# THE ORGAN BANK FARM

## Also by John Boyd

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The Pollinators of Eden
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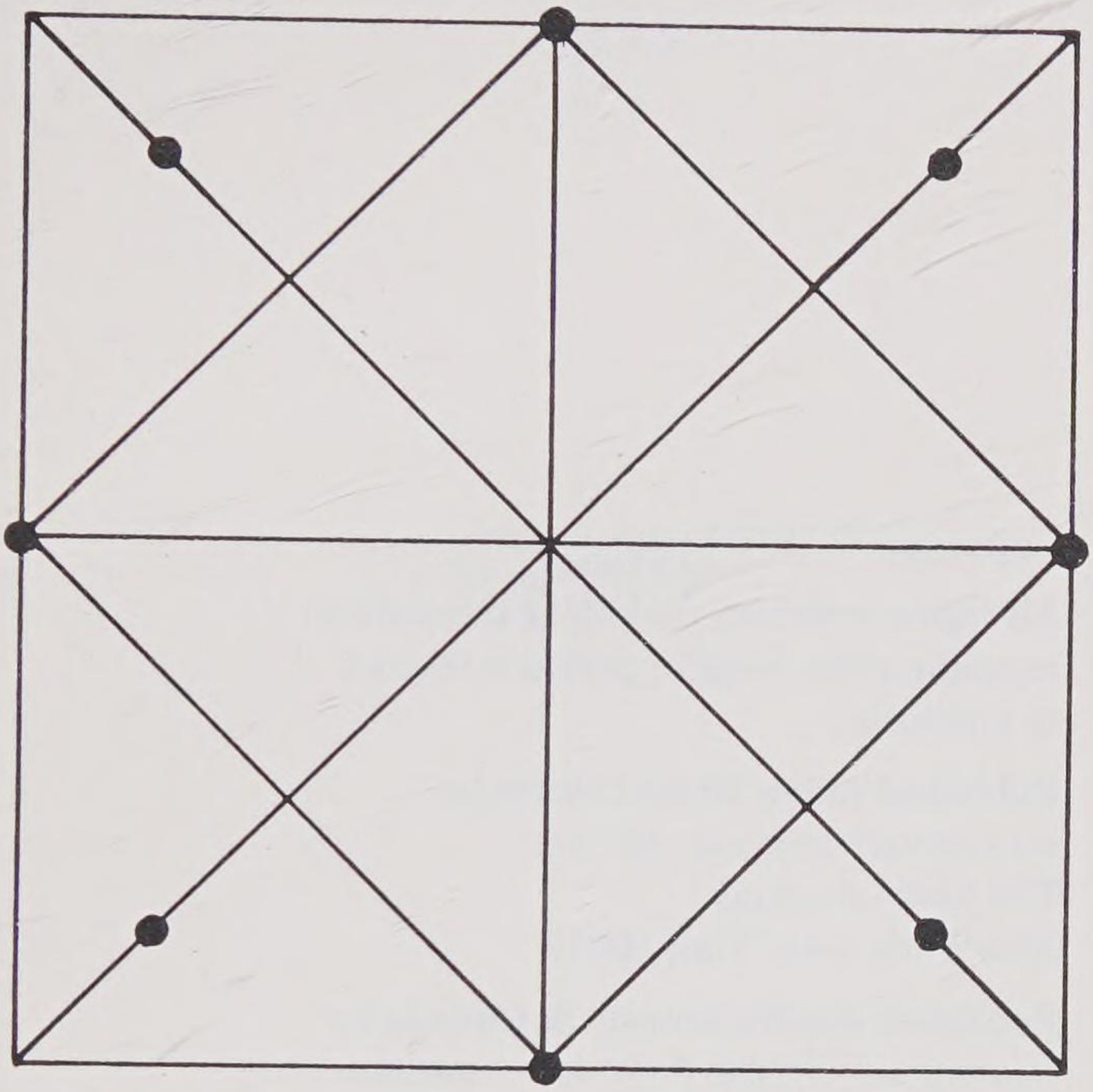
Sex and the High Command



# THE ORGAN BANK FARM

BY

JOHN BOYD

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# THE ORGAN BANK FARM

# chapter 1.

The doomsday mankind had feared since Hiroshima and awaited since Eniwetok dawned with the indignity of running noses, headaches, and a slight rise in employee absenteeism. "That bug again" was the common phrase. "A slight touch of flu virus," the doctors said. But there was a difference, even then. The headaches did not yield to aspirin.

In the beginning, overdoses of aspirin caused more deaths than the flu.

During the first winter in the northern climes only a few hundred thousand died, enough to label the attack a mild epidemic. It seemed to gain momentum in the southern winter and in its second season in the Northern Hemisphere a few millions died. It was then considered a grave epidemic, but the deaths were fami'y affairs that hardly touched the manswarm on earth. But in the third season, death became a public affair; in the fourth an economic burden; and in the fifth not death but burial became the object of national efforts. The dead outnumbered the survivors.

In laboratories, virologists formulated antibiotic after antibiotic in what seemed to them a hand-to-hand fight with the virus, but in the sixth year their outposts were overcome. Men of allied sciences stepped into the virological laboratories and died, and the flu gained power. Three hours from the first headache to death was common, for the flu attacked the autonomic nervous centers in the brain.

It was a Red plot. It was the Chinese. But the Reds died with the whites, blacks, and browns, and the Chinese requested bulldozers with which to bury their dead. Rumors solidified around the Chemical and

Biological Warfare Department operations during the military action in Asia, where Chinese armies had crumpled and surrendered to vastly inferior forces in a manner never officially explained.

Three Americans survived who knew the story of the Chinese surrenders. One was Doctor James Galway.

In the seventh year, the flu stopped. The virus had evolved into a form more vulnerable to the human body's defenses. Nature balanced life and death.

As an aftermath of the plague, weird religious sects sprang up stimulating bizarre antireligious movements. Grief lingered in many as gentleness, in others as indifference. Few survivors escaped without the personality changes psychiatrists labeled, with capitals, "The Death Trauma." The seven years, demographers estimated, had brought eight billion deaths. There were approximately three billion survivors, and many were males sterilized in the last effort to control the population explosion.

But the quantitive loss enhanced the quality of life. Freeways stretched empty for miles under skies unmarked by jet trails. The scent of flowers returned to the air, springtimes of singing birds returned, and clear brooks sparkled into clean rivers. Automated factories stood idle lest man be choked in abundance, and a basement was placed under the price of goods lest men grow idle. On the black market, steak was twenty cents a pound and fresh eggs ten cents a dozen.

Mild anarchy reigned. The government printed edicts, which good citizens read before ignoring. Crimes against property ceased, against persons diminished. Spy satellites decayed in their orbits. Fire departments assigned priority to fires, usually ignoring dwelling houses. Policemen wrote memoirs of past riots. Students studied, and research and technology flourished for a strange reason: a correlation had been established between death and intelligence. The wittiest were most apt to survive.

As a neurologist, Doctor James Galway believed all

life was a stimulus-response system, but he had a conscience and a sense of justice. As he palmed the tennis ball in his desk drawer, his philosophy and his nature headed toward a collision course. Before him a twelve-year-old boy slouched in a chair. Wires, snaking off from the boy's head-harness, connected electrodes with two buttons on the doctor's desk. The buttons activated hypersonic beams that crossed in the boy's thalamus. The green button stimulated pleasure and the red button induced pain.

"Catch, Tommy."

With his left hand, Galway lobbed the ball in a high arc toward the boy. Alerted, Tommy reached, but he reached with his right hand. Galway pushed the pain button.

Tommy winced at the bee sting in his palm, switched hands quickly, and caught the ball with his left. Galway cut off a threat of tears by pressing the pleasure button as the boy tossed back the ball. "Good recovery! You'll play for the Dodgers yet if you learn to read the lineup."

Hurt pride as much as pain had brought the threat of tears to the boy's eyes, Galway realized as he turned his attention back to the letterboard on his desk. The doctor could sympathize with hurt pride. Two months ago he had figured his brain-stimulus method would cure word-blindness in six weeks, but his class was only slightly ahead of other therapists at the clinic. A psychiatrist had written a paper calling Galway the Pavlov of the Tracy Clinic and suggesting that his training procedures be limited to dogs.

Galway tilted the viewing board toward Tommy. Between flanges on the board, he had inserted the letters U T B.

"Give me the word 'tub.'"

Galway could see the shadow of the boy's hand projected on a scoring screen the doctor had resurrected from an abandoned bowling alley, and Tommy was using his left hand to letter in a T.

"Doctor Jim," Lois, his secretary, said behind him,

"Doctor Egan called. There's a gentleman from Washington in his office who's flown out here just to see you. You're getting famous!"

"More likely infamous," Galway said, not overjoyed at her announcement. Nothing but bad news ever came from Washington.

Hearing Lois, Tommy completed T-U-B in haste, and Galway pushed the pleasure button. "That'll be all, Tommy. Go play now."

"You have a date with Cynthia in half an hour," Lois said, "and she'll be upset if you're not back on time. Better drive my scooter over."

In the department head's office, the man from Washington was waiting. Doctor Egan smiled hello to Galway and said, "Doctor Galway, this is Mr. Hobart of Health, Education and Welfare."

Hobart rose to shake hands. Around thirty, he was square-jawed, crewcut, with steel-gray eyes and the aloof smile of a minor bureaucrat. He reminded Galway of a Marine Corps drill instructor.

"Actually, I'm from the Bureau of Family Relations," Hobart said, handing Galway his business card, "which operates under HEW's jurisdiction."

"Please sit down," Galway said, "if you're not arresting me for child abuse."

"On the contrary, your article on aphasiacs in *Child Therapy* caused favorable comment in Washington. So I won't take much of your time, Doctor. I was sent here on recruiting duty."

"You've taken all the time you need," Galway smiled. "I spent six months in Washington."

"You'd be working in California, Doctor, at a government facility in Paradise Valley, north of Lake Isabella."

Galway thought for a moment. That area, south of King's Canyon, was rugged and desolate, and the town at Lake Isabella had been abandoned. "There's no one up there."

"There is a government psychiatric-research center," Hobart said.

Galway turned to Egan. "Did you know there was a mental institution near Lake Isabella?"

"Not until Mr. Hobart told me."

"What would my job entail?" he asked Hobart.

"Much the same as your work at USC. You'd be teaching autistic children to read, write, and talk."

"I'm no psychiatrist," Galway said. "And child therapy is only my hobby."

"Yes, I've heard you were a hobbyist of amazing proportions. But I'm not expert on such matters. I'm here solely to point an unwavering finger and say, 'Uncle Sam wants you.'"

"I don't want Uncle Sam."

"Uncle Sam assumed as much. He's prepared to offer you inducements."

"Inducements don't interest me," Galway said.

"Just for the hell of it, Jim," Egan interposed, "ask him how much."

"How much?"

"HEW is prepared to offer $82,250 per year plus expenses."

Although the figure was astronomical for a professorial grant, Galway was more impressed by its exactness. "Why not bring the project here," Galway suggested, "and give the money to the Tracy Clinic?"

"Your proposed department can't be separated from the Paradise Valley facility."

"But why me?"

"As I said, your article on brain-stimulus therapy got attention."

"Good. Then you must know my article explains my method in detail, including the equipment used."

"But, Doctor, we seek only the best experimentalists for this facility, and you're the foremost authority on your method."

"Hargood, at Stanford, is using it."

"Hargood's a father," Hobart said. "He's needed in the biological area."

One of Hobart's remarks irritated Galway's memory. "You mentioned autism, which is a problem for psychiatrists. I deal in organic malfunctions of the brain."

"I'm no neurologist," Hobart said.

Speaking carefully, Galway said, "My method trains children to bypass brain areas in which loss of cognition occurs and develop similar areas, perhaps on the opposite lobe. I retrain a left-hand lobe to use a right-hand lobe, and vice versa. Autistic children are psychotic, and the problem is infinitely more complex. HEW has made an error."

Hobart seemed pained, not by HEW's error but by Galway's inability to understand him. "Doctor, I promise you there's been no mistake. We're convinced your shock system would work on the children."

Galway *was* pained. "It's not shock therapy. The pain is mild but punitive. Even so, I don't enjoy conditioning children with pain."

"As the agency sees it, Doctor, you don't have to use pain as the punishment factor. Pleasure denied is punishment, so you could work solely on the pleasure principle. Besides, we're seeking only to break through their consciousness long enough to teach them to read and write, and, hopefully, to talk."

"Why go that far," Galway asked, "without trying for a cure?"

Suddenly Hobart grew haggard. He leaned forward to give sincerity to his words. "Doctor Galway, I'm not qualified to go into all the details, but, since the flu, every life we possess is a national asset. One of the reasons for our largesse is to show you the gravity of the situation. If I could speak frankly, I'm sure you'd volunteer."

"Then quit feeding me fragments of information," Galway said, irritated. "How can I make a decision without facts?"

"It's a very sensitive area, Doctor. You might say it affects national security."

"Security against what? Thirty million Russians?"

"Perhaps that was an ill-chosen phrase," Hobart said.

"But there are elements in this country that would seek to end the services provided by the facility, that sort of citizen who protests against vivisection of dogs."

"I'm one of those citizens," Galway said.

"You weren't awarded the Silver Star for squeamishness," Hobart blurted. "I *know* you're a patriot."

"Since you trust me so completely, why not tell me what the assignment entails."

Hobart's face registered such dejection that Galway felt compassion for the man who had entered as a Marine sergeant and was acting like a rookie. "Doctor Galway, I was sent here only to make the preliminary proposals. Personally, I don't *know* what's going on in Paradise Valley."

Galway glanced at his watch. It was possible that Hobart did not know what was going on, even probable. Galway was familiar with the security technique.

"Mr. Hobart, I have another appointment in fifteen minutes, and I would like a word with Doctor Egan. Perhaps you could drop by my house for dinner at seven. You have my address, I assume. We'd have more leisure, and I can't think of a more charming dinner topic than $82,250."

"It would be my pleasure, Doctor."

After Hobart left, Galway turned to the department head. "Well, Ed, what do you think of that?"

Egan leaned back in his swivel chair, his craggy features both amused and bemused. "Obviously he expected you to flip at the prospect of money, prestige, and the nefarious delights of secret government projects. When you weren't impressed, he couldn't regroup his forces, but he'll call Washington and be back tonight with a different approach. . . . You never mentioned a Silver Star to me."

"I buried it with Matilda. She was wearing it that day on her charm bracelet."

Egan nodded and said, "That sum, $82,250, fascinates me. Of course, you're a neurosurgeon, so you could expect them to go high, but why not $82,500? Do you

know what the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare makes?"

"No idea."

"Just a minute." Egan reached for his telephone and asked for the Political Science Department.

Since Hobart knew about the Silver Star, Galway thought, that would mean that Hobart had researched his war record, and this would mean a Q clearance for Hobart since Galway's jacket was with the Chemical and Biological Warfare Department. If Hobart had a Q clearance, he was not merely an employee of Health, Education and Welfare. He could be with the FBI or the CIA. On the other hand, he merely could have been told of Galway's Silver Star. Hobart could be a messenger boy, as he insinuated, or he could be lying.

"Thank you, Doctor," Egan said, and hung up the phone.

He turned to Galway. "Frankovitch tells me that the Secretary of HEW makes $82,500, so your $250 less would be a status reduction. . . . That part checks out."

Between the psychiatrist and Galway was the rapport of men whose disciplines demanded an objectivity approaching indifference, and Galway valued his judgment. For that reason, Galway was alerted by the skepticism implied in Egan's words.

"But other parts don't check out?"

Egan nodded. "I've never heard of a psychiatric-research facility called Paradise Valley. It sounds like some dear name a real-estate developer would use to cheat despair. . . . And Frankovitch has never heard of the Bureau of Family Relations."

"I'll find out more tonight."

"Not by asking Hobart, I suspect."

"No, by trapping him," Galway said, grinning. "One last question, Ed. What's a good book to read on autism?"

Five minutes later, as Galway started the motor scooter, he was concerned because he would be three minutes late for his class with Cynthia Perkins. Cynthia

considered her appointments with him as dates, and though she couldn't read a line, she could give him unmitigated hell in adult English if he outraged her feminine prerogatives.

The mild punishment he inflicted on Cynthia for reading errors might be ineffective in relation to the abuse she took from her environment. Perhaps a double charge of pleasure for infrequent victories might be more effective than punishment for her constant errors. It was Hobart's idea, or somebody's in HEW, but it might work on Cynthia, whose natural habitat was punishment. . . . Or on autistic children frozen in a permanent nightmare.

Galway lived in a two-story Spanish-type house north of Adams and west of Western on Sugar Hill, an area once occupied by prosperous Negroes. Flu had devastated the ghettos and the few remaining blacks were congregated farther south, in Inglewood—where the action was. The only reminder of the neighborhood's former inhabitants was a blackamoor on Galway's lawn with its face painted white.

Hobart enjoyed the tour of the house, particularly Galway's library. Glancing along the shelves at the books, he commented, "You read widely outside of your field, I see, even in religions."

"That's to help establish guidelines for research."

"But there's nothing on virology," Hobart said.

His selection of virology was too pointed to be irrelevant and Galway was alerted. Egan had prophesied that Hobart would come with a new approach, and if this was to be it, Hobart was taking the wrong gambit.

"There's no hard-core science here at all," Galway told him. "I use the reference library at USC."

Galway steered him across the hall to the nursery, where sonic stimulators hung from pegs on the wall. "Here's where I bring the children for the first three days of each semester, to establish myself as a father surrogate. The stimulator is my own handiwork."

"What does it feel like?"

"You feel nothing but the mood. The brain's insensitive to itself."

"Is there any aftereffect?"

From the question, Galway knew that Hobart had not read his monograph with much attention—or Hobart was trying to convey that impression.

"A mood might linger awhile," Galway said, "depending on the degree of stimulation and the mood itself. Mirth, for instance, is more ephemeral than grief."

"What about sex?" Hobart asked the inevitable question.

"It stimulates hormone activity without increasing the secretion, much like Shakespeare's wine."

"Is it effective against pain?"

"No. Any efference of that nature overwhelms the signals. If a child has a toothache, I have to suspend therapy. Would you like to see how it works?"

"I certainly would."

Only timid or insecure persons turned down a chance to feel with the apparatus, or very wary persons. As Galway seated Hobart and adjusted the headharness, he adjudged Hobart's reaction as an element against his being either an FBI or CIA agent.

"Do you have any hangups, such as claustrophobia or agoraphobia?"

Hobart had to think for a moment. "Sometimes I feel a little uneasy in an airplane."

"Then focus your mind on flying. Imagine you're in an airplane."

Galway probed for the hypothalamus, felt Hobart's shoulder muscles relax, and shot a sustained double charge of hypersonic vibrations into his brain, crisscrossing in the hypothalamus. An involuntary smile settled over Hobart's lips, and his breathing became slow and even. When a faint flush appeared on his cheeks, Galway asked, "How do you feel?"

With euphoric enthusiasm, Hobert half-sighed, "Man, this is the only way to fly!"

Galway cut the current and let the sonic vibrations fade.

Hobart's enthusiasm and euphoria extended through the martinis that Galway's housekeeper served. It was the best martini he had ever tasted, and with real Greek olives. He was interested in the decorator who had arranged Galway's living room, and when he paused before the portrait of Helen, with Sylvia in her arms, tears almost came to his eyes. "She was the most beautiful lady," he breathed, "that ever there was in the west countree."

Not until they reached the dinner table was Galway's guest able to get to the agenda. After the soup course, he asked without much interest, "Jim, have you thought over that proposition?"

"Hal, I'm not really interested. Of course, there are a few luxuries I'd like to have, but the offer wouldn't put them any closer."

"You must have expensive tastes."

"Unusual tastes," Galway said.

"Where do your unusual tastes lead you?"

"Offhand, I could say to a pontoon-equipped Hover-jet for hunting caribou in the North Woods. . . . But a toy like that approaches a quarter-million dollars."

"Unusual and expensive," Hobart commented. "Say, Jim, I called Washington this afternoon. I've been authorized to tell you that your work at Paradise Valley might lead to a surgical solution of psychosis."

Hobart's remark induced a mild euphoria in Galway. He laughed. "Then they'd better close the facility and take their money to Las Vegas. Besides, I've quit surgery."

"That's known," Hobart said. "I know the idea seems crazy, but Doctor English is with us, and he doesn't think so."

"Robert English?"

If Galway was expected to be pleased or astonished, neither emotion showed on his face.

"The Bureau gave me a message to deliver: Doctor

English would like for you to join him in a game of chess."

So Bob English was sending him a "May Day." Neither Hobart nor anyone else could have encoded that message. English was in trouble, and that was too bad. English was usually the source of trouble, and it was so far out of character for English to call for help that the distress signal itself was patently a fraud.

"I had rather hoped that he was dead," Galway said, "since he hasn't published anything since the epidemic."

"He's been alive and well at Paradise for the last three years."

"That shouldn't keep him from publishing," Galway said, "unless he's still sulking over the blow-back from his galvanic-dendrite theory. Why has there been such a complete blackout of his program among neurologists?"

"It's in an area sensitive to political pressure."

Whether Hobart knew it or not, his reasoning was false. The government had not consulted pacifists when it set up ABM silos throughout the country and the only pressures that Robert English responded to came from inside him.

"Who's in charge at Paradise Valley?"

"I don't know," Hobart replied promptly.

"It's not the military, heaven forbid."

"That I do know, and the answer's no. The army handles the transport, with some recruitment of civilian personnel, but that's all."

Now Galway knew why Hobart had been chosen to recruit him. The man knew nothing. But that knowledge, in itself, told Galway that the operation was in a black area of secrecy. Already he had probably learned more from Hobart than Hobart himself knew.

There was a pause as Hobart accepted a second slice of roast beef. "I take it you don't care for the military. I heard that you were a colonel."

"In the medical corps."

"But you scientists always played footsy with the military." Hobart sounded accusing.

"Not my science," Galway said. "Medicine's a soft science, an art."

"I've heard tales to the contrary."

There it was again, the tentative jab. Irritated, Galway said, "If you're referring to germ warfare, you can forget the rumors. We didn't start the flu, neither did the Chinese. Every antitoxin or antibiotic we devised helped produce a stronger strain, and it was Darwin's survival of the fittest applied to viruses."

Concentrating on the roast beef, Hobart said, "That sounds more reasonable than the retribution theory of the church boys. . . . How'd you find a cook?"

"I have methods," Galway said.

For a moment, Hobart ate in pensive silence, obviously enjoying the meal. Suddenly he said, "Say, Jim, it might be possible for you to requisition a Hoverjet as a business expense."

"So, I spend a year at Paradise Valley and come out with a Hoverjet. In two years it's claimed for back property taxes."

"I don't know." Hobart sipped his coffee. "There may be a way of getting around the property taxes."

"There are," Galway said bluntly, "but they aren't open to HEW."

Hobart nodded. "Right. But the Bureau of Family Relations operates on an independent budget from the department, and not accountable to it."

With unlimited funds and no accountability, Galway thought, the Bureau of Family Relations had nothing to do with Health, Education and Welfare except to use it as an administrative cover. Hobart was sincere in believing that he worked for HEW, and no undercover agent would have let slip that tidbit to a man as experienced as Galway. Only one agency in Washington had an independent budget without accountability and that was Central Intelligence.

Unknown even to himself, Hobart was an agent for the CIA.

Hobart didn't dawdle over liquor. He was eager to get to the airport and catch the flight east. Galway walked him to his car, and the younger man confessed, "I can't see why the government is keeping Paradise Valley under wraps, unless it's an out-and-out boondoggle in the face of the manpower shortage, but one thing I'd like to tell you, Jim: Don't plan on any summer semester."

"They can't shanghai me."

"It's not that, Jim," Hobart said. "Confidentially, I've been on this recruiting duty for over a year. Some come easy. Some come hard. But sooner or later they all come. . . ."

"I'll keep your confidence, Hal. How do you feel about the airplane?"

"Eager," Hobart said, "and thanks for everything."

Galway waved good-bye in the headlights and turned back toward the house, suddenly anxious to get into the book on autistic children. He heard tires squeal as Hobart gunned his auto south on Victoria.

Hobart was not rushing back to the International Airport. First there would be a short lay-over in Inglewood, where the action was, but there would remain enough residual enthusiasm for Hobart to enjoy his flight east. In fact, if the plane crashed this side of the Continental Divide, Hobart would enjoy the crash. Someone should research the relationship between ardor and courage.

On May 21, six weeks after Doctor Galway talked to Hobart, Cynthia Perkins stood before the class in Remedial Reading One, head-harness in position, and read in a firm and determined manner: "John is happy. See John run. He is chasing Spot. Spot is John's dog."

Cynthia stood for a moment, bowed to the right, then to the left, and waited for the applause to die before she sat down.

"Your group reading today will be *Hiawatha*," Galway announced.

From now until lunch, the class was supervised by

the nurse, who was drawing the curtains. Galway turned back to his desk and switched on his desk lamp as the nurse flashed the reading slide on the screen. In the darkened room, while the children chanted out the tale of Hiawatha, Galway scribbled the last notes for his paper on the revised methodology.

Looking back, he surveyed an incredible month, as the charts appended to his monograph would show. Tony Layton had read and reported on *Tom Sawyer*, Sylvia Tucker had read *Anne of Green Gables*, and Johnny Breckinridge was trying his hand at verse after sprinting through A. A. Milne. Elimination of the punishment factor had rid the children of apprehension toward failure. They had become success-oriented. Unknown to their owners, the minds chanting in the darkness were becoming as finely tuned as racing cars in an educational system designed for the speed of trucks.

Galway's work was accomplished with this breakthrough in the treatment of aphasia. Looking back, Galway recalled that Hobart had warned him not to prepare for a summer session at the clinic. He did not intend to.

He intended to attack the problem of childhood schizophrenia in an area where psychiatry had failed, the treatment of the completely withdrawn child.

As he wrote, it occurred to him that he might be the obverse of a coin well known to psychiatrists, not a man in search of a father but a father in search of a family. Ordinarily, Galway submerged his private loss in the greater tragedy, but this morning he had been fighting off thoughts of his oldest daughter, Matilda. Mattie had been fourteen, gangly but graceful, and the last of his family to go. For three months after Helen and their youngest, Sylvia, had died, he and Mattie had formed a family he hoped would endure. At the very end, she had planned to meet him for lunch at the Queen of Angels Hospital, but she had failed to keep her appointment. They had told him when he came out of an operating room and he had arranged for her cremation over the telephone. He had never

seen her body and had never re-entered an operating room.

When the overhead lights came on, he was writing his conclusions on the treatment of word-blindness. Dimly he heard chairs pushed back and laughter as the children dashed for the patio and lunch. When he felt an arm rest lightly across his shoulders, he didn't look up as he reached out and encircled the waist of the girl beside him. "You wowed 'em, Cynthia," he said.

"Next time I'll follow up with a striptease."

"Hush, you naughty girl." He spun her into the chair beside his desk, finished the sentence he was writing, shoved his own chair back, looked over at Cynthia Perkins, and said, "Act demure."

She straightened in the chair, brought her knees together, arched her back primly erect, folded her hands, and fixed a shy smile on her face.

Her gift of mimicry astounded him. Out of a thistle-patch environment that had given her six stepfathers and heaven knew how many "uncles" had sprung this violet, Cynthia—or tulip or orchid or whatever else he might have asked for.

"Cynthia, I have a secret for you. This is my last semester."

Her lower lip trembled slightly as she tensed forward in sudden alarm, and her skills couldn't conceal the disappointment that flashed in her eyes. "I wanted you in Therapy Two," she said. "I'm madly in love with you."

"You'll find others to love," he smiled. "Your life's problem, I suspect, is going to be in the wise selection of lovers."

"I'm thirteen," Cynthia said, "not far from fifteen. Mother says if a girl doesn't know what she wants in a man by the time she's fifteen she'll never know. I'll still want you."

"I'll be around town," Galway grinned. "Give me a ring on your fifteenth birthday."

"You give me your ring for remembrance."

"It's my class ring," he said. "And too big for you."

Cynthia looked aside, her face reflecting the tragedy of the moment, "They always end like this, in good-byes and regrets."

"You're tearing me to pieces, Cynthia. Now, smile and go to lunch."

Still seated, she twisted at the waist, lowered her shoulder, and flashed the fixed smile of a stripper. Then she jumped to her feet, gangly but graceful, and scampered away, not toward the patio and lunch but toward the restrooms. She was going there to cry, and he knew where the aura of Mattie had come from. Since early this morning his peripheral consciousness had been dreading the moment when he would have to cancel his appointments with Cynthia.

His watch showed twelve-ten. Doctor Egan was probably in his office. Galway called, and the psychiatrist was in.

"Fred," Galway asked, "where may I find some autistic children, preferably mutes."

"You won't in L.A.," Egan told him. "All the custodial patients are sent to Topeka."

"What happened to the clinic at UCLA?"

"Diagnosis only. The therapeutic facility's been closed for three years."

"I see," Galway said. "Do you know of anyone who might help me get two or three diverted to L.A.?"

"In your case, maybe. The man to talk to is Hammergren, at Topeka. One moment, I'll get his number."

Hammergren happened to be at his desk, so Galway's call was put through immediately. At first Hammergren mistook the reason for his call. "We have only thirty-two children, here, Doctor, with eight therapists. But if you'd like to join our staff for research, pack up and fly over. Your monograph on aphasia's a bible around here."

"I'm preparing a new testament," Galway said, "and you'll be sent a carbon copy. But what I'm inquiring about is the possibility of diverting a few of your extremely withdrawn patients to my care."

"I appreciate the preview of your article, but I'm afraid I can't help on the patients. HEW directives are very explicit on the procedures in that area."

"What of your nonresponsive patients under permanent custodial care?"

"There are none." A quality of circumspection had entered Hammergren's voice.

The guarded tone alerted Galway. With sudden insight, he decided to gamble on Hammergren's humanism. "In that event, Doctor, I'll drop my approach, but it's gratifying to know my services aren't needed. . . ."

"Don't misunderstand me, Doctor Galway. Your approach to psychiatric treatment might be of value. . . . Here, let me give you a number to call. Ask for Mr. Hobart."

He called the Bureau of Family Relations. Mr. Hobart was out, the girl at the phone told him, but if he wished to leave his number . . .

"Never mind," he said. "Simply tell him that Galway wishes to enter Paradise."

"I'll tell him, Doctor Galway."

He hung up, faintly amused. Security must be a problem within the cadre. He had not introduced himself as a doctor. Galway shuffled his notes together and walked to his office, resenting the tug of strings from the puppet master. English had foreseen the breakthrough in aphasia, had probably planted the "punishment denied" theory with Hobart after reading Galway's notes, and had deduced that Galway's next interest would be in autism.

Galway dictated his final notes into the dictaphone, adding to the bibliography: "Electro-Magnetic Attraction-Repulsion in Neuron Termini." It was one of English's theories that had been shot down on the wing by an undergraduate at M.I.T. Now, English would know he was coming, and he wanted English to be prepared. The former General Commanding, 99th Chemical and Biological Warfare Detachment, ATO, would

have a lot of questions to answer from his former Chief of Staff, Colonel James Galway.

Granted that English might have nudged him toward an interest in autism, how could English have foreseen, three years ago, enough about his interests to corner the supply of autistic children?

# chapter 2.

It was a morning in early June and hot.

The sign on the front of the bus read INYOKERN. The driver headed due east from Bakersfield across flatlands exuding the licorice miasma of alfalfa and veered left at Route 178 toward the Kern River. As the bus began its climb into the Greenhorn Mountains, the humidity dropped, the air grew clear and bracing.

After the first few miles, the driver dropped to a cautious speed because of potholes he avoided with foreknowledge and signs beside the broken fences warning that cattle had the right-of-way. Poppies and lupines filled the potholes. Cows raised their heads in jaw-wagging curiosity among the oaks. Once before he had traveled this road on a Sunday's outing with his family, and his strongest memory of the trip was of his own vexation at the crawling traffic.

A lost and legendary America was reasserting its claim on the land. To the north, it was rumored, buffalo once more roamed the plains and caribou, elk, and wolves had come back to the forests. Once, as they rounded a bend, he saw a beaver in a pond below a grove of aspen. Manitou, the Great Spirit of the Indians, was returning to his wilderness, but there were no Indians left to greet their god. Galway lamented the loss of Indians, a spin-off regret from his Death Trauma, he assumed.

"Folks," the driver announced, "we'll lunch at Paradise Valley about one o'clock."

When his orders had come through, five days ago, they had been processed through the Department of Defense, but a colonel at the Bakersfield Quartermaster Depot, where Galway had reported for transportation,

told him the army had nothing to do with the operation. Other passengers on the bus were also civilians, mostly young and slated for nursing or orderly jobs at the hospital.

Only one other passenger struck Galway as a professional man. Across the aisle and three seats behind Galway, who was riding behind the driver, sat a man in his early forties who was looking with detached interest at the scenery. His thin face was pale beneath prematurely white hair, which, except for his watery blue eyes, gave him the coloring of an interior decorator's white on white.

Shortly before noon, they arrived at Lake Isabella and turned north, skirting the western edge of the lake. Galway was surprised to see a filling station open for business in a deserted town on an abandoned highway. On reflection, he realized that the service-station attendants had been placed there to direct adventurous motorists away from the road they had taken.

North of the lake, the driver turned off the road to a ranch house, where a man came out and opened a gate. The driver eased the bus across a pasture, turned north again behind a clump of aspen, and trundled it onto an almost invisible strip of concrete mottled green and brown. Galway settled back to enjoy the best stretch of pavement since Bakersfield.

When the speedometer hit 35 and kept climbing, he grew unsettled. Though straight, the lane was barely wider than the bus. Occasionally, bushes swished along the sides and overarching trees swooshed toward them like a tidal wave cleft by a razor-thin prow. Skittering creatures were squashed beneath their wheels. When the driver leaned back and lighted a cigarette, Galway knew that the lane had a guide band and the ancient bus a sensor.

Running straight and true, the road took a sudden upgrade and they were hurtling along a canyon ledge at 80 miles an hour. Almost as an after-image, he saw the white spume of the Kern River far below, for he was intent on a granite outjut ahead. He gasped aloud

as the road dipped and they whooshed into a tunnel, a pinpoint of daylight showing far ahead.

"Somebody's gone to a lot of expense to hide this road," he said to the driver.

"I hear they've got communicable diseases up here."

"You believe them?"

"Well," the driver answered, "I take a lot of people in, but nobody ever comes out."

They emerged from the tunnel and descended by switchbacks to the valley below. It was a glacial cirque, less spectacular than Yosemite but still impressive. From the heights, Galway estimated it at 2 miles wide and possibly 4 miles long enwalled by granite cliffs. On the floor he could see the now meandering fork of the Kern looping a patchwork of forests and meadows, but there was no sign of habitation. Such secrecy and camouflage meant an operation was being carried on below that could be jeopardized by a letter to one congressman.

So it had to be financed by the CIA, but how had that agency dragooned the services of a man like Robert English?

Leveling out on the flats, the road again was covered by trees. Galway's sense of foreboding at the surrounding cliffs was heightened when the bus pulled up at a sentry box and a green-uniformed man wearing a pistol waved them on through a storm fence topped by delta bars strung with barbed wire. Fifty yards past the fence, they pulled into a green-graveled parking area before a camouflaged lodge set back in a clump of aspen and sequoias.

"We'll stop here, folks, to process your papers," the driver announced. "Restrooms are in the rear."

Stepping from the bus, Galway felt reality return with the crunch of gravel under his feet. He saw a park-like sweep of trees around him, some hardwood, mostly evergreen, their boles obscuring a distant green swash of meadow. Flanking the porch steps of the lodge pansy beds glimmered in the sunlight. Some-

where a bird trilled into the buoyant air. With trees obscuring the ramparts, his feeling of entrapment subsided. The valley had charm.

"Good coffee in the security office," the driver, disembarking beside him, said.

Most of the passengers were going around the building to the rear. A few were lighting cigarettes and surveying the scenery.

"I'll try it," Galway said, falling in beside the driver.

As they neared the building, a young girl with large brown eyes and black hair emerged from the building and waved at the driver. She was wearing a blouse and a plaid skirt and said, "How was the trip, Fred? Anyone scream?"

"No, Rosa," the driver confessed. "But I got a gasp from Doctor Galway."

It was the first that Galway was aware that the driver knew his name.

"Doctor Galway," the girl said, "I'm Rosa Valdez. You and Doctor Lovestone will be processed through the security office."

"Lovestone went to the restroom, Rosa," the driver said. "How's the coffee?"

"Fresh-brewed. Doctor Galway, let me have your papers and come with me."

Handing her his orders, he asked, "Is that Claude Lovestone, the Pied Piper of Bellevue?"

"Yes. We get nothing but the best in Paradise Valley."

Or the most original, Galway thought, following her into the sunlit office done in rustic modern with knotted pine prestwood and imitation redwood rafters. Doctor Lovestone was a man Galway wanted to meet, the world's only musico-psychiatrist.

Galway's anticipation was jolted by the sight of a black box on a table beside a swivel chair in front of a desk. A male clerk sat behind the desk, shirtsleeved, and behind him, at a second desk, was another man, hard-faced, in a green uniform. As Rosa took his pa-

pers back to the green uniform, Galway's pleasure at the thought of meeting Claude Lovestone ended in the black box.

Over by the coffeetable, the bus driver asked, "Coffee, Doctor?"

"Yes, please. Black."

Rosa returned and stood behind the swivel chair, swinging it toward Galway. "If you'll be seated, Doctor Galway, our sensor clerk has a few questions. You have no legal objections to the use of the mind-sensor, have you?"

"No legal objections," he said, stressing the word "legal" as he took the coffee and sat down.

Rosa caught the distaste in his voice.

"You'll be working in a sensitive position, Doctor, so we have to be careful. . . . Fred, will you keep a lookout for Doctor Lovestone?"

She fitted the electrodes to his temples and he felt queasy from the oiliness of their touch. Now he understood why his orders had come through the Department of Defense. By accepting them, he had waived his right to refuse the sensor.

Sipping his coffee, he comforted himself with the thought that his acceptance would shortly become an academic matter. Legally, all that was required of him was that he permit the electrodes to be placed in position.

"Doctor," the sensor clerk explained, "when I ask a question, please verbalize yes or no in your mind. Don't speak outright."

Already, Galway experienced difficulty interpreting the words, because he had shifted his thinking into Mandarin dialect.

"Your name is Doctor Galway and you are a neurologist?"

Mentally, Galway framed a yes in Chinese ideographs.

"Rosa, is the box plugged in?"

Standing behind him, Rosa must have nodded. The

clerk reached over and switched on his desk lamp. It worked. He looked back toward the security officer. "Dave, I'm getting no reading."

"Try the second question." The security officer seemed amused.

"Doctor Galway, do you consider the practice of euthanasia socially useful? Yes or no."

Now Galway could almost hear the tinkle of temple bells and smell the scent of wisteria as he answered no.

"I still can't get a reading, Dave." The clerk sounded plaintive.

"Try number seven." Boredom in the security officer's voice alerted Galway.

The clerk looked down at a question sheet on his desk, so Galway was ready when asked, "What actress played the lead in *Tropical Passion?*"

It was not a yes-or-no question but one designed to bring instantly to his mind a name whose pattern had been coded into the machine; but the resonance of Mandarin submerged "Barbara Linx" beneath the monopests of a love poem by Ling Po.

As the clerk continued to try to entrap him with nonsense questions, and *non sequiturs*, he saw Lovestone enter to watch the demonstration.

Finally, the green guard told Rosa to remove the electrodes. When Galway rose, his thoughts had returned to his native language and he heard the security officer saying, "Thank you, Doctor Galway, that will be all. Rosa will stamp your papers 'Approved for Entry' and they will be filed."

As they prepared Lovestone for interrogation, Galway walked out and stood looking across the valley. The busdriver followed him out.

"Doctor Galway, you're the first I've seen who didn't pass the test and still got clearance."

"I passed because I failed."

Beneath his lingering distaste for the mind-sensor,

Galway got some satisfaction from knowledge gained. The first question, on euthanasia, would have failed him, because Galway was opposed to mercy killings. More important, Bob English knew this, and English was high enough in the hierarchy to brief the security guard on Galway's tricks. Only English knew he could jam a thought-machine.

Suddenly he turned to the driver. "Fred, have you ever met Doctor Robert English?"

"Yes."

"What does he do here professionally? Therapy or surgery?"

"A little of everything, I guess, but he's got his hands full running this place."

When Lovestone boarded the bus, he sat down beside Galway and introduced himself. "I admire your work, Doctor Galway, both in treating aphasiacs and jamming mind-machines."

"A linguistic trick." Galway explained how he did it.

"Jolly," Lovestone said. "I'll pass the word to all my friends who can think in Chinese."

Galway grinned, and his vexation vanished. He was prepared to like Lovestone, founder and sole practitioner of musico-psychiatry. Lovestone composed scores based on brain-wave patterns of psychotics and keened back into their emptiness the disharmonies of his patients. Psychiatrists smiled when Lovestone first fluted to balls of dementia coiled on floors of bare rooms, but the derision ceased when some unrolled and sat up to listen.

Apparently Lovestone was well informed on Galway's work. "I was pleased when you dropped the pain factor from your methodology," he said. "You were caught between Pavlov and the pedagogues. An experimenter's first duty is to guard against traditional ideas. The beauty of your system is the left-hand, or opposite-lobe, idea. . . ." Lovestone continued. Galway listened with half an ear as they drove past a rambling resort hotel with wide verandas extended to conceal

the white walls of the building from observation from the air.

Beyond the hotel, the road paralleled a narrow meadow that turned out to be the fairway of a golf course. Farther down, he spotted a foursome on the fairway. One of the players was striding ahead of the others, walking with a peculiar stilted movement.

"Look," he interrupted Lovestone. "Golfers."

"Look over to your right," Lovestone said, "and you'll see a patient in a catatonic stupor playing golf."

"How so?" Galway asked.

"Sustained-reaction sodium amytal," Lovestone said. "The patient's playing in a fugue. Sleepwalking."

"Is that a form of chemical therapy?"

"It's useless as therapy. Senseless."

It might be useless as therapy, Galway thought, but it was not senseless. English never did anything senselessly.

Cutting the band-sensor, the driver took the wheel and steered off the road, pulling into a large parking lot concealed by overhanging carports. He pulled up beside a pedestrian island and stopped. "We're here, folks," he announced. "Please follow the yellow line down the island and it will take you to the commissary. After you've eaten you'll be met by guides who'll take you to an indoctrination lecture in the chapel. Your baggage will be taken to your quarters. . . . Doctor Galway, you and Doctor Lovestone follow the green line. You'll eat at the inn."

Following the green line, Galway and Lovestone went around a wing of a rambling building landscaped with rhododendrons. Around the corner, they came to a flagstone path that wound between two giant sequoias up to a rustic entrance.

Inside, the gloom was as deep as in the better restaurants of Los Angeles. They stood for a moment in a reception alcove to let their eyes adjust. In the light from a checkstand on their right, Galway noticed a huge theatrical poster featuring a moon-faced Oriental woman. The notice read:

# PERFORMING SATURDAYS MAMA ID AND THE CYCLOTHEMIC FOUR

A hostess, middle-aged in tailored blue decorated with an oak-leaf brooch, bore herself toward them, a stack of menus held at her breasts.

"Two?"

"Yes."

Galway ushered Lovestone ahead into a large dining area lighted by encased candles on the tables and lights from a bar lining the left side of the room. On his right, he could see a bandstand and dance floor. There were a few diners at the tables. Four or five customers sat at the bar. One, seated alone, was an auburn-haired girl in her early twenties.

"Would you care for a drink, gentlemen?" the hostess asked after they were seated.

Galway ordered a manhattan and Lovestone a martini. Jotting down their orders, the hostess said, "I'll have a boy over right away to change this tablecloth."

"Thank you," Lovestone said. "I was about to complain."

She handed them menus and walked rapidly away. Galway glanced down at the stretch of white linen on their table and complimented Lovestone on his eyesight.

"There's nothing wrong with the tablecloth," Lovestone said. "Our hostess is a mysophobe."

Galway slid back his chair as a busboy limped up to change the tablecloth. An oak leaf was pinned to the youth's denim shirt. Lovestone was right about the hostess. Oak leaves identified patients, and patients were being used on the work force.

As the boy moved away, Lovestone said, "Labor must be in short supply in Paradise Valley. . . . Jim! Look at that girl at the bar!"

He was beginning to respect Lovestone, whose bemused detachment concealed keen powers of observation. Galway already knew that he had an original mind. But Galway hoped the psychiatrist had not noticed the phased bending of the hostess' elbow when she handed them the menus or the lumpish walk of the busboy. The woman had an artificial arm with a cyborg elbow and the boy had walked on cyborg legs.

He couldn't spoil Lovestone's lunch by calling his attention to it, but the patients at Paradise Valley were being used for more than labor. Since they were psychopaths and legally incapable of being voluntary donors for surgical transplants, their limbs were being cannibalized from their living and acquiescent bodies.

# chapter 3.

Both men ate cottage cheese for lunch.

"Claude," Galway asked over coffee, "how effective is musical therapy?"

"Out of thirty patients at Bellevue, I saved two. But they gave me only terminal catatonics rolled into fetal balls I couldn't have unwound with a crowbar. What are you here for?"

Briefly Galway outlined his proposed attempt at treating autism.

"But you're not a psychiatrist," Lovestone complained.

"That I'll grant you," Galway said. "I don't know the difference between schizophrenia and dementia praecox."

Lovestone's complaining shifted to pedantry. "The old term for schizophrenia was 'dementia praecox,' which means, roughly, 'stranded on the shoals of puberty.'"

"I'll not be redefining terms," Galway said.

"But you're practicing without a license."

"Oh, no. I'm a neurosurgeon and I'll not be seriously invading your field. Psychiatry is merely my hobby."

"Too bad you weren't a proctologist," Lovestone half-grinned. "You could deal in butts and nuts."

The psychiatrist's sense of humor was a stabilizing factor, Galway thought. He might be able to use Lovestone.

During the meal, Lovestone had kept glancing at the girl at the bar, who had never looked around. She wore a backless frock, tied at the neck with a halter and flaring over her hips. Her legs, tapering to trim

ankles, framed the bar stool and the light from the bar threw a sheen around her hair.

Galway noticed a young man enter and stand beside her, obviously talking to her, but she didn't look around.

"Somebody's trying to move in on you, Claude."

Suddenly the young man signaled the hostess, and she came from the doorway, leading the man toward Lovestone and Galway's table. "Gentlemen, this is Doctor Updegraf," she said.

Lovestone and Galway stood and introduced themselves.

"Sit down, gentlemen, and finish your coffee. I'm a psychiatrist, here to show Doctor Lovestone to his residence and brief him on the function of the facility. Your guide will be here shortly, Doctor Galway. Did you have a pleasant trip up?"

"The driver ran over a groundhog," Lovestone said.

Lovestone *was* observant, Galway noted. From his seat, he had not seen the porcupine but had noticed the thump under the wheels and assumed it to be an animal larger than a ground squirrel.

"We were both intrigued by the camouflage," Galway said.

"An operation as expensive as this one has to be kept under cover," Updegraf said, "with the manpower shortage and the government preaching austerity."

"Then it's a government project."

"It must be," Updegraf said. "But we draw patients from Canada and Mexico, so foundation money may be involved. The fantastic equipment and support facilities here take a chunk of money."

"How long have you been here, Doctor?" Galway asked.

"Eighteen months. I renewed my option."

"Do you have a family with you?"

"No. I lost them, but some of the service personnel have their families here."

Families would be a part of the camouflage, Galway thought, as long as the family members worked in

nonsensitive areas. Any testimony from nonprofessional sources would be hearsay evidence, Galway knew, since law was one of his lesser hobbies.

"Excuse me one second, gentlemen."

Doctor Updegraf walked back to the bar. The girl at the bar had ordered another drink, and Updegraf took her arm and said something. She swung from the bar, leaving the drink untouched, in a pique. Updegraf steered her toward their table.

As they stood at her approach, Lovestone breathed, "She walks in beauty."

And with an animalistic swing to her hips, Galway noted. But he was more interested in Lovestone's remark. Lovestone read romantic poetry. A man of such literary tastes was apt to embrace the old ethos of love and fidelity in an age that regarded marriage, old style, as a refuge for the emotionally insecure.

"Gentlemen, may I present Miss Susan Atterbury. Susan, Doctor Lovestone. Doctor Galway."

Susan flashed a radiant smile to Lovestone. "You were fondling me with your eyes, you beast. I watched you in the bar mirror."

"Barlights become your hair," Lovestone said.

"You should see it against pink satin," the girl said.

"Susan is your guide, Doctor Galway. Doctor Robert English, the project director, wishes to brief you, personally, at three-thirty."

Lovestone recognized the name. "A conspiracy of neurosurgeons," he moaned.

Susan turned to Galway. "A man your size might be a problem in a compact car."

"I'm uninflatable," Galway said.

"Then I'll take you. . . . But I'll get back to you later," she promised Lovestone. "Shall we go, Doctor Galway?"

Galway shook hands with the men and followed the girl.

In the sunlight, her eyes were a clear brown that matched the reddish hue of her hair and a bridge of freckles spanned her nose. She wore only a touch of

lipstick and no jewelry except for the oak-leaf brooch of a psychopath pinned above her breast.

"Doctor English told me about you, James Galway, and I want you to know right now that I'm a shy, modest, typical American girl with a weakness for men."

"I'll try not to burden you," Galway assured her. "And what else did English tell you?"

"To show you the valley as we drive out and to answer your questions. I'm taking you to the clinic to let you check its facilities and the qualifications of its psychiatric nurse. I've even met the children you're to teach, and one, Christine, is a beauty. . . . This will be your car."

She had led him down the walkway to a high-topped electric-powered Mercedes with ample head and leg room, and took the wheel herself, driving the car deftly through the parking lot. There was no disjointedness to her reflexes and she was too alert to be in an amytal fugue.

She made a boulevard stop at the main lane and turned north.

"All streets are one-way in the valley," she said, "so the tree limbs can conceal them from the air. The building on your right is a supermarket with a parking lot beneath. . . . The drugstore cowboys are mostly patients, and the building on your left, yonder, is city hall, Mayor English's offices and living quarters. Over there's the high school."

"Are there any children in the valley?"

"A few, but the building also houses the biologic experimental unit."

She had to stop twice for two separated crossing lanes going east and west. "This intersection's the center of town. Nothing like Times Square. Over to the left, there, on top of the hill, is an all-denominational chapel. To your right there's the city jail."

"Do you have a crime problem?"

"No. It's for records. There's no crime in Paradise. Here even death has lost its dominion, although there's an undertaking parlor under Chapel Hill."

Rising atop the knoll, the chapel could have been mistaken for a rocky extension of the eminence. "Then why the undertaker?"

"Don't ask me what's undertaken. . . . There's a crematorium under the brow of the hill adjacent to the mortuary. . . . But, you'll love this place, particularly after you've seen your clinic."

They were moving into the country now, speeding along the lane, and he could see through the trees an occasional field of wheat. "Do they farm this valley?"

"It functions as a farm," she said, "but the wheat's for quail, and the quail's for hunters. There's swimming, horseback riding, wine, women, and song."

"What are you in for?"

"Oh, my badge! It's a legal dodge of Doctor English's to get me in here. I was a paperhanger on the outside. Would you light me a cigarette, Doctor? I can't carry matches while I wear the badge. This place is a tinder box in late summer and autumn."

He passed her a lighted cigarette. From her chatter, he supposed she was a verbiageous hebephrenic, but her deterioration, so far, was not marked. "This is supposed to be bad on the lungs," he said.

"Propaganda from the chewing-gum companies," she said. "I've smoked since I was seven and I don't even cough."

"Did your parents approve?"

"No, but I was in revolt against parental authority. I had sexual desires for my father on the oral level so, symbolically, I was smoking my father. He sensed this and rejected me, which made me more nervous, so I smoked more. Vicious circle."

She took one puff and stubbed the cigarette in the car's tray.

"You aren't a split personality," he said. "You're fractured."

She laughed. "Mama Id would love that one. We'll have to take in her act some Saturday night."

Her last remark made him wonder if English would use this girl as a messenger. No, he decided, there was

too much static. She was expressing too many messages of her own.

She was hitting 50, approaching a narrow cleft in the cliff wall ahead, and the two lanes converged as they shot up an incline leading through the wooded entrance to an upper canyon. On his right, built into the cliff wall, he saw a fire station with two fire engines and a borax helicopter.

"You were speaking truly about the fire hazards, I see."

"Doctor, I've never told a lie in my life and I'm eighty-eight years old."

Pretty, witty Susan, he decided, was probably a pathological liar, and not because of her imaginative chatter. One did not use "legal dodges" to get into an extralegal facility.

Past the canyon's mouth, the valley above widened and the lanes diverged. Here the ground sloped to a lake, a mile or so in length and a half-mile wide. On all sides, wooded slopes rose toward granite peaks above the timber line. "This is the Mirror Lake area, where the professionals live. Doctor Lovestone's cottage is down on the lake."

He had sensed enough from Susan's conversation to get a rough outline of English's problem, and he made a tentative jab at a solution. "Doctor Lovestone was quite smitten by you, Susan," he said. "He told me you had the beauty, grace, and rhythm of a symphony by Strauss. But don't tell him I told you."

"Whooeee," she said, whipping off the main road and climbing a spur through the woods, "nobody's ever said anything like that to me, and don't you tell him I told you."

Climbing for half a mile or so, they rounded a curve and pulled up beneath the overhang of a lodge, its western facade cantilevered from a point of rocks.

"We have to climb a flight of stairs to the entrance, but the view's worth the climb."

Following her, he mounted into a reception alcove facing a view window to the west, framed by golden

drapes. Walls and ceiling were white, the carpet pale green. Three corridors led from the vestibule, north, south, and east.

Susan called aloud, "Mrs. Butterfield, Doctor Galway's here."

"Coming, Susan," a voice answered from the south corridor.

A woman emerged from the room adjacent to the vestibule. Short, with rounded stockiness, she walked with pleasant authority. Breasting ahead of her was a bow wave of motherliness generated by her smile, gray hair, and the thrust of her high-borne bosom. Her hair was blue to match the powder-blue uniform beneath her white Dutch collar.

He grinned down at her as he took the extended hand, delicate but firm, and held it a moment to savor her aura of warm kitchens, blueberry pie, and fresh-churned butter. "I'll warrant you're a mother," he said.

"At one time I had six," she smiled rather sadly, "three of my own and three orphaned by my sister, but they were lost. . . . Our patients will be here at four, Doctor, along with the housekeeper. I'll show you the clinic. . . . How are you, Susan?"

"Keeping sober, Mrs. Butterfield."

"That's nice. . . . This way, Doctor. We'll begin with the living room."

She took him down the east hall to a doorway and opened it onto a huge room with fireplace, sofas, and white paneling. Lining the south wall were books all bound in white leather, their titles in gold lettering. He took down a book and leafed through it. It was done in letterpress type with deckled edges.

Putting the book back, Galway was vaguely irritated by the room's appeal to his taste. It was as if English had made a hobby of him, and Mrs. Butterfield, with her hazel eyes and silvery hair, might have been chosen to match the room's decor.

But Galway would have the final say about the nurse, and he was skeptical of appearances, particularly blatant motherliness. For some women, mother-

hood could be used for self-gratification at the expense of children or as a whip to control their husbands. Women with strong maternal drives usually were either at a man's throat or at his feet.

"Here's the liquor cabinet," Mrs. Butterfield was saying. "French Restoration, they tell me, but I wouldn't know about that."

Lacy hand carvings covered the pale green paneling on the cabinet, but she was showing him the television set, ignoring a Louis XIV writing table in a far corner.

"Now, the dining room is across the hall with the kitchen. . . ."

"We'll skip that for the time being," Galway said. "I'd like to see the offices and the schoolroom."

"They're in the south wing. Coming, Susan?"

Susan had taken a book from the shelf and sat down. "If you don't mind, Doctor Jim, I'd like to stay here and read."

"Be my guest," he said.

Outside, Mrs. Butterfield said, "She wants to raid your liquor cabinet, but I locked it. Here's the key."

"Is she an alcoholic?" he asked, pocketing the key.

"I don't think so. I think she just uses alcohol to excuse the crazy things she does. She's a transfer from Corona."

"But that's a prison."

"She was a forger on the outside, and she tried to beat a bad-check charge with an insanity plea, but the judge found her guilty. She's a smart girl, too. She just has a compulsion to write checks."

"She told me she was a paperhanger."

"She was, Doctor. That's what they call forgers."

He checked the nurse's office with a quick glance, thinking of Susan. Then she wasn't a pathological liar, but he had never heard of a psychosis related to compulsory forgery.

His inspection of his own office was also cursory. The south wall was lined with books, technical. English had remembered Galway's fetish for keeping his business records separated from his pleasure reading.

Mrs. Butterfield waved her hand toward the filing cabinet. "Case histories of all four children are filed, but I don't know if I should call Christine Haskell a child. She's fifteen and looks seventeen, and lovely, poor dear. Billy Haskell's daughter. She didn't withdraw till she was eight, when her father died."

He recalled Billy Haskell, an evangelist from Tennessee who had made a reputation for himself as a fire-and-brimstone fundamentalist.

The goal of Galway's tour was the classroom, and here his inspection was conducted with thoroughness and increasing amazement. The instructor's desk, facing five students' desks, revolved on a turntable to face the movie screen for a 3-D camera. All operations of the room were controlled from the desk, from pulling curtains to erasing the blackboard, and the desk front sloped to a banked row of electroencephalogram monitors that recorded the students' brain activity.

All this was subsidiary to the brain stimulators which could be actuated individually or for the group. Convenient to the instructor's right hand were the old general-pain-and-pleasure buttons. At a console on his left, he could simulate emotions, from "Nostalgia—Pleasant" to "Grief—Acute," by the appropriate mixture of pain and pleasure. Emotions could be programmed in advance, taped, and played back automatically.

Far to the left was a red set-and-push button with a safety lock. Galway bent to read the calibrations: "Right femur—compound fracture," "Left hand—ax severance," and in the burns division he read with disgust, "Right eye—red-hot poker." But the torture capabilities of the simulator had a fail-safe component. A nameplate warned that the pain controls could not be operated without tension on the operator's head-harness.

Galway generally disdained the hardware of technology, but here, he admitted, was a masterpiece of design that had taken thousands of man-hours to con-

struct. Those hours were largely wasted. To exploit the full capabilities of this device would require a Marquis de Sade or a Bluebeard.

"Are you familiar with my methods, Mrs. Butterfield?"

"They told me something."

"Would you like to see how it works?"

"I wouldn't want the children going through anything I wouldn't go through."

"Here, sit at this desk. This will give you confidence in my methods."

She was shy but determined. He adjusted the electrodes to the base of her skull, and seated himself at his desk, turning the pleasure button on high and manipulating the balled base until she licked her lips.

"Why are there five desks, Mrs. Butterfield?"

"One little boy, Willie Jefferson, was sent back to Topeka. Doctor English wanted to keep your work load light."

She shifted on liquescent thighs and smiled as she answered, open-mouthed. Her eyes were dancing, and her cheeks glowed with hormones. As a teen-ager, her maternal drives surging toward fulfillment, Mrs. Butterfield must have been pure potency.

He thought of the girl, Christine, whom everyone called beautiful. He had never attempted stimulation on a postpubertal female psychotic, and only once on a male, at Norwalk. Though now fifteen, Christine had been withdrawn since she was eight, so her libido might still be undifferentiated. It should be possible to determine the girl's libidinal fixation by sonic stimulation. But there was a danger. A completely withdrawn female with erotic impulses aroused and no awareness of a libido-object might fall in love with a doorknob. Well, on that he could write a paper.

He could see a slight reddening of Mrs. Butterfield's lower neck. Her collar was too high for him to see lower on her chest, but he could see that she was breathing fast.

He cut the current and glanced at his watch. "I'm running a wee bit late, Mrs. Butterfield. I'd like to see the children's room now."

"Yes, Doctor."

She led him down the hall. Her motherly airs had been borne away on a breeze of fresh femininity. Her stride was less purposeful. She moved languorously, with a more pronounced sway to her hips.

They came to the north corridor and she opened the first room on the left. Paul Gordon's room, she told him. It was bright and pleasant with a painting of Hank Aaron at bat hung above his bed. A model airplane dangled from the ceiling. Above the head of his bed in the corner was a shelf holding a sonic stimulator, a dream stimulator, and a night brain-wave recorder, all with plug-in wires. Galway did not wonder why so many released mental patients suffered from insomnia until allowed to sleep with wires attached to their heads.

Kathleen O'Neil's room, across from Galway's, was done in dusty rose with yellow curtains, and a large ragdoll lay on her bed. Christine Haskell's room had knights and ladies on the wallpaper, and above her bed hung a portrait of a lady bending from her horse to kiss a knight.

"Christine reads a lot, about those knights and castles," Mrs. Butterfield said.

He gave a casual glance into Ian MacClure's room—or "Little Mac," to Mrs. Butterfield. It had bucking-bronco wallpaper, cattle brands on the curtains, and a Navajo blanket on the bed.

"And I'm there," Mrs. Butterfield said, pointing to the door adjacent to Little Mac's.

"Show me your room," Galway said.

The corridor ended at the door to her room, which had an exit into a patio. Spacious, the room had the appearance of being lived in. She had taken down the gold drapes and put up a floral pattern printed on a chintzy material. A lithograph of "The Madonna of the Barrel" hung over her bed, a rag throw rug covered

the green carpet near the door to the bathroom and a rubber aspidistra was on a sewing table near the far window. On a night table beside her bed was an open copy of a book by Doctor Spock, and a box of cleansing tissues sat on the book.

"I might have an objection to the room," Galway said, "on a policy issue. It's separated from mine and I wish to minimize the separation between the mother-father image for these children."

"But they could wander out the side door at night. Sometimes, sodium amytal causes them to sleepwalk."

"I'm taking them off sodium amytal," he said flatly, closing the door into the hall behind them, "and I wish to give you a complete physical examination, in depth. Would you remove your clothes, please."

He watched as she removed her uniform and spread it neatly over a chair back. As she unhooked her brassiere, he noticed that her shoulders had the slope of power. Her breasts, though voluminous, were not fallen, so her pectorals still retained their tone. As she slipped her panties down over her rounding hips to place them beside her bra on the seat of the chair, he inspected the epidermis around the whorls in the small of her back. Her skin, there, lacked the crepiness of age, and was almost as smooth as a baby's.

She turned herself to him as white as a curd. "Do you want me to take off my shoes and stockings, too, Doctor?"

She wore laced uniform shoes and he said, "Never mind, Mrs. Butterfield. Spread your legs slightly, stand erect. . . . Now, cough."

Wonderingly, she coughed.

Indications were that his sonic primer had been effective. He used one of her tissues and stood in front of her, reaching behind her to spread her buttocks and kneading them with his hands. Her muscles were balled and powerful. "Good muscle tone," he commented.

"Thank . . . you . . . Doctor." Mrs. Butterfield sounded as if her throat muscles were constricted.

He weighed her mammalia in his hands and squeezed. "No liquid silicone here," he complimented her.

"That's . . . all . . . vanity."

She seemed to be squeezing her words out.

"Now, Mrs. Butterfield, would you lie back on your bed, relaxed, and make yourself comfortable. . . . No, on your back, please."

When his intentions became obvious, she said. "I wasn't expecting this, Doctor."

If she had not been expecting this, he thought, she had not correlated the sonic stimulator with her present position. Either she was completely lacking in sensuality or she was stupid. Maybe both.

"I have my methods, Mrs. Butterfield."

She uttered a low-keyed gasp, and he said, "Normal cervix."

At the apex of his probe, he noted a quick intake of breath. "Uterine cauterization?"

"Yes, Doctor."

Since he was seeking merely to implement policy and to determine her qualifications, this phase of her physical took less than ten minutes. He was pleased by her reaction. She made no moan, and, since she had reared a large brood in a small house, her silence reflected a consideration for the privacy of children. Her final sigh of contentment, more for his gratification than for hers, indicated that she was geared to an ideal of service.

"That was nice, Doctor," she said as he terminated the examination.

Mrs. Butterfield, he concluded, qualified as a nurse for the children.

Mrs. Butterfield entered the living room ahead of him, and he heard her exclaim, "Susan, you've broken into the whisky cabinet."

"Doctor Jim told me to be his guest," Susan answered as Galway entered.

She was seated on a divan with a book. On the

coffeetable was a fifth of bourbon, a flagon of water, and an ashtray half-filled with quarter-smoked cigarettes. She had a glass in one hand, a cigarette in the other, and a third of the fifth of whisky was gone.

"Doctor Galway," Mrs. Butterfield said, "she picked the lock."

"The child shall be hanged," he said, going to the cabinet and opening it. Inside was a bar set into the wall. He put ice cubes in his drink from a dispenser in the cabinet. A faint odor of bourbon rose from the sink. Susan had drunk less than the level in the bottle indicated.

Hands on hips, Mrs. Butterfield, looking down on Susan reproachfully, said, "Susan, that's not nice."

"It's all right, Mrs. Butterfield. Doctor Jim is driving back."

"I'll take care of the matter, Mrs. Butterfield," Galway said. "We'll be leaving shortly. Could you run off some précis cards on the case histories and leave them on my desk? I'll be in rather late tonight, but I'll wish to look in on the patients."

"Yes, Doctor." The nurse turned and left the room.

Swishing an ice cube with his finger, he walked over and sat down beside Susan. She looked up, and he grinned. "What say we stand English up and take the afternoon off?"

"I'll drink to that," she said, pouring.

"Would English be angry with us?"

"He doesn't own me," she said, "but he might terminate you. He's terribly jealous of me."

Susan was lying again. Bob English would have shared his bride on his wedding night with a friend in need.

"Then we'd better not risk it."

"No guts," she said. "Age makes a man cowardly."

"Right," he agreed. "Now, let's clean up this mess and get out of here."

"Maybe later?" she asked, rising.

"Maybe."

He had completed his diagnosis. Legally she was

not insane, and psychologically she was not even neurotic but she was possessed by a madness beyond even the aid of Lovestone's flute. Frenchmen called her ailment the lucid folly, the Germans called it moral idiocy, and in English she was a psychopathic personality. She could experience all sensations, but she was totally incapable of any sustained emotional response, moving from whim to impulse, as one-dimensional as a cardboard cutout. And it was too bad. He had planned an interesting future for her, but she was outside the scope of any stimulus-response system.

Still, the question remained: Why had English sent her to him? Was there somewhere in her peculiar ailment an arrow pointing to an exit?

# chapter 4.

She went on duty at 7 P.M., Susan told him, when he dropped her off at the inn, but he didn't ask her where. He drove to the city hall, parked in the underground garage, and took the elevator to the second, the top, floor.

When he stepped into the lobby, a receptionist swiveled away from her typewriter and rose, smiling. Slender, she wore a gray cashmere sweater to match her eyes and ash-blond hair. Her sweater rippled like a washboard with a single corrugation in the middle, and the flatness was unrelieved by an oak leaf. Behind her right shoulder hung a Modigliani. To her left was a door with the lettering

DOCTOR ROBERT ENGLISH
ADMINISTRATION

"Doctor Galway?" she asked.

"Yes."

She extended a limp hand, which he took and dropped.

"I'm Elsie Cook, keeper of the gate and lord of the files. Please have a seat. Doctor English is on the phone, with Washington, but he'll be with you shortly."

He thanked her and seated himself on a divan.

She swiveled back to her typing and he looked across at a lithographed Jackson Pollock on the wall opposite. Farther to his right, near the stairwell, he saw another door, and on it a sign read

DOCTOR JAMES GALWAY
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The sign explained Elsie Cook's too-formal effusiveness. She had been greeting a new boss.

Her name had a familiar ring. He looked again at her square-set, rather prim features, but he could not recall seeing her before.

Probably, she was unaware that her introduction had betrayed rather sinister reading habits. Unusual was the receptionist who, in one sentence, compared herself subconsciously with Charon, Guardian of Hell, and Satan in the form of Beelzebub, the Lord of Flies.

In fact, she wasn't a receptionist.

Elsie Cook? Ilse Koch! This constant reader's subliminal sadism had also made itself apparent in her choice of a cover name. Ilse Koch was the Bitch of Belsen whose lampshades were made from the skin of concentration-camp inmates.

"Tell me, Elsie," Galway asked, "how long have you been with the CIA?"

When he started to speak, she turned to him with a beginning smile, but when he finished the quality of her smile had changed. Hatred, intense, implacable, and unwarranted, showed in her eyes.

"My, what a smart boy you are."

She turned back to her typing, and he turned back to the sworls and daubs of the Pollock.

"Next patient, please."

Shirtsleeved and grinning, Bob English stood in the doorway, his cheeks as sunken as ever, the heavy gray brows almost meeting above watery blue eyes. Ten years had not removed the laughter from the eyes, but the sparse gray hair was gone. In its place was a mane of wavy black with sideburns reaching to cheekbones, giving him the face of an Abraham Lincoln gone mod.

Galway stood and stepped forward, saying, "Well, blessings on thy once-frosty poll, Bob English."

As they shook hands, Galway held him at arm's length to admire his wig.

"So, you finally got here!" English said. "I feared the bait might make the taker mad. . . . No more calls for an hour, Elsie. Come on in, Jim."

English closed the door, took Galway's arm, and ushered him toward a bar in the corner.

"Think of it, ten years," English said. "Last time I saw you, you were trying for a three-minute mile down a trail in Laos with Chinese bullets nipping at your heels."

"But I couldn't outrun their mortars. Where were you when the shrapnel hit the fanny?"

"Up on the hill with a machine-gun crew, trying to cover your rear. . . . Man, we ended that war in a hurry."

"When did you start wearing the throw rug?" Galway asked.

"This is no wig. Pull it."

He bent his head, and Galway pulled real hair.

"Remember that Italian movie star who got killed on the Ridge Route? Mario—what's his name?"

"Mario D'Anzio," Galway said.

"It was his. . . . Look at this." English slipped up his shirt and undershirt to reveal an incision. "My doctor told me to cut back on my drinking or risk cirrhosis, so I put in a new liver."

Stuffing in his shirt, English turned behind the bar as Galway said, "If you're becoming the world's first composite immortal, life will get tedious."

Hoisting a bottle to the bar, English grinned, "I took care of that with a couple of fresh acquisitions."

"From a teen-aged sex maniac, no doubt."

English poured and they touched glasses. "Lordy, how I've missed your Olympian wit. What'd you think of Susan?"

"She confuses me. At first I thought she was your daughter. Now I'm not sure."

"How about Mrs. Butterfield?"

"Her responses check out. She's child-oriented. But her habit of using the word 'nice' might get her terminated. Our secretary could use her breasts. . . . By the way, what's bugging Elsie Cook?"

"The CIA told her you started the plague, so she thinks you used up her family with your hypodermic needle."

"So? She's alive, and with lebensraum, yet . . . Why did you take over an operation for the CIA?"

English grabbed the scotch bottle around the neck like a warclub. "Bring your glass to the desk and let's sit down." He slid from behind the bar, stalking to his desk. "The CIA's a stooge for Health, Education and Welfare, and I didn't volunteer for this job, I was drafted."

"How and why?" Galway asked, seating himself.

"Blackmail is how and neurosurgery is why. Somebody stole the files from Chemical and Biological Warfare. On paper it looks like we started the flu in Asia."

"If Winnie Fairfax had survived, he could have testified differently. He helped me inoculate the field hospital when we overran their lines."

"He survived—to steal the papers. Sergeant Winston Cabot Fairfax, deputy chief of the CIA, is the most successful army sergeant since Wooldridge."

"We could demand a trial before the War Crimes Tribunal."

"And be lynched before they could get us in front of a firing squad. . . . No, HEW needs us, and blackmail's only a temporary restraint. They figure if they can keep you here three months and manipulate your environment, you'll be raising three cheers and a 'Charge' for the good old Department of Health, Education and Welfare."

"Manipulating the environment." Galway sipped his drink. "Seems I've met with that before."

"You have. With the autistic children."

"How's it done?" Galway asked.

"About five years ago, behavioral scientists hit on the idea of a cybernetic forecaster of human behavior and called the gadget BAC, short for behavior-analysis computer. Originally, it was designed to jail criminals before they committed a crime. But too many criminals are psychopathic personalities who don't compute."

Galway alerted. This was a strategy conference.

English had specified the target and was suggesting tactics.

"BAC works well on a man like you," he continued. "Your profile was fed to the machine and your action was plotted from three years back. As an old stimulus-response man, you can see that the system's practically unbeatable. It's like playing chess with yourself."

"Then BAC ends all arguments for free-will?"

"That depends on the point of view," English said. "It also testifies to your stability, reliability, and long-range motivation. You do what you *want* to do. But BAC manipulates your environment to make your goals support HEW's. You could have gone to Hawaii, you know, but you followed the autistic children here. You've got marginal free-will, but I wouldn't bet more than a quarter on your ability to exercise it."

Stable, reliable, and capable of long-range goals, everything Susan Atterbury was not. "Is this office bugged?"

"Don't be old-fashioned, Jim. Why should anyone eavesdrop when the machine knows what we're going to do before we do it. If you were morally incensed by what you've seen here, you could break over the fence and be in Bakersfield tomorrow. But the machine has weighed your capacity for indignation. It knows you would not leave the children. Psychiatry has failed. If you can't cure them, their parts will be sent to the organ bank."

"But why me?"

"Ah, now we're down to the nitty-gritty," English said. "You're looking at the first tycoon in the organ-transplant business. I've got more bodies and parts on ice under Chapel Hill than in all of Forest Lawn, Burbank, California."

English paused, perhaps awaiting Galway's admiring comment, but Galway was not impressed because he didn't know the population of Forest Lawn

"An organ bank shouldn't need camouflage."

"True," English said, "but this one's different. We've

got a biologic experimental station here that runs a little counter to the Judaic-Christian ethos, and we've got a loony farm supplying our bank. . . . Say, we get an order for a male Caucasian's right arm, blood-type so and so, cell-characteristics such and such. We check the catalogue. If it's not in cold storage, we send out a coded blip, via radio. Those oak-leaf brooches carry coded data. If the blip bounces back, we triangulate on the answering brooch, send out a terminator, and bring the body in to cut off, or out, the part we need. If it's not a vital organ, we outfit the loony with a prosthetic device and put him back out to graze."

"But that's maiming," Galway exploded, "which is illegal."

"I've got an agreement with lawyers," English waved aside his objection. "I don't try cases and they don't operate. Besides, if the psycho's only temporarily terminated, he doesn't know he's been operated on. . . . You know, Jim, prosthetics is a fascinating branch of surgery. Before you spring me out of here, I want to create the ultimate cyborg, a torso and head with artificial arms and legs."

"When do you plan on leaving?"

"That depends on you. We both may serve for life."

They were back into their old patterns, Galway realized, two *non sequitur* minds pouncing on one idea after another like indecisive sex maniacs. Again he asked, "But why me?"

"They need your surgical skills, Jim, because we're going after the big boy." Again English paused for effect. "You're going to perform a brain transplant."

Galway sat and English waited.

Galway had been weighing the problem of the behavior computer as they talked. As a behaviorist, he could see the logic of a machine in whose coils he was already trapped, but it wasn't invulnerable with two men of his and English's skills attacking simultaneously. Under the best of conditions, however, their success was problematical. They could not even discuss their plans because once the plans had been formulated

they would be clear to the machine, which would have installed countermoves before he and English sat down to discuss strategy.

Clearly, to Galway, they must rely on some Brownian movement in their dual subconscious. When two molecules collided by chance, the opportunity would have to be recognized by both and leaped upon. The exercise of spontaneous free-will, in a direction not plotted by the machine, demanded a high state of alertness in both of them.

And English had gone mad.

"Are *you* in charge of the administration here?" asked Galway.

"Except for security. HEW has a Doctor Knowles in charge of the CIA green guard, but I've never met the gentleman. Elsie's my contact there, but all the administrative decisions are mine."

"As Director of Research and Development, then, I'm your chief adviser, right?" Galway was going to suggest a change of administration, but English forestalled him in a flood of words.

"My *only* adviser, but it's more than that, Jim. I want you to function as an executive moralist, sort of a guideline setter. . . ."

"Moralist! Me?"

"Certainly. One doesn't need morals to be a moralist. Right now I'm having a problem with my biologic research boys. Somebody's got to establish a direction. They're running wild."

"That's easy," Galway interjected. "We'll set up an ethics committee of schizophrenics, hypo them with sodium . . ."

"I'm serious, Jim, look at this."

He reached into a drawer and pulled out a photograph he tossed across the desk. "Remember Frank Ellender, the astronaut who survived six months on Mars?"

Galway nodded and glanced at the photo, a montage of an infant in a crib on which the same negative had been printed thirteen times.

Ellender had crashed a landing module on Mars, he recalled, and had been given up for lost. A second probe, six months later, had picked up a faint radio signal near the polar cap and had landed to find Ellender, who had invited his rescuers into his module for lichen hamburger and algae stew. Unfortunately, the epic of survival had been marred. Two weeks after his return, Ellender had broken his neck in a fall from a stepladder.

"What about Frank Ellender?"

"That's him," English said, "cloned from DNA taken from his corpse. My biologists figured that a man with his survival capabilities should be preserved for future space programs. We've got thirteen of him over in the nursery. Three space crews and an extra for spares. . . . But look at this."

He shoved Galway a picture of a kangaroo. "The idea behind this one was to produce a rural postman for the Australian outback. It's a kangaroo modified with the DNA of a human brain, but it won't hop. It walks. And here's an eagle that can't fly. Heartbeat's too slow."

"These are legitimate enterprises," Galway protested.

"Would be, if they worked," English agreed. "But get this, Jim. The bio-research boys asked me to procure a pygmy and an albatross. Have you ever tried to requisition an albatross? You know what they wanted to breed? An *angel*, by God! They even called it Project Angel."

"Listen, Bob! Project Angel is far more rational than what you propose. A living brain transplant is impossible."

"A plumber could do it!" English exploded. "That neuron termini theory you so snidely referred to in your last paper is feasible. I've compounded a glial antigen gel that seals the cerebellum to the thalamus instantly, allowing free passage of impulses from higher centers to the brain stem. Neurons reach out to each other, dendrites meld, and brain fibers enseam themselves like a self-weaving carpet. . . ."

Galway listened with half-an-ear as English continued his peculiar poetry in praise of gliogel. His theory sounded valid, even awesome. A less clinical mind than Galway's might have seen the hand of God in such intricate phenomena as English was describing, but Galway had studied organic electricity. His mind was occupied with revised thoughts of Susan Atterbury in relation to BAC.

Now he saw the connection and his enthusiasm caused him to comment aloud, "Splendid idea!"

"You'll do it!" English said.

English had misunderstood him, so Galway covered up. "Bob, I had to quit surgery because of my Death Trauma. The smell of blood nauseates me."

"You'll have to overcome it. You're the only man I'd trust with the scalpel."

"You could hire a plumber," Galway suggested. "If I failed, I'd be guilty of murder."

"Don't worry about legalities. They're not dead until their brain waves flatten. That won't happen until they're in the glio-gel, so I'll be responsible."

"Where would we get the cerebellums?"

"From autistic children. They have functioning cerebellums, usually with high I.Q.s, if you can educate them."

"You mean I'm up there on the hill training those children to become brain donors?" Galway was aghast.

"We've got to get brains somewhere, and the autists aren't using theirs."

"There'd be a memory conflict," Galway pointed out. "We'd be creating organic schizophrenics."

"Oh no. The thalamus is the memory filter. Even in a two-lobe transfer, the memory would still be the patient's. He'd only be reading, writing, and talking with the higher brain centers. The danger lies in cutting into the thalamus. A fractional millimeter too deep would cause a memory conflict. That's why I need you."

"I'm no Judas goat, leading those lambs to slaughter."

"If you can cure the children outright, they'll be returned to society. We wouldn't wreck a functioning unit to repair a malfunctioning unit. But if you train them to read and write and they're still withdrawn, we'll use their brains elsewhere. But BAC has given you an inspiration. The girl Christine is an incredible beauty, and she's going on sixteen in July, the age of consent for sane girls."

"This is blackmail of the most vicious sort."

"I know it," English said. "But the directive comes from Doctor Knowles."

"Is there a possibility of blowing the cover on Knowles?"

"You know better. If we could, so what?"

Galway made a jabbing motion with his index finger, and English dropped his *bonhomie*. "None of that, here, Jim. The green guards would be down on us like Assyrians."

Galway's face had also hardened and his voice was harsh. "Let me have a few of your corpses and there won't be any green guards," he said.

"We can't do it that way, Jim," answered English, his voice suddenly temporizing. "Besides, we can't allow ourselves to be diverted. . . . Look, I've given you enough to think about. Take this pamphlet with you. It gives you the layout of the valley, its recreational facilities. . . . Meet me tomorrow, at one. I'll be sending you up a couple of horses in the morning with an African bushman as groom, and you'll want to look them over. Afterward, I'll show you around the plant. Meanwhile, go over to the inn and have a drink on me, meet some of our people. There's a wonderful *esprit* here."

"What about the night life?"

"There are facilities."

"Have you got a dossier on the girls?"

"You can pick it up from Elsie as you leave."

He reached over to the intercom and told the secretary to give Doctor Galway the file on the girls in Happy Hollow. Galway stood up to shake hands.

"Take a look at your office, Jim," English suggested. "You'll probably not be using it for a while, since you'll be occupied at the clinic, but I think you'll appreciate what I've done."

"O.K. I'll see you at one tomorrow." He walked toward the door, preoccupied. Turning, he asked, "Bob, did you try a brain plug between your loonies?"

English nodded. "No rejection, Jim. Slick as a whistle. The gliogel does it."

Galway walked into the lobby, where Elsie awaited him with the dossier. "I'll return this tomorrow, Elsie," he told her. "And I apologize for offending you earlier. I have a tendency to needle people, and you and I will be working very close together in the future."

He could see a touch of fear in her eyes as he turned and walked down the lobby toward his office. He entered through the door marked with his name and stood for a moment, uncertain. On his right was a large sink for scrubbing up and on his left a sterile cabinet for holding surgeon's smocks and facemasks. In front of him was a heavy swinging door with an oval window.

As charily as an acrophobiac approaching a cliff's edge, he walked to the window and looked in. Across a white-tiled room he saw two vital-function telemeter-ing panels, their dials glittering from a bank of over-head lights.

His office was an operating room.

He drew nearer the window, his eyes sweeping a widened field of vision, and saw, to right and left, two Mark 37 skull-actuated trephines. It was the first time in his life he had seen two of the world's most sophisticated surgical devices back to back. Using laser saws, either machine could detach predetermined skull segments, solving parameters by radar-differenti-ated feedback, without scorching a cell of brain matter, and they were equipped with pantographic reamers for matching the interior contours of skulls.

Galway came closer, his nose almost touching the glass. Up against the walls, he saw two cryonic casks,

or "ice boxes," for reducing the body temperatures of patients. Now fretting with a different unease, he yearned toward the room, feeling like a fighter who has never lost a battle. Then his eyes fell on the grated scuppers along the troughs against the bases of the walls through which the blood was hosed.

He tore himself from the window and staggered toward the exit, steadying himself against the door sill before he walked into the lobby, into the view of Elsie Cook. He would need several drinks tonight, some to anaesthetize the memory of blood and some to deaden his sensibilities for the commercial call he planned to make at Happy Hollow.

He took the stairs to the parking basement, where he would sit for a while to look over the literature and to think before driving to the inn. Walking down, he recalled English's remark about the *esprit* of the organization. Any elite operation, from hell bombs to harlotry, developed a gung-ho attitude among its members. But this was not Los Alamos with an Oppenheimer scanning the skies for Ahi, this was Paradise Valley with an English scratching his transplants.

Still, English had won the first move against the behaviorists. Any one of sixty brain surgeons in the country could have performed the brain transplant as English outlined it, but English had guided HEW's attention to Galway. He had pitted the computer against the one surgeon in the sixty who was also a stimulus-response expert.

Galway operated on the same principle as BAC.

Cocktail hour was underway when Galway arrived at the inn. He ordered a drink—not on English's tab—and a second, feeling his inner tensons slacken. Lining the bar were drinkers he might have seen in New York, or rather in London, since they kept their voices low in the English drinking style. Nearest him, separated by a service area for the waitresses, a dark-eyed girl with extremely long false eyelashes and dark hair touched with gray was being chaffered for amorous ware by an athletic crewcut who was trying too hard.

At times the girl would grant him a nod, less frequently a bored and enigmatic smile.

Judging from his build and hand movements, Galway felt the man might be a terminator. He assumed the girl was a prostitute because of her languor, false eyelashes, and a cross worn around her neck. It seemed unreasonable that a staff member of this facility should wear a religious emblem.

Galway found that the bartender, George, had been a former patient at the facility who had been cured and had married a hospital dietician. George volunteered the information without comment from Galway, and now Galway raised his voice to reach within earshot of the girl.

"George, I'm Doctor Galway and I'm new here. Do as many patients walk out as go out packaged?"

"Offhand, I'd say most will die of senility. This operation's too big for the country. People are attached to their arms and legs and the average amputee would rather have a cyborg replacement anyway. Cyborgs are better. Say, Joe, show Doctor Galway your trick."

He slid a beer glass down the bar to the dark woman's companion. The man called Joe fielded it, held it over and beyond the bar, crushed the glass in his palm, then let the slivers fall into a garbage pail behind the bar. He turned his palm to Galway to show there was no blood or scratches, and Galway said, "Thank you."

"Joe lost his hand in a Chicago riot," George explained, "and Doctor English fitted him with a new one."

From the studied indifference of the woman, it was obvious she felt imposed upon by her companion's bar trick.

"Then you figure the farm's overstocked?"

"Sure. The wife and I live north of here and we haven't heard the vertake lift off in three weeks. Of course, business picks up over holidays."

"Then the day should come when living patients shouldn't be needed?"

"Excuse me for intruding, Doctor Galway," the woman spoke up, "but the finalization of our ambulatory-supply program is projected within the next three and a half to four years."

"Thank you," Galway said, surprised. "Are you a statistician?"

"Oh no," she smiled. "I'm Doctor Maria Crossetti, and this is Mister Joseph Mendenhall, psychological therapist."

She leaned back to permit Galway a better view of the young man, who nodded.

"You're the new R & D Director, I hear," the girl said. "If you care to join me for dinner, I'd be happy to brief you on my part of the operation."

Her invitation struck Galway as a rather crude attempt to cut the young man out, so Galway answered, "I'd be happy to buy you both dinner."

Mendenhall declined. "My rush hour's from six-thirty to ten, Doctor, so I'll have to leave, but I'll take a raincheck."

"Joe has a cinema-in-the-round," Maria Crossetti said, a touch of sarcasm edging her voice.

"Psychodrama?" Galway asked Mendenhall.

"No. A psychorama," Mendenhall said. "I put my subject in the center of a cyclorama illuminated with psychedelic light patterns, put him under a mild hallucinogen, then let him work out his aggressions on mobile dummies. It doesn't help psychotics, but the psychiatrists and psychologists enjoy kicking my dummies around. Role-reversal, they call it."

"What are your duties, Doctor Crossetti?"

"I'm cryonic surgeon for the organ bank," she said, "and also serve as mortuary inductor for female specimens."

Galway rebuked himself for making snap judgments. It was not Mendenhall, a therapist, but the girl with the Mona Lisa smile who was the terminator.

# chapter 5 .

After Mendenhall left, Galway moved close to Maria. "I take it you're not inclined toward therapy?"

"It's too slow, and I'm too impatient. Each servant labors in the vineyard according to his own talents. I prefer weeding tares and pruning stalks. Every psycho who leaves here, supposedly cured, carries bad seed for future generations."

Galway was sensitive to metaphor and Crossetti's faintly scriptural references to lopping off limbs and snuffing out lives indicated a uniquely pious motivation, but he would explore her mind at dinner. At the moment he was more interested in her body.

Down through the years, he had correlated physical characteristics with feminine attributes. Buck teeth indicated a passionate nature. Thick, rounded lips were consistently duplicated. Heavy or slender ankles were also indices. But the most curious relationship lay between the thrust capabilities of a woman's buttocks and her drive for dominance, and nothing revealed those capabilities more quickly than Indian wrestling, the game indulged in by male and female medical students to develop arm strength for surgery.

Galway shoved back the stool and turned his back to the bar, placing his right elbow before her, his arm aloft. "Throw me," he challenged.

She smiled agreement and asked, "Woman's handicap?" A rather unusual question for a 120-pound woman to ask a 200-pound man.

"Of course," he said.

"I was fairly good at this at Stanford," she said, "but I can tell you're terribly strong."

He showed her his University of California class ring. "Beat Cal," he said.

She put her right palm in his and placed her left palm behind her right hand for reinforcement, the woman's handicap.

"Push," he said.

As they began the match, a silence fell over the bar. From the beginning, Galway realized the girl was better than fairly good. After three minutes of deadlock, his suspicion was verified by the rustle of billfolds along the bar. George was collecting bets, and, more often than not, he heard the name "Crossetti."

He wasn't here to provide a circus for groundlings. He leaned his head slightly forward to steal a glance at the girl's lower rear. Beneath her black serge skirt protruded buttocks like doorknobs, but the left one crested in a rippling line. She had the thrust of a dominant female. Moreover, Maria the pious was cheating. Her left leg was hooked behind the bar rail and she was throwing her entire musculature into the contest.

He wished now that he had never given her the impetus of the Cal-Stanford rivalry, for sweat was beading his forehead. If he lost, his prestige among the hired hands would be weakened.

Straining, he glanced at the girl. Her lips were moving. She was employing self-hypnosis to help her overcome, and he attempted to divert her with a biblical injunction, whispering low, "Woman is the weaker vessel."

"That's a crock," she hissed, and continued her lip movements. Faintly he heard "Domino patria" and "Mater Dei," and he realized she was using not hypnosis but prayer. Galway did not underestimate the power of prayer upon a true believer.

Desperately, he whispered, "Yes, Maria, pray, for I am lord of darkness and death and your prayers shall unseat me."

Blind chance alone did not choose his phrase. From her dress and speech, he had gauged her attachment to

Thanatos, and death was her profession. His remark took the edge from the Cal-Stanford rivalry and introduced a different dimension to the struggle. Maria could not fight her beloved. He felt her waver, and pressed with renewed vigor. Her hands slowly dropped behind the apex.

She had lost, but he didn't press the advantage.

"Call it a draw?" he requested.

"Draw request granted," she answered, formally.

They both knew her concession was a defeat, but all bets were off along the bar. He moved behind her, massaging her arms in a gesture of good will, saying, "So fragile, and yet so strong. . . . Let's take a table."

She half-leaned against his shoulder as they moved into the dining room, saying, "You're so considerate, James."

"You weren't offended?"

"Of course not," she smiled. "At Paradise Valley, we are tested in strange and devious ways."

She was due for more tests of a nature she probably could not foresee, he thought, for her cross was not a sentimental decoration and her lashes were not false.

At the table, she ordered herself an aperitif—three-fourths Dubonnet and one-fourth soda water—and suggested he try the scallopini with her special salad: three-fourths vinegar and one-fourth olive oil in a coddled egg over lettuce. She instructed the waitress to tell the chef to pound the veal with the edge of a saucer.

When her instructions were completed, Galway asked, "What was your work on the outside, Maria?"

"Forensic medicine for the Dallas police coroner," she said. "From my work on autopsies, my interest in biocryonic surgery flowered, and I took a position with the Dallas organ bank."

"What prompted you to leave such a city as Dallas?"

"My job was political, and the chief surgeon reserved the interesting operations for himself. All I was given were fingers and toes, fingers and toes. Vital organs put me in closer communion. So I took a

Behmer Profile for a federal post and scored so high that Doctor English offered me this position."

From his association with Egan, at USC, Galway was familiar with the Behmer Profile. Fully a quarter of the test probed sado-masochistic tendencies in a personality, and another quarter explored religious motivation. In the shadowy world of psychological testing, the BPT was sometimes called "Savonarola's Snare."

"Still," Galway commented, "yours is rather unusual work for a woman. It must have been difficult to adjust."

"Oh no," she smiled. "I was born with an aptitude for the art. When I was little there was a cemetery across the street from my house where I used to play, alone, burying my dolls. Some of the graves were my special favorites, and I loved to wander among the tombstones, particularly on moonlit nights when the granite seemed touched with silver. Granite tombstones have character, don't you think, James? Man's eternal artifacts dedicated to eternity."

He nodded agreement and she continued, her eyes aglow with childlike interest. "When the flu struck I was still at an impressionable age. I used to stand for hours watching the corteges file through the cemetery gates. During the peak of the epidemic, funeral trains would back up for miles. And the funerals! I simply doted on the masses spoken for the dead. It was then that I began to understand the message of religion."

"I would have sensed your religiosity without your crucifix," he said. "Peace surrounds you. Superficially, I'm not religious, but I've been reading Teilhard de Chardin lately, and I'm beginning to glimpse a great design."

"How exciting that you should mention Teilhard," she said. "Through his message, I came to the greatest revelation of my life. . . ."

A waiter committed near-sacrilege by delivering their salads at that precise moment. Leaning forward, Galway asked, "What was your revelation?"

"The awareness that we mortals can literally graft

ourselves onto the *corpus Dei*, become, by transplantation, the right arm of God, become immortals."

Maria's eyes glowed with an inner light, the lettuce had a crunchiness and direct-from-the-garden flavor that suggested that vegetables were also grown on this farm, and Galway was enjoying the conversation.

"Maria, are you a functioning biologic base?"

"In theory yes. In practice no. My flesh recoils from the touch of earthly flesh."

"Standard reproduction methods *are* messy," he agreed. "Personally, I detest body heat. My own metabolism is very low."

The dressing made the salad. Just enough garlic for piquancy melded with the wininess of vinegar in the oil base to adhere smoothly to the lettuce leaves. Maria would make a wonderful Italian mother, he thought, with her penchant for chopping confined to the kitchen.

He glanced over at her in delight, and noticed, in the light from the table candle, that her eyelashes had a coppery glint. No doubt, those lashes were a gift from English, and they revealed a chink of vanity in the girl's spiritual armor.

"How do you reconcile your homicidal duties with the Ten Commandments?" he asked over a raised fork.

"As a Christian," she said, "I have substituted 'Blessed are the peacemakers' for 'Thou shalt not kill.' You see, Jim, those minds are troubled, and I bring them peace. One cannot grasp the savage dreams of catatonia. . . ."

With half an ear, Galway listened to her rationalize until the waiter brought their veal scallopini. It was delicious and so tender it could be cut with a fork. Suddenly, Galway was enjoying both the scallopini and the theology, nodding wisely at her pauses and smiling at her delights.

Partly to give her a chance to taste her food, he interrupted. "Maria, you are committed to improving the life force. You have classic Italian beauty, you're a good cook, you have spiritual resources beyond those

of the average woman. Yet you let a mere repulsion forbid you from sowing such seeds in the garden. It pains me to think your beauty will vanish out of time."

"Jim," her voice was low and vibrant, "it's a phobia. At times I feel I should seek help."

"Oh no." He waved away her remark. "Yours is a yea-saying to a greater hunger. You would not have your temple defiled by barbarians, and you await a man of like spiritual flame. Mendenhall senses the dormant glory in your loins."

"That therapist! Speak for yourself, Jim."

"I couldn't light your flame with my poor flicker, for I'm no longer a viable biologic base."

Her voice grew soft, her eyes contemplative. "Nevertheless, Jim, would you like me?"

A forthright answer would have been a qualified "Perhaps." Thirty-year-old virgins could get emotional and he had no time for serious dalliance, but he wanted to get into her catacombs. "As your administrative superior, I would have to take the matter under advisement, but, as a man, I think you can almost feel my answer. You see, I have a problem."

She smiled. "I'm broad-shouldered. Tell me your problem."

"It would be painful to invade your innocence with it, painful even to a surgeon of the opposite sex."

Strange lights were glowing in her eyes, so Galway took a calculated risk. He reached over and took her hand in his. She didn't draw it back in disgust. So, emboldened, he continued, "If I were permitted entry, I might try, for I hear footfalls at my back and the candle lights a hint of silver in your hair. Yet, before we are laid on that bed from which no loves awaken us, I would try."

Staring through and beyond her, he composed his face into solemn and still lines.

She seemed to grow rigid. Her gaze also focused on a far horizon before she closed her eyes. Her right hand fingered her cross. Her lips moved, and he could lip-read the expression *mea culpa* repeated over and

over. At first he assumed she had drifted into a religious trance, but as her face grew paler and her unvoiced words came tumbling from her lips, she squirmed in her chair. His fingers moved along her wrist to her pulse, an estimated 180 beats per minute. If this was religious exaltation, then he was in the wrong profession.

It was his references to death and his offhand imitation of a corpse, he decided, but neither his poetry nor his acting ability should have stimulated such a response. Hers was the strongest example of necrophilia he had ever observed. Doctor Maria Crossetti was not half in love with easeful death, she was madly infatuated.

After her inner spasm subsided, he grasped the significance of the *mea culpa*. She opened eyes that revealed the female rampant in their invitation, and she spoke, low but distinctly, "Come with me to the catacombs tonight."

First things first, he thought. If he didn't keep to a schedule around here, he would be lost. So he said, "Tonight I have promises to keep, but tomorrow, Maria, at ten."

"In that event, I won't detain you," she said, "for I must get back to the morgue to work. I don't think I've ever met a man, Jim, for whom I've felt such instant spiritual rapport."

She rose, her veal untasted, and he escorted her to her car. She walked beside him, misty-eyed, languid, half-doubting, as if she could not believe the glory aroused in her. When he kissed her good night, she clung to him briefly, melting against him, then quickly drew back. "Tomorrow, at ten," she said, "in the catacombs."

He walked back to the bar thinking that there was nothing wrong with her responses, they had simply never received the proper stimulation. He ordered a double at the bar to give himself time to think. He no longer needed alcohol as an anaesthetic.

His thoughts focused on Mendenhall's psychorama.

Here might be an opportunity to communicate with English on a level beyond BAC's power to analyze, if he could get English into the actor's circle and station himself as an observer. If English refused, then the Director had become a willing prisoner of this Disneyland North he had created and had become as much an enemy of Galway as any agent of HEW-CIA.

He finished his drink and asked George to direct him to Happy Hollow.

"Can't miss it, Doc. Go out the back door of the men's room and follow the phosphorescent line down the path through the woods till you see the red light. But keep your eyes on the line. It's dark out tonight."

"I'll be chancing a head-on collision."

"No, sir. Everything's one-way around here."

Outside, Galway found the path easily enough, although he staggered slightly as he walked the line, and he realized he was under the influence. Strange, he mused, how the patterns of civilization so quickly re-established themselves. After less than ten hours in the wilds of the Sierras, he was drunk and headed for a cathouse while a woman and children awaited him at home.

Galway got home a few minutes after midnight and suppressed his eagerness to look over his new patients long enough to enter his office and call English. English was an insomniac and would be awake, Galway knew. As Ops officer of the 99th C&BW, Colonel Galway had held some of his most fruitful staff conferences with General English between midnight and 3 A.M. as they briefed themselves on the enemy's intentions with a bottle of whisky.

He would have to give English a target date for completion of the operation so English could synchronize their efforts. That date would have to come before the rainy season set in, some time in early September—say, the ninth. The ninth day of the ninth month, an easy date to communicate.

And the date jibed with English's warning earlier to Galway that if he had not solved the problem in three months, the problem would have solved him.

It was an alert and inquisitive voice that answered his ring with an immediate "Yeah, Jim?"

"Just like the old days in the 99th, Bob, I've made a night tour of installations and you've got some *very* unusual talent here. But I'm calling for clarification of my own status."

"You're in full control of Research and Development, with one proviso: Don't touch my corpses. BAC is a helluva lot smarter than the U.S. High Command."

"Never fear, Robert. This afternoon you suggested I return to surgery to make a try for the big boy."

"Big boy's the whole idea."

"I wasn't joking about my Death Trauma."

"If BAC didn't know you could overcome your trauma, you wouldn't be here."

"So I gathered, but I won't cooperate until I've proved your theory that the brain stem controls the mushroom by attaching a cool superego to a ravenous id, using sane specimens."

"You want to scramble Elsie and Susan."

"BAC knows very well my knife would slip on Elsie Cook."

"It takes two to tango," English said. "Who else?"

Galway gave him a dramatic pause. "I want to terminate a terminator."

"Maria Crossetti?"

"Bingo! I want to thaw out her pelvis with Susan's feedback."

"I can't afford to risk her. Where else could I find a terminator with her sense of purpose? And she's a dandy little theologian, my best persuader of recruits who are snagged on religious convictions."

"You said a plumber could do it, so there's no danger to her life. If, as you say, the thalamus controls the memory, you won't even lose her services. Put the brains where your mouth is, Bob."

"We could never trick her into temporary termination." English sounded confident. "She's a terminator herself, and she knows all the tricks."

"You gave her those eyelashes, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Within a month she'll be coming to you for a new head of hair. She'll be scalped and ready for the willing reamer's hand."

"Negative-negative, Jim. Find yourself another pigeon."

After English had hung up, Galway shuffled through the cards Mrs. Butterfield had left on his desk summarizing the case histories of his patients, rose, then walked to the children's wing of the clinic. English would come around. One did not have to be a behavior-computer to manipulate an environment.

BAC would weigh his motive, Galway knew, and find his logic unassailable. By the time the machine discovered he was seeking not a warm-hearted terminator but a judicious prostitute, hopefully it would be too late for BAC to retrieve its error.

The first room he entered was Paul Gordon's. A night light was burning over the boy's bed, and he had been wired in for the night by Mrs. Butterfield. When Galway turned on the overhead light to scan his case history, Paul opened his eyes and looked listlessly at Galway.

Galway walked over and pulled up the boy's nightgown. Paul, aged ten, appeared fairly robust. According to the card, he was a native of Chicago, the son of an airlines pilot and a high-school mathematics teacher. His mother had died three days after his birth and his father had died three years later. Although Paul Gordon was not a mute, he spoke a nonsense language of numbers. Apparently he thought he was an adding machine.

From the shelf, Galway removed the brain-stimulator and affixed the electrodes to the base of Paul's skull, rolling the boy's rigid body on its side to face Galway.

Starting the current, he probed for Paul's muscle-control centers and relaxed his body. Galway was amazed at the maneuverability of the beams with the balled push-button and the pinpoint focus of the sound waves. Testing it, he found he could cause the boy to twitch individual fingers.

When he brought a smile to the patient's face, he knew he had found the pleasure center. He diffused the vibrations onto medium and reached over and took the boy's hand.

"Paul, I'm Doctor Jim, and I'm coming in after you. You and I are going to fly model airplanes together, and toss a football around. You'd better believe that."

"Two, seven, nine," Paul said, contemptuously.

"Five, four, hut, hike!" Galway answered.

"Eight." The boy sounded pleased.

Galway sat, holding his hand, until Paul drifted again into sleep. Then he removed the pleasure-stimulator and turned off the light.

When he turned on the overhead light in Kathleen O'Neil's room, he found the nine-year-old sitting in the middle of her bed, her broomstick arms folded around her legs, her chin resting between her kneecaps. Her eyes were open, but she didn't look up when he entered. She had come unwired.

According to her card, Katie's mother had died two years after her birth, and her father, a television newscaster in Boston, had died three years later while on an assignment in Paris. She was a hostile mute who had learned to read and write by watching children's programs on television.

Dark-haired, brown-eyed, with a bridge of freckles across her Irish nose, she leaned away from him as he walked over. "Katie, I'm Doctor Jim. Maybe you'd rather have Railroad Bill or Uncle Giraffey, but you've got another Irishman."

As he spoke, he affixed the electrodes to her un-

willing neck and relaxed her, straightening her out before he could examine her. Apart from malnutrition, her body seemed in good condition.

When he made her smile, her face had an elfin quality, and he grinned as he held her hand, "How charming you are, Katie, when you smile. Doctor Jim wants you to smile because he loves you. You're my only Irish bairn."

He was telling her the truth, and she turned to him and smiled of her own volition. Suddenly, she seemed terrified and almost screamed at him, "Make me quit dreaming."

Again he was honest with her. "I can't make you quit dreaming, Katie, but I can make your dreams more pleasant if you'll not remove your wires."

He reattached the night encephalograph and the dream-stimulator, and he left the sonic beam wired to her skull, set on "Medium." He bent and kissed her, saying, "Good night, Katie."

At seven, Ian MacClure was his youngest and most pathetic patient. Totally mute, he could not read or write, was indifferent to food, and had resisted toilet training. When Galway pulled back his bedcovers to check him physically, he could count the ribs above the boy's rubber diapers.

Red-haired, freckled, the boy's head was so disproportionately large it resembled that of a fetus, yet the face was that of a boy made for sunlight and running barefoot in the grass. Holding a tiny hand, Galway sat for long moments looking down at the sleeping child. Blood, guts, and grief had been Galway's lot in life and he had survived all with equanimity, but these children made him wonder if he had not merely skimmed reality, improvising masks to make acceptable the face of truth.

In the matter of Ian MacClure, God appeared guilty of gross dereliction of duty, but some Russian, surely not Pavlov, had once written that where love was,

God was also. If that was true, then God, at long last, had walked into Ian MacClure's room.

Still holding the boy's hand, he leaned over and kissed his forehead. "Mac, Doctor Jim's coming in to get you."

He thought he felt an answering pressure from the boy's hand, but, at this stage, he knew he could be hallucinating.

Yet he was no Hamlet to while away time in soliloquies and no Maria Crossetti to flee prematurely to the tomb. He reached over and turned off the light, thinking that he was a hatchet and the function of a hatchet was to cut.

Still, he was half-sick at the stomach and paused with his hand on the doorknob to strengthen himself before entering the chamber of Christine Haskell, the girl called "The Beautiful."

He turned on her light to read her card and glanced toward the bed where she slept, then he stuffed all the cards in his pocket and walked softly toward her.

Supine upon the bedcovers, arms folded over her stomach, her breasts rising and falling, she might have been a girl napping backstage after winning all the beauty contests in the world. Aglow with highlights, her chestnut hair flowed to shoulders carved from ivory and framed such harmony of lips, eyes, and brows that he was caused to exclaim, "Christine Haskell, if you had been Helen of Troy, Ilium's towers would still be standing."

Well he knew this flawless habitation had been treated with diligence by every psychiatrist in its attendance, yet still it held an airy nothing for a mind. He, too, was expected to fail, but she was to hold him to his purpose until BAC had engrossed him in its transplant problem. And he was hooked the moment he lifted her gown to examine a body that had put all the computers of creation on overtime to plot the maximum aesthetics of the feminine form. Even her

navel was the triumphant expression of a concave whorl. But there was that strangeness of proportion without which there is no true beauty, for this girl of fifteen and a half was going on to a full 36.

When he lowered her gown she opened her eyes, hazel, margined by the lashes of a Semiramis, to look at him indifferently. He bowed and kissed her hand, afraid to kiss her lips.

Trailing the splendor of what he had seen, Galway walked to his bedroom, knowing that his tentative policy of sharing with Mrs. Butterfield would have to be modified. Strangely, he was half-grateful for the psychosis that had kept this girl inviolate from the questings of Tennessee teen-agers, and though he respected Mrs. Butterfield's maternalism, he knew that Medea, too, had been a mother.

His apprehensions were heightened when he opened the door and saw his pajamas laid out, his bedlamp on, and his sheets turned back. But he was not too preoccupied to notice that in this house without locks there was an inside bolt on his door.

Once abed, he remembered that Maria expected him in the vaults at ten. His drives, flagging from his visit to Susan, would need stimuli, and Christine might be his spur. With the acutely focused vibrations of the new stimulators, he might be able to determine if her libido was fixated in the primary erogenous zones. Willy-nilly, it should prove an interesting experiment. He had never witnessed the defloration of a virgin, sonically or otherwise.

# chapter 6.

Awakened by birdsong, Galway dressed and went into a spacious, Spanish-tiled kitchen to prepare coffee. A side door opened to a patio and he stepped out to watch the glow brighten above the mountain rim. Around him were trees and a path leading from the rear of the house to the stables up the slope, dimly visible in the dew-smelling dawn. He luxuriated in the silence, smoking a cigarette, until the diminishing perk of the coffeepot drew him inside.

Stirrings from the housekeeper's room behind the kitchen aroused him to the lateness of the hour, and he cleaned the utensils, remembering his policy conference with Mrs. Butterfield.

She was still asleep when he entered her room to pull up a chair beside her bed. He shook her shoulder. Drowsily, she turned to him, opened her eyes, and smiled.

"Wake, lass. Thews that cumber sunlit pallets get fat."

"It's so nice of you to awaken me, Doctor. The alarm's set for seven, but I hate bells."

A jailbird's syndrome, he thought, pushing the plug on her alarm clock. "Before I go to the village," he said, "I would like the children fed. I may have to stimulate Little Mac's appetite, and I want to run a test on Christine. I looked in on the children last night."

"I do hope you can help them."

"Perhaps, but a part of their recovery may depend on us. I've decided we must keep to a professional relationship to keep from arousing Oedipal antagonisms in the boys."

"What's that?"

"Oedipus was a man who fell in love with his own mother."

"A boy *should* love his mother."

"Oedipus had children by his."

"That would make his sons his half-brothers," she commented. "It must have been a close-knit family."

"No. When Oedipus found he had married his mother, he blinded himself in remorse."

"What happened to his mother?"

"She killed herself."

"Now, that wasn't nice of her, with a blind son to take care of."

"But he had killed his father, and that's what I'm concerned with. . . . I'll be in my office if you need me."

Confused by her reaction, he went to his office and put Christine's card into the cybernetic typewriter. He had never really considered the legend of King Oedipus from all points of view. Perhaps Jocasta had really killed herself because she was too old to find another lover.

As the typewriter began, he sat at his desk and pulled the phone toward him, toying with a pencil on a doodling pad as he dialed Hammergren's number. The workday had started in Topeka.

His call went through and he said, "Doctor Hammergren, this is Doctor Galway calling from Paradise Valley. I have all the children I need for my tests here, so don't let any more out of your clinic, regardless of requests from HEW."

"Of course, Doctor. Is there something . . ."

"Nothing's wrong, with the exception of one Willie Jefferson. . . ."

"I have him here, Doctor Galway. He had a brain lesion in his speech area."

"Good!" Galway hung up.

Robert English was fantastically honest, but it had occurred to Galway that English could have been lied to—that possibly Galway was not hooked into BAC's circuits. He ran a random test on the machine by dial-

ing the Los Angeles Police Department. He got a busy signal. He tried the Queen of Angels, Schwab's drugstore, and his own disconnected house number in Los Angeles. All the circuits were busy.

He could make only those calls that he would logically make. BAC had him wired in.

He called Doctor Lovestone's residence number from the directory in his desk and got no answer, but Lovestone answered from his office phone.

"Hello, Claude. You're in early."

"I'm composing a mood piece from an agoraphobiac's brain while my subconscious is still dewy. Fantastic equipment here."

"Good. I'd like to come down and look it over—say, about eleven—and I'll bring with me an encephalogram from a fifteen-year-old girl for your lyric muse. I'd like for you to work up something light and airy in the style of Puccini, say."

"I follow the brain waves, which are mostly Wagnerian, but bring it down. I'm in Ward A of the resort hotel. Just ask the bell captain."

Next, he pulled stationery from his desk and wrote a brief letter in longhand to Ed Egan, at USC, outlining the function of the organ bank farm with all the distaste he felt at the moment. He dated the letter September 7, knowing that his attitudes would have changed drastically in three months. In the corner he heard the bell clang on the typewriter, signifying the end of the transcript, as he put his indignation in the ending of the letter.

Miss Atterbury has been diagnosed a psychopathic personality—her records can be checked at Corona—and since her delivery of this message dispels the diagnosis, it will give you a strong idea of the methods used to bring fresh meat into this abattoir.

Please notify Cranepool at the bank—he has my power of attorney—to give the girl a thousand dollars to aid in her readjustment.

For God's sake, Ed, lift the lid on this American Dachau by all the means at your command and bring the responsible parties in Health, Education and Welfare to justice. This may well be my last request.

Urgently,
James Galway

He sealed the letter, addressed the envelope and put it in his pocket, then rose to remove Christine's case history from the scroll bar.

Speed-reading, he skimmed the biography and data related to her ailment:

Born in East Tennessee, on July 3, only daughter of Elizabeth and the Reverend Billy Haskell, she had withdrawn at the age of nine while an inmate of a Baptist orphanage. Precocious, she had learned to read at the age of four with such facility that her showman father had permitted her to read the scriptural text for his sermons from the pulpit.

Elizabeth Haskell had died of the flu on December 23, in the year of Christine's birth, and her father had died on the same date, seven years later. Her father had gotten out of the religion business one year before his death in order to breed Tennessee walking horses on a farm near Nashville. With no surviving relatives, Christine had been sent to the orphanage and from there to Topeka.

At Topeka, careful records had been kept of her behavior, which consisted almost entirely of reading, which had ranged from the Bible to a child's edition of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* issued by an antireligious society. Apparently, the librarians at Topeka had either been liberal or ignorant for she had been permitted to read Robinson Jeffers' *Roan Stallion* before she was ten. Later, her interests had swung entirely toward medievalism, starting from the complete works of Sir Walter Scott. She had read Chaucer in Middle English, and Galway marveled. She had taken into her void a better liberal education than he possessed.

Mrs. Butterfield came to the doorway. "Doctor, Little Mac won't eat his cereal or drink his milk."

"Did he drink his orange juice?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you pour cream on his cereal?"

"Yes, sir."

Galway closed the pamphlet on Christine and laid it aside, rising to follow her, when his eyes fell on the doodle pad. He had been drawing clouds, but there was a strange similarity between the cloud on the left and the cloud on the right.

They weren't clouds.

While his conscious mind had been preoccupied on the telephone, his subconscious had been occupied with the parietal lobes of a human brain. English might not yet be hooked on the brain-transplant experiment, he didn't know, but James Galway was showing signs of addiction.

Ian MacClure sat on the edge of the bed, his eyes expressionless, his breakfast uneaten.

Galway squatted before him, speaking gently. "Mac, I hear you don't want breakfast. You need calcium if your bones are to grow strong enough for you to herd cattle. . . . Now, let's see you take a swallow of good, fresh cow's milk, cowboy."

He held the glass of milk to the boy's lips. Ian clenched his jaws and averted his head.

Galway took the head-harness and put it on the boy's head. Mac didn't resist. Again he moved the glass to the boy's lips, increasing the charge of pleasure as it drew closer. But the boy still averted his head and clenched his jaws.

Galway cut the power and set the glass down, looking up at Mrs. Butterfield. "Mrs. Butterfield, would you take the boy in your arms, bare your breast, and place your nipple to his lips?"

"Of course, Doctor, but it doesn't seem nice."

As she bent to the boy, cuddling his head in her arm, her face grew radiant with tenderness. She bared her breast. Watching, Galway was so awed by her lumines-

cence that he had to force himself to observe his patient, placid now, with eyes unfocused. Mrs. Butterfield hoisted her breast outward, leading the teat toward his mouth.

"Merely touch his lips," Galway said. "Don't force it. He might bite."

"He'll not bite. Mama's little boy likes ninny."

Slowly the nipple snaked closer. It touched Mac's lips. His hands flipped up, forcing the object away, and he averted his face, toward Galway. There was terror in his eyes.

"Well, I never!" Mrs. Butterfield exploded.

Galway was lunging for the head-harness to shoot a stream of pleasure into the boy's brain.

"Keep holding him, Mrs. Butterfield. . . . Quiet, now, little dogie. . . . Have you any marmalade?"

"On the cart in the hallway."

"Take off his head-harness."

As Galway went for the jam jar, his heart sang to the knowledge that Mac had responded, physically and emotionally, to a stimulus. Judged on the basis of stimulus-response patterns, the child had reacted to the interchange more intelligently than the nurse. However, returning with the marmalade, he was gratified to see the nurse's indignation and hurt melt into wonderment as he spread a bit of the jam above her nipple.

"Your offering has not yet been rejected, Mrs. Butterfield," he reassured her. "Now try again, and don't spill the marmalade."

Warily she tried again, lifting her nipple toward the again indifferent boy.

"Wave it under his nose first," Galway instructed her. "Let him smell the marmalade."

Mac smelled the marmalade. Again his hands rose, but this time he cupped the forward portion of her bosom and drew the nipple toward his mouth. Of his own volition, he took the teat and began to suckle.

Nurse and doctor smiled at each other.

"You do have peculiar methods, Doctor."

"He's allergic to milk. Just before lunch, emulsify a

calcium tablet in half a pint of orange juice, hold the bottle between your breasts, and let him drink it from a bent straw. After we've run the tests on Christine, take a liquid rubber mold of your breast and call procurement. Order a replica with the capacity of one liquid pint. In two weeks this boy is going to be bursting with vitamin C and calcium, for you're going to nurse him on orange juice from your middle breast. . . . Now let him rest."

"Won't that be peculiar, Doctor? A three-breasted nurse?"

"He's a peculiar patient, Mrs. Butterfield. Now to Christine."

Christine had finished breakfast and was lying on her back, her hands beside her, her eyes focused on the ceiling. Lady Rowena, he thought, recumbent on her bier, remembering that the girl had read *Ivanhoe*.

"My aim here," he explained to the nurse as he lifted the girl's head to attach electrodes from both the stimulator and the encephalograph, "is to exercise a withdrawn patient by sonic stimulation of her muscle-control centers. I'm making a record of her brain waves to give to Doctor Lovestone, a musico-psychiatrist, for musical interpretation. We must use every resource to cure these patients. . . . Watch her right leg."

He probed until he saw her muscle twitch and increased the current. Unblinking, expressionless, Christine pointed her toe toward the ceiling. Then he did the same with her arm.

"I'll attempt a pushup from a supine position, a horizontal backbend."

He probed for her secondary erogenic zones and noticed with satisfaction an almost imperceptible swelling of her nipples beneath the gown.

"What beautiful coloring she has," Mrs. Butterfield exclaimed as a slight flush diffused over the patient's cheeks.

"Hormones. At fifteen they're loaded with hormones."

He reached over and took her wrist, feeling her pulse rate rise as he massaged the primary areas with a low

current. As her pulse increased, her pelvis twitched. He stepped up the current and her breathing grew audible. She arched higher.

"She's trying to do a pushup," Mrs. Butterfield said.

He depressed and released the control button, raising and lowering the girl. She was starting to perk like a coffeepot, and it occurred to Galway that if her libido was not already fixated in the primary erogenic zone, this should do it.

"She's doing it," Mrs. Butterfield said.

As her pulse rate continued to rise and her pelvic undulations surged higher, her output began to exceed his input, leaving him with a strangely galling question: Was her knowledge instinctive or had the child been taught? As the stimulus neared its peak, he was fascinated by a slight twisting flip she gave at the top of her arc, as if she were dancing a cha-cha. From whatever fragments of her memory the movement was woven he had no way of determining, but he was positive that it did not come from the pages of Sir Walter Scott.

When he shot the terminating charge, he had dropped her wrist and was no longer looking at her, but he heard her explosive sigh and let her drift off on a sine curve.

"Poor dear. She's worn out by the exercise."

"Got to keep her muscle tone for the organ bank," Galway said.

With calm urgency he removed the electrodes and snipped the tape from the encephalograph, looping it into his pocket.

"If you need me, Mrs. Butterfield, I'll be at Doctor Lovestone's office by eleven, lunch at the inn, and with Doctor English at one."

Within ten minutes, he was gunning his car through the Firehouse Pass at eighty, and he opened up when he hit the flats. As gray and brown tree boles blurred past, he felt a growing kinship with the great lovers of the past: Tommy Manville, Daddy Browning, Justice Douglas. Although he started to brake one hundred

yards before he reached the Chapel Hill turnoff, he still spun into a revenuer's reverse when he hit the graveled parking area before the organ bank.

The mortuary inductor's office was a slate-fronted building set back into the hill under an overhang of granite. To the left of the building was a tunneled garage, Gothic-arched, in which he could see a coroner's van parked beside a loading and unloading ramp, and beside it was a half-ton refrigerator truck.

Maria Crossetti was Spartan in her tastes. Inside, her office was a single room, done in off-black. She was seated at an ebony desk before a gray wall with a plastic icon lit by electric tapers. She looked up as he entered but did not smile.

"Doctor Galway, I had you scheduled for ten. It's nine-thirty."

She might be difficult, he decided. By now she must have discovered that last night's exaltation had not been entirely spiritual, and the discovery would have been a blow to one of her nature.

"Am I interrupting your morning's meditation?"

"No. I haven't completed my morning makeup. You've caught me without my eye shadow."

"No matter, Maria. Your monochromes are more attractive than the colors of painted women."

"You seem tired, Doctor." She sounded hopeful.

"Less fatigue than lassitude," he said. "I slept poorly last night, from thinking of you."

"I hope my friendliness led you to no untimely assumptions."

"Indeed not," he answered formally. "But I dreamed you were drifting down the River Lethe on a funeral barge, and the nightmare was so vivid it awakened me."

"I would hardly call that dream a nightmare."

"Enough of dreams." he said. "I'm ready for the tour if you're ready to guide me."

She pulled an architect's rendering from her desk and unrolled it toward him. Schematically, the cryonic morgue reminded him of the Pentagon, but there were seven circles.

"The vaults encompass ten square acres of tunneling in the hill behind us," she said. "Doctor English tells me the design is Italian. This outer circle is cryogenic interment crypts reserved for voluntary specimens, mostly government officials and celebrities who submitted to freezing after contracting the flu. Since they await resurrection if an antitoxin is discovered, this circle is called Purgatory. Then there are a few involuntary cases of suspended termination reserved for future anthropologists."

"Do you have any American Indians?" he asked.

"Five," she answered. "One pair of Apaches, another set of Cherokees, and a lone Paiute. . . . Beyond the cryogenic crypts are the permanently terminated specimens. The sixth circle is made of intact adult Caucasians, grouped according to age, sex, etc. The fifth circle is composed of intact Caucasian teen-agers. . . ."

"What are these insets in the tunnel walls?"

"Transplant harvest rooms with storage vaults for instant shipments. The fourth, third, and second circles are for remnant specimens that have been partly salvaged."

"Where are the restrooms?" he asked.

She seemed aggrieved by his question. "The entire facility is a rest area."

"I mean, where does the surgeon scrub up for a salvage operation?"

"Lavatories adjoin the operating areas. . . . Inside the inner circle is the heart of the operation, my cryotherm, drainage sump, and pumping facility."

"What's in the inner circle?"

"Minority groups." Suddenly a spark lit her eyes. "I have a jewel of a specimen there I must show you."

"I think I have a clear picture of the layout," he said. "Are we ready to enter?"

"First, I must put on a little makeup. I feel nude without my eye shadow."

He waited less than two minutes while Maria excused herself to dab on eye shadow. Emerging, she led him through a side door and they walked down the

freight platform toward a large door that slid back at their approach. Once they stepped through, the door rumbled shut with a dull thud and they were inside a corridor, wide and high-ceilinged, whose far terminus was lost in a glow of sodium vapor lamps.

"We're going west," Maria said.

In the gray light, her face had a pallor which threw her eye shadows into such stark contrast that they seemed like openings in her skull. Her heel-clicks echoed along the tunnel.

"And slightly downward," he noted.

"For drainage," she explained. "The door is sealed to keep the temperature a constant 40° to facilitate dissection. You may find it slightly chilly, at first, but one grows accustomed. Often I walk here before breakfast, thrice around Purgatory, briskly, almost a mile."

"Isn't it a rather depressing place before breakfast?"

"I like to think of it as a garden readying the pale harvest of the years. What dreams of love, of power, of now-vaulted ambition lie in these crypts!"

Her speech was growing more animated, her stride faster, as they approached the Purgatory intersection. When they reached the corridor of cryocrypts, Maria placed a restraining hand on him and they paused to look about. Six layers deep, on both sides of the corridor, the vaults, bronze handles gleaming, curved away into the infinity of a closed circle.

"A holy spot," she breathed, "for here peace laps one round."

Strangely, Galway shared her feelings, and he found himself lowering his voice to say, "There are so many. I did not know that death had claimed so many."

"More have died in the past two decades than lived in all eras past," she said. "But these are not truly dead since hope is embalmed in their darkness. Out of their darkness may come morning, perhaps, but presently they lie, by Hell or Heaven unmated, the statesmen, the patrons of the arts, the philanthropists."

At the moment, Galway was less awed by the accomplishments of the dead than by the mother lode of live

flu virus frozen in these innumerable cortices. For one interested in virology, a mere segment of this circle would furnish enough raw material for a lifetime.

"Would you like to take a quarter-lap around Purgatory," she asked, "and enter by the north-leading corridor to get adjusted before we enter the circles without hope?"

"I'm already adjusted," he said. "Press on."

Maria's animation increased as each circle was passed, and Galway's curiosity about her prize specimen in the first circle increased proportionately. Strangely, too, the impression her pallor and her eye shadow projected changed also. She who had appeared macabre at the outset of their journey was coming to resemble a charming and vivacious ghost.

At last they came to the inner circle.

"Now for my gem," she said, taking his hand and leading him around the corridor that encompassed only the cryotherm and sump. Here the circle was so short the vaults were curved to fit the circumference of the arc. In the southeast segment, interior wall, she stopped before a crypt, three tiers down from the top.

"My last official act as a police coroner in Dallas was to order this specimen transported here." She reached over and pushed a button.

Light flooded the interior of the crypt.

Laid out on white linen was a black who had once been a splendid physical specimen, under thirty, with nothing about him disproportionate except a slight, unnatural cant to his neck. The corpse's face had an Arabic hauteur with straight, slender nose and thin lips. Its trapezius curved into a curving deltoid. The pectoralis major could have been carved from ebony, so distinct were those muscles atop a straight slope to a flat rectus abdominis. Below, however, the cadaver's clean lines were broken in a manner that gave a new significance to the risus sardonicus on its lips.

"Notice how glossy the skin. It has the glow of black velvet."

"The sheen of putrescence" would have been a more

accurate phrase, but Galway did not wish to disturb the moment with a technical comment.

"Notice, too," she said, "how the grin of death gives his face an almost beatific expression."

"I was wondering if it was a risus sardonicus," Galway commented, "in the light of other evidence. It appears death came at a moment when it was least expected."

She understood the drift of his musings and answered, "He was hanged. Hanging has that effect. A matter of blood flow and temporary engorgement."

"Hanged? I didn't think that was done anymore. Even in Dallas."

"He wasn't lynched by whites but by a committee of neighborhood husbands. He was called 'The Dark-town Strutter.'"

He turned to thank her for showing the exhibit, but her hands were clasped in an attitude of prayer. He kept his silence and turned and walked back into a dissecting area and sat down on the operating table. He was tired and still chilly but inwardly warmed by the thought that Maria's gem might be a factor in his favor. Cupping his head in his clasped palms, he stretched out full length on the slab and closed his eyes to summon the memory of Christine, palpitant in the throes of hypersonic love.

Finally, Maria missed him and looked around, for he heard her heel-clicks on the cement. Echoes sounded so clearly in the first circle that she seemed to be approaching from two directions.

Then she was bending over him, her hand stroking his forehead, and Christine's image was having effect.

"Dear boy, I shouldn't have kept you awake last night. Jim, do you like me more than other girls?"

"Others give joy or sorrow, but you, Crossetti, sleep."

She was bending closer, her voice whispering in his ear, "We are but shadows in subterranean places and our voices are rustlings in dry catacombs."

Avoiding any sudden movement, his hand reached up and cupped around the nape of her neck. He started

to pull her lips toward his as his fingers slithered through her hair, measuring the concavities and projections of her skull.

"Mistress Crossetti, eminent forensic surgeon, cryogenius and *bon mordant*, open your tarot deck and find your second hanged man."

Her lips were almost touching his when suddenly she resisted. "Don't, Jim. My people were good people. On Sundays my father read the Old Testament."

In her voice was the irrelevance of hysteria. She was frightened. With sepulchral tones, aided by echoes, he essayed to calm her. "Remember the hanged man."

"But the black was hanged with a short rope and there's no flame in his darkness."

His long surgeon's fingers found the pulse of her neck. It fluttered like a snared hare's, and the possibility of failure confronted him. Even in her native habitat she was timid. She might decline the gambit, plead his fatigue. In this, her nunnery, she might cry sanctuary. He opened his eyes and caught the glow from the still-lighted crypt in her eyes. He let a note of sadness into his voice. "That, my dear, is my peculiar problem. Now you know why you're inviolate in my arms."

Her femininity came to support her necrophilia and her neck muscles softened with compassion. Her cold lips touched his. "Dear boy," she whispered, "I'll make your problem *our* problem."

He released her and pointed toward the crypt. "Go, then, Maria, and put out the light. Put out the light."

Coyly she bent and kissed him a second time. "I go, Greymalkin, but I shall return."

He closed his eyes, re-envisioning Christine and listening to the click-click of her departing footsteps. He had never met a woman who could not solve his problem, one way or the other, but the chill was making the problem a problem, and he was relieved to hear the urgency in her approaching footsteps.

A cold coming they had of it, in about the worst place in the world for such sojourning, but eventually they found their way back to the surface, galled and a

little refractory. Outward-bound, her animation reversed itself, but she emerged in a different silence, meditative now and proud.

On his way to Lovestone's office, Galway was not sure if he had created an ally in the catacombs but he was certain he had acquired a messenger to deliver the word to English—Mack the Knife was back in town, and with or without a brain transplant, Maria Crossetti was going to be humanized. The only choice left open to English was the direction from which the humanization would come, the top or the bottom.

# chapter 7 .

Led by a bellhop in a fugue, Galway reached Lovestone's office in the west wing of the Paradise Valley Hotel. Hardly had he introduced himself to a refreshingly sane secretary in the outer office when Lovestone was in the doorway, calling, "Come in, Jim."

Galway passed through a large private office with a divan, tossed his briefcase on a desk beside Lovestone's nameplate, and followed him into a third room. Here, facing a view window of the western rimrocks, sat a blond young man in a hospital gown, his head wired to a brain-wave recorder.

"Shake hands with Milbank Pomeroy, Doctor Galway."

Lovestone swiveled the patient's head around, owllike, and levered his hand back over his shoulder. Galway shook the hand, which remained extended after he dropped it.

"You just added a bar to the 'Ballad of Milbank Pomeroy,'" Lovestone said, "which is not the 'Moonlight Sonata.'"

"Close his mouth," said Galway. "He's drooling. . . . How'd he get this way?"

"Who knows?" Lovestone answered, snapping Pomeroy's jaws shut with a nudge of his knuckles. "He was a transcontinental truckdriver who developed a fear of distance. One morning they found him crouching in a closet. Now he's boxed into his skull, lest my music lure him out. But his brain waves are as inspirational as a haystack."

"Take a look at these." Galway pulled Christine's tape from his pocket.

Running the roll through his fingers, Lovestone

walked toward the window. Studying the tape, he whistled. "I've never seen such definition in a psycho. What'd you take these with?"

"A Sealyham, Mark 3. But they're reinforced by hypersonic stimuli."

"No matter. The thalamus controls the character of the waves. Here, hold this end."

As Galway held the end of the tape against the window, Lovestone unrolled it against the backlight, humming a few bars as he studied the tracings. "This thing almost writes itself. A series of orchestrated climaxes rising to a crescendo, then drifting into a diminuendo. This is rich!"

He took a pencil from his pocket and rerolled the reel back toward Galway.

"What do you think of Paradise Valley?" Galway asked.

"Somebody should blow the top off this butcher shop with a congressional investigation and have your boy English drawn, quartered, and deposited in his own bank." Lovestone was genuinely angry.

"Perhaps I could arrange your transfer," Galway suggested.

"Not yet. I've never tackled catatonia based on agoraphobia, and I want to see how Milbank comes out. I get my pick of patients, and all I save get home free. Besides, I've never seen such equipment. Come in here."

Lovestone's eyes were glowing as he steered Galway toward a room marked "Private." Dramatically he shoved it open and said, "Get an eyeful of that baby."

"That baby" resembled an electric organ with a mahogany finish and a console keyboard.

"What is it?"

"An electronic sound dispenser. But look here."

He walked across the room and inserted Christine's tape into a machine resembling a teletyper and pushed a button. The tape whirred through to reverse itself. Then Lovestone ran it forward, slowly, scanning it as it moved through a window with a marker.

"Here's a delightful passage. Notice the crescendo.

I'll back it up and run off a few bars, using the crescendo as a climax."

He pulled a lever, lowered a switch, set a dial, then pushed a button.

"The machine translates the waves into musical notes, taking the median as Middle C. I can adjust the chromatic base, of course, for special effects, such as choral groups."

With a *click-whirr-plunk-ping, ping-ping-plunk-whirr,* the tape started a slow progress past the window marker. Above it, a blank tape traveled at the same speed, and holes were being punched into the upper tape, like the holes in a player-piano roll, by a stylus that rose and fell with the scanner below.

"It's set to a four-beat measure, but I can vary the tempo in the sound dispenser. . . . Jim, this is it!"

Lovestone stopped the machine after a foot of tape was punched, tore out the player tape with a flourish, and bore it over to insert it in a box on the side of the console. He sat before the music dispenser, pulled a stop, and out of the instrument, rippling with the tremolos of a violin, came the airs from Christine. For six minutes, Galway listened, transfixed by the gay and golden notes. But a touch of sadness fretted beneath the music, and Lovestone, ears cocked, caught it.

"There's an element here, Jim, too plaintive for the mellowness of this violin. I'll run it through again, adding a muted trumpet, maybe a flute or two on that third stanza, and pitch the violin higher to carry the melancholy. . . . Now I'm holding this third note for a dreamy-waltzy effect." His jaw was wagging, up and down when he talked, mostly to himself, sidewise as he worked the instrument, pulling stops, pressing pedals, fingering keys. "So this is your fifteen-year-old girl. She's got the brain waves of a thirty-two-year-old nymphomaniac. . . . Hold that note, Claude. That longing, bring it out."

Above Lovestone's babble, the music was rising to heights of anguish, nostalgia, a weeping for the lost. When the cadenza wailed, quavered, and loped into

the finale, Galway could feel the vibrations in his lachrymal glands.

"Doctor Galway, Mrs. Butterfield's on the phone, and she sounded urgent."

Lovestone's secretary spoke from the doorway and Galway wheeled, his sorrow dissipating in the fear of an emergency as the finale faded into a diminuendo. As he passed into Lovestone's office, the last sound he heard from the machine was the quaver of a dying flute, sounding lonesome and far away, like a sigh from a tomb.

"Doctor Galway," Mrs. Butterfield was excited. "Little Mac just spoke. Plain as day, when he saw me cuddle the orange juice, he said, 'Ninny, Mama.' "

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" Galway said, and stood silent for a moment, thinking. "Listen, Mrs. Butterfield, get the boy out of those rubber drawers and give him a regulation diaper. Put him in bootees instead of shoes. . . . Did the horses come?"

"Yes, Doctor, a male and female. But a little black pygmy came with them, and he's not nice."

"He's not a pygmy, Mrs. Butterfield. He's an African Bushman." He recalled that Bushmen were permanently tumescent. "And his condition is normal, so don't worry about him."

"I'm not worried about him, Doctor. I'm worried about the horses."

"Don't concern yourself. What's the color of the stallion?"

"Reddish brown, with white specks."

A roan stallion. So English agreed that Christine was BAC's most powerful piece, and now they'd drop the chess metaphor. It was no longer a game but a death struggle, and Christine Haskell was the sacrificial virgin.

"Thank you, Mrs. Butterfield."

Lovestone had followed him into the office and he asked, "Problems, Jim?"

"My youngest patient, a total mute, just asked for Ninny."

"Incredible! But who's Ninny?"

Galway reviewed the incidents of the morning for the psychiatrist, who listened intently but with waning enthusiasm. Then Lovestone motioned him to a seat on the divan, sat himself at the far end, crossed his legs, and swiveled his torso toward Galway. A half-smile curled his lips.

"Doctor Galway, I appreciate your enthusiasm, but as a layman in this field you're overestimating an isolated reaction. Your hypersonic massage is the mechanical equivalent of sodium amytal, and the trauma from the second advance of the nipple induced an amytal kickback in the boy."

"But he took the nipple," Galway pointed out.

"No. He took the marmalade. It's Pavlov's dog all over again. On the second feeding, hysteria created by the advancing nipple wrenched an utterance from the boy."

"But he spoke words."

"You can condition a parakeet to speak words. No, Doctor Galway, little can be attributed to this episode except in a Pavlovian frame of reference, and Pavlov was a tinkerer, an atheistic, Communistic, Red Russian tinkerer."

Here was a Freudian defending his discipline, Galway realized, but he needed Lovestone. So, placatingly, he said, "You told me that adult schizophrenics were stranded on the shoals of puberty. Couldn't a child schizophrenic be stranded on the shoals of infancy, particularly one who was never weaned because he was never nursed, has never spoken and has never accepted toilet training?"

Lovestone smiled at the naïveté in the question. "At seven, a boy's libido is undifferentiated and nonfixated, swinging toward anal and oral. In effect, that boy's a homosexual. He considers the female breast vulgar, so he pushed it aside. His refusal to accept toilet training is a further clue. Symbolically, he regards the commode as a yawning vagina."

Lovestone's smugness irritated Galway, but he con-

cealed his irritation behind a jovial grin. "Claude, I was humping the girl next door at the age of six."

"That might be worth a paper, particularly if you were weaned early and suffered from constipation." Suddenly he leaned forward, enthusiasm burning away his pedantry. "Don't misunderstand me, Jim. Keep goosing their brains with your sonic tickler and send me their encephalograms. With that baby back there, I can create great music. Bach? Beethoven? Brahms? *Nada!* I could make Handel's 'Oratorio' sound like 'Kitten on the Keys'!"

For a brief moment, Galway glimpsed a Cole Porter fluttering against the bars of Lovestone's Freudian cage, but he was too pressed for time to feel compassion.

"How can musico-psychiatry reach children?"

"Group musical therapy, Jim. Pipe their dissonances back into them, but harmonized with the discords of the other patients. Musical social adjustment, there's your answer."

The answer sounded more like a question to Galway, but he had not covered the main subject on his agenda. "Sounds encouraging, Claude, but give me Christine's tune first. . . . I hate to run, but I have a luncheon date with Susan Atterbury. She and I had a long discussion, yesterday. There's a solid woman under all those feminine frills and she was impressed by you. I mentioned your musical gifts and she told me she sensed an artist in you with depths far more profound than those of an ordinary psychiatrist."

"Susan said that? Well, just tell that doll hello for me."

Tailored, trim, in unobtrusive makeup, Susan Atterbury glided through the dining room, spreading behind her a wake of low whistles. Galway stood at her approach and held her chair. At his gesture, her sway grew less pronounced and as she neared him her stride shortened. When she accepted his hand, her fingers drooped from the knuckle joints and her smile was fixed.

Fearful that her *grande dame* manner might slow his progress at lunch, he smiled. "My dear, you look very chic with your clothes on."

"And your legs look less like a stork's."

They slid into easy conversation until an arriving waitress interrupted them. Susan looked up. "My usual, honey."

"One triple martini, very dry," the waitress intoned. "And you, Doctor Galway?"

"A double scotch, and remove the menus, please."

After her first drink, Susan was floating, and Galway dropped the banter. "How do you like the work here, Susan?"

"It's crummy. In Fresno I used to draw down two hundred bucks a night from college kids, who could appreciate. All I get here is chickenfeed and empathy."

"How would you like to get out?"

"Are you kidding? I've still got two years at Corona."

"I mean go free, over the fence."

She was dubious. "I'd be fried on the wires or chewed by the dogs."

"I can show you how to avoid that," he said.

She shook her head. "Then I'd have eighty miles of cliffs, cougars, and rattlesnakes, with the green guard after my tail."

"The green guard wouldn't follow past the first ranger station and you'd have a male escort."

"You?" She shoved aside her drink.

"Not me. My prison doesn't stop at these walls. But a reliable man who'd sacrifice himself before letting you be hurt."

"So, I get out. I'm broke and a fugitive."

"I've thought of that. I'll give you a letter. There's a thousand dollars waiting for you when it's delivered in L.A. and a pardon with the thanks of the President."

"Give me the letter."

He handed her the letter and pulled out a map of Paradise Valley. "You'll need a fire to scare off the dogs, so you won't be able to leave until the fire season starts, late August or early September. You'll start diversion-

ary fires, here, by setting a focusing glass in a bed of dry grass. Over here, near the northwest corner, there's a mountain meadow leading into a granite ravine and over the crest. Over here's the Sequoia Highway. . . ."

As he outlined the escape procedure to the now-attentive girl, he felt little regret. One whore and one psychiatrist was a small price to risk for a deputy chief of the CIA and the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, who were even less a price to pay for man's free-will. In his present state of readiness, he would have risked Christine Haskell to smash the computer.

When Galway dropped the personnel file on Elsie Cook's desk, English bolted from his office, jamming his hat on, and pointed to the elevator. "Let's get out of here. There are things I've got to say I wouldn't want BAC to record, out of common decency."

English had gotten the message.

As the elevator door slid shut, English turned on him. "You pranged Maria! I had lunch with her and I could tell from the way she fondled your name with her tongue. I'm not interested in your sex life, but I have an organization here that I am interested in."

As they exited into the lobby, English was literally hopping across the area. "You can ruin that girl's career by humanizing her. I've got enough resurrectionists around here. I need crucifiers."

"If I make the brain swap, I choose the brains, and I don't want a feedback from Susan's thalamus spreading filthy rumors about me to Maria's frontal lobes."

"You give me a clean slice and there'll be no memory transfers."

"Then you'll go along with my choice."

"Or be blackmailed—yes."

"You'll not regret it," Galway said. "And an amiable Maria's part payment for Christine."

"Christine doesn't reach the consent age until July 3," English said. "And she'll still be psychotic, won't she?"

English was not asking about Christine, but Galway

answered honestly. "I haven't diagnosed her yet, but she's not autistic. . . . Where are we going?"

They were crossing the lanes, headed for the high-school area. English did not answer him directly but merely said, "You aren't interested in cloned babies or kangaroos that can't hop."

Molecules were colliding. The Brownian movement had begun, and Galway knew where they were going. Their minds meshed so closely they seemed linked by telepathic bonds, and Galway half-resented the invasion of his privacy.

"What's my procedure for clearing the children?"

"A sanity hearing before a five-man board. It takes about four hours, and there's no appeal, but there can be remittance for further treatment at the request of the attending psychiatrist. You're no psychiatrist."

"How are the hearings arranged?"

"At your request, two weeks in advance."

Through the trees, Galway could see a round building resembling a large Cretan windmill without vanes, painted with mottled greens and browns. Galway knew it was Joe Mendenhall's psychorama, and that there was no chance now of catching English off guard, had never been. It would be easier to trick a behavioral-analysis computer.

Inside the psychorama, there was a second door dogged shut like a warship's watertight compartment door with a sign on it.

ARENA ENTRANCE GAS CHAMBER ONLY
APPLY AT OFFICE

Beyond the door, Galway heard thuds, moans, and curses, But English turned right, up the stairway, into a control room overlooking the arena.

Seated at a control board before a viewing window, Joe Mendenhall looked up as they entered. On the table beside him was a coffeecup and a butt-piled cigarette tray, indicating the boredom his face reflected until he saw them. Alert and smiling, he stood. "Welcome, gentlemen."

"You've met Doctor Galway, the new chief of R & D," English said. "He and I would like to test our acting skills, but he'll go first."

"Delighted. I have a purge in progress, but it's almost to the red stage. If you gentlemen care to watch."

Below them, on a sod-floored pit, a shirtless man wearing glasses was kicking an articulated dummy and screaming inarticulate curses. On the walls around him, backlighted blues and yellows writhed together, fell apart, formed into blobs that shot rays into each other, flared green, collided, and separated again. Each kick, vicious enough to cave in the ribs of a man, moved the dummy only a few inches, which indicated its weight was about that of a human being. At times, Galway heard the crack of plastic ribs.

The dummy's hands and feet were padded balls, but the head was a plastiskin replica of a hairless human head that cou'd have been male or female. Simulated blood flowed from the mouth and a plastic eyeball dangled from a bloody socket.

When the color green flared against the circular walls, the hostility of the aggressor seemed to peak. At times his turning brought the actor's face toward Galway, and it was more repulsive than the dummy's. Blond, crewcut, wearing rimless glasses as thick as the bottoms of beer bottles, the actor resembled an apprentice Prussian wearing two monocles. Once when facing Galway and the lights went green, he leaped with both feet high in the air and came down on the chest of the dummy, tromping its head under his heels. Contorted with fury, lips drooling, he lifted his face toward the control booth as if imploring assistance from some god of skull-smashers.

"How do you forestall heart attacks?" Galway asked.

"Remote telemetering of vital functions," Mendenhall answered, waving his hand toward a lighted panel.

"Who is he kicking?" English asked.

"Probably his father. His parents were hippies and his dad rejected him for a patch of marijuana. He has a compulsion to mow grass, which these sessions re-

lieve. But it could be his mother. When he was an infant, she gave him a bag of glue to sniff, as a pacifier. Wrecked his eyesight. Anyway, it's some authority figure."

"Then it could be me," English said.

"Oh no, Doctor English!" Mendenhall seemed shocked by the suggestion. "Let me demonstrate."

He picked up a mike and said into it, "Hugo, you're kicking Doctor English."

With his leg drawn back to kick the dummy in the teeth, Hugo froze on the backswing. His fury turned to anguish. The leg he was standing on crumpled and he was on his knees beside the dummy. Whimpering, smoothing down the imaginary hair of Doctor English with one hand, he tried to stuff an eyeball back into the socket with the other. He began to weep genuine tears. In one final quivering of remorse, he bent and kissed the bloody lips as Mendenhall spoke into the mike. "Correction, Hugo. It is not Doctor English. Get back to your games."

As the thud of kicks resumed below, English turned to Mendenhall. "Perhaps you should give me that man's telephone number. I may need it since Doctor Galway's come to the valley."

Mendenhall didn't smile at English's levity. Almost sullenly, he said, "Yes, I've seen the surgeon operating. . . . Gentlemen, I'll speed up the red period to clear the arena. Observe the damage to the dummy, Doctor Galway."

As the green moving on the walls changed to red, which coiled among yellows to transmit psychedelic fury, Mendenhall lifted his cyborg hand and pulled down a trapeze bar.

Below them, the dummy stood up. Its dangling eyeballs slipped back into their sockets, the blood sacs swished back into its mouth. Legs spread, Hugo was crouched for another assault when the dummy rose. Leaning forward, it advanced on him in a series of jerks, dragging its padded feet behind. Then it lifted

higher and swung one basketball-sized foot gently into Hugo's crotch.

It was a gentle, symbolic kick, hardly more than a fillip of contempt for the man's masculinity, but it spun Hugo into a keening rage. Squealing, he lunged for the dummy's neck, not to choke but to bite. The fighting cock had become a pit bulldog.

Turning to Galway, English said, "Hand-to-hand violence is disgustingly effeminate, like Lesbians making love in public, but I suppose this is better than golf."

English was not talking about the dummy and man below, he was warning Galway that physical violence could only be used as a last measure in an attempt to disrupt the programming of BAC.

Galway went first into the arena. Following instructions, he went below to the gas chamber where the actors inhaled hallucinating gas before entering the pit. Exit from the arena was through an opposite chamber where high-oxygen-content air flushed residual hallucinogens from the lungs.

He had asked for five minutes with green as his color. He wanted to hunt tigers in a jungle, he told Mendenhall, and he would need three dummies as rifle-bearers and beaters.

"Since you won't be acting out aggressions," Mendenhall told him, "you needn't remove your coat and tie."

Now, dogged into the chamber, he could hear above him the hiss of a gas valve. There was no odor and little effect as he relaxed on a wooden bench, waiting for the door to open into the arena. He found it very easy to relax and there was no apprehension in his waiting. He had decided to escape capture from a squad of Chinese soldiers in the jungles of Laos, but he wasn't sure how. The escape method he would leave up to his subconscious.

When the door opened, he rose and walked out. Mendenhall's green lights were playing over the walls,

but the air-conditioning on the floor of the pit was atrocious. Humidity was so great the sod floor was slippery. Body odors from previous actors hung in the air, sickly sweet, like the odor of damp, rotting vegetation.

He would have to put Mendenhall on report as soon as he got to Headquarters Company, he decided. General English would agree with him, because English was a finicky bastard, intolerant of sloppiness. For that reason, Galway was now slithering down the banks of the River Ou. It had taken his detachment the better part of the morning to march from Sop Nao, and Galway intended to report to English in fully creased khakis and smelling of deodorants.

This far into the Highlands, there was little danger of liver flukes and the water was cool and swift. On a moss-covered boulder near the water, he took his uniform off and clambered out into the rocky riverbed, wearing only his dogtags, his class ring, and a bar of soap suspended around his neck. Ten yards from the bank, he found a pothole, lathered and immersed himself with only his nose protruding, letting the water ripple off the sweat and trail grime. Under water, he failed to hear the raucous bird calls in the surrounding jungle that would have alerted him. Reluctantly, he rose, blowing, and turned shoreward.

Slightly upstream, on a peninsula of rocks and dried mud, stood a Chinese sergeant and two privates, carbines casually pointed in his direction. From their shoulder tabs and brown skirts, he recognized them as Red Guard Commandos of the Chinese Women's Army Corps.

According to G-2, the closest units of General Ching's Third Route Army were at Lan Toui, sixty miles to the north, but the intelligence was now academic. If they took him prisoner, he would never make the journey. As an officer in Chemical and Biological Warfare, he could not permit himself to be questioned.

Nervously, he clasped his hands together, twisting the

C on his class ring to release the tiny needle. There was enough delayed-action cyanide in the needle to kill a platoon of soldiers, for it was a booby trap as well as a self-destruction mechanism.

But the girl to the sergeant's left and slightly behind the others was apparently going to make it unnecessary for Galway to use the needle on himself. She was raising her carbine and aiming it at Galway's chest.

Speaking in Mandarin, which Galway understood, the sergeant said to the girl on her right, "Everything we've heard about the white man is true, Comrade Han."

"He has a problem, Comrade Sergeant Soong," the soldier named Han admitted.

Despite the flippancy of the foremost pair's conversation, the barrel of the third woman's carbine did not waver as she spoke up, "I have seen better in Kenya."

"Mai is from Shanghai," Comrade Han said, "where the flower of modesty seldom blooms. But I would test my mettle against the Capitalist Pig. . . ."

"I second the motion," the sergeant interrupted. "Let Comrade Mai, from Shanghai, stand guard and put out his light, after he has put out our lights. Call to him in English, Comrade Mai."

Above the unwavering rifle, Mai's voice spat, "Come here, 'Melican privates."

Either it was a clever synecdoche or, since he was out of uniform, the Chinese had taken him for a common soldier. As he clambered toward the trio on the bank, into the muzzle of the rifle, his mind was forming into a plan, clear in its immediate purpose, dim to his longer view, to rescue himself and get to General Chi-ing.

No dream awaited him on the bank but a reality of oiled hair, the living ripple of field-hardened muscles, the odor of sweat-aroused body ointment, amid which he fought to control his own desire. Only by demonstrating the quality and duration of his passion could he reach the girl from Shanghai. Moreover, he had to

induce in the sergeant and compliant soldier a rapture that would render them oblivious to a prick, tiny but lethal.

Galway was loving for his life.

After forty minutes, with two of his victims lounging in the bushes, still sentient though satisfied, he rose to face the guard, whose rifle still pointed at him, steady, unwavering. In stark contrast to the background of contentment and repletion, his unwavering urgency matched that of the rifle. The barrel of the girl dropped first.

His last was the best. He kissed her before he killed her, giving her a double slap to the buttocks from mercy and in gratitude to convert her throes into death throes. Moaning low, the girl from Shanghai died in joy and tumult in his arms.

For a moment, he stood looking down on them as he reset the safety on his ring. Around him, macaws called and before him rushed the river, but the forest on the far bank was wavering.

Leaves on the trees were growing blurred, and he knew that the hallucinogen was bubbling from his veins. He didn't want the scene to fade, and he looked again at the fallen, to bid them farewell.

His mind flickered between reality and hallucination as he dropped his eyes, but the women at his feet were not Chinese soldiers. There lay the bodies of his wife, Helen, and his two daughters, Sylvia and Mattie. But instead of grief, he felt a strange exultation—his path to Chi-ing was clear.

Grief and remorse struck him when his mind awakened. Strangling a sob, Galway stumbled toward the oxygen chamber, entered, and stood for a moment, steadying himself, breathing deeply, forcing the gas from his lungs.

Han, Soong, Mai! Helen, Sylvia, Matilda! His subconscious had performed a charade within a charade. Their death had freed him to claim Christine, his only living love, who might not awaken from her savage sleep.

There was a mirror in the degassing chamber. He walked over to straighten his tie and comb his hair, but his hair was in place, his tie aligned, and there was not a bead of sweat on his forehead.

Only his eyes reflected what he had seen.

# chapter 8 .

When Galway re-entered the control booth, Mendenhall said, "Doctor English is in the gas chamber. He says to meet him later at the back door. That last rifle-bearer of yours must have been a dilly."

"Was it that obvious?"

"Nothing's obvious in this business. You have to watch carefully."

Glancing down, Galway said, "There are no colors."

"Doctor English wanted the walls white. Here he comes."

English stepped from the gas chamber, walking slowly toward the center of the arena at a stately pace. To Galway's right, a panel slid open to emit two dummies. English paused in the center, waiting, as the grotesqueries jerked, flopped, and swayed toward him on their overhead wires, their balled feet bumping along the ground. Obscene, sinister, they bore down on the slender figure of the man. Even in his trance, English must have shared Galway's feelings, for he lifted both hands in horror, beginning with a peculiar scooping motion with his hands.

Or was he invoking a blessing!

He stood thus, arms stretched upward, as the effigies neared him in their thumping travesty of a human walk, until they stood in front of him, not three feet apart. English stepped forward and placed his hands on the inside shoulders of the dummies, forcing them to their knees.

Again he stepped back and raised his hands.

Drooping before English, balled heads lolling forward, the hulks appalled Galway with their connotation of the power of human self-delusion. In his own

imagination, those same figures had been transformed into beautiful maidens.

English stepped forward, lowering his hands to touch the lips of each dummy in turn, as if offering a wafer to a pair of communicants. He stepped back and looked down at the kneeling figures and his face registered gravity and compassion.

"He's giving those things communion," Galway almost gasped.

"Could be," Mendenhall agreed. "Doctor English is a saintly man."

Again, English stepped forward. Above each bowed head, he made the Sign of the Cross. Once more he stepped back and waved the dummies away with an imperious sweep of his arm.

Mendenhall manipulated the trolley, and the two dummies were dragged backward toward their compartment, balled feet thumping behind them. Again, English raised his hands in the peculiar scooping gesture of invocation, clasped his hands together, and walked slowly toward the degassing chamber, head bowed, hands clasped in prayer.

"Thank you," Galway said to Mendenhall. Then he went downstairs, out into the bright sunlight, awaiting English's exit from the chamber. According to all educated thinking, a symbol disguised itself even from the symbolist. Galway did not discount the overtones of a religious ritual in the behavior he had just witnessed, but English was a surgeon, not a priest.

Not a priest but a surgeon!

English had raised his hands to invoke a blessing on someone, but the peculiar scooping movement of his hands had been a scrubbing up prior to an operation. The communion wafer had been an anaesthetic, and the Sign of the Cross over the skull of the communicants had not been entirely a priestly blessing. He had been trephanning the skulls of the dummies, preparing them for a brain operation.

English was yielding to HEW-CIA, hoping to gain a manumission of his sentence for services rendered. That

course would gain them nothing, Galway knew, and their own freedom wasn't important.

When English exited, his face was set in lines of anger. "Let's go to the woods. I've got a matter to settle with you."

"I've got one to settle with you," Galway replied.

Jaws set, side by side they strode down a bridle path into the forest. Walking beside him, English shook his head in disgust. "I don't know where you get this fixation on hypodermic needles. Maybe Fairfax is right. Maybe you did inoculate the Chinese with something stronger than estrogen P. Why don't you drop virology and take up basket-weaving?"

English's voice was high, angry, but also querulous. He was asking for a rebuttal Galway could not give, because Galway did not know what English had read into the symbols.

"Mendenhall thought I was shafting a woman," Galway said.

"You were. With a hypodermic needle."

Ahead, a log lay beside the path. Galway pointed to it and said, "Sit down, Bob.

"The needle was to immunize you and me and the children. A liver fluke in Mirror Lake could knock out their whole facility, from Doctor Knowles down. We'd have schizos running out of our ears for months."

English shook his head. "And the flukes would go down the Kern to the valley. There are enough nuts in Southern California already, and this is my facility, not theirs. . . . I'm serious, Jim. I passed the word to Doctor Knowles: If you're caught inside the organ bank again, you're to be terminated on the spot."

Galway considered a moment. This plan might appeal to a man with strong martyr feelings, but English's strategy led to an overwhelming question: Who was going to be the martyr?

He probed deeper. "Well, Bob, your charade made me want to throw up, too. You seemed to suggest that we knuckle under to HEW and perfect the brain-transplant technique."

"I'm for perfecting the technique and training other surgeons, but I'm not knuckling under to HEW."

There were dangers here English hadn't considered, Galway thought, reaching for a cigarette and putting it to his mouth without lighting it. "Brain transplants are so far ahead of society's ethos they're illegal. HEW could chain us here, bootlegging brains for the rest of our lives."

"Agreed," English said. "So we need a lawyer."

"We need a fortune-teller," Galway demurred.

"Try Mama Id," English snapped.

English's suggested plan would not lead directly to Christine, Galway realized. Ecstasy deferred was pleasure prolonged, but permanent deferment caused a stone ache, so he measured his words carefully as he spoke. "There's one assurance I need from you, Bob. If I save your tail, will you save mine?"

English paused before answering—a good sign—and said, "You can consider my assurance on that score as a contract signed and notarized by a third person."

Even so, it was the assurance that a large death benefit brought a dying policyholder, for Galway had been elected to martyrdom. It took bravery to risk one's life, but it demanded a vastly different brand of courage to stick one's neck in a noose and trip the gallows' trap.

Slowly, he snubbed his unlit cigarette against the log and English rasped, "G.I. that cigarette."

As he slowly tore the cigarette into shreds, Galway realized that BAC could never project this strategy unless the machine was psychotic, and the plan should blow the cover on Doctor Knowles, but no plan was better than the men who implemented it, and English often overlooked obvious details.

"The cigarette isn't lighted," Galway said.

"Oh . . ." English seemed embarrassed. "Let's get back."

As the two men rose, Galway asked, "Why did you put a night latch on my door?"

"Qualified help is hard to come by in this place,"

English said. "Mrs. Butterfield's on loan from Corona. She killed her husband with a butcher's knife one night in a jealous rage because he overtipped a waitress. So don't get cozy with that woman."

To save the children was Galway's first concern, but as a maddening June inched toward July he found that the sonic probes controlled only their musculature. As a neurosurgeon in the field of psychiatry, he had the confounded confusion of a man lost in the streets of a familiar city. Theories of traumatic guilt offered him no insights into the withdrawal of children who had not yet emerged from innocence, and the rules of stimulus and response were mocked by eyes that looked indifferently into his each morning in the classroom and were, eventually, staring at him in his sleep. Other than Little Mac's malnutrition and a male hormone deficiency in Christine's blood chemistry, they were organically sound, he knew, for he gave them a physical examination each Thursday. Only once during June did he get a flicker of an EEG variation.

The EEG variation occurred during an audio-visual lecture on geography when, in line with English's directive, he was trying to educate their higher nervous centers. A photographic plane swept low over the peaks of the Grand Tetons and Christine's needle flickered. But her reading held steady over Fujiyama and failed to register on a rerun over the Grand Tetons. He had to dismiss the reading as nonsignificant.

From the outset, he had discontinued his practice of kissing the younger children good night. His memory of Hugo kicking the dummy made him dubious of father-images, and, once the children were wired for the bed, kissing them was like kissing an electric fixture. Still, he retained the electro-therapy although dream stimulation seemed merely to alert their apathy earlier. He gave Christine shots for her hormone imbalance, and he flooded their thalami with pleasure whenever he announced a new lecture subject though only his animation was enhanced.

Among his supporting sciences, musico-psychiatry was conspicuously absent. Lovestone reported that he was making "Christine in C-Major" the magnum opus of his musical career. With some woodwinds, here, and a brass section, there, Christine's brain-wave patterns were being expanded into a symphonic composition played by an 88-piece orchestra.

After morning classes, lunch, and a nap, the patients were usually taken for a walk by the nurse. Once Galway hoisted Christine to the back of the mare, a Tennessee walking horse, and led the horse around the corral. Then, abstractedly, she patted the horse's neck, but she couldn't relate to the rest of the animal.

One bright spot in the clinical bleakness was Little Mac, who was gaining weight and learning to spell the pet name Mrs. Butterfield had given him—spelling it M-A-K—with alphabet blocks. Galway attempted to bring social pressure to bear on Mac's toilet training by requiring that he come to class in diapers. Mrs. Butterfield added to his image as a baby by giving him a cowboy hat. Sublimely indifferent to his peer group, Little Mac would hitch up his diapers and swagger into class to potty when he pleased. He became so attached to the hat that he disproved Lovestone's "yawning vagina" theory of toilet training, Galway decided, unless the Freudian claimed that the boy's primary erogenic zone was fixated on top of his head.

As June neared its end, Galway came to sense variations in the detachment of his patients. Paul's brow seemed furrowed perpetually over some insoluble problem. Little Mac had the normal self-engrossment of a two-year-old. Christine had a regal aloofness epitomized by the way she walked, but Katie's silence held a sadness that touched him most strongly.

After dinner, Galway gathered his family in the living room for a period that had originally been planned as an exercise in togetherness, but which fell apart when each patient followed his solitary or compulsive bent. Paul went alone to the Louis XIV desk

in the corner to sit, chin in hand, and ponder his problem. Christine read medieval literature. Mac played with blocks at the feet of Mrs. Butterfield, who knitted or reread Doctor Spock. Galway, who always shared dinner and the children's hour, took to reading Freud. To an untutored eye, the scene in the living room might have come from a novel by Gals-worthy, but Galway, in growing awareness, saw it as something from Faulkner.

It was Katie's practice, during the family period, to turn off all the lamps in her vicinity and sit cross-legged on the floor to watch a child's program, Uncle Giraffey, on television. Drawn by her sadness, Galway joined her, at times. It pained him to watch her face, shadowed by the television's flickering light, for when the studio audience laughed in glee she seemed to peer into the tube as if she sought for something she had lost. Her father? Galway wondered, recalling her case history. Often he had appeared to her on the screen, perhaps even after he had died, for he had been a special commentator, not a spot-news reporter.

It occurred to him that she might not have accepted her father's death. If so, she might consider herself rejected by her still-living father and thus, to her childish imagination, guilty of some heinous crime against him. Since Katie had learned to read and write by watching television, it was the one means of com-munication open to her. The theory seemed at once both far-fetched and too simple, but he called English and asked if he could have Uncle Giraffey personally announce to Katie that her father was dead.

English agreed to use HEW's influence to get the broadcast performed as a public service, but it would take a few days, he warned Galway.

While watching with Katie, Galway had found the children's cartoons so inane he decided to show them some fairy tales, those delightful or shivery emotion expanders he remembered from childhood. The pro-curement office provided him with "Red Riding-Hood" and "Sleeping Beauty" but when he previewed the 3D,

full-color animations to dub in a feeling line on the emotions stimulator he found them as insipid as Uncle Giraffey's offerings. "Red Riding-Hood" was a literal as well as logical horror tale. Instead of eating the girl in the wood, the wolf ran ahead to set up an elaborate hoax which entailed ruining his appetite on the stringy flesh of Grandmother.

In the cutting room, Galway tightened the story line to a straight wolf-sees-girl, wolf-eats-girl melodrama, editing Grandmother out entirely. She interfered with the chase and the children could assume she was away at the supermarket. He cut the rescue scene, for no woodchopper would answer a stranger's cry for help, and he tacked on the wolf's chops-licking scene at the end to signify the death of Red Riding-Hood, fitting end for a cretin who couldn't tell a wolf from her grandmother.

His version had more punch than the original. At the console with the emotions stimulator set on "Low," he programmed a feeling line from apprehension through diffuse and acute anxiety and peaking at terror when the wolf lunged. "Sleeping Beauty" was vapid beyond his aid, so he programmed it from sweet sadness through joy, which dwindled off on a sine curve after Prince Charming had kissed and awakened the sleeper.

On the morning of July 2, he lectured the class briefly on the relation of fairy tales to folklore, legend, and myth. Then he darkened the room, affixed his headset, set the stimulator on "High," and commenced the showing with "Red Riding-Hood." When the heroine skipped onto the screen, it struck Galway that the jerkiness of her movements he had assumed to be a fault of the animation actually reflected the little girl's inner fears, for the forest was dark and sinister and the tree limbs seemed to clutch at her as she passed. When the wolf slunk into view, eyes yellow, fangs bared, he half shuddered. But he understood why it cut across to await the girl in her grandmother's house. It didn't like meat tainted by adren-

aline. Once Red Riding-Hood felt safe, her flesh would again be sweet.

Galway sat frozen during the preprandial conversation. Now it was obvious to him that Red Riding-Hood was forcing herself to believe the beast under the covers was her grandmother. Like every mortal, she was avoiding the face of death until the last flicker of hope was gone. Then the wolf lunged, and the last flicker vanished.

He saw the fangs curving from the red maw, saw the saliva spume, and he threw up his arm to shield his eyes from the sight. Blessedly, the projector ceased and the lights came on.

Revolving the desk slowly back to face the class, he glanced at the EEG recordings. They were holding steady on a neutral node and their trailing recordings rose and fell in arcs that could have been halved precisely by a straight-edge.

A rage struck him at the sight and he looked up, almost shouting, "Where were you zombies when the teeth were tearing her flesh? Where are you now as she boils in digestive juices?"

The eyes were unfeeling.

"I'll make you feel," he screamed, and, with the stimulator still set on "High," he brought his fist down on the pain button. A blob of molten iron crashed through his stomach wall, splattered against his spine, and seared through his entrails. Slammed back into his seat, Galway saw Paul double forward, Katie clutch her stomach, and Christine clutch the baby.

Groping back to a sitting position, Galway leaned forward and pushed the pleasure button. Mingled with his memory of pain, the pleasure created acute remorse. Tears swelled in his eyes.

"Dear children, forgive me. . . ."

They were looking at him, not through him, with expressions on their faces. Paul was angry and incredulous. Katie seemed compassionate, even stretching her hand toward him. Continuing to shield Little

Mac, whose face was screwed from beginning tears, Christine was indignant.

"Out of my love for you, I've caused you pain."

Dabbing his tears, he noticed that each EEG had recorded and was still recording active though dwindling variations. Returning his gaze to the children, he saw Paul straightening, his eyes relenting and growing indifferent. He was losing Kate, too, but Christine still guarded Mac although her waves were dwindling toward a neutral node.

"Christine, the child is safe. I wouldn't harm a hair on his head, any more than I would harm that chestnut glory that floats above your regal brow. Fairest one . . ."

He was never to discover if the swelling eloquence in his voice would have won her over. Nudged by an unmistakable source of orange juice, Little Mac tilted back his Stetson and started to dig. In disgust or reprovingly, Christine placed the errant hands firmly back into their lap, squared the hat, and turned back to the instructor.

For the second time, her brain wave was agitated.

Removing his headgear, Galway considered the situation. Pain had caused these reactions, and he had vowed not to use the torture capabilities of the device. But the vow had been a month past, almost a third of his available time, and a fireman would never hesitate to chop down a door when a house was burning. . . .

Muffled inside his desk, his phone rang. Galway lifted it out and answered it.

"Christine's song is finished," Lovestone said.

"About time, Claude," Galway said jovially.

"Research," Lovestone explained. "There's a medieval quality to her brain waves that modern instruments couldn't reproduce. The indices aren't clear, but she may not even be schizoid. I'd like to run a musical diagnosis on the girl, Jim."

Lovestone's insight surprised Galway, for the psychiatrist had not been told of Christine's interest in medievalism. Pondering the thought, Galway remem-

bered, also, that he had received no report on his diversionary tactics with the behavior computer.

"Since tomorrow's Christine's birthday, join us for dinner tonight, and present her the present personally."

"I'll do that. . . . If my hunch is right, she's got a collector's item among psychoses—a very rare malady."

Hanging up, Galway swung his desk back to the screen and scanned the back line on Christine's EEG. Where he had mentioned her birthday, a faint but marked deviation showed.

As the room darkened and the projector began to whirr, Galway did not don his headgear for the showing of "Sleeping Beauty" to keep his mind clear while he considered policy. He had avoided pain therapy purely from his own squeamishness, that sympathy which had cost him his skills as a surgeon, but, if these patients felt so terribly guilty, perhaps they wished to be punished. Certainly feedback from pain had accomplished more in minutes than pleasure had done in a month.

To pinpoint the source of their guilt was the problem. Then, if he had the guts, he could blast their traumas with the countertrauma of pain, bring Pavlov to Freud's support. . . .

Paul Gordon's EEG was jumping off the chart.

Glancing backward through the gloom, he saw Paul seated rigidly as usual, his eyes blank, but his hand was scribbling on his writing pad. On the screen, Prince Charming was breaking off the long kiss that would awaken Sleeping Beauty.

And Paul's EEG was leveling off.

When the lights came on, Galway rang for Mrs. Butterfield to come for Mac, whose diaper needed changing, and dismissed the others. As the older children filed out, he went to Paul's desk and tore off the writing sheet. In two columns as precise as a bookkeeper's ledger, the boy had repeated:

$$2 + 1 = 1$$

When the nurse came for Mac, Galway showed her the columns.

"Two plus one equals three," she said.

"Not according to Paul Gordon."

"Poor boy, and his mother taught arithmetic."

"We were watching a fairy tale," Galway said, "and he grew agitated when he saw Prince Charming kiss Sleeping Beauty."

"A boy his age shouldn't think of things like that."

And a boy his age shouldn't work arithmetic problems during a love scene, Galway thought. The love scene had merely triggered Paul's response. But why a love scene?

Mulling over the problem, he stood for a moment as Mrs. Butterfield hoisted Mac to her hip and started from the room. He called her.

"Yes, Doctor."

"Tomorrow, send Mac to class in Levi's. I'm giving up the toilet training. I'm going to housebreak him."

A diaper rash for number one, a small corncob for number two, should do the job, he decided. As instructor, he would have to share the pain, but the results would be worth it. Still, it might grow uncomfortable, lecturing a class while seated on a vertical corncob, however small.

Why a love scene?

Returning to his office, Galway reviewed the boy's case history, his mind a behavior computer running backward. Suddenly, his pace quickened with an idea. He entered the office and went straight to the file cabinet, thumbing through the pages of Paul's history. Galway found what he suspected.

Still standing, he lifted the telephone and called procurement. "This is Doctor Galway. Send to my clinic, right away, the raunchiest stag movie you've got."

# chapter 9 .

Moving with an assurance he hadn't felt for weeks, his mind unburdened of nuances, Galway went to the stable. Nearing the building, he called, "Tambola, come talk."

Erect and proud, despite his four-foot height, the Bushman emerged from the stable wearing only a breech clout and wristwatch. Galway squatted as the little man approached. With equal politeness, Tambola hunkered before Galway.

"Tam, saddle the mare at two, to take Christine for a ride. Walk her down to the lake, then leave her to ride home alone."

"Chrissy ride back. She like horse."

"Good," Galway said, "I want to give her the horse as a birthday gift tomorrow."

Briefly, he outlined the method for delivering the horse to the classroom window. Slapping his haunch to signify the end of the conference, Galway rose and walked back to the house.

If his theory held, Paul Gordon would not be sick much longer. All the boy needed was to learn a few lessons, but Galway dreaded the teaching. Both he and Paul might die in the catechism.

After lunch and after he had edited the humor from the sex film, Galway gave instructions to the nurse. "Get Christine into slacks and take her to the stable. Put Katie in front of the television set and close the door to the living room. Put Mac to bed and let him take a nap. Then bring Paul to me."

In his office, he checked the directory in his technical library and found the volume he was looking for, an army technical manual, classified "Top Secret," which

testified to the foresight of either English or BAC. Then he sat at his desk, reviewing *Torture, Its Methods and Application in Interrogational Procedures.*

At two-fifteen, Mrs. Butterfield brought Paul to him.

"Mrs. Butterfield, I wish to be alone in the classroom with Paul for a few minutes. No matter what you hear, don't enter the room until I call you."

Galway took his black bag and the boy into the classroom and shut the door. Without being told, the boy went to his desk and started to put on his headharness.

"Never mind the harness, Paul. We're just watching a movie, you and I. One that any red-blooded American boy your age would give up his ballgame to see."

The movie detailed an adventure of Peter Alcock, a young man so thrifty he cheated at strip poker. Technically Galway considered it well done, although the cameraman had gotten a little too much red in the flesh tones, and the supporting actress, Lucy Tutti, brought a certain professionalism to her role. The plot concerned a strip-poker game the young lady had hit upon after her date had complained of the high cost of movies and the busfare to get to them.

Seated at Katie's desk, Galway studied the boy's face as Paul watched the screen. His eyes remained indifferent, but when the girl had lost all but her brassiere, beads of moisture appeared on Paul's forehead. When Lucy lost her bra, Paul recoiled in horror, but his eyes stayed on the screen.

After a quick double-shuffle by Peter, Lucy lost and anted up the whole pot, on the tabletop. When Peter leaped to claim his prize, Paul, watching, began to scream, "Two plus one equals one. . . . Two plus one equals one."

At the pause between equations, Galway shouted, "Three."

As their voices mounted, the din drowned out the grunts and moans from the screen, but Galway's inexorable "Three!" punctuated the screamed equations from the boy.

Then it was over, the lights came on, and Paul Gordon, a quivering mass of plaintiveness, slumped in his chair, whimpering.

Galway got up and walked to the door. Outside, with alarm showing on her features, Mrs. Butterfield was hovering. "Will you step inside, please," Galway requested.

Entering, she cast an apprehensive glance at the boy. "What happened to Paul?"

"He's been tried and found guilty of murdering his mother by letting himself be born. His mother died in childbirth and the last request of his dying father was, 'Get that big-headed bastard out of my room.' As long as Paul admits his guilt, he must be punished. I want you present to witness his punishment."

"That wasn't nice of Paul," she said.

From the expression on her face, he knew she was not aware of the nuances of his explanation, but her function as a nurse was to follow his instructions. At the moment, she wasn't functioning too well. As he took an ampoule of antishock serum from his case and loaded a hypodermic needle, she seemed terrified, and her relief, as he handed it to her plunger end first, was apparent.

"If Paul faints, give him half the serum in his forearm. If I faint, give me the other half."

Galway adjusted the head-harness on the boy, then went to his desk and put on his own harness. He released the marker on the punishment dial and set it to "Cheek, slap." Paul's head was slumped, but he had ceased whimpering. Galway pushed the red button.

Galway almost heard the crack of a hand across his cheek. Before him, Paul snapped his head up, looking toward Galway in wonderment. With his own cheek smarting from the force of the blow, Galway said to the boy, "To atone for your sins, Paul, you are hereby sentenced to answer 'Three' to the question 'What is two plus one?' Now we commence. . . . What is two plus one?"

Hostile and stubborn, Paul sat mute. Galway dialed "Stomach, fist blow" and pressed the button.

The fist of a heavyweight boxer slammed in his stomach, doubling him forward and leaving him gasping for breath. Galway shook his head, straightened slowly, and croaked, "Answer me. . . . Two plus one?"

"One! One! One!"

Despite his pain, Galway felt a glow of pride in the boy who clung so stubbornly to his guilt, and he felt admiration for this incredibly sophisticated machine. But the machine had limitations. Torture was supposed to persuade, not to kill. This device could cause death, psychosomatic, perhaps, but nonetheless final. His reason told him that the blows he and Paul had suffered were imagined, but his imagination told him they were real.

Now he studied the dial carefully, knowing that he might succumb to the cure before Paul's guilt succumbed.

Because Galway was using his left hand to manipulate the dial and button, he put his right index finger on a chopping block. He turned the dial to "Right index finger—ax severance."

"Paul, what is two plus one?"

"One!" The boy spat the answer.

The ax swished down.

His fist doubled of its own accord. Pain from the severed finger threw his right arm behind him with such force he feared the elbow might have snapped. Across from him, Paul Gordon was clutching his index finger and yowling in pain, "Two plus one equal one!"

Galway was weak from pain and weakening faster from the shock of his severed finger. Now, his reason added a new dimension to the pain, for though the severed finger was imagined, the arm cramp was real and the shock was real. Physiological changes were taking place in his body, and the younger, more resilient boy might outlast him. Paul was bent over his finger, mumbling his false equation, but his muscles were not cramped.

Galway had suffered too much to quit. He would use his shock as a shield against further pain, play his weakness against the boy's incredible strength of guilt, and apply the clincher. Forcing his eyes to focus, he turned the dial to "Left testicle—live cigarette burn."

"Two plus one?" His voice sounded faint and far away.

"One! One! One!"

Galway pressed the button.

A red-hot poker touched his scrotum and the world dissolved in a red flare of agony. Faintly through the haze he heard a childish treble squeaking, "Three! Three! Three!"

From somewhere close by, he heard Mrs. Butterfield saying, "Paul didn't faint, Doctor, so I gave it all to you."

He looked around him and the nurse was withdrawing the needle from his arm. "Thank you, Mrs. Butterfield."

He sat up, placed the dial on neutral, locked the switch, and asked, "Paul, what is two plus one?"

"Three, Doctor Jim. Three. Three. Three."

"Mrs. Butterfield, I think Paul is cured. He'll stay withdrawn for a little while, because he can't kick the habits of a lifetime in a day. Will you notify the housekeeper we're having a guest for dinner? And leave the boy with me."

"I must say, Doctor, you have strange methods. But do you think it's safe, letting Christine ride off alone into the woods with that nasty little man?"

"Quite safe."

"I just hope you're right." There was a silent *Hmmph* in her voice as she stalked from the room, which told him that there were some things mothers knew best.

Galway got up and walked over to the boy, swinging his left leg to minimize the chafing of his blister by his trousers lining.

He stopped and placed his hand on the boy's shoulder. "Forget it, son. Just think of it as a tough

arithmetic problem. You had nothing to do with your mother's death."

"It was a crazy thing to think, Doctor Jim, but I couldn't throw it," the boy said. "I guess Dad was a tough old geezer like you."

"We have to be tough, son. It's a rough world. Come to my office. I've got some ointment for that blister."

Man and boy, they hobbled from the classroom, swinging their left legs. Galway kept his arm around Paul's shoulder, as much to use the boy for support as to comfort him.

Bearing Christine's long-playing stereophonic, high-fidelity record in a gaudy wrapping, Lovestone came to dinner wearing the bemused detachment Galway now felt he had acquired in his long meanderings through the psychotic wards of various hospitals. During dinner he chatted easily and, at first, attempted to draw Mrs. Butterfield into the conversation.

"A well-behaved group, ma'am. They could be Jo's children in *Little Women*."

"I don't know him, but they're nice."

Thereafter, Lovestone addressed himself to Galway, discussing theories on childhood psychoses like a military scholar discussing Lee's Gettysburg Campaign. As an embattled recruit in the psychiatric trenches, Galway would have preferred tips on bayonet fighting, and he feared to discuss his yet unapparent success with Paul Gordon lest the Freudian brand him a Pavlovian.

Still, after dessert, he unwittingly irked his guest by remarking that crippling guilt feelings in comparatively guiltless children seemed unjust.

"Then your sense of justice is unjust," Lovestone said. "Guilt feelings made this country great. Think of the Pilgram Fathers, the church, the courts, our benevolent and philanthropic institutions. Guilt is the spur to our talents. Even now I feel guilty for having spent merely a month orchestrating Christine's brain

waves. Such form, even without content, merits a maximum effort."

"Then you've fallen under the spell of our Lilith?"

"Not Lilith, Jim. Lilith was fabled. Christine's beauty is legendary, more along the lines of a Guinevere, or Isolde."

"Judging from her reading, she is a medievalist," Galway affirmed.

"It follows." Lovestone was suddenly excited, shoving back his chair, his coffee forgotten. "She's got to hear my 'Medieval Moonlight Suite,' right now. She might clarify a few ideas for me. If I'm right, she has a rare jewel of a psychosis. . . . Take me to your record player, Jim. Nurse, bring the children."

The theoretician had become a man of action. Rising, he took the package from the buffet, slitting open an end.

As they walked across the living room, Lovestone said, "Keep in mind, Jim, that this is Christine's composition, so try to visualize the scenes as she imagined them. On the clarity of your imagination depends the quality of your insight into her thought processes. You can't afford a sense of justice in this business, but you've got to have empathy."

They had reached the hi-fi set and Lovestone flipped the record in his hand, seeking the correct band. Behind them, Mrs. Butterfield filed in with the children.

"'Medieval Moonlight' opens with a tournament in the afternoon. For the joust of champions, I use a sort of Middle Ages bolero called a saraband, and there's the tune wherewith to catch the fancy of the queen. Ever hear of a trance dance?"

"No. But why do you call it 'Medieval Moonlight' if it happens in the afternoon?"

"The jousting is the prelude to the third movement where the champion claims the lady in her chamber. There, you won't have any trouble visualizing the details. Strangely, a modern note kept recurring in the finale, like a hip-flick in a samba."

But the music was beginning. Faint and far away, tinkles skirled from the weefer and woofer, growing nearer and louder, strung together on a plaintive hooting like mismatched beads on a weak thread and looped around and around.

"That's a harlequin tumbling toward the queen's pavilion. The wind instrument you hear is my recorder."

A descant of sharper tinkles drowned the recorder.

"Player piano?" Galway asked.

"Clavichord, registering applause for the tumbler."

"What's that sound between a banjo's plunk and a guitar's twang?"

"A dulcimer, a sort of trapezoid zither, depicting the excited hum of voices before the jousters enter the arena."

Strangely, the music was throwing pictures on Galway's mind. Through his hearing, he could see, before a moated castle, a greensward bedecked with pavilions, and pennants fluttering above the grange. Away from the set, in the optimum hearing area, Mrs. Butterfield was aligning the children.

"Listen," Lovestone whispered, "the massed entrance of the knights."

A cymbal clanged, a clarion called, the recorder hooted more urgently, kettle-drum hooves thudded as piccolos neighed in a circling thunder of music. Inside the larger circle, a stringed instrument revolved with a rising tension.

"The knights are circling in review," Lovestone explained, "and the lutes are the waving scarves of ladies while the lords are laying bets."

"Where's that saraband?"

"It comes during the main event, but don't get impatient. I telescope the preliminaries. They're beginning now."

Needing no further interpretation, Galway succumbed to the imagery of music, flowing faster, eddying around his ears in the clash of combat. Clarions

challenged, stereophonic kettle drums thundered toward each other to clash in the cymbal clang of armor as a piccolo circled around and around.

Suddenly, a swift diminuendo drifted into a flute's lone quavering, and the pause seemed sinister.

"Main event coming up," Lovestone said. "The lists of the champions, bared lances and no boons asked."

"Who's jousting?"

"Guy de Rois of Burgundy against the White Knight of York. Watch the Frenchman. He's a wily bastard."

Wilder grew the music. Mutes were off the clarions, the kettle drums beat a deeper note, and two piccolos neighed, first to the left and then to the right.

Galway could feel the Yorkist heft a lance of seasoned oak, ten pounds heavier than standard, and its tip of Coventry steel glittered beyond an unwavering blazon. He was a power jouster, scorning French finesse, and beneath him a roan stallion pawed and snorted.

In the center of the arena, the squires of the combatants touched trumpets, one emblazoned with a red *fleur de lis*, the other with the white rose of York. They about-faced, raised their trumpets, and a hush fell over the crowd.

High and clear, the squires blew the call to combat, and scattered for cover. The scarlet lily of Burgundy thundered forward to meet the thundering rose of York.

"By the quivering clit of my Aunt Brit," Lovestone breathed. "It's working."

Tension in Lovestone's voice tore Galway from the conflict and he looked across to see Christine moving forward, coming out of the lineup. Her old serenity still lay in her eyes, but there was a fresh abandon to her hips as her feet moved to the beat of the saraband. She stopped, stomped, slapped hands to thighs and slid them over the curve of her spine. Her head turned sideways, her eyes down, in haughty yet sensual disdain. Then her arms bent behind her as she pirou-

etted, slowly, then faster, following the swirl of the music, her thighs rippling.

Christine danced, squarely between the charging knights.

Possessed by angels of air, she cast off the churlish bonds of weight and spun as lightly as a falling leaf. Fluttering aside from the thrust of the lily, she arched to meet the low-aimed lance of the rose, which spun her in her gyre, hips, shoulders, breasts quivering to the inlooping ecstasy of the lance, and arching again to prolong the outdrawing as she swirled for the next encounter.

Behind her, the background faded and she danced alone in time and space, becoming Lilith, Eve, Helen, Deirdre, Isolde, and Isadora Duncan, becoming all myths, fables, legends, and fact, all graces and all desire. Then the music dwindled across the bridge of a lorn lute, and time and space spun back. From the dip of a deep curtsy, she rose, serene and indifferent as of old, and walked back to her place in the line.

"Stop the music, Claude. I can't bear to hear the sexy part."

"That girl's mother was a Spanish gypsy," Lovestone remarked as he turned to the machine.

"Her mother was the wife of a Tennessee preacher," Galway said as behind them the children clapped woodenly at the nurse's command and split apart. Paul was heading back to his corner, Galway noticed.

"Not the mother I'm talking about," said Lovestone, sliding the record back into the package. "What you saw was a trance dance." He slid the record into a rack. "Pour me a double scotch, Jim, and have one yourself. You'll need it."

At the liquor cabinet, Galway remarked, "Then her dancing has psychiatric significance."

"No. Diagnostic significance. She's not psychotic in the accepted sense because there's a voluntary element in her withdrawal. Inside her psychosis, I suspect that her ego's intact, and her libido's out of this world."

As he stirred their drinks, Galway asked, "Then her higher nervous centers must function rationally?"

"Since she permits no distractions, her imagination is probably stronger than ours, overpowering really. You got a whiff of it in her music."

Galway handed Lovestone his drink and ushered him to a seat. Christine had seated herself and was reading. The lamplight on her hair stirred him as much as her music.

"She's reading *Beowulf*," he said to Lovestone.

"For her that's a modern novel."

"How can you tell all this from music?"

"I can illustrate," Lovestone said, seating himself on a divan across the coffeetable from Galway. He set down his drink and pulled a recorder from his coat pocket.

"The basic pattern of a psychosis," Lovestone said, "runs along an anxiety staccato, like this." He trilled a few notes, off key and weirdly dissonant. "In a depressed state, a manic depressive sounds like this. . . ." The pipe sounded a *hoo-hoo-tweet-hoo*. "But in an agitated state, he develops a cyclothemic allegro, thusly." He blew a *tweet-tweet-hoo, tweet-tweet-hoo.*

Facing Galway, Lovestone could not see Paul Gordon rise and come forward, drawn toward the piping. Half across the room, the boy paused, and looked around him, confused, like an awakened sleepwalker.

"In Christine, I found a strong element of nostalgia, a longing for the lost, indicative of melancholy, and melancholy is the neurotic expression of a sound mind. Here was my first clue."

Out of his pipe the sounds flowed circuitously, interminable, beckoning. They seemed to whisper, "Follow, follow," creating in Galway a vague longing to crawl into Christine's dementia and roll himself into a fetal ball around her. But the boy was moving forward again, like an ambling pad.

"Keep playing, Claude," Galway whispered. "You've got a bite."

Without a false note, the psychiatrist merged the rhythms of melancholy into the lilting notes of "Camptown Races." The Pied Piper of Bellevue was living up to his name. Oblivious to all but the music, Paul came closer, circling around the divan on which Lovestone sat. Lovestone glanced up and riffled into "Oh, Susanna."

Paul looked down, smiling.

Quietly, Galway rose and went to the shelves to get *Songs for Pickin' and Singin'*. He opened the book and stood with his arm around Paul's shoulder, as Lovestone brought the song to a halt and ran up and down the scale.

Finished, he handed the recorder to Paul. "You can have this, son. Learn it, and get a flute. Learn the flute and get a trumpet. Learn the trumpet and you're right up there with the Angel Gabriel."

"Thank you," Paul said, accepting the recorder.

Galway held the open book before him, saying, "Paul, music is a mathematical progression and a mathematician like you. . . ."

"I can read music, Doctor Jim," Paul interrupted, taking the book. He closed it under his arm and the two men watched as he walked slowly back to his corner, blowing high and blowing low. They listened as he settled at the desk to open the book and they heard, halting but unmistakable, the strains of "Hullabaloo Belay."

"His tempo's off," Lovestone complained.

"Nevertheless, it's an incredible breakthrough."

"My fastest ever," Lovestone said, "but they weren't his brain waves." He sounded aggrieved. "Those were Christine's brain waves."

"Perhaps there are similar patterns in both psychoses," Galway suggested.

"Only because the musical scale is limited," Lovestone demurred. "Christine's malady is so rare its name hasn't even been translated into Latin yet."

Sensing that he was in the presence of a psycho-

logical insight, Galway alerted. "Translated from what?"

"From the German. The German name is *tiefzeit-verloren*, which translates, liberally, as 'lost in the depths of time.'"

"What's the prognosis?"

"From critical to hopeless. There's never been a known recovery from *tiefzeitverloren*. But, then, the etiology is not fully charted since the incidence of the disease is so rare. At times, patients have been known to open a casement window and look out, but the portcullis is always closed. . . . Mind you, Jim, she's not stranded on the shoals of puberty. She's a fully ripened female with a superb libido. But her sense of guilt is so vast it has scourged her ego outside of herself into the abyss of time."

Conviction in Lovestone's voice, coupled with Galway's knowledge of Christine's id, gave Galway his first sickening intimations of failure. It had been easy to pinpoint and blast out Paul Gordon's guilt, but Christine might be beyond the range of pain's artillery.

"So there's no way to break her shell?"

"Through craft or guile, you might wangle an invitation to look in, but you'd never find the entrance alone. Not by analysis surely. You can't analyze a mute."

"She reacted to the music."

"Wrong. Her body reacted. Christine herself was dancing in another place, at another time."

"Too bad," Galway said, thinking. There was an element to the trance dance that suggested an approach Lovestone was overlooking. "How are you doing with Milbank Pomeroy?"

"The bastard doesn't appreciate music."

"Why not try country-and-western? He was a truck-driver . . . How are you coming with Susan?"

"Often. We have a date, Saturday night, to go hear Mama Id. Susan's frivolity amuses me, but I'm still looking for the solid woman underneath."

"Keep looking, Claude. It's there."

All the reports were in, and Galway relaxed, sipping his drink. "By the way, Claude, who won the joust?"

"The Yorkist. He was a Rocky Marciano-type jouster who wore the Burgundian down with nothing but brute strength."

Galway found a peculiar consolation in the answer. Lovestone was wrong about the Yorkist, who had cunning as well as strength, so the psychiatrist could be wrong in his pessimistic prognosis of Christine's illness.

Tomorrow he would check out the area Lovestone had overlooked, trance writing.

# chapter 10 .

In the classroom next morning, Galway put an apple in his desk for the horse and set up a sound-actuated color caster to project a visual accompaniment to "Christine in C-Major." He sought a hypnotic distraction for Christine's superficial awareness, hopefully to induce her trance writing, and to tap Paul Gordon's subconscious. From Paul he sought a non-torture-motivated response, fearing that the sanity committee might judge the boy merely conditioned to sanity and, willy-nilly, deposit him in the organ bank to protest Galway's Pavlovian methods.

After his class entered and was seated, Galway announced that Christine's song would be played in its entirety. Any comments, free-form drawings, even doodlings, found on a student's writing pad after the recital would entitle the student to an extra scoop of ice cream at Christine's birthday party during the lunch period. He darkened the room and started the strobe lights.

In the prelude, "Winter of the Mind," Lovestone apparently found Christine's beginning response to Galway's libidinal probe and translated it into a sprightly passage wherein Yule logs crackled on the castle hearth and clinking flagons of sack and mead were hoisted around.

Galway hoped that a playback of Christine's psychosis might prompt her into trance doodling, but when "Winter" bridged into "Springtime," with lambs frolicking among green shoots and birds twittering, Katie's EEG was activated. Here was a bonus he had not expected, and when he glanced through the gloom, he saw she was using a color crayon on her pad.

Paul started behind Katie, but his response continued after hers had died. Christine remained frozen during the prelude and first three movements, but he expected no response from her until the saraband commenced, if then.

When the player turned the record over for the second half, the light on the screen flared white and in its reflection Galway saw a stain spreading on Little Mac's Levi's. Galway cut Mac and himself into the punishment circuit and started the diaper rash as the notes of "Summertime" came rippling through the room and gay colors began to flash on the screen. Galway had been listening with growing expectation, but the itching and burning on his bottom dampened his enthusiasm.

In a passage called "Following the Hounds," vivid with long halloos, tally-hos, baying dogs, and the thundering hooves of a stag, Galway caught an odor and inserted the corncob.

This punishment was a complete distraction. As the hounds circled the stag at bay, Galway shifted from one cheek to the other, unmindful of the excitement.

When the prelude to "Medieval Moonlight" began, Mac started to whimper, and Galway threw in the towel. With the crucial part of the composition coming up, he could not permit Christine to be distracted by a bawling baby.

Galway eased around and opened the telephone drawer. Softly he spoke into the phone, "Come and get the stinkpot, Mrs. Butterfield. Clean his behind and bring him back."

He waited until Mrs. Butterfield entered and took the child before he cut the circuit, but the memory still throbbed. He eased back around to the screen and found an alexin for his pain waiting over the bridge that led from the tournament to hanky-panky in the castle.

By right of conquest, the Yorkist claimed the Burgundian's lady, and the widow was willing.

Lovestone's chamber music was masterful. The

knight's chase was more eager than the previous chase of the hounds, the eluding more adroit, but the Yorkist was an expert also in the lists of love. When the champion was mounted for the encounter, even the colors on the screen writhed together in ardor and exploded with the instruments in a crashing crescendo. Exhausted, Galway slumped in his seat, welcoming the diminishing throb of a duet on tap drums that died into a solo on a muted trumpet.

Recovering, he sat through the reprise at the coda with his eyes closed, and when the music died, he rose to collect the contributions. Christine's wave pattern was unchanged.

Paul was still writing.

Curious, Galway walked over and looked down as the boy tore off a sheet and continued writing. On the unlined paper, he was jotting down bar after bar of musical notes.

"What are you doing?"

"Rewriting the opening passage. I'm putting a little more rock in the rhythm."

"Good!"

He let Paul continue and turned to Katie's pad. She had outlined the figure of a man in yellow with a round body, a round head, and a very long neck. Galway noticed with satisfaction that the figure was smiling, its grin smeared in black crayon from ear to ear and well beyond.

"Lovely, Katie," Galway lied. "I want to show this to the class."

As he stooped to tear off the sheet, his eyes fell across her desk to Christine's pad. Somewhere between the corncob and the orgy, Christine had responded. He stepped around Katie's desk and tore off the sheet. In pointed Gothic script, she had written two eight-line stanzas of a poem followed by a one-line *envoi* at the bottom. If Lovestone's diagnosis had been correct, he held in his hand a poem with historical significance, literally a missive from the Middle Ages.

"Children, I'm very proud," he announced as he

seated himself at his desk. "Paul is preparing a major composition to be played for us at a later date."

"But I'll need a guitar, Doctor Jim."

"You shall have it, Paul—but no amplifier. Now I want you all to look at Katie's artwork. You, too, Paul."

He held Katie's drawing up to view as Paul reluctantly laid down his pen. "This is Katie's impressionistic rendering of a man. Notice the deft strokes on the outline and the bold dots for the figure's eyes. The artist's sense of joy refused to be confined by conventions of space and form. She carries the smile on the face of the figure into and beyond its ears. This device reflects the contagion of joy so effectively that it makes me as happy as Uncle Giraffey."

A glow in Katie's eyes told him it was, indeed, her portrait of Uncle Giraffey. "This drawing is worth two scoops of ice cream, and I'm going to frame it."

With a fond last look he laid the drawing on the desk as Mrs. Butterfield entered with a spruced-up Mac. As the nurse seated Mac and hooked up his harness, Galway scanned Christine's offering.

## BLACK FLOWER

All the morning in the valley was a sweeping
toward the mountains,
When I first breathed in the sunlight.
All the evening in the valley was a crying for the
fountain,
When I breathed out the sunlight.
But the darkness did not spare them,
For a star came down to snare them
In a loop of burning gold.
And I was one day old.

Where they tore me from the gourd vine
Gushed a sap that looked like lambwine
From that fountain
On the mountain
To drown them all abed,
And they were one day dead.

Now I lay them down, the sheep,
I slay the gourd my soul to sleep.

Amen! Woe men! Whoah, man!

As poetry he thought it gibberish, but he couldn't be sure. Ezra Pound, he recalled, had won the Bollingen Prize with something similar. But it wasn't medieval. It was so unintelligible it had to be modern. It might even be a poem about marijuana or LSD.

Isolating himself with the mood stimulator and setting the impulse on "Low," he quickly orchestrated moods to fit the stanzas, knowing he would need assistance to give this poem any punch.

Since the first stanza seemed to be about birth, he recalled his own emotions at the birth of Mattie and gave it a low-keyed awe followed by a dash of elation. In the second stanza, he thought he found sadism in the tearing of the gourd vine, or the image could have symbolized the severing of an umbilical cord, for "lambwine" might indicate the blood of an innocent child.

Feeling by ear, he commenced the second stanza with nostalgia, which he diluted with increasing joy to end the invocation on an optimistic note.

"Christine has contributed a poem," he addressed the class, "describing the birth of a child in cosmic terms, certainly an appropriate subject on her birthday."

There seemed to be a glint of interest in Christine's eyes as he continued. "Now, I will read you 'Black Flower' by Christine Haskell."

He must have been mistaken, he thought, as he reached over and cut the children into the emotions circuit, setting the stimulator on "High." She was as apathetic as the others when he began to recite.

Almost immediately, Galway got a feedback from his cerebrum that clashed with the impulse stroking his thalamus. In the birth stanza, instead of awe rising to elation, he felt sadness sinking into grief, and his voice was susurrant. He choked on the poignancy of the

line "And I was one day old" as he staggered out of the first stanza and steadied himself on the childish banality of "Where they tore me from the gourd vine. . . ."

Gourd? Gored!

Nailed and bleeding, the gored limbs of the Crucified Christ.

Drowned in the Blood of the Lamb!

Inexorably, an entity detached from its source, his voice rolled over his listeners, blasphemous in its connotations, demoniac in nuances, rasping the travesty of the child's prayer, which invoked the death of gods, and ended hissingly on the final incantation of the diabolist's curse on all births.

Galway slumped back in his chair, shaken by the power of the poem. No missive from the Middle Ages this, but a bouquet from Hell that made Beaudelaire's *Flowers of Evil* smell like violets.

He forced himself to sit upright and speak: "For the lady endonjoned in her dark tower, I bring a gift."

He pressed a button and the curtains rose, and the Tennessee walker, prompted by the invisible Tam beneath the window ledge, stuck its head inside the classroom and looked around. Coming out from under his excess of sentiment, Galway was struck by its inquisitive intelligence, more than that on the face of any of his students.

"The horse is my gift to you, Christine. Happy birthday."

She looked at the horse. Then she stood up and walked, trancelike, toward the window. Mac, following class discipline, rose and walked behind her. Then Kate rose, of her own volition, and walked to the horse. Paul tore a sheet from his pad and continued scoring his music.

Half-irritated, Galway called, "Knock off the composition, Beethoven, and join the party."

"I've seen a horse," Paul said.

Nevertheless and reluctantly, the boy laid aside his pencil and walked toward the window, indifferent and

preoccupied. Paul resembled Lovestone, Galway thought, as he took the apple from his desk and arose to join the group.

Christine still moved in a trance, but she reached out to pat the horse's muzzle, then to stroke it, shoving Kate's hand aside when she attempted to join in the petting. Christine's pride of possession was too joyous to spring from the darkness he had read into her poem. He reached over and took her left hand, placing the apple in it. "Here, Christine. Feed your horse."

Christine looked down at the apple and then at Galway. She slapped his hand and threw the apple to the floor. Turning, she walked from the room. Mac turned and followed her.

She had not been dismissed, but Galway watched her go, followed by the faithful Mac, with a growing sense of loss. The only reason for her behavior his mind could grasp was paranoia. Perhaps she identified herself with Snow White and assumed the apple was poisoned.

Kate retrieved the apple and fed it to the horse, but Paul, watching Christine leave with Mac, turned to Galway and said, "Doctor Jim, Christine writes pretty good poetry, but there's something wrong with that girl."

Galway leaned out the window and said, "Take it back, Tam. The celebration's over. Paul, take Kate to the television set, and you can work on your music."

As Paul complied, Galway walked over and picked up the poem, reading it coldly, analytically, as he headed to his office. As a symbol, the gourd vine couldn't be umbilical. Unless she was a midwife in A.D. 900, Christine wouldn't know an umbilical cord from a placenta, but "gored limbs" for "gourd vines" still held up. It was an old trick of poets and aphasiacs to substitute words of similar sounds for antonyms of the word intended.

Settling at his desk, he felt he had to be right about the Crucifixion and the Blood of the Lamb. It was his

interpretation that was wrong. He was on to something.

She had been born of fundamentalist parents, and she had not withdrawn until she was eight. The first octet could be the first eight years of her life. The second octet would be the clue to her madness.

That would make the seventeenth line a prophecy.

Prophecy or not, the seventeenth line was prophetic, and the knowledge chilled him. Through the same weird chemistry that permitted him to talk to English with a half-phrase or a gesture, had he established a subliminal contact with the mind of a girl who was lost in time? If English had written the line, Galway would have taken it, unequivocally, as a suggestion that he desist from his plan of attack against the computer.

Now he wondered if this girl, with her disordered time sense, had not opened some window into the future and was pleading with him to spare her. Such rapport between their minds would indicate that he, too, was grafted to an alien branch of time and, by indirection, English. There would be three minds on earth capable of subliminal thought-transference, with the most sensitive of the three belonging to a psychotic. His pride resisted such logic.

The phone on his desk rang. He answered it, and the voice of Robert English shrived all thoughts of Christine from him. "Drop whatever you're doing, Jim, and hurry down to R & D. I've got Crossetti and Atterbury in the ice boxes, peeled and readied for the brain swap."

Wearing a surgeon's green smock, English met him in the lobby. A handshake too quick, a smile too fleeting, told Galway the older surgeon was apprehensive. Speaking above the whirr of his secretary's typewriter and completely indifferent to her presence, English said, "Just before Maria came in for her scalp job, I ordered her to give Susan temporary termination. If this thing fails, Maria will die happy."

Apprehensive himself, Galway was irritated by English's touching concern for the necrophiliac. If the thing worked, he was on the point of suggesting that English should shop around the farm for a younger body for himself, one with nonhardened arteries. But he stifled his pique and focused his mind on matters of greater urgency as English took his arm to steer him toward R & D.

"If this fails," Galway asked, "what's our cover story to HEW?"

"Susan was ordered temporarily terminated for biting a customer. . . ." English started to explain.

"Who?"

"You," English continued. "But Maria switched needles to a lethal dose because she was jealous of Susan over you. In turn, Maria was terminated by Doctor Knowles for willful and unauthorized termination."

"Did Knowles approve of *that* cover story?"

"Certainly. Knowles is here to get the brain-transplant program off the ground, not to protect non-CIA personnel."

An element in Galway's plans could jeopardize the cover story, but this was not the time to discuss it, he thought, as they entered the washroom to scrub up.

"How long have they been on ice?"

"Susan for three hours, Maria for two," English said.

Long enough, Galway thought, for both bodies to reach 38° F. and a minimal blood flow, a point in his favor. Cold blood had less odor than warm blood. Still, his rising anxiety prompted a request. "Would you smoke your pipe, Bob?"

"It's loaded and ready."

English had foresight. His mixture of Russian and Chinese tobacco, with a little dried ragweed—or so it seemed to Galway—would drown out the odor of blood.

"Both patients scalped?"

"Yes."

"And the dura mater?"

"Both heads have been swabbed with dilute sodium pentasulphide for forty-five minutes."

Good, Galway thought, dowsing his hands in alcohol and holding them before the air-dryer. Adhesion between the skull and the brain's linings should be completely broken. Any fragments clinging to the inside of a skull might cause rejection headaches and make Crossetti suspect she had undergone more than a scalp transfer.

English held a smock open and Galway slipped into it, weighing alternatives: Either BAC did not know what he was up to, or it did and Doctor Knowles had overridden its projection. HEW would overrule BAC to prove the feasibility of brain transplants.

As English zippered him from behind, Galway glanced through the glass panel into the operating room. The two cryonic caskets were readied and the indicators on the trephines were green. Beyond the Mark 37s and their attendant caskets, the two control boards on the vital-function sensors were lighted. Standing beside the panels, in casual conversation, stood two men wearing green smocks, facemasks dangling around their necks.

"This is supposed to be top-secret," Galway said. "Since when am I conducting a seminar on brain transplants?"

"That's Wheeler and Abbot," English said.

Wheeler and Abbot, Galway knew, were two of the top brain surgeons in the country, but he was still irritated, as tense as an actor before the first curtain.

"At best, they're witnesses to the forcible conveyance of property," Galway snapped. "At worst, they may witness murder."

"Being surgeons, they're accessories," English said. "And Paradise Valley has an educational function."

Galled by the fact that English had pointed out an obvious legalism to one whose hobby was medical jurisprudence, Galway snapped, "Let's go."

He shoved open the swinging door and strode into the operating arena.

Wheeler and Abbot came forward to be introduced, but Galway waved them aside as he walked past them to check the vital-function monitors. "Welcome, gentlemen. Forget formalities."

Both boards read normal for hibernates; blood pressure, .016/.009; pulse, 6; kidney pressure, a little high on one, normal on the other; oxygen absorption, 6,000 molecules per minute; lung pressure, 16.8 P.S.I.

On the periphery of his consciousness, he heard English say to the observing surgeons, ". . . worked together in the Orient. A Michelangelo with a scalpel."

Galway cut into the conversation. "How long have the diametric sensors been operative, Doctor English?"

English glanced at his watch. "Thirty-eight minutes. Both skull configurations are plotted."

Galway started to frown and recalled that he was using the Mark 37 and English was correct. These machines could map the dimensions of the entire skull in forty-five seconds.

"What's the bonding time on the gliogel?"

"Very fast. An hour on the skull bones."

"Not the healing time, Doctor. The sealing time for transverse neuron functions."

"Instantaneous, of course."

That "of course" had been gratuitous, and English caught the flicker in Galway's eyes.

"You recall, we discussed electrostasis," he added, apologetically.

"I didn't take notes. . . . I'll start with Crossetti. If she dies, I stop."

"But Crossetti's a talented surgeon," English said.

"Atterbury's talented, too. Take a vote from the committee. What say you, Doctor Abbot?"

"Start with Crossetti."

"Wheeler?"

"Take Crossetti."

"A panel of four surgeons vote three to one to risk Crossetti, Doctor English," Galway reported.

"And you're supposed to be an ethical, potentially Godfearing man. . . ." English started to argue.

"We left God in the washroom."

English shrugged. "Take Crossetti."

"Which one's Crossetti?"

"In the ice box on the left as you enter."

"Doctor Wheeler, will you take her panel? Doctor Abbot, you can monitor Atterbury. Doctor English, will you handle the controls on the Mark 37, without gloves?"

Out of earshot of the observing surgeons, Galway whispered, "Light up and smoke like hell, Bob, and blow the smoke my way. If you see me start to waver, push back on my shoulders. I don't want to faint and fall into my patient."

English lit the pipe as Galway stepped past him and pulled on his rubber gloves.

He started the motor on the cryonic casket to his left. It caught, spit, wheezed, coughed, then caught. Galway breathed his relief. Visions of delicate manual adjustment to the heavy casket faded from his mind as it rolled forward slowly, bearing Crossetti toward the neck yoke extending from the Mark 37 head aperture.

Nearer the casket came, and nearer. Then it clicked on its stops, the lid lifted, and the frozen head and neck of Crossetti came into view as the operating slab slid on its rollers to project a foot beyond the interior of the freeze box. Attached to the lifted lid, near the vital-functions rheostat, a bottle of $NaSO_5$ swung its weighted neck down to drip on the toweling that swabbed Crossetti's skull. She resembled a recumbent swami whose head had been swallowed by an over-sized turban.

Galway bent to unwind the lagging, closing the clamp on the drip line, leaving the blotting gauze over her face. Pink and gleaming from the viscous oozings of $NaSO_5$, her scalped skull came into view. Crossetti, a fairly attractive woman with hair, was repulsive as a bald-headed mummy. He blotted the excess fluid from her scalp and manipulated the "eject" lever on the cryonic casket. The rollered slab

moved the body out, and 6 inches from the aperture of the Mark 37, Galway stopped it in a locked position. It was now an operating table.

"Extend neck yoke," Galway said.

"Neck yoke extending," English echoed.

From the base of the aperture, the padded cradle slowly traversed the intervening space and paused, abutting against the slab with the bight of the yoke on a level with the table.

Now it was up to Galway, poised above the operating table, feeling the loneliness of command flood through him. For a brief moment, he feared that his trauma had locked him into immobility, but suddenly a saraband sounded in his memory, he hefted a lance, and the old eagerness for battle flooded back.

He slid open the instrument drawer on the table and pulled out a flexible, 2-inch, double-handled scalpel, pencil-thin and razor-sharp. He bent it into an arc, touching the handles, and let it twang back into shape. Then he held it aloft for the observing surgeons to see and said, "Gentlemen, I call your attention to the scalpel: Swedish steel, double handles." He pushed the handles together, forming an S shape. "It can cut a figure S when handled properly."

To demonstrate the versatility of the instrument, he formed an M, a W, and a Greek omega. Lowering it and concealing it behind the body of English, he released the left handle and held the scalpel in one hand. It bent slightly in the middle, but the free end did not quiver.

English, observing the test, whispered, "You've whipped your trauma, Jim."

Maybe. He laid the scalpel on the tray and bent to the body of Crossetti, sliding the torso forward to fit the yoke under the neck. As he did so, his eyes glanced down the sheeted torso. His eyes fell on two mounds, rising like kittens rampant from the sheet.

He straightened up. "This is not Crossetti," he said.

"Liquid silicone, you ass!" English whispered. "She did it for you. Get on with it."

English was nervous, he thought, as he lifted the board-stiff form to fit her nape to the yoke. As a man, he was not pleased by Maria's act, twice vain in its vanity and fruitlessness, but it might serve to eliminate any residual memory conflict concerning cup sizes on bras.

"Insert patient," he said in a voice of cool command.

"Commencing insert," English said.

The neck-yoke extenders clamped her jaws rigid and lifted her head, edging it slowly up to and into the head-hole. He heard a click as the neck yoke locked inside. With her body canted at a slight angle upward, her head had vanished into the aperture up to her chin.

"Commence parametric monitors," Galway said.

English clicked a switch. "Parametric monitoring commenced."

Infra-red rays, bouncing back through cold bone off the warmer brain tissue recorded the depth of the skull to the 1/100,000 millimeter. Scanning the fluorescent view screen Galway inched the head forward, lining the cutters slightly above the hazy outline of the eye sockets. Six millimeters above the sockets should be safe, he decided, locking the skull in position.

"Commence laser saws," he said.

"Laser saws commencing."

Inside the machine, the whir of fans began, blowing the heat and fumes away from the saws into the fume-evacuation chamber. Galway watched the stitch of light through the screen, a tiny Fourth of July sparkler cutting through the skull bone. He guided the saw down, swinging it up, over, and down behind the tape-bent ears, then bringing it up, sharply, to anchor the after-portion of the skull firmly to the spine.

A spark flared where opposing laser beams met, and the skull was severed.

"Cut lasers."

"Lasers off."

English was calm now, knowing they were committed.

"Affix skull suction cups."

Galway lifted his eyes to the direct-view panel, flooded the interior with light, and watched four suction cups come forward and clamp onto the scalp. From the instrument panel, English called, "Suction cups anchored."

"Commence lift-off."

"Lift-off commencing."

There was a low wheeze from the withdrawing ram, and Galway detected a suspicious whine in the wheeze. "Call your pressure."

"Five pounds over 15," English called.

"Hold it," Galway barked. "What's the atmospheric pressure at this altitude?"

"Sorry," English said. "Five pounds, 8-ounce excess pressure, Doctor."

Galway swore under his breath. English had been reading a P.S.I. gauge set at sea level.

"Resume pull."

"Six P.S.I. Six-eight. Six-twelve. Seven pounds per square inch, and climbing."

"Hold it," Galway said. Of all the stupid errors! English the infallible had forgotten to drill air holes. The suction from the vacuum inside the skull was wrenching Crossetti's brain loose from her spine.

"Release suction," he said quietly.

"Suction off."

Swiftly, Galway moved to the aperture and grabbed the frozen shoulders, inching the head out of the aperture to clear the skull. Bending down, he was sickened by the odor of burnt bone. He recoiled. "Start blowers."

"Blowers started."

Sweating, fighting off a very real nausea, he bent to the skull, grabbing a bone chisel from the tray. The trace line left from the incision of the saw was invisible at 8 inches. He dropped to 4 inches, concentrating his vision, searching, until he saw the minute red line encircling the skull. Carefully, above the hair-

line to avoid visible bruises, he touched the tip of the chisel.

"Mallet," he called.

English passed over a mallet. Galway tapped. No response. He tapped again. The upper portion refused to budge, the fit was too perfect, too tight. Holding his ears close, he laid aside the mallet, wedging the bone apart with main strength, guided by his touch. His nostrils were assailed, the stench penetrating his sinus.

"Sweat," he called.

English dabbed at his brow.

From 4 inches away, the fans were blowing in his face. Forcing himself to adjust to the odor, he leaned his weight against the chisel, straining his muscles. Suddenly he heard it, the faint hiss of air entering through the minute crack. He had broken the vacuum.

Straightening, he shoved the body back into the slot, calling over to Abbot on Atterbury's monitor. "Trephine Atterbury, Doctor Abbot, four air holes, one millimeter in diameter, and keep the air holes clear of the vacuum cup contact areas."

"She'll look like Swiss cheese," English said. He was rattled again.

"Not with her holes plugged and her scalp in place."

"Sorry, Jim."

"Resume suction," Galway ordered.

"Suction resumed."

Galway no longer looked through the view window. He merely put his ear to the aperture of the Mark 37, listening. When he heard, over the whir of fans, the long withdrawing *plop* as the skull came free of the brain, he said, "Stop suction."

"Lift-off A-OK," he told English. Then he called back to Doctor Wheeler, "How do you read her, Doctor?"

"All vital functions are go. Kidney pressure is dropping."

It was Little Mac all over again.

"I'm withdrawing the patient, Doctor," he said to

English before turning to the retraction lever on the cryonic casket. Slowly the operating slab moved away from the Mark 37, the neck yoke extending with the withdrawing slab, and Maria Crossetti emerged into full view, her brain gleaming in the light from the skylight. It was a beautiful separation.

"Doctor English, would you kindly put out your pipe, and assist Doctor Abbot with the drilling while I smoke a cigarette."

English complied and Galway lit up, confident now that he had his Death Trauma whipped. His objectivity had returned and he was no more involved with the patient before him than with an ice-cream cone containing a single scoop of dull gray vanilla. And he had time for a cigarette since he wanted to let the brain thaw a little before he cut. He was a surgeon, not an ice sculptor.

English and Abbot moved with such dispatch that their job was finished before he finished the cigarette. He called back to Wheeler, "Let me have her vital readings again, Doctor."

"Pressure .022 over .012. Waves holding. Pulse eight," Wheeler answered.

The increased reading, caused by the body's warming, did not alarm Galway. Maria was good for another hour before she resumed breathing, if ever, and he intended to use all of his skills to see that she did.

He didn't want her to die. He needed her dependability, mated with Susan's versatility, and the world needed heroic sufferers. Besides, if her waves flattened before the brain hit the gel, English would never let him live it down.

# chapter 11.

"Gentlemen, I'm ready to commence severance," Galway called back to Wheeler and Abbot. "I suggest you come forward and observe with Doctor English."

At this stage of the operation, monitoring vital functions was a useless procedure, Crossetti's life depended solely on Galway's skills. Wheeler and Abbot came forward.

As the three surgeons watched, Galway flexed the scalpel into an omega to clear the eye muscles and made an incision into the forebrain, saying, "Gentlemen, when the cortex is ready for severance, press slightly upward as you cut. In this manner the upper brain is sheered from the thalamus as neatly as a mushroom from its stem. According to Doctor English's theory, the thalamus acts as a memory filter. If you dip too low, the thalamus shares memories with the cortex. In essence, you'll be creating a horizontally split personality."

Galway cut two-thirds of the way through on his downward incision and reversed his motion, coming up from the bottom. To clear the after-projection of the skull required a delicate maneuver, and tedious. He had to be careful in order to avoid shaving Crossetti's dura mater, so he pressured his blade against the skull projection. "Doctor English tells me that a plumber could perform this operation," Galway said jovially to ease his own tensions, "as indeed he could, if he moonlighted as a brain surgeon. . . . Extend scoop."

"Scoop extending."

A cupped tongue of stainless steel, resembling an oversized sugar scoop, slid from the aperture, abutted against the neck yoke, and stopped a few millimeters

beneath the protruding brain. Galway pressured the bight of the scalpel into a shallow, inverted U, and pulled the blade toward him, bringing his shoulders back and up, pivoting on his hips with the movement of an oarsman at the end of a stroke.

Severed cleanly, the brain dropped from its stem into the scoop. The weight triggered an up-tilt to the forelip of the scoop to secure the organ. In a blur of motion, the scoop retracted, snatching the brain into the Mark 37.

Galway whirled to the needles on the lid of the casket, hearing from inside the trephine a *click*, *swoosh*, and *plop*, followed by a gurgling sound as the organ sank into its electrolytic bath of bio-gliogel.

"Splash one," English called, as Galway was inserting the needles into the brain stem. Only a 3-volt current passing through the needles was sufficient to maintain the autonomic system with 2 amps to spare. As always, Galway felt awe at the efficiency of the human machine, but reverence did not slow his hand. Scorning the retraction level on the ice box, he muscled the slab carrying the headless Crossetti inside and slammed the lid.

"How does she read, Wheeler?" he called to the surgeon, who was already back at the board, scanning the vital-function monitors on the brain and body.

"Both components read A-OK," Wheeler almost shouted. "All systems are go. My compliments, Doctor Galway."

There was an exultation in Wheeler's voice, a clarion note sounding a new era in medical technology, and Galway resented it as premature. "There's still the link-up, Wheeler."

Still, the readings were a good sign. With both components alive, English's bio-gliogel was functioning, so far—and that "so far" carried the moral responsibility for the death of the patient into English's area of liability. Now Galway's blade could not be the lethal weapon since it had not flattened the brain waves.

Relaxing, Galway slipped off his gloves and saun-

tered back to the VF board, gloves dangling casually from hip snaps. On the board, the computer was plotting a projection of Crossetti's life-expectancy curve based on the EEG from the vat and the cardiogram from the box. When Galway reached the panel, Abbot gave a low whistle and tore the graph paper from the diaphragm, handing the sheet back to Galway.

Two lines joined and flattened out. The nodes were in sync. Crossetti's life expectancy was normal though her brain was separated.

"Well, gentlemen," Galway commented, "that's that. back to work."

From insert through lift-off to severance and splash-down, all went smoothly with Atterbury. With a sigh of relief, Galway gave the order, "Commence pantographic reamers."

Now Galway was relaxed enough to forego the cigarette as the interconnected reamers whirred away, matching the inner contours of the two skulls to accept the transplants. An acrid odor from abrading bone vented through the filters, offending him only mentally; the manufacturer of the Mark 37 had skimped on the lithium hydroxide and charcoal filtering compound.

Aligning the brains and fitting them onto their new stems was partially a hand-operation, but the two organs clicked into their housings like key slots. Success, hereafter, depended solely on the bio-gliogel.

After he returned the patients to their caskets, Galway set the thermostats for a one-degree-per-minute rise in temperature. For five minutes, the four men stood and watched as the body heat and rate of metabolism mounted toward normal. Wheeler signified the end of the watch when he turned to shake hands with Galway, Abbot following suit.

Galway demurred from their voiced compliments. "It was nothing. Most of the credit belongs to Doctor English for compounding the bio-gliogel."

"Nonsense, Jim," English said. "It's knife men like you who separate brain surgeons from telephone linemen."

In polite language, English's words were bravado solely, and not a man present failed to recognize them as such, Galway knew. A scalpel attached to a control arm from the Mark 37's sensor could have made the brain swap more efficiently than Galway. But the surgeons had not convened in R & D to eliminate surgery, and Galway had come to bury the machine, not to raise it.

"You'll have to handle the cosmetics alone, Bob," Galway told English. "I've got a problem at the clinic."

"You'll have a drink with us first to mark this historic occasion. I'm sending a telegram to HEW I'd like to read, and Abbot and Wheeler are leaving to spread the new technique."

"I couldn't refuse a farewell toast to such eminent colleagues," Galway said.

On their way to the bar in English's office, English paused at Elsie Cook's desk and said, "Get word to Doctor Knowles that it worked."

Later, as English poured the drinks, Galway said, "Keep an eye on Happy Hollow, Bob, and let me know if Susan's behavior swings more toward the average. And let me know if Mendenhall progresses in his courtship of Maria."

Ruefully, English nodded assent. "Science doth make voyeurs of us all. . . . Gentlemen, to brain transplants, and hope for the hopeless."

They clicked glasses.

"Was there any time that you doubted the outcome, Doctor Galway?" Abbot asked.

"Only when the vacuum stuck. Otherwise it was routine."

"You looked a little hairy when you saw the apples on Maria," English grinned.

"That was a personal shock," Galway explained. "Expecting the Poconos, I saw the Grand Tetons."

English drew a slip of paper from his pocket and smoothed it out on the bar.

The Grand Tetons. The bawdy name *voyageurs* had given the Wyoming mountains stirred in Galway's

memory, juxtaposed against the word "apples." Christine's EEG had flickered at the sight of those mountains on the movie screen but had remained steady over Fujiyama. Could it be that the name alone had stirred her? She might know enough French to translate "grand tetons" into "big teats."

"Gentlemen," English was saying, "my message has to be in code to keep from blowing the dome off the Capitol. The Protestant ethic's still strong back East, and a few senators might view this experiment with alarm."

His eyes dropped to the paper and his voice lost its casualness.

> To the Secretary, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C. Please be advised that this day the Irish Corsair overhauled two galleons on the high seas. Signed, the English Navigator.

Galway was pleased that English had used the metaphor of old romance rather than that of modern technology, which had "all systems go" from the kitchen to the bedroom.

"Apples," too, was an old figure of speech.

Christine had recoiled in horror from the clutches of Little Mac. All Galway's past observations of Christine were coalescing into a bizarre theory. She had thrown the apple to the floor from indignation, not from fear of poison. Symbolically, the apple had represented her breast, and no reigning Queen of Cockaigne would deign to offer her breast to the nibblings of a horse.

"Gentlemen, I must go," Galway said. "May I wish you *bon voyage*, and don't forget those reports on my patients, Bob."

He jabbed his hand to left and right in a quick shake for Abbot and Wheeler, set his unfinished drink on the bar, and loped from the room.

No wonder Christine had been offended. He had failed her as a man, as a doctor, and as a literary critic.

His interpretation of the symbolism of her poem had been so far off the mark that he had even mispronounced the title.

Mrs. Butterfield was waiting, face drawn, at the top of the stairs as he bolted up. "Christine didn't come to her birthday party, Doctor Galway. She's been in her room all afternoon, and she won't come out."

"I'll go in and talk to her later, but, Mrs. Butterfield, have you ever known of an infant being smothered by the breasts of its sleeping mother."

"Yes, Doctor. When they're long and loopy. . . . Little Mac pottied this afternoon."

"Good! Tomorrow, wean the boy. . . . Have you ever calmed a psychotic patient by putting a pillow over his head?"

"Yes, Doctor."

"Good! I'll be in my office for a few minutes—and don't let anyone disturb me."

"Yes, Doctor."

He didn't expect to find the direct information he sought in Christine's history. Such reports invariably failed to give the breast dimensions of a patient's mother, but he could project backward along genetic lines and arrive at an ample figure. And the case history might give him enough information for indirect deduction.

He pulled it and sat down, the case history open before him, and took the poem out of his desk drawer.

Almost immediately, facts to substantiate his hypothesis began to leap from the casebook. He was on to something and he knew it. Mrs. Haskell had been a native of the Tennessee hills, where traditional practices still prevailed. She had been reared as a hard-shell Baptist and fundamentalism would have held her to old norms of conduct. His clinching discovery was that she had been a food-faddist: No mothering food-faddist would entrust her baby's diet to milk from cows that had fed on hay and oats grown from nonorganic

fertilizers. He was almost certain, Christine had been breast-fed probably long after toothing.

In his mind's eye, Galway could see the infant lying beside the mountainous bulk of its mother. In sleep or in love, the mother turned to the child. A breast fell across its nostrils and it squirmed free, perhaps biting hard enough to draw blood (lambwine) and wailing in the panic an adult mistakes for rage. Then the mother slapped the baby, and those breasts became, in the imagination of the child, mountains with fountains that could drown (smother) her abed. Breast-feeding became a battle between hunger and fear, love and hatred.

The mother had died, presenting the infant with a token of victory, a harmless bottle with a rubber nipple. But the child's awareness of her sin grew in that Christian environment and the wages of her sin were death. When Christine was seven, at the winter height of the epidemic when the Star of Bethlehem blazed from street decorations, her sainted father succumbed, as had her mother, on the day before Christmas Eve. His widely attended funeral had brought quick death to aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, good Christians all, and at Christmastide.

> And a star came down to snare them
> In a loop of burning gold.

Only the little parricide, the mass murderess, survived.

Numbed by the significance of her symbols, Galway leaned back. Here, then, was Christine's great guilt: She was the Antichrist.

She had quarantined herself by withdrawing into a pagan era in which Christ did not abide.

Her "Black Flower" was not a bloom but death, the flowing black tide that had drowned the world. She was the cause of the flu epidemic. She identified with the Doomsday Bug.

He called Doctor Lovestone.

Lovestone's exuberance cut into his greeting. "Jim, I just got a reaction from Milbank Pomeroy. I plunked out his theme in the Blue Grass style, and the sweet bastard raised his head to watch me finger the guitar."

"Good! I'm thinking of writing a paper supporting your method. I was doing the world's first brain transplant this afternoon, and a remembered passage from 'Medieval Moonlight' eased me over my Death Trauma."

"Wonderful! You write that paper, Jim. You're no psychiatrist but the publicity won't hurt."

"I'm calling to ask if there's such a thing as an obsessive fear of breasts?"

"You bet! In my book, mamaphobia rates right up there with castration fears as a cause of infantile trauma."

"I think Christine has obsessive mamaphobia."

"With her knockers? Come off it, Jim. Besides, mamaphobia's not indicated in the pathology of *tiefzeitverloren*."

"You said the etiology of the disease isn't clear."

There was a pause, and judiciousness slowed Lovestone's words. "If I accepted your . . . er . . . diagnosis, you'd still be attacking a symptom only, not the guilt feeling."

"True, Claude. But with my mamaphilia, I could blast a hole in her defenses wide enough to let her ego slip through and into this time zone."

"She'd still be in deep psychosis and nonresponsive to analysis."

"Conventional analysis," Galway corrected him. "Maybe you could reach her with music."

"Jim, you've got to get empathy. Why drag a schizoid from the Age of Chivalry into this butcher's shop?"

"To cure her. She's too beautiful to be parceled out from an organ bank."

"That's an academic consideration," Lovestone de-

murred. "After you've lured her into normal catatonia and I've tootled her up to depressed neurosis, she'd be ninety-six and too old for the organ bank. . . . I advise you to forget Christine and concentrate on writing that paper."

Galway hung up. Consultation with Lovestone was always depressing. The Freudian was capable of only two prognoses—critical or hopeless.

He set his desk in order, mentally outlining his approach to Christine's breast problem. At the age of five, she had read the text for her father's sermons from his pulpit, so she might be amenable to a quasi-religious approach. And it would not be entirely hypocritical. At the moment, he was feeling grateful for his restored objective attitudes.

He would need all the objectivity he could get for this experiment.

On the way to Christine's room, he stopped by Mrs. Butterfield's office. She sat at her desk reading her Spock while Little Mac played with his alphabet blocks on the floor. She looked up when Galway rapped on her door jamb.

"I wish to be left in absolute privacy with Christine for twenty minutes, Mrs. Butterfield. Ignore her if she screams."

"Yes, Doctor Galway," she said, smiling. "Little Mac just spelled 'Ninny' with his blocks."

Running through his agenda, Galway resumed the short walk to Christine's room. He was so busily reminding himself to give equal time to each breast that he had no prescience that he was starting on the longest journey of his life.

Galway entered and closed the door. Christine was slumped on the edge of her bed, her arms hanging by her sides, her head drooping. He walked over and lifted her arm. It fell when he dropped it. She had not yet reached the lead-pipe flexibility of a Milbank Pomeroy.

Galway pulled a chair before her, sat down, and

took one of her hands in his. He cupped her chin and raised her eyes to his. Her eyes focused on his, but listlessly.

"Christine, I'm your doctor, so I must keep your secrets, but I understood your poem and I didn't wish to discuss it before the class. Child, you are not a black flower but a brook, crystalline and leaping. At the moment, you have flowed into the backwaters of a weir and I have come to open the weir gate."

She was unimpressed by his understanding or his imagery, so he tried realism.

"You must not hide behind the battlements of a false romance. Knighthood flowered from a dung heap. There were no bathrooms in the castles and no deodorants."

If she heard him, she did not heed him. Almost reluctantly he reached behind her and lifted her headharness. Unmoving, she let him adjust the electrodes to the base of her skull. He took the hand controls and stood back from her.

He twitched her fingers and toes to boresight the cross beams and moved directly into her erogenic-stimulation area, starting with a low decibel shot. She did not flicker an eyelid but continued to stare at the corner walls. He stepped up the vibrations and let the flow continue to rise. She sat unmoved as the silent sounds howled through her skull. He let the charge rise to its maximum stops, beyond which the bones of her skull might have shattered, and let it continue at the peak. At this stage, an ordinary female would have been climbing the walls—at least writing on them—but Christine sat immobile.

Then she sighed, very low, and he noticed the first flush on her lower neck.

"Good girl," he whispered. She was coming through.

Still, it was two full minutes before she squirmed, and five before she lounged back on her elbows. Even then, she merely licked her lips. But at the seven-minute mark, she was tensing her leg muscles, lifting herself on elbows and heels, beginning a pelvic twitch.

Amazed at her resistance, but gratified that it was overcome, Galway cut the current.

"Stand up, Christine. I wish to give you an examination."

Obediently, she stood and lifted her arms over her head. He unbuttoned her frock, lifting it over upstretched arms, and peeled off her chemise, folding the items neatly and laying them on her bed. When he turned back to her, she had divested herself of her panties and was stepping free of their twin circles. He folded them atop the other garments and turned back to her. Kneeling before her, he spread his arms in an attitude of invocation. "It is written, Christine, that a woman's glory is her hair, but there are references in the scripture not unfavorable to her breasts. Now, I kneel in worship at your twin altars."

He didn't expect her to understand his words, but he expected her to find the pulpit intonation familiar. Avoiding sudden movements that might frighten her, his arms encircled her thighs. "I am your communicant seeking the wafer."

With ritual deliberation, he lifted his face and bent slowly toward her. She was staring into space. Uncontested, his lips moved slowly toward her left nipple, still swollen in sonic tumescence, and touched it.

She flipped back with the speed of a striking cobra, straining away from his touch. At the apex of her backbend, her breasts leaped like live things, and he said, "Your breasts are twin roes leaping."

Despite the Biblical flavor to his words and the quavering reverence in his voice, she remained rigid in an inverted U but his grip held. Again with majestic instancy, he lowered his lips to her navel and dipped his tongue into the whorled concavity of her chalice. She bent forward to squeeze shut the orifice but Galway had foreseen her move. His right hand shot up to grasp the nape of her neck and locked her into the forward bend. Once more his lips found her left dug.

Squirming to free herself from her huge suckling, she

tried to wriggle free, but her movement was not sufficient to disengage her breast from his suction. Galway could sense the battle between Eros and Thanatos sweeping through her mind, and his own lips first told him that Eros was gaining. Later, her squirming subsided. He felt her right arm drape around his shoulder, her left hand begin to stroke his cheek.

He applied more suction over a wider area and Christine bent downward to give him better purchase. Slowly, he withdrew his hand from her nape, letting it slide down the small of her back. As his hand slipped down to encircle her waist and she continued to bend low, he was amazed. Old-fashioned methods had succeeded in arousing her maternal instincts far faster than technology.

But Galway was losing his objectivity. He had promised himself to give each breast equal time, but he could not tear himself away from this magnificent left. To keep her from feeling rejected on the right, he brought his left hand around to knead, ripple, and pat consolingly.

Then Christine cupped her breast for his lips and the motherliness of her act catapulted him almost beyond the point of no return. Clinging to her, in desperation, he suddenly recalled how the memory of her tune had steadied him when he had commenced the operation on Crossetti. As he had counterattacked his trauma with the memory of Christine's music, he now counterattacked his libido with the memory of Crossetti's skull, pink and glistening with sodium pentasulphide.

Breaking contact, Galway stood, smiling. "That will be all, Christine. You may put on your clothes."

He walked to the door, opened it, and smiled. "I'll expect to see you—"

She was smiling back, the first time he had seen her smile. An intimacy and sharing in the curve of her lips, a beckoning in her eyes, struck some inner node of his being with intimations of a glory beyond the physical.

"—at dinner." He completed the sentence and turned, wondering, from the room.

Mrs. Butterfield called to him as he passed her door. "You were gone twenty-eight minutes, Doctor, and I didn't hear her whimper."

"She has a high threshold of pain."

"But you look white and peaked. I don't think you should use that torture system, Doctor. You're killing yourself."

Galway glanced down at the boy at her feet. He had selected three of his alphabet blocks and was attempting to align them in a row. He said to the nurse, "Christine will come to dinner."

In his office, he sat for a moment at his desk, shaken. The power that had touched him as he knelt before Christine and as he received the benediction of her smile had been transcendent. There must have been a feedback, through the dampened connection, from Christine's sound-induced encephalic electricity.

But he was lulling himself with stimulus-response sophistry. There had been a third presence in that room.

Some remnant Puritan in Galway rose to protest the evidence, but Galway squashed the protest. If the Kingdom were founded on such pillars, then he would accept the Kingdom, but as first prophet of the libido he would have to remain an undercover saint until September 9.

His new dispensation would need a Scripture. Ritual must be retained. Very well, he would revive Project Angel for its ritualistic value, using a California condor since albatrosses were hard to come by. And he had an idea for a new Bible.

He went to the bookshelf and took down a copy of *Trends in the New Biology*. Walking back to his desk and leafing through the pages, he remembered that the three alphabet blocks Little Mac had pulled toward him in the nurse's office had been an F, a K, and a U. Galway smiled. Mac was learning to write graffiti before he could talk, but someone was going to have to teach the boy to spell.

# chapter 12.

Christine came to dinner where Galway, more absent than any of his patients, merely went through the motions of eating.

Half an hour before dinner, Katie had come to his office in tears.

"Doctor Jim, Uncle Giraffey spoke to me. He told me Papa was dead."

Galway took her on his lap, asking, "What else did he say, Kate?"

"That I should love you instead of Papa."

"That shouldn't be hard, since I love you."

"But Papa's still alive. I saw him on television after they said he was dead."

"Katie, your father was a famous man. You saw film clips taken after he died."

Her father had died while on a television junket to Europe and following the economics of the epidemic he had been cremated in Paris, but some member of the TV fraternity might have photographed the funeral of so famous a brother. If the funeral was replayed on the Paradise Valley circuit, Katie would be cured, he thought, for she believed all she saw on television. Grief would be her therapy, and he would insure her grief with the emotion-stimulator.

"Dear child," he cuddled her closer, "death is the natural end of us all."

He hated to lie to a child, but his duty as a doctor demanded it.

So it was that by dinner he had learned that films were indeed available and that the funeral would be held in the classroom. And he barely noticed Christine.

His thoughts were of himself. He would have to share Katie's emotions, and of all emotions he dreaded grief the most. He would have preferred the lighted end of a cigarette.

So great was his dread, the Fourth of July would have passed unnoticed had it not been for the whir of helicopters taking off from the valley late into the night. Even semi-deserted highways took their toll, and there was a rush demand for spare parts over the long weekend.

But on Monday it was all over, the Fourth and the funeral. Both he and Katie wore black for a week.

In the remaining weeks of July, Christine took to riding alone, although she was still lost in her faraway land. Katie, after her grief subsided, proved to be a bright and talkative girl with plans to become a television repairman, actress, writer, and critic, in that order, until she finally gave up on the medium and took to reading.

She decided to become a cowgirl after Galway bussed the entire ménage, including the Bushman and housekeeper, to a Saturday matinee of a cowboy movie in the village. Even Christine swayed in empathy at the riding scenes, and Little Mac gurgled at the hats, saying, "Look, Mama."

After ice-cream cones—Galway selected chocolate—they were bussed back to the clinic with Katie and Paul arguing the merits of the movie. Paul, who was fast becoming a one-man band, was critical of the background music.

When Galway got them home, he found a messenger waiting at the clinic with a pouch, for Galway's eyes only, sent up by Doctor English.

Hidden microphones and miniaturized television receivers were not limited to security forces in Paradise Valley. English had very favorable reports on both Galway's specimens. Susan's activities were markedly less versatile and Lovestone had reserved her Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays for himself. After despair-

ing of Galway's return, Maria had finally accepted Mendenhall's courtship, but never in the crypt. That area was sacrosanct, she told her lover.

Another incident brightened Galway's third week in July.

At four one morning, he was awakened by a sound outside his door. From his military days and his brief career as a father, he had learned to sleep on the edge of alertness, and the moment he was awakened he swung silently to the floor. Night lights burned in the corridor and no moon shone to outline him against the bedroom window, so he moved with confidence toward the door. No patients from the hospital roamed this far north, so the sound had to come from someone in the clinic, the housekeeper, a patient, or—and the thought flitted across his mind—a homicidal nurse with a kitchen knife.

In one motion, Galway unlocked and swung open the door, to find an empty corridor. He stepped out, looking up and down the hall. Though he could see nothing, he knew he had not been awakened by his imagination.

When he turned to re-enter his room, his eyes fell to the floor and he saw, in the pale light from the corridor, that a piece of paper had been slipped under his door. He locked the door behind him and carried the note to his bedlamp, turning on the light. He read the Gothic script of Christine:

My right breast yearns for you. Tear this up.

He tore the note to shreds and dropped it into the wastebasket. A singing in his heart told him Christine was coming out, and his optimism flourished, despite her indifference in class the next morning.

On the following Saturday, he sent the household to the movie to gain free time to formulate his new dogma. The respite from his tasks was less welcome after his first hour in the empty house, and he felt a growing loneliness for his peculiar family. When he heard the bus mounting the ridge, he was waiting at

the foot of the stairs to get Katie's excited synopsis of the plot and Paul's critique of the background music.

Mrs. Butterfield told him that Christine had seemed more withdrawn than ever during the movie.

In the third week in July, Christine talked.

It happened on a Thursday afternoon as Mrs. Butterfield was preparing the smaller children for a walk in the woods. Galway was in the living room reading Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, and, at a passage where the goddess was forcing her attentions on the lad, the nurse entered, hurriedly. "Doctor Galway, do you think it's safe, letting Christine ride off on that stallion?"

He laid the book open on the coffeetable and rose. "Which way did she go?"

"Toward the lake."

Galway hurried outside to the stable to find Tam unsaddling the Tennessee walker. The head-harness was still on the horse, and Galway said, "Never mind, Tam. I'll take the mare."

He swung aboard the horse's bare back and whacked its ribs with his heels. The mare snorted at his unaccustomed weight but responded, moving off in a pacing canter, its muscles pulsing between his legs like a huge machine. It didn't slow for the downslope, plummeting like a falling rock beneath him. He clung to its sides with his heels, bending low over the mare's neck to follow the hoofmarks of the stallion, thinking of the beast, its great mane arched, its flanks straining, and the stain of a woman's blood in the grass.

Christine had read Jeffers' poem, and she might have taken the poet's symbolism literally. Now she had the roan stallion, and he was afraid with a fear without trust in the horse or the girl. Both were dumb animals, and the only other animal the girl related to was the horse.

Below man and mare, the drop of the slope lessened and the horse leveled off with a gentle swoop that

cushioned Galway's descent and horse and rider swished through the underpass beneath the auto road. Then, they were swinging north along the lakeshore, and ahead he could see the stallion, cropping grass beside the bridle path. Christine was not in sight, as he reined the mare to a slewing halt beside the stallion and slid from its back, looking around him.

Through the trees lining the lake's edge, he saw her, standing on a boulder that jutted, a small peninsula, into the lake. With her legs spread, her riding crop crossed behind her and held in both hands, she looked out over the lake.

In his relief from anxiety, Galway darted through the boles toward her and broke into the clear, calling, "Christine! Why did you take the red horse?"

She turned and smiled as he raced up, and spoke as casually as a sane person. "I knew you would come for your steed."

"For my steed?"

In his exultation at hearing her speak, in his confusion at her misconception, and in his joy at finding her safe, he embraced her, half-laughing. "I came for you."

As he hugged her, in a gesture prompted by spontaneity alone, he felt her arms encircle his waist, and he continued to hug her, swaying slowly from side to side with the girl in his arms, nestling his face in her hair. For a long moment he held her thus in silence, until he finally said, "And you thought I was worried about the stallion."

She pulled her head away and looked up at him. "Weren't you?" she asked, and her eyes were laughing.

Again he felt that some secret facet of his mind had been touched by hers, that she had lured him to this spot deliberately, coquettishly, and nothing in her eyes denied it.

"In a way, I *was* worried about the stallion."

Again her eyes were lit by laughter, now at him. "I wasn't worried about my mare."

If he interpreted her remark correctly, the girl was telepathic. When she giggled slightly against his chest, he was almost sure he had made the right interpretation.

"I assure you, milady, you had no reason to be."

She arched back and looked at him, sadly. "Then why do you send me away Saturdays to the movies?"

"Why do you want to be with me?"

In simplicity and innocence, she answered, "Because I love you, James."

He crushed her to him to hide his perplexity, feeling protective and confused. From the curve of the hips in his arms, the thrust of her breasts against his, and the softness of her pillowing hair, he knew, if left alone with her, his nobler nature would overcome his pragmatism and that he would take her to protect her innocence from its initial despoliation before the grosser sensibilities of the seventeen-year-old amateur lover who statistically awaited her. And then he would be responding to his environment precisely as the behavior-computer had predicted. BAC would have him hooked.

His was a choice no man should have to make, between love and human dignity, sex and free-will, but other men had made it. An old line from Lovelace ran through his mind: *I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honor more.*

Softly he whispered, with an irrelevancy that would have made the old Galway smile, "My dear, I'm thirty years your senior."

Again she arched away from him. "Varlet, you're nine hundred years my junior, but what has age to do with cowboy movies on Saturday? I'd liefer ride a-hawking in the blaze of noon."

Her anger was imperious and to soften it, he said, "Then stay, milady, to whom my heart pledges fealty."

"Get me a falcon for the hunt and bruit not your pledge about. Morgan le Fay would be wroth."

Despite the masculine name, Morgan le Fay was a sorceress, he remembered, so Christine must be refer-

ring to Mrs. Butterfield. Through clairvoyance, perhaps, this strange and wonderful girl had sensed the homicidal tendencies of the nurse and might be trying to warn him.

He attempted to ease her mind. "Your nurse would be happy to know the spell was lifted."

"The charm is not broken, dearest James, for I must . . . leave you . . . now."

As she spoke, he saw her radiance vanish as if a wispy cloud had floated between them, growing darker, and her arms fell limply beside her. He took her hand as if to hold her back from the abyss but the girl who had spoken was gone. Her eyes were looking through him with their old vacancy. Keeping her hand, he led her back to the horses.

At the clinic, he left Christine in the living room and went immediately to his office to call English.

In answer to his request, English was blunt. "Forget it. Falconry is a lost art. It would take a month to get a haggard from England, with its trainer, and the girl doesn't know a hawk from a handsaw. Why don't you get her an albatross?"

"Then get *me* a California condor," Galway said. "And set me up an appointment with your chief of biologic research Monday. I'm reviving Project Angel, using a condor."

There was a long silence in which he could hear English breathing. Then, sounding resigned, the director said, "You're hooked on freaks, Jim. . . . What time Monday?"

O ye of little faith, Galways thought as he hung up to return to the living room to get his copy of Shakespeare, but someone had returned the book to the shelf, in the wrong place apparently, for he couldn't find it.

On Saturday, Christine stayed at the clinic, but she was withdrawn. She went into the living room to read the Venerable Bede, and when he went in to tell her

he could not get a falcon, she didn't hear him. He returned to his labors feeling chagrin that she should reject him for an eighth-century monk, but relieved that the conflict between his humanism and his planning had been annulled. Later he heard her ride off, on the Tennessee walker he could tell from the hoofbeats, apparently going a-hawking without the hawk.

By the end of the first fortnight in August, Paul and Katie were weaned from the stimulator. Little Mac was taken from the class and turned over to Mrs. Butterfield to be taught reading and spelling. His hang-up was more chronological than psychological. He was as bright a three-year-old as any ten-year-old boy alive.

Galway's Angel Project moved immediately into the pre-flight stage when he hit on the idea of splicing human DNA from the brain of the eagle which would not fly into the cloned condor foetus. Originally, his biologists had planned to use DNA from Tambola's brain, but the eagle's human DNA was pre-modified to fit the skull of a bird. Besides, Tambola's permanent erection, if transmitted, might have altered the flight characteristics of a male condor and would have, at best, appeared unseemly in even the first-stage evolution of an angel.

He had redefined the basic theological concept, love, to conform to the thrust of his new dogma. Not at all to his surprise, he found that he was in love with Christine, by definition as well as intuition, but it would take more than sentiment to claim her if English failed him.

Cloning might salvage something from a lost battle, though hardly love. Only learning patterns, not memories, were duplicated in human replication. The hiatus between lives was a vacuum against which the thunder of old loves rolled in vain. He had to plan on victory. All else was pointless. And he had to give her some talisman by which she could recognize him in the dark,

but, since the day at the lake, her fog had not lifted and he could not communicate with her.

From out his dwindling reserve of days, August was drawing pale September. Along the southern shore of Mirror Lake, trees were casting longer shadows northward. Soon the honking of the wild geese would be heard above the land, but the girl remained shrouded in her medieval mists.

Suddenly, around the clinic, strange things were happening.

# chapter 13.

On Tuesday of the third week in August, Mrs. Butterfield interrupted him in his office. She wanted him to come see what Little Mac had spelled with his blocks on her office floor. Maternal pride in her voice assured him that the boy had not written a dirty word, so, feigning an interest, he walked down the hall.

Spelled out before him was the sentence "I LOVE JAMES."

It was an unusual sentence, not merely because of the perfect spelling but because of his Christian name.

"He did it all by himself," the nurse said. "Now, isn't that nice?"

"It is very nice," Galway agreed. "Get the boy a new white Stetson and a brace of Colt .45's."

Two days later, during the family period, Paul entered the living room with his new guitar. Without requesting permission, he sat cross-legged at the feet of Christine and strummed a few bars. Then he started singing in a quavering but clear soprano:

When shall we two meet again,
  Thunder, lightning, or in rain?
When the hurly-burly's done.
  When the battle's lost or won.

When I'm dead and gone, alas,
  When I'm dead and gone,
How shall I my true love know
  From another one?

Paul was finished. Christine read on, and the boy rose to start back to his room.

"Hold, wandering troubadour," Galway called. "Where did you learn those lyrics?"

"I made them up."

Paul lied to protect his teacher. He had been singing lines from *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. He could not have learned them from Mrs. Butterfield, who didn't know Shakespeare from Spock. He had learned them from Christine, the night wanderer, who had learned them from Galway's purloined volume.

Christine was communicating.

That night, Galway was awakened and lay in silence waiting for Christine to retreat. Then he turned on his night light and went to get his note.

> I know a vale where a bright tarn gleams.
> Tear this up.

It was an invitation and he accepted it, writing out his reply:

> On Saturday we'll go riding together.

Eager for Saturday, Galway attended a meeting on Friday with English and a committee for prosthetic surgeons. He was inattentive, knowing that English was attempting to hook his interest on an ultimate cyborg to lure him from Project Angel, but Galway was involved with angels, with and without flight capability.

Then Saturday came.

Christine led him on a circuitous route, north and then west, skirting the rim of the bowl enclosing Mirror Lake. At times, their trail paralleled the fence enclosing the fire break and once he saw a trio of German shepherds that loped beside them, as gaunt and as menacing as timber wolves. Christine in her trance failed to notice the dogs, but Galway was relieved when the fence swung north, over the ridge, and was lost to their view.

They came, finally, to a large brook flowing south from the snowfields on the northern peaks, and she turned off the path, following the bed of the stream. Five hundred yards from the bridle trail, the stream

cut a narrow draw through a granite ledge and its channel was filled with boulders. Christine dismounted to lead her horse upward through the defile, and Galway followed.

In this environment, she had lost her withdrawn manner completely and, though silent, she moved with the sureness and agility of a woodsman. Watching her, it occurred to him that Lovestone's prognosis could have been in error, without discredit to his diagnosis.

Ahead of them, the walls of the arroyo narrowed, forcing them to clamber single-file through the flume, wading almost to their boot tops in the rush of water. Once up and through, the draw debouched onto a meadow, a swale in springtime, 100 yards wide and twice that in length. Ringed by a Canadian Zone forest, backed by granite cliffs, the meadow was still lush from the cupped moisture, but the tips of the grass were sear. Even without an early frost, the grass would be ready for burning in September.

Here the brook wound through the meadow in widened, deepened loops of dark water.

They remounted and Christine cantered ahead, toward a far stand of aspen, slender, silver-boled, and bright green against dark blue ramparts of Douglas fir ascending to the base of the granite massif. To the left of the aspens, the stream emerged from a canyon that angled northwest. It led, Galway knew, to a 10,000-foot pass beyond which the Sierras dropped toward the San Joaquin Valley.

The canyon was the escape route he had plotted for Susan.

Christine was waiting, dismounted, by the aspens when he rode up and swung down. She spoke casually. "My pool is yonder." Then she pointed. "But cross your heart you won't tell."

He took the vow of secrecy and followed her up a slight rise into the forest, twisting between the tree boles. Her words had been spoken so naturally he was not even surprised at the sound of her voice.

She led him over the rise to a pool overhung by

willows, then turned and ran to a ledge above the water, unbuttoning her garments as she ran. Finally nude, she stood above him, poised on tiptoe, arms stretched forward, and the sunlight turned her body into ivory crowned with bronze. Dark behind her rose the fir trees forming ragged Gothic arches, but she relieved the rudeness with her symmetry of form.

Christine dove.

On the upper arc of her dive, she clung to a curve in space, then swooped down to cleave the water with scarcely a ripple and swim beneath the surface to the bank where Galway stood. Rising, flinging back her hair, she called, "Come on in. The water's fine."

"That's ice water. Your lips are blue already. I'll give you three minutes."

"Time to catch a golden trout."

She dove, swimming downward. Far below, her body shimmered in refracted light. Moving indolently aside as she glided among them, the trout accepted her presence but not her grasp. He watched for a full two minutes as her sinuous body, hair afloat, glided and turned 10 feet beneath the surface. As he grew alarmed, she flipped upward and jetted to the surface, and he was helping her up the bank.

Her teeth were chattering. He took off his heavy flannel shirt to swab her dry. Limber as an aspen, she bent and twisted to assist the drying. He massaged her hair with the shirt and kneaded her shoulders and arms with his hands until the chill bumps were gone.

"Warmer?"

"Yes."

"All right," he said, slapping her rump, "into your clothes."

Instead, she turned and embraced him, saying, "Hug me like you did on the lake and I'll get warmer."

"Only a minute," he said, embracing her.

"Why must I put on my clothes?"

"Because there are areas to your education we haven't touched on yet, and I don't want to give you any premature lessons."

She laughed, "Like the birds and bees?"

"What do you know about birds and bees?"

"Enough to know that I'm not a bird and you're not a bee."

"Are you tempting me?"

She hugged him closer. "No, but I'm holding you prisoner until you grant me a boon."

"Another ten seconds of this and you'll be granting me a boon, come pine needles or cold water. . . . What do you want?"

"Brush my hair?"

"Of course."

She released him and slithered from his slowly opening arms to scamper to the ledge and retrieve her clothes. Hooking his shirt over his shoulder, he watched her run, buttocks tremblant, and stifled an urge to pursue her, satyr-like, and take her from behind.

Skirted, shirted, and booted, she came down from the rocks to lead him back to the meadow, where the horses browsed. "Once I dreamed of you, James. It was so beautiful and true. . . . Get my brush and comb."

"Hold my shirt and I'll get the whole saddle."

She held his shirt and he uncinched the saddle, lugging it to a grassy hummock by a bend in the creek. He dropped it and spread his shirt before it, saying, "Sit here."

She sat. He took her comb and brush from the saddlebag and sat on it, spreading his knees around her and turning her back to him.

"Tell me about your dream," he said, drawing back her hair.

"Oh, anguish and longing. I was stretched on a bier in the chapel of the duke, my father. Done in by primogeniture. I wanted to be a duke but I was a girl. So I asked the court dwarf to mix me a potion, nightshade cut with just enough wolfsbane to take the edge off the bitterness. It was the middle of the night by the castle clock when you entered, all brazen in your

greaves. Your beauty made me sigh and you asked aloud, 'Did the whore moan?' And then you bent and kissed me, but never ask me where. . . ."

She paused with that same lip-parted raptness he had seen on the face of Crossetti before the crypt of her Darktown Strutter. Her dream, he realized, was part Coleridge and part Tennyson with just enough reality to give a clue to its origin. She had taken his word, "hormone," out of context, but he did not have to ask where he had kissed her.

"Where did you learn about the birds and the bees?"

"Some from that dirty book you were reading."

"Shakespeare?"

"Yes, and aptly named. But more from you, in the other place. In my realm you are a low-born knave, naught but a whoreson, though with a gentle heart and skilled in love."

Sixteen, he recalled, was an advanced age for a woman in the Middle Ages. As if to accent his memory she half-turned to him, smiling coquettishly. "Did you keep your sword, James?"

"Always."

"I'm glad, for I have fears that I may cease to be before the sheath enfolds the jeweled blade."

He recognized the line from Keats, but it had a non-Keatsian connotation. If not mad, the girl was certainly peculiar, and the irony of her remark lay in its truthfulness as a prediction. Her language alone would get her deposited in the organ bank.

"Would you help me prevent your ceasing to be?" he asked.

"Do you think you can help me?"

All banter left her voice when she asked the question, and he rocked her back into his arms, nestling her to him. "If I can't help you, then God's your next best bet."

"I'd rather put my trust in you, James. As my companion in depravity, you can understand me. God can't."

Her remark made him curious. "We've done nothing depraved yet."

"Not altogether yet. Separately, yes. It's been bruited abroad that you, too, are a mass-murderer."

"Where did you hear that?"

"Before you kissed me in the chapel, two vestals dressed in white let fall the name 'James Galway, the Crown Prince of Darkness.' "

She meant nurses in the psychiatric ward before she came to the clinic.

"They lied," he said.

"Pray don't be modest, James. I brought the plague."

"You're more innocent than I am, Christine. But in three weeks, you'll be taken before the assizes in the village to be judged. . . ."

"They'll burn me for witchcraft," she said. "And you'll not love me roasted."

She took his right hand and placed it against her right breast and held it there. With sudden intuition he knew that she had lowered the drawbridge and raised the portcullis. To her time-warped vision, he was two halves of a stereoscopic slide. If he could bring them into her focus, give them depth and integrity, then she would come to whichever world his love beckoned.

Now was his moment of choice and he opted for the twentieth century. He closed his right hand and twisted her toward him. His lips found hers and he bent her sideways to the grass, sliding from the saddle to stretch beside her, pillowing her head in his left palm. Then his right arm moved down to encircle her waist and draw her toward him.

"Excalibur," she sighed.

She was not resisting him. All coyness was shriveled in desire when suddenly she went tense. "There's someone coming."

He raised his head to listen and heard nothing but the soughing of the wind in the trees behind them, but he did not take her warning lightly. He knew that a loss in one area was often compensated for by en-

hanced acuity in other senses. Still, this was a remote and isolated spot.

"Are you sure?"

She put an ear to the ground, listening. "Two horses coming up the draw."

He remembered it was Saturday, nearing summer's end, and that Susan would be scouting the pass behind them as an escape route and that Claude Lovestone, her co-conspirator, would be with her.

"They're friendly," Galway said. "It's Doctor Lovestone and Susan Atterbury, a girl from the valley."

" 'Tis a pity," Christine said. "You were becoming the knave I love. Is this girl pretty?"

"In a coarse sort of way."

"Then remember whose liegeman you are."

"Give me my shirt, Christine," he said, suddenly inspired by an idea. "Sit on the saddle and comb your hair. Doctor Lovestone may be one of your judges at the trial. We have an opportunity to fix a judge if you'll talk to these people normally, with no 'prithees' or 'forsooths.' And, by all means, thank Lovestone for composing your music."

As he buttoned his shirt, Galway looked down at Christine, regretting the canceled contest between him and his doubleganger from the Middle Ages. Rarely was it given man to bridge 900 years with so joyful a span or dip into antiquity in just such a manner.

When the prostitute and her consort rode into the meadow astride rented hacks, Galway stood musing on the creek bank, his shirt tucked into his trousers, fully 10 yards from the girl who sat on the saddle combing her chestnut hair.

Galway waved at the approaching riders and faced them, hands on hips, surprise and pleasure on his face, when they rode up. "Fancy meeting you here."

"We were up scouting for a picnic ground," Lovestone lied adroitly. "Who's the Lorelei? Ah, Christine."

"She brought me up. Hello, Susan."

"Hi, Jim." She slid from her horse and looked over at Christine. "Jesus! Is that dummy beautiful."

"She's no longer a dummy. Claude's music has helped her to talk."

"But can she say anything besides 'Oh, Daddy'?"

"I'm writing a paper on her."

"Why don't you use a desk?" Susan said, walking slowly toward the girl, the open admiration in her eyes that of a madam sizing up a prize recruit.

"How's the paper coming?" Lovestone asked, dismounting.

"Fine. Come over and meet your patient." He lowered his voice. "Is Susan a Lesbian, too?"

"Of course not. She's merely high-minded enough to appreciate beauty in another woman without envy. . . . You aren't laying a loony, are you, Jim?"

"Of course not. I'm a doctor."

"But you're not a psychiatrist, your shirt's wrinkled, and she's combing her hair."

Galway swallowed his irritation over the slur on his ethics and said, "Go ask her yourself."

"Does she really talk?"

"To anyone with enough empathy."

They followed Susan over to Christine, who was humming, low and melodiously, the theme from the third movement of "Medieval Moonlight." Galway admired her tact, for Lovestone's eyes glowed at the sound. She was winning the psychiatrist's allegiance.

"What beautiful hair she has!" Susan exclaimed.

Christine looked up at her and smiled.

"And what beautiful teeth!"

"The better to eat you with, my dear," Christine said, and again Galway was impressed with her tactfulness.

"This is Susan Atterbury, Christine," Galway said, "and Doctor Lovestone, who composed your song."

"How be you good folk?" Christine asked.

"Just fine, Christine," Lovestone answered, too transfixed by her voice to notice the sentence.

"Claude, get my cosmetics kit and beach towel from the saddlebag. I want to style Christine's hair and give her a few tips on makeup. Honey, when I'm

through with you, there'll be contracts waiting for you in Hollywood."

As Lovestone turned and virtually sprinted to her horse, Galway said, "Go easy on the rouge and lipstick, Susan. I don't want the girl made up like a—in too sophisticated a manner."

"Don't worry, Doc. I used to moonlight in the daytime as a beautician."

"Where's Hollywood?" Christine asked.

"Don't tell me you don't know about Hollywood. Well, I'll just give you the lowdown while we work. Get the lead out, Claude."

Lovestone was back, and Galway said, "While you girls primp, I want to show Claude a trout hole downstream. . . . How's Milbank Pomeroy coming, Claude?"

Galway took the psychiatrist by the arm as Susan fluttered out the beach towel and steered him away.

"Excellent, I'm putting him up for hearings on the sixth."

"So soon?"

"My country-and-western music did it, and my paper's almost finished. . . ."

Galway cut him short. "Claude, I've got a serious problem. My patients are coming up for a hearing around the ninth. Paul and Katie should clear immediately and Mac should get a conditional clearance, but I'm worried about Christine. You saw her when she was totally withdrawn, and now you've talked to her. Give me an off-the-cuff opinion. Do you think she'll pass the board?"

"Firstly, I don't give off-the-cuff opinions in such matters. Secondly, she talks, but the content of what she says is the determinant. Her speech might deviate from the metaphor of our time."

"Does your prognosis still hold at critical to hopeless?"

"Any prognosis is a guess. Do you still play her symphony?"

"Constantly."

"In this business, Jim, if you go out on a limb, some-

one may cut it off. I'd say there's hope, but the total concept of sanity includes interpersonal and social adjustment. If I could only get her on a couch after observing her in a social environment—say, a hospital dance."

"My primary interest is in the girl's problems," Galway interjected. "And I'm willing to go along with the observation in a social environment, but hospitals are too depressing. However, my idea is to get a friend in court. There are five men on the sanity committee, and I could have you appointed. One persuasive speaker, such as you, could swing two more. . . ."

"Jim, this proposition is unethical."

"Come off it, Claude! The whole Paradise Valley operation is unethical."

"As a director, you should know. But that's your ethics, not mine."

"I don't approve of this butcher shop, either, and I certainly don't want that girl sliced up and parceled out from the organ bank. Besides, you're as responsible for her improvement as I. . . ."

"Exactly," Lovestone snapped. "And as her psychiatrist, I have an empathy for her that would disqualify me as a member of an objective review board."

"But you're not her psychiatrist of record."

"I will be after you publish your paper."

Galway shafted him.

"There'll be no paper, Claude, if she's not cleared."

"But if she's qualified for the bank?"

"Still no paper."

Lovestone was visibly unnerved. "What about Paul? He's mine, too."

Galway turned him back toward the girls.

"Confidentially, Claude, I was brought here to explore new approaches to the physiological cure of psychoses. Psychiatry is too tedious, too time-consuming, in a society that needs bricklayers and carpenters more than psychiatrists. I'm on to something with this sonic vibration. From sheer honesty, I was willing to give you credit for Christine and Paul, but there's a

conflict of interests here between my interests and Freud. . . ."

"You *are* unethical!" Lovestone seemed horrified.

"Only as a man, not as a neurosurgeon. But I'd still be willing to straighten up a little if you're willing to stoop. . . ."

"Can you get your hearing moved up two days?"

Then it had never been a problem of ethics, Galway saw. There was a conflict in escape dates. But Claude had no problem of synchronization with English, and Galway's date was fixed and immutable.

"I need every minute I can get with Christine."

"Let me talk it over . . . with myself. Maybe a deposition."

"A deposition would help, but the vote's from the floor."

"You keep me in that paper and I'll think of something."

Smiling, the two men walked back to where Susan chatted of Hollywood to an enthralled Christine and applied finishing touches to the makeup.

Galway feigned enthusiasm over Susan's labor. "Masterful. You've added a maturity to her beauty that would clear her for drinks at the Paradise Valley Inn."

"You've got an idea, Doc. Why don't you bring her out next Saturday with Claude and me? She would lay them in the aisles. They got just the frock for her at the Village Boutique and you could get Battle-ax Butterfield to make the alterations."

"That's an idea. Claude's been touting Mama Id for weeks. . . . How would you like to go dancing in a nightclub next Saturday night, Christine?"

Under her hayrick hair, beneath layers of rouge, lipstick, mascara, and eye shadow, Christine's face lighted with childish eagerness. "I would love it, Doctor Galway, as long as I'm with you and Susan and Doctor Lovestone."

# chapter 14.

As they descended from the meadow, Christine's apathy deepened with their approach to the clinic. Obviously the environment inhibited her. Or, he wondered, did the heavy breasts of her nurse stir terrors from her infancy?

Outwardly she had no reason to dislike Mrs. Butterfield, who, in the following week, fussed happily over the fitting of her gown and brought out a prized ermine stole for her to wear. On the evening of her debut, Mrs. Butterfield handled Christine's makeup with far more subtlety than Susan had shown, enhancing her natural beauty with a hint of color and maintaining the bouffancy of her hair with only a mist of hairspray. When Galway, himself bedecked in unwonted splendor, called for his patient, he had to stand in the doorway for a moment to adjust to the sight.

Under the knee-length green sheen of a flared transparentine skirt, her gold lamé panties were buttercups in the fields of quintessential springs. A golden band at her waist, matching her golden slippers, was touched by the long V of her blouse. Itself, the blouse was little more than the purple haze of evening splashed with sequin stars where two full moons rose above the dark purple horizon of her cantilevered bra. Around her shoulders the stole balanced the rococo gaiety of her ensemble with Regency elegance.

"Christine," he finally breathed, "you look spiffy."

Other comments awaited her in the foyer, where the household had gathered to see her off.

"Oh, that's so nice!"

"My next tune is 'The Girl with the Chestnut Hair.'"

"Save that dress for me, Chris."

"Pretty ninny, Chrissie."

When Galway escorted her downstairs and ushered her into the car, he had no foreknowledge that she might speak. With her beauty, he rather hoped she wouldn't talk, and she remained silent as he steered along the centerline glowing in his hooded headlamps. When he reached the south lane and put the car on the steering band, she relaxed visibly and moved closer. He draped his arm over the seat behind her and took her hand.

"A penny for your thoughts."

"You look spiffy," she said, without looking at him. "Little Mac is a better poet than some adults I know."

This girl, a psychotic in every apparent sense, was rebuking him, a neurosurgeon, for using a cliché in her bedroom. Trying to keep his irritation from showing, he said, "I'm no poet. My life hasn't provided me the inspiration, before now."

"Ah, James. Now, there's a full penny's worth." She looked up and smiled at him.

Her smile triggered responses that renewed his youth, and suddenly he was on his first date with the prettiest girl in the freshman class. An eagerness to please her drew his senses taut.

"Christine, when first you gleamed upon my sight back there in your room, I knew there was no art to trace such beauty as you master now, so I fell back on triteness. But at that moment there flared into my life's darkness a candle to light my way to dusky death."

"Plagiarizing a pornographer, you churl, will out this brief candle."

He had forgotten that she read Shakespeare, but a smile took the hook off her barb. He shifted to more modern poets.

"In all my daily trances and all my nightly dreams, my thoughts follow you down the deep romantic chasms of my mind until, piping songs of pleasant glee, I come to the dark tower that embowers my still unravished bride of silence and slow time. And a spirit,

who knows how, leads me to your casement window."

"Two shillings for that attempt," she said, and turned her face to him. He kissed her with kisses that roamed from earlobe to nose-point, lips and eyes, neck and brow. Night and silence enclosed them in an intimacy, a secret sharing, which was less a spin-off from their body chemistry than a synchronization of encephalic electrical emissions.

As he released her to take the wheel and steer the auto into the inn's parking lot, she whispered, "Ah, brave new world, that hath such neurosurgeons in it."

"Quit borrowing from that dirty poet," he said.

Claude and Susan had reserved a table next to the dance floor and were waiting, according to plan, to create a partially familiar setting for Christine among a crowd of strangers. The place was extremely crowded, but Christine needed no crutch. Whistles, wolf-calls, and *hoo-eees* from supposedly dignified professional men, in the company of their own dates, whirled around her, and a girl who had spent eight of her sixteen years in a near-catatonic stupor smiled radiantly up at her escort and thrust her breasts a few more millimeters forward.

Mouth agape, Lovestone rose at their approach. He had apparently gained self-control by the time they reached the table, but after they were greeted and seated, Lovestone pointed to an ice bucket in the center of the table. "I ordered champagne to celebrate Christine's coming-out party, but I didn't want to screw the cork until she got here."

"Unscrew the cork, Claude," Susan said. "Gee, Christine, you look ravishable."

"Christine, I'm writing you a new opus, based on my own brain waves, called 'Night Thoughts.'"

"That'll be right nice," Christine said.

"She likes pornography," Galway added, "but let me have that bottle before you ram the corkscrew into your wrist."

Champagne tickled Christine's nose, and it was too strong for Susan, who introduced Christine to her new

drink, rose wine and ginger ale. Lovestone and Galway used the champagne for chasers, and they had ample time to dispose of it since they could do nothing but drink.

Mama Id's show did not start for an hour, and the dance orchestra was out for a recess. Members of the biology unit dropped by to pay their respects to Galway and to wangle an introduction to Christine. Then Lovestone's colleagues got into the act, and colleagues of colleagues were dropping by for an introduction. Christine did nothing to discourage the fatuous oafs, even thanking them politely for their compliments. She basked in admiration so intense that a miasma of musk was beginning to gather around the table.

Maria Crossetti and Joe Mendenhall, from their front-row table around the arc of the dance floor, dropped over to say hello. Mendenhall began to pitch into an immediate invitation to his pit, and Maria had his psychorama to Christine with a fervor that soared to wrestle him away.

When the bandleader entered with the orchestra, Galway, his jaw jutting, went to the platform, introduced himself, and ordered the leader to announce a no-break traditional dance set for the first round. The audience booed the announcement. Let the bastards jeer, he thought, hurrying back to the table, where Doctor "Just call me Claude, Chris" Lovestone was humming a passage of "Night Thoughts" hot off the brain waves into Christine's overaccommodating ear. And with breaks permitted in a traditional dance set, these studs would punch holes in Christine's transparentine.

Then the music began and Galway led her onto the floor, stepping off into the slow tempo of a foxtrot. His arms encompassed lightness as she swung immediately into the rhythm of the music. Most couples dropped out at the rhumba, others quit on the samba, and when he swung into the tango he was alone on the floor with Christine. In the close harmony of their dip and swirl,

her thighs parted to the thrust of his sartorius and the buxom swell of her Mound of Venus sent Pan pipes skirling above the orchestra.

After he held her too close in a four-beat dip at the music's end, discretion dictated that he steer her from the floor, following so closely that they resembled two prisoners parading on a short ankle chain. He hoped that the onlookers would assume that his lock step was merely some esoteric fillip, perhaps imported from the Congo, which had been tacked onto the tango.

Christine must have felt otherwise, for she smiled up at him when he seated her and said, "Thank you, James. It was beautiful. All of it."

In the second set, Galway managed half of the first dance with Susan before he was tapped.

"Do you still have my letter?" he asked.

"Yes, Jim, and I'm going to deliver it. By the way, you mentioned you would get me some assistance. Forget it. I'll manage."

Then someone cut in and he went back to the table to join Lovestone, and the two sat, watching Christine.

Even in the noncontact dances she was cut in on constantly, for her grace was such that she could lend beauty to such twisting gyrations as "The Fall-Away Jump." Mendenhall got her for the last dance, and he was never cut in on because no one could tap his shoulder without breaking a high-jump record. The dance was a hand-under-the-armpits bounce called "The Alienated Kangaroo," and at the peak of the bounce Mendenhall was tossing his partner so much higher than himself that his hands were level with Christine's breast. Here was the height of salaciousness, Galway decided, copping a feel with an artificial hand while one's heels were five feet above the floor.

When Mendenhall led her back to the table, Galway said, "You should take ballet lessons, Joe."

"I give them," Mendenhall said, with such hostility that Galway knew he had finally discovered why the crypts were sacrosanct. Probably Susan's cerebellum had prompted Maria to a little bragging.

During the intermission between the dance and the first show, Lovestone briefed them on the hospital's premier psychopath.

Mama Id had been a fortune-teller before she was committed, but under the influence of sodium amytal, she had blossomed into a calypso singer as well. "Wave a dollar and she'll sing your fortune," Lovestone said, "with surprising accuracy if you can read her right."

Then the accuracy was in the interpretation rather than the prediction, Galway decided—a standard ploy of fortune-tellers.

Voices around them ceased as the house lights dimmed and shadows moved onto the bandstand. Out of the darkened wings a brass voice gonged. "May I welcome you all to the sodium-amytal ball, and any of you who doesn't like my act is a cunnilingual coprophiliac. . . . Let's go, libido!"

A single spotlight speared the source of the obscenity, which Galway hoped Christine could not understand, and Mama Id stood in the glare, dressed in a muumuu, a squat, round-faced woman with her black hair drawn into a bun. To rising applause, she jinked forward, gyrating in a hula-shimmy across the dance floor. The band started, picking up its tempo from the thud of her bare feet, and she flicked her head toward the leader.

Blow me off my feet
With a cyclothemic beat,
I'm a schizophrenic mama
With a deep-seated trauma
And catatonic poise.
With my go-go super ego
And my undulating id,
My psyche never wonders
What my soma just did.
I like boys.

"That means she's telling only men's fortunes tonight," Lovestone whispered as Mama Id jerked toward the front line of tables, moving her right fist back and

forth in a gesture Galway read as obscene until she chanted,

I'm hot, chaps.
Let's shoot craps.
Fade me.

At the first table, Mendenhall was waving a bill, and she took it, singing her dice-thrower's song.

Little Joe from Cicero
Eight straight passes and two to go.

No psychopath in a fugue could pick a stranger out of a crowd and pinpoint his birthplace. The entertainer, Galway realized, had been programmed to recognize faces from photographs in the base personnel files. He noticed, too, that she was being selective in her choice of bills thrust toward her. She had been programmed, but by whom? Doctor English or Doctor Knowles?

Then she was grasping Lovestone's dollar, gyrating before him and belting out,

Italian red's a mighty fine wine.
If you can't roll seven, it's craps on nine.

No CIA agent would compromise top-secret information. Mama Id was English's message drop. And she was taking Galway's dollar.

Eight, skate, and evacuate
Or meet your fate on a double date.

As she jinked away, chanting her gibberish down the line, Lovestone muttered, "I don't drink wine."

"I do, and I've had a strange craving for lasagne, lately," Susan said, turning to Christine with a knowing smile, her auburn hair glinting in the lamplight. "Bet I know who's met their fate on a double date."

Galway would have taken her bet and given her odds. And Lovestone, he knew, would not be at Christine's hearing. He would leave on the seventh, and Galway prayed that English had not miscalculated the lethal range of BAC. But Lovestone was less Galway's

concern than English. Was English losing his nerve, he wondered, or merely afraid that Galway might lose his? If the latter, English was correct. Galway was terrified, but he was not skipping on the eight. As the computer had predicted, he could not leave Christine to be dismembered, but he was staying for a different reason. If the pieces didn't fall together on the ninth, he and English would lose their last chance to smash the machine and the organization supporting it.

But Christine's hand was in his, and she was whispering, "The soothsayer frightened me, James. Take me home."

On the drive back, Christine sat in silence until he turned to her and asked, "Are you still afraid?"

"Not for me but for you, though I dread the dark without you. In that night, there'd be no rising of the horned moon."

He knew she was thinking of their last dance together, but the compassion for him in her voice stirred him far more than the fretwork of passion behind her innuendo. He drew her to him and held her in silence, as if trying to shield her from the storms of mortality, and they rode thus as the auto whirred through the night. In a love beyond lust he sheltered her, feeling the old imperatives of his nature weaken to velleities.

Finally, he roused himself to say, "We shall need a password for the dark."

"Password?"

"Some sign by which we might recognize each other."

Lightly she touched him and as lightly as a butterfly launching from a limb her fingers withdrew. "I have my talisman."

"But that too solid flesh soon melts," he said. "We need a tongue that speaks without sound."

Suspended between passion and sorrow he took the wheel for the off-ramp and she moved away from him, moody, pensive. Suddenly she spoke in a voice

sprightly with inspiration. "That Mama Id was a nasty-talking old woman."

So Christine understood the jargon of psychiatry.

"She's par for a nightclub," he said.

Through the trees they could see a light in Mrs. Butterfield's room. "Morgan le Fay awaits to lash me to my rack."

By her manner of speaking, he knew she was drifting away. He pulled under the overhang, turned off the motor, and took her in his arms. "Good night, beloved."

"Good night, Sweet James, and bands of angels lull thee to thy rest."

As he kissed her, he felt her lips go waxen and her arms around him go limp. He felt like weeping, knowing now that given the time he would have met with her around the last act of *Hamlet*.

Upstairs, Mrs. Butterfield was waiting in the foyer. "Did she enjoy her evening?"

Leaden-eyed, he turned to the leaden-eyed girl.

"You see her, Mrs. Butterfield."

As the nurse led her away to wire her into bed, he went to his office and took out her case history to add the final addenda to his notes. All the other casebooks were finished, with the details of his treatment laid bare, and now he was writing his swan song as an amateur psychiatrist. He knew he would be hanged as a Pavlovian, but his treatment would go on the record. Someday some offbeat genius of the healing arts would read his papers, and the work of physiological psychiatry would be carried forward.

Before midnight he finished his notes and closed forever the book on Christine Haskell.

On the Monday of the hearings, which commenced at 10 A.M., Galway loaded his wards and their nurse into a bus for the drive to the chapel, where the sanity committee convened. Fires had broken out on schedule Saturday. Borax helicopters and fire engines had been busy over the weekend, and a smoke haze still hung over the valley. So far so good.

In the back of the bus, Galway reviewed his arguments to the sanity committee. Little Mac sat forward with Mrs. Butterfield. Christine stared vacantly ahead while Paul, across the aisle from her, tuned the guitar he was to play at the hearing. Katie was so fidgety she had come back to sit next to Galway.

As the bus rolled through Firehouse Pass into the lower valley, Katie called his attention to a helicopter spiraling down from the north. To placate her, he leaned over and glanced out. A huge Sikorski hospital craft with a red cross on its fuselage was angling toward the ninth green, the hospital's landing pad. What was English up to now, he wondered, bringing a basket case onto a farm overstocked with athletic psychopaths?

Well, that was English's problem, he decided, and turned back to his notes.

Beside him, Katie had taken her handkerchief from her pocket and was slowly twisting it. He put his arm around her. "Brace up, Katie. If you're going to be an actress you'll have to learn to live with stagefright."

"I know, Doctor Jim. But I'm still nervous."

"Paul," he called, "come back and play a song for Kate."

Paul swung himself into the aisle and walked back and sat in the seat ahead. "This is one of my originals, Doctor Jim. I hope Katie likes it."

He struck a key and sang softly, in a voice that would not carry to the front of the bus, a lilting song that would have sounded more appropriate in an Elizabethan public house.

My love's a cunning linguist.
His tongue's my greatest treasure.
With "tu bella" and "liebe dich"
He bends me to his pleasure.

But when he coos a "Je vous aime,"
I trow I am his dove,
For, as all true gallants know,
French is the language of love.

It was a message from Christine specifying the countersign by which she would recognize him. A less versatile man than Galway might have been shocked or even offended by her proposal, but he was merely beguiled by its unorthodoxy. Her word-play on psychiatric jargon, more adroit than Mama Id's, was the logical outgrowth of his remark, "We need a tongue that speaks without sound."

# chapter 15 .

When the bus pulled up before the granite surge of the chapel, English and a lean, dark-suited, white-haired man with a mien both pleasant and grave like that of a deacon or an undertaker were waiting at the church door. Galway knew, before he walked up the steps to be introduced, that the man was the chairman of the sanity committee.

A nurse came out of the shadowy basilica to assist Mrs. Butterfield as Galway shook hands with Doctor Ball, chief psychiatrist of the facility. Galway apologized, as head of R & D, for not having called on Doctor Ball earlier. "As you can judge from the case histories, I've been quite busy since my arrival."

"From the alertness of your patients," Ball commented as the children filed inside, "I would say you've been successfully busy. Yours is a rather historical hearing, Doctor Galway, the first time the board has judged the efforts of a nonpsychiatrist. After you've presented your summations to the board and answered a few questions, you will be dismissed with thanks before the patients are interviewed."

"That's to minimize the patients' dependence on a father-figure," English said.

"I've read the operating procedures," Galway said. "Is Lovestone present?"

Doctor Ball shook his head. "Your case histories disqualified Doctor Lovestone as a disinterested judge, so Doctor Hugo Wenzel has replaced him."

So Christine's case was to be judged on its merits.

"However," Doctor Ball continued, "Doctor Lovestone just called. He is sending over an addendum to

his deposition for clarification. It's to be here within the hour."

As the three men entered the church, Galway was disturbed. Lovestone had made no attempt to escape, and Galway did not like the sound of "clarification."

Four other psychiatrists were seated on the front pew with bridge tables set up before them. One seemed vaguely familiar to Galway, but he was positive that none of the others had danced with Christine. Doctor Ball excused himself to join the other committee members, and English walked with Galway across the transept. Glancing up, Galway could see that his wards had been seated in the secondary apse and were flanked by two nurses.

English shook hands with him and said, "Good luck, Jim."

"I don't want luck. Just a fair hearing."

"That's why I'm here. I'll be listening. Where can I reach you afterward?"

"At the inn, getting tanked."

Galway mounted toward the pulpit feeling burdened and weary. Lifting his eyes, he saw the cross on the reredos and the sight gave him comfort of sorts, either as a phallic symbol or as a direction sign to heaven. In the New Religion, he decided, he would retain the cross.

Removing his notes from his briefcase, he laid the case on the pulpit and the notes atop it, thinking that BAC might have erred in permitting Christine to testify from an altar. Since she had spoken from such pulpits as a child, her memories might reinforce her awareness and self-assurance.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I came here to test new methods for solving problems that you have considered much longer than I. For three of my patients, I hold high optimism. For one, Christine Haskell, I urge that her physical integrity be retained for its aesthetic value and that her life be judged not for its social or economic functions but on the quality of that life itself."

Since her beauty would speak for itself, he spoke of the richness of her imagery, the depth of her reading of medieval poetry and prose. Possibly, he pointed out, she might be useful in academic circles as an antiquarian, an authentic voice from the Middle Ages.

He confirmed Lovestone's diagnosis of *tiefzeitverloren*, but offered a more favorable prognosis and outlined a possible treatment. "Rather than disavow her guilt feeling as a cause of the flu plague, confirm it. Praise her for ridding our planet of an overload of life and thus enriching the environment for we who survive."

Below him his listeners were attentive, even jotting notes as he spoke. When he finished, they applauded him, but they looked to Doctor Ball, who rose and said, "Thank you, Doctor Galway, for treating us to a touching and artistic dissertation. Currently, I hear, there's a methodology abroad in academic circles called the New Realism, and I suspect that the academicians are more interested in castle outhouses than in medieval poetry and prose."

As Ball sat, there were smiles, in which Galway joined, at his shafting of the academicians. The crew-cut younger man with the rimless glasses raised his hand and Galway nodded toward him. "Doctor Wenzel here, Doctor Galway. Touching the matter of academic research, are you aware that your method was used, with less sophisticated equipment, at the turn of the century?"

Wenzel was currying Doctor Ball's favor, and Galway abetted him with a smile and a nod. "I might have heard something to that effect, but being a working scientist, like you fellows . . ."

"Are you the same James Galway they call 'the Pavlov of the Tracy Clinic'?" Harshly the question was hurled from a lantern-jawed man on the far right who had glanced at his notes.

Smiling, Galway turned to him. "I belong to no school. To me academic rivalries are merely tempests in a pot of tea. I browse where the grass is best."

Spluttering, Wenzel leaped to his feet shaking his fist. "This tea, this pot, this grass, represents a fight between humane treatment and torture. . . ."

"Please, Hugo," Ball tried vainly to intervene.

The name "Hugo" triggered Galway's recall. He had last seen this flushed face lifted from the floor of Mendenhall's pit, where Hugo was symbolically bashing the skull of a father who had rejected him for marijuana.

The diatribe from below rolled on, peaking at a screamed question: "What about that girl's genes? You can't condition bad seed."

In feigned anger, Galway roared back, "In the matter of bad seed, I bow to the world's top expert."

Whimpering from the blow, Hugo slumped back into his seat. Rising, Ball put a fatherly hand on his shoulder and said, "Thank you for your presentation, Doctor Galway."

Galway's thrust had been an attempt to divide the committee along personality lines, but Hugo's sobbing was arousing father-images and bringing more support to him than his obnoxious personality would otherwise have garnered. Stuffing his notes into his bag, Galway strode from the altar before the hostilities localized on him, hurrying, also, because he knew that if Lovestone's clarification reached the committee, Christine was lost. Only lately had he remembered that in his anguish he had forgotten to credit Lovestone with the girl's diagnosis.

Outside, he walked around the building to the bus and told the driver, "They'll be there for two more hours. Get me to the hospital in a hurry, and wait."

But the typist was still typing when Galway strode through the reception office into Lovestone's office, and Lovestone was at his desk, still writing. He looked up, a scowl on his ordinarily bland countenance, as Galway laid his briefcase on the edge of the desk.

"Claude, they tell me you're sending an amendment on Christine over to the committee."

"You're damned right, Galway, and it will set the rec-

ord straight. I read the case histories Friday night, and you put my music in footnotes."

"I wasn't writing a panegyric to music. I was trying to save lives. You'll be given full credit in a separate paper."

"Bull! All you're doing is pitching your torture techniques, but I'm straightening that committee out on one Doctor James Galway."

"I don't care what you do with me, but I want your observations on Christine's lucidity the night of the dance recorded accurately."

An expression of guarded cunning crept over Lovestone's face. "You're reading no paper of mine, Galway."

"Claude, I'll put your name in lights if you wish, but I want to read that amended declaration before it's sent."

"I'm on to your tricks, Galway. Stealing my secrets!" His face was flushed, his hands trembling. "By God, you took credit for my diagnosis. . . . You stole my *tiefzeitverloren*."

He screamed the accusation at Galway across the width of the desk, his face flushed.

"Listen, Claude." Galway's voice was low, calm, reassuring. "You're very upset. A girl's life depends on us. Let me give you a tranquilizer."

Lovestone lifted a plastic paperweight from his desk, stood up, and backed toward the corner. Suddenly his face was white with beads of perspiration glistening over his brow. "Galway, you're one of them. . . . If you come near me with a hypodermic needle, I'll kill you."

Quietly, Galway lifted his briefcase and backed out the door, knowing now that it made no difference what Lovestone said, either in the disposition or the addendum. Galway was familiar enough with psychoses to know that once a man believed "they" were after him, they already had him. He closed the door quietly behind him and turned to Lovestone's secretary. "Miss,

you'd better call a doctor immediately for Doctor Lovestone, and tell him to bring two attendants."

Galway had the busdriver drop him off at the inn, where he telephoned Susan.

Over the telephone, Susan Atterbury's voice was alert and pleasant. "Jim, how are you?"

"Up at the inn, hoping you'll join me for early lunch."

"I'll drink to that! See you in fifteen minutes. And, Jim, I won't be able to mail your letter."

"No sweat. Throw it in a trashcan."

An hour later, with the luncheon crowd drifting in, he seated her at a table by a window. Either she had been drinking or she was wearing gin perfume, he noticed, but her first questions were about the hearing and Christine. He was briefing her when the waitress came and interrupted him. "My usual, honey."

"Rose wine and ginger ale," the waitress intoned.

"No, dearie. A triple martini, very dry, and skip the olive."

"Make that two," Galway ordered. Then he asked her, "Did you go riding with Claude Saturday?"

"Yes. We picnicked in the meadow, but he was up in the air about his Milbank Pomeroy. The nut was cleared, but Claude stayed over to see him through the gates today. Claude doesn't trust the administration. But he sent Christine's deposition over Friday."

"His deposition won't mean anything," Galway said.

"Are you kidding? Claude's the top musico-psychiatrist in the country."

"Not anymore," Galway corrected her. "He had so much empathy for his patients he joined them. He's schizoid."

"You don't say? . . . Where's that girl with our lunch?"

"She's coming. You've decided not to make a break?"

"Not with Claude. I thought I really liked the guy, but I'm confused over my feelings for him."

She was genuinely perplexed, thoughtful, as the waitress placed the drinks before them. Galway ordered

another round and said to Susan, "Maybe I can straighten you out if you'll play a word game with me."

"Are you kidding?"

"Twenty dollars says I'm not."

Her eyes sparkled with drunken glee. "I'm game. Try me."

"Then look at my ring. Let your eyes follow the platinum C without moving your face. . . . That's right. . . . Now relax and think of something pleasant. Imagine you're flat on your back in a field of daisies, waiting for your favorite lover, but he's a long time coming and you're growing drowsy."

As he talked he was moving the ring in a slow circle, keeping it in a shaft of light from the window. "Now, Susan, I'm going to call a word. You answer with a word that my word reminds you of. My first word, Susan, is . . . love?"

"Money."

"Money?"

"Green."

"Green?"

"Green men. . . . No, helicopters. Dogs. Dogs and fire. Guns!"

He snapped his fingers and she smiled across at him. "I'm game, Jim. Try me. Give me some words."

"You're too smart for me, Susan. You win by default."

As he laid her winnings on the table, a voice over the P.A. system announced, "Doctor Galway, report immediately to Doctor English's office."

"They're calling you," Susan said. "You're going to leave me." Her eyes were misting toward a crying jag. Rising, he placed his martini beside her empty glass and chucked her under the chin.

"It's a tough life. Drink this, Susan, and go play with balls."

His gesture brought a freshet of tears as he turned and strode across the room, feeling sympathy for her but no empathy. His flanks, too, were crumpling, his center giving way but he had no alternative other than

to attack. By now BAC had scanned his letter, authenticated its date from supporting data, and had been reduced to a chitter of disassociated impulses—an electronic nervous wreck.

That far that good, but no further. English had lost his nerve and automated the Mark 37 trephines, but the absent-minded bastard had set their blades too low.

Elsie Cook had paged him. Doctor English was called to the hospital on an emergency but wanted Galway to wait in his office to discuss a matter of extreme urgency.

Emergencies were cropping up all over, Galway thought as he walked in and sat before English's desk, eyeing the bar rather wistfully. No doubt English was giving him time to reconsider his plans, but he was committed to Christine, and it was too late to back out. Perhaps he had been overly elaborate in programming himself with the pathological responses of martyrdom, but at least romantic affection was a better opiate than whisky.

He was halfway through his second scotch and soda when English entered with a strangely brisk gait, saying, "Jim, we just got our tickets out of here, air-mailed from Walter Reed Hospital. A government VIP was brought in this morning, loaded with dexametha-sone. . . ."

"Glioblastoma?" Galway asked.

"A hopeless case." English was rubbing his hands in glee as he sat down at the desk. "The brain's studded with tumors. We'll have to trim his brain stem."

"What about the sanity hearings?"

"Despite antagonizing the judges, you did pretty well for an old country boy. Paul and Katie go scot-free, Little Mac is being remanded to the out-patient clinic at Topeka, and even Christine was awarded an oak leaf. Congratulations."

English spoke of his oak leaf as if it were the Medal

of Honor rather than a license for butchery. Despite his inner preparation and the whisky, Galway fought to keep his face calm.

"Thank you. Who is this VIP?"

"A senator whose identity and ailment must be kept secret from his constituents. At the moment he has nothing to do with HEW-CIA, but he's in line for a seat on the Ways and Means Committee."

"So if his brain's programmed to ask questions . . ." Galway mused. "Where are the children?"

"Lunching at the high school."

"Mrs. Butterfield's with them?"

"To the bitter end. . . . You're right about the programming, but that's only one approach. . . ."

Galway raised his hand to interject. "But where do we get the healthy brain?"

"We have two choices. First, there's Milbank Pomeroy."

"He's supposed to be going out."

"He's out all right. Maria's got him in the cryonic vaults. That girl's an artist."

"Is that ethical?"

"Lovestone was indiscreet in his presence, so security wouldn't release him. Anyway, the country needs legislators more than truckdrivers, and the job will pay better if your operation succeeds."

Success was doubtful, Galway knew. Since the tumor had entered the thalamus, protuberances would have to be carved onto the healthy brain to fit into the excavations in the diseased brain stem. If the senator's memory was to be retained, the operation was beyond the capabilities of an automated trephine. It would require a surgeon with the skills of a Michelangelo.

"Health, Education and Welfare would really like to see this one succeed, wouldn't it, Bob?"

"The Secretary of HEW's waiting for my telegram."

"I'll make a deal. I'll do the operation if you'll give me Christine."

"What do you want with Christine?"

"I love her."

English looked at him in amazement and slumped back into his chair. "Get me a drink, quick."

Half-smiling, Galway complied. His hands were steady as he returned with the glass and coaster and placed the drink before his stricken friend, who sat abstracted, dazed.

"Do you want me to put the cup to your lips?" Galway asked.

Wanly English waved his offer aside and lifted the glass. He held it before him without sipping and said, "James Galway, aged forty-plus, in love with a sixteen-year-old loony. . . . Jim, you didn't bring that girl out of her madness. She drew you into hers."

"The girl is not mad," Galway said. "She is a poet in the ultimate ivory tower."

"Of what value is a poet?"

"To a neurosurgeon, nothing. To a prophet, she's an inspiration."

English looked at him closely, expecting or hoping to see a jesting smile on Galway's lips, but all Galway showed him was beatific sincerity.

"Either you've earned an oak-leaf cluster," English said finally, "or you've got religion, or both."

"Say, rather, I've seen a vision of a dreamed-of Eden where men, immortal and forever young, soar on angels' wings. And I've found the key to the gate of the garden, genetic engineering."

English looked bemused. "What about sex?" he asked.

"Keep it as a sanitized ritual of love, but reproduce by controlled cloning."

"You *are* insane."

Galway leaned forward. "Do *you* want to see the man-blob oozing over earth again, spewing babies from sperm spume, befouling air and water, breeding violence from despair?"

"I'd like to be on the side of the angels," English admitted, "but of course that depends on which side the angels are on. . . . Where does this put you with BAC?"

"I submit, of course. We're doing socially worthwhile work here, and I'm particularly involved with the Angel Project. Besides, a machine, in itself, is neither good nor evil. . . ."

English waved down further protestations. "As far as I'm concerned, Jim, you can have the girl, but the release of oak-leaf holders is a security function. We can't have discharged patients running around the country speaking of what they've seen here. Pomeroy's a case in point. But I'll have Elsie contact Knowles and put the proposition to him. Will you retain the clinic as a cover for your sex life?"

"I'll keep the clinic as our residence," Galway said. "Christine likes the horses. . . . May I use your phone?"

English shoved the phone over the desk and switched on the intercom. "Elsie, I have a top-priority message for Doctor Knowles. . . ."

Galway put a hand over his ear to block out English's voice and called Mrs. Butterfield to the phone.

"Yes, Doctor Galway?"

"After lunch, take the children to the clinic for our last supper."

"That's nice, Doctor Galway. But Christine went to lunch with Doctor Crossetti."

Galway hung up and looked over at English, who had finished his message to Elsie. "Bob, Maria's got her!"

"By whose authority?"

"By her own apparently. Your artist is a fanatic, and jealous. . . . Give me your car keys."

English tossed the keys across the desk, saying, "Blue car, first stall. I'll clear you for entrance into the vaults and then call Maria."

Galway was out of the door and headed down the stairs. He found the car and gunned it out of the garage, slewing into the north lane with a whine of rubber, and hit the intersection at 80. In less than ten minutes he had spun to a stop in a spray of gravel before the mortuary office.

Maria was opening the door, alarm showing on her face, as he leaped from the car. "Where's Christine?"

"In the fifth circle. You'll kill yourself, Jim, driving like that."

The fifth circle, he recalled, was reserved for non-mutilated teen-agers, and he reacted to the knowledge with savage anger at her concern for his safety. "I wouldn't wish to deny you that privilege," he said. "Who authorized Christine's termination?"

"Doctor Knowles. I've explained it to Doctor English, and he was quite upset, but she's at peace, Jim. I said a little prayer for her."

He strode past her into the office, where Joe Mendenhall sat. "Take me to her," he said.

"Jim, it's all over now. She's with the angels. But if you wish to pay your last respects . . ."

"Maria, I don't want you alone in the vaults with that man," Mendenhall said.

"Your attitude is presumptous, Mr. Mendenhall. Come, Jim."

She followed him along the loading platform and through the door. "Jim," she said, "there's no need for haste."

She was right. He turned and waited for her to catch up, saying, "You terminated her without authority, Maria. Doctor Knowles has nothing to do with administration, and you know it."

"Jim, you haven't studied our operational procedures. Doctor Knowles has emergency authority to authorize a termination."

"This was no emergency."

Again they had come to the place of the dead. Behind them he could hear Mendenhall enter the door, his footfalls sounding lewd and insistent, like the thud thud of a voyeur's heart behind a two-way mirror.

"Joe said it was, and he's my contact. If the termination was unauthorized, it's his responsibility." She lowered her voice. "He found out about us, somehow, and he's terribly jealous."

"Maria, you've fallen for his trick. He knew if you murdered the girl, I'd have nothing more to do with you."

She might believe him, but if she did it would be a Pyrrhic victory. As they swung right at the fifth circle, Galway twisted the platinum C on his class ring, releasing the cyanide needle. Neither Mendenhall nor Crossetti was coming out of the vaults alive. He was going to meet Doctor Knowles the hard way.

"Here she is," Maria said, switching on a light, "and isn't she lovely?"

As the interior of the vault flooded with light, Galway gasped in anguish.

Stretched out on white linen, slightly below his eye level, in a shroud of filmy black, lay his beloved. With her arms folded over her stomach and her eyes gazing into infinity, her trance of death varied little from her trance of life, but now the silent clarions were sounding for her in vain. She would go no more a-hawking in the blaze of noon, and never again would those hips sway in stately pacings to the beat of different drums. For her the mountain meadows would bloom no more, and never would her dark be lighted by the rising of the horned moon. Now she was a vestal of eternity, her right breast forever inviolate.

"Your tomb shall become a shrine, my beloved," he promised her aloud, "and you shall be cloned to walk again in beauty over this earth, your loveliness unshadowed by madness."

"You never talked to me like that," Maria said.

"Silence, murderess," he said.

He could hear Mendenhall come nearer, noticing, too, that this man, who hungered for a murdering harlot, slowed his own steps in reverence.

When cloned, Christine would grow without madness, he realized suddenly, and it was her madness that had enthralled him. She was indeed dead, for there was no art to reconstruct a soul.

By degrees, his loss numbed him, as his living eyes looked into the dead and his mind admitted that her

spirit had flown forever. Some dim-remembered line of Poe stirred in him and he voiced it aloud: "My lady sleeps, ah, may her sleep, which is enduring, so be deep."

Behind him, Maria gratuitously supplied a line he had not remembered: "Soft may the worms about her creep."

In the chill of his mind, he thought, at first, that the arms surrounding him from behind were those of Maria, embracing him in sympathy and sexuality, but when he turned to denounce her, he saw it was Mendenhall holding him.

"Doctor Knowles is coming," Mendenhall said to Maria.

"This is very unusual." Maria was genuinely perplexed.

"It's some sort of private beef," Mendenhall said, "but I don't question orders, I just carry them out."

Galway continued to gaze down on Christine, silently asking her forgiveness for the coming desecration before her crypt. Far away, he heard the wheeze of the thermal door opening, heard it slide shut, and heard footsteps coming down the main passage.

To the very end he would play the grief-stricken lover, but his grief evaporated in rage at the approaching sound. As the clickety-click of a woman's heels drew nearer, he recognized the walk of Mrs. Butterfield and knew his trap would snap on not entirely unexpected prey.

She turned briskly at the fifth circle, swinging down the corridor, and she was carrying Crossetti's handbag. "Doctor Crossetti, no good carpenter is ever without his tools. Forgetting this was very thoughtless of you."

She handed the bag to a dazed Maria.

"It's Doctor Knowles, Maria," Mendenhall said. "Do what she says."

"Doctor Galway," Mrs. Butterfield said, "you can't stay away from that girl, even in death, can you? She made you a very dangerous man, but I suppose you

know that. You don't compute anymore, Doctor. But we'll send you with her. Of course, you're too old for the fifth circle."

"This isn't authorized, Maria," Galway said.

"Of course it's authorized, Doctor Crossetti. And you should worry. He turned us both down for a catatonic virgin. Even dead, he prefers her to us. . . . But justice will be done. He who lives by the needle shall die by the needle. Get out your hypo, my dear."

Watching, Galway saw compassion mix with avidity on Crossetti's face, and desire was winning. Slowly she opened her bag and brought out a hypodermic needle, beautifully balanced and gleaming in the light from Christine's crypt. Her face beneath the dark hair was almost beautiful in its solemnity and passion.

Galway slapped his ring against the thigh of Mendenhall.

It struck metal with a hollow clang. He felt the point bend back into the shield as it met the steel thigh of Mendenhall beneath the fabriskin covering.

"Be careful of his ring, Joe," Mrs. Butterfield called. "He's not a nice man."

A tempered-steel hand closed around his wrist, and Galway, helpless, awaited death in the grasp of English's ultimate cyborg.

"I've passed over eight without a scratch," Mendenhall said, as if his professionalism were in question.

"Don't brag, Mendenhall. For every man you've killed, I've killed a billion," Galway said, seeing Maria waver. Since he had to go, he saw no reason to let her jeopardize her career, but strangely, his remark did not strengthen her. She paused, the needle poised, and Mendenhall was holding his arm out for her injection.

"Go ahead, stick the pig, Maria," Mendenhall barked, "or I'll stick you."

She wavered because Galway's remark had a reverse effect. She was a death-lover confronting a prince of darkness. "Dearest Jim," she whispered, "I'll place you next to my Darktown Strutter."

It was as if the promise of this rather dubious—for

him—honor absolved her. She plunged the needle into his arm.

"Good-bye, Maria, my only mature love," he said. "God bless."

In the brief seconds before death claimed him, Galway felt none of the conventional final feelings, no sense of soaring, no flashing review of his life. All he could think of was the date, the ninth day of the ninth month.

He had met his fate on a double date.

# epilogue:
## Three Years Later

Spring had come to the high country when Doctor Robert English took a little walk through the April woods between the resort hotel and the Paradise Valley Golf Course. Lupine and poppies flared along the path, and here and there among the trees an arbutus trailed. Snow still spotted the north shadows of the sequoia boles, and he inhaled the odor of thawing sod and burgeoning grass. Despite his preoccupation with official concerns, English thrilled slightly to the awakening earth.

His stride was a little less brisk than that of the man James Galway had known, laughter crinkles around his eyes had deepened, and gray fretted the sideburns of Mario D'Anzio. One third of a decade, plus another set of acquisitions, had given firmer anchor to his former ebullience, but long-absent friends might have felt the old *bonhomie* surrounding him. At the moment, however, English was troubled.

His citadel was being invaded a second time with an intrusion more sinister than the first. Two years earlier an attempt by the California Highway Patrol to get into the valley had created a flap as far back as Washington. The matter had been hushed when the missing person sought—a Doctor Claude Lovestone—had been found legitimately ensconced in a violent ward at Camarillo. But now the intrusion came from more powerful sources. Yesterday a telephone call had come from his former sergeant, now Chief of the CIA, Winston Cabot Fairfax, telling him to prepare the facility for inspection at 11 A.M. this morning.

English had prepared. He had taken the flag from the ninth hole, put the players away, and whitewashed a crude X on the putting green. Down the fairway among the trees, a golfer's cart draped with red, white, and blue bunting waited for English's summons.

Base security was not English's problem but personal insecurity was. If the cover were lifted from the facility, he would be first before a firing squad after a brief pause before the U.N.'s War Crimes Tribunal, and his inheritance from Galway had given him hope of an active retirement, a sweet death in bed, and hosts of mourning ladies tossing flowers on his bier.

Breaking from the woods to the edge of the green, English heard the helicopter throbbing from the north. Moments later he saw it through the trees, flying low, and then it was hovering above the green like a giant dragon fly and sinking slowly to earth. At the lip of the sand trap, he semaphored the caddy and turned to await his disembarking guests.

First from the cabin with an athlete's leap came Winston Cabot Fairfax, the eternal frat man grown slightly bald. He sprinted the 20 yards toward English, his hand extending at the halfway mark, and his voice boomed above the dying sibilance of the rotors. "General English! I don't know whether to salute you, hug you, or shake your hand."

English extended a limp hand beneath a wan smile and spoke softly as Fairfax bounded to a halt, "Well, W.C., you can always shine my shoes."

Fairfax clasped his shoulder, held him at arm's length, and gazed down on his former commanding officer with a proprietary smile. "Don't worry, Doc," he whispered, "I got him in the palm of my hand, and I'm right behind you, 100 percent."

"Tell me when I'm up against the wall," English said, looking over a burly shoulder at a tall, slender, dark-haired man who approached them with authority in his walk and no smile on his face.

Fairfax stepped aside, "Senator Duval, this is Doctor English, the facility's director."

He extended a formal hand to English, who accepted it formally and felt it draw back quickly. "Senator Duval's from Louisiana and ranking member of Ways and Means. There have been some rumors he wants to check."

Senator Duval, English noticed, was surreptitiously wiping his palm on his trousers leg as he spoke. "More than rumors, Mr. Fairfax, the testimony of a former patient given to me personally."

He turned to English. "This inspection has been authorized by the President, Doctor, and I wish to inform you both that if the testimony is verified, charges may be brought. Tomorrow morning the President will accept the resignation of the Chairman of Health, Education and Welfare, pending further action that may be instituted on the basis of my findings. You may remain silent if you wish."

The only softness in the senator's voice came from the ersatz diphthongs of his Southern drawl and a startled glance by Fairfax told him the senator was in no one's palm.

This could be it, English thought, but there was no tremor in his voice as he said, "In the light of the service rendered to the nation, Senator, I believe the facility can be justified."

Down the fairway, the caddy's cart was *putt-putting* toward them, a green guard at the steering tiller.

"Army U-70 reconnaissance photos revealed a psychiatric hospital on the grounds," the senator said. "It will be closed and the patients assigned to open facilities. Another matter I wish to discuss is the existence of a biological experimental station. Do you have one?"

"Let me answer that, Senator," Fairfax intervened.

"Mr. Fairfax, I specifically don't care for you to answer."

"We have such a unit," English admitted.

As the cart pulled up, English stepped back and said, "The facility is ready for your inspection, Senator."

The senator sat down in the cart, pulling a crudely drawn map from his pocket. "North of the administra-

tion building there's a chapel atop a hill. Beneath it there are cryonic vaults. Take me there first."

"To the morgue, Caddy," English said.

They sat in silence as the cart lumbered down the fairway and up a bridle path, cutting across the parking lot of the inn. Fairfax, seated on the opposite side of the senator, leaned forward and spoke to English. "Doctor, I believe you have on your staff an acquaintance of mine, a psychiatric nurse, Mrs. Butterfield?"

"Did have," English said. "She died unexpectedly last night after a short illness."

"Oh! Who was her attending physician?"

"Doctor Maria Crossetti."

Fairfax thought for a moment. "You have an Elsie Cook, also, I believe."

"Yes. That building there, in the administrative office."

"Senator, since you're in such good hands with Doctor English, may I be excused for a visit?"

"Certainly."

Abreast of the city hall, Fairfax leaped from the cart and English settled back. From the outset he had recognized that Fairfax was no longer a help or a threat. The man beside him held all the power, and English did not like his feeling of helplessness.

"You understand, Senator, that I'm here under duress."

"From the alleged nature of your duress, that problem would not be one for my government but for the United Nations."

Duval's implication was clear to English. He would be charged with international crimes and be shot, whereas Fairfax's crime, purely a governmental matter, would be squelched in the interest of national security.

Not until they were turning off the lane onto the drive to Chapel Hill did the senator speak again. "A deposition made to me by a former patient of your facility included the name of Doctor James Galway, neurosurgeon, as your executive officer. Where is he?"

"Dead," English said flatly.

"How did he die?"

"With honor, I presume. I have heard that just before he died he babbled of green fields."

"That's a crock," the senator snapped. "The CIA has a record of his deathbed confession implicating himself in the flu epidemic."

And thereby implicating his former commanding officer, English realized. As the bunting-draped cart pulled to a halt before the Gothic-arched loading entrance to the organ bank, he wondered why Galway had taken such a method to insure that the charges would never be aired.

"Then I'll get it either way," English commented as they stepped from the cart. "Either from the U.N. or the U.S."

Behind him, Senator Duval waited for the caddy to drive out of earshot as the cart trundled toward the camouflage shed. "Not either way, Doctor. Since a trial would implicate the U.S. High Command, you'll get it here, with extreme prejudice."

They mounted the ramp and walked down the unloading platform, past Maria Crossetti's empty office, and English asked, "Why do you tell me this?"

"Because I'm talking to a dead man."

"You have me by the well-known appendages, Senator."

"Perhaps too well known," the senator said.

The thermal door slid open. They walked through, and the door slid shut behind them with a metallic clank instead of a thud.

"The door's warped," the senator said.

English ignored the comment. The intuition and quirkish attention to detail were still there, but he had been given no inkling of the senator's policy.

"There's the matter of a verbal contract between us, Senator."

"Yes, you needed a lawyer. Specifically, the contract was: If I saved your tail, you'd save mine. It remains to be seen if you saved mine."

English felt relieved for the first time since the sena-

tor wiped his palm in that implied contempt after the handshake, the gesture that seemed to have condemned English on some obscure point of ethics or morality.

"The tail is right where you left it," English assured him, "in the fifth circle. But if I may criticize the owner of the candystore, your confession was dirty pool."

"There were two reasons for that confession," the senator said. "The first was to assure me that you would operate with all skill, an insurance clause on that first contract. As it was, you didn't leave me enough thalamus for me to remember my name. I had to con my own name from my nurse. I had to research my voting record to find out what my politics were. I told you to leave me some stubs."

"I never professed to your skills with the knife," English apologized. "I'm no Michelangelo of the scalpel."

"Agreed," Senator Duval said.

"Anyway, I didn't operate. I automated the Mark 37. It had worked on the Lovestone-Pomeroy switch."

"Not very well," the senator said. "Lovestone was such a lousy truckdriver he went into country music. . . . You set the blade too low. Well, you were never much of a detail man."

"Your tumors went deep," English said, wondering whether to use "your" or "his."

"If you were so unsure," the senator said, "why didn't you put the cup to your own lips when I offered it?"

"I didn't have the guts," English said.

"Agreed," the senator said, and the too-hearty accord in his agreement rasped against English.

"More than that," English said, "there were administrative problems I couldn't leave to you."

The senator nodded. "That was my second reason for the confession."

English didn't understand, and he awaited an explanation. None came. In the silence, their footfalls echoed hollowly along the tunnel.

Suddenly the senator asked, "What happened to Mendenhall?"

"Detail work again." English shook his head. "The CIA wanted an ultimate agent from my ultimate cyborg, so I gave him a mechanical heart. But I forgot to put a battery in the heart. . . . By the way, don't let Maria know about you. She still wears black for you, her only true love."

They had come to the fifth circle and turned right, to Christine's crypt. English walked ahead and illuminated the vault. Behind him he heard the footsteps, slow in reverence, and the senator was standing, looking down on the hibernating girl. For long moments he stood in silence until English grew impatient.

"You look like Romeo at Juliet's bier," English said, half-scornfully. "Do you want to arouse her now?"

"Later," the senator said softly. "Business before pleasure. Besides, I'll want to be alone with her."

"Will she recognize you?"

"Yes, we have a signal. That's why I want to be alone . . ."

The senator paused in mid-sentence. Underneath the gauze of Christine's shroud there was an adhesive bandage, hardly bigger than a corn pad. He pointed to it and turned to English. "You've cloned her."

"Twice," English said. "One for me and a replacement for her. A more beautiful pair of twins you've never seen. I've also got a couple of young fellows over in the nursery you might be interested in."

"Children are no longer my hobby," the senator said. "Turn off the light or I'll never be able to leave this place."

English turned off the light and the two men walked back toward the exit.

"What are we going to do with English?" English asked.

"That's Fairfax's problem," the senator answered. "One of his lesser problems. . . . How did you get Maria to cooperate?"

"I didn't," English said. "As I foretold you, I switched needles in her handbag. She thinks she killed you completely. What's this about Fairfax's other problem?"

"My deathbed confession implicated him. A man can get the firing squad for harboring a war criminal, such as you. But the War Department figures he'll be safe if he lies low here and maintains security for about twenty years. But you like the place, don't you?"

English thought of the robust body that had leaped from the helicopter and sprinted across the green. "It grows on one," he admitted. "Particularly when one has free-will."

"You'll keep the biologic research center and the organ bank," the senator said. "You'll close down the farm. I wouldn't think of leaving the administration of the remaining facility or the care of our replacements to any administrator but you. But don't touch my Christine's Christine."

"After me," English said, "you can trust God."

"Before you. You don't have His knack for details."

However waspish and true, English realized that the senator's remark was less a criticism than a resumption of the old subliminal language that was no longer needed, so he made a plain-language reply to the suggestion.

"It wouldn't be ethical for me to forget to put the gliogel in Fairfax's electrolytic vat. Besides, there's a matter of administrative jurisdiction. Elsie now orders all local terminations, and Maria has earned the right to make the last deposit in the bank. . . . By now, Maria should have Fairfax ready for you."

"For me?" the senator snorted. "I haven't performed an operation since the Atterbury-Crossetti swap."

English grabbed the senator's arm and swung him around, jabbing a finger into his lapel for emphasis. "I said, 'for you.' You're not using that automated cookie-cutter on me. And I don't want you to leave me enough of his thalamus to remember his name. I know his name too well already."

Suddenly jovial, smiling, the senator threw an arm over English's shoulder and they resumed their walk to the exit. "Seeing as how a plumber could do it, I won't panic and desert you, old friend."

They had come again into the sunlight. The senator stood on the edge of the unloading ramp, his eyes sweeping the valley, stretching green to the tawny mountains.

"A right pretty place," he mused, "to bring a colony of spiritual-minded folks. . . . By the way, Pomeroy-Lovestone's getting tired of Nashville. He can't stand the sentimental music now that Susan's back in jail for writing bad checks. . . . Yes, a right pretty place."

"We could take one of the biologists . . ." English started to suggest, but the senator wasn't listening. He was teetering on the balls of his feet, his hands clasped behind his back, lost in thought. A faint nostalgia in his eyes let English sense the drift of his mind, and English was dreading his next question before it was asked.

"Say, Bob, how's the other little angel of mine?"

English stepped down from the ramp and waved to the driver, waiting under the shed. "It's hopping around," he answered. "As intelligent a condor as you'd ever hope to find."

"What do you mean 'hopping'? Why isn't it flying?"

Senator Duval-Galway had been so officious about attention to details that English feared his reply might be taken personally, but there was no way to circumvent the answer.

"It has no feathers, Jim. You forgot its feathers."

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