

1805 VOL 1 PROJETS ET TENTATIVES DE DEBARQUEMENT AUX ILES BRITANNIQUES

Through the cacophony of shattering glass, splintering wood, and cracking plaster, Paul heard the hard roar of an engine, the blare of a horn, and suspected what must have happened. Some drunk or reckless driver had crashed at high speed into the parsonage. Excessive insurance, Agnes believed, was a temptation to fate. "A reasonable policy, yes, that's fine. But a big one ... it's like betting on death." In addition to mulling over strategy, Tom had spent a lot of time lately brooding about culpability: his own, not Cain's. By seizing on the name that he heard Cain speak in a dream, by making use of it in this psychological warfare, had he been the architect of the killer's Bartholomew obsession, or if not the architect, then at least an assisting. Dining room. Two place settings at one end of the table. Wineglasses. Two ornate pewter candlesticks, candles not yet lit. Glasses off the table. He seized one of the pewter candlesticks, as well, knocking the candle out of it. "Jacob scares people," Agnes said. "No one would eat a pie that Jacob delivered without having it tested at a lab." "Nicholas Deed." On her tongue, the name was as bitter as a dissolving aspirin. The musician's behavior required explanation. After wending through the crowd, Junior located the man in front of a painting so egregiously beautiful that any connoisseur of real art could hardly resist the urge to slash the canvas to ribbons. Great hobnailed wheels of pain turned through Agnes, driving her into darkness for a moment. He wanted to say: The vain, power-mad politicians who milk cheers from ignorant crowds, the sports stars and preening actors who hear themselves called heroes and never object, they should all wither with shame at the mention of your name. Your vision, your struggle, the years of grueling work, your enduring faith when others doubted, the risk you took with career and reputation--it's one of the great stories of science, and I'd be honored if I could shake your hand. Then from San Francisco International, through the fog-shrouded streets of the night city, to St. Mary's, to Room 724. And to the discovery that Phimie's blood pressure was so high--210 over 126--that she was in a hypertensive crisis, at risk of a stroke, renal failure, and other life-threatening complications. This back blow wasn't just sport, either, but more like Vietnam as lie sometimes told women that he remembered it. As though pitched by a grenade blast, Junior went from his feet to the floor with chin-rapping impact, teeth guillotining together so hard that he would have severed his tongue if it had been between them. As nimble as a geriatric cat, crying out with pain, Junior nevertheless sprang onto the deep windowsill and shoved against the twin panes of the window. They were already partly open--but they were also stuck. Crouched on the deep sill, pushing against the parted casement panes of the tall French window, using not just muscle but the entire weight of his body, leaning into them, the maniac tried to force his way out of the bedroom. Her awful sense of weightlessness became something much better: buoyancy, an exhilarating lightness of spirit. Fear remained with her--fear for Barty, fear of the future and of the strange complexity of Creation that she'd just glimpsed--but wonder and wild hope now tempered it. Dropped cartridges gleamed on the carpet. Stoop to snatch them up? No. That was asking for a skull-cracking blow. The Spruce Hills Police Department was far too small to have a full-blown Scientific Investigation Division. And if the tableau presented to them appeared convincing enough, they might accept the death as a freak accident and never turn to the state police for technical. He was immensely weary, limp. He felt oppressed, as though a great weight were piled on him. Even keeping his eyes open was tiring. Celestina almost begged off, almost told him that she had no interest in whatever curiosity of medicine or physiology he might have witnessed. The only miracle that would have mattered, Phimie's survival, had not been granted. Deeply distressed that he was planning the funeral of a man as young as Joe Lampion, whom he had liked and admired, Panglo paused to express his disbelief and to murmur comforting words, more to himself than to Jacob, as each decision was made. With one hand on the chosen casket, he said, "Unbelievable, a traffic accident, and on the very day his son is born. So sad. So terribly sad." "It's a lot," Angel insisted. "Wally gave me an Oreos, last time I saw him. You like Oreos?" Golden lamplight gilded the front windows downstairs. He would sit with Victoria on the living-room sofa, sipping wine as they got to know each other. She might tell him to call her Vicky, and maybe he'd ask her to call him Eenie, the affectionate name Naomi had given him when he wouldn't tolerate Enoch. Soon, they would be necking like two crazy kids. Junior would disrobe her on the sofa, caressing her smooth pliant body, her skin buttery in the lamplight, and then he would carry her, naked, to the dark bedroom upstairs. Without using his flashlight, depending only on the moon, he ascended through the cemetery to the service road. Beautiful she was, both of face and form, even with her mouth gaping wide and her eyes rolled back in her skull. How bright her future might have been if she had not chosen to deceive. A tease was, in essence, a deceiver--promising what she never intended to deliver. He turned the knob. The door eased inward, but he pushed it open only a fraction of an inch. To the window. The warm room sucked cooling fog out of the night, and she leaned across the sill into the streaming mist. In the passenger's seat, Barty was cushioned in his mother's arms. At times, the boy cooed or gurgled, or made a wet chording sound. "Well, you ought to be," Grace said, taking her pies out to the Suburban that Wally had bought solely for this enterprise. She was so hot that the ice melted quickly. A thin trickle slid down her throat, but not enough to take the Sahara out of her voice when she said, "More." At home, Agnes had no appetite, but she fixed Barty a cheese sandwich, spooned potato salad into a dish, added a bag of corn chips and a Coke, and served this late dinner on a tray, in his room, where he was already in bed and reading *Tunnel in the Sky*. Pistol that he'd purchased in late June. The city operated a program to melt confiscated and donated weapons and to remake them into plowshares or xylophones, or into the metal fittings of hookah pipes. The family didn't exist in anticipation of developments with Barty and Angel, didn't put the pair at the center of their world. Instead, they did the good work, shared the satisfactions that came daily with being part of Pie Lady Services, and got on with life. He opened the solid doors on the bottom of the breakfront, did not find what he was looking for, checked in the sideboard next, and there it was, a small liquor supply. Scotch, gin,

vodka. He selected a full bottle of vodka. "I knew," said Wally, braking for a red traffic light, "that you'd be thinking of Phimie now, and thinking of her would lead you to your father's words, because as short as her life might have been, Phimie was a Bartholomew. She left her mark." "I'm sure you would be, yes, but I'm afraid I don't have the patience to teach, I'm a performer, not an instructor. I suppose I could give you the name of a good teacher." He tugged on a pair of thin latex surgical gloves. Flexed his hands. All right. To the growing pile of ruin, she added one of Joey's cardigan sweaters, after popping loose one bone button and almost completely detaching a sewn-on patch pocket. A pair of knockabout khaki pants: quickly clip open the seat seam; cut the corner of the wallet pocket, then rip it with both hands; snip loose some stitching and half detach the cuff on the left leg. Part of him knew this sound was his heartbeat, not the footfalls of an otherworldly pursuer, but that part of him wasn't dominant at the moment. He moved faster, not exactly running, but hurrying like a man late for an appointment. In spring, summer, and fall, they brightened the grave with the roses that Edom grew in the side yard. In this less rose-friendly season, these Christmas bouquets had been purchased at a flower shop. Applying his intelligence now, he employed simple meditation techniques to calm himself and to slow his heartbeat. The cop was trying to rattle him into making a mistake, but calm men did not incriminate themselves. The moon shimmered, and the stars blurred-but only briefly, for her devotion to this boy was a fiery furnace that tempered the steel of her spine and brought a drying heat to her eyes. Without Franklin Chan's full approval but with his complete understanding, Agnes took Barty home. On Monday, they would return to Hoag Hospital, where Barty would receive surgery on Tuesday. Junior stood at the window for a long time, not because he was pretending to rest, and not because any of the attending nurses was a looker. He was transfixed, and for awhile he didn't know why. Worse, to make credible his anguish and to avoid suspicion, he would have to play the devastated widower for at least another couple weeks, perhaps for as long as a month. As a dedicated follower of the self-improvement advice of Dr. Caesar Zedd, Junior was impatient with those who were ruled by sentimentality and by the expectations of society, and now he was required to pretend to be one of them-and for an interminable period of time. Murmuring on the edge of sleep, Barty spoke to his father in all the places where Joey still lived: "Good-night, Daddy." Maybe the watch wouldn't be discovered with the corpse. Maybe it would settle into the trash and not be found until archaeologists dug out the landfill two thousand years from now. Once, she left the TV and came to Tom, where he sat talking with Paul. "It's like Gunsmoke and The Monkees are next to each other on the TV, both at the same time. But the Monkees, they can't see the cowboys-and the cowboys, they can't see the Monkees." Tom removed the lid. No beer, one head. Simon Magusson's severed head lay faceup on the ice, mouth open as though he were standing in court to object to the prosecution's line of questioning. At the end, with the salt Tom and the pepper Tom standing side by side in their different but parallel worlds, Maria said, "Seems like science fiction." Amazed, Agnes gaped at her baby. The throat lump that blocked her speech was part pride, part awe, and part fear, though she didn't at once understand why this wonderful precociousness should frighten her. "Just that she's aware of all the ways things are," Maria added. "Like you and Barty." The second time, armed with the previously calculated fact that each regular year contains 3,153,600 seconds, and that a leap year contains an additional 86,400, she vetted Barty's answer in only four minutes. Thereafter, she accepted his numbers without verification. Nolly finally disturbed the quiet: "Well, sir ... you're quite a psychologist." He pressed the muzzle of the weapon against the girl's forehead and said, "Naomi, Seraphim, you were exquisite lovers, but you've got to be realistic. There's no way we can have a life together." As a young man, he had performed first in nightclubs catering to Negroes and in theaters like Harlem's Apollo. During World War II, he'd been part of a USO troupe entertaining soldiers throughout the Pacific, later in North Africa, and following D-Day, in Europe. Shivering, Junior slammed the trunk lid and warily surveyed the lonely landscape. Black pines spread bristled arms through the charry night, and the moon cast down a jaundiced light that seemed to obscure more than it illuminated. Through tears, that night, she asked him if the commitment he was making didn't frighten him. Instead, as he settled into the offered chair, he withdrew a picture of Perri from his wallet. It was an old black-and-white school photograph, slightly yellow with age, taken in 1933, the year he'd begun to fall in love with her, when they were both thirteen. Joey was standing just outside, gazing in at her. His blue eyes were seas where sorrow sailed. Perhaps a lot of suspects were rattled and ultimately unnerved by this behavior. Junior wouldn't be easily trapped. He was smart. One of his favorite gifts for Christmas 1967 was a twelve-hole chromatic harmonica with forty-eight reeds providing a full three-octave range. Even in his little hands, and with the limitations of his small mouth, this more sophisticated instrument enabled him to produce full-bodied versions of any song that appealed to him. Weird, this kid. Making him uneasy. All in white, with her incomprehensible yammering about talking books and talking dogs and her mother driving pies, and working on a damn strange drawing for a little girl. Phimie's speech had been slurred later, as well, immediately following the birth of the baby, when she had struggled to convey her desire to name her daughter Angel. "It isn't just the rotten railing," Junior said, still paging through the report, his outrage growing. "The stairs are unsafe." She slept for a while, waking to a prayer spoken softly but fervently in Spanish. The word need, instead of want, moved Paul to follow the doctor across the coffee shop. By the time Junior passed the three offices and found the men's room, Neddy had occupied it. The door was locked, which must mean this was a single-occupant john. The funeral was at two o'clock, after which family and friends of the deceased would gather here in the parsonage for a social, to break bread together and to share their memories of the loved one lost. Embarrassment flushed her when she realized that the paramedic had cut away the pants of her jogging suit. She was naked from the waist down. Drawing from a well of inspiration deeper than instinct, Junior knew that if ever he crossed paths with a man named Bartholomew, he must be prepared to deal with him as aggressively as he had dealt with Naomi. And without delay. A fine carpenter can wield a hammer with an economy of movement and accuracy as elegant as the motions of a symphony conductor with a

baton. A cop directing traffic can make a rough ballet out of the work. However, of all the humble tasks that men and women can transform into visual poetry by the application of athletic agility and grace, clambering into a Dumpster holds the least promise of beautification..He was a man with a plan, focused, committed, ready to act and then think, as soon as he was able to act. A spasm of pain weakened his hand. Cartridges slipped through his fingers, fell to the floor..He opened his mouth but stood mute. Raised his right hand from his side. Worked his fingers in the air, as though the needed words could be strummed from the ether. He felt stupid, foolish..For Gammoner, exactly as for Pinchbeck, Google had provided: a driver's license that was actually registered with the California Department of Motor Vehicles, and that would, therefore, stand up to any cop's inspection; a legitimate social-security card; a birth certificate actually on file with the cited courthouse; and an authentic, valid passport..Suddenly she realized-Good Lord!-that someone else had a had inside her, up the very center of her, massaging her uterus in the same lazy pattern as that made by the piece of melting ice on her belly..He exploded off Renee with the velocity of high-powered rifle fire. Stunned, disgusted, humiliated, he backed away from the chaise lounge, spluttering, wiping at his mouth, cursing..Before he searched the bedroom, Vanadium walked quickly back through the rooms that he had already inspected, suddenly remembering the three bizarre paintings of which Nolly, Kathleen, and Sparky had spoken, and wondering how he could have overlooked them. They were not here. He was able to locate, however, the places on the walls where the art works had hung, because the nails still bristled from the pocket plaster, and picture hooks dangled from the nails..use it. The cop was no threat to the English army, as Joan had been, but as far as Junior was concerned, the creep most definitely deserved to be burned at the stake..She asked Edom to stay in the main house, so Barty wouldn't be alone while she visited Maria Gonzalez for an hour or two. He was pleased to oblige, settling down to watch a television documentary about volcanoes, which promised to include stories about the 1902 eruption of Mont Pelee, on Martinique, which killed 28,000 people within minutes, and other disasters of colossal proportions..Simon's a good man. Now that he pretty much knows Cain pushed the wife, he doesn't feel better about representing him just because the payoff was big. And in the current case, he's not Cain's lawyer, so there's no conflict of interest, no ethics problem, so he's got a chance to set things right a little..The dear man cried and kissed her scars and told her that she was as beautiful as any woman alive. They stood then for a while, embracing, his hands upon her back, her breasts against his chest, and twice they kissed, but almost chastely, before she put on her blouse again..Because of a certain awareness you've had since childhood," Celestina said, recalling what he'd told her in San Francisco..The cemetery had been mown for the holiday. The scent of fresh cut grass grew more intense the longer Agnes met her son's radiant green-blue gaze, until the fragrance became exquisitely sweet..FOR JUNIOR CAIN, the Year of the Horse (1966) and the Year of the Sheep (1967) offered many opportunities for personal growth and self-improvement. Even if by Christmas Eve, '67, Junior would not be able to take a dry walk in the rain, this nevertheless was a period of great achievement and much pleasure for him..In her arms she held Bartholomew. The infant was not heavily bundled, for the weather was unseasonably mild..Not that she ever gave any indication that her brothers were other than a source of pride for her. She treated them always with respect, tenderness, and love-as if unaware of their shortcomings..Two high-quality deadbolt locks. Sufficient protection against the average intruder, but inadequate to keep out a self-improved man with channeled anger..Junior was aware that all the cops were watching him as he stared down at the body, and he frantically tried to think what an innocent husband would be likely to do or say, but his imagination failed him. His thoughts could not be organized..He fished the sound-suppressor from a jacket pocket, drew the pistol from his shoulder holster, and began to screw the former to the latter. He misthreaded it at first because his hands had begun to shake..And as he grew, the boy seemed content with his own company and that of his mother and his uncles. Yet Agnes worried that no children his age lived in their neighborhood. She thought he would be happier if he had a playmate or two..Evidently, either Frank Sinatra was an enthusiasm that Victoria and the detective shared, or the nurse purchased some of the crooner's records expressly for their dinner engagement..The social worker's office once more. Rain tapping lightly at the window where Dr. Lipscomb had stared intently into the fog as he tried to avoid confronting the life-changing revelation that Phimie, speaking with the special knowledge of the once-dead, had shown him..He told her that he loved her, and she slipped away upon his words. As she went, the haggard look of the terminal leukemic patient passed from her, and before the gray mask of death replaced it, he saw the beauty he had preserved in memory when he was three, before they took his eyes, saw it so briefly, as if something transforming welled out of her, a perfect light, her essence..Against the sight of Franklin Chan's pity, which implied the hopelessness of Barty's condition, Agnes closed her eyes. But she opened them at once, because this chosen darkness reminded her that unwanted darkness might be Barty's fate..Junior tipped his head back and gazed up toward the section of broken-out railing along the high observation deck..She didn't reach into your thoughts and pluck out the name Rowena. Or Beezil or Feezil!.Agnes's chilled bones. Pushing a tangle of wet hair away from her face, she realized that her hands were shaking..Who else? I think there's romance in the air. The cow-eyed way he looks at her, she could knock his knees out from under him just by giving him a wink..than the left: slack yet with a pulled look. The left eyelid drooped. That side of her.They came to the house in Boatwright Street after dark. They kicked the door in, and Hound, standing among the armed and armored men, said, "Him. Let the others be." And to Otter he said, "Don't move," in a low, amicable voice. He sensed great power in the young man, enough that he was a little afraid of him. But Otter's distress was too great and his training too slight for him to think of using magic to free himself or stop the men's brutality. He flung himself at them and fought them like an animal till they knocked him on the head. They broke Otter's father's jaw and beat his aunt and mother senseless to teach them not to bring up crafty men. Then they carried Otter away..Before setting out from home, Joey had buckled his lap belt, but because of Agnes's condition, she hadn't engaged her

own. She rammed against the door, pain shot through her right shoulder, and she thought, Oh, Lord, the baby!.Draped across his midsection, the terrible cold weight had chilled his flesh; but now his bone marrow prickled with ice at the thought of the birthmarked detective sitting silently in the dark, watching. Junior would have preferred dealing with Naomi, dead and risen and seriously pissed, rather than with this dangerously patient man.."Ouch," said Edom, and this earned him loving smiles from Maria, Agnes, and Barty.."They've gone to bed. They're tired," Wally told her as he put the car in gear and released the hand brake. "Aren't you?".His attention, as morbid as a circling vulture, settled upon the pianist's right hand. The left was open, palm down. But the right was crumpled shut, palm up..The symptoms that terrified Phimie-the headache, crippling abdominal pain, dizziness, vision problems-had entirely relented. Possibly they had been more psychological than physical in nature.."But I've never seen a case like this. Usually, boils appear on the back of the neck. And in moist areas like the armpits and the groin. Not so often on the face. And never in a quantity like this. Really, I've never seen anything like it.".Kennedy, whose portraits hung side by side, the girl revealed to their mom and dad what had been done to her and also what, in her despair."Sure. There's lots of places where he didn't get shot, but there's places where he got shot and died, too..".We don't sell no pizza," Angel said, because lately they had received a few calls for a new pizzeria with a phone number one digit different from theirs..The formless apprehension with which she had awakened at 1:50, Tuesday morning, had returned to her from time to time during the past couple days. Now, here it came again, pinching her throat and tightening her chest-at last beginning to take form..If the aftermath of his encounter with Vanadium had not been so messy, Junior might have paused for dinner before wrapping up his work here. The walk back from Quarry Lake had taken almost two hours, in part because he had ducked out of sight in the trees and brush each time that he heard traffic approaching. He was famished. Regardless of how well-prepared the food, however, ambience was a significant factor in the enjoyment of any meal, and bloodstained decor was not, in his view, conducive to fine dining..The paramedic pumped the inflation cuff of the sphygmomanometer, and Junior's blood pressure was most likely high enough to induce a stroke, driven skyward by the thought that Naomi's love had been a lie.

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