

Celia finally responds, 1998

I filled out the goddamn form. You already know my blood type, every shot I ever had; you know my mother had diabetes and my father had a stroke – and his father deaf in one ear. That's it. What else do you want? Do you think if you follow me home I'll keep you? Do you think when you come to my door I'll let you in? What do you think I have for you? Thirty-eight years of birthday presents tied up with ribbons? Well, I don't. I don't have anything for you. I never had anything for you. I'd have stopped you being born if I could – but nobody would do it! They were all afraid of getting caught, being punished by judges like the damn fools sending you after me now. Oh, now! You want to know if I like music, if I have curly hair, thin earlobes? Why not ask to see the strawberry birthmark? I bet you wonder why I didn't leave you a token, a silver ring like in the movies. It's simple: I never wanted to give you anything but *away*. You think I'll tell you about your father, but I can't tell you what I don't know. That was a bad time, a bad time in my life – and it's none of your business. What makes you think what you need matters more than what I want? Do you really believe I'm your mother? Especially now, now that we know anybody, *anything*, can hold those eggs, hold them and grow them just like a sitting hen? Now they've got plastic boxes that'll damn near do the job. In twenty years people like you will go looking for those boxes, won't they? They'll want to see their own box, just like *you* want to see *me*, with your phony nostalgia, your pathetic curiosity. Well, you can just pack it in; pack it in and give it up. Even if you do win in court, what'll you get? My name and address, my phone number? Then you'll be like the people who call me at suppertime to sell me something – credit cards, life insurance, vacation cruises – but I just hang up. So you're out of luck. Like the kids who show up at school with welts on their arms, looks like you got a bad one. Do you think you're missing something, you poor abandoned child? Play the hand you were dealt and stop asking for favors. Why do you think what you want matters so much more than what I need? You want me to say not a day went by I didn't think of you, wondering what you look like, how you turned out.

Judith Arcana

You want me to say I think of you every year on the day you were born. You want me to lie to you, but I won't. That's the kind of mother I am, the kind who won't lie to her kid. Go 'way from my door, kiddo, you're just a Jehovah's Witness to me.