

Chapter 3

The chapter opens with a vivid aerial journey away from Libertyville, heading southwest toward the Mississippi River and the world's largest six-pack of beer. The narrative paints a sensory-rich scene, capturing the smells of grass, trees, and yeast from the nearby brewery. The focus shifts to a small cinder-block building housing KDCU-AM, a local radio station, where a pink patrol van and a spray-painted declaration of love hint at small-town charm. The setting establishes a quirky, nostalgic atmosphere, blending industrial and rural elements.

The scene introduces a slender, elegantly dressed man emerging from the station, clad in khaki Dockers, a straw fedora, and maroon braces. His polished appearance contrasts sharply with the boisterous, larger-than-life persona of George Rathbun, the station's beloved drive-time host. The narrator reflects on the dissonance between the man's refined demeanor and the imagined image of Rathbun as a brash, overweight sports enthusiast. This reveals the central twist: the elegant man is, in fact, the real voice behind George Rathbun, a fabricated persona that has revitalized the struggling AM station.

The chapter delves into the irony of George Rathbun's existence as a constructed character, a "hobby in action" that masks the man's true identity. The station's crew believes they understand the joke, but the reality is even more complex—the man embodies multiple personalities, with Rathbun being just one. This duality underscores the theme of performance and identity, as the station thrives on the illusion of Rathbun's exuberant charm while the real man remains enigmatic and composed.

The narrative shifts to a conversation between the man, revealed as Henry Leyden, and Morris Rosen, a summer intern. Leyden's sharp senses and cryptic wisdom, including a warning about Morris's marijuana habit, highlight his perceptive nature. The exchange reinforces Leyden's multifaceted personality, blending humor, insight,

and an almost supernatural awareness. The chapter closes with a sense of intrigue, leaving readers curious about Leyden's other identities and the deeper mysteries surrounding him.

