

CELESTIAL BODIES: THE TESS LEE AND JACK MILLER NOVELS by Patricia Leavy EXCERPT

At the end of the evening, they all bundled up and stumbled out of the bar.

A homeless man standing on the sidewalk asked, "Can you please spare anything?"

The group stood around awkwardly, but Tess walked right up to him. "Hi. I'm Tess, this is Jack, and these are our friends."

Jack stepped directly behind Tess in a protective stance.

"What's your name?" Tess gently asked the man.

"Henry," he replied.

She smiled, pulled a twenty-dollar bill out of her pocket, and handed it to him. When he took the money, she held his hand. Surprised, he looked at her and said, "You're very kind. Thank you."

"Getting kind of cold out," she said, still holding his hand.

"Sure is."

She took off her cashmere scarf and held it out. "Here, please take this and try to stay warm."

"Wow," Joe muttered.

"Oh, I couldn't," Henry said.

"Please, I insist."

"Thank you," he said, taking the scarf. "Someone must have taught you to do unto others."

"No, someone taught me there are no others. Good night, Henry."

She turned to her friends, their mouths agape.

Henry looked at Jack, who hadn't moved, and quietly asked, "Is she some kind of angel?"

"Yeah, something like that," he muttered.

Tess walked over to Omar and hugged him. "Our usual breakfast on Thursday?"

"Yes, Butterfly."

"Good night, guys," she said to her friends.

They all said goodbye. Jack took Tess's hand and walked her to his car. He opened her door and she got in. When he closed the door, he looked back at Henry, who was wrapping the scarf around his neck and smiling.