Patience

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On a crisp clear autumn day, seventeen year old Gabrieile Brecht entered her home for the last time. The house had been sold to include the furnishings, so her mother had not had the means to purchase any. Only the decorative accessories and personal items had been packed away. Gabrieile stood in the stairway wondering why she had not also been included with the sale of the house, since few of her past had been moved.

Gabrieile entered and stepped onto the sofa, with her feet stretched toward the imaginary heat of the empty fireplace. The familiar scent of her mother’s cologne was interwoven with the floral fabric of the sofa cushions; and she was almost comforted. Involuntarily she knew the girls were thinking the same thing he was — if they timed their move right, they would use all three poodles at once against the log as a push-off point for leverage against the current. If they could push in their move while they were still in the saddle, if the paddles didn’t split, they might be able to get out of the fast current.

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Kelly was the one to watch. When she made her move, the other two would have to move at the same time. Jeff knew Chrisey was watching Kelly, too.

Kelly’s paddle came out of the water and was held horizontally, ready. Chrisey’s and Jeff’s paddles were poised and ready, and without really thinking, they moved in unison, their paddles jamming the log hard. The canoe lurched sideways and they had their paddles back in the water at once. As they moved sideways, they also moved forward with the current, and they found themselves moving along very fast, but without struggling. They had found another current in the river that moved steadily forward. The rock that had been formed up and ruined by the damming of the river before it must come into view through the gray mist, was the bridge.

For a few seconds they all just let the river take them along. Then Kelly turned and moved back at the last moment, and she struck across her face, and then she grinned. Chrisey turned and looked over her shoulder at Jeff and he could see she was smiling, too. He felt his own arm almost splitting his face. He raised his hand and touched his brow in a salute from the water.

Then he reached back and patted the wallet in his pocket. It was going to be a great, great party!