

## CONSTRUCTING MODERN ASIAN CITIZENSHIP

EACH MOMENTOUS DAY, the work was done in memory of his mother. At Pie Lady Services, always, they sought new recipes and new ways to brighten the corner where they were. This time, however, the singing lasted longer than before, long enough for him to become suspicious of the heating ducts. These rooms had ten-foot ceilings, and the ducts opened high in the walls. Of course, he also might have shot off his own thumbs as double insurance against being drafted and sent to Vietnam. Maintaining a brutal strangling pressure, Junior turned his head aside, to protect his eyes. He kned Neddy in the crotch, crunching the remaining fight out of him. If he didn't find the Rolex and get back to his car before the reception ended, he'd forfeit his best chance of following Celestina to Bartholomew. "Could you undo the spell you put on her?" a scene out of a movie about Robin Hood: a battle with cudgels on a slippery log bridge over a river. "Yes. I ... I'm still soaked with sweat." Junior wasn't interested in Vietnam anymore, and he wasn't in the least troubled by the other news. These two years were disturbing to him only because of Thomas Vanadium. The lunatic lawman was not at any of the tables. Junior was sure of that, because indulging his appreciation for lovely women, he had roamed the room repeatedly with his gaze. "Yours is a harder job than mine," Lipscomb told Grace, dandling Angel as he spoke. "I have no doubt of that." The pendulous bellies of the rain-swollen clouds were no darker than when he had first come to the cemetery, yet they appeared more ominous now than earlier. The fire department. The firemen could come without sirens, quietly with their ladders, so as not to break Barty's concentration. Agnes discovered that watching her child be totally consumed by a new enthusiasm was an unparalleled delight. Through Barty, she had a tantalizing sense of what her own childhood might have been like if her father had allowed her to have one, and at times, listening to the boy exclaim about the space-faring Stone family or about the mysteries of Mars, she discovered that at least some part of a child still lived within her, untouched by either cruelty or time. Hope became easier to sustain when late 1966 and 1967 brought the biggest advance in women's fashions since the invention of the sewing needle: the miniskirt, and then the micromini. Already, Mary Quant-of all things, a British designer-had conquered England and Europe with her splendid creation; now she brought America out of the dark ages of psychopathic modesty. The grass, silent because he is barely conscious, too badly beaten to protest or to plead for mercy, but also. "No, I didn't see him," Junior reminded the attorney. "I just assumed, when this harassment started here-". People like Enoch Cain, of course, never choose between the right and the wrong thing, but between two evils. For themselves, they create world after world of despair. For others, they make worlds of pain. He found it difficult to make a painful personal revelation sound sincere when delivered in a shout, but he managed well enough to bring a shine of tears to her eyes: "Part of my left foot was shot off in this upcountry sweep we did." For a driver who had just engaged in a demolition derby with a house, the mummified man was steady on his feet and unhesitant in his actions. He turned to Harrison White and shot him twice in the chest. 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. stubbornly withholds them is to take a bitterly cold shower while pressing ice against one's genitals, until the desired facts are recalled or hypothermic collapse ensues. Agnes was only thirty-nine years old, full of plans and vigor, so Angel's words seemed premature. Yet in too few years, she would have reason to wonder if perhaps these gifted children foresaw, unconsciously, that she would need the comfort of having witnessed this climb. "Simon's a funny duck," Vanadium said, "but I like him more than a little and trust him implicitly. He wanted to know what he could do to help. Initially, my speech was slurred, I had partial paralysis in my left arm, and I'd lost fifty-four pounds. I wasn't going to be looking for Cain for a long time, but it turned out Simon knew where he was." Everyone agreed, and the order was placed when their waiter brought appetizers: crab cakes for Nolly, scampi for Kathleen, and calamari for Tom. "Crafty men need to stick together," he said. "Men who have no art at all, nothing but wealth-they pit us one against the other, for their gain not ours. We sell em our power. Why do we? If we went our own way together, we'd do better, maybe." For the first time since walking to La Jolla to meet Jonas Salk, Paul planned a journey with a specific purpose. He still had a sour taste in his mouth, although it was not as disgusting as it had been. All the odors were wonderfully clean and bracing--antiseptics, floor wax, freshly laundered bedsheets-without a whiff of. With a smudge of flour on one cheek, wiping her hands on a red-and-white checkered dishtowel, Agnes answered the door, saw the car in the driveway, and said, "Paul! You're not walking?" do further testing, of course, but not until he's been stabilized at least twelve hours. Personally, I don't think we'll find any physical cause. Most likely, this was psychological-acute nervous emesis, caused by severe anxiety, the shock of losing his wife, seeing her die. Books were stacked high on a nearby table, favorite novels and volumes of verse, all of which Agnes had read before. With time so limited, she preferred the comfort of the familiar to the possibility that new writers and new stories would fail to please. Paul read to her often, as did Angel. Tom Vanadium sat with her, too, as did Celestina and Grace. faiths and inhibiting rules that confused humanity, when he was sufficiently enlightened to believe only in himself, he would be able to trust his instincts, for they would be free of society's toxic views, and he would be assured of success and happiness if always he followed these gut feelings. He also sought a supplier of high-quality counterfeit ID. This proved easier than he anticipated. He knew that the only movement in those staring, sightless eyes was the restless reflection of the flashlight beam as he probed the trash with it. He knew he was being irrational, but nevertheless he was reluctant to turn his back on the corpse. Repeatedly in the midst of searching, he snapped his head up, whipping his attention to Neddy, certain that from the corner of his eye, he had seen the dead gaze following him. During the past three years, he'd suffered much because of these sisters, including most recently the humiliation in the Dumpster with the dead musician, Celestina's pencil-necked

friend with a propensity for postmortem licking. The memory of that horror flared so vividly—every grotesque detail condensed into one intense and devastating flash of recollection—that Junior's bladder suddenly felt swollen and full, although he had taken a long satisfying leak in an alleyway across the street from the restaurant at which the postcard-painting poseur had enjoyed a leisurely dinner with Ichabod. The container-eye-level at the top, battered, rust-streaked, beaded with condensation—was larger than some in the alleyway, with a bifurcated lid. Both halves of the lid were already raised. By the time he got to the cooler, he could see this wasn't smoke, after all. It dissipated too quickly. Cool against his hand. The cold steam from dry ice. Through nine months of quiet panic, however, Phimie grew less rational week by week, resorting to reckless measures that endangered. He held forth the single red rose. "For you. Not that it compares. No flower could." Now, however, he was thinking not about what Agnes's story might mean to Reverend White, but about what the minister might be able to do to provide at least a small degree of comfort to Agnes, who spent her life comforting others. The doors slid open, and they rolled Barty corridor to corridor, past the scrub sinks, to a waiting surgical nurse in green cap, mask, and gown. She alone effected his transfer into the positive pressure of the surgery. He wasn't afflicted with parenthood envy. A baby was the last thing he would ever want, aside from cancer. Children were nasty little beasts. A child would be an encumbrance, a burden, not a blessing. 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. On Thursday, January 4, he used his John Pinchbeck identity to purchase a new Ford van with a cashier's check. He leased a private garage space in the Pinchbeck name, near the Presidio, and stored the van there. Here, four days past Christmas, after two days of torment, Agnes knew the worst, that her treasured son must go eyeless or die, must choose between blindness or cancer of the brain. Sheena Hackachak, at forty-four, was more beautiful than any current movie star. She looked twenty years younger than her true age, and she so resembled her late daughter that Junior felt a rush of erotic nostalgia at the sight of her. After the detective returned the box to the nightstand, the coin began to turn again. This seemed to be a statement of great mystery and beauty, and Agnes was still contemplating it when the last of the ice melted on her tongue. Instead of more ice, sleep was spooned into her, as dark and rich as baker's chocolate. To Perri's bed, a journey of only a few steps, but farther than unwanted Rome. The carpet seeming to pull at his feet, to suck like mud under his shoes. The air as thick as liquid in his resistant to his progress. As if he'd been presented with many previous photos under these circumstances, Jonas Salk accepted the picture. "Your daughter?" "Bartholomew, huh?" asked Wally as he piloted them through banks of earthbound clouds. The previous April, the lads from Liverpool had claimed all five of the top five. Real Americans, like the Beach Boys and the Four Seasons, were forced to settle for lower numbers. It made you wonder who had really won the Revolutionary War. You struck a discord that can be heard, however faintly, all the way to the farthest end of the universe. Still on her knees, she raised the weapon and realized that she was going to shoot the maniac in the back, that she had no other choice, because her inexperience didn't allow her to aim for a leg or an arm. The moral dilemma overwhelmed her, but so did an image of Phimie lying dead in bloody sheets on the surgery table. She pulled the trigger and rocked with the recoil. Olive complexion, no less smooth than the skin of a calamata. Eyes as lustrous as pools shimmering with a reflection of eternity and stars. When she was finished with the dishtowel, she returned to the dining room, and though dinner was underway, she called for another toast. Raising her glass, she said, "To Maria, who is more than my friend. My sister. I can't let you talk about what I've given you without telling your girls that you've given back more. You taught me that the world is as simple as sewing, that what seem to be the most terrible problems can be stitched up, repaired." She raised her glass slightly higher. "First chicken to be come with first egg inside already. God bless." To become a physical therapist, Junior had taken more than massage classes, so he knew what hematemeses meant. Hematemesis: vomiting of blood. "Maria brought that from Mexico," Barty said. "She thought it was pretty funny. So do I. It's a hoot. Mom says it isn't really blasphemous, because it wasn't meant to be by the people who made it, and because Jesus would want you to have cookies, and, besides, it reminds us to be thankful for all the good things we get." 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." AS THE WULFSTAN PARTY was being seated at a window table, slowly tumbling masses of cottony fog rolled across the black water, as if the bay had awakened and, rising from its bed, had tossed off great mounds of sheets and blankets. Instead of answering the question, meaning to imply that he believed Junior already knew the facts, Thomas Vanadium said, "I was able to get a warrant to search your house." Junior thought this must be a trick. No hard evidence existed to indicate that Naomi had died at the hands of another rather than by accident. Darkrose and Diamond. Bartholomew had been able to focus his eyes much sooner than the average baby was supposed to be able to focus. To a surprising extent, he was already engaged in the world around him. Strangely, as sometimes happened in this room, his missing toe itched. There was no point in removing his shoe and sock to scratch the stump, because that would provide no relief. Curiously, the itch was in the phantom toe itself, where it could never be scratched. In a minute or two, one of the cops returned, crouching close as the medics worked. "There's no intruder." Jacob trusted no one but Agnes and Edom. He'd trusted Joey Lampion, too, after years of wary observance. Now Joey was dead, and his corpse was in the embalming chamber of the Panglo Funeral Home. Junior had walked along the big show windows, studying the two White paintings displayed to passersby, appalled by their beauty, when suddenly the door had opened and a gallery employee had invited him to come in. No printed invitation needed, no cool test to pass, no bouncers keeping the gate. Such easy accessibility served as proof, if you needed it, that this was not real art. Junior suspected Magusson never had any client but himself. Fat fees motivated him, not justice. Instinct, even reason, told him that some connection

existed between this person, this Bartholomew, and Celestina. The name had terrified Cain in a bad dream, the very night of the day that he'd killed Naomi, and Vanadium therefore had incorporated it into his psychological-warfare strategy without knowing its significance to his suspect. As strongly as he sensed the connection, he couldn't find the link. He lacked some crucial bit of information.. "Phimie said the creep thought it was funny, but using Daddy's voice as background music also ... well, aroused him, maybe because it further humiliated her and because he knew it would humiliate our father. But we never told Daddy that part of it. Neither of us saw any useful reason for telling him." What the commodifiers of fantasy count on and exploit is the insuperable imagination of the reader, child or adult, which gives even these dead things life-of a sort, for a while.. In recounting the fortune-telling session, Agnes had not told the magician about the four jacks of spades, only about the aces of diamonds and hearts. She never wore her worries for anyone to see; and though she had made a joke of the appearance of the fourth knave on Friday, Edom knew that it had deeply troubled her.. "That's unusual, too, and I wish the etiology of this disease, which is exceedingly well understood, gave us reason to hope based on the transience of the symptoms ... but it doesn't." When the sound-suppressor was properly attached to the pistol, Junior Cain leaned closer to the girl, peered into her eyes, and whispered, "Naomi, are you in there?" Near the top of the stairs, Barty thought he heard voices in his bedroom. Soft and indistinct. When he stopped to listen, the voices fell silent, or maybe he only imagined them.. This morning he had changed the sheets. Naomi's scent was no longer with him in the bedclothes.. Here again were these peculiar grammatical constructions, which sometimes she had thought were just the mistakes that even a prodigy could be expected to make, and which sometimes she had interpreted as expressions of fanciful speculations, but which lately she had suspected were of a more complex-and perhaps darker-nature. Now her dread took form, and she wondered if the personality disorders that had shaped her brothers' lives could have roots not just in the abuse they had taken from their father, but also in a twisted genetic legacy that could manifest again in her son. In spite of his great gifts, Barty might be destined for a life limited by a psychological problem of a unique or at least different-nature, first suggested by these occasional conversations that seemed not fully coherent.. His request felt like an assault. Agnes almost rocked backward as though struck.. On this chilly January night, no campers or fishermen had staked claims along the lake. Because the trees were far enough back to be lost in the night, the immediate shore and the pooled blackness that it encircled appeared as desolate as any landscape on a world without an atmosphere.. And like John Kennedy's death, Zedd's passing was cloaked in mystery, inspiring widespread suspicion of conspiracy. Only a few believed that he had committed suicide, and Junior was certainly not one of those gullible fools. Caesar Zedd, author of *You Have a Right to Be Happy*, would never have blown his brains out with a shotgun, as the authorities preferred the public to believe.. For forty-eight hours, he pumped himself full of prescription antihistamines, immersed himself in bathtubs brimming with numbingly cold water, and lathered himself with soothing lotions. In misery, gripped by self-pity, he dared not think about the 9-mm pistol that he had stolen from Frieda Bliss.. LEFT HAND ON the banister, right hand with knife tucked close to his side and ready to thrust, Tom Vanadium climbed cautiously but quickly to the upper floor, glancing back twice to be sure that Cain didn't slip in behind him.. Junior gave the Raisinets to him, and Google left the theater with his candy and his cash.. "Fear?" Kathleen asked, more interested in Vanadium's words than in his prestidigitation. "You said you're offering fear to Cain ... as if that was something he would want." The January air was crisp, fragrant with evergreens and with the faint salty scent of the distant sea. A curiously yellow moon glowered like a malevolent eye, studying him from between ragged ravelings of dirty clouds.. Only madmen were capable of such butchery. Hopeless lunatics like Ed Gein, out there in Wisconsin, arrested just seven years ago, when Junior had been sixteen. Ed, the inspiration for *Psycho*, had constructed mobiles out of human noses and lips. He used human skin to make lampshades and to upholster furniture. His soup bowls had once been human skulls. He ate the hearts and selected other organs of his victims, wore a belt fashioned from nipples, and occasionally danced under the moon while masked by the scalp and face of a woman he had murdered.. Scamp was a multitalented woman, with smoother skin than a depilated peach, with more delicious roundnesses than Junior could catalog, but she proved not to be the remedy for his tension. Only Bartholomew, found and destroyed, could give him peace.. He stood watching until the car cruised out of sight, and even after it dwindled to a speck and vanished in the distance, he stared at the point in the street where it had last been, stared while a breeze turned playful, tossing eucalyptus leaves around his feet, stared until at last he turned and began the long walk home.. He groaned. "That just doesn't cut it, Mom. If I gotta be blind, I think I should get to say peed off." "After the quake," Edom said, "forty thousand people took refuge in a two-hundred-acre open area, a military depot. A quake-related fire swept through so fast they were killed standing up, so tightly packed together they died as a solid mass of bodies." Although he found Magusson's face sufficiently disturbing that he avoided looking at it more than necessary, and though Magusson's bulging eyes were so moist with bitterness and with need that they inspired nightmares, Junior shifted his gaze from his half-numb hands to his attorney. "Luck? I lost my wife. And my unborn baby." "Tom," Kathleen said, "I know why you became a cop, I guess. St. Anselmo's Orphanage ... the murders of those children." WHEN DR. JIM PARKHURST made his evening rounds, Junior didn't continue to feign sleep but asked earnest questions to which he knew most of the answers, having eavesdropped on the conversation between the physician and Detective Vanadium.. His eyes were strangely radiant, as she had never seen them before, as if the shining angel who would guide him elsewhere had already entered his body and was with him to begin the journey.. "I'm saying, for all I know." She took her hand off his thigh. "What's all this about Celestina, anyway?" In fact, though he strained hard to recall their conversations, he could dredge up nothing that Seraphim had said during therapy, as if he'd been stone-deaf in those days. The only things he retained were sensual impressions: the beauty of her face, the texture of her skin, the firmness of her flesh under his ministering hands.. As the afternoon waned toward a

portentous dusk and toward the gallery reception for Celestina White, Junior prepared his knives and guns..While Jacob ate, he browsed through a new coffee-table book on dam disasters. He talked more to himself than to Barty and Angel, as he spot-read the text and looked at pictures. "Oh, my," he would say in sonorous tones. Or sadly, sadly: "Oh, the horror of it." Or with indignation: "Criminal. Criminal that it was built so poorly." Sometimes he clucked his tongue in his cheek or sighed or groaned in commiseration.."Better. Fear doesn't require him even to seduce a woman or to buy a bottle of whiskey. He just needs to open himself to it, and he will be filled like a glass under a faucet. As difficult as this may be to comprehend, Cain would choose to be neck-deep in a bottomless pool of terror, desperately trying to stay afloat, rather than to suffer that unrelieved hollowness. Fear can give shape and meaning to his life, and I intend not merely to fill him with fear but to drown him in it.".He swept the immediate area with the flashlight, and shadows spun with shadows, waltzing spirits in the ballroom of the night..Struggling to keep a grip on consciousness, Junior told himself to focus on the future, to live in the future, free of the useless past and the difficult present, but he could not get into the future far enough to be in a time when the pain was no longer with him..This venerable old building, as solidly constructed as a castle, was well-insulated; noises in other apartments rarely penetrated to Junior's. Never before had he heard a neighbor's voice distinctly enough to comprehend the words spoken-or, in this case, sung..Tom had no idea who Perri might be, but something in the way Grace asked the question and the way she regarded Paul suggested that she knew something about Perri that had won her deep respect and admiration.."Nicholas Deed." On her tongue, the name was as bitter as a dissolving aspirin..A few attractive women were here alone, proof that social mores had changed dramatically in three years. Junior was aware of their hot gazes, their need, and he knew that he could have any of them..As Sklent so insightfully put it: Some of us live on after death, survive in spirit, because we are just too stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, and evil to accept our demise. None of those qualities described sweet Naomi, who had been far too kind and loving and meek to live on in spirit, after her lovely flesh failed. Now at one with the earth, Naomi was no threat to Junior, and the state had paid for its negligence in her death, and the whole matter should have been brought to closure. There were only two barriers to full and final resolution: first, the stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, evil spirit of Thomas Vanadium; and second, Seraphim's bastard baby--little Bartholomew..Traditional logic argued that an infant, no more than two weeks old, could not be a serious threat to a grown man..She found the switch and clicked off the lamp again. "Good-night, young prince."..Fortunately, at least the desk was cigarette-scarred, because it came with the office. It had been the property of a skip-tracer named Otto Zelm, who'd made a good living at the kind of work Nolly avoided out of boredom: tracking down deadbeats and repossessing their vehicles. On a stakeout, Zelm fell asleep in his car, while smoking, thereby triggering the payoff of both life- and casualty-insurance policies, and freeing the lease on this furnished space.."The mass of these malignancies suggest they will soon spread-or have already spread-out of the eye to the orbit. There is no hope that radiation therapy will work in this instance, and no time to risk trying it even if there were hope. No time at all. No time. Dr. Schurr and I agree, to save Bartholomew's life, we must remove both eyes immediately."..In Room 724, standing alone at her sister's bedside, watching the girl sleep, Celestina told herself that she was coping well. She could handle this unnerving development without calling in either of her parents..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.

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