HOPE

Jack is in bed. It is early morning and the first light is appearing. The birds are singing, the dew is dropping from the trees.

Jack is dreaming. He throws himself to and fro in bed, wailing and weeping. Then, he gets up with his face in pain. A minute later he lies down again, smiling and relaxing. Jack dreams on while the birds are singing and the day is getting lighter.

An hour later he wakes up, rubbing his eyes and saying, "Why do people dream?" Is it to get scared? To get happy? To find out who you are? Or to get cleverer about one's own thoughts and emotions?

Jack dreams every night, but this night it was rather bad. He cannot forget it. Often you cannot recall your dreams, but this time the dream is quite clear to him. That is the reason why he takes out paper from his cupboard. He finds his pencils and starts to draw.

Jack is drawing his dream: A man is walking in a street in a town Jack does not know. All the houses are yellow, and there is a tree at each house. All the houses are alike with the same number of windows and doors. All the trees are alike--equally tall and equally old. The same number of leaves and the same number of twigs.

The man looks around and cannot find his way. There is nobody to ask. Therefore, he shouts, " Where is the hospital? I have to get to the hospital!" One window in each house get up, and he hears voices shouting, "Go straight ahead. 3oo meters. Just go straight ahead!" The man walks and finds the hospital. This is the only house in town which is different. But it is yellow, and the tree in front of the building is quite unlike the other trees in town. He walks slowly to the gateway and presses the button to the bell to get in. A moment later the gate opens by itself. The man hurries inside and is received by a man in a long black robe. "What do you want?" His voice sounds as if it is coming from very far away. "I am ill. It's my heart. It is so hot today and I am very weak. Can you help me?" The black man says, "Can I see your card?" The man finds a small plastic card and gives it to him. "I hope it is all right," he says. "We'll see."

The black man takes the card and puts it into a computer. The whole wall is illuminated: the man's gene-card is to be seen very clearly on the screen. One pair of genes after the other is shown, but suddenly the picture stops.

The black man is searching. A small green arrow shows up on the screen--pointing towards a pair of genes which seem to be out of order. "We can't help," the black man says. "Why not?" "I guess that's clear enough," he replies angrily. "You have no future. You have to leave as fast as possible!" "Sir, couldn't you make an exception?" "There are no exceptions any longer!"

The man gets up, pointing towards the door. "You have to leave now, you are not supposed to be here. I am supposed to put you in the register. Get out!!" The man hurries to the door, unhappily.

Jack draws his face so that it looks like his own. "It might be me," he thinks.

The man is standing in the street for a moment. Then he turns towards the gate, shouting, "Why are there no exceptions any longer? Why can't you be different? Why has everything to be alike?" No answer!! He sits down on the street, gazing at all the trees and houses.

"If this is supposed to be beauty, I don't like Beauty," he whispers. He can feel his heart beat irregularly. He really had wanted a doctor to help, because he knows that you have medicine for that. But his gene-card showed something that was different. Therefore, he cannot get any help.

The man is thinking of his wife and his children. Are they different, too? He had

never thought about this in this new way. He is afraid that it is his fault if they cannot get the help they will need some day.

It is almost dark, and the man lies down to try to sleep. The street is cold as ice, but he feels the coldness as a sort of peacefulness. The cold is creeping into his entire body, and he is almost falling asleep.

Now a small boy comes running down the street. He runs directly up to the man, saying, "Why do you sleep here?" The man does not answer. The boy tries again," Are you afraid of being different?" No answer!!

The little boy gets up, tears in his eyes. He really wished to talk to the man. Instead he draws with his finger in the dust of the street--a pattern--notes perhaps.

Suddenly Jack cannot recall what it was. Then the boy runs away, and the street is empty. A moment later the man raises his head in surprise. For there--where the boy drew the pattern--exactly there flowers are growing up. And: they are all different! Not even two are the same!!

"Oh," the man sighs. "There is hope anyway!" Hope, Jack thinks. Was that what he said? What is hope? What does it mean to hope? Jack finishes his drawing very quickly. He is happy that he decided to draw his dream--for now he all of a sudden understands the whole thing. Except the hoping. What does it mean to hope, he thinks again. I wish I knew!!!!

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Courtesy of SK-Forlag, Denmark