste blew her a kiss.

CHAPTER THREE

“**S**he’s so tall now. And her hair. I don’t think she cut it all year.” Eleanor sat in the passenger seat as David scanned storefronts of early-morning Minden, looking for a motel.

“We saw that coming. We knew she’d be different,” David said, his voice casual, but Eleanor could sense some residual anxiety lingering. He’d had a frightful night of worry and dread waiting for her. Her tale of near capture and physical harm did little to ease his mood. He couldn’t leave the Batton farm fast enough.

“I’m going to need clothes,” she said.

“Hey, there’s a place we can stay.”

Eleanor looked out at a downtown hotel and shook her head. “Someplace farther away. More private.”

“Okay. We’ll try another town.”

“Go to Lexington. They have a secondhand shop. I know the area.”

David drove west. “And she was okay with it?”

“She was,” Eleanor said. “It was surreal, I admit, but we connected. She wasn’t afraid of me. I am her special secret friend.”

“Shame you couldn’t have talked longer,” said David.

“No,” Eleanor said. “I’m glad it was short.”

“Yeah,” David agreed.

She looked at David, at his thick hair, so dark brown it bordered on black. The wind jabbed at it through his open window, making it even fuller and richer. Occasionally, he’d dart his similarly dark brown eyes at her and smile, just to say how happy he was to have her back, and her heart would skip a beat. She loved those eyes. At one time, they had been the only friendly eyes she knew. She’d had a mother whose eyes were love to depths beyond understanding, but David’s eyes, even as a child, were friendly and warm, and she’d loved them then. Now, years later, with secrets spoken and crises shared and the kisses. She melted in those eyes. He was beautiful. He looked much the same as he did the year before, when he came back to Jamesford, but now to her, he was truly beautiful.

“I don’t know about the hair,” Eleanor said, remembering the moment and what lay ahead.

“What’s the deal with the hair? Can’t you make it any length?”

“I don’t know,” she said. “I think it’s possible, but I haven’t had a lot of luck with it. It’s usually all or nothing.”

“How does the DNA indicate hair length?” he said.

“I’m not sure it is DNA,” Eleanor said. She and David had theorized on the mechanics of her talent, but it was all conjecture. “I told you. I think that’s a lot of it, but there’s more. I get a complete picture of the donor. It’s what I see and smell and hear and sense. Subconscious stuff I can’t quantify or describe. Everything. It all goes into the recipe. It just happens. I can’t control it. At least, not much.”

“Okay, then we’ll cut your hair when you’re done. That’s an easy one. I think the height jump will be more of a problem.”

“I’m used to that one,” she said. Eleanor had stayed hidden in her little house for two weeks before the trip, only coming out for necessities and purposefully avoiding as many people as possible. It was the system her mother, Tabitha, had invented to conceal the sudden change her Nebraska trips invariably brought. When people saw Eleanor again, they’d all comment on her sudden growth, but realize they hadn’t seen her in weeks and leave it at that. Karen Venn, David’s mother, would be another matter. She’d seen Eleanor regularly during the past month. She was Eleanor’s legal guardian, and though Eleanor was allowed to live in her old house pretty much independently, she had regular contact with David’s family. David’s sister Wendy was also close. There’d be some explaining to do with them.

“Man, it’s so flat here,” David said.

“Hard to hide,” said Eleanor.

“You don’t have to,” he said putting his hand on Eleanor’s. He sped to Lexington.

They found a cheap motel off I-80. The clerk raised an eyebrow but took David’s money and gave them a private room “away from other guests” as requested. David walked Eleanor to the room, but Eleanor stopped him at the door.

“I need you to go get me some food. Protein. Cooked if possible. Ham is

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