

## GLADLAND GARDERNS GLADIOLUS 1929

After nudging the door shut with his shoulder, Barty carried the sodas out of the kitchen and forward along the hall. Pausing at the livingroom archway, he said, "Uncle Jacob?" A matronly nurse arrived, alerted to the patient's return to consciousness by the telemetry device associated with the heart monitor. Nurses were supposed to be angels of mercy. She had shown him no mercy. And she was certainly no angel. One detail. One only. It was a crucial detail, however, one that she absolutely must confirm before she left St. Mary's, even if she would be required to look at the child once more, this spawn of violence, this killer of her sister. Most likely, if Victoria was entertaining, the visitor's car would have been parked in the driveway. Caesar Zedd recommended not merely seizing the day but devouring it. Chew it up, feed on the day, swallow the day whole. Feast, said Zedd, feast, approach life as a gourmet and as a glutton, because he who practices restraint will have stored up no sustaining memories when famine inevitably comes. Like a spring-loaded novelty snake erupting from a can, Junior exploded up from the chair, nearly knocking it over. He looked up into the eyes of the stocky man with the birthmark. They were gray eyes, hard as nail heads, but clear and surprisingly beautiful in that otherwise unfortunate face. Cold, wind-driven rain slashed through the missing windows, and voices rose in the street as people ran toward the Pontiac-thunder in the distance-and on the air was the ozone scent of the storm and the more subtle and more terrible odor of blood, but none of these hard details could make the moment seem real to Agnes, who, in her deepest nightmares, had never felt more like a dreamer than she felt now. "Yes," she assured him, though her gaze had dropped from his mouth to his hand, so small, which she held in hers. By Thursday, the eruption passed from him. Because he'd had the self-control not to claw his face or hands, he was presentable enough to venture out into the city; although if people in the streets could have seen the weeping scabs and inflamed scratches that tattooed his body and limbs, they would have fled with the grim certainty that the black. So much argued against the idea that they could succeed as a couple. In this age when race supposedly didn't matter anymore, it sometimes seemed to matter more year by year. Age mattered, too, and at fifty, he was twenty-six years older than she was, old enough to be her father, as surely her father would quietly but pointedly--and repeatedly!--observe. He was highly educated, with multiple medical degrees, and she had gone to art school. Thickened with the odors of antiseptics and blood, until breathing required an effort. He knew for a fact that Seraphim had died in childbirth. He had seen the gathering of Negroes at her funeral in the cemetery, the day of Naomi's burial. He had heard Max Bellini's message on the maniac cop's Ansaphone. But with the silencer attached, the pistol was useful only for close-up work. After passing through a sound-suppressor, the bullet would exit the muzzle at a lower than usual velocity, perhaps with an added wobble, and accuracy would drop drastically at a distance. "Take care you don't beat evil into him," said his aunt. At the end of his fourth month, instead of in his seventh, he said "Mama," and clearly knew what it meant. He repeated it when he wanted to get her attention. After a silent moment of surprise, Nork or Knacker, or Hisscus, said, "Your sentiment is understandable, Mr. Cain, but it's customary in these matters--". Junior forgot all about seduction. "And she--what?--She adopted her sister's baby?" OTTER WAS THE SON of a boatwright who worked in the shipyards of Havnor Great Port. His mother gave him his country name; she was a farm woman from Endlane village, around northwest of Mount Onn. She had come to the city seeking work, as many came. Decent folk in a decent trade in troubled times, the boatwright and his family were anxious not to come to notice lest they come to grief. And so, when it became clear that the boy had a gift of magery, his father tried to beat it out of him. He had come to believe that every well-rounded, self-improved person ought to have a craft at which he excelled, and needlepoint appealed to him more than either pottery-making or decoupage. For pottery, he would require a potter's wheel and a cumbersome kiln; and decoupage was too messy, with all the glue and lacquer. By December, he began his first project: a small pillowcase featuring a geometric border surrounding a quote from Caesar Zedd, "Humility is for losers." On Thursday, December 28, employing forged driver's licenses and social-security cards as identification, Junior opened small savings accounts and also rented safe-deposit boxes for Pinchbeck and Gammoner at different banks with which he'd never previously done business, using the mailing addresses that he'd established earlier. "Tragic. Her string's been cut too soon. Her music's ended prematurely," Junior said, feeling confident enough to dish a serving of the maniac cop's half-baked theory of life back to him. "There's a discord in the universe now, Detective. No one can know how the vibrations of that discord will come to affect you, me, all of us." Shuddering, rubbing furiously at himself, he stumbled into the bathroom. In the mirror, he confronted a face he hardly recognized: swollen, lumpy peppered with red hives. The purpose of life was self-fulfillment, per Zedd, and Junior was so rapidly realizing his extraordinary potential that surely he would have pleased his guru. Instinct, even reason, told him that some connection existed between this person, this Bartholomew, and Celestina. The name had terrified Cain in a bad dream, the very night of the day that he'd killed Naomi, and Vanadium therefore had incorporated it into his psychological-warfare strategy without knowing its significance to his suspect. As strongly as he sensed the connection, he couldn't find the link. He lacked some crucial bit of information. During the course of this momentous day, he had employed Zedd learned techniques to channel his hot anger into a red-hot rage. Now, without any conscious effort on his part, rage grew into molten-white fury. At nearly forty years of age, Edom still dreamed of that grim summer afternoon, although not as often as in the past. When it troubled his sleep these days, it was a nightmare that gradually metamorphosed into a dream of tenderness and hope. Until the last few years, he'd always awakened when the roses were being jammed into his mouth or when the thorns flicked through his eyelashes, or when Agnes began to strike their father with the Bible, thus seeming to assure worse punishment. This additional act, this transition from horror to hope before he woke, had been added when Agnes was pregnant with Barty. Edom didn't know why

this should be so, and he didn't try to analyze it. He was simply grateful for the change, because he woke now in a state of peace, never with worse than a shudder, no longer with a hoarse cry of anguish.. "Oh, my Lord," Chicane groaned as he and Sparky half carried Junior into the bathroom..The longer they were required to lie low in fear, the more likely Celestina would be to cast caution aside and return to Pacific Heights, Tom knew her well enough to be sure that she was a fighter rather than a runner. Being in hiding frustrated her. Day by day, hour by hour, with no target date for resuming a normal life, she would quickly lose patience. Rubbed raw, her dignity and sense of justice would compel her to act-perhaps more out of emotion than out of reason..San Francisco's pre-Christmas cheer had deserted it. The glow and glitter of the season had given way to a mood as dark and ominous as *The Cancer Lurks Unseen, Version 1*..The Hackachaks had arrived post-grief, brought to the hospital by the news that Junior had expressed distaste at the prospect of profiting from his wife's tragic fall. They knew he had turned away Knacker, Hisscus and Nork..Her voice was flat and a little hard. Another man might have mistaken her tone for disapproval, for impatience, even for quiet anger..When her hand went limp in Celestina's, her body sagged, too, and her eyes were no longer either focused or rolling wildly. They shimmered into stillness, darkled with death, as the cardiac monitor sang the one long note that signified flatline..Agnes's faith told her that the world was infinitely complex and full of mystery, and in a peculiar way, Barty's talk of infinite possibilities supported her belief and gave her the comfort to sleep. Monday morning, New Year's Day, Agnes carried two suitcases out of the back door, set them on the porch, and blinked in surprise at the sight of Edom's yellow-and-white Ford Country Squire parked in the driveway, in front of the garage. He and Jacob were loading their suitcases into the car..MONDAY EVENING, January 15, Paul Damascus arrived at the hotel in San Francisco with Grace White. He had kept watch over her in Spruce Hills for more than two days, sleeping on the floor in the hall outside her room both nights, remaining close by her side when she was in public. They stayed with friends of hers until Harrison's funeral this morning, then flew south for a reunion of mother and daughter..If the sight of his daughter almost drove him to his knees, the sight of his wife, also his first in seven years, lifted him until he was virtually floating across the grass..Because he genuinely liked women and hoped always to please them, always to be discreet and chivalrous and giving, Junior did as she wished, spinning a vivid account of the grisly vengeance he would take if ever Seraphim told anyone what he'd done to her. Vlad the Impaler, the historical inspiration for Brain Stoker's *Dracula*--thank you, Book-of-the-Month Club--could not have imagined bloodier or more horrific tortures and mutilations than those that Junior promised to visit upon the reverend, his wife, and Seraphim herself Pretending to terrorize the girl excited him, and he was perceptive enough to see that she was equally excited by pretending to be terrorized.. "I was once doubting Thomas," said the detective, but not from beside the bed any longer. His voice seemed to come from across the room, perhaps near the door, though he had made not a sound as he'd moved..Three times, Mary vanished, and three times she reappeared, before she led the bamboozled Koko to her mother and father. "Neat, huh?" In those days they had no fixed names for the various kinds and arts of magic, nor were the connections among those arts clear. There was-as the wise men of Roke would say later-no science in what they knew. But Hound knew pretty surely that his prisoner was concealing his talents..A quick review of these book spines revealed that the treasured Zedd collection wasn't here..They hadn't been close to Naomi, who'd once said she felt like Romulus and Remus, raised by wolves, or like Tarzan if he'd fallen into the hands of nasty gorillas. To Junior, Naomi was Cinderella, sweet and good, and he was the love-struck prince who rescued her..After following his uncle's movements, Barty looked at the table again. "Pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie." Gradually he grew calm. His great frosty exhalations diminished to a diaphanous dribble that evaporated two inches from his lips.. "You look as if you've seen a ghost," said Vinnie, and Agnes wished the threat were as simple as a restless spirit, groaning and rattling its chains, like Dickens's Marley come to Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas Eve..Alone with Paul, as he stood abashed, she removed her blouse and bra and, with arms crossed over her breasts, revealed to him her savaged back. Whereas her father had used open-hand slaps and hard fists to teach his twin sons the lessons of God, he preferred canes and lashes as the instruments of education for his daughter, because he believed that his direct touch might have invited sin. Scars disfigured Agnes from shoulders to buttocks, pale scars and others dark, crosshatched and whorled..She sat at the kitchen table, staring at the glass. After a while she emptied it in the sink without having taken a sip..And the mills of capitalism provide them. Supply meets demand. Fantasy becomes a commodity, an industry..Barty's math and reading skills exceeded those of most eighteen year-olds, but regardless of his brilliance, he was a few days shy of his third birthday. Prodigies were not necessarily as emotionally mature as they were intellectually developed, but Barty listened with sober attention, asked questions, and then sat in silence, staring at the book in his hands, with neither tears nor apparent fear..Furrowing her brow and narrowing her eyes as though prepared to scold him, she slowly lowered her face to his, until their noses were touching, and she whispered, "Because it's more fun if it's secret." She could have used the chair. Sitting, however, she wouldn't be able to see his face..Eventually, he settled on a mental image of a bowling pin as his "seed." This was a smooth, elegantly shaped object that invited languorous contemplation, but it did not tease his libido..Of all the kindnesses that we can do for one another, the most precious of all gifts-time-is not ours to give. Bearing this in mind, Agnes did her best to guide her extended family through its grieving for Harrison and for Jacob, into happier days. Respect must be paid, precious memories nurtured, but life also must go on.. "That's not what they say," the boy replied with a giggle, for his extensive reading had introduced him to words that he and she agreed were not his to use.. "Yes, you did, and it's exactly what experience has no doubt taught you to think. But I'm forty-seven and you're twenty-". This night in Weott, with the high solemn silence of the redwood forests out there now and waiting to embrace him in the morning, he slept without dreams..Sparky Vox-with less training in theology and philosophy than his guest, but with a spiritual insight that any overeducated Jesuit would have to admire, even if grudgingly-had

settled Vanadium's uneasy conscience. "The problem with movies and books is they make evil look glamorous, exciting, when it's no such thing. It's boring and it's depressing and it's stupid. Criminals are all after cheap thrills and easy money, and when they get them, all they want is more of the same, over and over. They're shallow, empty, boring people who couldn't give you five minutes of interesting conversation if you had the piss-poor luck to be at a party full of them. Maybe some can be monkey-clever some of the time, but they aren't hardly ever smart. God must surely want us to laugh at these fools, because if we don't laugh at 'em, then one way or another, we give 'em respect. If you don't mock a bastard like Cain, if you fear him too much or even if you just look at him in an all-solemn sort of way, then you're paying him more respect than I ever intend to. Another glass of wine?" "But let's pretend it's me, okay? So here I am, stepping off the curb without looking both ways-". And when she finally looked directly at him, blinked at him, her lashes flicking off a spray of fine droplets, Agnes saw that Barty was dry. Not a single jewel of rain glimmered in his thick dark hair or on the baby-smooth planes of his face. His shirt and sweater were as dry as if they had just been taken off a hanger and from a dresser drawer. A few drops darkened the legs of the boy's khaki pants--but Agnes realized this was water that had dripped from her arm as she'd reached across him to adjust the vent..Spinning off the stool, the bun cap in one hand and the mustard dispenser clutched in the other, Junior surveyed the long narrow diner. Looking for the maniac cop. The dead maniac cop. He half expected to see Thomas Vanadium: head crusted in blood, face bashed to pulp, caked in quarry silt, and dripping water as though he'd climbed out of his Studebaker coffin just minutes ago..In spite of its dazzle, the detective's smile was nonetheless melancholy, proof that he was sincere when he said that Seraphim's baby was beyond their reach..At eight o'clock in the evening, Junior parked two blocks past the target house. He walked back to the Prosser residence, gloved hands in the pockets of his raincoat, collar turned up..Even Rudy, as huge as Big Foot and as amoral as a skink, was afraid of this woman..Rhythmic breathing. Slow and deep. Slow and deep. Per Zedd, the route to tranquility is through the lungs..Agnes's sharp intake of breath caused Edom to look up from his nephew's name. Pale, she was, her eyes as haunted as old mansions..In his smooth whiteness, Junior felt a pressure on his eyes, and then came visual hallucinations, disturbing his deep inner peace. He felt someone peel up his eyelids, and Bob Chicane's worried face--with the sharp features of a fox, curly black hair, and a walrus mustache--was inches from his..When he came to himself, sick and weak from the poison and with an aching skull, he was in a room with brick walls and bricked-up windows. The door had no bars and no visible lock. But when he tried to get to his feet he felt bonds of sorcery holding his body and mind, resilient, clinging, tightening as he moved. He could stand, but could not take a step towards the door. He could not even reach his hand out. It was a horrible sensation, as if his muscles were not his own. He sat down again and tried to hold still. The spellbonds around his chest kept him from breathing deeply, and his mind felt stifled too, as if his thoughts were crowded into a space too small for them..With his sister's financial backing, Edom purchased a flower shop in '71, after ascertaining that the strip mall in which it was located had been even more soundly constructed than the earthquake code required, that it didn't stand on slide-prone land, that it did not lie in a flood plain, and that in fact its altitude above sea level ensured that it would survive all but a tidal wave of such towering enormity that nothing less than an asteroid impact in the Pacific could be the cause. In '73, he married Maria Elena (that boy-girl thing, after all), whereupon she became Agnes's sister-in-law in addition to having long been a full sister in her heart. They bought the house on the other side of the original Lampion homestead, and another fence was torn down..First, Victoria Bressler was listed as one of his victims, although as far as he knew, the authorities still had every reason to attribute her murder to Vanadium..Naomi's beautiful countenance rose in his mind, and she looked beautiful for a moment, but then he thought he saw a certain slyness in her angelic smile, a disturbing glint of calculation in her once loving eyes..Maria's mother, visiting from Mexico, was babysitting, so Maria came without her children, as a guest, joining Agnes and the laugh-a-minute Isaacson twins, chroniclers of destruction. They ate in the dining room, rather than at the kitchen dinette, with a lace-trimmed tablecloth, the good china, crystal wineglasses, and fresh flowers..The only light came from a reading lamp. An adjustable brass shade directed the light down onto a chair..Some information she'd withheld from him: that the cancer might already have spread, that he might still die even after his eyes were removed--and that if it hadn't yet spread, it might soon do so.."There is no king in Earthsea," the young man said, stern and righteous, "In my master's service, then," Hound amended, patient..For her, the suspense that grew throughout dinner didn't have much to do with whether or not Wally would pop the question, because if he didn't broach the subject this time, she intended to take the initiative. Instead, Celestina was more tense about whether or not Wally expected that a heartfelt expression of commitment should be sufficient to induce her to sleep with him..Succinctly, Edom told Jacob about visiting Obadiah, the magician with the mangled hands. Then: "When we left, I followed Agnes, and Obadiah held me back to say, 'Your secret's safe with me.'". Because Harrison, with the best of intentions, had not wanted to open wounds, Cain could walk up to Celestina anywhere, anytime, and she wouldn't know that he might have been her sister's rapist. To her, his face was that of any stranger..Junior's fear gave way to an appreciation for the irony in this situation. Gradually, he regained the ability to smile, tossed the coin in the air, caught it, and dropped it in his pocket..Books were stacked high on a nearby table, favorite novels and volumes of verse, all of which Agnes had read before. With time so limited, she preferred the comfort of the familiar to the possibility that new writers and new stories would fail to please. Paul read to her often, as did Angel. Tom Vanadium sat with her, too, as did Celestina and Grace.."-though this Tom now has a rhinoceros-smacked face, this other Tom, in his own world, has an ordinary face. Poor him, so ordinary." He switched off the flashlight and stood solemnly for a moment, paying his respects to Seraphim. She had been so sweet, so innocent, so supple, so exquisitely proportioned..The girl was creepy, no doubt about it, and Junior felt now precisely as he had felt on the night of Celestina's exhibition at the Greenbaum Gallery, when he had

come out of the alleyway after disposing of Neddy Gnathic in the Dumpster and had checked his watch only to discover his bare wrist. He was missing something here, too, but it wasn't merely a Rolex, wasn't a thing at all, but an insight, a profound truth..Angel liked to perch sideways with a drawing tablet in the window seat in Barty's room, look out at the oak tree from the upper floor, and draw pictures inspired by things she heard in whatever book he was currently listening to. Everyone said she was a pretty good artist for a three-year-old, and Barty wished he could see how good she was. He wished he could see Angel, too, just once..just as the smile curved to completion, however, an awful thing happened. The humiliation began with a loud gurgle in his gut..Many nights, his sleep wasn't half as restful as he would have wished, for he often dreamed of walking in a wasteland. Sometimes, desert salt flats stretched in all directions, with here and there a monument of weather-gnarled rock, all baking under a merciless sun. Sometimes, the salt was snow, and the monuments of rock were ridges of ice, revealed in the hard glare of a cold sun. Regardless of the landscape, he walked slowly, though he had the desire and the energy to proceed faster. His frustration built until it was so intolerable that he woke, kicking in the tangled sheets, restless and edgy.. "Getting her into her shoes and coat sooner than Monday required a bribe," Wally said..In the first drawer, he discovered an address book. Logically, Vanadium would have taken this with him, even if on the lam from a murder rap, so Junior tucked it in his jacket pocket..Now the message ... Something about a hospital. Someone dying. A cerebral hemorrhage..Victoria lived on the northeast edge of Spruce Hills, where streets petered into country lanes. Here the houses tended to be more rustic, built on larger and less formally landscaped lots than those closer to the center of town, and set back farther from the street.. "Six hundred ninety-five people were killed in three states. Winds so powerful that some of the bodies were thrown a mile and a half from where they were snatched off the ground."..Meanwhile, as attorneys met on Tuesday afternoon, Junior, having taken leave from work, phoned a locksmith to change the locks at his house. As a cop, Vanadium might have access to a lock-release gun that..Beseechingly, with no intention of intimacy, he took Celestina's hands in his. "For years, as an obstetrician, I brought life into the world, but I didn't know what life was, didn't grasp the meaning of it, that it even had meaning. Before Rowena, Harry, and Danny went down in that airplane, I was already ... empty. After losing them, I was worse than empty. Celestina, I was dead inside. Phimie gave me hope. I can't repay her, but I can do something for her daughter and for you, if you'll let me."..She nodded. And could not lift her gaze from her hands. Could not meet his eyes, afraid that his worry would feed her own, afraid also that the sight of his sympathy would shake loose her perilous grip on her emotions..From the corn soup to the baked ham to the plum pudding, he did not speak of his dry walk in wet weather..The receptionist, Rebecca, had stayed late, just to keep company with Barty in the waiting room. As she settled into a chair beside the boy, he asked her if she knew what gravity was on Mars, and when she confessed ignorance, he said, "Only thirty-seven percent what it is here. You can really jump on Mars."..Even though he now knew what a hateful person the nurse was, he remained strongly attracted to her. He was not the kind of man, however, who would take advantage of an unconscious woman..Leashed like a dog, he walked along, sullen and shivering with sickness and rage. He stared around him, seeing the stone tower, stacks of wood by its wide doorway, rusty wheels and machines by a pit, great heaps of gravel and clay. Turning his sore head made him dizzy..replace her. I'd never be able to spend a penny of it. Not a penny. I'd have to give it away. What would be the point?".. "Wally gave her tests. She's got an exceptional understanding of color, spatial relationships, and geometric forms for a child her age. She may be a visual prodigy.".. "For the love of God," Junior pleaded, "can't you please give me something for the pain?"..Then came the Year of the Tiger, 1974. Gasoline shortages, panic buying, mile-long lines at service stations. Patty Hearst kidnapped. Nixon gone in disgrace. Hank Aaron toppled Babe Ruth's longstanding home-run record, and the inflation rate topped fifteen percent, and the legendary Muhammad Ali defeated George Foreman to regain his world-heavyweight title.. "Well, you're sweet, aren't you? And you're all bright red on the outside and milk chocolate inside," Celestina said, gently tweaking the girl's light brown nose..He hadn't heard the cop get out of the chair and cross the dark room. Difficult..Another machine beside the first, stocked with copies of a sexually explicit publication for gays, fired a quarter that hit Junior's forehead. The next snapped against the bridge of his nose..Playing with fire was fun when you didn't have to attempt to conceal the fact that it was arson.. "It doesn't have to be grand," she said, with a seductive leer, "but if we're going to wait, then the wedding better be soon."..Choking fumes, blinding soot. A licking heat told him that slithering fire had followed the smoke up the stairs and now coiled perilously close in the murk..Paul stayed with her, sometimes wincing at the ground as though the danger were there, not above-which, in a sense, it was, because impact rather than the fall itself is the killer-and at other times putting his arms around her, staring up at the boy above. But he, too, was silent..Not a door opened in the narrow street. Nobody looked out to see what the noise was. Not till long after the men were gone did some neighbors creep out to comfort Otter's people as best they could. "Oh, it's a curse, a curse, this wizardry!" they said..So these are reports of my explorations and discoveries: tales from Earthsea for those who have liked or think they might like the place, and who are willing to accept these hypotheses: things change: authors and wizards are not always to be trusted: nobody can explain a dragon..Tom had no idea who Perri might be, but something in the way Grace asked the question and the way she regarded Paul suggested that she knew something about Perri that had won her deep respect and admiration.. "Honey," she said, crouching to peer at him through the vertical slats of the playpen, "what're you doing?"..Looking toward the nearest window, where the wet night kissed the glass, he said, "Lawn sprinklers?"..That same day, he dared to visit two galleries. Neither of them had a pewter candlestick on display..In a neatly groomed neighborhood of unassuming houses, Vanadium's place was as unremarkable as those around it: a single-story rectangular box of no discernible architectural style. White aluminum siding with green shutters. An attached two-car garage..Onward he came, past the left front fender, gleefully hopping up and down, as if on a pogo stick, still

waving. And in time, the surgeon did appear, bearing the good news that neither of the malignancies had spread to the orbit and optic nerve, but he had no greater miracle to report. From San Francisco south to Orange County Airport on a crowded commuter flight, then farther south along the coast by rental car, Paul Damascus brought Grace, Celestina, and Angel to the Lampion house. "Before we go to my place, there's someone I very much want you to meet. She's not expecting us, but I'm sure it'll be okay." The coin stopped turning across his knuckles and, as though with volition of its own, it slipped into the tight curve of his curled forefinger. With a snap of his thumb, he flipped the quarter into the air. "He's a wonderful boy, so very bright, so very full of life. Blindness will be hard, but it won't be the end. He'll cope without the light. It'll be so difficult at first, but this boy ... eventually he'll thrive." The Hackachaks were present, of course. Junior had not yet agreed to join them in their pursuit of blood money. They would give him little privacy or rest until they had what they wanted. In regard for Barty's tender age, Dr. Franklin Chan had arranged for Agnes to spend the night in her son's room, in the second bed, which currently wasn't needed for a patient. No inquiring voice echoed off the passage walls, no accusatory shout. He was alone with the cadaver in this mist-shrouded moment of the metropolitan night-but perhaps not for long. The street in front of the gallery was as flooded by a sea of fog as the alleyway at the back. The headlights of passing traffic probed the gloom like beams from deep-salvage submersibles at work on the ocean floor. The hateful window. The hateful, frozen window. Celestina wrenched on the crank with all of her strength, and felt something give a little, wrenched, but then the crank popped out of the socket and rapped against the sill. Since childhood, he had been waiting for this moment-if indeed it was The Moment-and he had nearly lost hope that the much-desired encounter would ever come to pass. He had expected to find others with his perceptions among physicists or mathematicians, among monks or mystics, but never in the form of a three-year-old girl dressed all in midnight-blue except for a red belt and two red hair bows. As she commented on each masterpiece, Frieda grew steadily less coherent. She had drunk a few cocktails, the better part of a bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon, and two after-dinner brandies. When Junior complained of severe thirst, Victoria explained that he was to have nothing by mouth until morning. He would be put on a liquid diet for breakfast and lunch. Soft foods might be allowable by dinnertime tomorrow. In spite of its dazzle and power and comfort, however, the car was not able to lift his spirits as he cruised the hills of the city. Somewhere along these darkly glistening streets, in these houses and high-rises clinging to steep slopes awaiting seismic sundering, the boy was sheltered: half Negro, half white, full doom to Junior Cain. Junior took one of the boxed guns, a 9-mm semiautomatic. Months would probably pass before she noticed the pistol missing from the back of her closet, and by then she wouldn't know who had taken it. The modulated electronic brrrrr was similar to the sound of the telephone in Vanadium's cramped study, on Sunday night. Junior was transported back to that place, that moment in time. For breakfast, he avoided sugar. He ate cold roast beef and drank milk laced with a double shot of brandy. Heaven, and his words touched a tenderness in her, overlaying an arc of pain across the curve of her smile. She tried to raise her right hand, but it flopped uselessly and would not respond. In answer, Wally came running with his heavy medical bag, as he was vow doctor to some people on the pie route. "The weather's a lot better than I expected, so I went back to change into lighter clothes." "Cancer," she whispered, and superstitiously reproached herself for speaking the word aloud, as though thereby she'd given power to the malignancy and ensured its existence. Tom received a fierce hug, too, and a sisterly kiss, and he was grateful for them. He had been a loner for too long, as a hunter of men pretty much had to be when on a long hard road of recuperation and then on a mission of vengeance, even if he called it a mission of justice. During the few days he'd spent guarding Celestina and Grace and Angel in the city, and subsequently during the week with Wally, Tom had felt that he was part of a family, even if it was just a family of friends, and he had been surprised to realize how much he needed that feeling. "No, no. But being around him so much, inevitably I absorb some details. He's a compelling speaker when the subject interests him." Behind her, he said, "And is that my gray cardigan? What did you do to my cardigan?" After just twenty-one days, the boy's adaptation to blindness was amazing but clearly the gathered audience stood in anticipation of something more remarkable than his unhalting progress and unerring sense of direction. Tom Vanadium was too unnerved by the Cain scare to be interested in the newspaper anymore. The strong black coffee, superb before, tasted bitter now. "Yours is a harder job than mine," Lipscomb told Grace, dandling Angel as he spoke. "I have no doubt of that." "I know what you mean. Mr. Cain, I'd never turn my back on that much money if there was any damn way at all I could earn it." just as Sinatra broke into song again, Junior thought he heard a footstep on the wood floor of the hallway, and the creak of a board. The music masked the sounds of the visitor's approach if, indeed, he was approaching. Celestina, surprised by Lipscomb's arrival, was still mentally numb from Neddy's harangue. "Doctor, I didn't know you were coming." Thus armored, he at last arrived in the city of Sacramento, an hour before dawn. Sacramento, which means "sacrament" in Italian and in Spanish, calls itself the Camellia Capital of the World, and holds a ten-day camellia festival in early March-already advertised on billboards now in mid-January. The camellia, shrub and flower, is named for G. J. Camellus, a Jesuit missionary who brought it from Asia to Europe in the eighteenth century. Highly impressed by the spot-on hyena scream with which Frieda had purged herself of the childhood emotional trauma inflicted by an authoritarian grandmother, Junior asked her to go out with him. At the conclusion of the ceremony, he relinquished his secondhand sight. He would live in darkness until Easter of 1986, though every minute of the day was brightened by his wife.

[Vie de Mgr Cuenot Eveque de Metellopolis Vicaire Apostolique de la Cochinchine Orientale Etc](#)  
[Maurice Durant Vol 1](#)

[Hugh Darnaby A Story of Kentucky](#)  
[Clay Plant Construction and Operation](#)  
[Poulot En Italie](#)  
[Saurapurnam Ein Kompedium Spatindischer Kulturgeschichte Und Der Sivaismus Das Einleitung Inhaltsangabe Nebst UEBersetzungen Erklarungen Und Indices](#)  
[Les Reformes Financieres de la Republique DHaiti](#)  
[Oeuvres Completes Introduction de R Vallery-Radot](#)  
[Grandes Propiedades Rusticas En Espana Efectos Que Producen y Problemas Juridicos Economicos y Sociales Que Plantean Las](#)  
[Les Oeuvres de Guiot de Provins Poete Lyrique Et Satirique](#)  
[Centenaire Du Mariage de Figaro de Caron de Beaumarchais 1784-1884 Recueil Des Extraits Des Principales Correspondances de LEpoque Precede DUn Avant-Propos Par Aug Paer](#)  
[A Sportsmans Eden](#)  
[Excursions in the County of Surrey Comprising Brief Historical and Topographical Delineations](#)  
[Stephen Marchs Way](#)  
[Proceedings of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool Vol 67 During the One Hundred and Eleventh Session 1921-1922 the One Hundred and Twelfth Session 1922-1923 and the Roscoe Lecture](#)  
[Memorials of C H O Daniel With a Bibliography of the Press 1845-1919](#)  
[The Speeches Table-Talk of the Prophet Mohammad Chosen and Translated with Introduction and Notes](#)  
[Of the New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine as Revealed from Heaven To Which Are Prefixed Some Observations Concerning the New Heaven and the New Earth](#)  
[Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Victor Alfieri Vol 1 of 2](#)  
[Report of the Auditor of Accounts of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the Year Ending December 31 1879](#)  
[Borland Hall](#)  
[Consultations on the Affirmative Action Statement of the U S Commission on Civil Rights Vol 1 Papers Presented February 10 and March 10-11 1981](#)  
[Cooperation and Cost of Living in Certain Foreign Countries Message of the President of the United States Transmitting Data on Cooperation and the Cost of Living in Certain Foreign Countries March 13 1912](#)  
[Deutsche Arbeit in Chile Vol 2](#)  
[Latin Syllabus for the Freshman Year Prepared for the Students in the University of Pennsylvania 1871-72](#)  
[Promptorium Parvulorum Sive Clericorum Dictionarius Anglo-Latinus Princeps Vol 1 Auctore Fratre Galfrido Grammatico Dicto Ex Ordine Fratrum Predicatorum Northfolciensi Circa A D 1440](#)  
[The New York Central and Hudson River Railroad And the Rome Watertown and Ogdenburg Railroad](#)  
[The Laws of the United States Relating to National Banks As Amended with Cognate Statutes and the Federal Reserve ACT](#)  
[The Widows Tale And Other Poems](#)  
[The Thousand and One Nights Commonly Called the Arabian Nights Entertainments Vol 8 of 8](#)  
[The Vision of Dante Alighieri Translated by REV Henry Francis Cary M a](#)  
[Stratagems of Chess or a Collection of Critical and Remarkable Situations Selected from the Works of Eminent Masters Illustrated On-Plates Describing the Ingenious Moves by Which the Game Is Either Won Drawn or Stale-Mate Obtained](#)  
[Select Poems of Catullus Edited with Introductions Notes and Appendices](#)  
[Trade School Speller for Use in the William Hood Dunwoody Industrial Institute of Minneapolis Minn](#)  
[The Honor Roll An Appreciation of the Gallant Men of Bureau County Illinois Who Served the Nation in Its Hour of Need 1917-1918-1919](#)  
[Pathological Anatomy The Last Course of Xavier Bichat from an Autographic Manuscript of P A Beclard With an Account of the Life and Labours of Bichat](#)  
[The Parliamentary Register or History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons Vol 4 Containing an Account of the Most Interesting Speeches and Motions Accurate Copies of the Most Remarkable Bills Letters and Papers Of the Most Materi](#)  
[History of Education in Mississippi](#)  
[Their Books of Association Catalogued Compiled and Collated](#)  
[Critica Sacra Examined Or an Attempt to Show That a New Method May Be Found to Reconcile the Seemingly Glaring Variations in Parallel Passages of Scripture](#)  
[The American Journal of Otolgy Vol 1 A Quarterly Journal of Physiological Acoustic and Aural Surgery 1879](#)

[The Oologist Vol 7 Jan 1889](#)

[The Environment of Vertebrate Life in the Late Paleozoic in North America A Paleogeographic Study](#)

[The Business Mans Arithmetic Containing an Application of a Natural Studies in Constitutional History](#)

[Proceedings at the Celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town of Dedham Massachusetts September 21 1886](#)

[Wheat from the Fields of Boaz](#)

[Ausgewhlte Aufsätze Zur Musikgeschichte](#)

[Satellite Cities A Study of Industrial Suburbs](#)

[Toxines and Antitoxines](#)

[The Heriots](#)

[Second Annual Report of the State Board of Health of Indiana For the Fiscal Year Ending October 31 1883](#)

[Cross Lights](#)

[The Life of Sir Matthew Hale Knt Sometime Lord Chief Justice of His Majestys Court of Kings-Bench](#)

[The Young in Heart](#)

[Ancient Critical Essays Upon English Poets and Poesy Vol 1](#)

[An Inquiry Into the Structure and Animal Oeconomy of the Horse Comprehending the Disease to Which His Limbs Feet Are Subject with Proper Directions for Shoeing And Pointing Out a Method for Ascertaining His Age Until His Twelfth Year To Which Is Added](#)

[Scripture Baptism Defended and Anabaptist Notions Proved to Be Anti-Scriptural Novelties](#)

[Transactions of the Philosophical and Literary Society of Leeds Vol 1 Consisting of Papers Read Before the Society](#)

[The Blind Farmer and His Children](#)

[Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the National Association of Life Underwriters Olympic Theatre St Louis Mo October 23 24 and 25 1906](#)

[La Pensee Et La Polyglossie Essai Psychologique Et Didactique](#)

[Athena 1911](#)

[A Treatise on Arithmetic In Which the Principles of the Science Are Inductively Developed Combining Written Arithmetic with Copious Mental Exercises](#)

[Child Support Enforcement Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means House of Representatives One Hundred Third Congress First Session June 10 1993](#)

[Junius Vol 1 Stat Nominis Umbra](#)

[The Lawyer or Man as He Ought Not to Be A Tale](#)

[The Loves of Chaereas and Callirrhoe Vol 2 of 2 Written Originally in Greek](#)

[Arithmetic in the Ancient Order Fully Yet Familiarly Demonstrated Facilitated in the Study by an Adaptation to Recitation in Classes Simplified in Practice by Concise Maxims and Modes of Statement in Proportion](#)

[Rand McNally and Co s Handy Guide to Philadelphia and Environs Including Atlantic City and Cape May](#)

[The Little House](#)

[Popular British Ballads Vol 3 of 4 Ancient and Modern](#)

[A Philosophical Historical and Moral Essay on Old Maids Vol 2 of 3](#)

[The Very Young Man and the Angel Child](#)

[Handbook of the 6-Inch Howitzer Materiel Model of 1908 and 1908mi With Instructions for Its Care](#)

[The Origin of the North American Indians With a Faithful Description of Their Manners and Customs Both Civil and Military Their Religions Languages Dress and Ornaments](#)

[Popery the Foe of the Church and of the Republic](#)

[Two Lectures on Population Delivered Before the University of Oxford in Easter Term 1828](#)

[Contagious Diseases of Domesticated Animals Continuation of Investigation](#)

[Wisconsin Census Enumeration 1905 Names of Ex-Soldiers and Sailors Residing in Wisconsin June 1 1905](#)

[Prayer Its Necessity Its Power Its Conditions](#)

[Life in Railway Factory](#)

[A Grammatical Index to the Ch#257#769ndogva-Upanisad](#)

[The American Bicycler A Manual for the Observer the Learner and the Expert](#)

[A Study of Virgils Descriptions of Nature](#)

[Car#257doc or the Church in the Sands A Life Picture of England Ireland and Cornwall Before the Romans Left Britain](#)

[The Carnation Manual](#)

[The Regiments of the British Army Chronologically Arranged](#)

[The Literature of the Highlands](#)

[Suggestion and Autosuggestion A Psychological and Pedagogical Study Based Upon the Investigations Made by the New Nancy School](#)

[Personality and Fellowship](#)

[Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener His Life and Work for the Empire Vol 1](#)

[Thoughts on Some Important Points Relating to the System of the World](#)

[In the Day of Battle Poems of the Great War](#)

[Divine Hymns or Spiritual Songs For the Use of Religious Assemblies and Private Christians](#)

[The Suburbanite Vol 9 Devoted to the Promotion of Suburban Life and the Interests of Suburbanites March 1911](#)

[Naval Reform From the French of the Late M Gabriel Charmes](#)

[Cornelii Nepotis Liber de Excellentibus Ducibus Exterarum Gentium Cum Vitis Catonis Et Attici](#)

[Brandeis Review Vol 12 Summer 1992](#)

[Buddhist Art in India](#)

---