

THE LONE WOLF HAS
COFFEE WITH THE
DOCTOR'S SON-IN-LAW

the doctor told me that i was eating too many grape pits and that they were causing my fingertips to pain as they did. so of course i stopped eating them, and it wasn't long after that my fingertips stopped paining me so. when i went back to the office to thank him for such excellent treatment i found the office empty, the sign on the door gone. the man sweeping the hallway told me that the doctor had been gone a week now and that he had left no forwarding address whatsoever. i was sorry to see that this had happened; here was the first doctor in my life i felt at ease with and now he had literally vanished. i asked the man sweeping the hallway if he had known the doctor personally. he said that not only had he but he still did, that in fact he was married to the doctor's daughter. i asked him what the doctor's daughter was like, but he didn't seem to want to discuss her, so i didn't pressure him. i asked instead if i could buy him a cup of coffee, and when he said yes we rode the elevator down and went to the cafeteria. there were some huge and enthusiastic fountains there. we picked one out and sat next to it and raised our voices. by the time we finished our coffee he practically had told me his entire life's story. when i told him what the doctor had done for me he pretty much made light of it, saying that the doctor had told many people to stop eating grape pits, and that he himself had been told to stop consuming them so that his hearing would improve (which incidentally did improve after he hadn't eaten any grape pits for only a short period of time). as we were about to leave, the doctor, of all people, suddenly came over to our table, looked at us very rigidly, and told us in some clear language that he disapproved of his patients socializing together, even if only over a harmless lunch. so we both did the only thing we could do: we apologized. i paid the bill, but since i saw the doctor and his son-in-law hotly exchanging more words i didn't bother to say good-bye to either of them, rather i simply made a fast exit and was lucky enough to catch a taxi right out front. the taxi driver turned out to be the doctor's daughter's ex-husband.