

## RED WATER

With a bark of pain, chest to chest with defeat, the killer was borne downward by the fragrant weight, in a clink and clatter of brass handles. Besides, he couldn't any longer afford to spend endless hours either learning a new language or attending the opera. His life was too full, leaving him insufficient time for the Bartholomew search. For the first time since walking to La Jolla to meet Jonas Salk, Paul planned a journey with a specific purpose. As if he'd been presented with many previous photos under these circumstances, Jonas Salk accepted the picture. "Your daughter?" "He's crafty, you say. Can you use him?" Over the final refrain of "I'll Be Seeing You" came a man's voice from the foyer, raised quizzically, with perhaps a note of surprise: "Victoria. On the sofa, Celestina finally worked up the courage to dial her parents' number in Spruce Hills. Junior felt a little lightheaded. He felt strange. He hoped he wasn't coming down with the flu. "When I couldn't get enough nightclub and theater bookings for my magic act anymore ... I turned to gambling." Already another contraction racked her, so intense that the pain was not limited to her lower back and abdomen, but seared the length of her spine, like an electric current leaping vertebra to vertebra. Her breath pinched in her chest as though her lungs had collapsed. "That's right," Celestina told Wally. "This isn't wagering. What's wrong with you?" He knew that he needed to get a grip on himself. But he could not keep his breathing slow and deep, couldn't remember any of Zedd's other foolproof methods of self-control, couldn't recall a single useful meditative technique. "Getting her into her shoes and coat sooner than Monday required a bribe," Wally said. 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. She had put aside a half-finished pencil portrait of Phimie to develop several of Nella Lombardi. 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." He smiled. "Those of us who were priests first--yeah, we're all a broody bunch. Of the others--not many, but probably more than you think." Greed. So easy, taking money from the rubes. Soon, instead of peeling off a little from each game, he sought bigger kills. Junior had thought the news was the lab report, which had found no ipsecac in his spew. All that had been distraction. Soundlessly, reluctantly, Agnes pulled the bedroom door nearly shut, and went down to the kitchen, where she sat alone, drinking coffee and nibbling at mysteries. Of all the gifts that Barty opened on Christmas morning, the hardback copy of Robert Heinlein's *The Star Beast* was his favorite. Instantly enchanted by the promise of an amusing alien creature, space travel, an exotic future, and lots of adventure, he seized every opportunity throughout the busy day to crack open those pages and to step out of Bright Beach into stranger places. The paramedic put aside the needle, having used it, and grabbed the paddles of a sliding Victoria's chair away from the table, he turned her to face him. He adjusted her body so that her head was tipped back and her arms were hanging slack at her sides. Obadiah tossed the pack of cards to Edom, startling him. "Son, you'll have to help me. My fingers have no finesse anymore." "Honey," Angel said to her daughter, "show us that game you were just playing with Koko. Show us, honey. Come on. Show us. Show us." Judging by the smeariness of the letters and by the fact that some had run before they dried, the writing instrument hadn't been a felt-tip marker, as Vanadium first thought. A spattering of red droplets on the closed lid of the toilet and across the beige marble floor, all dry now, gave rise to a suspicion. He suspected the blame lay with his exceptional sensitivity to violence, death, and loss. Previously it manifested as an explosive emptying of the stomach, this time as a purging of lower realms. Nothing remained to be done but to press her shoe in the butter and hammer her head into the corner of the oven door. Her voice grew thinner when she spoke to Angel, but in this new frailty, Barty heard such love that he shook at the power of it. "God's in you, Angel, so strong you shine, and nothing bad at all." Sometimes Barty could be fierce in his independence--his mother told him so--and now he rebuffed Angel too sharply. "I don't want to be waited on. I'm not helpless, you know. I can get sodas myself" By the time he reached the doorway, he felt sorry for his tone, and he looked back toward where the window seat must be. "Angel?" Finally he switched on the light, and illuminated Neddy at ease, silent in death as never in life: lying on his back, head turned to the right, swollen tongue lolling obscenely. "Money's no object. I can afford whatever you'd like to charge. And I'd be a diligent student." Then by ambulance to the hospital, whisked into surgery, and for a while, blessed unconsciousness. Leave the lamps burning, the door unlocked. A murderer, frantic to vanish while the victim remained undiscovered, wouldn't be worried about the cost of electricity or about protecting against burglary. He might suspect, but he couldn't know. He would but would be left with at least a shred of doubt about Junior's. "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. He tucked his left arm tight against his side and threw himself against the door. The obstructing furniture was heavy, but it moved an inch. If it would give one inch, it would give two, so it wasn't immovable, and he was already as good as in there. When the police operator answered, Junior shrieked, "I've been shot! Jesus! Shot! Help me, an ambulance, oooohhhh shit! Hurry!" Waking from a bad dream, he sometimes thought he heard the ratcheting of gear-wheel feet. The scrape and creak of rusted iron joints. The clink of rake-tine fingers rattling against one another. Using the straight edge of a ruler to guide his eye down each column, Junior searched for Bartholomew, ignoring surnames. He had already checked to see if anyone in the county had Bartholomew for a last name; no one in this directory did. She must have sensed his assessment of her and realized that she had little chance of charming him, for she turned at once away and never looked in his direction again. Thrusting his finger toward the table with each repetition of the word, Barty happily insisted, "Pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie." His profession was cocktail piano, though he didn't have to earn a living at it. He had inherited a fine four-story house in a good

neighborhood of San Francisco and also a sufficient income from a trust fund to meet his needs if he avoided extravagance. Nevertheless, he worked five evenings a week in an elegant lounge in one of the grand old hotels on Nob Hill, playing highly refined drinking songs for tourists, businessmen from out of town, affluent gay men who stubbornly continued to believe in romance in an age that valued flash over substance, and unmarried heterosexual couples who were working up a buzz to ensure that their rigorously planned adulteries would seem glamorous. 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. "Wouldn't live in the Caribbean if you paid me," Bill said. "All that humidity. All those bugs." Posing as a counselor with Catholic Family Services, he phoned each listed Bartholomew, with a question related to his or her recent adoption. Those who expressed bafflement, and who claimed not to have adopted a child, were generally stricken from his list. One of the gifts of power is to know power. Wizard knows wizard, unless the concealment is very skillful. And the boy had no skills at all except in boat-building, of which he was a promising scholar by the age of twelve. About that time the midwife who had helped his mother at his birth came by and said to his parents, "Let Otter come to me in the evenings after work. He should learn the songs and be prepared for his naming day." "December 1, 1958, in Chicago, Illinois, a parochial-school fire killed ninety-five." Maria's face gathered into a frown, like a piece of brown cloth cinched by a series of whipstitches. "Six lessons." In his head, without apparent effort, Barty kept a running total of the number of seconds that he had been alive, and of the number of words in every book that he read. Agnes never checked his word totals for an entire volume; however, when she cited any page in a book that he'd just finished, he knew the number of words it contained. The minister had finished. The service was over. No one came to Junior with condolences, because they would see him again shortly, at the Ford dealership buffet. He might not have this future-living thing down perfectly, but he was absolutely terrific at anger. For the first few bites of crab in a light cornmeal crust, Nolly suspended their conversation. Bliss. 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*. Into the autumn of 1967, Junior reviewed hundreds of thousands of phone listings, and occasionally he located a rare Bartholomew. In San Rafael or Marinwood. In Greenbrae or San Anselmo. Located and investigated and cleared them of any connection with Seraphim White's bastard baby. He followed the dead man through the window, into the alley, managing not to step on him. Her hands were locked together in her lap, gripped so tightly for so long that the muscles in her forearms ached. "What's wrong?" Eventually she discovered within herself all the light that she needed to find her way through the crucial hours immediately ahead. At last she knew what she must do, but she was not certain that she possessed the fortitude to do it. The announcement poster seemed enormous, huge, far bigger than she remembered it, crazily-recklessly large. By its very size, it challenged critics to be cruel, dared the fates to celebrate her triumph by shaking the city to ruin right now, in the quake of the century. She wished Helen Greenbaum had opted, instead, for a few lines of type on an index card, taped to the glass. "Nonsense," Agnes breezed on, "it's no imposition. You'll be a great help with my baking, the pie deliveries, all the work that I put aside during Barty's surgery and recovery. It'll either be fun, or I'll wear you down to the bone, but either way, you won't be bored. I've got two extra rooms. One for Celie and Angel, and one for Grace. When your Wally arrives, we can move Angel in with Grace, or she can bunk with me." As he was wheeled headfirst into the operating room, Barty raised off the gurney pillow. He fixed his gaze on his mother until the door swung shut between them. Agnes winced. Already, another contraction. Mild but so soon after the last. She clasped her hands around her immense belly and took slow, deep breaths until the pain passed. His mother, gently pushing Tom to the prime view point at the head of the stairs, seemed unconcerned about her child's venture into the storm. Her eyes, lustrous pools, brimmed with the need to know, but she respected the deal. "I only half understood all that, and I don't even know which half, but in some strange way, it feels true. Thank you. I will think about it tonight, when I can't sleep." She stepped close and kissed him on the cheek. "Who are you, Tom Vanadium?" Flanked by Dumpsters and trash cans, through steam rising out of grates in the pavement, past parked delivery trucks, here came the dead cop. Running. Halted by the unmistakable meaning of the expressions on these women's faces, Paul was grateful that Nellie was briefly stricken mute. He didn't believe he had the strength to receive the news that she had tried to deliver. She wanted to tell him not to say these queer things, not to talk this way, yet she couldn't speak those words. When Barty asked her why, as inevitably he would, she'd have to say she was worried that something might be terribly wrong with him, but she couldn't express this fear to her boy, not ever. He was the lintel of her heart, the keystone of her soul, and if he failed because of her lack of confidence in him, she herself would collapse into ruin. Hope, on many wings, hovered all around the physician, but he was afraid to let it roost. "You know," Tom said when the second round of drinks arrived, "hard as it is to believe, some places never heard of martinis." As woe begone a widower as anyone could expect, Junior spent every night home alone. By Sunday, he'd slept without companionship eight nights since being discharged from the hospital. She also sought forgiveness for the hardness with which she had treated Nicholas Deed. As always in uncertainty, she asked herself what her mother would do in this situation. Grace, of infinite grace, unfailingly did precisely the needed thing, knew exactly the right words to console, to enlighten, to charm a smile out of even the miserable. Often, however, the needed thing involved no words, because in our journey we so often feel abandoned, and we need only to be reassured that we are not alone. Now the message ... Something about a hospital. Someone dying. A cerebral hemorrhage. Maria Elena Gonzalez--such an imposing figure in spite of her diminutive stature that even three names seemed insufficient to identify her--was still present. Although the crisis had passed, she wasn't ready to trust that nurses and doctors, by

themselves, could provide Agnes with adequate care..Kathleen expected this would prove to be true. She herself was not frightened by Thomas Vanadium's appearance; but then she had been prepared for it before she first saw him. And she wasn't a murderer, fearful of retribution, to whom this particular face would seem like Judgment personified..WHEN A GLASS OF chilled apple juice at dawn stayed on his stomach, Junior Cain was allowed a second glass, though he was admonished He was also given three saltines..Kathleen and Nolly shifted their attention to Tom's clenched left hand, although the quarter could not possibly have traveled from one fist to the other..The middle finger on his right hand throbbled under the pair of Band-Aids. He'd sliced it earlier, while using the electric sharpener to prepare his knives, and the wound had been aggravated when he'd had to strangle Neddy Gnathic. He would never have cut himself in the first place if there had been no need to be well-armed and ready for Bartholomew and his guardians..Once satiated, what she desired was a reason to deceive herself into believing that she was not a slut, that she was a victim. She didn't really want to tell anyone what he had done to her. Instead, she was asking him, indirectly but indisputably, to provide her with an excuse to keep their passionate encounter secret, an excuse that would also allow her to continue to pretend that she had not begged for everything he'd done to her.. "If you don't, your feeling gland isn't working. Want me to read you to sleep?" .Out of the car, along the sidewalk, up the steps, from Mercedes to mist to murder. Pistol in his right hand, lock-release gun in his left, three knives in sheaths strapped to his body..The blinds were raised, the windows bare. Usually, she liked the smoky, reddish-gold glow of the city at night, but this once it made her uneasy..Nurses were supposed to be angels of mercy. She had shown him no mercy. And she was certainly no angel..Industrial Woman, which he'd purchased for a little more than nine thousand dollars, less than eighteen months ago and at another gallery, would fetch at least thirty thousand in the current market, so rapidly had Bavol Poriferan's reputation risen.. "I'm not going anywhere," she pledged. She had realized that his voice was growing heavy with sleep. "But it's time for you to go to dreamland." .Opening his eyes blinking back his tears just as more agonizing contractions knotted his abdomen, he could see ribbons of red in the watery green mess that gushed from him. Bright red. Gastric blood would be dark. This must be pharyngeal blood. Unless an artery had ruptured in his stomach, torn by the incredible violence of these intransigent spasms, in which case he was puking his life away..Phimie's stubbornly high blood pressure, the presence of protein in her urine, and other symptoms indicated her preeclampsia wasn't a recent development; she was at increased risk of eclampsia. Her hypertension was gradually coming under control-but only by resort to more aggressive drug therapy than the physician preferred to use.. "Well, you see, that's the funny thing about all the important choices we make. If we make a really big wrong choice, if we do the really awful wrong thing, we're given another chance to continue on the right path. So the very moment I stupidly stepped off the curb without looking, I created another world where I did look both ways and saw the rhinoceros coming. And so-" .The crazy bitch wielded it with such ferocity that the force of the impact with the floor, rebounding upon her, must have numbed her arms. She stumbled backward, dragging the chair, temporarily unable to lift it..Cupping Angel entirely in his big hands, smiling at her, he said, "Oh, no, Mrs. White, this looks like a healthy young lady to me. No medicine required." .If Junior was not discreet, and if gossip about the widower Cain and the sexy nurse began to circulate, Vanadium would be on the case again even if it had been closed. The cop was sick, hateful, driven by unknowable inner demons. Although he might for the moment have been reined in by those in higher office, mere gossip of a spicy nature would be excuse enough for him to open the file again, which he'd surely do without informing his superiors..As though Amelia Earhart, the long-lost aviatrix, had reached out of her twilight zone and snared the two bits, no tumbling coin glinted in the air above the desk.. "It's not a specific brand you can't have, it's the whole idea of a candy bar." .Based on the evidence, perhaps Sklent never laughed, regardless of how clever the joke. He scowled fiercely at the paintings in the brochure, returned it to Junior, and snarled, "Shoot the bitch." .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..Naked, dripping, he roamed the apartment. As on the night of December 13, the voice seemed to arise from thin air: ahead of him, then behind him, to the right, but now to the left..From late morning until dinner, people arrived and departed, raised toasts to a merry Christmas and to peace on earth, to health and to happiness, reminisced about Christmases past, marveled about the first heart transplant performed this very month in South Africa, and prayed that the soldiers in Vietnam would come home soon and that Bright Beach would lose no precious sons in those far jungles..Switching on the lights as he went, Junior sought the source of the serenade. He carried the 9-mm pistol, which would have been useless against a spirit visitor; but his extensive reading about ghosts hadn't convinced him that they were real. His faith in the effectiveness of bullets and pewter candlesticks, for that matter-remained undiminished.. "Well," Tom said, "those people who think it's just a trick generally react bigger than you folks, and you know it's real." .The guy was carrying a purse, whatever that meant, and when he walked through the door, he had a goofy look on his face, but his expression changed when he saw Junior..2000, the Year of the Dragon, gives way without a roar to the Year of the Snake, and after the Snake comes the Horse. Day by day the work is done, in memory of those who have gone before us, and embarked upon work of her own, young Mary is out there among you. For now, only her family knows how very special she is. On one momentous day, that will change..Eye to eye with Tom, Celestina herself did some clear-seeing. "You're special, too, in lots of obvious ways. But like Angel, you're special in some secret way ... aren't you?" .Initially, the Pacific could not be seen beyond an opaque lens of fog, Yet later, when the mist retreated, the sea itself became a portent of sightlessness: Spread flat and colorless in the morning light, the glassy water reminded her of the depthless eyes of the blind, of that terrible sad vacancy where vision is denied..Junior in the fog. Trying oh-so-hard to live in the future, where the winners live. But being relentlessly sucked back into the useless past by memory..She rushed on: "I'm one of the best waitresses they have, so if I

ask for dinner shifts only, I'll get them. Tips are better at dinner. And working the one shift, four and a half to five hours, I'll have a regular schedule." This guy was spooky. Junior was beginning to think that the detective's unorthodox behavior wasn't a carefully crafted strategy, as it had first seemed, but that Vanadium was a little wacky. The night was holding its breath again, the previous breeze now pent up in the breast of darkness. Bartholomew's genius might have been intimidating, even off-putting, if he'd not been as much child as child genius. Likewise, he would have been wearisome if impressed by his own gifts. Before they set out for the amusement park, Agnes pulled him aside, held him close, and said, "Listen, kid of mine, I'm not giving up. Don't think I ever would. Let's have fun today. This evening, you and I and Angel will convene a meeting of the North Pole Society of Not Evil Adventurers"-the girl had become the third member years ago" and all truths will be told and secrets known. ".Leaving Spruce Hills, Junior thought he was putting distance between himself and his enigmatic enemy, gaining time to study the county phone directory and to plan his continuing search if that avenue of investigation brought him no success. Instead, he had walked right into his adversary's lair. Because the tower stood on a ridgeline that marked the divide between county and state property, most of the attending constabulary were county deputies, but two state troopers were present, as well. In his right hand again, the real gun, loaded with ten hollow-point rounds, felt charged with supernatural power: to Bartholomew as a crucifix to Dracula, as holy water to a demon, as kryptonite to Superman. AS MEANINGFUL AS Jacob's death had been within the small world of his family, Agnes Lampion never lost sight of the fact that there were more resonant deaths in the larger world before 1968 ended and the Year of the Rooster followed. On the fourth of April, James Earl Ray gunned down Martin Luther King on a motel balcony in Memphis, but the assassin's hopes were foiled when, because of this murder, freedom grew more vigorously from the richness of a martyr's blood. On June 1, Helen Keller died peacefully at eighty-seven. Blind and deaf since early childhood, mute until her adolescence, Miss Keller led a life of astonishing accomplishment; she learned to speak, to ride horses, to waltz; she graduated cum laude from Radcliffe, an inspiration to millions and a testament to the potential in even the most blighted life. On June 5, Senator Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Unknown numbers died when Soviet tanks invaded Czechoslovakia, and hundreds of thousands perished in the final days of the Cultural Revolution in China, many eaten in acts of cannibalism sanctioned by Chairman Mao as acceptable political action. John Steinbeck, novelist, and Tallulah Bankhead, actress, came to the end of their journeys in this world, if not yet in all others. But James Lovell, William Anders, and Frank Borman-the first men to orbit the moon-traveled 250,000 miles into space, and all returned alive. Just as Celestina snapped shut the latches on the suitcase and turned to the door, a nurse's aide entered, pushing a cart loaded with towels and bed linens. Now that efforts were being made to control the preeclampsia, Dr. Daines had scheduled a series of tests for the following day. He expected to recommend a cesarean section as soon as Phimie's blood pressure was reduced and stabilized, but he didn't want to risk this surgery before determining what complications might have resulted from her restricted diet and the compression of her abdomen. He surprised himself by sitting up in bed and shouting, "Shut up, shut up, shut up!". Great anger was apparent in the way that the uneven, red block letters had been drawn on the wall in hard slashes. But the lettering looked like the work of a calm and rational mind compared to what had been done after the three Bartholomews were printed. To Edom, humanity was obviously not the greater of these two destructive forces. Men and women were part of nature, not above it, and their evil was, therefore, just one more example of nature's malignant intent. They had stopped debating this issue years ago, however, neither man conceding any credibility to the other's dogma. "If Phimie wasn't here," Celestina said, "and then she came back, she was somewhere during that minute, wasn't she?". On Tuesday, January 2, Junior met with the drug dealer who had introduced him to Google, the document forger, and he arranged to purchase a 9-mm handgun with custom-machined silencer. Standard decks of playing cards are machine packed, always in the same order, according to suits. You can absolutely count on the fact that each deck you open will be assembled in precisely the same order as every other deck you have ever opened or ever will open. Friday brought Scamp again, all of Scamp, all day, every way, wall-to-wall Scamp, so on Saturday he hadn't enough energy to do more than shower. "He knew how you felt about having too much life insurance. So he didn't disclose it to you." THE SANDMAN WAS powerless to cast a spell of sleep while Junior spent the night flushing away enough water to drain a reservoir. The man, whom the others called Licky, led him out into a hot, bright morning that dazzled his eyes. Leaving his cell he had felt the spellbonds loosen and fall away, but there were other spells woven about other buildings of the place, especially around a tall stone tower, filling the air with sticky lines of resistance and repulsion. If he tried to push forward into them his face and belly stung with jabs of agony, so that he looked at his body in horror for the wound; but there was no wound. Gagged and bound, without his voice and hands to work magic, he could do nothing against these spells. Licky had tied one end of a braided leather cord around his neck and held the other end, following him. He let Otter walk into a couple of the spells, and after that Otter avoided them. Where they were was plain enough: the dusty pathways bent to miss them. "The quarter in the sandwich," Nolly said, because that was the first stunt that Simon Magusson had paid him to perform. "Your mind is as fascinating as ever," he said. "Your soul as beautiful. Listen, Per, since we were thirteen, I was never primarily interested in your body. You flatter yourself shamelessly if you think it was all that special even before the polio." Now, here, lying on a bed in the emergency room of a Sacramento hospital, on a Saturday afternoon only six weeks before the camellia festival, Junior suffered under the care of a resident physician who was so young as to raise the suspicion that he was merely playing doctor. After prying Junior out of the meditative position, Chicane pushed him onto his back and vigorously--indeed, violently--massaged his thighs and calves. "Really bad muscle spasms," he explained. Too much had happened in those rooms. They were stained dark with family history, and in the night, when either Edom or Jacob slept under that gabled roof, the past came alive again in

dreams..The receptionist, Rebecca, had stayed late, just to keep company with Barty in the waiting room. As she settled into a chair beside the boy, he asked her if she knew what gravity was on Mars, and when she confessed ignorance, he said, "Only thirty-seven percent what it is here. You can really jump on Mars."..The mortician and his assistant had nearly finished dismantling the frame of the winch. Soon a worker would close the hole..In spite of the gloom, the boy's miraculous accomplishment was evident: his clothes and hair were dry as though he'd worn a coat and hood..He lived high, on Russian Hill, in a limestone-clad building with carved Victorian detail. His one-bedroom unit included a roomy kitchen with breakfast nook and a spacious living room with windows looking down on twisty Lombard Street..Of course, he had the Pinchbeck and Gammoner identities waiting, two escape hatches. But he didn't want to use them. He liked his life on Russian Hill, and he was loath to leave it..Holding the mug in his right hand, Tom picked up the coin and rolled it across the knuckles of his left. Paul's quarter, after all. A two-bit temptation to panic. As gifted with physical grace as with good looks, Junior stepped into the bedroom doorway, lithely and with feline stealth. He leaned against the jamb..When he pushed Naomi, profit was the motive. He killed Victoria and Vanadium in self-defense. Those three deaths were necessary..The phone rang at 3:20 in the afternoon, just after he switched off the radio in disgust. Sitting in the breakfast nook, the Oakland telephone directory open in front of him, he almost said, Find the father, kill the son, instead of, "Hello."..A music tradition was deeply rooted in the Negro community. No similar tradition in magic existed..Just as the man turned away, Junior got a glimpse of what he wore under a London Fog raincoat. Between the lapels of the coat: a white shirt with a wing collar, a black bow tie, the suggestion of black-satin lapels like those on a tuxedo jacket..To be useful, anger must be channeled, as Zedd explains with unusually poetic prose in *The Beauty of Rage: Channel Your Anger and Be a Winner*..Junior's current predicament would only get worse if he had to telephone Roto-Rooter to extract a musician from the plumbing..Until Nolly, Kathleen's life had been as short on romance as a saltless saltine is short on flavor. Her childhood and even her adolescence were so colorless that she'd settled on dentistry as a career because it seemed, by comparison to what she knew, to be an exotic and exciting profession. She'd dated a few men, but all were boring and none was kind. Ballroom-dancing lessons-and ultimately competitions-promised the romance that dentistry and dating hadn't provided, but even dancing was somewhat a disappointment until her instructor introduced Kathleen to this balding, bull-necked, lumpy, utterly wonderful Romeo..Barty let go of the girl's hand, and although he remained dry, the storm at once found her where she'd been hiding in the silver-black folds of its curtains.

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