



Roger Peyrefitte

Roy

*ROMAN urbanity and Greek Atticism had no fear of words. Rome represented power, and Athens liberty, in the way that these are represented to-day by America. The three civilizations are alike in another respect: the barbarism at their base; but the Romans covered it over with purple and the Greeks with beauty.*

*The Americans cover it with dollars. Despite their former puritanism, they have had no scruples about the revival of eroticism. Just as self-confident, under their Nixon and their Carter, as were the Romans with Augustus and the Greeks with Alexander, they have created their sexual revolution in the same way as, two centuries earlier, they created their libertarian revolution. In other words, they have won their independence a second time.*

*“L’Europe aux vieux parapets” still retains in this respect its battlements, dilapidated though they may be. What brings these down in the end should be eroticism; let the honour not be left to pornography! Following the Renaissance, our own century of enlightenment undertook this task in “red-claw” fashion, after which came the red bonnets. To enter “le bonnet rouge au vieux dictionnaire” is an act of daring that has always tempted men of truth.*

*Victor Hugo gave the direction, but did not follow it. The only cocked hat he put on his prose and verse was that of the academician. Never did he pen a sentence such as the following, from the Portier des Chartreux: “The abbé had eyes that rogered you from a distance of twenty paces,” or a line like Ronsard’s “Les culs plus que les cons sont maintenant ouverts.”*

*Tell me, “hypocrite lecteur, mon semblable, mon frère”, tell me, young and beautiful queen in exile, who honour me with your friendship, tell me, my renowned friend who vainly hide your eternal youth behind your insigne of the Légion d’Honneur and beneath your*

*turret-crown of a great European, tell me, my homonymous cousin, monsieur le garde des Sceaux and member of the Académie, tell me also, my dear and courageous editor, who in trembling begin to read me—but do not tell me, you illiterate and venomous criticasters, you ordinary authors, unreadable and envious—that that sentence and that line are not excellent French (“cul” is in the Dictionnaire of the Académie, while “con” is as yet marking time at the gate) and that they have not amused you. The art, in speaking without circumlocution, lies in the ability to raise a smile, just as the art in removing one’s clothing lies in the ability to attract admiration. The line and the sentence I have quoted are not pornography, because pornography lacks spirit. Eroticism is the poetry of truth, the flower of liberty.*

*California is the freest state in America the free. The young people raised there are the best looking, the most intelligent, the richest, the most ardently desirous, and the most terrifying. This novel depicts them candidly, with love . . . and in the appropriate language.*

*It is precisely words of this kind that are called “improper” and that Montaigne, the first great master of the truth in French literature, is astounded to see “least current, least used in writing, and best eliminated”, even though they are “the best known and the most widely understood”. Since “to every age, and to every mode of life, they are as familiar as bread”, I venture to offer them to you here in the form of a brioche.*

# Part One

## Part One—Chapter One

LIT partly by the moon, and partly by the street-lamps, Roy, right foot on his skateboard, hurtled at top speed around the hills of Summit Ridge, the highest point in Beverly Hills. He was imagining himself as Victory from his ancient-history book, that winged goddess who adorns the radiator of Rolls-Royces. Suddenly he braked, transferring all his weight onto his left foot, and crouching: in front of him a herd of deer were crossing. Happily he had a top-class board, fitted with sprung wheels for easy manœuvrability; rather than falling among the deer he fell onto the embankment. No harm was done; he had known harder falls.

He smiled as he read, by the light of the street-lamp, a sign-post saying: “Deer crossing”. Many of the slopes between Bel Air, Beverly Hills, and Hollywood were still covered by forest, but no hunting was permitted. In this region of California, so well managed and industrialized, Nature and her denizens were still close. The song of crickets echoed through the vast nocturnal silence. Near the Clears’ (Roy’s parents’) swimming-pool, at this time of night, frogs could be heard croaking. And at the Buckley School, where he was a student—the most fashionable private school in the county, at the foot of the Santa Monica hills near Los Angeles—stags or does were sometimes seen crossing the playgrounds; one teacher reported that he had seen coyotes dancing in the moonlight on the tennis-courts.

Roy was getting up, the skateboard in his hand, when a long black car going down the hill stopped alongside him. A man of about fifty, with a misshapen and forceful face, put his head out of the window. He was alone. “Hello boy,” he said, “what are you doing here?”

“Skateboarding,” replied Roy, showing his board.

“At night?” the man asked.

“I can go faster then, because there’s hardly any traffic. But I fell over because of a herd of deer.”

“Where do you live?”

“In Summit Drive, down at the bottom.”

“A good address,” responded the man. “Do your parents let you come out like this?”

“No, but they’ve gone out for the evening and I sneaked out.”

He bit his lip after this confession. But why lie? Still winded by the speed, he was breathing heavily, his blue eyes reflected in the black eyes of this stranger who was inspecting him. Roy was well aware that he could be proud of his physical appearance: he was said to be the best-looking boy not only in Beverly Hills, but in the whole of Los Angeles. He was blond, tall, well put together, and combined both strength and grace. He was proud, too, of sporting a T-shirt across which was displayed in large letters: “Buckley”, a name testifying to his social standing.

“Get in with me,” the man said, “I’m going in your direction and I’ll take you back. At your age it’s not wise to be running around in these quiet streets.”

He had a commanding air which, together with the feeling of having done something wrong, intimidated Roy. His ugliness would have been repulsive, had it not been balanced by an almost feminine and penetrating smile. His new Chevrolet, more powerful than that of Roy’s father, was a further reassuring element. There was no way he could be a kidnapper. Roy, the skateboard on his knees, sat down beside the man. They moved off gently. The driver did not seem to be in a hurry.

“You’re very nice,” he remarked. “How old are you?”

“Thirteen and a half,” Roy answered.

“What other sports do you play, besides skateboarding?”

“Football, tennis, surfing . . .”

“What does your father do?”

“He’s an estate agent.”

“Any brothers or sisters?”

“One sister, who’s married and lives in San Diego.”

There was a pause. “Do you know about the mysteries of life?” the man asked.

This question astonished Roy. “What mysteries?” he replied.

“How babies are made, how to have a good time by yourself.”

“Yes,” replied Roy.

Once again he reproached himself for having answered so quickly, but he had been taught as a matter of principle always to speak the truth. Moreover it was the first time a man had ever interrogated him about such things; but when it came to the point he was pleased not to be treated as a child. “You’re at Buckley, I see,” said the man. “Do you have sex education lessons?”

“Hardly!” exclaimed Roy. “Mr. Thepot, the principal, thinks it would give rise to licentious conduct. As if all the students, both boys *and* girls, did not know quite as much about it as he does! We’re furious, because the public schools have these classes and we don’t. But our parents think it’s a good thing that they are not available at Buckley.”

“So what are you complaining about, if you have nothing more to learn?” asked the man.

“We’re being deprived of an education, and education is an education,” Roy replied.

The man had reduced the speed of the Chevrolet even further. Instead of continuing along Summit Ridge, he turned right into Pickfair Way and stopped to point out a slate roof and two tall white chimneys visible through the trees. “I’m sure you know that’s Mary Pickford’s house. Douglas Fairbanks presented it to her before their divorce, and the name of this street is made up of parts of both their names . . . She’s eighty-five now, ‘America’s sweetheart’, but she’s still beautiful.”

“I saw her once, when she came out of her apartment in Wilshire Boulevard,” Roy said. “People were clapping and cheering.”

A moment ago he had developed an erection. The man had leaned against him, and the virile warmth, penetrating his jeans,



had abruptly brought about this condition, in which Mary Pickford played no part at all. "I haven't told you my name yet," said the man. "It's Jack. And what's yours?"

"Roy Clear."

"Would you care for a smoke before you go home?"

"If you like."

The man handed him a Winston, then the cigarette lighter from the car. He lit his own cigarette from Roy's, so as to be able to examine him more closely in the half-light. "You are really ravishing," he said. "But do get rid of that skateboard." He seized it, so as to put it away at the back, and brushed, as though by chance, against Roy's fly. "You're a little man already," he said, tapping the straining member . . . "But look at the difference!" he continued, suddenly exposing his own. The enormous organ in the moonlight filled Roy with wonder: he had never imagined such an instrument. Nor had he ever imagined sharing his pleasures, until now solitary, with a man. But he offered no resistance when invited to grasp that fascinating organ, and he acquiesced when—the cigarettes having been extinguished in the ash-tray—this man's hand unzipped him in turn. Still less had Roy imagined a mouth that would kiss *him* on the mouth and then, fastening upon his phallus, unveil to him a new pleasure.

The issue had been speedy for both parties. The man wiped himself with Kleenex, then wiped Roy's hand in the same way and pushed the two phalluses back into their rightful places. "Will we see each other again?" he asked.

"Sure," Roy replied. His muted voice seemed to assent to an entire future, just as he had assented to everything that had happened.

The man opened his wallet and took out a hundred-dollar note. "Here!" he said, "My present. Don't tell any one." Roy made as though to refuse, but he was dazzled; he had never before been given so much money. He thanked Jack and put the note into the back pocket of his jeans. The man switched on the interior light and wrote his telephone number on a page from his note-book.

“When you know you’re going to be free one evening,” he said, “call me in the morning before you go to school. That’s my home number. Later I’ll be at the office, and you won’t be able to call me there. But where will you call me from?”

“From my bedroom,” Roy replied. “I have my own phone, because our school work is done in teams, which means we have to telephone each other a lot in the evenings.”

“Perfect,” said the man. “And how do you get out without anyone knowing?”

“I take the mosquito-screen off one of the back windows in the dining-room,” Roy replied. “The frame is warped and doesn’t close properly. I sneak out like a squirrel.”

Jack looked at him tenderly, but also seriously. “You and I share a great secret,” he said. “Next time, we can go to my place. I’m a widower; my married children are in San Francisco. I live in Brentwood, not far from Beverly Hills.” They drove off.

When the car came to a halt near Roy’s home, the man kissed him again. “I’m wild about you,” he said. “I hope you telephone me soon.”

“Excuse me,” said Roy, “but you only told me your first name.”

“I’m Jack Sherman, the Los Angeles chief of police.”

## Part One—Chapter Two

HENCEFORTH Roy's life was changed. He was the same in appearance alone: he had had an encounter with a man, and with him he had the triple bond of pleasure, of secrecy, and of money. Without doubt what had encouraged that man not to conceal his identity was the certainty of what all these bonds represented. Without doubt, as well, he had considered the fact that it would have been a simple matter for Roy to discover it from the moment of their second meeting at his home. Hence Jack had decided to give him a sign of trust in advance, a sign at the same time that he had great expectations of this meeting. If it did not take place, the one in Summit Drive would have led to nothing. Roy was intelligent enough and precocious enough to consider all sides of the question and to understand the motives that had prompted Jack's candour, worthy of his own. This story-book romance, which was in fact a reality, kindled his imagination: he would be the boy friend of the Los Angeles police chief.

Assuredly, Jack could not have guessed the extraordinary nature of his profession in the eyes of his young companion of one night. John Clear, Roy's father, who prided himself on being a typical "plain and simple American", carried his respect for law and order to the point of having served a term as police volunteer. This made it his duty to report driving offences or any other crime, and to be in some ways an auxiliary of the municipal police, as well as the county police and the California State Police. The step of asking this service of the citizens of Beverly Hills had been taken at the request of the residents of the southern district, where the population was more mixed and delinquency more common. The residents of the northern district, that is to say the residential zone, had profited from this and attended police training courses

with a view to protecting themselves. Sunset Boulevard formed the dividing line between the two Beverly Hills, the poor one and the rich. (Some even ventured to make a distinction between two stretches of the same road, putting “North” in front of the name when the address was on the good side.) John Clear had insisted on joining this civic action, not solely by reason of his principles, but because he was the son of the judge Andrew Clear, whose severe portrait held pride of place in his study. His diploma, stamped with a seal in gilt paper, was displayed under the glass on the chest of drawers in his bedroom: “This is to certify that John Clear successfully completed a training course in law enforcement. Issued at Beverly Hills City Hall, B. L. Cork, chief of police.”

Had Beverly Hills not been a municipality independent of Los Angeles, with its own police force, Roy would have been in the position of having for lover a man who had given his father lessons in the promotion of “law enforcement”. But then he would have known him already, which would probably have made their relationship impossible. In fact B. L. Cork, a Texan who weighed almost fifteen stone, had visited the Clears two or three times and Roy had not liked him at all; the great fat creature had treated him in a most offhand manner, and had rebuked him for skateboarding in areas with busy traffic such as Beverly Drive and Sunset Boulevard. Several times Cork’s patrols had reprimanded Roy and taken him home, but he was incorrigible. Consequently, Roy regarded this chief of police as his personal enemy and had experienced a flush of pride when Jack Sherman had revealed his status. Having a clandestine relationship with Cork’s superior—what was Beverly Hills, despite its wealth, with its thirty-five thousand residents, in comparison with Los Angeles which had three million, and more than eight in its urban area?—amounted to taking a kind of revenge on him. At the same time, it was for Roy a defiance of his father, who was wont to add his own reprimands—as utterly ineffectual—to those of Cork and his men. Even though he was well aware that he could never call

upon this protection, it gave him a sense of superiority and invulnerability.

What he was constrained to do first, was to make sure that the stranger encountered on Summit Drive had not been making a fool of him. He did not know the name of the Los Angeles police chief. The following day, he pretended to be studying the diploma displayed in the room where his father was changing for dinner, and asked who the Angelenos' police chief was. He was gladdened when he heard Jack Sherman's name, and especially when his father added that he had seen him during his training course at the Beverly Hills City Hall, and described him as a man of remarkably ugly appearance. "Yes, he is ugly," said Roy to himself, "but if you only knew what a phallus he has, you would envy him, my dear old dad." One morning the boy had surprised his father under the shower in a state of erection, and although the paternal member had been infinitely larger than his own, there was the same ratio again between Jack's and Mr. Clear's.

The readiness with which Roy had accepted the hundred dollars was perhaps due to the fact that within his family the cult of money had been instilled into him. His father had drummed into him as a small child these verses of Ben Jonson, Shakespeare's contemporary:

*"Get money; still get money, boy;  
No matter by what means."*

And one of the first pieces of poetry he had been taught at the Buckley school—by another English poet, Robert Browning—said this:

*"Every joy is gain,  
And gain is gain, however small."*

His education, both at home and at school, had consequently tended to persuade him that while joy is a gain, gain is a joy.

He had been taught to earn for himself the fifty dollars that sufficed for his monthly expenses and were procured by odd jobs, shared among the local boys. It was principally an affair of delivering by bicycle the *Beverly Hills Courier*, the forty-page weekly sent gratis to all Beverlyites. This gazette, which fed on publicity, but did enjoy a certain influence, had hopes of being purchased by the *Los Angeles Times*, the big daily paper of the neighbouring city, which absorbed journals of the satellite towns as soon as they had gained a large circulation. There was also the need to distribute handbills for tradesmen or announcements of “garage sales”, one of the special characteristics of California: people, lacking an attic—since owing to the regulations relating to earthquake-proof construction almost all the houses had only one storey—accumulated unwanted items in their garages, and put them on sale when they had too many, displaying them on the site, and people eagerly came along to inspect them, as though it were a flea-market. The rituals relating to distribution varied: the *Beverly Hills Courier*, rolled up in an elastic band, was thrown onto the lawns in front of the houses, while the handbills slid into long letter-boxes on posts, bearing the house-number. The Californians’ taste for authority was evident in the legend these boxes bore: “Authorized by the Postmaster-General.”

Since Roy’s father was a member of the Bel Air Country Club, close to Beverly Hills, Roy had a supplementary source of income in the role of caddie for the players. And often, at the Tennis Club where he went to play, he was content simply to act as ball boy at the rate of four dollars an hour.

Some time ago his shrewdness had shown him a way of filling his pockets which he had not revealed to his parents. As a wolf-cub in the scouts, he went to steal handbills from the various protestant churches of Beverly Hills—but not his own—and from the Catholic church of the Good Pastor, and took them on his bicycle to the residents of far-flung districts, pretending to be a young collector of funds. His angelic appearance, his scarf and his badges, the list upon which he asked the donors to write their

names, all inspired confidence. He had not penetrated the synagogues, because he did not have the Jewish scout insignia, but, ecumenism being the fashion, he had often benefited from the charity of the Jews towards Christian youth. Naturally, he never went twice to the same believer. Moreover he had the sense not to go on with this canvassing too long, for fear of coming unstuck.

One of the first books his father gave him to read at the age of ten was *Think and Grow Rich*, by Napoleon Hill. This work, of which the American edition alone comprised more than three million copies, was fifty years old, but was constantly reprinted in a paperback edition. The cover claimed: "This book can earn you a million dollars." It was beyond Roy, who at that era had been more interested in Walt Disney, and what is more the author was writing especially for businessmen, but he did indicate some general principles from which even a child was likely to profit. One which Roy had retained in his mind was that, to encourage oneself to make money, it was necessary to decide on the amount one wanted to have after a given period of time, and to say to oneself each evening: "I believe that I have this money in my possession. My faith is so great that I see it before my eyes. I am touching it with my hands . . ." It was the incantation of the religion of money, of the faith which produces miracles, of the suggestive and creative force of what Washington Irving called the "almighty dollar". Roy had never before possessed a hundred-dollar bill. Now that he had one, he was at liberty to inspect it, to feel it, and the certainty that he would receive the same sum at each of his meetings with Jack gave him a feeling of light intoxication. But who would ever have told him that he could earn a hundred dollars from pleasure? For him, sensuality was something essentially free, seeing that one derived it from oneself. For the past year, since the day when, following his schoolfellows' instructions, he had discovered the thrilling resources of his sexual organ, he had with exhilaration been giving his child-life this secret comfort. And now, thanks to Jack, he had found a second

carapace: the experience of shared pleasure—but with that came also the experience of money.

He was interested enough to skim through Napoleon Hill's book again, and found a passage he had not noticed at the age of ten, at a time before his senses had awoken. The writer spoke of "the stimulating force of sex" and cited certain great men who had had a "highly-sexed" nature: Shakespeare, Washington, Napoleon, Emerson, Wilson . . . Roy's ambition was neither to govern his country nor to predominate in philosophy or literature. He wanted to be an electronic engineer. He was captivated by the future of this science which had made it possible for man to reach the moon. And so, in contrast to that maze of technological intricacies, he became all the more enamoured of the immediate possibilities of fleshly desire. To possess, unknown to everybody, a "highly-sexed" nature and life, appeared to him a most amusing ideal for a young boy studying at the Buckley School.

The feeling of what he knew and what he had done in the realm of his personal life strengthened the feeling of superiority he had acquired even in regard to his own parents. It was true that John and Kathy Clear, both forty-five, made a handsome couple, but in the eyes of their son each of them had lost a portion of the prestige of which they were so proud. John belonged to the society of Americans of royal descendancy—French royal descendancy in his case—and he was so certain of this that he had named his son Roy the better to call to mind this claim. This, he said, was the reason why the Clears traditionally learned French and had not adopted the American practice of circumcision. And it was likewise for this reason that they were members of the Republican party, that is to say conservatives.

When, in the presence of his French teacher at the Buckley school, Roy boasted of this ancestry, or descent, the teacher, a Frenchman, asked him about the reasons for his assertion, and showed him their absurdity. The Clears claimed to be connected with the French royal line of the counts of Clermont, one of whose offshoots was said to have come over to the United States



and changed his name first to Claremont and then to Clear. The professor asked Roy to read, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the article stating that the last Count of Clermont had died without issue, more than two centuries before the discovery of America, and that then this countdom had been reunited with the crown. He added that the title had subsequently been borne by members of the royal family, and was at present borne by the elder son of the heir presumptive to French throne, the Comte de Paris. Where did the Clears of Beverly Hills come in? Roy's father had been very vexed when his son triumphantly repeated the teacher's remarks, and he said that he would complain to the directress and founder, Miss Isabelle Palms Buckley. He declared that the American descendants of the royal family were connected only to the line of the Bastard of Orleans, and that a genealogist had established this lineage in the case of his father the judge. It was unassailable. What is more it was happily supported by a resemblance in the contracted name; the Coombes of San Francisco, and the Vincents of Carmel, were descendants respectively of William the Conqueror and of the kings of Scotland, without their surname having preserved any trace of that. Roy did not tell his parent about the teacher's conclusion: that in America descendancy from royal families had to be a question of dollars. From that day on he had despised his father for believing in such sillinesses, and he no longer showed the same respect before the portrait of his grandfather, Judge Andrew Clear.

He smiled at the framed coats of arms in the first-floor corridor, which displayed the three flowers of the golden fleur-de-lis of France on an azure background, and, below, not the names Orléans or Bourbon, but Clear. This seemed to him to form an appropriate counterpart to the diploma, more authentic, in "law enforcement". His father had already irritated him, rather than gained his respect, with a display of diplomas of the same type in every room of the house: a diploma for crossing the line during a cruise to South America; a diploma from an airline

company for having landed at Kotzebue in Alaska; a diploma proclaiming him to be a member of another club after having completed a certain number of flights, etc. "The only thing he doesn't have is a diploma for being a silly prick," Roy thought. Having learned from him the worship of one real divinity, the dollar, and having learned of his own accord the worship of another, no less real, namely pleasure, he considered it grotesque to claim either an imaginary lineage—more absurd in America than in Europe—or honours which his youthfulness did not prevent him from finding puerile.

His mother too had an inherited vanity, somewhat less absurd: she belonged to the national society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, consisting of female descendants of those who fought in the War of Independence—one of the most envied and patriotic clubs in the United States. She was treasurer (rather than treasuress, women's titles yielding to the masculine) of the Los Angeles chapter, and spent her time soliciting donations, in cash or in kind, so as to ingratiate herself with the mother society in Washington. At the homes of numerous friends, who dreaded her coming, her eagle-eye discovered relics, often modest, which, with a note of their provenance, would be added to the twenty thousand or so objects of "historical interest" already assembled by the society's museum in the federal capital. She was proud of having enriched it with thirty snuff-boxes, twenty silver tea-pots, a hundred and ten spoons and forks, and a collection of tooth-picks. Mr. Clear had sacrificed everything he owned from that period of revolution—which was extended up to the beginning of the nineteenth century—but he had refused to hand over the thirty volumes of the *Gentleman's Magazine* that adorned his library and lent him an additional air of aristocracy.

Naturally, Mrs. Clear had affiliated her son and daughter to the society of the Children of the American Revolution. Gladys, Roy's sister, had even earned the Society's Good Citizen certificate for California at the national meeting attended each year by the three best students from each state, chosen for their loyalty, their

helpfulness and their patriotism. This had earned her a silver cup and a thousand-dollar scholarship at the university of her choice. She had chosen not the state university, known as the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), but the principal private university of that city: the University of Southern California (USC). Indeed the Clears, like the majority of distinguished people, and especially the rich, took great pride in not sending their children to public educational establishments.

Roy had not omitted to tell his French teacher about the national society of the Daughters of the American Revolution and had proudly shown him his membership badge as a Child of that society. There were, moreover, other boys and girls at the school who sported this badge, to the great satisfaction of Miss Buckley. She herself was a member of the society, which seemed to be invented for her, so much did she embody its spirit. Since she suspected the French teacher of harbouring an inordinate disrespect for the great patriotic memories, she had refused to let him have the *Index* of the *Daughters of the American Revolution* which he then requested from Roy. Mrs. Clear liked to let it be known that there had never been a United States president, from George Washington to Jimmy Carter, whose name did not appear in that *Index*, as if this fact was a guarantee of all their good qualities.

The teacher certainly saw therein Mrs. Clear's maiden name, which was Clemens, like that of "Mark Twain". Under the same rubric, moreover, variants of this name were listed: Clemence, Clements, and Clement. The Christian names of those patriots who had distinguished themselves during the revolutionary period were listed after each of the surnames in the *Index*. Kathy Clemens claimed to be descended from a Captain born in 1783 who died in 1811; the orthography of his name had not been established. The teacher had little trouble in proving to Roy that this genealogy could not have been much more serious than that of Americans from the royal family. It was open to any one to acquire roots, provided his name was in this list. Another book,

containing the statutes of the Society, which Roy had brought along with the *Index*, affirmed that a genealogist had helped the families to find their evidence; here too it was doubtless a question of dollars. All things considered, Roy might have been prouder to be related to “Mark Twain” than to the problematic Captain.

Nevertheless, while he had been quite happy to humiliate his father a little, he did not dare repeat to his mother the hateful teacher’s latest comments. But, pleading that it was no longer the fashion at Buckley, he did at least remove from his blazer the badge of the Child of the American Revolution. This gesture signalled the beginning of his emancipation, which was henceforth to make great strides.

## Part One—Chapter Three

THAT Saturday at the end of September, a fortnight after the recommencement of school and a week after his meeting with the police chief, Roy was surprised to see his mother waiting for him as he delivered the *Beverly Hills Courier*; she frantically snatched up the copy he had thrown onto the lawn, and ran into the house. Later, when he got back, he was anxious to discover what had been happening. Uracca, the Mexican maid, who was working in the kitchen, told him nothing. Kathy Clear was in her room, in tears over a page in the newspaper. She showed Roy a few lines, in microscopic type, of an official notice inserted by H. B. Alvor, the receiver of taxes in Los Angeles County, listing “delinquent” taxpayers for the current year. This term, recalling the “Wanted” formerly seen on photographs of highway robbers, was normally used to indicate a straightforward delay in payment of taxes by the due date, a delay which the administration wished to render humiliating. But it could also be a matter of so-called criminal fraud—the “white collar crimes” such as tax evasion, stigmatized under the term “felony”.

Clear, Kathy C., had been put in the pillory of delinquency as the proprietress of a plot of land measured in blocks and specified by the land registry’s reference code; she owed 14,836 dollars and 63 cents. Roy was aware that she herself administered her family assets. From time to time she consulted a mimeographed sheet which her lawyer had given her: “What a lady should know about her properties.” The block in question was a house in Los Angeles purchased by the Clemens before her marriage, where she had tenants.

In the meantime, John, who had been in the city on business, had returned, and Roy, seated in an arm-chair, joined in his parents’ stormy discussion. Kathy confessed to her husband that

she had submitted a false declaration of maintenance expenses for this house, a truly delinquent act. He reproached her with having forgotten her obligations as a Daughter of the American Revolution, but she responded that defrauding the tax department had not seemed to her to be dishonourable. She was equally devastated by the thought that Mr. Alvor's notice would be appearing not only in the *Beverly Hills Courier*, but also in the *Los Angeles Times* and the other newspapers of the county. "It's a good thing my parents are dead," she said. "It would have killed them."

"And it's a good thing," John added, "that my mother in Vermont doesn't read our papers. I won't dare to show myself in my clubs; but for your part, send in your resignation as treasurer of your chapter right away before they ask for it. Perhaps that way you won't be expelled from the society."

"Me! expelled from the society of the Daughters of the American Revolution!" cried Mrs. Clear amid tears.

"No," her husband said to console her; "you've done too much for them. Anyway, you're right to say that fiscal delinquency, of whatever kind, is no dishonour. Otherwise a great many eminent members of my own clubs would have been excluded."

When he mentioned his clubs, the family could not help recalling with him the three lines printed below his name and those of his wife and children in the social register of the county: the *Blue Book of Los Angeles*. In spite of his disdain of all these things, Roy was flattered enough by his inclusion, which distinguished him from many schoolfellows belonging to families infinitely richer than his own. In fact this register included very few Jews, even though they formed a majority in Beverly Hills North—known as the "golden ghetto" of the "golden state", the familiar name for California—and numbered five hundred thousand in Los Angeles, occupying positions of unrivalled importance. Mr. Clear, who had an anti-Semitic streak, but let it show only within the family, so as not to prejudice his business dealings, took a malign pleasure in pointing out that the *Blue Book* and its two rivals, the *Social Directory of California* and the *South*

*West Blue Book*, were the last bastions of unsullied Americanism. In Los Angeles he alone could boast of the appearance of the Colonial Society of Americans of Royal Descent in the list of his clubs. The society of the Daughters of the American Revolution was represented in greater abundance. John's other clubs, besides the Bel Air Country Club, were the Kappa Kappa Gamma (from the University of Southern California, of which he was a graduate), the costume committee of the County Museum in Los Angeles, the Palm Springs Desert Museum (he owned a house in that resort town, ninety-five miles east of Los Angeles, at the foot of Mount San Jacinto), the Friends of the Desert College Cultural Centre, the George Randolph Hearst Memorial Foundation for Diabetic Education, and finally a club in Vermont—Roy's paternal grandmother had, since becoming a widow, occupied their house in that New England state, whence the Clears and the Clemenses derived their remote origin. None of these affiliations, the splendour of which was in Roy's opinion debatable, appeared to be called into question by Mrs. Clear's delinquency, which would, moreover, be discharged immediately after the week-end; on the Monday, John would hasten to Mr. Alvor to pay his wife's debt. Nevertheless, it had been a bad moment.

Mr. Clear was comforted also after looking through the list of convictions published by the receiver of revenue. He confirmed the presence therein of other Beverly Hills landowners, notably the Kaplans, who were very rich. He declared that there were a great many delinquents for a city that congratulated itself on having the highest *per caput* income in the United States: 35,000 dollars. But the names enumerated by his father did make Roy think: none of those Beverly Hills residents had children at the Buckley school.

Nevertheless Roy, who until now had had more respect for his mother than for his father, discovered that patriotism was not the answer to everything and that he was inclining towards patrimony. And John Clear, having to-day given his wife a lecture, was congratulating himself on having obtained a building permit by

bribing a Beverly Hills municipal councillor. Yet when it was discovered that the Boy Scouts Association of America, a most respectable organisation, had inscribed non-existent boys on its membership roll so as to obtain extra federal hand-outs, John had at once indignantly withdrawn his son! Roy concluded that, like the Los Angeles police chief and like himself, grown-ups had double standards in regard to the realities of life.

His own sister had been the first to teach him this. After discovering for himself the arts of pleasure, he was curious to find out whether she knew about them. Exchanging one confidence for another, she showed him the pills she took to prevent pregnancy, and, fearing that their mother might discover them, she even hid the box in Roy's bedroom. At that time Gladys had been a student, on her Good Citizen scholarship from the Children of the American Revolution—the strictest of the strict.



## Part One—Chapter Four

SINCE the Buckley School was so far away, few parents drove their children there. Students sixteen years old and over were permitted to have their own cars, and they willingly took their neighbours' sons and daughters along in return for a small contribution towards the cost of petrol. The school, with almost a thousand pupils, did, it is true, have around fifty buses which picked them up from their homes. But after the age of twelve having only this means of transport was a humiliation. Roy used to walk or cycle to the home of a boy of seventeen, Bob Teller—who lived not far from him in Rodeo Drive—and travelled in his Ford Capri with three others: two girls and a boy.

On the Monday following the tax receiver's notice, Bob, seeing Roy coming, called out ironically: "You know what my father said?—that a collection's going to be organised for the Clears."

Roy blushed from ear to ear. He responded that his mother's debt to the revenue would be paid off by his father that very day, and the incident was not mentioned again until they reached the school.

During that long drive, Roy thought about the adult world, within which he had just formed a secret relationship, and which was so full of spite. Clearly it was not one of his fellow students who had had the idea of reading the list of fiscal delinquents in the paper; all Bob had done was to repeat his parents' silly remarks. Yet, considering the fact that henceforth he had one extraordinary ally in that world, Roy felt himself to be as strong in opposition to that world as he was with respect to his family and his schoolfellows, and this thought restored his equanimity. Twice already he had telephoned Jack, who had been delighted to receive the calls, but vexed at not being free. This little matutinal conversation with the chief of police stimulated Roy. The school

was situated in the Arroyo de la Cumbre, at a place called Sherman Oaks; in his mind this conjured up the wooded hills of Summit Ridge, where they had met. A large placard proclaimed “We have savage dogs and armed guards.” This warning was intended not so much to deter kidnappers as to please the families by demonstrating that the Buckley school-kids were worth their weight in gold.

Before lessons began, the flag-raising ceremony brought every morning a group of students to the schoolyard—nine, ten, eleven, and twelve of them from the four upper classes (form nine, form ten, form eleven and form twelve), who took it in turns. Roy, whose turn it was to-day, advanced towards the great pole to raise the star-spangled banner, but one of Miss Buckley’s deputies stopped him with a gesture and signalled to a girl to replace him. Guessing the reason for this affront, he turned pale with anger, but quietly returned to his place. A prayer was recited—a non-denominational one, paying homage to the divinity in vague terms; in this way Miss Buckley made a point of not offending the beliefs of any of her students, since there were protestants, Catholics, Jews, and a few Orientals.

Roy looked at his fellow-students: both girls and boys seemed to have come from the same mould, or if not that, at least from the same tailor. The girls wore a plain grey skirt, and the boys, like Roy, a pair of grey trousers, while all of them had a white shirt, a tie with grey and red stripes, and a dark blue blazer bearing on the left the coat of arms showing a red griffin over the word “Buckley”. Shortly the little ones would enter the hall where various framed texts reminded them of the “human values”, upon which they were invited to meditate. It is certain that this teaching, founded on morality, could accommodate no kind of delinquency, not even fiscal. Roy, in an environment as snobbish and money-mad as his school’s, had to resign himself to enduring to the bitter end the insults which his mother’s imprudence had brought down upon him. Was it not rumoured that Miss Buckley exploited this snobbery by asking for donations to the school in

return for enrolling the children of big Hollywood producers? It was said that twenty thousand dollars was the minimum sum.

Almost all the students lived in Beverly North, which was likewise a hotbed of snobbery. While his own teachers did not share the deputy's boorishness, Roy did perceive in their manner a nuance of irony, just as he had seen coolness among the majority of his fellow-students. The news had spread like wildfire, as the notorious list in such small print was avidly devoured. The Clears' own snobbery, with their regal ancestry and the Daughters of the American Revolution, had stoked the malicious gossip. The only students not to have changed their behaviour towards Roy were the Jews and the Negroes. He understood that the feeling of belonging to a minority made them show tolerance of and solidarity with some one who, for one reason or another, became separated from the majority. He observed this nuance all the more in the case of the Jews since, influenced by his father, he had never particularly sought out their company. Roy also realized, from the little he knew of their history, that to them no question relating to money would appear degrading.

He was sorry that the French teacher who had opened his eyes on the genealogy question was no longer at the school. The past year had, in fact, been a climacteric year for Buckley, but to a lesser degree than had been experienced a dozen years previously by the American universities—notably, in California, by Berkeley. In September, the seniors, which is to say the final-year students, mutinied against the need to bring in their midday meal—the school did not provide food—and they claimed the right to eat nearby, where one of the popular McDonald restaurants, and another one with hamburgers, were to be found. Miss Buckley and Mr. Thepot would not hear of it. The headmaster claimed that the one time this had been permitted, the students had behaved badly in these restaurants; they had spread disorder and spilled mustard on the tables. The mutiny was crushed, but it unexpectedly continued among the staff members: nine masters, who at first respectfully referred to themselves as “loyal

dissidents”, and among whose number was the French teacher, called for certain structural reforms, and complained that the headmaster was not adequately qualified to carry out his duties. They demanded that he be replaced. But it was he who sent *them* packing, and they brought a suit against him, still pending, in the high court of California. Their departure gave rise to new disturbances in the school. Fake telegrams were sent to the members of the administrative council, and letters of suspension to sixty students, on headed paper stolen from the bursar’s office. Mr. Thepot engaged a detective to find the thieves, but in vain. The F.B.I. likewise was unsuccessful when, some time later, they attempted to find the author of an anonymous letter sent to the headmaster, threatening him with death. Those students who had sympathised with the “loyal dissidents” were fearful that they would not be warmly recommended by Mr. Thepot for their university admission, which depended not merely upon a pass-mark of “B”—the second best mark—but upon a reference from the headmaster of their secondary school. Quite severe disciplinary measures against drug use, and the searching of certain vehicles, had perturbed the affected students. The continuance of the ban on coloured shirts, and the regulation that girls should wear only low-heeled shoes, seemed anachronistic things. In brief, behind the white shirts and blue jackets, revolt smouldered still. But while he was, on this subject, on the side of his fellow-students, to-day Roy despised those who were not on his. For him it was a time to tell himself that such extreme strictness in the educational system did not always mould happy personalities, nor turn people away from their true desires. “. . . Savage dogs . . .”

When he got home, and although Bob had been charming, as if to excuse himself for his unfortunate joke, Roy announced that he did not want to return to Buckley; he did not accept that he could stay at a school where he had been publicly insulted and where he was looked down upon because his mother had been cited as a fiscal delinquent. He added that, since it was a question of money

that had stirred up this turmoil, he considered it appropriate that he should enrol at the Beverly Hills High School, where the education was free of charge, instead of obliging his father to pay two thousand eight hundred dollars a year to Miss Buckley. While the teaching at his present school did have a good reputation, that was true of the High School as well. In the competitive examinations between all the high schools of the union, its students had often come first, and regularly appeared at least among the top ten. It was the great pride of Beverly Hills. Finally, its proximity made Roy's attendance easier. Since his father's agency was next to the high school, he could take Roy there in the mornings. And for coming home, Roy would find a schoolfellow with a car. Or if not, he would use one of the limousines that transported the students, like the Buckley buses. John suddenly looked interested.

Mrs. Clear, the one responsible for his troubles, declared that they were only temporary, and opposed Roy's idea. She said that while it was true that she had been the cause of his humiliation before the Buckley students, for him to enrol at the High School would be a cause of humiliation for her in the face of her friends, and that she would not stand for it. Had he forgotten who he was? Gladys's entire education had been at Buckley, and Roy too had to have his there, concluded Mrs. Clear.

He apologized for having a self-esteem equal to hers. He said that the fleeting humiliation she may have experienced had nothing in common with the humiliation which now singled him out; his mother's friends would soon no longer worry about whether he was at Buckley or not, while his own fellow students would never forget that morning's affront. Suddenly Kathy announced that she had had a brilliant idea. There was a very simple way to sort everything out: all that was required was to enrol Roy at the French Lycée of Los Angeles, a private institution whose style, reliability and elegance matched those of Buckley. Roy studied French, so it was the obvious thing. This Lycée had been founded fifteen years ago by two French people, Raymond

and Esther Kabbaz, after a heroic battle with French bureaucracy, eager to preserve for the school in New York the privilege of being the sole French *lycée* in the United States. Finally they extracted an approval from the French minister for national education, and, with more than five hundred students, made French education shine for the first time in California. The Clears had not sent Roy there because of the links between Beverly North and the Buckley school, but they had considered the Kabbazes, because they appeared in the *Blue Book*, which stated that they belonged to the order of Saint Etienne of Alsace.

Mr. Clear did not permit himself to be persuaded by his wife: the French Lycée of Los Angeles was as costly as the Buckley School and the financial case which Roy had put forward appeared to him to carry some weight. Even though he himself had been educated at a private school, he agreed with his son that the state institutions had equally good teachers and equally good students: the University of California at Los Angeles, and the Berkeley University, both state universities, had the same prestige as the University of Southern California at Los Angeles and the Stanford University at Palo Alto, both private universities like Harvard, Yale and Princeton. He concluded that Roy, who almost always got an “A” grade, would have no difficulty enrolling at the Beverly Hills high school, even though the minimum age was officially fourteen, since there had actually been cases of boys beginning at twelve.

These details came from Manuelito, Uracca’s son; he had started as a student at the High School earlier that year, and he was six months older than Roy. Mr. Clear had prevented the two boys from consorting with each other, but the little Mexican’s personal affairs still became known when he appeared in the kitchen—he and his mother lived in a villa at the far end of the garage yard. Mrs. Clear called attention to the fact that, in short, her son would be in the same institution and perhaps in the same class as the maid’s son. “So what?” asked Roy. “If we don’t consider the publication of a fiscal delinquency shameful, would it

be shameful to be in the same educational institution as anybody at all?" Mr. Clear agreed, and Mrs. Clear did not press the point.

He decided to take at once the necessary steps to enrol Roy at the high school. Education being one of the principal responsibilities of the state, every resident of a given region had the right to demand that his children, no matter the time of the year, be admitted to an educational institution in that region. This advantage was not reserved for Americans: the sons of immigrant workers, and, what is a much more extraordinary thing, those of illegal immigrant workers, were entitled to the same benefit. As most of these were Spanish speakers, the courses were in some classes given in two languages.

"Thanks for saving me over two thousand dollars," said John Clear to his son. "That will encourage me to buy you a car when you turn sixteen, instead of waiting till you reach eighteen, as I had intended. But I must warn you in advance that you will get it only after having spent a month in the summer as a page-boy at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, whose owner, Hernando Courtright, is a friend of mine. It is a much sought-after position, at that age, for boys of good family. It pays a minimum of a thousand dollars a month. Another good position, during the weekend—four or five dollars an hour—is as an assistant at the supermarket, packing the customer's purchases into big paper bags; it is always students who do that. I know the Carls, who have a supermarket chain; you'll be all right there, likewise at the Beverly Wilshire. And lastly, I have some friends with pregnant wives, getting some children ready for you to mind when you reach sixteen. It's fun being a baby-sitter. *Get money; still get money, boy . . .*"

## Part One—Chapter Five

THE Clears themselves had shown their son how money could be earned otherwise than from one's profession: they let out, each summer, their house in Beverly Hills, when they went off either to Palm Springs or to Vermont. But at present their residence in Palm Springs was let by the year. The letting of the house in Beverly displeased Roy. Having ascertained that none of his schoolfellows' parents let out their houses, or required their sons to deliver newspapers, he inferred therefrom that his own were not as rich as they made out, and that they were obliged to economize. He endured having to put some of his books and personal possessions away in a locked cupboard, so as to make room for unknown children who would poke about in his library, play with his footballs, use his bicycle, eat from his china, bathe in his bath, and shower under his shower.

It was his father who drew up the "transfer of authority" with the future occupants, while he and his mother withdrew, but on one occasion when Roy had chanced to be present he had felt sick at heart. The strangers wandering from room to room, checking, on a list of which his father retained a copy, the objects there described, appeared to be buying something at an auction sale, and this inventory, intended to safeguard all these objects, had seemed to him, on the contrary, a kind of dispossession. That intimacy, that secret of family life they loved to boast about, seemed to have been annihilated, and he in his turn came to think of himself as a temporary occupant of this house that would, for a month, be in other hands. He no longer felt at home, and never would. He blamed his parents for inflicting this mortification upon him, and he looked down on them for inflicting it upon themselves. But since the taste for money had been inculcated upon him, these practices had done nothing to dispel his notion



that the dollar was an idol to which everything should be sacrificed.

There too, moreover, he witnessed the power of the principle—stronger than rectitude—of *Get money . . . No matter by what means*. His father arranged things so that nothing out of the cheque for two thousand dollars that they gave him as guarantee for the rental was returned to the tenants, particularly if they were foreigners; on the pretext that he had to wait for the water, electricity and telephone accounts, he swindled them out of the refund. That was how Roy got the idea of his own little swindles of the Beverly Hills parishioners.

John Clear loved to cite instances showing that money was the be-all and end-all of life. He recalled that Jesus had been delivered up for a sum equivalent to twenty-four dollars, that Franklin said “Time is money”, that the United States had won their independence over a question of money (the duty on tea), that they had won two world wars because they had more money than their enemies, and that the singer Bob Dylan, having enriched himself through protest songs at the time of the Vietnam war and the blacks’ struggle for civil rights, had just built a villa at Malibu worth two million dollars.

Similarly, Mr. Clear showed his family the importance of money by way of the scrupulous economy he imposed upon them. This did not consist merely in obliging his son to do odd jobs. He checked the kitchen and clothing expenditure, and the bills from Pacific Telephone, and did not fail to reproach his wife for any excessive purchases or for conversations she had had with his own mother, Mrs. Andrew Clear, in Vermont. “Can’t you just write to her?” he asked every time. He did not allow any one to make calls outside the Los Angeles area. Thus it was his daughter Gladys who regularly passed on his news by telephone, since no one had the right to insist that he himself did so—besides, San Diego was no more than sixty miles away. He had made a terrible scene when Uracca called the Tijuana hospital in Mexico, where her husband was ill. It was in that town in the state of Baja, adjoining

the Californian border, that the Clears, while on a trip, had engaged their maid, who came with her younger son. Since everyone was carefully checked at the frontier, John was obliged to grease the immigration officers' palms, as Californians did in such circumstances. He did indeed spend money when it was in his interests to do so. Once the frontier had been crossed, the two Mexicans' residence permits were sorted out thanks to the Beverly Hills police chief.

To inspire in his son an ingenuity in the art of pecuniary advantage, John Clear had engaged the services of a certain student, who had for a time become a public benefactor. In the streets of Beverly the time-limits for parking were fixed by meters, and offences against the regulations were the province of female police officers. As absent from the foot-paths as their male colleagues, they circulated in three-wheeled cars, descending therefrom to slide onto a windscreen the fatal form, after having verified that the hour had run its course. The student in question had the idea of wandering around looking for an impending violation, and he inserted the coin—a "quarter"—required to restart the apparatus. Then he waited for the owner and pointed out that, poor as he was, he had saved the said owner a fine of five to ten dollars; he asked him for a dollar as token of gratitude, and in that manner he earned three times his investment. Or else he found out the driver's address and wrote to him so as to invite his generosity in the same way. John Clear, who had several times been obliged to him, never tried to avoid him, since in Beverly as in Los Angeles it was impossible to cover up the smallest contravention. But what John admired most was that this lad had thought up this way of gaining a reliable income at the expense of the public purse.

Meanwhile, the police-women soon found that they were no longer managing to issue a single parking ticket, at least in the areas with meters. The student was prosecuted. He asked whether there was a law saying that a citizen might not insert a "quarter" into a slot designed for that purpose. The judge ruled in his

favour, but the city, panic-stricken, passed a by-law that forbade any one but the owner of the car, his chauffeur, or one of his employees to use the meter. Now, with his father still praising that student's imagination, Roy could not tell him that *he* had perhaps just as easy and pleasant a way of regularly earning a hundred dollars.

## Part One—Chapter Six

IT was his second meeting with Jack Sherman. After the malicious sentiment generated among their friends and acquaintances by Mr. Alvor's publication, the Clears were again receiving a few dinner invitations. It became known that Kathy's fiscal debt had been paid off p.d.q., and the Los Angeles chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution had refused to accept her resignation. Thanks to one of these dinners, Roy had again got away to meet up with the police chief, who was waiting for him in Summit Drive at ten in the evening, just up from the house. As Roy climbed into the black Chevrolet, he felt both the sense of security given by the recollection of his first encounter, and also a *frisson* of sexual anticipation: he was without a doubt on the way to new pleasures, and he had nothing to fear from the scene of those pleasures. Having recently suffered at the hands of one of the institutions of society, he savoured the additional joy of a secret connection with the local head of a second institution, more formidable than the taxman: namely the police.

He wondered whether Jack would say anything about his mother's misadventure. That would have bothered him, but before that could happen his companion, after a few friendly words about their meeting again, remarked jovially: "One of my colleagues puts together a detailed report of the county press, and so I saw that list of his latest victims put out by my friend Harry Alvor, the receiver of taxes: your mother's name was there. I can laugh now, but at the time I was furious to think how riled you would be by your school-mates' reaction. I know boys! You have to rise above such concerns. You are a young man who should face all life's problems with courage. That publication doesn't affect you in any way, and your mother's honour remains intact. Everybody breaks some law or other, starting with the

police chief. You skate on the road, you have certainly crossed a street without using a pedestrian crossing, in spite of the signs that forbid 'jay-walking', and your mother has run a red light hundreds of times. Your father is certainly hiding a portion of his income."

Roy replied that he did not know, but that in any case his father was officially a police auxiliary, since he had a diploma to say that he had attended a course in "law enforcement" at the Beverly City Hall. This detail greatly amused Jack, and he went on: "Don't forget that when the law does catch up with you, you will pay for all the times you escaped its clutches. So think of your good fortune in being safe with me from all danger, because relationships of this kind do bring a certain number of risks: diseases, scandal, etc."

"That's what I was telling myself when I got into your car," said Roy, and added with a laugh: "But it wasn't diseases I was thinking of. Which ones do you mean?"

"Venereal diseases," Jack said. "Diseases of the sexual organs, if infected. They are common in 'gay' circles,—you know that is the term for men who have sex with other men or with boys. And often that word 'gay' is quite ironic, because being 'gay' can bring all kinds of misfortune."

"Sometimes," said Roy, "my father complains about the newspaper reports of gay demos in California, and he is furious that there could be a Los Angeles city councillor who is openly gay."

"Ah!" exclaimed Jack, "That one! I detest him. His name is 'Amador'; his first name is 'Don' or 'Donald'. He has a degree in anthropology from the UCLA. It's a disgrace that a city like Los Angeles, a city of which I am the police chief, should have elected a councillor who campaigns for gays in the name of the liberties guaranteed by the constitution, gives lectures on that subject in three university colleges, and goes on the television to defend them on Sunday mornings."

Roy asked where he taught.

“At the State College, and at the Los Angeles City College,” Jack replied. “Also at the State College of Long Beach. What a fine generation of Californians he is raising there.”

Roy found it strange that Jack, like his father, should detest a city councillor who defended gays, and he could not help making a remark to that effect.

“Later,” said the police chief, “you will understand that there are certain things one should not shout from the roof-tops, which should remain the privilege of an élite, and gain all the more spice from being secret.

“I don’t see why,” said Roy. “I even think that to admit to tastes that the majority condemn shows a certain courage.”

“Don’t forget,” said Jack, “that I advised you to keep things secret, and I got together with you because I believe you can do that.”

“I will,” said Roy, “but I am obliged to scorn a social system that could condemn what I am for you. My mother’s difficulties taught me scorn.”

“Your intelligence and sensitivity are equal to your charm,” said Jack. “Yet my task will be to teach you life by teaching you love.”

Roy was taking note of their route; first the car joined Sunset Boulevard and drove east for a moment, passing between the campus of the University of California and the lawns of the Bel Air Country Club, where he went to carry golf-clubs. Then it ascended Sepulveda Boulevard, passed the Westwood cemetery, and turned into one of the short streets of Brentwood between the boulevard and the heights of Montana Denair Cashemere.

Jack’s house was surrounded by greenery and thus hidden from his neighbours, who were in any case some distance away. The garage, like that of the Clears, opened onto a space close to the kitchen door, permitting access from that side without being seen. Jack had said that his two Negro servants left the house at nightfall, at least on the days when he did not need them. Life in Los Angeles was calm enough for him not to need a guard. In

any case, he carried a firearm, as his job obliged him to do. In the living room the first thing he did was to place on the table a revolver he kept in the left inside pocket of his jacket. Roy stretched out a hand to examine the weapon. "Careful, don't touch," said Jack. "It's loaded. A police chief always has to be on the defensive. One of my predecessors was killed, and another died of wounds from an armed altercation with one of his deputies."

Roy said he had sometimes fired his father's revolver in the garden of his home. The Constitution gave citizens the right to keep as many arms as they wished in their homes, to defend their property, but they were not permitted to carry arms on their persons or in their cars.

The second thing that Jack did was to put his badge down next to the revolver; this badge, like that of a sheriff, was a star made of nickel and brass. Then from the refrigerator of a bar installed at the entrance of the living-room, he took some bottles of fruit juice. Roy looked around the room, enjoying the apricot juice. The walls were adorned with displays of old revolvers and Sioux weapons, while Hawaiian artefacts decorated the furniture—dancers in wood with flowery necklaces, shells, coral and other preserved marine plants.

"My old revolvers," Jack said. "The envy of Tom Bradley, our mayor, who was once a policeman like me. Is not Los Angeles an extraordinary town? The only one, beside Detroit and Washington, to have a Negro mayor even though it has a white majority population. California even has a Negro vice-governor, Dymally, a senator of Japanese descent, Hayakawa, and, for secretary of state, a woman of Chinese origin, March Long Eu! But as I said, I don't appreciate the honour, which Los Angeles shares with San Francisco, of having a representative of the gays among its elected officials. The one in San Francisco is a councillor, Harvey Milk—a Jew. And the one in Los Angeles . . . ." Jack opened a drawer and found a card. "Here," he said, "the most scandalous visiting-card of the century." Roy read the

following: “Don Amador. Administrative assistant liaising with the gay community. Mayor’s office. Los Angeles. California. Room M.20.” The telephone number followed. Above left, the Los Angeles coat of arms, which encompassed the United States escutcheon, an eagle clutching a serpent in its beak (symbol of Mexico, of which California was once a possession), a bear (the animal symbolizing the state), a lion and a tower; and to the right: “Tom Bradley, Mayor.”

“Just think,” said Jack, “that on the walls of his mayoral office Amador puts up photographs of himself in the arms of his friend! It’s inconceivable. And when Harvey Milk was elected supervisor, he turned up at the San Francisco City Hall in the company of a huge retinue of gays, and—he too—arm in arm with his ‘boy friend’. The pictures were published on the front page of the local newspapers.”

Even as he was vilifying these gay officials, Jack had seated Roy on his knees, stroking his hair and gazing at him. “What beautiful eyes!” he said. “Lavender blue, which makes your blondness even sweeter.” The gentleness of these words and these caresses contrasted with the ugliness of Jack’s face, which had already struck the young boy and inspired the bizarre attraction to which he once again surrendered. Such perfect ugliness let him take a greater pleasure in his own beauty. That narrow forehead, that monstrous nose, those asymmetrical eyes, those fan-shaped ears, that elephant skin, that crooked mouth, were surely the absolute contrary of his own satin skin, fine nose, delicately rimmed ears, and rose-coloured lips. He sensed that one could obtain the same stimulation from a totally unsightly combination as from a combination of all the graces—indeed a greater stimulation, since the first has more influence upon sexuality. This overturned the scale of values he had hitherto been taught, something which did not displease him in the slightest.

Like last time, at the first touch from this man Roy developed an erection. Jack’s giant member, rearing up similarly, amid a



forest of hair, throbbed against his stomach. Roy was startled when the police chief's hand caressed his backside. The pleasure he derived therefrom revealed for the first time the sensual potential of that part of his body. Jack put his tongue into Roy's mouth, unfastened his belt, stripped him before and behind, comprehensively caressed him, turned him over onto a sofa, and spread his buttocks. From the drawer of a side-table he seized a jar labelled "Lube"—a lubricant. "Don't be surprised by what happens next," he told Roy. "I'm going to go in as gently as possible, and it won't hurt. This muscle I'm fingering, which is giving you those quivers of voluptuous delight, is very elastic. Relax yourself, don't tighten up, and I will possess you in the way that a woman is possessed."

Roy obeyed, and the stallion-like member was able to lodge itself half-way in without causing him too much discomfort. Then instinctively he tightened the muscle, which for Jack brought on the longed-for ejaculation, while with a feverish hand he excited and exhausted Roy's member.

"Are you happy?" asked the police chief, kissing the scattered hairs on Roy's neck and on his right cheek, turned towards him.

"Yes," replied Roy, eyes half-closed in the afterglow of pleasure.

"What we did just now," said Jack, "and what we will do better next time, is the strongest link that can exist between two beings. Henceforth it exists between us." Jack smiled and added "It might be said that you are made for it. You open up marvellously. I adore you."

The loving care with which the police chief wiped him front and back, washed him, and wiped him again, charmed Roy once more. "I even fancy your foreskin, it's a rare item," Jack told him. They were in the bathroom, where a telephone was installed, as was the case in each of the rooms Roy had seen, but Jack had unhooked it just before the love-scene. The moment he replaced it, he was called by one of his colleagues who was on duty at the office in Los Angeles Street, close to the city hall, and who read

the eleven-thirty summary of the evening's events: a thief had been caught cutting the window of a jeweller's, the fire-brigade had extinguished a fire at a paper-factory, ten rapes had been reported (there are a hundred and fifty per day in Los Angeles), one black and a Mexican had been stabbed to death, and some gays had been arrested in *flagrante delicto* at Griffith Park. . . .

"A quiet city!" Jack told Roy. "But it is in the parks—at night time—where some gays are sure to be arrested—and mainly in that one. My duty, you see, is to have them arrested, because I am the defender of the law. But don't be surprised that a police chief likes boys. There was one famous example: J. Edgar Hoover, who for almost half a century was the director of the F.B.I. He died at his post at the age of seventy-seven, and he never suffered any scandal, that goes without saying. He too had gays arrested."

As they walked to the car to return to Summit Drive, Roy, reddening a little, asked: "Are you going to give me what you gave me last time?"

"Sorry, I forgot," replied Jack. He opened his wallet and counted out a hundred dollars in mixed denominations.

## Part One—Chapter Seven

THE following Sunday, Roy could not help hearing councillor Don Amador's speech on one of the nine Los Angeles television channels that Jack had pointed out to him. He was charmed by the refined and intelligent manner of this young man who expressed himself with calm and dignity, without a hint of provocation. This time the councillor spoke about those churches which, while hesitating to invent a new morality, recognized gays as among their sons, and no longer banished them from their bosom. He gave the addresses of their representatives in Los Angeles.

He astounded Roy by saying that the Episcopalian Church had been one of the first to welcome gays. In fact Roy belonged to this confession, but hardly ever attended the "junior service" at the All Saints church in Camden Drive at Beverly Hills. His parents took part in the services only on holidays, when one could be sure of seeing Fred Astaire and Dorothy Lamour. Few of the three thousand parishioners of All Saints attended any more regularly, but they were proud to have contributed three hundred thousand dollars to their priest, Dr. Bill N. Camper. It was the richest protestant church in the city; it rivalled the Catholic church of the Good Pastor, jocularly referred to as Our Lady of the Cadillacs. As far as the young people were concerned, the non-confessional education at the Buckley School, with its anonymous prayers, certainly contributed, but unbeknownst to the worthy Miss Buckley, to the alienation of her students from their various religions. Of course it was not the church in Camden Drive that commended itself to gays, but another church, in Santa Monica Boulevard, by name "Integrity".

Roy was no less astonished to hear that the Mormons at the Affirmation Centre welcomed gays. He thought of their superb church in that same Santa Monica Boulevard, the largest Mormon church in the world. Since the Mormons were very strict about morality—they did not permit bare arms or legs, even in the summer—this development did the gays great credit. Similarly Don Amador cited a Jewish synagogue, that of the New Life, as well as Adventists, Lutherans, Unitarians, and finally the Catholics at the Dignity Centre: these had as chaplain the Jesuit Father Jim Fleck, formerly professor at the Catholic university of Los Angeles, the Loyola Marymount University. The councillor pointed out that there was now even a saint for homosexuals: St. Ælred de Rievaulx, the twelfth-century English monk who, appointed to the court of King David of Scotland, formed a special friendship with the King's son, Count Edward. He saluted Winston Leyland, a former Catholic priest, and graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles, who had founded and edited the literary journal *Gay Sunshine* in San Francisco, and had recently published an anthology of gay poetry entitled *Orgasms of Light*. Don Amador stated that only the Baptists were resistant to gays, and that nevertheless one of them, the Reverend Troy Perry, had recently created a religion especially for gays: the Metropolitan Community Church. This minister had already put up several churches in the United States and other countries, the first of which were those in California. He celebrated marriages between men. Roy was filled with wonder at such particulars. Despite his father's republican and racist sentiments, he felt full of sympathy for the black mayor of Los Angeles, who was a democrat: it was thanks to him that a gay had become a city councillor and could say those things on the television.

On the question of homosexual marriage, Don Amador expressed his regret that it was not yet recognized in California. Partnerships of this kind had been possible in certain states where the legislation had not foreseen that the two parties had to

be of differing sexes. Thus was it that in Boulder, home of the University of Colorado, several unisexual marriages had been celebrated by the authorities. But a new law was quickly brought in to forbid them, without however having the power to annul the marriages already contracted. Don Amador similarly deplored the fact that the gays of Los Angeles could not adopt children, which in San Francisco they were permitted to do.

Such revelations astounded Roy, but also amused him. He imagined himself marrying Jack Sherman, the chief of police; Miss Buckley and Mr. Thepot would be the witnesses. Clearly he learned much more that Sunday morning from listening to Don Amador than he would have from the Reverend Bill N. Camper at the All Saints Church.

## Part One—Chapter Eight

HE worried that he would not be able to see Jack as often as he wanted. The mere memory of the enormous member that had halfway penetrated him, was sufficient to rekindle his desire.

Feeling freer in regard to his school, now that he was about to leave it, he decided to try one or two sexual experiences, to see whether certain of his fellow-students could provide for him sensations of a similar nature.

He was aware of the delicacy of the enterprise. The boys, even while secretly enjoying relations with each other, or, like him, with an adult, put on a pretence of mocking gays. The abusive words “Faggot!” or “Fag!” were let fly at those who assumed an effeminate air, or gazed at a friend with too much kindness, or applied rather too much scent. Nevertheless they did not take offence at that; it was common knowledge that no one at the Buckley School could actually be gay. That would have been counter to the lessons about “human values”. As a result, the attitude of all his school-fellows reminded Roy of his father’s on that question. It would have been futile to ask whether they had heard Councillor Amador. But Roy was making plans not to *discuss*, but to *act*. The far-off image of Jack encouraged him to try his luck.

He decided on a fifteen-year-old Negro, Jim Mellow, who had recently started sharing Bob’s car, and whose family enjoyed the privilege, very rare for the blacks, of living in North Beverly. He was the son of a wealthy lawyer and one of those who had been indifferent to the fiscal delinquency. Roy felt free with him; he would be more receptive to his advances than others. He had heard that the member of certain blacks resembled an elephant’s trunk. He had not been able to verify this in Jim’s case, but having observed him in swimming trunks at the school pool, he

had formed a favourable impression. This was confirmed when, by way of a nicely judged manœuvre, he caught sight of him naked under the shower after a gymnastic lesson. To have a pretext for inviting him home, Roy requested his assistance, as a senior, with a geometry problem, a subject where Jim shone. Although they normally worked in teams of three, it was open to any student to consult a more senior boy. This particular lesson cost four dollars an hour.

Back from school, Roy trembled with pleasure to see Jim enter his room in the Summit Drive house. As if by agreement, they were both wearing shorts. Roy considered this garment—particularly brief at Buckley—propitious for his plans; and since the white woollen socks with red stripes were also very short, their legs were exposed from the top of the thigh to the base of the calf. The school day had ended with a basket-ball match, and the students had kept their shorts on underneath the trousers of their uniform. On the way home, Bob and Jim had removed their trousers in the car, so as to excite the two girls who were with them, and to appear in shorts. Roy copied them.

He went to the kitchen to find some Cocoa-Cola and snacks. Jim's great eyes, his wide mouth, and the idea of that long phallus just under the blue, white-edged shorts, disturbed him. He showed Jim some books about ships and flying-fortresses. Then they sat down side by side at the writing-desk where Roy did his homework. Jim showed him how draw a curve around a polygon, and one polygon around another. Their thighs made contact, and there at last Roy rediscovered the excitement he had experienced in Jack's Chevrolet, on the evening of their first encounter. This time there was mixed with it the odour of Negro skin, rather rich, which he apprehended as something sensual. He was ready for action, but who, Jim or he, would dare to make the first move?

The Negro found in one of his pockets an olive-shaped inhaler, which he applied to each nostril. "Have you got a cold?" asked Roy.

“Clot!” replied Jim. “They’re poppers, to stimulate the mind . . . and the rest. Here, sniff,” he added, putting the inhaler under Roy’s nose. Roy sniffed, but just a little and cautiously. His father had warned him of the dangers of all drugs, and had mentioned this particular one. At Buckley, only a few of the seniors went so far as to use them, with the necessary discretion, and even then there had been incidents. Until now, Roy’s only experience had been to smoke two or three “weed” cigarettes. He had, moreover, found that rather pleasant, and had concluded that his father’s advice did not mean much. Similarly this time he found that the popper had some effect. A sweet arousal swept through him. He pressed his leg against Jim’s. He felt himself transformed into sexual desire.

Once the problem had been resolved, neither of the two boys uttered a word, but an odour of a different kind prickled Roy’s nostrils: Jim had lowered his shorts and was pulling at his phallus. He brusquely appropriated Roy’s hand, in the way that Jack had done in the car, and took Roy’s own organ out of his shorts and began to shake it. Roy, who had marvelled at the dimensions of his companion’s organ in repose, marvelled at them even more in their rigidity. He too shook with a firm grip. He would have wanted a more complete sensual experience, but did not dare to ask. They gushed forth simultaneously onto the carpet: Jim released a veritable torrent.

They stayed there silent, as though stunned, gazing at the page of the exercise book covered with geometrical diagrams, and each still clutching the sticky organ of the other. Suddenly Jim stood up, shoved Roy, punched him violently, knocking him back onto the floor, and kicked him in the stomach, shouting “You swine! You brought me to your place for that. I’ve only ever jerked off with girls. Because of you, I might turn gay. My father would kill me if he knew what I did.” The amusing thing was that as he spoke, his prick was still hanging out of his shorts, just as Roy’s was—and a prick with a foreskin, like his, because he was a Catholic. Jim realized this, adjusted his clothing, and



demanded the four dollars for the lesson. Then he raced out, slammed the front door, and ran all the way home along Summit Drive to San Ysidro Drive—close to Fred Astaire's residence.

Would he tell his father the lawyer what happened, and would Roy have to face a serious parental reprimand? It was most unlikely. The Negroes who had managed to establish themselves in North Beverly did not want to make any fuss. Besides, appearances would favour the younger, not the older. It would be simple for Roy to claim that, far from his having lured Jim to his home, it was Jim who had suggested the idea of helping him with his geometry homework. However that may be, Roy had not been expecting such a reaction. Instead of thanks, he had received punches. His father had warned him that people who smoked pot or hashish often became depressed. Did that happen to Jim because of the poppers? Roy didn't think Jim was any more religious than the other Buckley students. His reaction could not have come from the Church of the Good Shepherd. After thinking about it, Roy found it more a typically racial thing, rather than physical or moral: Jim had doubtless imagined that he, Roy, planned to use the fact that Jim was black in order to find a partner more easily. Who knows whether that was what led a black to kill the young film actor Sal Mineo, in similar circumstances—a recent Los Angeles scandal that Roy had overheard his father discussing. So, that's what comes of mixing with people of that kind. And Roy had thought he was doing Jim a favour with these diversions. He understood that the Negro question presented many difficulties, even when one did not attempt mutual masturbation with them. But nor was the gay question any simpler. Having observed Jack's behaviour Roy was well placed to know that; the police chief was gay, indeed he was a gay of the most controversial kind—those who love young boys—and he condemned gays, persecuted them, he abominated those of them in the civil service who proclaimed their tastes. To-day, young Jim, having made the first move, atoned for it

with blows. Roy's first steps along the gay road had now earned him two hundred dollars and a hammering.

But did he think of himself as destined to be gay for his entire life because he did these things? Did one necessarily go gay through having done them when very young, as Jim seemed to believe? Roy held the opposite view. He was interested in gays, because just now he was one of them owing to the whims of fate and no doubt also owing to his own nature, but one day he would get married, just as Jack Sherman had got married. For the moment, girls had nothing to offer him, and even alarmed him. And what is more he wondered what pleasure could possibly surpass the sensation of Jack's member in his *derrière*, or feeling in his hand the member of that brute whose semen he was now mopping up.

## Part One—Chapter Nine

AT dinner, he told his parents that he would not be inviting Jim again, that it was inadvisable to associate with Negroes, who did not know how to behave, that Jim had spilt the Cocoa-Cola bottle onto the carpet, had left him to clean it up, and had clumsily jostled him during the operation. Roy had expressed his annoyance, to which Jim had responded with blows. In short, Roy had shown him the door. The truth was that Roy himself had scattered a little Cocoa-Cola so as to disguise the traces of sperm.

He added that it was a humiliation for Los Angeles to have a black mayor, and that at least that would never happen in Beverly Hills.

“Still,” said Mr. Clear, “you cannot accuse Bradley of dishonesty. But what about the new mayor of Washington, Marion Barry, who according to the newspapers has a criminal record as long as your arm? He has been arrested several times on a charge of theft, and has still not explained what happened to the three hundred thousand dollars intended to assist unemployed young blacks.”

“At least the mayor of Los Angeles is some one who arrests thieves,” said Mrs. Clear.

Having alluding to Dymally, the Negro vice-governor of California, John declared that all white Americans would be even more humiliated to see their country represented at the United Nations by a mulatto, Andy Young, who was making one blunder after another, showing that black Americans were incapable of occupying positions of responsibility, even though “that fellow” was in fact only an octoroon. John Clear cited the ancient text-books, now proscribed, wherein it was stated that the brain of blacks was smaller and lighter than that of whites.

Mrs. Clear said that the function gave rise to the organ, and that these measurements went back to a time when the blacks' brains did not operate, since only their arms were put to work; assuredly to-day they had the same weight and volume as whites'. She drew attention to the fact that mulattos were famous for their intelligence. Her views on blacks had changed recently since a black woman had been admitted to the Daughters of the American Revolution—the first of her kind—after having proved that one of her forebears had fought for the independence of the United States.

“Soon,” said Mr. Clear, “we will find that there was a darkie on board the Mayflower, and all the darkies will want to join a “Descendants of the Mayflower” club, as aristocratic as ours.”

Mrs. Clear went on to say that it would in any case be difficult to complain about the darkies of Beverly Hills: the oldest known proprietor of the land at present occupied by the town was, at the end of the eighteenth century, the grand-daughter of a Negro tailor. Mrs. Clear championed all the recollections of this historical epoch lumped together.

One argument that filled Mr. Clear with indignation was that swingeing taxes were imposed in order to support unemployed blacks and to favouritize that race in general. He was willing to agree with his wife that the blacks of California deserved some respect, but he found it improper that for a number of years the Negroes of the southern states should have overrun the west coast in order to seek work and, in reality, to increase the unemployment rate.

Just as Roy had so quickly changed his views on the blacks, so had his father changed his opinion on the question of taxation: in fact he had more than once congratulated himself that in Beverly Hills people paid fewer taxes than in Los Angeles. The Beverlyites had even put up a monument to the eight cinema stars of the past—Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Rudolph Valentino, Harold Lloyd, and so on—who, the inscription said, had “courageously” fought for the independence of Beverly

Hills, as though this had been a latter-day instance of the old wars against Mexico, from which California had been taken in the middle of the nineteenth century. In reality, the courage of the eight screen celebrities had been exercised only in the defence of their wallets. Beverly North had gone to some lengths to remain apart from its immense neighbour, so as to retain a privileged status. The question of annexation had been submitted to a referendum. In Beverly South, which included more than half the population, and nine tenths of the commercial enterprises, a majority voted for union with Los Angeles, but did not carry it through. One of the factors relating to this union was the water supply, which was dependent on Los Angeles, and had in the past obliged Hollywood to secede. But gigantic engineering works had subsequently enabled Beverly Hills to obtain its water from West Hollywood. The actions of Beverly Hills tended to maintain the subjection of Beverly South: the mayor was always some one from the North, and of the five municipal councillors, only one, in the most recent elections, represented the Southern part, and that for the first time.

While Beverly Hills boasted the best paid police of the United States, so much so that people from all parts wanted to join up, this was first and foremost due to the local people's fear of the Negroes. In August 1965, the riots at Watts, a district to the south of Los Angeles populated almost entirely by blacks, had led to the deaths of thirty-four people and forty million dollars worth of damage. More than a thousand were injured. During all that time, Beverly was in a state of alert: people feared a march of the Negroes upon the city of the rich. But the Los Angeles police chief at that time, William Parker, had been the hero of all the whites of the county due to the energetic measures he took to stop the rioting spreading. Their gratitude had led to his name being given to the police head-quarters—the place where Jack Sherman held sway was the “Parker Centre”. Following these transient alarms, security in Beverly, protected by police patrols, remained so high that hardly a house had shutters or bars on the

windows. The sole protection was afforded by mosquito screens, which burglars sometimes removed to gain entry, just as Roy did to sneak in and out.

Thinking about the evening's conversation and his own comments, he more than ever concluded that there were two ways of looking at everything, just as life itself shows two sides. Negroes could be an attraction, and at the same time a danger. Society rested on foundations seemingly permanent that were nevertheless fragile; it was made in the image of that California held up as Paradise on Earth. According to certain geographers, it would, perhaps within the century, disappear in a great cataclysm. The houses of Beverly Hills and Los Angeles, which looked so beautiful and and often even so luxurious, at times resembling old European *châteaux*, were constructed only of wood covered with a mixture of cement, sand and whitewash—"stucco"—capable of resisting seismic shocks. It was said that every day there were several hundred tremors, detectable only by precision instruments, such as those at the Federal Earthquake Research Centre at Menlo Park, near San Francisco. While Los Angeles itself was not affected, Santa Barbara, Long Beach, and, a few years ago, the San Fernando Valley, had suffered severely. Geography books recalled the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, which brought about the destruction of that city by fire, the loss of seven hundred lives, and four hundred million dollars worth of damage.

The only two houses built of stone in Beverly Hills were, firstly, at Loma Vista and Doheny Road, that of the multimillionaire Doheny, whose forebears had founded the city, and who had now been succeeded by the American Film Institute; and the second, in Leona Drive, not far from the Clears', that of the film director Jean Renoir, son of the great French painter. The new "sky-scrapers" of Los Angeles, especially numerous at Century City, had been constructed only after the invention by Japanese architects of flexible steel girders,

thanks to which these buildings were able to sway but not collapse.

The earthquakes posed a further threat: a simple gnawing insect, the termite. Sometimes a building that appeared to be intact under its cladding of “stucco” would cave in like a house of cards: termites had entirely eaten away its wooden frame. So termite inspectors had to be consulted prior to any purchase of property.

This did not detract from Roy’s optimism, and he retained his faith in his beautiful city of Beverly Hills and his beautiful California. He did not believe the dire predictions of the geographers. He had read that on the very day that the first Spanish explorers arrived in this region from Mexico, there were three earthquakes. Not even that discouraged them, and their chaplain recorded that the place “afforded all the commodities for a settlement”. And so it came to pass that, twelve years later, in 1781, the Spanish governor of California, Don Felipe de Neve, founded the city which would soon celebrate its bicentennial: El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles de Portioncula—or in short, Los Angeles.

## Part One—Chapter Ten

THE commotion stirred up by Mrs. Clear's fiscal delinquency had died down; like the sky-scrapers of Los Angeles her reputation had bowed but was not broken. John Clear had purchased two new Chevrolets: one for him and one for his wife. The family's reputation had been restored. In the end, the only outcome of this affair had been Roy's resolve to leave the Buckley school, where he had been for nine years.

There was no difficulty about his enrolment at the Beverly Hills High School; besides, his father was on good terms with Mr. Stuart Silver, the deputy head.

And so it was that Roy now, on the eve of his departure, looked with a certain melancholy upon that verdant Arroyo de la Cumbre past which Bob Teller's car took him, on the quiet and convenient buildings, the open-air tables where soon he would no longer be eating his home-packed lunches, the locker to which he had the key, the computer that had introduced him to electronics, the enormous hall donated to the school by Walt Disney's brother Roy—his namesake—the pool where he swam almost daily, the pink and white crape-myrtles, the jacarandas with their purple blooms, the great fig-tree, bent to the ground by the wind, that had continued to grow horizontally in the front courtyard. He was moved even to see the venerable Isabelle Buckley, the moving spirit of the school, and author of the book *Education Begins at Two* (the Clears had stolen two years from her), which had a certain reputation in educational circles: she represented all the respectability that Roy was in the process of losing, at least secretly, through his private conduct—he was quite conscious of the fact—all the morality in which he no longer believed. His tender feelings even extended to the inflexible principles of Yves Thepot, that severe and dignified



Breton become Californian! Mr. Thepot had recently given further proof of those principles by not hesitating to expel Clark Gable's son, who took drugs. And yet he had been proud to see Clark Gable himself helping at the school fête.

Roy, however, did not wish to leave the school without having taken his revenge in respect to morality. Jim shunned him and hardly spoke to him when they were in Bob's car. So it was towards the latter that Roy now set his sights. Again he contrived an inspection under the shower, and although Bob's member was not as long as Jim's, its thickness augured well. Roy was excited by the challenge of putting to the test this fellow who spoke only of girls and always had one sitting beside him on both the outward and the return trip. His mother, like Mrs. Clear, was a Daughter of the American Revolution, but a less active one, since, like Mr. Teller, she belonged to some pseudo-aristocratic societies which took up more of her time. His father, the banker, was president of the Bel Air Country Club, and Roy had often acted as his caddie, thus earning five dollars and a few friendly pats on the backside. Roy's revenge would be redoubled due to the fact that Bob had been the first to make fun of Mrs. Clear's fiscal misfortune.

He was especially strong in the economic subjects. It was he who last year gained the maximum A's of his class in that field. And what is more he shone in all the other subjects, so much so that he was a member of the "Honour Society"—an association of the best students of America. As mark thereof, he sported a little golden badge, bearing the letter "H", which had replaced his "Child of the American Revolution" badge. And to crown it all, he was the Buckley tennis champion: he had captured the cup from rival private schools in the area such as Harvard and the French *lycée* of Los Angeles.

Roy, who had to submit an essay for the following week, comparing economic systems in the principal countries, had already prepared it with his usual two team-members, and asked Bob to read his draft on the way home from Buckley. It was the

same stratagem as in Jim's case. Bob needed a certain amount of coaxing: as a senior—form-twelve—student, he no doubt found it humiliating to explain things to a form-nine student, and in any case his father's position saved him from giving private lessons. Nonetheless he responded with, "Well, since you ask so nicely, I'll give you a free lesson."

As the two girls were dropped off first, and then Jim, the latter could not have suspected Roy's scheme, and Bob had said nothing about his imminent visit. To make quite sure that Bob would come, Roy had walked to the house at Rodeo Drive, instead of cycling as was his usual practice. These intrigues with the boys of Beverly North animated him to the highest degree, giving him the courage to discover himself in the midst of his own circle. The only intimacies flaunted openly were those between girls and boys; that was not what Roy was after.

As he came in, Bob greeted Mrs. Clear, who was playing the piano in the living room. In reality she was pretending to play: there was a mechanical apparatus inside the piano, and when she held out her hand to Bob, the music went on playing. Roy found in the kitchen some crisps and two bottles of beer, a beverage that in public was prohibited to those under eighteen. He felt excited when Bob crossed the threshold of the fatal room where, eight days earlier, he had been hammered by Jim. Gently, he locked the door. Having no wish to repeat himself, he had worked out a different scenario.

Instead of sitting at his writing-desk, he opened his exercise book on the Chinese table in the centre of the room, and sat down on a *pouffe*, with Bob facing him. This boy, so well-built, such a champion, such a good student, this parishioner of the Church of All Saints, intimidated Roy a little. He was one of the school heroes, just as he would next year become a hero of the USC. Everything lay at his feet, including his father's fortune. Nevertheless Roy, watching him read the essay, had a feeling of superiority, since he was almost sure he could bend Bob to his will. The idea of having been half-way sodomized by the Los

Angeles police chief, was enough in his eyes to reverse those advantages. He was in possession of a secret that encouraged him to stand up to anybody—even, after a Jim Mellow, to a Bob Teller. At his own risk he would lead Bob astray, as he had done Jim. What did it matter what they might think, or what one or the other of them might say? Roy would just rejoice all the more in his hidden superiority if they exposed him to public scorn—that same scorn by which in the past he had been temporarily overwhelmed, in regard to four bureaucratic lines in the press. The more he sought to reassure himself with the conviction that what he was now doing did not destine him to life as a gay, the more he was encouraged to perform those acts by the certainty that he could face up to the consequences.

Bob, who had turned towards Roy to explain to him Keynes's monetary doctrine, looked stunned to see his hand moving in the left-hand pocket of his trousers, as though he was stroking himself. And that indeed was what Roy was doing: he believed it impossible that any one could resist that sight. Sometimes at school, where the desks were far enough apart, he had caught certain of his fellow-students occupying their minds thus while working, generally when they could not be seen by a girl. It had such a strong effect on him that after five or six similar movements at the bottom of his own pocket he would reach a peak of ecstasy. He had not been able to work out whether those who indulged in these pastimes believed that they were not seen, or whether, on the contrary, they were hoping that people would see, and even join in the action. In any case, common usage at the school did not permit a discussion of such things. Roy did not know whether Bob himself took such liberties in class, but had no doubt that he would have witnessed them. Young Teller remained there wide-eyed and open-mouthed, struck dumb at the sight of this gesture which Roy appeared to be making mechanically, without interrupting the perusal of his draft.

"You like to touch yourself like that?" asked Bob in a stifled tone.

“Yes,” replied Roy, “even at school. It feels so good to get a hard on!”

“You make me want to,” said Bob, fingering his member through his trousers. He unbuttoned himself and took it out. “You too,” he said. That was all Roy wished for. He eagerly opened his flies.

“Well, you’re very well developed already for your age!” said Bob, repeating the police chief’s compliment. Bob, for his age too, was well endowed. He made no reference to Roy’s foreskin, which must have seemed a secondary aspect.

“Show me your balls,” he said, shaking himself as hard as he could.

“You too, show me your balls,” said Roy. “Undo your belt and take your shirt off.”

“You too,” said Bob. . . . “Fantastic, you’ve got hardly any hair yet!” This fact excited him quite as much as his hair excited Roy. “Have you got hair on your bum?” he went on.

“Just a bit of fluff,” said Roy, “and you?”

By way of response, Bob lowered his pants and lay down on the *pouffe* so as to expose his behind. Roy stood up and, fondling Bob’s hairs, ejaculated in an instant.

“My turn!” said Bob. “Let’s see your backside. . . . Oh! the hole is as smooth as a girl’s.” He too discharged his burden while caressing that region.

Having put their trousers back on, cleaned their hands on their handkerchiefs, wiped up the sperm from the carpet with a hand-towel, and taken a drink straight from their bottles, they went on studying Keynes’s theories. Roy was thrilled to have found a friend who shared his tastes. He would retain at least this good memory from Buckley; he did not doubt that he had begun an erotic friendship that would make up for all the innocent years he had spent at that school.

When the homework was finished, Bob got up, took hold of the collar of Roy’s blazer, and said: “I want to be a plain and simple American; we will never do that again.”

Roy caught his breath. "But after all, Bob, I too want to be a plain and simple American," he said.

"If that's what you want," said Bob, "there are some things you shouldn't do. I used to wank myself off. My father found out and sent me to the reverend Camper, who made me ashamed of it, and I promised to change my ways. That's when I started playing a lot of sport."

Mr. Clear likewise, as Roy approached puberty, had told him that if he should have any little problems, he should take them to the reverend Camper. Moreover that was the advice Mr. Thepot gave all the parents, so as to excuse himself from not giving sexual education lessons. "If you do not wish to teach your children about this subject yourselves, then send them to a doctor, or better still to a pastor, a rabbi, a priest."

Roy, for his part, abstained; he had found out for himself what he wanted to know. "Yet," he asked Bob, "you don't mind going with girls?"

"Naturally," Bob replied, "but that's a different matter."

He let go, and looked at Roy with an air which, despite his sudden outburst, seemed to look back without too many regrets at their brief sensual pleasures. As he went out, he said gently, "Until you leave, I'll keep taking you in my car."

## Part One—Chapter Eleven

THE standing of the Clears had now been so far restored that they decided to hold a reception. All their friends, advised by telephone, had accepted, and there was no doubt that most would turn up. Even mere acquaintances were dredged up, if it was thought they might embellish the occasion. Cards, sent out “as a reminder”, had confirmed the date and time.

What is pleasant about Southern California is that in the subtropical climate the periods of rain are fairly short, and it is possible to entertain in the open air almost the whole year round. So Mrs. Clear, in order to give her “party” greater glamour, had a tent put up in the middle of the garden, which the living-room opened onto: that was the place for the buffet. The twilight would be helpful, and giant electric *torchères* would illuminate the tent amid the greenery. All this gear, together with the waiters, was hired, and since Mr. Clear was acquainted with the director of one of the enterprises involved, the cost would be reasonable, provided that he was invited. It was true that receptions under a tent had gone out of fashion, but Mrs. Clear thought them appropriate for a Daughter of the American Revolution, in that they had a military and historical aspect. “Good taste and true *chic*,” she said, “does that not stand apart from fashion?”

The Clears’ guests were recruited in the first instance from John’s professional circle: the estate agents and the finance companies which served as arbitrators and authorized depositories for payments in regard to transactions of that nature—a procedure called “holding in escrow” (which term amuses French speakers, since for them it means committal to prison). The Daughters of the Revolution set, so dear to Kathy, made up an equally important contingent. But there were also

members of other clubs to which the couple belonged, and which, to their credit, were among the three society registers of Southern California. The presence of such persons showed that the “fiscal delinquency” had nowhere been of any consequence.

The Clears were delighted to see their friends the Capps from Palm Springs, whom they considered the most stylish of Californians, since the list of their clubs occupied six lines—the longest entry in the *Blue Book*.

The Capps’ conversation invariably consisted of a recital of which Hollywood stars they had met at the Las Casuelas, the fashionable restaurant at Palm Springs. If they were to be believed, Cary Grant, Frank Sinatra and Kirk Douglas would rather take lunch or dine there than at the Bistro in North Camden Drive and the Polo Lounge at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Ladies in general were wild about Cary Grant, the Englishman from an impoverished part of Bristol: they found him more seductive at seventy-four than in his photographs from thirty-five years ago, married to Barbara Hutton. He lived in Pico Boulevard at Los Angeles. Frank Sinatra, who had once had a house at Beverly Hills, now lived at Burbank, near Los Angeles, with his fourth wife, Barbara Marx. Kirk Douglas resided at Rexford Drive in Beverly North. Actors were the principal subject of conversation since they formed the true aristocracy of this region of America, rather than Prince Youka Troubetzkoy, Prince Dimitri Djordjadze, Prince Toumaroff and the Countess of Massy, “cousin of Prince Rainier of Monaco” who were photographed at the “parties” of which the *Beverly Hills Courier* or *Society West* published accounts, or the Prince and Princess Dogget-Jselefki, brightest ornaments of the *Blue Book*.

The great female stars were even more appreciated. The triumph of a hostess was to be able to announce that Rita Hayworth, Barbra Streisand or Farrah Fawcett-Majors, the most recent addition to the company of stars, would be at her reception. Very often, though, they were heralded but did not turn up, having had “a last-minute hitch”. Mrs. Clear did not

attempt this comedy, to which it was known that she could not aspire.

One of her lady friends had told her about a benefit reception for the Naval Cadets organized at Pickfair, Mary Pickford's residence, by the Beverly Hills Naval League. The name "Pickfair" had made Roy prick up his ears; he had pricked up something else not far from that house. In the course of that marine party, the ninety-year-old actress had been pleased to appear in a white uniform at a second-floor window, while the orchestra played "Mary—it's a grand old name" and her husband, Buddy Rogers, lavished compliments upon her, without effacing the memory of Douglas Fairbanks. Mary Pickford, the senior "super star" of Hollywood, was venerated by the Daughters of the American Revolution, and by all patriots, after the effective slap in the face she gave Charlie Chaplin when he came back in 1972, at the age of eighty-three, to receive the Hollywood Academy Award. Mary had treated him like "dirt" because of his left-leaning views. It was in Summit Drive, considerably higher up than the Clear residence, that he had once owned a house: the estate of the Little Tramp. The *old* tramp had not gone to see it again. His visit lasted only four days, during which he hardly left the Beverly Hills Hotel; and even there he was surrounded by guards, because he was afraid of being assassinated as Robert Kennedy had been at the Century Plaza four years earlier. It is true that he received more threatening letters than letters of congratulation.

John Clear had invited some people from the Jewish society of Beverly Hills, with whom he had business connections. Among them were the builder Dan Cohn and his wife Contessa. She, a delightfully vivacious and witty redhead, had achieved notoriety when she changed her name; since the law, in return for a fee of fifteen dollars, permitted any one to take whatever name they wanted, she had asked the judge to change her first name from "Henrietta" to "Countess". And it was so, and she gave a lavish dinner at the Bistro, where she was crowned countess on a



throne. She was the most photographed woman in the Los Angeles papers. What is more she remained a countess without a count, since her husband considered it entirely unnecessary to change *his* first name, “Dan”, to “Count”.

Maria Hirschborn was Mr. Clear’s new female partner in the Martin Ballin group of estate agents in Beverly Hills, and she was accompanied by her husband Eddie Buzzell, who had directed some of the Marx Brothers films. Kenneth A. Cohen, chairman of the Bank of Beverly Hills, came with them. It was he who had accommodated at his bank the recent seminar on contracts of sale, at which two hundred estate agents were present.

Roy, acting as attendant in his Buckley uniform, looked at all these people and remembered what he had heard his father say about the discrimination the Jews of Los Angeles had until recently suffered: how at that time they were not admitted to the country clubs of the city, nor even to the hospitals, and how they had founded the Hillcrest Country Club at Century City, now the most select of the golf clubs, and the Cedars Sinai Medical Centre, the most modern and the best endowed hospital, where, moreover, patients of every religion were treated. At least the smiles Mrs. Clear directed at these lovely Jewish ladies were more sincere than those of her husband. She said that for her part it was impossible to harbour the least anti-Semitism, since the very first name on the *Index* of the *Daughters of the American Revolution* was that of a certain Abraham Aaron, Virginian patriot from the time of heroes.

She was doubly delighted at the arrival of one distinguished guest who was a member of that faith, Betsy Bloomingdale, the most stylish woman of Beverly Hills; this because Kathy had not been confident that she would turn up, despite her acceptance. Perhaps Mrs. Bloomingdale had resolved to show her solidarity with Mrs. Clear the fiscal delinquent, since she herself had experienced serious tax problems. In fact, on each of the several trips to Paris she undertook each year, she bought some Dior

dresses. She was one of the best customers of that house, which had, it was said, recommended her for the Legion of Honour, due to her activities as ambadress of French *haute couture*. But Mrs. Bloomingdale, at the American customs, declared all these dresses—from which she removed the labels and sewed them back on in Beverly Hills—as the work of a minor dressmaker, and she was taxed only on the two hundred dollars she claimed to have paid for them. This continued until the day when, her reputation as a lady of fashion having reached the ears of the customs service, the new dresses she imported were submitted for an expert assessment. She was subjected to an enormous fine and the scandal reached the newspapers. The citizens of Beverly Hills were rather annoyed with her for that, because since then they had *all* been treated as suspects at the Los Angeles international airport. The leader-writer of the *Courier*, Mark Schwartz, was still complaining about this recently in one of his articles, but did not restate the reason.

Mrs. Bloomingdale, although she had made her peace with the customs on the matter of her dresses, had apparently retained a taste for *fraude de luxe*. She caused a bustle of envy and curiosity among the Clears' guests by inviting them to sample the perfume "Opium" of Yves Saint Laurent, the great French *couturier*, a perfume refused entry by the American customs who considered it an incitement to opiomania. It was said that the French commercial authorities were in the course of demonstrating the absurdity of this prohibition, which would doubtless be removed at the same time as the ban on Concorde landing at New York.

Something else happened to Yves Saint Laurent, who was not yet aware of it. A Frenchman in Los Angeles, whose Christian name was Yves, had just obtained the right to change his surname to Saint-Laurent, but without announcing his intention to open a fashion house. He had done what Mrs. Cohn did in the case of her first name "Contessa". Objections seemed to be difficult under American law. One judge in Los Angeles had

assented to a Negro having the name “Bonaparte”, thus awarding an unexpected cousin to the French prince Napoléon. When a Mr. Kabotchnik got his name changed to “Cabot” by a judge in New England, the famous Cabot family lodged a formal complaint against this usurpation of identity. The judge dismissed the case, saying that the Cabots should be flattered that some one had chosen their name. What is more, these changes were not in the one direction; the French count Sanche de Gramont made it known, in the *Reader’s Digest*, that henceforth he would officially be citizen Ted Morgan—almost an anagram—taking a witty approach to the fantastic American harlequinade of names. His case showed the absolute reverse of the mentality of the epoch when European aristocrats sold their names and their titles to rich Americans. The duchess of Caylus, who, having regard to the Spanish nobiliary law concerning the dukedom, and her own condition of widowhood, claimed that she had the right to make her husband a duke, had vainly sought a taker during a recent stay in Los Angeles. Money no longer attracts anything but more money. The Americans no longer chase after armorial bearings now that they fabricate their own. A latter-day Gloria Swanson would no longer seek to become a marchioness *de la Falaise* in order to have the pleasure of displaying on the doors of her Rolls two Crescents and two Spurs.

Obviously the Clears had not invited the Mellows, and what is more there were, apart from the waiters, no Negroes in their house that afternoon. But Roy was pleased to see the Tellers arrive; Bob had come with them. After what happened the other day, Bob had taken a slightly ironic attitude towards his Buckley schoolfellow, but Roy had the impression that the “plain and simple American” armour was not without flaws. In any case, it was the first time that he had met, in the presence of their respective parents, a boy who had fingered his backside and gone into raptures about his lack of hair, and whose own backside he had fingered and judged so pleasantly pubigerous.

For Mr. Clear, Mr. Teller was a secret object of envy, not because of his fortune, but because he was one of the *Chevaliers du Tastevin*. John, with his dream of a venerable French origin, would have wished to join this French order, the Californian branch of which was by far the most *chic* club, and the most exclusive. Unfortunately, for that it was necessary to be the owner of a true cellar, over and above the other qualifications for admission. It is true that the Clears had some top-quality bottles, but not a cellar adequately fitted out and stocked, like the one that the Tellers proudly showed off.

Another one of Roy's schoolfellows arrived: young Aglion, like Bob a senior student at Buckley. This boy impressed him with the high standard of his French, but they also fraternized a little outside the school, because they shared a passion for skateboarding. He too lived in Beverly North. He was with his father, a former financial advisor in California, recently retired, who had just been elected to the position of president of the *Union des Français de Los Angeles*. Madame Aglion, who had died two years ago, had with Kathy Clear been a member of the same Museum committee, and had been mourned by every one in local society. The Clears had a great deal of respect for the Aglions, since they, like the Kabbazes, were among the rare French people to appear in the *Blue Book*.

Simultaneously with Raoul Aglion and his son, there arrived some Belgians who shared that honour, M. and Mme. de l'Arbre d'Estaing. They claimed to be cousins of the president of the French republic, while at the same time letting it be understood that they were a more authentic variety of d'Estaing. The former French teacher at Buckley, who had such a malicious mind, had told Roy at the time of the election of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and in regard to these de l'Arbre d'Estaings, that he wondered why so many people fought over the name: he revealed that, while the American war may have given it a certain lustre, he who bore it had disgraced himself before the revolutionary tribunal, and without thereby saving his skin. The Clears did

not go into such matters, and were very pleased to receive the d'Estaings, as well as Mr. Aglion. Having neither great actors nor great actresses to show off, it was stylish to have French people, and even Belgians.

Suddenly Roy had a shock: Jack Sherman came in, together with his colleague Mr. Cork. The Beverly Hills police chief told the Clears that the Los Angeles police chief, who had been visiting and knew that he, Mr. Cork, was coming, had expressed a wish to accompany him so as to congratulate a citizen for having obtained a volunteer auxiliary's diploma in law enforcement. Roy, who overheard this story, had a good idea that Jack had quite simply intended to give him a surprise. The arrival of the Los Angeles police chief, whose physiognomy, easily recognizable from its deformity, was no less imposing than his stature—shorter, though, than Mr. Cork's—made a certain sensation, but Mrs. Bloomingdale had quickly stuffed her "Opium" scent back into her bag. The position of chief of police was surrounded by considerable prestige, since he was independent of the municipal authorities; they appointed a commission, which in turn appointed the incumbent. But even though the mayor was a democrat, the police chief of Los Angeles was a conservative. As for the Beverly Hills man, he owed his fame to something different: at the time when he was still a simple detective, he had hunted down the criminals who had stolen jewels from a Beverly Hills resident, after following their tracks to Texas, Louisiana, and Mexico, where he had arrested them. But who could have suspected that Jack Sherman was there solely because he had masturbated, sucked and sodomized the son of the house? These contrasts, which Roy had grasped and which he valued, between the world of appearances and that of reality, had never been brought out better. The man who had initiated him, and had given him two hundred dollars, was the counterpart of Bob, but Roy, in respect to each of them, was the sole keeper of his secrets with the other.

When his parents introduced him to Jack, he managed not to redden. The great hand of the police chief pressed his own, just as it had pressed his diminutive phallus. The finger that had penetrated his anus now tickled his palm, as a sign of recognition. Then Jack Sherman bowed to Mme. de l'Arbre d'Estaing.

## Part One—Chapter Twelve

ROY's third encounter with the police chief took place three days after this unexpected visit. He was wildly excited at the idea of being with some one who had come to his home, who had conversed with his parents, and had seen the circumstances of his family life. But this incursion had seemed to transform his life even more: there existed henceforth, in his home, the shadow of this man to whom he belonged.

And what was more to-day he was about to belong to him totally. Perhaps this thought also inflamed the police chief; scarcely had they reached the Brentwood room when he launched himself upon Roy to strip him naked, and had his own clothes off in the twinkling of an eye. He asked Roy to smoke a little marijuana, with the intention, he said, of inducing a slight intoxication so as to render more bearable any discomfort due to their disproportions. Roy was astonished to see that the police chief possessed prohibited products and was recommending that he use them. But was not everything taking place here prohibited? Roy refrained from saying that one of his schoolfellows had got him to sniff poppers, but he confessed that at the Buckley school he had smoked a few marijuana cigarettes, mixed with tobacco. This one, which was pure cannabis, brought him to the faintly intoxicated condition that the police chief was hoping for.

Jack, who had begun by sucking him, at once profited therefrom in order to stretch Roy's anus, first using his tongue, then the lube; and his member, little by little, penetrated all the way into the posterior. . . .

Roy remained for a few minutes, quivering under the effect of this possession, which was like an extension of his own being and surpassed all his dreams of sensual delight. He already dated his

true life from the day when he had discovered pleasure; and then the transformation of his life from the day when he had met Jack. But nothing of what had thrilled him in the past was comparable with what he had just experienced and from which he still trembled. He touched the hair on those arms, on that chest, on the *pubis* pressed against his buttocks, and reflected upon Bob's hair, which really did not amount to much. He realized that he would always prefer a man to a boy, because he loved strength. His solitary amusements, or those he had experienced with Jim and Bob, seemed to him in truth to be schoolboy games. Even Jack's ugliness remained for him one more attraction, lacking the cute expressions of his schoolfellows. The revolver and the gleaming star, on a table near the bed, augmented his sensations.

"I belong to you," he told Jack—something he would probably never have dared say to him without the influence of the marijuana he had smoked.

The police chief smiled in triumph. "Yes, you belong to me," he replied, "and I belong to you." He got up and went, quite naked, to prepare a cocktail. "Since you have taken a stimulant," he told Roy, "you have the right to a Bloody Mary. The apricot juice is finished." In fact Roy was well used to alcohol; he drank at home in secret.

He contemplated, with the same pleasure with which he had touched them, that powerful musculature, that back covered with a dark mane, that organ which retained a semi-rigidity and below which bounced a pair of enormous testicles. Such an ensemble was in his view the virile ideal.

"Now that we are comfortable with each other," said Jack, "we should sort out a few things to make sure that our relationship lasts. The first time, I wanted to do you honour by giving you a relatively large sum of money. Then when I forgot to offer it to you, you asked me for it, as though it were an established custom. But it will have to be an exceptional custom. I am no millionaire, I support my married children; I cannot give you a



hundred dollars at each of our meetings. Perhaps they will be more frequent than I anticipated. You know the trick of getting out of your house; your parents often dine in town. I'll give you a hundred dollars a month; if you prefer to have something each time, we will split the total amount.

Roy was shattered. He wondered whether this altered attitude came from some kind of advantage which Jack believed he had gained through meeting his parents. His intoxication had quite gone. He had had confidence in this man, and here he was, calculating like an accountant, weighing up his kindnesses like a salary. Roy suddenly perceived that what had drawn him to Jack was not only the sex, the hair, and the ugliness, but also the money. Their first encounter would not have left such a powerful impression had it not been sealed with a hundred-dollar note. To-day, he felt he had been tricked, and even robbed. But he wanted to prove to himself that he was capable of standing up to a man, be it even a police chief. After all, he knew that the secret which linked him and this man was more formidable to this man than to himself. Just as he had not hesitated, with the two boys, to use his initiative to show his superiority, he now did not hesitate to speak firmly to establish the fact that it was indeed he—at thirteen and a half—who was in charge. "Jack, I have told you that I belong to you, but I will no longer belong to you if you don't give me a hundred dollars each time."

The police chief was stupefied. They were still totally naked on the bed. They had not yet even washed, and Roy's words had struck like a thunderbolt. Nevertheless, Jack decided to burst out laughing. "But look," he said, "do you think that a hundred dollars can be so readily given to a boy of your age? Besides, what do you need all that money for?"

"I keep it," Roy replied. "Money is good in itself."

"If you have those principles already," Jack said, "that's awful, because you will be insatiable in your desire for gain."

"It is to my parents and to you that I owe those principles," said Roy. "My parents have taught me that it is good to acquire

money no matter how—I deliver newspapers, I carry golf-clubs, I collect tennis-balls—and it was you who so abruptly introduced me to a hundred-dollar note. For me, that enormous sum is associated with this enormous thing,” he added, feeling the police chief’s penis.

“Ah!” exclaimed Jack. “I can’t resist you. I’ll give you another hundred dollars to-day, but it will be the last time. From now on, monthly.”

“Fine,” said Roy. “We’ll see each other just once a month. I do what you want, and you do what I want. Contrary to appearances, I am not asking for anything. It is you who are asking something of me. I grant your request, and with an immense pleasure, might I add, but in return for that compensation. Take it or leave it.”

“You are an extraordinary logician,” said Jack. “And you’re still at the Buckley school! How will it be when you get to the university!”

“I am not only a good son and a good lover,” Roy explained, “but also a good student. I study comparative economy and from it I have drawn certain conclusions for my own purposes. The tool between my legs has of its own accord taught me rational thought, just as your tool has made me love a hundred dollars.”

“Good!” said Jack. “but then we will see each other less often than I would have liked.”

“I shall regret it,” replied Roy, “since what you just did to me excites me enormously. But if you don’t give me that money I shall have the impression that you are taking advantage of me . . . and of my liking for you.”

Jack kissed him, again calling him “my lovely little logician, to whom no response is possible.”

Before leaving, Roy also asked for a handful of marijuana, which the police chief did not refuse him. “Obviously you know how to hide the money,” Jack said. “And if by chance the

marijuana is discovered, you can say that you bought it from a 'pusher'. They are often to be found at school gates."

"Certainly not at Buckley," Roy said. "But don't worry, neither the pot nor the money will be discovered. It is for me to put into practice the California state motto: *Eureka*—I have found it."

The police chief burst out laughing, more genuinely than before. This Greek word was a reference to the miners who had made California the "golden state". "You know," said Jack, "that on the great seal of California there is a man with a pick. But it is I who *prrick* your backside, from which you extract the gold."

Now it was Roy's turn to burst out laughing. He wanted to go one better in this bout of pleasantries, which was the sort of thing he had struggled with in his classics lessons at Buckley. "You have taught me," said he, "the profound exactitude of a definition in the *MacMillan Children's Dictionary* which my English teacher gave me for 'outstanding results'. It's the fourth sense of the word 'bottom': 'what is fundamental and most important'."

"Truly," said the police chief, "that English lesson is well worth a hundred dollars."

Each time he was deposited late at night close to where he lived, Roy enjoyed his secret return to the heart of the slumbering house. The chirps of crickets always accompanied his steps. From the road he saw the darkened windows of his father's room and his mother's room. He stealthily crossed the garage yard, where stood the two Chevrolets and, to the rear, on shelves, some plastic bags filled with washing and discarded items of clothing that had been of no interest to Uracca the maid, and were set aside for the "charities"—countless charitable organizations went around regularly to collect these bundles. There existed, what was more, a rivalry between these organizations corresponding to their respective religious affiliations, but the Jews were at once the most active and the richest. However these collections were modest compared with

the annual fund-raising balls. Last year a display of Saint Laurent fashions by diamond-studded stars had raised four hundred thousand dollars for the united Jewish social aid fund. This year the Thaliens had collected two hundred and nine thousand dollars from their Century Plaza ball in aid of the Mental Health Centre at the Cedars Sinai. But at the Beverly Hilton ball the ladies of the Saint Vincent de Paul organization had likewise experienced extraordinary success, helped by the presence of Cardinal Timothy Manning, the archbishop of Los Angeles.

As Roy glided into the dining-room, he felt the little *frisson* of a burglar who has just helped himself to the contents of one of these houses of paradisiacal Beverly Hills. He removed his shoes before ascending the wooden staircase, which fortunately, like the corridor, had a very thick red carpet. What luck that there was no longer a dog! Agigillo, the Pekingese Gladys had taken with her, whose hearing had been so keen that he would certainly have barked, had not been replaced. The Siamese cat presented no threat. Next, Roy passed like a shade between the photographs in the corridor. He could have picked out the place of each one in the shadows. Almost all of them depicted family members, houses, cruises and holidays. The most glorious showed John Clear at the side of his idol, President Nixon, whose protruding chin Roy hated—one disfigurement he did not find exciting (he would not have wanted to be sodomized by him!)—as well as his air of false bonhomie (he had heard Nixon say on the television that the only gift he received during the presidential campaign had been a pair of little dogs). Finally he reached his bedroom. After closing the door he switched on the light. He very gently turned on the taps in the bathroom. To make his bed soft and snug he rotated the knob on his electric blanket.

## Part One—Chapter Thirteen

THE day before leaving Buckley, he promised himself he would prevail in a double battle: it would be his farewell to Mr. Thepot, to Isabelle Buckley, and to education of the plain and simple variety. Bob had fallen out with the two girls he usually took to school, and had replaced them with two others, who had themselves fallen out with their usual drivers, and things were already going well. Pair exchanges of this kind were common at Buckley, depending on the mood and the season. Bob had no objection to feeling up the dusky Pamela, whom he asked to sit beside him, and Roy had been astounded at the liberties Jim took with the blond Doris, seated at the back between the two of them. Perhaps the young Negro believed he had the right not to stand on ceremony where Roy was concerned, after what had happened in the Summit Drive bedroom. The girl was as shameless as he: she placed on her knee next to Roy her stack of books, held together by a strap. This formed a sort of screen, behind which Jim had slid his hand underneath her skirt—the Buckley skirt! Roy admired their *sang-froid*, since they continued to converse loudly as though nothing was happening. Doubtless they intended these fondlings to provide an agreeable stimulation, and not to soak their underwear. Doris, so as not to be idle, from time to time under the cover of her long hair fondled Jim's sex, which was pushing up against his trousers—the Buckley trousers! While Roy was as yet insensible to the charm of girls, the sight of Jim had brought him to the same condition. And assuredly the front of Bob's trousers must have been as distended as theirs, but Roy could not see whether Pamela was passing her hand over it.

The atmosphere prevailing in the Ford Capri, which seemed to favour his plans, had been provided by a "disco" hour at the

end of the school day. This dance, popularized by a new screen star, the handsome John Travolta, in the film *Saturday Night Fever*, was born in a Los Angeles gay *discothèque*, the Studio One, and was now all the rage in America. There was something voluptuous about it, as it was mainly a matter of swaying the hips from side to side. Roy and Bob were past masters. It goes without saying that Jim was no less brilliant at it; the Negroes have modern dancing in their blood. The arrival of the disco at Buckley had been a mini-revolution, thanks to the students; in the primitive teaching programme of the directress and founder, dancing was confined to the junior classes aged from four and a half to seven and a half, which is to say the age of the most complete innocence. But at last, once the class leaders had set before their teachers' eyes the Beverly Hills school magazine, with photographs of boys and girls doing disco dancing, they were obliged to grant their own students the same privilege.

After the two girls had been dropped off at their homes, Bob declared that he was furious, because Doris allowed herself to be touched up, but not to be screwed. That is to say, she refused to take the pill, saying that the risks were still unknown. "My sister wasn't so hard to get," put in Roy. "When she was at the University of Southern California she used to take the pill. She hid the box in my bedroom."

"She's a lovely girl," Bob said, "and I'd love to screw her. Her husband has done all right for himself."

It was not without reason that Roy had raised the subject of his sister and thus stoked up the libidinous atmosphere. "Listen," he said, "I have some marijuana at home, and you are welcome to come and smoke it. That will be my farewell to the school."

His two companions looked dumbfounded. "You?" cried Bob. "And who sold you that marijuana?"

"Pal is pop," replied Roy, laughing. This meaningless formula came from "kookie"—the *argot* of the young—and was a way of not answering by uttering words in absurd combinations.

But the “pop” part doubtless prompted Bob’s next question: “And your parents?” he asked.

“They’re at Palm Springs for the day and won’t be back until late in the evening,” Roy replied. It had to be the case that they were away, since Jim’s presence would have greatly astonished them after what Roy had said about him. The coast was clear.

The three boys arrived at the Summit Drive house and went upstairs. Roy fetched three bottles of beer from the kitchen. Doubtless the room called up for Jim and Bob some very specific memories, which did not appear to bother them. Despite the reactions they had each had after their previous visit, they now trod without shame the carpet upon which they had spilt their seed.

They settled down on the *pouffes* around the low table. Roy, who had locked the door as he had done the last time with Bob, took the packet of marijuana out of a drawer in his writing-desk. “What a stash!” exclaimed Bob. Roy smiled, thinking of who had given it to him; he imagined the amazement it would have caused had he revealed the name, but no one would have believed it. Besides, he knew that he would never disclose that secret; he was already well aware that his life was founded upon something unmentionable.

“Have you got a roller?” asked Bob.

“No,” said Roy. “We can make our ‘sticks’ ourselves.”

Each of them carefully rolled the marijuana in a piece of cigarette-paper and reverently lit his stick. Long aspirations. Long puffs.

“Isn’t forbidden fruit good!” said Jim.

“You mean to say that nothing else is good?” Roy put in.

“Don’t you have some economic homework to do?” asked Bob with a mischievous air.

“Or some geometry?” said Jim.

From the way the two boys laughed, Roy understood that they had told each other about their experiences with him. This only

encouraged him in his plans; since they had returned, it meant that they were ready for more.

He put Amanda Lear's disco song *Follow Me* onto the record player. The press had announced that this delightful *chanteuse*, English in origin, a former companion of Dali, and, according to some, originally a boy, was currently having great success on the "hit-parade". This renowned ambiguity augmented her success among young Californians. Moreover, she had had a liaison with David Bowie the androgyne singer, married and gay, and was a great friend of Elton John, the English singer now settled in the United States, another star the gays had claimed for themselves.

Maintaining the lively atmosphere, Bob set operations in train. "In the car," he said, "I had a hard on all the time because of Pamela, and I've still got a hard on—maybe because of the pot." He stroked his flies and, laughing, pressed his trousers down on his thigh, making clear that his was no idle boast. The fact that he was repeating what he did last time indicated that the rest would follow.

"I too am stiff, thinking about Doris," said Jim, who was exhibiting the same protuberance Roy had observed during their journey.

"A pity there's no girl here!" said Bob. "I'd give her a good one, in front or behind."

"How about me," said Roy coolly. He stood up and unbuckled his trousers.

"You're an early developer!" responded Bob. "Have you ever been screwed?"

"I screw myself with a finger," said Roy, "but I'd like to know what the real thing is like."

"You need a vibrator," said Jim. Roy asked what that was.

"A cylinder, fairly large, made of rubber or some plastic material, with a battery; and it produces a vibration at the spot where it is inserted," Bob explained. "I've seen one in a drawer in my mother's bathroom. Probably my father has given up making love to her."



“Let’s take our pants off,” said Roy, setting the example.

He went to get a bottle of sun-cream and some hand-towels, tied his shirt around the small of his back, leaned over with his stomach against the bed, and smeared his orifice with the cream, just as Jack had done with the lube.

“Sun-tan cream for a sunny hole!” cried Bob. “You’ve got class.”

“Come on!” said Roy.

“Ah! girls! . . .” said Bob, the first to approach. He entered the moist *derrière* without the least difficulty. “Goodness me!” he exclaimed, “how wide you are!”

But now Jim would not wait his turn; he anointed Bob’s anus; Bob pretended to struggle. Instead of the cigarettes, now extinguished, Jim got them to inhale poppers—he always carried some in his pocket. Roy, rubbing himself, was thrilled when Bob slid a hand around to replace his. All that remained was for the semen of the son of the house to drop onto the carpet.

The three boys remained motionless for a moment, savouring their delight. Roy experienced a further delight in telling himself that he, the youngest, had made it all happen, and that he had achieved his goals, that he had his two schoolfellows on his back, as proof of his victory and his revenge, that he had procured for a black the pleasure of possessing a white, and that he had skewered two Children of the American Revolution, one of them the son of a *Chevalier du Tastevin*.

After they had cleaned themselves up and put on their trousers, they smoked a final stick. Roy waited for Bob to explain that he had been imagining himself in Pamela’s fanny, and Jim in Doris’s; but they kept quiet. He put *Chanson Rose* on the record player, sung by the black disco star Grace Jones; like *Follow Me* it was a worldwide success. Then he burned a little incense to dispel the odour of marijuana. The incense was a survival of the hippy era, and much favoured by those young people who congratulated themselves on their Hinduism, even at the Buckley school.

When his two companions stood up to leave, Roy wondered how they would come to terms with their moral standards: with a lecture or with punches and kicks? Bob looked him in the eye, with an expression he could not contrive to make unfriendly, and said in a steady tone: "Son of a sorceress! You won't catch us again."

Jim and he, the screwdriver and the screwed, could leave with a clear conscience. They were still plain and simple Americans.

## Part Two

## Part Two—Chapter One

THE Beverly Hills High School helped Roy forget the Buckley school. Its immense two- and three-storey buildings, its square tower—the “watch-tower”—its magnificent hall, its monumental stairways, its huge school-yards, its planetarium, larger than the one at the UCLA, and its two thousand eight hundred students, were a pride and joy for the city. Just as Beverly Hills had disbursed a million dollars to lower the foot-paths for the use of the handicapped, so had it devoted over seven million to recent extensions and refurbishments of this *Athenæum* of secondary education.

Situated in Moreno Drive, a little below the Santa Monica Boulevard and close to the Hillcrest Country Club, the high school had for back-cloth the sky-scrapers of Century City. They had been built on the site of the warehouses of the 20th Century Fox Corporation, whence this new quarter of Los Angeles acquired its name. This transformation symbolized the crisis experienced by the American cinematographic industry, which enjoyed to-day an audience of only seventeen million, compared with eighty-five million thirty years ago.

As Mr. Clear’s office was nearby in Olympic Boulevard, and he was driving his son to the high school, he was obliged to take Manuelito along. It made a kind of image of the democratic *rapprochement* practised by the high school and rejected by Buckley. Manuelito’s family name was Pico, and Roy liked to say that he must be a descendant of Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of California, after whom a boulevard below the Olympic was named. Among the sights in the Los Angeles area were the sixteen remaining rooms of his house, which had been half destroyed in a flood; it was surrounded by pepper plants, olive trees, and palms, the remains of his once extensive

possessions. "After all," said Roy, "why shouldn't Manuelito be descended from Pio Pico, just as I am descended from the French royal family and from a hero of the American revolution?" Neither his father nor his mother enjoyed this pleasantry. Anyway, Roy was not in the same class as Manuelito at school. And in spite of his broad-mindedness, he was not averse to keeping a certain distance.

Mr. Clear, although he still rather regretted having to abandon his liking for social inequality, was satisfied at least for another reason: the Beverly high school, besides its reputation for quality teaching, was the school where municipal expenditure per student was the highest in the United States, as the costs of public education were drawn from property rates, and not from income tax. It is relevant that, some months previously, the residents of Baldwin Park, a working-class district of Los Angeles county, had submitted a case to the Californian supreme court complaining about the fact that their municipality spent only six hundred dollars per head annually on school funding, while the Beverly Hills high school received over twelve hundred. Consequently, their children's education was not provided on the principle of equal rights, guaranteed by the constitution. The supreme court upheld their complaint, and the legislature brought in a special budget to compensate for the lower value of rates on property in poorer neighbourhoods. Beverly Hills had then introduced a tax on educational affairs which kept the average expenditure per high-school student double that of the rest of California. Mr. Clear, who, despite his principles on household expenditure, had approved this supplementary tax in the name of his principles, was now in the situation of seeing his son benefit therefrom.

However, the other side of the coin for his secret racialism was that three quarters of the students at the high school were Jews, as was the new principal, Sol Levine. This was all the more striking in that only half the Beverly Hills population were Jewish. It was said that in the first year after Negroes had to be

admitted to all public educational institutions, the Jewish students at the high school had beaten up some of their new schoolfellows when they posted notices in the hall about the Christmas Mass—many blacks being Catholic, like Jim—and had torn them down. Incidents of that kind seemed quite impossible to-day; the greatest possible liberalism reigned over the high school, and every one, even the blacks, appeared utterly indifferent to the problems of religion. That though was no impediment to talking about them calmly, and taking an interest in cults. The high school had a private television channel, and the programme “Face to Face” announced a debate on the movement “Jews for Jesus”. The committee of the American Jewish Federation was due to participate.

In any case, no one would ever have considered snubbing Roy because of his mother’s fiscal delinquency; one student at the school was the son of Harold Goldstein, the Beverly Hills financier who had caused a million dollar crash, had been imprisoned for fifty days, then bailed on a surety of five hundred thousand dollars, and sentenced to fifteen years in prison, reduced to eighteen months after he asked to be examined by a psychiatrist. The school also numbered among its students the nephew of another Beverly Hills financier, Stanley Goldblum, president of the Equity Funding Corporation of America, whose own failure, amounting to two thousand million dollars, was even more notorious than Harold Goldstein’s, and beat every record of that kind in American history. Such a figure inspires respect, even in Mr. Clear who had been embarrassed by his wife’s 14,836 dollars and 63 cents. Sentenced to eight years in prison, Goldblum had been freed on parole after a third of the term. The teachers had congratulated his nephew.

As at Buckley, girls were as numerous as boys. Roy was told that, in the same way as in his old school, they gained more A grades, because they did more work, the boys being more occupied with sport or impressing them. Mr. Clear often deplored the constitutional reform that established the equality

of the sexes, and of the races; it had brought girls to the boys' schools and universities to which they had not previously been admitted, having had their own schools and universities. Henceforth they, studying harder, had profited from the disquiet they brought the boys, and gloried in the rivalries they created among them. That was not something Mr. Clear needed to worry about in the case of his son. Unlike Buckley, where there were elementary classes, there were only four classes at the high school: the first-years, the sophomores (second-year students), the juniors (third-year students), and the seniors. Roy no longer stumbled upon the little kids who, puffed up with importance behind their griffin badge, having paid perhaps twenty thousand dollars, sometimes emerged all alone from a large chauffeur-driven car.

And at last it was no longer necessary to wear the same uniform the whole year round: the same tie, the same belt, the same trousers. At last Roy could wear jeans. The most fashionable ones at the high school were those with back pockets known as "railways", whose lower half bore two transverse lines, emphasizing the cleft between the buttocks.

At last, also, Roy could wear coloured shirts. As at Buckley there were particular T-shirts for the sporty pastimes, different for each class and black and orange for inter-school matches. Here might be read the name not of the establishment, but of "Norman"—the dwarf who was the school mascot—while the picture represented a knight on a caparisoned horse brandishing a tournament lance.

At the high school, as at Buckley, the football "fans" were divided into two camps: those who supported the University of California at Los Angeles team, and those who supported the University of Southern California team, the two great rivals, that is to say the state university and the principal private university of the city. But the high school was rejoicing: for the first time in ten years one of its seniors, David Weber, had been chosen as scholar-athlete at the chapter of the national football federation

and the hall of fame. This title was awarded not only for sporty qualities, but also for authority in school life and success in study. Every sport, even golf, water-polo and, in winter, ski-ing—including mono-ski-ing—was practised at the high school, whose teams often did brilliantly against those of other high schools and colleges of Southern California, including, according to their specialities, the Bay League, the Ocean League, the Pioneer League and the South Bay Athletic Association.

The mornings started differently: there was no flag ceremony, but each class *had* a flag, propped up against the wall, next to the teacher's rostrum. The work was different also. Although no less wide-ranging than at Buckley, the programme was less demanding; in each subject there was only a monthly examination, not a weekly one. Roy was advised not to expect too much from the ninth grade "well-being classes". They were very much more innocent than the students. The teacher confined himself to generalities or to facts about natural history. All in all, Mr. Thepot had made an altogether unreasonable bogeyman out of these classes.

Roy realized this after the initial lessons; they explained menstruation, fertilization of the egg, the growth of the foetus, and methods of contraception. The teacher washed his hands of the rest and referred to a book in the library entitled *Show Me*, wherein photographs depicted boys and girls between eight and eighteen exposing their organs and taking part in certain exercises, not all of which were consistent with the phenomenon of child-birth.

While the sexual education courses were intended to teach the students how to work in pairs, the homework was done in teams of three, as at Buckley. The teaching inculcated this habit upon the students so that it could later be used in their professional activity. It was claimed that the NASA teams who implemented the space research programme had been assembled in this way. Roy regretted that the individual desks were no closer together



than at Buckley, which would have given him some titillation while he studied; one of his two team mates, Din Kelly, the son of a wealthy jeweller, was a massive, well set-up youth, evidently well-endowed sexually. As in the case of Buckley the work was completed later, by telephone in the evening.

Roy was delighted with the school computers; they monitored absences, prepared the examination questions, and corrected the homework. At first this way of being assessed had continually startled him; but after some thought he saw the point of it: at Buckley, explanations had to be provided; here the machine disregarded them and went straight to the heart of the matter. This forced one to be precise.

The optional subjects were much more numerous than at Buckley. One could learn cooking, weaving, embroidery, basketry, dramatic art and musical composition. The singing classes were well attended. Those who had a good voice already believed themselves to be future Elvis Presleys: this teen idol had expired the previous summer, leaving a fortune of four and a half billion dollars and six hundred million discs around the world. Such numbers kindled ambitions.

Similarly, the dramatic art course had a renewal of success after the young Italo-American actor, Robert de Niro, the principal player in the film *Taxi Driver*, had taken the legendary place of James Dean among young people's rapturous infatuations.

Since, from high-school days on, everything was translated into dollar terms, not only the good tennis players were fascinated by the fact that Jimmy Connors, the American champion, had personally pocketed 687,335 dollars in one year. This gave rise to arguments between the tennis enthusiasts and the horse-racing enthusiasts; the latter lauded Steve Cauthen, the seventeen-year-old jockey who had earned six million dollars in prize-money over the past year—a record for that profession—and had been named “sportsman of the year”. The

son of the most famous Los Angeles jockey, Bill Shoemaker, was at the Beverly Hills high school.

Mr. Clear had not forgotten to warn his son about drugs; they had earned that establishment a bad reputation. While even the strict Buckley school had not escaped the contagion, the high school had experienced veritable scandals, which had leaked out to the press. One student had died of an overdose of Nembutal, just as Marilyn Monroe was thought to have done in Los Angeles; other students, under the influence of other drugs, had committed "hold-ups". Kenneth L. Peters, the superintendent of schools in Beverley Hills, had recently declared that seventy out of every hundred high-school students had had some experience of drugs. Roy at once discovered that marijuana was openly smoked during recess, but this was only "joints", which is to say a mixture of tobacco and marijuana, such as had been smoked at Buckley. Mexicans and Negroes would discretely offer you pure marijuana, and there were drug peddlers at the school gates, just as Jack had said. But three plain-clothes policemen kept a watch on, or were presumed to be keeping a watch on, this traffic. Those who smoked tobacco were annoyed because there had been a discussion at the Beverly Hills city council with a view to prohibiting smoking in schools, in enclosed public spaces, etc., as a result of the anti-smoking campaign run by the state of California. Since the municipalities were divided, the government of Sacramento, the capital, had decided that the proposed ban be put to a referendum the following year. It had been calculated that to ban the use of tobacco the signs alone would cost six hundred thousand dollars.

One pharmaceutical drug doing the rounds at the high school was Quaalude, a sedative which many students obtained using false prescriptions when they could not get genuine ones. The administration made it known that this drug could easily cause delirium or even a coma. Quaalude was particularly widespread among the girls, who said it was essential to their peace of mind. The boys claimed that it was the opposite: an aphrodisiac for

girls. In fact, Roy soon saw that not all the girls were busy gaining A grades; the attitudes of dozens of them seemed to show moral values much laxer than those at Buckley. The abuse of drugs certainly contributed to this laxity. It often made detoxification treatment necessary, or sessions with psychiatrists. Beverly Hills had the highest ratio of these specialists in the world: more than four hundred for thirty-five thousand residents. Their principal clients were young people. Roy could not comprehend this excessive drug-taking. He wondered whether it was a substitute for sex, or a reaction, different from sex, to being educated in a conformist way within the family—a reaction similar to his own. He remembered an example that had been cited in an ethics course at Buckley, to turn the students away from the path of evil: the American writer William Burroughs, who had written about all his vices, notably his drug-taking, and had accidentally killed his wife, was the grandson of Burroughs the billionaire inventor of mechanical calculators. “Now,” concluded the teacher, “he is calculating backwards.”

The school newspaper, *Highlights*, which the students printed themselves, was a true newspaper; the Buckley one, *Griffin Gazette*, was nothing in comparison. The first edition Roy saw showed a photograph of girls and boys, each behind the other, with the upper body inverted, and the groin area directed towards the backside of the boy or girl in front. The legend read “A chorus line?” The question mark suggested that this image of a musical comedy rehearsal—not the English show *A Chorus Line*, on tour across California—might have a number of different interpretations. Roy was sure that Mr. Thepot and Miss Buckley would have had a fainting fit if this photograph had appeared in the *Griffin Gazette*.

One satirical caricature, fixed to the board where the students expressed their views, amused Roy: it showed two drinking fountains of the type seen in the corridors. One of them, clean, with its *de luxe* taps, bore the inscription “North of Sunset only”,

and the second, dirty, with just a simple rubber tube: “others”. These two fountains stood for the two worlds of the city, the two sides of Sunset Boulevard, which evidently came together only at the high school, in the form of their children. Roy had already noticed that this mingling in the classroom did not eliminate differences in wealth, and that preferential treatment almost always went to the rich students—that is to say, to those from Beverly North. What is more, these banded together naturally, as did the Negroes, the Mexicans, and the least privileged—that is to say those from Beverly South. For example, although use of the lifts was restricted to teachers and the handicapped, the Beverly North students obtained it on various pretexts.

Further novelties for Roy were the disco room—the “500 Room”—where there was dancing at certain times on certain days, and the cafeteria, which made it unnecessary for him to bring his lunch from home, as he had done for so long at the Buckley school. On Wednesdays the school orchestra—the Norman Band—comprising thirty-two players, and school orchestras from neighbouring districts, embellished the lunch hour by performing in the cafeteria. The orchestra also played at the start and in the interval of sporting competitions, where the “passion for the Norman spirit” was sustained by an anticipatory procession of seventy girls from the “exercise team” in short tartan skirts and chivalrous T-shirts, brandishing flags.

There were about forty clubs—as opposed to about fifteen at Buckley. The principal one was the Hebrew club. Roy had felt humbled when he joined the Cycling club, intended to give a touch of pride to those who used this means of transport: it was the only club with official sponsorship. The Archery club and the Aviation club left Roy indifferent. Since he was studying French, he signed up for l’Esprit de France, and, as a future electronic engineer, the Radio-Electronics club. The Chinese Culture club might have appealed, but there were few non-Asiatic members. The Rucksack club would remind him of his time as cub scout: this club was organizing an excursion shortly to the San

Bernardino mountains north-east of Los Angeles. The Ski club was going to search for snow in Arizona and Utah.

Two political clubs divided the students into unequal parts: the Whigs or liberals, and the Tories or conservatives. At his father's suggestion Roy joined the Tory club, which was the smaller one. Wealthy Beverly Hills prided itself on being democratic, like its populous neighbour Los Angeles, and in the proportion of two to one. It was more or less the same at the high school, while at Buckley the students, whether they liked it or not, were subject to the republican influence of the strict teaching, and not so much to that of their families. Roy found it very droll to be a conservative to whom the Los Angeles police chief, a second conservative, had given a hundred dollars in return for a little sodomy.

## Part Two—Chapter Two

IN spite of what Jack had said, neither he nor Roy were free to meet as often as they would have wished. The free time of the Los Angeles police chief did not coincide with the ways of escape open to a Beverly Hills schoolboy. But Roy had enlarged his empire of the senses by satisfying them in other ways. Not having a man available, he suddenly had the idea of finding a partner among his schoolfellows, but the disappointments he had experienced with Bob and Jim recommended caution. Moreover he had risked those offensives only because he was on the point of leaving Buckley, and he had no wish to spoil his start at the high school by making advances to other boys whose reactions were unpredictable. But was there not at the high school, was there not at his home, one boy with whom he felt free to venture anything? Manuelito. When it came to sex Roy forgot his little family prejudices. Din Kelly, his team-mate, excited him, but masturbation was not a required part of working in teams. At Buckley too, Roy had had two very exciting team-mates; he, thinking of them masturbating, had often masturbated himself. Perhaps they had done the same. But there was a great gulf between masturbating oneself while thinking of some one, and masturbating oneself *with* him. Happily for the stars of stage, screen, song, and even sometimes of literature. Otherwise they would not be able to measure up to their fans' needs.

The young Mexican was good-looking enough, but not disconcertingly so. As he had done with Bob and Jim, Roy accompanied him to the showers after gymnastics lessons and formed a favourable impression of his endowments. Their stage of development seemed to indicate that they were in working

order. Manuelito examined Roy's with the same curiosity. It was the first time they had seen each other entirely naked. "How funny!" said the Mexican. "We're both uncircumcised." In fact hardly any one apart from the Catholics sported a foreskin.

That Saturday, Roy invited Manuelito to his room. The invitation showed the effects of the casualness at the high school; it would have been unthinkable when Roy was at the Buckley school and this boy was at the primary school in Wittier Drive, the nearest one to their common abode. All that the little Mexican had ever seen of the house was the kitchen and the breakfast room. But now that Mr. Clear was taking him in the mornings with Roy—the school limousine brought them back in the evenings—neither he nor Mrs. Clear could be scandalized by this familiarity. Again this time Roy quietly locked the door behind them; he was itching with curiosity about what would happen in this room where two of his school-friends had twice ejaculated, one of them deep down in his *derrière*. At least he could be certain that with Manuelito there would be no cuts, bruises, or insults.

He had invited him not for scholarly purposes, but to watch a "Western" on the television. To make themselves more comfortable they lay down on the bed in front of the device, with a cushion under their heads and body, and their legs half hanging down. Roy would never have dreamed of telling Manuelito about his discreet marijuana smoking, but he did have a packet of Winstons, some cornflakes, and some choc-ices he had purchased from the little white van that passed slowly along the Beverly Hills streets in the late afternoon, advertising its presence with friendly chimes.

In contrast to what had happened the first time Bob and Jim entered this room, Manuelito seemed to have guessed what was expected of him. He assumed a languorous pose, his legs spread wide, and a smile wandered across his lips. After a few moments, he stroked his fly, as if to give a sign. At the same time he

pretended to be thinking of something else. “This choc-ice is very good; the cream is lovely,” he said.

“Yes,” said Roy, also touching himself, “I really love choc-ices.” It was no frozen choc-ice that was bothering them inside their jeans, but their warm cream—“cream” was a word used by the young to signify spunk and Manuelito had used it advisedly. Such rapidity of intuition had astounded Roy. He concluded that it must be a feature of the Latin races, or even of a boy of inferior status suddenly admitted to the intimacy of the son of the house; Manuelito did not wish to impede the only form of equality he could claim, namely the fraternization of two delightful appendages. But had not Roy proceeded just as adroitly with Bob, and Bob, later, with him? What, in his own action, or in Bob’s action, had appeared to be a gesture of aristocratic casualness, seemed to him, as performed by this boy, evidence of a bad education, worthy of a Chicano—the disparaging term applied to Mexicans in Los Angeles, and one, moreover, which they had made a cause of pride. Nevertheless Roy made up his mind to profit from this impudence, which anticipated his intentions.

“Do you know how to wank yourself off?” he asked in a slightly arrogant tone.

“Sure I do!” replied Manuelito. “One of the boys at school even gave me some cream which makes wanking more fun, because it tickles.”

“And who gave you that?” asked Roy.

“A senior who you don’t know.”

“Will you lend me that cream?” said Roy.

“Yes, if you give me a dollar,” Manuelito answered.

Roy was deeply shocked at this response. “But that boy gave it to you for free!” he said.

“No, it was in return for wanking him off.”

“What! You wank your schoolmates off for money?”



“What’s wrong with that?” said Manuelito. “Everything is done for money. My mother works in your house for money. Give me a dollar and I’ll wank you off.”

“What! Even *I* have to pay you?” cried Roy.

“The service is not among those provided by my mother,” said Manuelito.

Roy had to smile at these words, despite himself. But he remembered what he had told Jack Sherman: that he would come back to see him only if he could be sure of receiving a hundred dollars. One demand was the counterpart of the other. The young master and the maid’s son were temperamentally alike.

“I already have a hundred and ten dollars earned that way,” continued the Mexican.

“You’ve done a hundred and ten wanks?”

“No, I charge one dollar for wanking, three dollars for sucking, five dollars for screwing, and ten dollars for being screwed. I can’t say how many times I’ve done one or the other, but in total it comes to a hundred and ten dollars, which my mother keeps for me.”

Roy gave a start at each of these revelations, but the last was too much. “Your mother knows?” he asked.

“I asked for her advice,” said Manuelito, “when the boys at school wanted me to do those things. She drew up the price list. You know, in Mexico many parents think of their kids as a source of income, and the kids find it quite natural. It’s family feeling that produces that attitude.”

Truly Roy could not believe it. So, Manuelito collected money at school in exactly the same way that he himself obtained it from the police chief, and bit by bit the total was approaching what Roy had! But this discovery, revealing to him the underside of the high school, did not prevent him from feeling a touch of prideful relief: Roy Clear’s *derrière* was worth ten times more than Manuelito Pico’s.

He enquired about where these things took place. "Sometimes," said Manuelito, "I do the wanking and sucking in the school toilets. It's risky, but some people like danger; and others like to be quick. But mostly the boys take me home and we do it at leisure in their room, especially where screwing is concerned."

And indeed, since Roy had been at the high school, there had been two or three evenings when Manuelito had left him to travel home alone.

"Do a lot of people do this business?" asked Roy.

"No," said Manuelito, "but almost all of them are boys from Beverly South: Mexicans, Filipinos, Cubans, Puerto Ricans . . . and blacks, of course. It was a Chicano who told me about this way of making a bit of money. Most of the customers are Jews, and they find the foreskin exciting. In my own case it's the reverse; I get excited because they don't have one."

It was like the hair and the absence of hair with Bob and Roy. "Forget my foreskin," said the latter, unzipping himself, "and suck me off."

"Payment in advance," replied Manuelito. Roy got up, his member at attention, went to get three dollars from a drawer, then came back and lay on the bed.

He had to admit that Manuelito sucked just as well as the police chief. That skilful tongue winding around his member, those lips pumping it, and those hands tickling his testicles drained them in no time. "I swallowed everything," said the Mexican. . . . Look how hard I am! Your turn to suck me."

"That will be three dollars," said Roy.

Manuelito reflected for a few seconds. "Listen," he said, "just wank me off and I'll give you one dollar back."

## Part Two—Chapter Three

IN quick succession the great veils around Roy dissolved, revealing to him life as it was, and completing his instruction. After what Manuelito had told him about the secret mores of the Beverly high school, it remained for him to discover those of Los Angeles.

One evening, in his pyjamas, he was watching a horror film—he loved that *frisson*, which he had of late been intensifying with the sensations of a marijuana cigarette—when the programme was interrupted. He was irritated by the interruptions which, every ten minutes, and without the least interval, interweave with the scenes of the film you are watching not only advertisements for beauty products, dietary products, Japanese Toyota motor-cars, or the inept language of a politician soliciting votes, but also the news of the day. This time it was a report about juvenile male prostitution in Los Angeles. It stated that the city now led the United States in this activity, surpassing even San Francisco, that boys were eagerly crowding in, not only from all over California, but also from the other forty-nine States of the Union, and that the most popular spot was Hollywood Boulevard, between Highland Avenue and Cahuenga Boulevard, together with the bars of that district. So much precision sounded like an advertisement to attract interested clients. And further, images were displayed of seductive youngsters, *habitués* of those pavements; but also on show were the massive policemen who moved them on. There were, as well, confidential interviews with some of these boys. The majority admitted that they practised this profession for money. They stated their tariffs—ranging from ten to thirty dollars—which appeared to indicate a progression along the same lines as Manuelito's, except that he finished where the others started. They added that

often they were content to be invited to lunch or dinner, and that sometimes they asked for nothing if they enjoyed being driven around in a Cadillac, or being invited into a beautiful apartment; some maintained that they prostituted themselves chiefly for pleasure. It was said that very young boys were among their number, and as proof, the transmission displayed the charming face of an urchin around twelve years old—not far below the age of Roy and Manuelito. But he was not a Mexican: he was blond.

Roy was both bowled over and excited—bowled over by the idea that he had seen this, filmed in Hollywood five miles from his home, and that his mother, at the Los Angeles chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, was on the committee against indecency in theatrical or cinematographic displays. But Roy's bedroom had itself already been the scene of displays that would have outraged Mrs. Clear's sense of decency. The odd thing was that his greatest excitement came from the sight of those policemen, puffed up with their own importance. He fantasized about their giant organs and imagined them sodomizing those boys rather than moving them on. He thought of their ultimate chief, Jack Sherman, who had possessed him twice. There was nothing Roy wanted more than to see him again. There was no comparison between Manuelito's member, nor even those of Bob and Jim, and that of the police chief.

The feeling he had derived from this film roused him even more, given those memories. He was overjoyed to learn that so many boys, so many young people, did the same thing in other United States cities, and especially all across California. He had never before heard mention of male prostitution, and he was suddenly forced to admit to himself that, from the moment he had offered himself for money, he too had been a prostitute—a prostitute *de luxe*. Having fixed the price of his favours at a hundred dollars, he had at a stroke set himself above the common herd. But the idea that he was more or less a participant in this humiliated him a little. He suppressed the thought, concluding with Manuelito that “everything is done for

money.” Yes, every one in the world was in one way or another a prostitute; his father prostituted his houses by letting them out; the politician prostituted himself by seeking votes; the actor and the actress by playing for the public; the banker, the industrialist, the shopkeeper and the civil servant by making themselves available; the painter by exhibiting his work; the writer, the journalist, and the scholar by publishing the fruit of their labours. It was this general prostitution that made the world go round. And was not God himself for sale, in times past in return for sacrifices, and to-day in return for donations to the churches and the priests? The former French teacher at Buckley, who was so mischievous and loved to mingle elements of French history with his lessons, had given his students the example of a duchess of Laval-Montmorency, who “deserved,” he said, “to be an American”: she promised the Eternal a sum proportional to the amount she prayed for, but payable only if the prayer were granted.

The horror film had resumed. Roy was no longer interested. He turned off the television and removed his pyjama pants the better to play with himself. The delights of his vital organ, so easily aroused and ever ready to pour out the divine liquor, intoxicated him; but from now on there would be more. Against a finger he clenched and unclenched his astonishingly flexible anus. He was sorry not to have one of those vibrators Bob had spoken of, and he wondered where they might be purchased. Failing that, he sometimes used the handle of his tooth-brush. This evening he would have preferred something less simple: getting himself sodomized by giving Manuelito five dollars. However the spectre of being possessed by the maid’s son bothered him; upon reflection, he would not have been comfortable with sucking him off in return for three dollars. On this matter he retained his father’s class prejudices. He would even have been hesitant about being sodomized by the policemen in the television report; what he needed was their

chief. To-morrow he would sodomize Manuelito—ten dollars. The image of this act once more brought both his hands to life.

All of a sudden, on the verge of orgasm, he broke off. A different desire had come to him: going down to explore Hollywood Boulevard. He burned to investigate that location immediately; he had had no conception of its special nature when he had been there to buy books and shirts. Surely hordes of Los Angelenos and Beverlyites were even now dashing down there in their motor-cars.

Roy did not question the moral aspect of his resolution. He had already scorned too many rules to be concerned about one more. Similarly he was indifferent to what Uracca might have thought of him when her son brought her the two dollars earned in his room. Nevertheless he was grateful to her for not having changed her attitude towards him, and he only hoped that she would not encourage Manuelito to increase his rates. But these easy domestic pleasures seemed to lack the appeal of those of the outside and unknown. He believed he was hearing the call of life and liberty. What attracted him, once again, was not boys; it was men—the men he had caught a glimpse of, the men who sought out Hollywood Boulevard boys. He wanted to meet a second Jack. He wondered whether he would meet Manuelito down there; it would not be particularly embarrassing. But the young Mexican must be unaware of these possibilities; otherwise he would not have hesitated to brag about them. Moreover, since he disliked horror films, he would certainly not have been watching the channel that transmitted that report. Roy was curious to know whether it would be discussed at school. And indeed there was a second film to be made, about secret prostitution among schoolboys.

The scruffy clothing of the young people depicted was doubtless in accord with their tariffs. In order to distinguish himself from them at first glance, Roy donned a silk shirt, a heavy cotton jacket, and brand-new jeans. He took with him ten dollars—the ten dollars that represented the furthest point of

Manuelito's favours. It was not to treat himself to some bum. He was going to Hollywood to *earn* money, and to enjoy himself in the process. He was sure he was worth more than the others, since he was better-looking and better dressed. He would rely on hitching to reach his destination—perhaps luck would bring him a motorist with the same tastes as Jack. Otherwise he would wait for a 'bus in Sunset Boulevard, or hail a taxi. Down there he would behave as he had with Jack: he would insist on a hundred dollars to go with any one. Even if that were a staggering sum, as Jack had given him to understand, he would not come down by one cent. He was an American of royal lineage—something he had told the police chief the other evening when being driven home. Although he might smile at his father's pretensions on that subject, he espoused them when it suited him.

As was his custom he got out by removing the mosquito screen in the dining-room, and was pleasantly surprised by the cool of the night. The moon was shining above, as it had shone on the day he met Jack. At a brisk pace, but with heart pounding, he passed along the street under the trees. For some time now he had no longer gone skateboarding at night; Jack had advised him not to, so that the number of his excursions did not become excessive. He thought of the rumour that pedestrianism was prohibited in Beverly Hills, but he had confirmed that this was just a glorious legend. In reality the prohibition applied only to people with a suspicious appearance.

Not a car passed along Summit Drive. Roy turned into Benedict Canyon towards Sunset Boulevard. A large black Chevrolet on its way down slowed and came to a halt near him; it was Jack's. "What are *you* up to?" the astonished police chief demanded.

"I'm going to Hollywood Boulevard out of sheer curiosity," Roy replied.

"Get in with me," said Jack. Roy did so, and faithfully reported the documentary that had inspired this curiosity.

“A morbid curiosity,” said Jack, who had turned in the direction of Brentwood.

“I don’t see anything morbid in the things we do,” said Roy.

“It’s not what one does that matters,” said Jack, “but with whom one does it. In any case, I seem fated to bump into you every time I go to dine at the Trousdale Estates, with my friend the consul-general of . . . and amuse myself by driving down through the hills of Beverly. What a stroke of luck that I came this way to-day! I was eager to see you again, and now I am seeing you again thanks to a television report about male prostitution! It was a repeat of a recent ‘Top Show’ by Tom Snyders, originally transmitted at one a.m., and I find it scandalous that the subject was aired at ten p.m. before children are in bed.”

The police chief added that there was a case going on at present in San Francisco in relation to the responsibilities of television: a mother had claimed eleven million dollars damages, with interest, from a local channel for her nine-year-old daughter’s loss of virginity at the hands of other children, who used a bottle. She maintained that this act had taken place after the transmission of the film “Born Innocent”, in which little Linda Blair—later the heroine of “The Exorcist”—had been deflowered by her companions with a plumber’s tool in an institution for runaway girls. The advocate for the television channel had invoked the first constitutional amendment, relating to freedom of expression, which had infuriated the police chief. “It’s the same argument,” he said, “that the gays appeal to for their propaganda, and the pornographers for their odious commerce. You really don’t belong among those boys who prostitute themselves. Heaven be thanked that I turned up again.”

They arrived at the Brentwood house. The police chief, after having, as usual, got rid of his revolver and his badge, lifted the telephone and called the sheriff, telling him that because of the televised report he should organize a round-up of all the boys



loitering in Hollywood Boulevard. Evidently the sheriff raised some objections, because Jack corrected himself: "Yes, I know, the mayor is full of tolerance towards gays and Amador lodges a protest with him if I take any action against them. So just confine yourself to checking their identities and frisking them, and arrest the ones with weapons or drugs." Satisfied, he lit a marijuana cigarette and gave it to Roy.

Roy's first reaction had been to criticize him for his double dealing, and to stand up for the boys, perhaps the very ones who had been filmed. Then he reflected that he had no reason to concern himself about others, and that there was nothing more sophisticated than feeling beyond the reach of the law: it heightened his enjoyment tenfold. That was what he had experienced since the beginning of his relationship with Jack, and Jack had observed it in him.

"I have a funny idea," the police chief declared. "If you sodomize *me*, do I have to give *you* a hundred dollars?"

"Yes," said Roy. "Otherwise I would have the impression of getting less pleasure from having you than from being had by you."

"Ah! Always those unassailable conclusions!" cried Jack. Roy had not told him about his adventures with Jim and Bob, but he thought it would amuse him to hear about Manuelito's four tariffs. It did indeed amuse the police chief. "It's lovely for you to have that little Mexican available," he said. "So you don't need to go to Hollywood Boulevard when our rendezvous are less frequent. But, of course, you will never mention me either to that boy or to any one."

"I'm too proud of my secret," answered Roy.

In spite of his mirth on hearing those details, Jack could not resist a little moralizing. "All the same, is it normal," he asked, "for boys at a high school—and at Beverly Hills of all places—to pay for other boys' hands, mouths, pricks and bums? One thing consoles me though: it is seeing the rich profiting from the poor."

Roy started laughing. "I think that in this business the poor also profit from the rich," he said.

"Irresistible logician!" said Jack again, kissing him.

Taking off his jacket, he pointed to the handkerchief he had just hung down to the left from the back pocket of his trousers. "Do you know what that handkerchief means in the language of Hollywood Boulevard?" he asked.

"The programme didn't say," responded Roy.

"It was difficult," said Jack. "When the handkerchief hangs down to the left, it means you like to be screwed, and it means you like to screw when it hangs down to the right. I've just now positioned my handkerchief to remind you of what I'm expecting of you."

The impact on Roy was extraordinary. Those furry buttocks spread out before him. . . That forest of black hair that he pushed aside. . . He had no need of lube to penetrate therein. Never had he had such a sensation of power. The man who struck fear into all the gays of Los Angeles was now held fast beneath him.

## Part Two—Chapter Four

THE campaign for the class presidencies—one president for the seniors, one for the juniors, and one for the second-year students—was much more active at the Beverly Hills high school than at the Buckley school. Every one took a lively interest, and here again money played a role. To keep expenditure in check, the committee set up for the election had prohibited badges displaying the candidates' names, but the candidates had arranged with their supporters to have their slogans printed for ten dollars on T-shirts. Roy was left out of these friendly rivalries, which did not include first-year students. Posters were put up in authorized places; but outside the school they were displayed on senior students' cars, parked in neighbouring streets.

There was also a campaign for the presidency of the students' association, which was divided into a chamber and a senate, with the role of serving as intermediary between them and the teachers. Roy, who, as a member of this association, had the right to vote, at once perceived that the rivalry around these positions was even more intense than for the other presidencies. This was because the two principal candidates were Mike Navarro, Mexican in origin, and Aaron Schechter. In other words, it was again the battle between Beverly North and Beverly South. Beverly North prevailed.

Roy was not surprised at this result, even though he had not had a hand in it. His father had encouraged him to vote for a Mexican rather than a Jew, but if Roy had obeyed him this was not with the intention of pleasing him; he had told his father that he wanted, quite simply, to favour a boy with the same background as Manuelito Pico ("the sweet little sucker" he added to himself), and John Clear had given a sickly smile. Uracca's son had greatly appreciated his young master's remark.

Roy did not add that in supporting the intelligent, bespectacled but ape-faced Navarro, who sported an Angela Davis hair-style, he had been following his penchant for ugly people. Schechter, by contrast, was a good-looking boy, just as Ivy Cohen, whom he was succeeding, was a good-looking girl. Mr. Clear had bemoaned the fact that all the school honours went to children of Israel. To annoy his father a bit more, Roy told him that in fact Mike Gottlieb and Greg Levy were the best volley-ball players, John Zucker the best baseball player, and Diana Isaacs the best female diver. And the blacks as well were not the least renowned in several sports.

Under cover of the electoral hurly-burly Roy conducted his investigation in relation to the television programme a few evenings previously. Many of his schoolfellows had seen it. The majority had not ascribed much importance to it: the boys of Beverly North had no interest in male prostitution at Hollywood Boulevard. Everything beyond their own town, even Beverly South, was for them a different planet. Moreover a certain number affected an extreme dislike of gays, as the Buckley students had done. At the high school also, the insulting “faggot” was frequently heard even from the lips of boys who themselves looked quite camp. Manuelito had not seen the programme, but he told Roy that the Beverly South boys, his natural friends, had discussed it with him. Some of them admitted that they sometimes went to Hollywood Boulevard to help finance their week-ends at times when their rich schoolfellows did not employ their services. But those boys were no concern of Roy.

He had the idea of questioning one of his Beverly North schoolfellows, a sixteen-year-old third-year student. He was Otis Z., a Jew, and grandson of one of the old Hollywood tycoons. His father, a great electronics manufacturer, was an example of those brilliant career transformations produced by the—at least relative—decline of the cinema industry. Roy and Otis had met early on, at the Radio-Electronics club, and had subsequently taken part in a basket-ball match between their two teams. These

inter-class sporting matches maintained the competitive spirit that lay at the heart of the school life—in the school *Year-Book* three quarters of the illustrations had to do with sports. But actually neither Roy, who loved skateboarding, nor Otis, who loved jogging, was interested in being a “football hero”, or a “basket-ball” or “baseball hero”. They met most often on the running track, but did not endeavour to beat their senior comrade Sandy Grushow, who ran five hundred metres in one minute fifty-five seconds. They were already conscious of a mutual affinity. Otis was as dark as Roy was blond, and, what was an attraction for Roy, he was ugly. Of course it was not an ugliness comparable to Jack Sherman’s, but Roy’s discovery of sexual relations had taken place with a man of that physical type, which thus remained impressed upon his sensual nature. Proud of his beauty, he judged that it would be further accentuated in proximity to individuals who were not beautiful, and that they would thus become more attached to him. Besides, Otis’s air of intelligence gave him a kind of beauty that shone forth from his eyes. As soon as Roy asked him about the television report, Otis said that he had heard it mentioned. Then, looking straight at Roy as though they had both waited for this moment to confide in each other, he added: “What matters isn’t male prostitution; what matters is being gay. Are you already a gay?”

“Just sprouting,” said Roy.

“And I’m almost ripe!” responded Otis. Their friendship was sealed at that moment, with a heightened intensity derived from the difference in their ages.

Otis’s mentor, he told Roy, was his elder brother Ramsey, a student at the University of California at Los Angeles, and a member of the official gay students’ group at that university. Like the other student groups or clubs, they had their own special room (in the Kerckhoff Hall) and an administration budget for the telephone, office supplies and on-campus advertising. They published a bi-weekly roneoed bulletin: the *Gayzette*. Roy thought he was dreaming: an official group of gay

students! Otis told him that there was a similar one at the University of Southern California—the university at which almost all the boys from Buckley enrolled, as it was the most traditional, and the university Gladys Clear had attended.

Roy was even more astonished that there should be a gay group in the high school as well, but, since the boys were minors, this group remained clandestine. Otis made no secret of the fact that he was both its founder and its president. Roy would join the group, which included few first-year members. He gladly accepted the honour done to him. He asked whether Manuelito was a member. Otis gave a start: “We don’t enrol the sons of domestic servants,” he said. “I hope you are not on intimate terms with him.”

“Oh!” said Roy, “I did get carried away once; but you are right to call me to order. There won’t be a second time. I won’t even ask him for the wanking cream a senior gave him in exchange for being wanked.”

“I can give you some,” said Otis. “I am aware that there are certain students who pay boys of that type. That’s their individual business. Contrary to what is often asserted, money does have an odour: it comes from the one who receives it.”

“What aristocratic principles!” exclaimed Roy. “You are truly extraordinary.” In his heart of hearts he thanked Otis for thus justifying the money he took from Jack, and he saw it doubly justified, even, since that money did not come from just any one.

Otis turned up the bottom of his alpaca pullover, to reveal a golden twig with two descenders that he had pinned on. “It’s our club badge,” he said, “and the sign of gays in general—the ‘lambda’, because this Greek letter symbolizes the male gender. The gay university students wear it openly. We have to be more discrete. I’ll give you your lambda too. Gay Jews,” Otis continued, “have a badge where it appears on the seal of Solomon, but I don’t like to mix religion with this question. And besides, quite a few of my secret members are Protestants or

Catholics. For gay Catholics, the badge is a cross with a lambda-shaped support.”

Clarifying what the chief of police had told Roy, Otis explained that the gays’ clever move had been to get themselves considered as a minority, which entitled them to invoke not only the first constitutional amendment in regard to freedom of expression, but also the fourteenth, which guarantees equal protection under law. This amendment was the consequence of the abolition of slavery after the civil war. Later amendments confirmed this equality between races, and even between sexes, which so annoyed Mr. Clear. Otis was proud that many Jews had been behind these reforms and also the gay liberation movement. “The lawyer Peter Goodman, who runs the—essentially gay—Human Rights Foundation in San Francisco,” he said, “is a Jew from New England. The *Advocate*, the great Californian gay monthly, the management of which is in San Mateo, near San Francisco, is published by David B. Goodstein together with Peter G. Frisch. In the *Los Angeles Times* there was recently a call from the Union of American Jewish Congregations to invite Jews of all views, ‘even the gays’, to take part in one of our ritual festivals. This Union, which comprises more than a million people, is the principal body of modern Judaism. You’ve seen how the movement is spreading to our governing classes. It’s good that we other Jews should care about gay liberation, because our religion was the first to call down a curse upon sex. Religious faith should again become utterly irrelevant to the problems invented by man, in the name of God, so as to take upon himself the right to persecute other men.”

After Roy had told him of Don Amador’s televised speech about gay churches and synagogues, Otis declared: “I’m still a believer; for festivals I even go to the Beth Jacob synagogue in Beverly South, but when I come of age I’ll go to the New Life synagogue (Beth Chayim Chadashim) in West Pico Boulevard.”

Just as Roy had learned from the television about male prostitution in Los Angeles, so was he instructed in detail by

Otis about the gay demonstrations he had heard his father judge so severely. Every year since his election Tom Bradley the mayor had authorized, at the end of June, "Gay Pride Week", intended to combat the dislike of gays in a section of the population, and the discrimination they still suffered in many types of job, even in government employment. "The Jews," said Otis, "invented the slogan 'Glad to be Jewish'. It was adapted to form 'Glad to be Gay'. The addresses of the gay temples, churches and synagogues cited by Amador were published in the *Advocate* under the heading: 'Gays, proud and united through God'. The intention of this formula is to show that God accepts the existence of gays, that He recognizes their right to have religious feelings, to devote themselves, without hypocrisy, to religious practices and to obtain His protection. During the Gay Pride week, there was a parade of thousands of gays who released balloons displaying the words 'Gay and Proud!', and acclaimed 'Gay Power'. That power was indeed recently demonstrated in the elections of Don Amador in Los Angeles and Harvey Milk in San Francisco. When the two hundred and forty thousand gays in that city marched in support of Milk, the nature of the gathering was shattering for professional politicians. It is said that the blacks, by turning to Carter and the democrats, decided the last presidential elections, but that the gays also played a part, and this changed the attitude towards them of many straights. The conclusion was that ten million gays and twenty million darkies could capture the White House. Result: there is now a republican group which champions equal rights for gays.

"It's strange that you enrolled for the Tory club," continued Otis. "One would think you had foreseen what I've just been saying. But anyway, up to now, it is only the liberals we have to thank for gay progress. You can spread insidious propaganda for our cause among the republicans. But I still doubt you'll be able to show them your lambda. . . . Anyway," he added, laughing, "you know what I mean."



When the bell rang for the next class, Roy saw Otis using an inhaler he had taken from his pocket. Roy asked whether he had a cold, just as he had asked Jim once before. "No," said Otis.

"Is it a popper?" Roy went on, wanting to show that he was well informed.

"It's something much better," said Otis: "cocaine in distilled water. The effect lasts two hours, for class-work. This drug should be taken only if one is capable of using it in moderation. You can try it at my place some time. . . for pleasure."

The friendship Roy had begun in one day with this boy, who possessed all the characteristics of what was called at the high school "leadership", already gave him a certain prestige among his schoolfellows. Young Z. impressed them in a number of ways: he had a famous name, he was rich and he had a forty-thousand-dollar Mercedes. It was known that his brother had another one. In that way Mr. Z. had established his two sons in a pre-eminent position in relation to the majority of their comrades. Naturally, Otis had offered to take Roy home, and had dropped him at Summit Drive, without either of them bothering about Manuelito. Never before had Roy travelled in such a fine car. The dash-board had electronic indicators that showed—over and above the speed—the journey time, the time remaining, the distance remaining, etc.

When, at dinner, Roy mentioned his new friend and his limousine, Mr. Clear became testy. He inveighed against Jewish arrogance, and added that it was just typical of a Jew to present his son with a forty-thousand-dollar car and send him to a free school: no student at Buckley, the school for the rich, possessed such a Mercedes. Roy, for his part, was amused at these contradictions, to which there were so many equivalents within his own family. He presumed that his father's verdict had been dictated by jealousy. And besides, he found ridiculous these endless remarks about racial and religious differences in a country like America, which was a happy melting-pot of every religion and every race. The library at the University of

California at Los Angeles, endowed by Doheny Jr., and containing four million volumes, had been built on land donated by a Protestant, a Catholic, and a Jew. John calmed down when his wife mentioned that Mr. Z. was an electronics manufacturer, and that the friendship of Otis Z. could be very useful for the future of Roy Clear. Kathy declared as well that the Z.s had one of the most beautiful houses in Beverly Hills, but Mr. Clear retaliated by pointing out that they did not appear in the *Blue Book*.

In any case, Roy told himself that were the elections for the presidency of the students' association held again, he would vote not for Mike Navarro but for Aaron Schechter.

## Part Two—Chapter Five

ANYTHING new stimulated Roy. And so he was worked up at the idea of visiting Otis's home this evening. It was in Greenway Drive, considered the best street in the city; there were in fact only about fifteen houses, each more magnificent than the last, bordering the lawns of the Los Angeles Country Club. Roy admired these houses from afar whenever he accompanied a golfer as caddie. Ann Rutherford, one of the stars of *Gone with the Wind*, lived there in a Georgian style house near the Z.s.

Roy, who had had a high opinion of the interior of his own home, felt humble enough as he passed through the gate. The Rolls at the bottom of the steps, the statues in the entrance-hall, the sumptuous carpets, and the formal butler, truly conveyed the impression of a "gilded ghetto". Otis's room was ravishing, with rattan furniture, chintz curtains, and an enormous bed covered in furs. Nevertheless there were no pictures; only a simple poster with a Jewish symbol and the inscription "Be numbered among those who are committed". "That means," said Otis, "that I am committed to the struggle for the defence of Israel." Then he added, laughing, "I'm equally committed to the struggle for the defence of gays."

He had a bar, and in honour of his guest he opened two little bottles of Californian champagne. They sat down face to face. Otis put his inhaler on the table, just as Jack put down his revolver and his badge when he arrived home. Roy, who until now had said nothing about the subject, felt obliged to make some remark. "That cocaine you take," he said, "isn't it rather dangerous? I smoke marijuana and I have sniffed poppers. Consequently, I know that those drugs are harmless, but I'd be scared of the 'white lady'. No doubt that's one reason why I'm scared of girls."

“The liquid lady,” said Otis, “is the least dangerous of the species. My brother, who taught me everything I know, is guided by Adam Gottlieb’s book *The Pleasures of Cocaine*, which describes exactly what one should and should not do. It’s also as precise as a Swiss chronometer . . . like the twenty or fifty milligrammes of pemoline—a substitute for cocaine—given to American airmen during the second world war to stimulate them for six to twelve hours at a time. The inhaler is the most discreet and practical way to use cocaine in public. No one will suspect you: it can be put in the vaporizer of a pharmaceutical product for the nose. But when at home it is better to inhale pure cocaine. You’ll see, it’s phenomenal, not only for class-work but also for sex, so long as you don’t abuse it, as I said: otherwise no more class-work and no more sex.”

“I’m capable of studying and having sex without that assistance,” said Roy, trying to resist.

“Me too,” said Otis. “But it’s fun to have one of the vices of the rich.”

“Why of the rich?” asked Roy.

“Because pure cocaine is very expensive: a hundred dollars a gramme,” said Otis. “And also it’s the rarest of all the drugs at school. So you need to know what it is.”

“What a twister you are!” Roy exclaimed. “You’re getting at me through vanity.”

“I’d rather get at you another way,” replied Otis. “But before you try it, let’s go to the sauna.”

“The sauna?” asked Roy.

“Yes, we have one. It’s our training field, my brother’s and mine.”

“Obviously,” said Roy, “I’m only your apprentice.”

“Right,” said Otis, who had just been inspecting Roy’s jeans. “You still have the flies of an innocent. See mine?”

“I admit,” replied Roy, “that yours has always attracted me because of the bulge at the left; it’s crying out to be touched.”

Otis stood up, and drew Roy's right hand across to stroke himself through the material. "The bulge isn't padding, you see?" he said. "But a highlight like that comes from the pumice stone used to rub the cloth at that spot, which makes it thinner. And then it is bleached a little, so that the area stands out better. Happy jeans, that bring us all these pleasures! If for no other reason, you are right to study French, because their cloth is called 'denim' after the town of Nîmes where it was originally made. I forgot to say that you have to start by soaking the jeans in water, to make them skin-tight."

They undressed, retaining their briefs. The protuberances which became evident, and which were the effect neither of bleaching nor of pumice stone, amused them; they were evidence of the result of Otis's little manipulation. "You get aroused quickly," he told Roy. "But admit that you're not indifferent to me. Look, let's measure our cocks before we go to the sauna." He found his tape-measure in his school case and pulled down the two briefs. "Hooray!" he cried, seeing Roy's member thrusting up. "You're almost as well developed as I am." Roy had by now become accustomed to this form of flattery. Fingering him, Otis went on: "You have what is called a 'handcrafted' cock, because your hand has fashioned it with love. What a wonderful item you were hiding from me under the denim!" As it chanced, the two friends had never showered together at school; this brought them to-day the pleasure of mutual discovery. Roy was as enthralled as Otis: he stroked the powerful member, hard and quivering, the circumcised end of which looked ready to erupt. He felt the weight of the testicles, almost as voluminous as Jack's. "And you still have your foreskin!" Otis exclaimed again, fingering that fold of skin. Roy had not forgotten what Manuelito had told him about young Jews' fascination with foreskins. At last Otis took the measurements: "You, six inches. . . Me, seven. We could live off our charms." This witticism made Roy smile.

Naked, they wrapped themselves in towels and went off to the sauna, a little further along the corridor. Otis adjusted the gauge to a moderate temperature. "The heat should be no more than a caress," he said—"one caress more." He had again grasped Roy's organ, and was working the foreskin up and down, but this was no more than a gesture of amorous curiosity. "Are you Catholic?" he enquired.

"I'm Episcopalian," replied Roy.

"I thought the Catholics were just about the only uncircumcised people in the United States," said Otis.

"My father claims it's a family tradition," said Roy. He omitted to add that Mr. Clear had all the more reason to keep it up so as to distinguish himself in particular from the Jews, who had spread among Americans the custom of circumcision.

"See how I've been properly circumcised," said Otis, exhibiting his own organ from all angles. "Our rabbis in Beverly Hills are very skilful. One of our cousins, who is not a practitioner, got his son circumcised by a doctor in Los Angeles, and the little appendage was horribly burned with an electric knife. The parents and the child received a million dollars in damages."

Ramsey, who had come back from the university, entered at that moment. He resembled his brother, but had a little moustache *à la mode*. He was naked under his half-open dressing-gown; his sizeable phallus, worthy of his age—twenty—was already in a state of erection. "Roy Clear, about whom I spoke to you," Otis told him, "is the latest member of our secret gay group."

"What an attractive recruit, and what an attractive member!" said Ramsey. He shook Roy's penis, as though it were his hand, and then caressed his backside. "Just getting to know you," he said. He too had at once noticed Roy's special feature, and, no less inquisitive than Otis, fiddled with the foreskin. "They left you your lace curtains," he said. This caress caused Roy's tip to peep out; at Ramsey's arrival it had withdrawn behind the

curtains. Ramsey was thrilled at that. “Ah! all the better,” he said. “It shows that I’m not a party pooper. Don’t mind me, my friends. I’ve taken a little powder and I’ll be quite happy wanking myself off watching you.”

“You know Roy has never taken it before,” said Otis.

“It’s time he started,” said Ramsey.

“Why not?” said Roy. “Otis has already persuaded me.”

“Bravo!” said Ramsey. “You’re one of us. I’ll go and get some Erythroxyton coca. But I’ll have to grind the flakes.” He put on the dressing-gown he had removed, and went out.

“How well-built you are!” said Otis, constantly gazing at Roy. “It struck me the first day I saw you in your T-shirt and your basket-ball shorts.”

“When I was very young,” said Roy, “I was a cub scout, which is good training. Their motto is ‘Do your best’. I have retained the principle of doing my best in everything, and have always followed it to the letter. I was one of the best at ice-skating—a good preparation for the skateboard—and at swimming, hoisting sails, climbing, and exploring caves. I have the badge of the American eagle.”

“And as for me, I qualify for the badge of the Jewish turkey,” said Otis. “I was too lazy to be a scout. I’m ashamed of my great hips, my great thighs.”

“I like your face,” said Roy.

“What!” cried Otis, “you find me good-looking?”

“I find you exciting,” responded Roy. “Is that not the true beauty?”

“You have given me the greatest compliment I could ever have dreamed of,” said Otis, coming up to Roy and kissing him.

As Otis began to fondle the hole in his bottom, Roy, foreseeing what was about to happen, was concerned to guide the reflections that the hardly virginal penetrability of that orifice would surely inspire in Otis. “Nature was good to me,” he said; “I have a supple anus, and I’ve made it even more supple with

my exercises.” This was true, but concealed the fact of Jack’s mollifying activities.

Ramsey returned with two boxes of different kinds, and a plastic drinking-straw. As Roy had done when there were visitors in his room, Ramsey locked the sauna door behind him. Then he hung his dressing-gown over two hooks on the glazed door, to mask the view. Besides, the shape of the room, with its recesses, allowed them complete freedom. Opening one of the boxes, which contained a white powder, Ramsey introduced into the straw a little of this powder, asked Roy to put his head back, inserted the straw as far as the upper membrane of the nostril, and puffed in the powder. “I would ask you to observe,” he said, rubbing his organ against Roy’s own, “that I am constantly erect. That shows you the good that comes from cocaine. It wouldn’t be so brilliant if the sauna were warmer. The method I used with you is recommended for a beginner. Because, if you breathe in yourself, without being used to it, you might blow the powder away, or not get it far enough in, or alternatively get it into your throat and lungs. Roy sensed an agreeable titillation at the top of his nostrils, spreading into his mind. With the same straw, Ramsey puffed cocaine into his brother’s nostrils. The presence of his two friends, with their straining sexual organs, heightened Roy’s excitement. He recalled the session in his bedroom when he had smoked marijuana in the company of Bob and Jim, as he had also done at Brentwood with the police chief. Obviously today’s sensations were stronger, and they would not be obliterated by disagreeable remarks afterwards, as in the case of his two former Buckley schoolfellows.

“That’s only the prelude,” Ramsey told Roy. “When I’ve got you ready to climax, I’ll increase it tenfold.” He put a cloud of cocaine on Roy’s phallus, sticking it there with an ointment of lube taken from the other box. Then he turned Roy over and smeared his anal region with a similar mixture. “In front and behind,” said Ramsey, “you have sixty dollars worth of powder.” He performed the same operation on Otis.



“I have the feeling,” said Roy, “that my cock is as big as yours, and my backside is on fire.”

“Me too,” said Otis.

“That’s the reason why you are going to put out my brother’s fire,” said Ramsey to Roy, “and I intend to put out yours.”

“Oh no!” cried Otis. “*I* want Roy’s maidenhead.” The word “maidenhead” made Roy smile again.

“Well I don’t want to rob you of your rights,” Ramsey said to Otis. “So I’ll wait until you have done your thing, and then I’ll blend my spunk fraternally with yours in this angel’s bum-hole.”

## Part Two—Chapter Six

OTIS telephoned Roy the following morning to tell him to listen to Don Amador's speech on the television. Roy would not have forgotten, but he was delighted that his friend wished to augment his knowledge of gay matters.

This time the councillor spoke about homosexuality among the Indians of former times. In passing he said that he had accepted as colleague at the Los Angeles city hall an Indian of the Mohave tribe, which now numbered no more than fifteen or sixteen hundred persons living in an Arizonan reserve near the Colorado River. This collaboration was indeed further proof that all the American minorities were united around the gays, a minority not ethnic but sexual, not religious but social.

Amador related that the Indians themselves had treated their homosexuals as a minority, and had given them the right to live together under the name "Winkti". For them, homosexuality was a godsend, which they respected. The Navajos, who still exist in a number of states, and particularly in Los Angeles, told of how, after the world was created, the earliest boys had those tendencies—tendencies they consequently continue to venerate among those thus affected. Formerly, such individuals were excused from war, and were content to organize a supply of horses and care for the wounded. But it was they who made peace between the tribes. Even hunting was forbidden them, as it entailed the bearing of arms. They took care of the children while the women were working in the fields. Among themselves, they addressed each other as "sister". The councillor pointed out that the Navajos' theory about the primordial boys recalled that of the Greek philosopher Plato, according to whom the homosexuals, women or men, were the descendants of a primordially created double man or woman, one of whose halves

was searching for the other on Earth. The Indians, like him, saw in the gay phenomenon a heritage linked with the very origin of the world, and not a more or less debatable consequence of civilization.

Don Amador could not finish without saying a word about the subject at present occupying the minds of all Californian gays, and Otis commented on it when he telephoned again after the programme. Mr. Clear had alluded to it only a few times in passing, doubtless out of a sense of propriety where his son was concerned. The state senator John Briggs—from Fullerton, in the county of Orange to the south of Los Angeles—had proposed a law, assigned the number 6, which was to be put to referendum on the seventh of November. It specified that any teacher convicted of or suspected of homosexual leanings could be dismissed from his or her post in any state institution. Don Amador, being a teacher at Los Angeles and Long Beach, would be one of the first victims. He maintained that this would be a reopening of the Salem witchcraft trials, the famous example of the spirit of intolerance reigning in that Massachusetts town at the end of the seventeenth century. The late federal senator McCarthy had already resumed these trials, in the aftermath of the second world war, by hounding Communists and homosexuals; he confused the second lot with the first, and saw them as virtual spies in the service of the USSR, since he considered homosexuality to be an anti-American monstrosity.

This senator Briggs carried on the theme of the singer Anita Bryant who, in Florida on the other side of America, attacked homosexuals with the cry “Save our children!”, out of which she had created the name of a league, subsequently entitled “Protect the children of America”. In this way, in the Florida county of Dade, she had contrived to obtain through referendum the suppression of legislative measures acknowledging the equal rights of homosexuals. This outcome had made her more famous than her earlier win in a beauty contest in Oklahoma, where she was born, or any of her discs, even though they sold by the

million. Her biography and photograph appeared in the 1978 *Year-Book* of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. She belonged to the Baptist church, the most hardened opponents of gays. Miami Beach was where she received the first support for her crusade. Through her, she said, the “normal majority” calls: “Enough! Enough! Enough!” Liberal groups reacted every bit as violently; in a recent poll, students at the University of New York, asked who had done the most harm to humanity, responded: Hitler and Anita Bryant. Gay Californians added senator Briggs to this duo, at least in respect of his destructive disposition.

“It is very important,” Otis told Roy, that Proposition 6 be rejected. “If they begin by restricting the right of educators to be gay, they will soon be putting the same restriction on other social categories. No one knows where repressive tyranny will end. The Nazis put gays in concentration camps, and the Soviets still do it, when they don’t send them to a clinic. Here too there are bogus psychiatrists who would like to treat us as mental patients. I’d like to quote to them the words of a Persian poet: “They invent a cure for my illness, and it is my illness that is my cure.” Ramsey taught me that clever line.

“Just imagine, not so long ago it was illegal in New York to serve alcohol to gays, because they were thought to be potential criminals. And now look at the progress we’ve made: the present mayor of New York, Ed Koch, a Jew, is a discreet gay. He’s a democrat who encourages gays, while all the Californian democrats oppose Proposition 6, even if they are not gay themselves. It is said that Ronald Reagan, our former governor, who is a republican and not gay, will also vote that way. You should tell that to your father.

“Notice that, in defending gays,” continued Otis, “I’m not going as far as that partisan in New York, Craig Schonnmaker, who has set up an organization known as ‘Homosexuals Intransigent!’, and calls for all the gays in the city to come together in the same neighbourhood, so as to form ‘the first gay power of the district’, including, I may add, the University of

Columbia. I disapprove of that kind of segregation. We other Jews have fought for centuries to come out of the ghetto; we don't want to go back in as homosexuals. That lamentable mind-set is evident even in the slogan 'Separate the men from the boys' used by a 'leather' bar (for fanatics who dress up in black leather and wear chains) called the *Leather of the West*: it means that its clients should be only 'big men', lorry drivers, or dockers. I find sporting competitions between gay teams just as absurd. My brother told me that recently, at the University of California at Long Beach, there was a teachers' seminar on the theme 'Think gay'. Perhaps this obsession with particularism can be excused by the fact that not so long ago it was impossible even to speak of such tastes."

Despite Otis's advice, Roy judged it prudent not to rush into a defence of gays before his father; he did not want to start him thinking. The Clears were not as broad-minded as the Zs. Otis had said that his father would point out to Ramsey and him anything in the newspaper that might be relevant to the gay cause. Mr. Z., a complete stranger to homosexuality, saw the shadow of Hitler hanging over senator Briggs, the persecutor of homosexuals, just as the students of New York saw it hanging over Anita Bryant. He appraised his sons' tastes with the liberalism that most Jews had drawn from the defence of their own cause. Mrs. Z. considered them youthful frolics.

## Part Two—Chapter Seven

AS Roy entered the house near Montana Denair Cashemere, he had the delirious feeling that he was about to be arrested. Did not indeed the duties of a policeman essentially consist in the act of handcuffing, which Roy had once seen performed in Santa Monica Boulevard when a patrol car intercepted that of a gangster, or presumed gangster? It was true that Jack, while he did have a revolver, did not carry handcuffs about his person, because he was not assigned to such duties, but it was he who gave the orders, just as he had given the order to harass the gays the other evening.

To-day, for Roy's fourth visit, Jack seemed proud to report that, that very night, the police had raided all the gay bars in the city—"There are a hundred and seventy," he asserted; "really rather too many"—in an attempt to intimidate and disperse the clientele. Similarly, his men had been assigned the task of roughing up any gays caught in *flagrante delicto* in the toilets of those bars or in the parks. "If Bradley tells me off again that's just too bad," he added.

Jack was anxious to preserve his reputation as enemy of the gays, even though his behaviour in private was that of an accomplice. "We'll have to put a stop to it," he said, thumping his fist on the table next to his revolver, his badge, the glass of whisky and the Bloody Mary he had just prepared for Roy. Perhaps he also wanted to accentuate for his young companion the privilege one acquired from being on the right side of the barricade, something he himself had already considered carefully, as had Roy. The latter knew, moreover, from the famous television report, that some boys even younger than himself were exposed to such danger from the police, since they were prostitutes who frequented bars of that kind. And besides,

Otis had told him yesterday that the police had been mistreating gays and that the UCLA gay group had joined the Coalition against Police Excesses. The “coalitionists” had organized for the following Saturday a march starting from the lower city, passing in front of the principal prison, within which numerous gays languished, and continuing to McArthur Park, one of the wooded areas of Los Angeles that were snares for their nocturnal frolics. Roy thought it his duty, as member of the school’s clandestine gay group, to tell the police chief about the feeling that these measures were stirring up among young people, who viewed it as an attack on liberty, even when they themselves were not among those who risked suffering the consequences.

“That coalitionist demonstration is a joke,” said Jack. “Any one would think I’m torturing the gays in prison. If my men don’t wait for my orders before roughing them up a little, when they catch them in the act, that’s the natural reaction of normal people faced with things that shock them. The claimed ‘police excesses’ are no more than the enforcement of the law, which prohibits the commission of obscene acts in public places, whatever the sex of the participants. In San Francisco, general councillor Milk managed to get actual gays appointed to the police, and naturally they are more indulgent towards such crimes. But here councillor Amador has not yet gone that far, and I retain all possible means of enforcing respect for the law.”

Jack continued: “Davis, one of my predecessors, and himself the successor of the fiercely anti-gay Parker, made himself a butt for ridicule by taking seriously a ‘slave market’ organized by a Lesbian called Jenny Barney in a gay bath house, Mark IV, in Melrose Avenue. Davis mobilized the entire force, and surrounded the block with police cars; two helicopters watched over the operations; a thousand men were set in motion to arrest sixty or so gays. Davis maintained that this market was a contravention of the 1865 constitutional amendment which abolished slavery forever in the United States. The slaves were unchained, only to be put in handcuffs, as were the slave-lovers.

I was under Davis's command, but I happened to be on leave, and that saved me from being compromised in this punitive expedition. The Lesbian proved that this market had been no more than a prank, and the people became annoyed with the police, especially after learning that the deployment of these forces had cost the city two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Every year since then the gays have put on a 'remembrance party' to commemorate the occasion. But perhaps Davis was right to be alarmed at a slave market; I'm investigating an actual child market, now before the court. It relates to seven girls and one boy, very young, upon whom sexual acts were first performed, and who were subsequently sold in foreign countries. They were Mexicans, but from Los Angeles and San Diego. Meanwhile, I avoid Davis's melodramatic excesses. Gates, my immediate predecessor, was the first chief of police to receive a delegation of gays, just as he received representatives of every minority. I have done the same, which doesn't prevent me from having a firm hand."

Roy enquired what these "Lesbians" might be.

"I beg your pardon!" said the police chief. "What do they teach you at the Beverly Hills high school? Lesbians are women or girls who love women and girls. The term comes from Sappho, the Greek poetess and native of Lesbos, who gave her name to that 'Sapphic' love. American Lesbians have set up a group called the 'Daughters of Bilitis'—alluding to a French literary work that sings of the loves of Lesbians."

"But what do they actually do with each other?" Roy again asked.

"When they are not playing the lyre, they rub their privy parts together," said Jack, "or they make use of artificial *phalli*, called 'dildos'. Vibrators, which you have doubtless heard of, and which sell very well these days, are a kind of truncated dildo. The gays have enlisted the Lesbians in their movement, and the ladies are frequently braver and more brazen than the gentlemen. In New York one of them, Jean O'Leary, co-directress of the National



Gay Workforce, has just been named by mayor Ed Koch as a member of the city commission on the status of women. In New Orleans another Lesbian, Ann Toups, active both in the gay liberation movement and in the women's liberation movement, is advisor to the new Louisiana governor, Ernest Mortal."

Roy, encouraged by the Bloody Mary, ventured to ask the police chief why he dealt so ruthlessly with people who seemed to be acquiring more and more protections by simply demonstrating their abundance. "I don't care if they're protected," said the chief of police. "The more a noxious weed spreads, the more it needs to be rooted out."

"Am *I* not a noxious weed?" asked Roy, puffing at his weed cigarette.

"Come off it!" cried Jack. "You're the little lover of the rooter out."

In spite of his pleasure at the thought—and Jack's pleasure in confirming it to him—that as the police chief's poppet he would always have a kind of immunity, Roy could not comprehend Jack's intransigence. The reasons put forward for respecting the law did not seem to him sufficiently weighty; he did not see how it could be a violation of the law to engage in acts, however reprehensible, in an enclosed space such as the toilets in a bar, or, at night, in an unfrequented spot such as one of Los Angeles's numerous parks. So in his view it was a sign of repressive mania (he would not have dared say this to Jack): the craving to earn a clear conscience. In fact he did not believe the arguments Jack advanced about the things that "should remain the prerogative of an élite" and that "have all the more spice if they are hidden". He would admit, if need be, that Jack might be jealous of some one like Amador, a government official who flaunted his homosexuality, but why persecute unknown persons? He asked for the reason.

"I pursue these unknown persons in order to render them a service," Jack declared, emptying his second glass of whisky. "Almost all of them are humble people who are preparing a

difficult future for themselves. It's not for nothing that the stated aim of one of the gay organizations is 'the prevention of suicide'. In spite of what they think, I am the protector of these people, just as I am the protector of the social order. It isn't disturbed by what *we* do, or by what rich people do, the people above the multitude; but it *is* when the habits or vices of those people are passed on to the masses." Roy saw that Jack was standing by his principle of wishing to restrict the pleasures of homosexuality to the few, which seemed at once ridiculous and illiberal. But he judged it futile to argue any longer.

"In the county prison that the coalition against police excesses will parade past," Jack continued, "there are only poor devils: employees, 'heavies', bar-boys, Mexicans, prostitutes. A fine clientele! Fine rights of man to support! . . . But anyway," he went on, "criminals and lunatics aside, you don't know how far the depravity of certain gays can go, nor the horrible activities they invent in the sexual arena, which, if the truth be told, make them indistinguishable from mental patients."

Roy said that an entire group could not be condemned because of a few individuals, and that without a doubt some men also did dreadful things with women.

"Yes," said Jack, "but the one doesn't excuse the other. There are places, both in Los Angeles and New York, where men exhibit themselves whose anus is so dilated that another man, shaven-headed, can put his head in up to the neck! Or men who stuff into themselves a chain with large links, push it right in, and then pull it out!"

Roy began laughing. "What do such performances have to do with the world of gays?" he asked. "They're acrobatic turns."

"Yes," said Jack, "but performed by acrobats who exist only because there *are* gays. I blame gays not for making a god of the anus, but for rendering it that kind of homage."

"Perhaps rich people enjoy these things," said Roy.

"For the rich," said Jack, "they would be simple pleasantries, piquancies, intended to stimulate the appetite; for the poor they

are abominations. A poor man has only one thing he can call his own: his dignity as a poor man.” The whisky was firing up the police chief’s singular ideas, he was the protector not so much of the social order as of the feudal order.

“It’s because I come from a poor background,” he said, “that I love the rich. When I was at school—the Widney high school, in central Los Angeles—there were days when I ate only apples. The rich—not only do I love them, I also serve them. I save them from prison, even when they’re caught in a park or in the toilets, doing what other gays are in prison for. My men have secret orders to issue as few tickets as possible to luxury cars. I’d like there to be a special lane for Cadillacs, Mercedes and Rolls. The rich should not have to pay income tax; then their money could be put to better use on magnificent buildings and splendour. The glory of French civilization came from the aristocracy, who paid nothing. There should be only consumption tax and company tax. Everything beautiful in southern California comes to us from the rich: the Huntingdon Gallery in Pasadena, the Hearst *château* at San Simeon, the Getty Museum at Malibu. . .

“I regret,” Jack went on, “the fact that I am a Baptist—the church of the poor, the church of president Carter—even though I support this church for being the only one in America to come out against gays. I would have liked to be in the Christian Evangelistic Association, whose head is the reverend Frederick J. Eikerenkoetter II, better known under the name ‘Reverend Ike’, the name also given to president Eisenhower. He has sixteen Rolls, six secondary residences in the United States, and several others around the world. He spends fifty thousand dollars a year on his outfits. To his congregations he preaches the love of God and the love of money combined. ‘Oh! Money, bring me your blessings; you are a marvellous thing!’ That’s the prayer he inculcates.”

Roy was amazed that his father had never told him about this church, which had doubtless arisen later than the era of the book

*Think and Grow Rich* which Roy had been made to read while still a child and which preached a similar doctrine. But in the United States there were so many churches that Mr. Clear might well not know about that one! Besides, he was too wedded to tradition to convert to a new church.

“Look,” said Jack, “since I caught you one evening making your way to Hollywood Boulevard with the idea of earning some money, I’m going to let you earn some from a few rich men I know. Perhaps you can guess, after what I’ve just been saying, that the reason I know them is that thanks to me they didn’t go to prison for homosexual behaviour in public, or for ill-advised relationships with minors such as yourself. One of them is Mr. Teller, the banker, and president of the Bel Air Country Club, whose son Bob was with you at Buckley, and for whom you sometimes act as caddie.” Roy was dumbfounded; he could see himself being a participant in the most extraordinary of gay stories, in that he was going to have sex with the father of a boy who had sodomized him. And so he acquiesced in Jack’s proposals. They had the authority of the chief of police; they presaged money, which he had learned to acquire “no matter by what means”, and they piqued his curiosity, one of his principal qualities.

“Mr. Teller,” Jack went on, “you will approach yourself, in the way I’ll explain to you as I’m taking you home. You will ask him for three hundred dollars, and, after each of your encounters—they will be easier to arrange than our own—you will set aside a hundred dollars for me. That will relieve my own budget, which you rely on. As for the others, I will introduce you to them; the second one is the consul-general with whom I often dine at the Trousdale Estates; the third is Y., superstar of the cinema; and the fourth is X., the great Negro singer. That shows you my trust in you. These men too know that they can have trust in me, and consequently, in you: secrecy is the master of the world. I’ll tell them that they too should give you three

hundred dollars, and every time you see them, you'll give me my hundred dollars: my commission.”

Jack bent down, opened Roy's mouth with his tongue, lifted him, caressed his posterior, lowered his jeans and briefs together, and bore him bare-bottomed to the bed.

## Part Two—Chapter Eight

ROY was keen to ask Otis whether there was a secret Daughters of Bilitis group at the school. “Who on earth told you about them?” asked Otis.

“My mother, when I said something about Don Amador’s talk,” said Roy at random.

“Actually,” said Otis, “you are inspired. Look at those two girls beating each other up: they are both members of the secret Lesbian group.”

It was the lunch hour, but many students had, like Roy and Otis, already left the cafeteria. They watched a short girl, stocky and strong, leap upon another, taller girl, shove her into the staircase, knock her down, claw her, and beat her to a pulp. Then the taller one got up, attacked the other, knocking her down in turn, and banged her head against the steps. Fifty or so boys crowded round, uttering cries of encouragement and laughing themselves silly. For the majority, this was the young males’ revenge on those responsible for stirring up the boys’ quarrels; it was more common to see boys fighting in the schoolyard over girls. And the ones who were aware of the true nature of these girls took even less interest in their motives. But Otis, wishing to save the honour of the two clandestine gay groups, hurled himself into the action, taking along Roy and a few others. They managed to separate the combatants, still fuming with anger. The lunch-hour ended, and spirits became calmer in the classroom. As they left school, Otis won a second victory: in the presence of all he got the two girls to fall into each other’s arms.

“The Bilitis,” he told Roy afterwards, “often have stormy love-affairs. I think the gays are more peaceable.”

“Providing they’re not completely mad,” said Roy.

“Yes, quite so,” said Otis, “but as you yourself have pointed out, there are lunatics everywhere. I am just sorry that gays can’t agree about the big issues, such as Proposition 6 at present. The moment one of them wakes up, all he can think about is starting a new group. Los Angeles has a hundred and eighty-one gay organizations, even more than there are bars. There are only five bars for women, and only three gay groups that admit women. Ramsey tells me everything. I also know that in San Francisco there is intense rivalry between Harvey Milk, the councillor-general, and some one called Paul Hardman, the moving spirit of a group called the Pride Foundation. This last claimed a grant of three hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars for a gay community centre, and Milk opposed it before the finance committee. But still, there *are* exceptions to this passion for rivalry. As you yourself know, the clandestine group at school is very much united: I’ve introduced all the members to you, and although I’m their president, I won’t form a Pride Federation to get a grant. Nor would I ever ask them for money; I’m the one who gives it to them. So they’re the ones truly in charge! The funny thing is that at the UCLA, where the group is official, its statutes don’t permit it to have a president. Ramsey is jealous.”

The boys in the clandestine group, who numbered around sixty, were principally recruited from among the seniors, perhaps because the approach of graduation, which equated to their liberation, made them bolder. So it was an honour for Otis to be their leader even though he was still a junior. Doubtless his wealth and his precociousness had recommended him to all. In accordance with his principles of selection, he had admitted only boys from rich, old or distinguished families. But, so as not to practise gay racialism, he had approved certain blacks whose fathers occupied important positions. One of Roy’s two team-mates, Din Kelly the jeweller’s son, was a member of the group. This stimulated them even more when working. They could eye each other up without calling each other “faggots”.

But, while Roy now knew the Lesbians to whom Otis had introduced him that time, his unease in the presence of a sex that still did not attract him remained. Besides, Otis fraternized with them only at arm's length. On the other hand, he arranged weekly social gatherings of a dozen gays, turn by turn, in the cafeteria, where he paid the bill. Roy attended all these gatherings in the capacity of leader's intimate.

Otis had given him the golden lambda, which he pinned under the belt of his jeans. Some people attached their badge to the interior of a pocket, others inside the flies of their trousers, and others to the back of their tie or on their key-ring, or left it in their wallet.

During this time, Otis distributed to the sixty, one day at a time, a more clandestine object than the group or the badge: it was a rubber plug to be inserted into the anus, where he promised it would generate a delightful titillation. It took the form of a long truncated cone, terminated at the other end by a disc. Every one went off to the school toilets to insert it. There was universal satisfaction. Roy, the first to be served, was, when he came back, obliged to admit that Otis had not been exaggerating. "You'll discover," said the latter, "that it is even lovelier to experience that discreet sensation while you're studying, or in class, or sitting exams. The man who invented it is a genius. It wouldn't be possible to walk around with a dildo in one's *derrière*, or even a vibrator. This plug is like the permanent and secret seal of our gay disposition."

"The great seal of California!" said Roy.

He received the rest of his gay education during the weekly gatherings of the group. He was told which teachers were thought to be gay: the Briggs campaign had little by little prompted them to reveal themselves in order to defend their positions. He knew that a gay should never drink orange juice. This boycott was a reprisal against Anita Bryant, who appeared in television advertisements for Florida orange juice. The gays had thought up this method of forcing the makers of the product



to cancel her contract, and it was said that it would not be renewed in 1979. T-shirts, which could not be displayed at school, bore the inscription "Squeeze a fruit for Anita". Since "fruit" is a slang word for "gay", what one was being invited to make flow in this defiance of the sad Florida heroine was something other than orange juice. These T-shirts matched the briefs bearing images either of two lips around the opening, or of a hand slipping in. À propos of the school T-shirts, which bore the image of a Norman knight, Otis pointed out the amusing fact that the San Francisco gay newspaper was called "The Crusader". "It strikes the right note," he said, "but for our own slogan we should have a double shout: 'Lance to the front! Lance to the rear!'" He would have liked to see it adopted by the school, like the special shout—the "yell"—uttered at athletics competitions. The high school did not have any particular one, while Ramsey favoured the one from his University: "U., rah! rah! rah! C., rah! rah! rah!—L., rah! rah! rah!—A., rah! rah! rah!—UCLA. Fight! Fight! Fight!" The students were true Norman knights.

Ramsey had given Roy some details about gay activity at the university. While Don Amador lectured on homosexuality at three colleges, the University of California at Los Angeles had no cause to be jealous of him; it had appointed a full professor in that field, Gary Steele, but his courses were given only at certain times of the year. He told how he had been initiated at fourteen by his schoolfellows, and without the participation of any teacher. Another bad mark for senator Briggs.

The gay group at the university organized within the precincts a "gay awareness week" and a "sexual awareness week"—analogous to the "gay pride week" taking place outside—dance evenings at the Sunset Canyon recreation centre, conferences (at which the writer Christopher Isherwood and the reverend Troy Perry had spoken. . . ), dinners, beach excursions, winter sports, and meetings with gay groups from other universities affiliated with the Gay Students' Union—GSU. "Let

us praise our courage,” said Ramsey. “Otis has brought together several dozen gays, a promising new crop. In my group, I would seem to be the only one from the Beverly Hills high school, and yet I have dozens of fellow-students—principally from Beverly North—who had those tastes at the school, who still have them, and practise them in secret, but who refuse to identify themselves and join the GSU. They use their family as an excuse, or their *fiancée* or whatever. Ah! American hypocrisy. . .

“Within the same generation,” Otis told his brother, “the space of a few years suffices to produce changes in attitude. I will have been badly misled if the seniors in my group fail you next year.”

In the room they occupied at the Kerckhoff Hall, the UCLA gays took tea and coffee, but alcohol was proscribed. It was not desirable that the gays should exemplify one of the traditional university songs which ran: “*When I am drunk, I am as gay as can be. . .*” The gay students had a library at their disposal, and some gay magazines, entertained the gay staff and, naturally, Lesbian students who officially belonged to their group. But the latter, for their own specific activities, repudiated the Daughters of Bilitis. Although it was a literary name, these ladies joined a different group, more widespread among the universities: the Lesbian Coalition. And besides, just as the University of California at Los Angeles had one telephone number for the gay group, the female students in general and the female staff had another—the UCLA Women’s Resource Centre—where Lesbians were given all the information that could be wished for. . . “even the addresses for dildos,” asserted Ramsey.

The two brothers, even while delighting in Roy’s favours, had the good sense not to turn him into a cocaine addict, and he was grateful to them for that. “It’s best for you to remain a mere dilettante,” Otis said; “that will make it all the more effective for you, as you discovered the other day, and I won’t carry the responsibility of having inflicted a reputedly dangerous habit upon you. What we see around us at school prevents me from

launching you onto a slope that may lead to an abyss; I am too fond of you for that.” In recent days, during the recreation, some boys and girls had passed out, the victims of various drugs. Marijuana, considered harmless—Bill, president Carter’s hare-brained brother, had announced his advocacy of it, and there were committees of intellectuals supporting the “legalization of marijuana”—retained Roy’s preference; he had recognized its relative innocuousness, with Otis’s approval.

Otis had embarrassed him for a moment by asking where he obtained his supply. “From my old friends at Buckley,” Roy had replied.

“Don’t worry about that any more,” said Otis; “I’ll be your supplier—the king’s supplier.” (Roy, partly out of vainglory, and partly for amusement, had told him about his father’s ideas.) Otis had no idea that as drug supplier he was succeeding the Los Angeles chief of police.

## Part Two—Chapter Nine

AT the time of its annual basket-ball tournament, the school conducted a poll which confirmed its claim to be the most stylish in America: the election of one king and queen for all the students, and one prince and princess for each of the four classes. Otis and the gays were thrilled that a king and four princes would be elected; they saw it as a victory for masculinity. In fact until the previous year only a queen and four princesses were chosen. Elegance and charm played a part, but also beauty. Sweet Otis had told Roy “Were it up to me, I’d campaign to have *you* elected king, and not only because of your forename and your royal lineage; but it’s impossible, because you’re new. So rest content at least with your principality.”

Thus, at the same time as King Jay Weiss and Queen Rita Rago, worthy of their titles, Senior Prince David Weber and Senior Princess Leslie Sachs, Junior Prince Mark Kagan and Junior Princess Robbi Marsten (both of them friends of Otis), Second-year Prince Todd Mann and Second-Year Princess Selma Gladney, there were elected “Freshman” Prince Roy Clear and “Frosh”—her jocular appellation—Laura Rogers, a charming petite blonde with a seraphic countenance. Naturally, Manuelito was proud to have propagandized in support of a prince whom he had sucked and who had wanked him off. Otis was delighted. “Next year,” he told Roy, “I will be a senior and I swear to you that you will be the king, even though you will then be just a second-year. I will purchase Beverly South holus-bolus.”

“You worry me,” said Roy, laughing, “no doubt that means you already purchased all the first-years for me.”

“Relax,” said Otis, “it cost me hardly more than if I had got them to wank me off at Manuelito’s rate.”

The queen's principal rival had been another, still more exquisitely beautiful senior, Penelope Webster, in whom Roy felt a certain interest, since when they met she always gave him a tenderly intrusive look. She lived at Benedict Canyon, not far from his home. She would certainly have been elected, were it not that Rita Rago's two older sisters had been queen in the two preceding years, and the third had benefited from the students' tendency to create a dynasty. In any case, Penelope, with much grace and urgency, had been anxious to congratulate Roy.

The "freshman" Gordon Swan, whom he had beaten by a whisker, and who would assuredly have been elected on his merits but for Otis's intervention with Beverly South, would also have come close to Roy in a competition for beauty and elegance. He was the favourite of the group known as the "Watch-tower", certain members of which were assigned the task of photographing, through the entire school year, striking students and events, so as to provide illustrations for the *Year-Book*, which also went by the name *Watch-tower*. The preparation of this book, for the students a valued souvenir, and especially for those due to leave the school at year's end with their graduate diploma, was regarded as class-work, awarded ten "credits"—the maximum number of points awardable for each subject—and resulted in a veritable work of art. Otis said that Gordon Swan was a perfect "cock-teaser", but an unconscious one—he was not gay—since he wore soft velvet trousers in extravagant colours, and pointed shoes, and he combed his long blond hair over one eye. He had started a fashion of gold and silver jackets, bearing in relief on one sleeve the name of a brand of motor-car. These jackets were the latest craze at the school; Otis had bought two with the legend Mercedes-Benz, one for himself and one for Roy. The girls were no less anxious to attract the attention of both the *Watch-tower* group and their fellow-students. Julie Semel, chair-woman of the students' chamber of representatives, wore a new T-shirt almost every day;

certain others made themselves conspicuous with the originality of their *coiffure* or the appeal of their sheaths.

As well, both boys and girls took up eccentricities which, for Roy when he copied them, were yet another repudiation of his old Buckley uniform: they would wear two shirts, one over the other, hanging outside their jeans; two or three pairs of socks, of various lengths; different coloured trainers.

These pleasures of the young rich, which could not be copied by all their school-fellows—those who did not, as a rule, enjoy access to the clean drinking-fountain in the corridor—had their opponents. Often collections were held for charities, or for cults, and Beverly North was generous. On Christmas Eve, Julie Semel took a group of students to visit a primary school in Albion Street, in the Los Angeles Chinatown, one of the poorest in the city, and two Father Christmases (Tony David and Jeff Cohen) distributed more than five hundred dollars' worth of presents to the children.

As well as the addicts, public or secret, at the school, as well as those who came back cured after a disintoxication course and no longer thought about it, as well as those who at once relapsed, there were those who became apostles of healing. This youthful fervour seemed natural, since it was found in all spheres of activity: clubs lacking an exclusive theme devoted a great deal of enthusiasm to the enrolment of new members, which of course meant new subscriptions. And the clandestine gay group, in truth an unregistered club, was no less ardent about recruitment, with the discretion necessitated by the conformism, or rather hypocrisy, of the great majority.

Otis and Roy came to know of the missionary activities of former addicts through a second-year gay student who had dedicated himself to this ministry. This boy, Nick Stevens, was one of the few group members not to live in Beverly North, and he was one of its few blacks—a very good tennis player, incidentally, like the school's junior ace, Jerome Jones, another

black. He said that his father and mother had been addicts as well, that he had been introduced to drugs within his family, as were his sister and his elder brother, and that they had all been saved by Dr. Charles E. Dederich, founder of the Synanon cult, which Otis and Roy had heard spoken about in their families. This gentleman, of German origin, having come to Los Angeles from Ohio, and having himself shaken off drugs, had been a member of the “Alcoholics Anonymous”, which numbered two hundred thousand former drunkards. Then he went through an LSD disintoxication process at the University of California at Los Angeles, stopped smoking, and finally, around 1960, created his own treatment centre for all forms of intoxication: the “Tender Loving Care Club”, which became the Synanon, a word that evokes the idea both of community and of anonymity, like the “Alcoholics Anonymous”. Then the association took a religious turn, so as to gain the right to the fiscal advantages reserved for cults, and its founder proclaimed himself its Messiah. Having begun with a weekly unemployment benefit cheque of thirty-three dollars, he to-day controlled millions, with aeroplanes, boats, institutions in Southern California (in Santa Monica and in Tulare county, near the Sierra Nevada), in Northern California (at San Francisco and in the counties of Marin and Alameda), as well as on the other side of the Sierra in Arizona, at Lake Havasu City. His cures were undeniable, just as was his ability to inspire donations from his clients, who became his congregation: one Los Angeles woman alone, Mrs. Garrett, a friend of the Clears, had given him over a million dollars, and a friend of the Zs., Mr. Siegel, had made him the proprietor of his firm “Reliable Mortgage”.

Nick added a few details to this information: for example, that Dederich had formed a team, called the “punks”, devoted to the education of delinquent children, and that he had returned six hundred and fifty of them to the path of righteousness. The young Negro showed them a kind of gospel that Chuck—Dederich’s nickname—had made them learn by heart:

“Chuck is very handsome and very rich. . . Chuck is strong enough to fight before the courts against an entire country. . . Chuck has men who will sacrifice their existence for him. . . Chuck can tell a thousand people what they should do and say. . . Wherever Chuck has been, everything is going better.” This praise of Chuck’s riches reminded Roy of the reverend Ike of the Association of United Christian Evangelists, so admired by the police chief. Nick admitted that despite the ministrations, and despite the teachings of the catechism, many children had fled the cult’s institutions, and had complained about “ill treatment” to the sheriffs of the cities in which those institutions were located. That had prompted investigations by the police or the department of health, which had come to a sudden end because Chuck had a host of lawyers and judicial advisors whose vigilance defended the cult’s reputation against this calumny, as they called it. So they declared that the fugitives’ allegations were just the work of little delinquents and not to be trusted. Otis said that he still suspected that most of those who founded cults were crafty debauchees who assembled harems for themselves under the flag of religion. Nick maintained that, for his part, he had observed nothing of that kind. He did however confirm that Chuck required couples to change their partners, as a form of regeneration. He added that Chuck, in a press conference held after the visit from the department of health inspectors, had boasted about “confronting them with investigations of matters about which they had not the least inkling, in order to prove that they practised sodomy and even bestiality.”

What Nick told his two friends appeared each day more and more extraordinary. The followers of the cult were informed about it solely by way of bulletins aimed at proving to them the invulnerability of their leader; he did not shrink from any means of defending himself. Not content with his lawyers, he had also a military group, the “Imperial Marines”, provided with an arsenal worth three hundred thousand dollars. Otis saw there the elements of a dictatorship in miniature. Moreover, after being



bothered by the press and television, which were beginning to show rather too much interest in him, Chuck set up a special organization—the Synanon committee for American media responsibility—devoted to terrorizing them. Chuck himself openly told journalists that he would cut off their ears and keep the said ears in a jar of alcohol in his office, and would “break their bones in a way that would inspire his people”. At that point, he started legal proceedings against a major adversary: the magazine *Time*, from which he claimed seventy-five million dollars for defamation. He also attacked the *San Francisco Examiner*, an organ of the Hearst press, from which he demanded two million dollars for an article entitled “Synanon, the racket of the century”. Otis and Roy would have liked to visit his head-quarters in Santa Monica. Nick strongly advised them not to: Chuck’s attitude to the curious was fearsome. He would not cut off their ears, but he might well bore them to death.

Against *Time* he had unleashed a “holy war”. The magazine’s editor in chief, Hedley Donovan, and his co-workers received every day floods of threatening letters, directed also to their wives and children. They received promises to rid the United States of their “vermin” and assertions that they “had nothing too big to be sodomized”. There had been a bomb scare, which led to the evacuation of the forty-eight storey building housing their offices. Donovan, returning from a trip to Europe, was denounced to the customs as carrying a bag of jewels and drugs, and was subjected to a humiliating search. Having escaped the attentions of the customs, he requested police protection.

Otis and Roy, after Nick had eagerly told them about the fantastic battle Chuck was waging against one of the great journals of the United States, were in the end inclined to find this man astonishing enough, and accorded him a minimum of sympathy. Otis, however, thought his behaviour was unspeakable and amounted to an attack on liberty of expression worthy of what senator Briggs and Anita Bryant had would have wished for in relation to gays. But, once he learned that Chuck had just

forbidden procreation among his followers and required them all to have a vasectomy, he begged Nick to break with such a man, Messiah though he might be. In fact a boy from the medical club explained for them the significance of this operation, which consisted in raising the excretory vessel of the testicles. Nick, who valued his vessel, was very much in agreement with Otis. He confessed that his parents were already making preparations to leave the cult, but that Chuck was holding a kind of hostage, his elder sister, and refused to restore her to them. So Otis said he would ask his father's advice about liberating this girl and preventing the vasectomies. It was the most important service he had yet had to provide as president of the school's clandestine gay group.

Mr. Z. provided the name of a lawyer, Paul Morantz, to whom he had explained the situation, and who was keen to make a stand against the Synanon cult. Other boys and girls at the school, also from Beverly South, were, with their families, under Chuck's thumb. "What a lot of spermatic vessels will be grateful to us!" said Otis. "We're still on the path of righteousness: beside the beautiful stream of spunk."

## Part Two—Chapter Ten

IT goes without saying that on Saturdays young Z. delivered neither newspapers nor handbills, whether by bicycle or by Mercedes, to earn his pocket-money. No more did he perform the role of caddie at the Hillcrest Country Club, of which his father was president, and he retrieved tennis balls nowhere. Roy's friendship with Otis had helped Roy to distance himself from his father, who was hoping, moreover, to profit from this friendship by building up a useful relationship with the Zs. Roy, however, continued to deliver the *Beverly Hills Courier* and the handbills, so as to account for the source of his pocket-money, but he excused himself henceforth from the other services, saying that Otis's generosity made up for them. He would, nevertheless, in accordance with the plan worked out with Jack, return at least once to the Bel Air Country Club to make a conquest of Mr. Teller. This prospect had him bubbling over with excitement.

Once again, as with Bob and Jim, he had the sensation of being the stronger one, since it was he who was about to prevail. To discover, as the ruling power, the other side of society, fascinated him, and all the more because of the prospect of gaining a great deal of money. It appeared to him that the substantial profits would raise him to Otis's financial level. His intimate relations with the last-mentioned, and to a lesser degree with Ramsey, had, as they developed, somewhat altered his evaluation of what he enjoyed with Jack. He had found that boys of more or less his own age inspired in him the same experience of pleasure as a mature man. But that was because refined manners, superior intelligence and liberty of spirit compensated for the absence of remuneration. Nonetheless, apart from the motive of interest, a man—and Roy imagined Mr. Teller as a

second Jack—possessed in his eyes the advantage of an organ whose dimensions would add to his delight. And finally, what fun to seduce the president of the Bel Air Country Club, while having as best friend one of the sons of the president of the Hillcrest Country Club!

Things worked out wonderfully well on the first Saturday he went to the Bel Air: Mr. Teller was playing his round alone. Roy felt the same emotion as the time he had sneaked out of the paternal home to go down to Hollywood Boulevard. Yet he well knew that this afternoon he was crossing the Rubicon. He had decided that the tenth hole would be the place. So, pumping up his courage as Mr. Teller was raising his club to hit the ball, he said in a low but distinct voice: “Mr. Teller, if you like, I can have sex with you, but you’ll need to give me three hundred dollars.”

The banker, whose face was already flushed, paused a moment with his club in the air, and turned purple, as though he was close to having a stroke. He mishit the ball, and said “What right have you to talk to me like that, you little wretch? Do you want me to tell your father what you said?”

“You won’t do that, Mr. Teller,” said Roy, “because I will swear to him that it was you who offered me three hundred dollars to screw me . . . and he’ll believe it.”

The coarse word he had just uttered excited Roy himself, and seemed suddenly to have excited Mr. Teller. Yet the president still attempted to preserve his honourability, if not his wallet. “It’s incredible, quite incredible!” he exclaimed. “A boy of your age, with your education! a former schoolfellow of my son! to use such language! There are no children any more.” This time he managed to hit the ball into the hole.

“It is precisely because I am what you say,” continued Roy, “that you cannot refuse me. Never in your entire life will a boy like me offer you his bum for three hundred dollars.” Roy had the clear impression that his aggressive utterance of that word was continuing to tantalize Mr. Teller. The president of the Bel

Air Country Club had evidently never imagined the possibility of hearing “such language” here, and it was used by a boy from the best Beverly North society. Roy saw this very exceptional conversation as his revenge for the pleasantries his mother’s fiscal misfortunes had inspired among the Tellers.

He realized that he had prevailed when, between the tenth and eleventh holes, Mr. Teller said: “Why is it to me rather than any one else that you address this improper proposition?”

“Because I’ve seen from where you look that you like boys.”

“Where I look!” said Mr. Teller. “Where I look is where everybody looks.”

“Not exactly,” said Roy. “And your little pats on the backside?”

“Completely innocent pats,” said Mr. Teller.

“None the less they were enough to give me these ideas,” said Roy.

This remark, which Mr. Teller appeared to find charming, ended the debate. “Good,” he said. . . . “Can I rely on your discretion?”

“As much as I can rely on your own,” replied Roy. The round continued, but not the conversation.

“Phew!” said Mr. Teller at the eighteenth hole. “I won’t do thirty-six to-day. You’ve taken the wind out of my sails.” He went on quickly: “The day after to-morrow, Lincoln day, Bob and his mother are going to watch the tennis tournament at Griffith Park. Come to my house at four, as though you were coming to see Bob.”

## Part Two—Chapter Eleven

LINCOLN day, that is to say the anniversary of his birth, fell on a Sunday that year, but it was usual in such a case to move the official holiday to the following day. That then gave students an extra twenty-four hours of holiday. The newspapers had related the intransigence of the French consul-general at Los Angeles, who, during the time when de Gaulle was president of the Republic, refused to allow the joint celebration of the July 14th holiday, which that year fell on a Saturday, to be moved to the Monday. The mayor had taken pains to point out to him that this was the procedure followed for the principal American holidays, but the French representative insisted upon making a diplomatic incident out of it. Mr. Aglion, who had arranged the twinning of Bordeaux with Los Angeles, was on the point of threatening to untwin them. In order to respond with a courteous gesture to so much Gallic *hauteur*, the mayor agreed to put himself out and indeed to put every one out on the Saturday to have ceremonies for the French national holiday in front of the town hall. And the consul-general could telegraph the Elysée to report that he had brought America to its knees.

Mr. Clear, being a plain and simple American, moaned about the excessive number of holidays in the government schools of California. Every month there was a three-day week-end. "It is fortunate," said John, "that St. Valentine's day falls on the same Monday to which Lincoln day has been moved; otherwise the schools would have had yet another holiday." Mrs. Clear was tolerant towards St. Valentine's; she still had a drawer full of "Valentines" which her daughter used to send to her suitors, the "Valentins". (The previous day Roy had given Otis one of these cards, adorned with a heart. He had also given one to the first-year princess, Laura Rogers.) Mr. Clear was gratified that

the communal administration of Beverly Hills had declined to announce holidays when the two democratic presidents Truman and Johnson died, a decision that had saved the city more than ten thousand dollars. Despite that, Ronald Reagan, the governor of California when Truman died, had declared a day of mourning.

This Monday, Roy, happy to have a sleep in, noted that not all work stopped on Lincoln day; the gardeners who came two mornings each week to mow and water the lawns—they were businesses confined entirely to Beverly Hills—had woken him for a brief moment, and then he dozed off again, taking the fact that he had a full erection as a favourable omen for his personal employment in the afternoon. He woke again when the gardeners began raking the sand on the paths. He also heard the sound of tennis-balls, struck by the rackets of two children in the garden of the house opposite, and the cries of another child in the garden next door. There *were* still children, whatever Mr. Teller might say, but he, Roy, was no longer a child. Jack had noted that well on the occasion of their first meeting. He thought of Lincoln—a milder version of “Linkhorns”, just as Roosevelt was the hardened form of “Rossocampo”—to whom were owed this holiday and a great deal more: it was because that great man had emancipated the Negroes that now the gays could be emancipated. More than a hundred years had been needed to progress from one emancipation to the next.

Mrs. Clear was astounded, at half past three, to see Roy come down from his room in his Buckley uniform. “Where are you going?” she asked.

“I’m just going to see Bob,” he replied, “and it will amuse him if I wear my uniform again.” In reality he was certain it would stimulate Mr. Teller.

In his beautiful Rodeo Drive house the banker had taken precautions: he himself opened the door. He was the image at once of desire and of fear. He took Roy immediately up to his bedroom, and locked the door. The relatively narrow bed

showed that he slept apart, as for that matter did Mr. and Mrs. Clear. On the furniture stood framed photographs of his wife, his married children, and Bob. That bothered his visitor a little, more than it appeared to bother the host.

Mr. Teller sat down in an arm-chair, leaving Roy standing in front of him, as though for an interrogation. "Your father," he said, "belongs to the society for Americans of royal lineage."

"And I've been elected prince of the first-years at the Beverly Hills high school," said Roy, adding that this election had given his father and mother great pleasure, not to mention his sister. He did not go on to say that this flattering office, together with Otis's friendship, had amply consoled them for his departure from the Buckley school. It was the first time he had spoken his new title aloud outside his home, and he found the circumstance agreeably caustic. His supporters and his lovely Otis would certainly not have expected his symbolic crown to be used to enhance the value of the contractile crown he held between his buttocks.

"I congratulate you," said Mr. Teller. "As for myself, I am a *Chevalier du Tastevin*, a member of the Plantagenet society, and of the society of descendants of the very noble order of Jarretière." He paused, as though to allow Roy to reflect upon the importance of his titles, the most significant of which he had cited first. He went on: "My wife, like my mother, is a Daughter of the American Revolution. What is more she belongs to the *Dames de la Magna Carta* and to the order of Saint Brigitte of Sweden. Perhaps it was all these resemblances that prompted me to invite you. So, are you ready to indulge in the fantasies that you presume me to cherish?"

"I believe, Mr. Teller," said Roy, "that among men of the same world everything is natural. Nothing can lower us, and it is for the one or the other to take the first step in matters that are the concern of us alone." He was proud of having improvised this chain of reasoning, which seemed to be equal to Mr. Teller's *snobisme*.



“Tell me,” the latter went on, “have you ever had sexual relations with Bob?”

“Never,” responded Roy, not wishing to betray his friend.

“Are you really capable of holding your tongue?” the banker asked again.

“As you may imagine,” said Roy, “it’s impossible to have relations of this kind if one is not capable of keeping silent.”

“Have you had sex with a man before?”

“No,” said Roy, proving to himself that not only did he know how to keep silent, but that henceforth he knew how to lie. He had come a long way since the time when he had so ingenuously responded to the questions put to him by a stranger one skateboarding night—a stranger thanks to whom he found himself in this room. He added, “But I have a longing to be possessed, and you are my choice, Mr. Teller. I discovered this pleasure by myself, with one finger, then two fingers.”

“It’s incredible,” said the banker, beginning to warm up. “Such precocity, in a boy so ravishing! Why are you not attracted to your schoolfellows?”

“Precisely because I don’t believe they are capable of secrecy, nor do they have enough money. I want a sum proportional to what I am offering.” He turned around and lifted the back of his jacket to display his backside, nicely brought out under the grey trousers.

“You’re driving me wild,” said Mr. Teller, motioning him to come closer. He eagerly caressed the spheres that he had so often patted. “How many times have I dreamed of doing what I am going to do to you!” he said. “Something incredible has happened to us. This meeting will be only the first of a long relationship. But you hardly ever come to the club now.”

“I can come to your house every Saturday, if you like,” said Roy.

“That certainly won’t be possible,” said Mr. Teller. “But, as long as I know in advance, I can arrange to be free from time to time, as I am to-day for example, by sending Bob and my wife

off somewhere and dismissing the servants. Telephone me on a Friday at the bank and I will let you know how things stand. I'll give you my direct number in a moment. You can only reach me at the office."

It was the opposite to Jack. "And you'll give me three hundred dollars each time?" asked Roy, as Mr. Teller was unzipping him.

The president of the Bel Air Country Club posed the same question as the police chief: "But what do you want to do with all that money?"

"I'll keep it somewhere safe until I'm eighteen and can open a bank account," said Roy, "or a savings bank account at sixteen. It will be a little nest-egg that will allow me to buy a nice car, for example. I'll say I've won it at bingo." This lottery game, the most popular one in the United States, but until now banned in California, had recently been legalized on condition that the profits went to a church or a charity.

"Little streams make great rivers," said Mr. Teller, applying his lips to Roy's phallus, which was extremely stiff and on the verge of erupting. And the one the banker produced in no way disappointed Roy's expectations.

Mr. Teller spread a bath-towel on the costly rug that covered the centre of the carpet, arranged Roy thereon face downwards, licked his *derrière* comprehensively, munched at it, anointed the orifice with lube, and then, with a great lustful cry, entered him.

## Part Two—Chapter Twelve

THE Synanon cult was not the only one to cause a stir at the high school. There was also the Church of the People's Temple, founded at around the same time, but especially well represented in San Francisco. However it did have many members in Los Angeles, where it ran a property office in Crenshaw Boulevard and a house of prayer. The founder, the reverend Jim Jones, had become a political force thanks to his twenty thousand followers, the majority of whom were Negroes. He had campaigned with Mrs. Carter during the last presidential elections, was proud of having retained her friendship, and had contributed to the success of George Moscone, the liberal mayor of San Francisco. In gratitude the mayor had appointed him head of the housing department. Like Dederich, Jones claimed to be the new Messiah. Like Jesus he required people to renounce everything and follow him: they had to sell their homes and pool all their worldly goods, under his direction. He was already worth five million dollars. But this acquisitive side did not deter his flock from speaking of him with enthusiasm. The famous black communist activist Angela Davis, who taught at the University of California at San Diego, often preached at the People's Temple.

One of the girls at school, Ruth Medlock, a classmate of Otis's, was a member of this cult; she was an ardent propagandist for it and distributed handbills. Among those she importuned, who, like her and the Synanon members at the school, were from Beverly South, there was not a single gay. Nonetheless Ruth kept Otis and Roy informed about what went on in this church. As members of the gay minority, every organized religious minority interested them. They were keen to learn about how they worked and to follow their progress. But these spiritual aims almost invariably appeared to them to be

concealing something else. They were looking out for the aberration that would seize up the machine, as was happening at that precise moment at Synanon.

When Roy started at the high school he had been struck by the general indifference to religious matters, and so he was amused to find out, little by little, how much activity these cults inspired, as though, through the act of breaking away from the mainstream churches, young people had made themselves ready to embrace the secondary churches, simply from seeing them take form before their eyes. He had not had this experience at Buckley; the cults did not venture into the school.

Ruth said that Jones, to retain his adherents, made them confess to imaginary crimes, and even made them steal in order to contribute to the coffers their ill-gotten gains. She admired these ordeals, accepted in the name of the faith. Sinners were publicly whipped. Rumours circulated that the Messiah—perhaps Ruth said this to titillate Otis and Roy—had sexual relations with women and children so as to bring them the pleasure of making love with God. But she assured them that she herself had never been invited to these celestial weddings.

While in Los Angeles no disputes arose concerning the People's Temple, the same could not be said for San Francisco, where a series of incidents kept Jones busy. He accused the FBI of bringing him into conflict with the Black Panthers, the celebrated leftists based in Oakland, but in fact it was former members of his own cult that he blamed for the bomb-throwings and unspeakable acts performed in and around his place of residence. And so he decided to leave the country with a group of his followers and go to a place near Jamestown, the capital of the new republic of Guyana, the advanced principles of which accorded with his own. He was at present creating there the town of Jonestown. But his Los Angeles offices continued their efforts to persuade local sympathizers to sell their property and send him the proceeds, even if this meant they had to join him there. Otis congratulated Ruth on having got rid of her Messiah.

She had tears in her eyes, but this was not solely due to the thought of Jones's departure; it was because he had taken with him Ruth's beloved, Ken Morris, a high-school senior, with his parents, who had become zealots. She regretted not having been able to follow their example, and was waiting only for her majority before flying off to Jonestown.

However, when she told Otis that her grandparents, Wade and Marble Medlock, had been forced by Jones to sell their Baldwin Hills home, and another in Los Angeles, where they had tenants, and that he had threatened to have them killed if they did not obey him, she acknowledged that her enthusiasm for the Church of the People's Temple had diminished. Persuasion she would accept, but not death threats. Again Otis unhesitatingly took up his role of saviour. It was not possible to engage the lawyer Paul Morantz to take on Jones while he was already occupied with the formidable Chuck. But after this advocate had been consulted by Mr. Z., Otis urged Ruth's grandparents to refer the matter to the assistant prosecutor of the district, Lee Cogan, giving his father's name as reference.

The followers of another pastor, likewise represented at the school, were beginning to get tired of being fleeced. The Universal Church of God, based at Pasadena, near Los Angeles, was worth eighty million dollars. Some members accused their leader, the almost ninety-year-old Herbert Armstrong, and those who advised him, of squandering many millions of dollars annually on beanfeasts, gifts, travel, and every kind of extravagance, rather than proselytizing. A case was pending at the High Court of Los Angeles.

Otis and Roy were left perplexed by this propensity of the Californians towards throwing themselves into the arms of the first crank or crook that came along. To explain it, one teacher at the school cited Emma Harding, a historian of spiritualism, who attributed the success of these cults on the Pacific coast "to the remarkable transparency of the air, to the mineral magnetism emanating from the gold mines, and to the continuing influence

of the old pioneers". Otis was less philosophical. "In short," he said, "besides the white-collar criminals, there are the criminals in chasubles, in so far as these false Messiahs are failed priests. One advantage of Judaism is that it is impossible for such figures to be created in its heart. All these men enriched themselves on the pretext of making poor people happy. They remind me of Black Bart, called the 'gentleman of the highway', photographs of whom appear in books about old California: he wore a bowler, a morning-coat, an overcoat with satin lining, was scrupulously polite to those he stole from, and sent poems to the employees of the postal wagons he attacked. Incidentally, I thought of him recently when a gangster, near Los Angeles, entered a private house and stole jewels, furs and money while threatening the occupants with a revolver, but said he would take their Mercedes only to escape, and would abandon it two blocks away. He was true to his word. Black Bart was given away by a laundry mark on a handkerchief he dropped in the course of one of his enterprises. I have the impression that the founders of Synanon, the Church of the People's Temple and the Universal Church of God have just dropped their handkerchiefs."

Roy said that these founders of Californian cults, and even these recent reactions, reminded him more of a story his father had told him about a Los Angeles citizen, fifty years old, called Emil Drake, the record holder for marriages: he had successively married, under different names, more than thirty rich women, each time stripping them of their fortune. Unlike the hero of Chaplin's film *Monsieur Verdoux*, who, like Bluebeard, did away with his wives, Mr. Drake himself vanished. He had always been a perfect husband, and boasted that none of his wives had ever asked for a divorce, nor even expressed the least anger upon learning that she had been deceived.

Otis remarked that, while it might be possible to explain the mentality of the cult founder, it was more difficult to comprehend that of the disciple. He believed not in the notorious "brainwashing", but in a magnetism indisputably

emitted by certain men, rather than generated by certain places. He found, among those who followed such men, a thirst for mysticism, an hereditary taste for slavery (hence the sizeable number of blacks), a need for security which did not prevent them from impoverishing themselves for the sake of the cult, and the desire in many to escape solitude and fear, by trusting the care of their destiny to a guide.

In making this analysis of the cults, he made exceptions of two of them, both of which had connections with the school and seemed to him to be more serious: the Church of Scientology, whose aim was mental health and which rested upon a whole theory of the relationship between the physical universe and the spiritual universe (it was an improved version of the already hundred-year-old Christian Science cult, which had a church in Beverly Hills), and the Church of Unification, founded by the reverend Sun Lyung Moon. Otis had been delighted when Colonel Pak, a collaborator of Moon, had defended him before the American congress against attacks by the leftist member Parker, and when quite recently the federal department of justice, through the Attorney-General Benjamin R. Civiletti, had recognized the complete freedom enjoyed by the cult members. The reports they published, into which errors had crept, such as the eulogy of the late pastor Luther King, false apostle of peace, and the apophthegms from the late French writer André Malraux, sometime commander of Spanish red brigades, did attest to a genuine spirituality, applied to the safeguarding of society. Mr. Clear too held this church in high regard because of its conservative approach.

Apropos of Luther King, who was, with John Kennedy, a political idol in the United States, Roy admired Otis's independence of spirit. One of the school clubs, the Cultural Conscience Fraternity ("a rather pompous name", said Otis), had in January, in the school's Little Theatre, arranged a great celebration in memory of the appalling pastor, beneath an immense photograph of him. Otis had dared to dampen the

enthusiasm of the succession of speakers. He said that of course he approved of the ideals championed by King, but that he deprecated his methods, that he detested violence, which only generated more violence, that reforms should come from the élite and not from the masses, that demagogues were the scourge of contemporary society and that if they were assassinated that was not sufficient reason either to excuse them or to idolize them. Any one but Otis would have been called a Fascist.



## Part Two—Chapter Thirteen

GLADYS, Roy's sister, was visiting Beverly Hills. She had married a young naval officer, at present an instructor at Camp Pendleton, one of the American naval bases on the Pacific, where recruits were trained following a period at San Diego. Jeff, her husband, had been detained by his duties, but she had brought along her two-year-old daughter Ellen, who filled the house with her babbling, her dolls, her balls and her go-carts. Roy, like the Siamese cat, enjoyed playing with her, and in this way rediscovered his own child-soul. Mr. Clear found his son-in-law's occupation the most enviable of any, and he would have liked Roy to follow the same path. Photographs of his cruises with wife and family, very young at the time, were the most numerous of those lining the corridors. For years he had owned a clipper, anchored at Marina, one of the county's ports, and in the *Blue Books* for those years the Los Angeles Yacht Club brought the list of his clubs to a glorious conclusion. His magnificent photograph in the arrogant uniform of a naval officer still stood on the commode in his room, under the glass of which was displayed his auxiliary's diploma in "law enforcement".

Roy was very close to his sister. Tall, beautiful and free-spirited, for him she had been an example of emancipation, and he was sorry that her visits to Beverly Hills were not more frequent. She too seemed to rediscover her child-soul here: she had her teddy bear, her fluffy rabbit and lots of books. But, like Roy, she had cast off childhood relatively quickly. Recently he happened to glance through an album in which, for Gladys's last birthday at Buckley, her classmates had recorded their greetings. He was not surprised that she had not shown it to him. On one page there was a sketch of her, upon which a boy had quoted her

as saying "I would like to be screwed a million times." Another boy had crossed out "I would like to be screwed" and replaced it with "I've been screwed". "A million times", thought Roy, for whom this word "screw" recalled Bob's ardent enthusiasm for Gladys, "that's a considerable exaggeration." Her misdeeds must have been rare at Buckley. But from the time she had been a university student, he possessed, in her tablets, the proof that she was leading a very active love-life. Probably virginity was no longer insisted upon in marriage. Moreover it was she who had given Roy his first lesson in comparative physiology, by showing him her vagina: the sight had left him cold, and full of perplexity. Since his initiation into sodomy, Roy, who would have blushed to consider such a point in relation to his mother, had wondered whether Gladys had ever been sodomized. In view of the fantastic excitement this pleasure gave him, he wanted her to experience it, and he also wondered whether she knew about the delights of masturbation, but he would not have dared mention them to her; that would have meant making a personal confession.

Each time his daughter came to visit, Mr. Clear asked her for news of president Nixon. Nixon originally came from southern California, and had purchased a residence at San Clemente, near Camp Pendleton, which he had converted into a summer White House. He had retired there after his dismissal, and lived there in almost complete solitude, devoted to writing his memoirs. John Clear, on the recommendation of former governor Reagan, had paid him a visit which he considered the most memorable day of his life. He was mesmerized by this man, all of whose views he shared; his grim anti-Communism that had led to his unmasking of the Sovietic spy Alger Hiss, agent of the secretaryship of state, his plans for reduction of public expenditure, his plan for energy, etc. He likewise admired in him the man who had twice made the USSR back down, first by preventing it from attacking China, and then by preventing it from intervening against Israel. He praised him just as much for

having instituted the politics of *rapprochement* with the two communistic superpowers, thus ending the “cold war” and expanding United States trade. He deplored the fact that Nixon had got bogged down in the Watergate affair to the point of having lost his face and his position. But he prided himself on having remained faithful to a man whose voice, according to a recent poll, eighty per cent. of Americans never wanted to hear again.

Gladys’s husband was just as resolute a republican as John, but she was a democrat. Her liberalism had frequently been the cause of arguments with her father. If she had managed to stand up to him, it was because she had always been a brilliant student, as her success at the examination for the Children of the American Revolution had demonstrated. Roy admired her all the more for combining her freedom, not only of spirit but also of conduct, with a love of study, and he tried to copy her.

He was stunned when, from the Saks shop in Wilshire Boulevard, she brought back a boy doll, the latest offspring of the Barbie doll family, two examples of which she kept even here; it was called “gay Bob”. The name delighted Roy because of Bob Teller. Gladys said she had read a report about this product in an article in *Time*, where the inventor, Harvey Rosenberg, explained that his homosexual doll was “a cross between Paul Newman and Robert Redford”. “Gay Bob” was, like the other dolls of this kind, constructed out of articulated plastic pieces, but possessed an organ that could be moved to every position—and Gladys did not hesitate to do so. He had an ear-ring, long eye-lashes, and an agreeable facial expression. The closet he was kept in—calling to mind the term “closet queen”, meaning in the United States a secret homosexual—held his sport clothing, his city clothing, his work clothing, his pyjamas, his ties, his shirts, his shoes and a little fur mattress upon which he could be laid down to sleep. “I like it best when he sleeps naked,” said Gladys.

Kathy had been unable to suppress a scream of laughter, but John had been scandalized. "Gay Bob" seemed to him an official recognition of the existence of gays in family life, and an encouragement of children to become one. He had no hesitation in repeating Anita Bryant's "Save our children!". "Soon," he said, "gay Bob" will make an appearance in the dolls' palace at Disneyland, presumably with a room-mate, and God only knows what they'll be made to do."

"Don't worry," said Gladys. "The dolls' palace was funded by the Bank of America, which certainly won't put money into the campaign against Proposition 6."

An argument about this point began between her and her father, to Roy's delight; he had discovered in his sister an uncompromising ally. It seemed likely that she had guessed his tastes, or at least his predispositions, and that she was anxious to back them up. Never had he found her so likeable. At that moment he was certain that, even though she was pregnant again, she must love being sodomized. Like brother like sister. And when Mr. Clear declared that voting for senator Briggs's initiative was an obligation, Gladys retorted that she was resolved to vote against it, and half won her mother over, which added to Roy's pleasure. She made no secret of the fact that her husband shared her father's view, and added that perhaps women understand certain things better than men.

"I'm sure that Nixon will vote for Proposition 6," said Mr. Clear.

"But you must be aware," said Gladys, "that Reagan will vote against it. And Reagan is more in the main stream than Nixon, who has been put out to grass."

Roy hastened to chime in with his sister on this point, so as to act in accordance with Otis's recommendation at least once. "My schoolmates," he said, "are very impressed by Reagan's attitude. Neither they nor their parents are gay, which goes without saying, but be they republicans or democrats, they are

all liberals, and see only the anti-libertarianism in Proposition 6.”

“I too am a liberal,” cried Mr. Clear. “Who in our times could not be? But we no longer know where this crazy gay liberation road we’re being dragged along will end. An Ohio arbitrator has just ruled that a company must fund a sex-change operation for any female employee who wanted to become a man!”

“I’ve read that arbitrator’s judgement,” said Gladys, “and it seemed quite reasonable to me. He stated that the employee’s health costs were the company’s responsibility, that the term ‘health’ was not clearly defined, and that the sex-change operation could be included if physical and mental health is associated with that change.”

“In that case,” said Mr. Clear, “you will evidently approve of the Seattle supreme court when it annulled the dismissal of a government employee who, conversely, dressed as a woman, even took a woman’s name, and campaigned for gays. What is more he was awarded forty thousand dollars damages for the salary he lost up to that time.”

“That’s quite natural,” said Gladys. “Freedom ought to be capable of being taken to the absurd; if not it is no longer freedom.”

Roy felt like applauding. Mrs. Clear recalled an identical case in Los Angeles, where a postal worker had been dismissed because of his effeminate behaviour, and had subsequently been reinstated. After that it was he who brought in most business: gays queued at his counter. “From Washington state to the state of California, how beautiful our west coast is!” said Mr. Clear. Roy had the feeling he was hearing Jack.

Quite calmly Gladys expressed her contempt for the repressive anti-homosexual laws recently passed by certain states, notably in Pennsylvania, where they were excluded from government posts, in Arkansas, and in Idaho, where homosexual relations were outlawed even between adults. She was concerned because the Supreme Court of the United States had ratified a Virginian

court's decision, affirming that the state did have the right to intervene when acts of this kind were performed in private. This could allow the police no longer to respect the privacy of residences.

What went through Roy's mind was the converse of his earlier reflection: hearing Gladys speak, he had the impression he was listening to Otis.

"So where did you acquire all this information?" asked Mr. Clear.

"At Pendleton," said Gladys. "I have a Lesbian friend who married a gay officer. Or I should say a former Lesbian and an officer who is a secret gay. Mark you, they have two children. But we freely discuss all these problems among ourselves, and they keep me informed."

"I do hope they're not leading you astray," said Mr. Clear.

"No," said Gladys, "but I live in the modern world."

"And what does your husband think about that?" Mrs. Clear put in.

"Oh, don't worry about Jeff; he won't cheat on me with any of his sailors." She explained, with a sidelong glance at Roy: "*I'm* his sailor-boy."

"Nor will he, I trust," continued Mr. Clear, without requiring an explanation of her words, "cheat on you with any of the sailor-*girls* now appearing on our warships."

Gladys admitted that this most recent victory for equality of the sexes was causing some difficulties at San Diego, where part of the American fleet was based; the sailors' wives often abused these female sailors who, according to them, were stealing their husbands while at sea, even though married persons were forbidden to do such things. Faithful to her principles of freedom and equality, Gladys supported the right of gays to be active in education, and the right of women to join the navy.

The presence of his daughter seemed to encourage John Clear, who had never before had so much to say about gays in his son's presence, to ventilate his views. He said that the gays of

California had had the audacity, when they lived as a couple, to claim the tax concessions granted to households. He feared that this relief would be granted, since the gays were making common cause with orthodox unmarried couples, who claimed the same exemption, and outnumbered married couples. "So," concluded Mr. Clear, "married men like me, and married women like you, Gladys, will be paying a little more tax, because the gay couples will be paying less."

"Why do you mention gays and not the others?" asked Gladys.

Aware that her father almost always thought along the lines of his financial interest, she raised the point that Proposition 6 would have disastrous consequences for taxpayers; countless cases would be brought before the state courts, and compensation would have to be paid out to graduate teachers. The proposition was in fact contrary to seven laws on education and to seven penal codes. An argument like that gave Mr. Clear pause for a moment. But he recovered, declaring that there was, thank God, another law, applying only to Beverly Hills, that would restore equilibrium: it was written by a citizen of the city, Mr. Jarvis, who wanted, by way of referendum, to reduce the local taxes imposed on developed sites. Its intention was to get rid of much unnecessary activity in the bureaucracy. Both the authorities and a section of the press were against this proposition; but Mr. Jarvis collected a number of signatures infinitely greater than what was necessary to obtain a referendum, and his success had been assured.

When, on the evening of this long discussion, they went upstairs, Gladys came into Roy's room, which was just opposite her own. It was the first time she had been there since it had been the scene of his double and triple parties, and Roy felt rather as though she was intruding upon his secrets. But was it still necessary to tell her about them? She had confessed her own secrets by giving him that sidelong glance when speaking of Jeff's

sailor-boy. This moral complicity, under the eyes of their parents, had been for Roy something exquisite.

Gladys embraced him, then looked at him and said “You are more beautiful than ever, my brother, my little prince. . . It must be because you know how to make use of your beauty.” She added—one act of complicity leading to another, of which she seemed certain in advance—“Give me a reefer.”

He opened the drawer where he kept Otis’s supply, which had replaced Jack’s, and made up two sticks. Gladys had gone very quietly into her own room. She came back: “Ellen is sleeping like an angel,” she said. “Have you got any porno magazines?”

“Porno magazines?” asked Roy, astonished.

“Yes,” said Gladys with a smile. “That would help me fall asleep.”

From Roy’s silence she understood that her brother’s education had not been as complete as she had imagined. But nonetheless she would have been staggered had he told her only the half of what he had done.

“Good night,” she said, planting a kiss on his forehead. She had lit her cigarette.

“Won’t the smoke bother Ellen?” asked Roy.

“Come on!” Gladys said. “A child of the American Revolution!”



## Part Two—Chapter Fourteen

GLADYS stayed only a week at Beverly Hills. Most of her time was spent with her old friends. Roy, for his part, busy with his school-work, did not have the opportunity to develop their new-found intimacy: he restricted himself to the provision of marijuana and smiles of complicity. Having thought about it, he was happy that he had not fallen into the snare of confidences. He had put to the test once again his ability to keep secrets. He was no more obliged to divulge to his sister what he got up to with Otis, than was he to divulge to Otis his relations with Jack and Mr. Teller. To the extent that he kept all his secrets to himself, he remained the master of his destiny. To make up for that, he took great pride in telling Otis that gay rights had, in Gladys, an energetic supporter, and he had amused him with the story of “gay Bob”. “It will be the boy’s doll of the future,” said Otis. He was delighted to see two people out of four from so conservative a family as the Clears in favour of the gay cause. And who knows, even Kathy might be changing tack?

Roy also reported the strange request Gladys had made of him. This indiscretion in regard to his sister seemed to make up for his keeping silent about Otis, and was a homage to masculine complicity. He also mentioned the marijuana. “Gosh, your sister is really with it!” said Otis. But she’s right to be well informed about everything that’s going on. A modern woman. And about the pornographic magazines, I’ve got heaps of them, but I haven’t given you any so as not to soil your eyes and mind. In the ones with cocks, you won’t see any finer than our own. In the ones with fannies—and I haven’t got any of those—you will feel like an outsider. In the ones where cocks are engaged with fannies and perhaps with bums, there’s nothing you don’t know or that could interest you, at least for the present.” Roy thought

to himself that Otis had summed all that up rather hastily, but he did not insist, for fear of being looked down upon: he valued his reputation.

Otis went on: "I didn't give you the wanking cream either, and besides, you've never asked for it. I'd rather have you save yourself for our pleasures. You've done with masturbation. Leave that to the losers."

Again Roy thought that this was rather a rapid condemnation of a sensual pleasure in which he still took delight and which must surely remain dear to every one, having been their earliest. But he valued Otis's remarks as tokens of this friendship that enchanted him with its thousand subtleties and this loftiness of sentiment that fascinated him. Every day the two electronic engineers of the future refined their relationship, in the way that one day they would be refining their computers. It was the one who gave almost everything, while the other had only to accept; but at least he attempted to be as agreeable as he could in return.

Since Roy was still distributing newspapers in his zone, Otis had given him a bundle of copies of the Californian monthly *Gay Rights Newsletter*, the main purpose of which was to campaign against Proposition 6. Roy did not leave this publication on people's lawns like the *Beverly Hills Courier*, but in their letter-boxes "approved by the postmaster general". Otis told him how, about twenty years ago, the Los Angeles postmaster general had prevented the postal services from distributing the first gay magazine of the United States, *One*, accusing it of obscenity. Now that dozens of truly obscene publications were available, the progress made by freedom of expression was evident. Of course Roy could not show much of a gay flag elsewhere than at school, where he had enrolled four Tories, all second-years, and four students from his own class. Nevertheless he had agreed to distribute this monthly newsletter because Los Angeles couriers, rivals of the boys from Beverly

Hills, put various kinds of advertising material into the local boxes, and so his contribution would be attributed to them.

The *Gay Rights Newsletter* was the organ of a branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, which had played an important part in the achievement of Negro rights, and was now doing the same for those of the gays. This publication, printed in Los Angeles, was intended for Southern California.

In the course of a plenary meeting at Otis's home, one day when his parents were away—it took place in the grand reception room, graced with magnificent French paintings, purchased from the famous dealer Fernand Legros—the clandestine school group congratulated Roy for his zealous work as distributor. Everybody found him charming, and so he was kissed eighty times over—the current membership count. Moreover it was Otis who, with a touch of vanity, set the example. But Roy turned crimson when a senior unceremoniously told him: “We should really screw you eighty times over.”

“No way,” said a second-year, “Otis would find that seventy-nine times too many.”

This reference shocked no one; there were many other couples in the group, as were there among the Daughters of Bilitis. The young master declared that he had taken precautions, having advised the members to come with plugs inserted: no entry would be possible.

The aim of the meeting was to read together the most recent number of the *Gay Rights Newsletter*, so as to obtain a firm grasp, “in both the literal and the figurative sense”, said Otis, of the arguments that would best enable them to combat Proposition 6. The way was then to slip them into family conversations, just as Roy was slipping the newsletter into boxes, and, without seeming to be gay themselves, to influence the electors' vote in favour of the cause. The last page of the newsletter depicted the statue of Liberty in New York harbour, accompanied by the legend “Fight for your rights. Persuade ten

non-gay electors to vote no on Proposition 6.” That was precisely what the high-school gays hoped to achieve.

Roy did the reading. Otis drew the conclusion, with the approval of all, that the “Fascist” aspect of the Briggs initiative was the sort of thing most offensive to the human mind. This remark corroborated something his father had said and he had passed on to Roy: that Briggs and his inspiratrix Anita Bryant were Hitler’s henchmen.

On the matter of the teachers, the Newsletter published an item of news which already showed the consequences of this initiative: when a teacher in the small town of Healdsburg, in northern California, had openly stated his opposition, a parents’ committee called for his dismissal. A similar affair erupted at the Mormon University of Hawaii, where a teacher had just been removed because of his gay sympathies. The American Union of Civil Liberties was supporting his cause. Five or six boys from the Beverly high school clandestine group were intending to go into teaching. Like the gay teachers, they were in a position to judge what the November referendum signified for their future: it put them in the position of either giving up their gay life or giving up being teachers.

Briggs had given the Los Angeles Times a long interview on the subject of “homosexuality”, and to-day Otis was anxious to comment on it. “The tenor of the article is evident already in the title,” he said. “Briggs confronts citizens with the fearsome word ‘homosexuality’, a word that makes families tremble and awakens sinister echoes of a moral millennium, with the rattling of chains, burnings at the stake, and rains of fire. We other Americans, by contrast, have invented the marvellous word ‘gay’, which demystifies the matter. We have borrowed it from mediæval Scotland to remove the fearsome quality of the word ‘homosexual’ and reduce the subject to a question of character rather than sexuality. And is it not true? One is sexual at most once a day, and then? But one can be gay from morning to night. Our adversaries would have it that we are only sexual—sex

machines, penis ever at the ready and anus open. Well actually, just at present, we've put a cork in it." The group burst into laughter.

Nick Stevens confirmed that not once in his interview had Briggs used the mollifying word "gay", only the aggressive word "homosexual".

"That's what the *Wall Street Journal* does," said Otis. "Its management, in response to a Chicago stock-broker who complained, said 'A homosexual is a homosexual'. You can see that we don't have a high rating at the Stock Exchange." He made an appropriate gesture, and they laughed again.

"Briggs's refrain, 'Save our children!'," he continued, "is a good proof of his imbecility. I've heard your stories: not one of us owes the fact of being gay to a teacher. It happened of its own accord, or we owe it to one of our friends, to whom we are grateful. In my own case I owe it to my brother. Some of you have told me that they too owe it to a brother or to a family member or to a cousin—I won't say who owes it to his uncle, though it's true that a home education is the best. Save us from our brothers! Save us from our cousins! Save us from our uncles!" It had not been possible to see the blushes of the person he was alluding to; in fact it was Nick, the Negro.

"Consequently," Otis resumed, "Anita Bryant and Briggs should also shout 'Save our brothers! Save our cousins! Save our nephews!' But our friend Din has told me something I can't keep to myself. Although I'm only a third-year, I had thought I was our senior member, because Ramsey initiated me when I was five. Well! Din learned everything from an older boy when he was four; this boy got into a big closet with him, removed Din's pants, removed his own pants, attempted in vain to get himself sodomized, sucked him, etc."

Din had reddened, but without showing any confusion; in fact he was quite proud of what had just been related. "Perhaps that's why I'm not a closet queen," he said.

“Is there any one here who was gay before the age of four?” Otis asked. No one laid claim to that record of precocity. “So,” said Otis, “let’s give Din a round of applause.”

Every one clapped and shouted “Hooray!” Then they added “Rah! rah! rah!” in imitation of the UCLA “yell”.

“What I didn’t tell Otis,” Din explained, “is that that friend, who is now at the French lycée, goes only with girls now, and calls me ‘fag’ if I remind him of our closet.”

“That’s a telling detail,” Otis exclaimed, “and a good indicator of a future closet queen. Save us from the straights who first initiate us and then later repudiate us! In short, Anita Bryant and John Briggs have to save the whole of humanity.

“And there’s worse,” continued Otis. “Briggs further accuses the gays, or at least ‘a very high percentage of them’, of suffering from gonorrhœa.” Roy asked what that illness was. “A venereal disease, already mentioned in the Bible, and more commonly known as ‘clap’,” explained Otis. “On that point, the best response to Briggs was made by his interviewer Robert Scheer: he reminded Briggs that Atlanta, the capital of Georgia, one of our thirteen original states, called the ‘Bible belt’ because of their puritanism, has the highest percentage of gonorrhœa. ‘You don’t say!’ said Briggs, ‘but at least it doesn’t have a high percentage of homosexuality as well.’

“Finally,” said Otis, “Briggs quotes a remark made by General MacArthur: ‘There are few examples of a civilisation having survived once it has sunk into a period of economic and moral decadence’.” Otis threw the paper onto the table and developed his ideas with fervour. “What *is* decadence? In the minds of those who speak about it in order to stigmatize it, it means the refinements of civilization, and there is no civilization without refinements. I respect and admire MacArthur, but the morality of West Point is not my own. I am the sworn enemy of all war, and I’m happy that Beverly Hills doctors gave young men of means certificates of homosexuality or drug addiction in order to exempt them from service during the Vietnamese war. In fact

Beverly Hills broke the record for evasion of military service in Southern California, and for that I congratulate it. Being a great nation does not consist in dying. Our good fortune is that we have fantastic armaments to protect us from that.

“As for freedom,” he went on, “it is we who personify it, and we should pursue it to the furthest limits in order to demonstrate its nature. What the others, the straights, the conformists see as a bottomless abyss, is in fact an endless ascent. But this seemingly vertiginous ascent is simply exhilarating. It is exhilarating for those who can never have enough liberty; it is vertiginous for the timorous and it is fitting that they should tumble down. We won’t tumble because we will be looking upwards.”

The group applauded their leader. They drank champagne. They walked in the garden and smoked marijuana. And, since the weather was fine and the pool—Olympic-size—was heated, many of them, in briefs, dived in and romped about in joy.

Roy stayed behind after the others had left. “You were sublime,” he told Otis.

“But you know,” said he modestly, “I was only repeating my brother’s views. That’s always the way in our family. . . .”

“Then it’s a good time to tell you,” Roy added, “that my sister, when discussing Proposition 6 with my father, also made an excellent remark about liberty: ‘It must be taken to the absurd; if not, it ceases to be freedom’.”

“Gladys is becoming more and more a sister to both of us,” said Otis. “When she comes back I must meet her.”

“She hardly ever comes,” said Roy. “And I think she is more comfortable with her friends at her place, than with my parents.”

“She’ll be waiting for you to grow up,” said Otis.

“That remark of MacArthur, cited by Briggs,” said Roy, “the one to which you so brilliantly responded, reminds me of a prose-poem quoted by that general, entitled *Youth*, which I learned at Buckley. I was thinking of it while listening to your eloquence, and I’ve never loved you more: ‘Young is he who . . .

Demands, like an insatiable child: And then? He defies events and finds joy in the game of life’.”

Otis was enchanted by these words; Roy could have applied them even more accurately to himself.

The next number of the Gay Rights Newsletter contained a scathing denial of another complaint senator Briggs had propounded in his interview: that gays were “seducers of children” and that the number of these seducers had risen over the past ten years because of the gay liberation movement. This denial filled Roy with joy, because it came from Jack Sherman. The police chief had recently made it known that certain statistics issued by one of his sergeants, and referred to by Briggs, were incorrect; this sergeant had in fact announced that 78 per cent. of the children seduced over the past year were boys; but the reverse was the case, the 78 per cent. had been girls. Roy flattered himself that by not concealing from Jack his sympathy for the gay cause, he had encouraged him to issue this correction, which was, as well, a courteous response to the gays’ campaign about police excesses.



## Part Two—Chapter Fifteen

THERE was great excitement at the Beverly Hills high school about its "Open House" event. This evening the families of the greater part of its two thousand five hundred students were thronging in to visit the brightly lit rooms, enabling them to inspect the scenes of their offspring's labours, and in the case of some subjects, the results of those labours. Of course the Clears had turned up, with the intention of meeting the Zs. And they had indeed had the good grace to take Uracca and Manuelito, but let them vanish into the crowd.

Otis and Roy were happy to bring their parents together. It was the consecration of their friendship. Mr. Z. came not only as the father of a former and a present student, but as an old boy himself. Ramsey came along as well. He said that everything to do with education fascinated Jews, since that, just as much as religion, was what had been their strength throughout history. Less orthodox than his brother, he even said that religion tended to vanish and that for them it was hardly more than a hollow formalism, whereas education lived on. Apropos of Judaism, Otis told Roy that on the day of his confirmation ceremony—the Jewish first communion—his father had arranged for Oriental belly-dancers to dance in their house, and that other Beverly Hills Jews provided the same distraction for their sons on this festive day. Which does not seem to indicate a particularly intense orthodoxy. But it was no less compatible with the defence of Israel's interests: "Be numbered among those who are committed".

That is why the Zs. were interested in the room containing a display of Jewish art by the Hadassah, the organization of American Zionist women. Mrs. Z. said that she was a member of the Californian branch. Mrs. Clear, well primed by her husband,

declared that members of that branch would indubitably possess the qualifications required to join the Los Angeles branch of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Mrs. Z. said that this was probable in her own case, but that she was overwhelmed by charitable organizations. She added that the Hadassah, which handled millions of dollars, was not only aimed at assisting the Jews of Israel, but was also intended to promote Jewish life in the United States, which had existed even prior to the revolution. Mrs. Clear responded appropriately by citing the renowned Abraham Aaron, whose name headed the *Patriotic Index*. This display highlighted the preponderance of the Jewish element among the student body, but next door there was a Catholic exhibition, and a Protestant exhibition further along, which the two families also visited.

They greeted the headmaster Sol Levine, the deputy head Stuart Silver, a friend of John, and some of the teachers. Both the Zs. and the Clears were delighted with the quality of teaching at the high school: their sons collected nothing but As and Bs. Actually Otis was one of the best students, and Roy remained what he had been at Buckley. For their future electronic studies, after the rudiments they were now receiving, they had not yet decided whether to go on to the University of California at Los Angeles like Ramsey, or to the Californian Institute of Technology, which was at Pasadena near the Universal Church of God. On New Year's Day Otis and Roy had taken part in the Rose Tournament, Pasadena's great annual festival, when people throw millions of flowers at each other. They spent the whole day covered with petals.

Mr. Z. graciously accepted the thanks of the Stevens and Medlock families, who had come with their boys. A few days earlier Ruth Medlock had informed Otis that her grandparents had placed themselves under the protection of the district assistant prosecutor, and that he was conducting an investigation in collaboration with the San Francisco justice department to see whether it might be possible to proscribe the Church of the

People's Temple as an organization that had lost all religious character. In the mean time Ken Morris, Ruth's sweetheart, remained at Jonestown. The Stevenses—Nick's parents—had been more fortunate; thanks to the lawyer Paul Morantz, they had snatched their eldest daughter from the clutches of the appalling Chuck. But this latter had sworn eternal hatred towards the lawyer, the more so because Morantz, encouraged by his success, was now pleading the cause of a husband whose wife and under-age daughter were shut away at Santa Monica in the Synanon cult's institution. Chuck, as usual, brought a counter-action against Paul Morantz for "persecution and abuse of power" and demanded from him five million dollars in damages. "I had a narrow escape," said Mr. Z.

Next they viewed an exhibition of photographs of the high school in 1928; this "open house" event was in a way a prelude to the festivities at the beginning of June, to celebrate the founding of the school fifty years earlier. The appearance of the buildings had altered less than the surrounding country: where to-day there was an immense lawn, there was once a field; where the sky-scrappers of Century City rose up, there was once nothing but scrub. The school had been co-educational from the beginning. There were photographs of lumpish girls, with their skirts below the knee and their hair cut short; the boys did not look much brighter, with their hands thrust into their pockets and their hair combed back. "Perhaps they knew about everything we know, including cocaine," Otis said in Roy's ear, "but certainly not the plug we put in a certain place."

"You never can tell," said Roy. "There's nothing new under the sun, nor between the buttocks." Mr. Z., who had not heard these reflections, and for whose ears they had not been intended, reminded his son that the images of his own class, from 1944, were more attractive.

Further photographs showed Beverly Hills fifty years earlier; the "golden ghetto" had only a few scattered houses, amidst agricultural land and oil wells. "That was the time to buy land

here,” Mr. Z. observed to Mr. Clear. Mr. Clear hastened to say that in Hollywood he knew of land for sale on favourable terms.

“Hollywood! That’s my father’s old stamping ground!” exclaimed Mr. Z., interested at once. After hearing the brief summary John supplied, Mr. Z. asked him to send further details. The useful relationship for which the Clears had been hoping had already commenced.

One room contained technical and architectural projects set up by students from this part of the school. The electronic courses formed part of this section, and here Roy and Otis came across Donald Walker, their teacher. Roy had already been initiated in his class into the labyrinths of the integrated circuit, database techniques, and colour coding. As a practical application of his lessons, he and his schoolfellows had constructed an apparatus which was on show here, as was also one from Otis’s class. Mr. Z. examined them in his professional capacity. He admired a spaceship, the work of two seniors and full of ingenuity. The model houses displayed nearby likewise attested to the skill of their builders. The famous American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who designed the Guggenheim museum in New York, and died about twenty years previously, had engendered emulators among the younger generation; the Ollive house, which he built in Hollywood, was now the municipal art gallery, and there was his Millard house at Pasadena. The County Hall at Marin, near San Francisco, was also one of his most famous buildings.

In other rooms, girls and boys wove and embroidered cloth, made baskets, modelled with clay, and decorated terracotta vases. Moving between the rooms, students from the television service conducted live interviews with parents and students, for the channel which had transmitted the report on male prostitution in Los Angeles.

The clandestine gay group, seizing the opportunity, had discreetly scattered on the tables leaflets opposing Proposition 6. Sol Levine noticed this, and ordered the removal of these

documents, ensuring that the families would not be given the impression that the high school was one vast Sodom. But no sooner were they removed than they were replaced. The gays were grateful for the collaboration of the Daughters of Bilitis, whose bags were stuffed with leaflets.

Mr. Z. picked up one of these sheets, and handed it to Ramsey, with the words "For you!" He asked Mr. Clear what he thought about the proposition. Roy admired the courage of his father, who did not at first shy away from the subject. "I will support it," he said. "I don't take sides on the root of the problem, because I respect individual freedoms, but I am in complete agreement with Briggs, and with Anita Bryant from whom he took his inspiration: 'Save our children!'"

"Save them from what?" asked Mr. Z. "I think all we need to save them from is bad teachers, and we should insist that a teacher has professional skills, without concerning ourselves with his tastes, his religion and his race."

"Perhaps I'm more sensitive to these things because my son is younger than yours are," said Mr. Clear evasively. "That's why I feel this need of protection more strongly."

"The protection of freedom is the foremost duty," said Mr. Z.

Mr. Clear, looking for a way out, declared that these remarks were making him think. Wishing to indicate that one of his own family was more latitudinarian, he added that his daughter, recently visiting from San Diego, had expressed similar views, and he had valued their generosity. This was an outcome Roy had not anticipated from a meeting of this kind, yet he thought the prospect of change was little more than a diplomatic promise. But he could not repress a smile when his father, in explaining why he favoured Briggs, made reference to him. "He's frightened I'll be corrupted by one of my teachers," Roy thought to himself, "and he has no idea that I'm having sex with Jack Sherman, Mr. Teller, Otis and Ramsey, and that I've done it with Bob, Jim and Manuelito."

During this brief debate between their husbands, Mrs. Z. and Mrs. Clear had been discussing the respective merits of the New York Ballet and the Los Angeles Ballet, which had both given performances in recent days. Kathy, who loved ballet, was of course delighted that Mrs. Z. shared this taste. Everything was working out wonderfully well, yet the two families had no idea that it all rested on sex and drugs.

The room devoted to cookery classes, where food prepared before the eyes of the onlookers was handed out, was overflowing, as was the cafeteria, where drinks were distributed. Cream desserts were most popular among the visitors, but there were also soups, Jewish cakes, and cheese soufflé. One incident disturbed the merry-making: some pranksters had mixed a powerful aphrodisiac in with the items being concocted under the direction of Sybil Tapscott, the mistress. Otis, who was privy to the secret, warned his parents and the Clears not to touch them. The effects were already visible; some couples were embracing indecently, boys were fingering their flies, and girls caressing their breasts. In a panic Mrs. Sybil Tapscott hastened to close the exhibition.

As they left to return to Summit Drive, Manuelito, who had eaten some of the soufflé, appeared unable to sit still. Seated at the back, between his mother and Roy, he removed his jacket, on the pretext that he was too hot, and spread it over his knees and across Roy's as well. He reached a feverish hand towards his schoolfellow's fly and tried to open it. It must have taken an aphrodisiac to inspire this licence, because being taken to school every morning in Mr. Clear's motor had not granted him further access to Roy's bedroom. Although Roy remained on friendly terms with the little Mexican, he was keeping his promise to Otis not to yield a second time to the facility of these semi-servitorial amours. He gently repulsed Manuelito, who forgot himself to the extent of suggesting a free wanking session.

## Part Two—Chapter Sixteen

WHEN Jack told Roy to give him one hundred dollars out of the three hundred he would receive, first from Mr. Teller, and later from the others, the young Clear had had a moment of stupefaction. But it would have been difficult to complain after what he himself had demanded from Jack. Besides, the entertainments that followed those words had prevented him from giving much thought to them while in the Brentwood house. Later, they had often returned to his mind, but without surprising him overmuch. He found the thought of giving money to the chief of police rather stimulating. He could never have imagined a relationship such as theirs, and still less could he have imagined it having such a corollary. But as money was what had helped bring him and Jack together, he told himself that the proposed exchanges would make their attachment even closer.

It was their fourth meeting. The moment Roy got into the car, he handed over an envelope containing a hundred dollars. "I've seen Mr. Teller," he said.

The police chief burst out laughing. "You've discovered that I was right," he said, "but what a precise way to pay tribute to me."

"Money is money," said Roy.

"Since I have to go on giving it to you," said Jack, "put that envelope back in your pocket. It's my hundred dollars."

Roy was amused that the police chief had found this way of not paying him. Nevertheless he valued his discretion in not asking for details of his encounter with Mr. Teller.

"Soon," said Jack, "you'll be ahead, when you are seeing all my circle regularly. Then you'll be in my debt. Next time I'll take you to meet the consul-general. You'll see his wonderful house at Trousdale Estates, the reason for our two chance encounters."

“Will you be staying there?” asked Roy.

“No,” said the police chief. “That would be rather awkward for a diplomat, and perhaps for you as well. I’ll leave you both alone.”

“When you tell him about me,” said Roy, “tell him that at the Beverly Hills high school I’ve been chosen as prince of the first-years. That makes a good impression.” Roy had decided to put this passport to good use; it had already earned him Mr. Teller’s congratulations, and now it earned him those of the police chief.

“You were born to become prince,” Jack told him, “even if you were not born *as* a prince, because I have perhaps even more faith in your lineage than you do.”

Roy told Jack about the favourable impression his remarks about seducers of children had made among the high-school students with an interest in gays. “I did it very much in spite of myself,” said Jack, “but I could not allow that lie to stand; besides, it would indubitably have been turned back onto the police. There are people who monitor official statistics. Anyway, the mayor was delighted, because he’s under Amador’s thumb. But again, don’t you think Briggs is right to use the word decadence, when high-school boys become gay propagandists?”

“If there were no gay boys,” said Roy, “you wouldn’t have found *me*.”

“Sure,” said Jack. “But I’ll say it again: there shouldn’t be too much. At the high school there should be only one gay boy: you; in the city, only one gay man: me.”

Roy thought that that wouldn’t be a lot. He had told Jack about his close relationship with Otis, but not about the way the brothers used cocaine. He knew what he could tell the police chief and what it would be best to conceal from him. He had been pleased to let him know that his relations with Manuelito had been short-lived. The police chief corrected his train of reasoning, as though he had guessed Roy’s thoughts and wished to clarify his own. “Clearly,” he said, “if there were only one gay



man in the city, you would not have met Mr. Teller and you would not be meeting the consul-general or my other two friends. But don't forget that in what I say I make exceptions of the rich. They are above society. Your episode with the Mexican amused me, but you have done well to put a stop to it. I am happy that you are having sex with a rich boy. There must be the same secrecy."

Jack's charming manners, in the intimacy of the living-room or bedroom, always made a curious contrast with his athletic appearance and his ugliness. Perhaps this feminine refinement revealed his deeper nature. Perhaps it also seemed to him a compensation for his zeal in combating homosexuality. He was, in regard to Roy, in a situation as strange as Roy was in regard to him: he had taken the decision to make a prostitute of a boy of good family who had no need of money, and he pursued this perversity to the point of getting for himself a part of the fruits of this prostitution. Clearly his battle against immorality had given him the taste for such crimes; he was a victim of his chosen profession, or rather, his own immorality was a reaction against the rules of his profession, just as Roy, in prostituting himself, was reacting against his family's principles and against a puritan education.

Their sexual pleasures varied. Prior to penetrating Roy, Jack put his enormous organ into the boy's mouth, and rejoiced in the sight of it, which was, he said, just as heavenly as the sucking. But for Roy nothing surpassed that other delight: having on his buttocks the weight and the hair of that robust body, and within those buttocks that organ, still soaked with his saliva, which poured into him a more precious saliva, like the flood of his own saliva that an expert hand inspired. The two operations were exactly simultaneous.

After that they smoked marijuana. Roy asked the police chief whether he was frightened of being compromised by introducing him to other men. "I know what I'm doing," said Jack. "Those men are in my power. They cannot harm me, and can refuse me

nothing. Besides, I am not bringing them boys; I am bringing them *a* boy—one unique boy. We form a closed circle, from which there is no escape. The moral scandals that have shaken America, such as the one in Boise, a small town in Idaho, and those in Waukesha in Wisconsin, broke out only because they involved hundreds of boys who prostituted themselves to dozens of individuals, who passed them around. Not one of the people to whom I introduce you will know that you are having relations with any one apart from himself—provided you don't tell him, which would be a very foolish thing to do. If they ask, you should deny doing anything with me. I'm supposed to have questioned you, one night when I came across you skateboarding in Summit Drive (absolutely true), to have made you confess your proclivities, and to want, out of the goodness of my heart, to find you a dependable and rich friend. Never mind that the beginning is somewhat suspect. The end justifies the means. It is a source of great power never to speak the truth, provided one does not get oneself into the situation where it is self-evident, and it is still possible to claim that it is a lie. The misfortunes of others should be an education for us. The only stimulating life is one that challenges, but one should challenge only when one is certain of prevailing." Roy thought of the poem quoted by General MacArthur which exhorted the young to "defy events".

The police chief recounted the two well-known scandals to which he had alluded. The principal victim of the first, which took place about twenty years earlier, was the president of the First National Bank in Idaho, who had been sentenced to seven years in prison; the others, which had taken place partly in 1960 and partly 1974, had first compromised the dean of Carroll College, a priest, and a number of doctors, and later a hospital director who had killed himself, and some scout leaders.

"The fault of most gays," Jack continued, "is their craving for sex. They don't like it when they are criticized for that, but I am well placed to know how it is. Hence Briggs's accusations about their illnesses. Last year my colleague in San Diego invited me to

the Shakespeare festival that takes place every September at the old Globe theatre.”

“My sister always goes,” said Roy.

“They played the *Merchant of Venice*,” continued the police chief, “and I’ve remembered this line from the beginning, in which the word ‘bottom’—a different sense of which you once quoted for me—refers to the hold of a ship, and the word ‘ventures’ means commercial enterprises, but the literal meaning is quite amusing: ‘*My ventures are not in one bottom trusted.*’ That’s the gays’ problem. I’ll end up approving of Don Amador and Harvey Milk because they have just one friend.”

## Part Two—Chapter Seventeen

THE Los Angeles branch of the Daughters of the American Revolution, of which Mrs. Clear remained the treasurer, had decided to plant a tree in the part of Sunset Boulevard administered by Los Angeles. It was to commemorate a former manageress of the branch, or rather a former “manager”, who had just died. An honour of this kind was not exceptional. This time it had been prompted by president Carter’s ecological concerns. His decision to preserve the sequoia forests of northern California, which the congress had approved, led to protests from Californian wood-cutters. Those in Alaska had already protested after part of that state was included in the plan for preservation of the natural environment. But was the sequoia not the state’s tree and the symbol of California? (Every state had its own tree, its own flower, its own bird, its own animal and its own fish, as well as its own flag.) Saving the sequoias was considered a patriotic duty, especially in the Mount Chasta national forest, to the north of San Francisco, from which, for over a century, thousands of them had been taken annually. But Californian scholars had carried their arboricultural studies further than many others: one of them had recently detected the pollen of a plant peculiar to Jerusalem on the Turin shroud, one of the four or five winding-sheets supposed to have enveloped the body of Christ. This priceless relic had been sent to Los Angeles to be assessed. Jack, being the city’s police chief, and his colleague the county police chief, had been the guardians.

As Roy had been neglecting his association with the Children of the American Revolution, his mother had insisted that he reappear at this public event in Sunset Boulevard, so as to demonstrate that even though no longer at the Beverly Hills high school, he was not neglecting the principles that prevailed at

Buckley. Besides, he liked trees, and even had a passion for them. This was not solely because they helped to purify the atmosphere, into which were emitted daily, above Los Angeles, more than fifteen thousand tons of pollutants. Thanks to the trees, and to the Santa Ana—the wind that blew from the valley of that name, to the south-east—the smog in the city, which, it should be said, did not affect Beverly, was bearable. As a small child Roy had been to the Chasta forest and admired the sequoias, which had a circumference of several yards, a height of well over two hundred feet, and grew from an almost invisible seed. It was there that he had caught sight of wild gray bears, the state animal of California, and had tasted, in the course of this trip, the best trout in the world (the golden trout was the state fish of the golden state). He also admired the magnificent trees of Green Mountain in Vermont, the north-east state where his paternal grandmother lived; they had spent a month's holiday with her. He loved the trees in the family garden at Beverly, and arranging the sprinklers to irrigate them. In summer that sweet sound beneath the foliage combined with his dips in the pool to create a world of enchantment. At this time of year, one of the trees made a perch and spring-board for a multi-coloured humming-bird with a long blue beak, which at dusk would ascend to the very top and perform songs, leaps and pirouettes. Although California's state bird was the crested quail, this humming-bird, with these amazing feats and favours, seemed to want to usurp its status, at least here in Beverly North. The display was so remarkable that the Clears would sometimes invite friends to marvel at it. Since Roy had been leading his double life, the love he retained for these things reassured him about his transformation, just as he had reassured himself by continuing to play with his little niece. It was, somehow, his emotional virginity that he was thus preserving. He was also the one who watered the house-plants, and those hanging over the picture window in the spacious living-room, not forgetting some

he had given his mother for mother's day which bore a tiny inscription "Mother".

Even though the majority lived in Beverly Hills, the members had chosen Los Angeles as the place to plant their tree, so as to compensate, they said, for the superiority of the tree-lined roadsides which were already one of the attractions of their own city but were lacking in Los Angeles. If the opulence of Beverly North differed from that of Beverly South, clearly this could not be deduced from the trees that uniformly lined all the roads. But the difference became very evident between one side and the other of the same road when it divided Los Angeles and Beverly Hills: for the Beverlyites there were trees, and for the Angelenos none at all. Or else the trees were luxuriant and thriving on the good side, and bare and scraggy on the bad.

The maple tree that the group would plant was already well-grown. The University of Michigan had found a way to reduce considerably the time trees took to grow, by flooding them with electric light in glass-houses. But this maple would subsequently need many centuries to reach the age of the oldest tree in the world, a Nevada pine, four thousand six hundred years old. In performing this planting, the group also hoped to set an example of reforestation for California, which had lost, two years earlier at the time of the great drought, a hundred and seventy-five million dollars' worth of wood, burnt in the county of Modoc in the north of the state. This terrible fire recalled another, seventeen years previously, which had destroyed four hundred and eighty-four houses and caused twenty-five million dollars' worth of damage at Bel Air and Brentwood. Mrs. Clear would have preferred the group's maple to be a sugar-maple, the state tree of Vermont. At least that was a Montpelier maple, Montpelier (with one "L") being the name of the capital of Vermont. All these contorted arguments from his mother had amused Roy, as an example of the art of selling oneself. He was aware of other instances of the kind, which cost very little, were sanctioned by the presence of the authorities, and earned their

performers the respect of the public. He thought to himself that an ambitious and well-informed person should invent a tree of his own. Quite so, but here the tree was being planted by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

For this august ceremony Roy had donned his Buckley uniform—the only one he possessed—and pinned on his blazer the badge of the Children of the American Revolution. But under one of the sides of his gray and red tie he had also pinned his lambda, the badge of the gays. The Daughters of the Revolution wore their own badge, but not their medals with blue and white ribbon: they had the right to display these only during indoor ceremonies, which phrase was not understood to refer to cocktail parties.

As might have been expected, the Los Angeles authorities had been invited to this planting, which took place on their territory, and this brought Jack and Roy another unexpected encounter. The chief of police, surrounded by certain of his co-workers, and mayor Tom Bradley, with certain of his, among whom Roy had the joy of recognizing Don Amador, made imposing figures. The fact that the official representative of the gay community in the Los Angeles municipality had come, confirmed the gays' desire to join in all expressions of national life. Never had the prestige of the group doing the planting shone more brightly than through this gathering. Kathy was convinced that had president Carter been in Los Angeles he too would have come. Jack darted a few glances at Roy, accompanied by an enigmatic smile. Among the Daughters of the American Revolution was Mrs. Teller, and Bob was among the Children. It was for Roy another curious thing, to meet at an event like this both a boy who had sodomized him and a woman whose husband *was* sodomizing him.

The chair-woman of the branch, Mrs. Owen W. Strange, in an apple-green gown, made a short speech, muted in a way by the countless motors that went by, mercifully without honking. She thanked the mayor and the police chief for their presence at the

planting of this maple, which would perpetuate the memory of a Daughter of the American Revolution holding the Medal of Liberty and buried beneath a flag. “At the same time,” she said, “it will perpetuate the memory and the spirit of the men and women who achieved American independence, promote the development of enlightened views and encourage patriotism.”

The chaplain—another woman, in a fuchsia gown—then read a passage from the First Epistle to Timothy: “Neglect not the gift that is in thee.” It was to exhort the city mayor and Don Amador to conserve and protect the maple.

The participants responded with the words from Psalm XVI: “Yea, I have a goodly heritage . . . Thou wilt remember the whole path along which the Lord thy God has led you.”

A brass plaque, bearing the name of the deceased and the date of the ceremony, was attached to the foot of the tree. Then the chaplain read a passage from the First Epistle to the Corinthians: “So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. . . . For we are labourers together with God; ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” She went on to say that this maple, like the trees in Deuteronomy, “would sing in the presence of the Lord.” At last came the final prayer, recited together by the Daughters and the Children, and murmured by the officials who were moving their lips: “Our Father, we thank you for the privilege of being united. We thank you for the men and women of our entire nation who share the care and responsibility for building a better world, in which our children may obtain the fulfilment of their aspirations and their noblest ambitions.”

The chaplain added a few words of another prayer, reserved for ceremonies of this kind: “Almighty God, teach us to plant living truths in our souls.”

Facing Jack Sherman, and not far from Mr. Teller’s son and wife, the expressions “planteth”, “watereth” and “giveth increase” called to Roy’s mind other images.



He told himself also that America's greatness came from all these contrasts that had ended up living together harmoniously. She had assimilated her blacks, after many battles and misgivings, just as she was in the process of assimilating her homosexuals, despite Anita Bryant and senator Briggs. That the Jews occupied to-day the position they did, had likewise not come about without a struggle, even against Henry Ford, who had taken it into his head to stir up anti-Semitism. Otis had told Roy that they forced the Detroit tycoon to back down using the same approach that the gays were now applying to the Florida orange juice producers in opposition to Anita Bryant: they threatened never to buy a Ford again. It was all these actions in support of justice, equality and liberty that had led to the sexual revolution, with the assistance of the intellectuals and great artists. The poets and writers of the "beat generation"—who came mostly from North Beach, near San Francisco, and from Venice, near Los Angeles—had prepared the way. Dali, the brilliant and admirable painter of the *Crucifixion of St. John of the Cross* and *The Last Supper*, had, in New York, been the first to exhibit erect penises, while Andy Warhol, with so many other claims to fame, painted bum-holes. But that did not prevent the Daughters of the American Revolution from planting a maple in Sunset Boulevard in the presence of personalities, and even young boys, whose bum-holes were far from virginal. Nor did that prevent one of those Daughters, were one to believe her son, from keeping a vibrator in her bathroom drawer.

## Part Two—Chapter Eighteen

THE consul-general's house, on the heights of the Trousdale Estates—an evidently fated name—to the north of Beverly, stood out from a distance by reason of its strange architecture. It was a renaissance castle with pediments, casement windows, pinnacles and scalloped chimney stacks, similar to those at Westwood, the Tudor manor-house recently purchased by Hugh M. Hefner, the founder of *Playboy*. On one occasion Roy had visited that manor-house with his mother, when it belonged to a club for stylish ladies, the Dames de Champagne, who arranged charity fairs there. But this evening it was not the Dames de Champagne who were escorting him to the renaissance castle.

Over the door there was a flag of the country that the consul-general represented, paired with that of the United States. Roy was expecting to see a butler, as at the Zs. However, when Jack rang it was the master of the house himself who opened the door, like Mr. Teller. Roy understood that no one should see the police chief bringing a young boy, any more than should Mr. Teller be seen receiving him. The consul-general was a man of about fifty, tall, with a dignified appearance and a face as red as that of the president of the Bel Air Country Club. He was dressed in white, his shirt collar half open over a silk foulard.

They mounted a staircase lined with flowers, and entered a living-room adorned with coats of arms and Buddhas. Some refreshments had already been served. Roy dared not ask for a Bloody Mary and made do with an orange juice. It was likely that, at the consul's, Florida orange juice was *not* drunk. He observed Roy out of the corner of his eye even while discussing with Jack the concert at the Los Angeles Music Centre where they had recently met. This reminded Roy of the conversation about ballets between his mother and Mrs. Z. at the high school.

But music and dance were the great *snobisme* of Southern California.

A ladder encircled with brass, fixed to a bar and leading to a kind of loggia which opened out from the upper part of one wall on a level with the ceiling, caught Roy's interest. "You're wondering what that is," the consul said. "Go up the ladder, after pulling it out a bit to give it a better angle, and you'll see."

Roy climbed up and stopped at the floor of the loggia, to take a quick look; it was a deep alcove containing two curtained beds face to face, with a large bronze perfume-burner between them. "When I entertain a lot of people—I mean, a lot of my close friends—two of them can retire up there and do whatever they want, out of sight of all the others. I am told that this provides interesting sensations. Note that the occupants of the alcove have the option of ensuring that they will not be disturbed: all they need do is pull up the ladder. The young Californian who decorated my house, and had that idea, is a boy with a lively mind."

"Well I'll leave you to show Roy your marvels," said Jack. "He is interested in all things beautiful."

"He is so beautiful himself!" exclaimed the consul.

"You'll drop him at Beverly Hills after you've finished your chess game," said Jack with a smile, indicating a superb chess-board in coloured ivory laid out on a table. He left.

The consul took Roy's hand and guided him through the house. It was simply a series of reception rooms and bedrooms, each more sumptuous than the last. One four-poster bed had translucent sky-blue curtains. "It's here that I like to accommodate my chosen guests," said the consul, "when they are staying in my own house, because I do have the separate guest-house. The position of this bed is calculated so that the rays of the rising sun hit the curtains, and one awakens in a kind of azure dream. Sometimes it is a golden dream, worthy of California, when I have gold-threaded curtains put up." In the bathroom the dream continued in a different way: into the wall

beside the peach-blossom marble bath was built an aquarium, in which Chinese fish swam amid marine plants. A sauna had been put in nearby, making Roy think of the Zs' example.

On the ground floor, near the terrace, one vast room enclosed a little stream that cascaded onto rocks and re-emerged from under the ground to water the garden. It was the ideal refuge on days of great heat. There were wide beds on three sides. The stream was wide and deep enough to serve as a bathing place. Tropical plants overhung it, as if to protect the swimmers from the sun. The water temperature could be adjusted at will, which was yet another attraction.

Next the consul took Roy to the terraces, which occupied a part of the slope and of which each had a pool and a jet of water. The spring night, illuminated by the moon, had an almost summery warmth.

"Your name is Roy Clear?" asked the consul.

"Yes," said Roy.

"You are descended from the kings of France?"

"That's what my father claims," replied Roy.

"And what is that claim founded upon?"

"That's it!" said Roy. "A claim is no more than a claim."

"Your spirit equals your charm," said the consul, kissing him. "You deserved to be chosen as prince of princes at the Beverly Hills high school, because the princes are always the youngest."

He took Roy onto a terrace the approaches to which were concealed by a curtain of cypress. "Take off your trousers and briefs," he said. Roy had only his trousers to take off, because, the better to feel himself naked beneath the cloth, especially when he was on his way to have sex at some one's house, he did not wear briefs. Otis had taught him this anti-bourgeois refinement which meant the backside and the penis could be got at more quickly. Roy put his trousers on the bench where the consul was seated. "Now," said the latter, "take off your shirt. There's no risk of getting cold." Roy was now quite naked, and his penis was already standing up straight, even though his host

had not yet laid a finger on it. "Walk like that in the light of the moon," the consul told him. Roy took a few steps; then, swinging or raising his arms, and swaying his hips, he started his disco-dancing. The consul had opened his own trousers and was stroking himself. His organ, an item of most respectable dimensions, stood out against the white cloth.

He signalled Roy to come nearer, stretched him out, backside up, across his thighs, and taking a tiny electric torch from his jacket pocket, spread Roy's buttocks the better to contemplate his anus.

"Moisten it with your own saliva and your own fingers," he said. Roy, with care and attention, obeyed, excited at the thought of the torch that illuminated him, the eyes that observed him, and by the touch of the member that quivered below against his own. He took his time, running two moistened fingers around the orifice, widening its rim, and entering it more and more deeply with a slow in-and-out motion, to demonstrate its capacity. His host watched this spectacle untiringly, just as Roy, enamoured of this part of his own body, untiringly exhibited it. "Come and impale yourself on me," the consul suddenly said, standing Roy upright.

Roy thought of the sybaritic bedrooms indoors and admired this man for having selected a corner of the garden for his pleasures.

## Part Two—Chapter Nineteen

THAT Saturday, Roy, Otis and Ramsey met Bob at the Griffith Park sports ground for a tennis match between the nineteen-year-old Paul Bernstein, a native of Fullerton, and another boy of the same age, Mark Andrews, from Long Beach; this match formed part of the singles championship. Even though Bernstein was studying at the State University of Arizona, and Andrews was not at the Los Angeles university, this encounter had mobilized the city's gay groups, because senator Briggs was going to be there to support his young fellow-citizen from Fullerton. Besides, it was through the gay groups that the Californian universities, rivals in the areas of prestige, study, and sport, enjoyed the most certain and direct link. When, last year, the University of Southern California had beaten the University of California at Los Angeles at football—an all too frequent victory—the gays from both camps had prevented a brawl.

The intention was not to shout the senator down. It was simply a matter of chanting in front of him the three words “No to six”, and, in the case of the official activists, of carrying banners bearing that inscription. The attitude of the Z. brothers indicated the primacy in their eyes of the gay problem over against that of being Jewish, since it was Andrews they had come to support, not Bernstein. It also proved that, amid the general tension created by the Briggs initiative, after that of Anita Bryant, people would take sides in the name of such absurd criteria as municipal citizenship: in lieu of boycotting items such as Florida orange juice and oranges from Fullerton and Orange county (which took its name from that fruit), people would band together against a tennis player who hailed from that county but was not even studying there.

Otis, Ramsey and Roy, who had never set eyes on senator Briggs, were delighted to see that he had an unprepossessing physiognomy, and a stubborn, narrow-minded and malicious appearance. The gays hoped that the longer his campaign continued the more this would be to his disadvantage. At least Anita Bryant had curvaceousness on her side. During the two hours and forty-five minutes that the match lasted, all the spectators were spellbound, not least Briggs. At first the gays were fearful: Bernstein, unbeaten since the age of sixteen, won the first set. But the second and the third, which went to Andrews, raised their enthusiasm and filled senator Briggs with confusion. The placards "No to six", joyously brandished, seemed to presage defeat in another competition the outcome of which would have very different consequences.

Although Roy and the Z. brothers had met Bob on the terraces, they had not arrived at the same time, but they did return together to their respective motors. When Bob saw Roy climbing into the magnificent Mercedes, he felt humiliated by his Ford Capri. He had just told Roy that he had quarrelled with his father, who had refused to buy him a luxury car for his eighteenth birthday. He asked Roy and the Zs. whether they would be attending the district championship at the Los Angeles Tennis Place the following Sunday. This championship, organized by the tennis association of Southern California, brought together fifteen thousand boys and girls, and he, Bob, had already been selected for the finals. The Zs. replied that they would certainly be there, but Roy said he would be occupied with his parents. This encounter with Bob had caused Roy a certain unease; it was the first since his visit to Mr. Teller. But he had smiled inwardly when he told Bob he could not come to the Tennis Place: in fact he was due to pay his second visit to the house in Rodeo Drive.

As before, Mr. Teller opened the door. He was more flushed than usual, and his eyes sparkled below his thick gray eyebrows. "Quick, quick, come up to my room," he said.

Scarcely had he closed and locked the door than he pounced upon Roy. "Look at the state I'm in at the mere thought of your visit," he said, seizing Roy's hand and applying it to his long thick member. Roy fondled it, and with pleasure, even though Jack's example, where length and thickness were concerned, would easily have surpassed the president of the Bel Air Country Club, and even the consul-general.

"To think," Mr. Teller went on, "that it's an old schoolmate of my son who ventures such a caress! But do admit that you've had sex with him. He often speaks of you, even though you are no longer together, and always with a kind of fondness that is very like intimacy. Yesterday evening, for example, he was so happy to report that he had bumped into you at Griffith Park. And that even though he was supporting Bernstein and you Andrews!"

It seemed obvious to Roy that this father must be secretly in love with his son to speak of him so urgently and to get so worked up about the idea of Roy and him having a sexual relationship. And so he decided it would do Bob no harm to admit to it. "Well, yes," he said, "you're perfectly correct, Mr. Teller. I couldn't tell you the first time I was here, but now I no longer need to hide it from you."

Feverishly Mr. Teller removed Roy's trousers, stretched him out again on the big bath-towel, anointed him with lube and penetrated him. "Tell me," he said before ejaculating, "was it you who screwed Bob or was it he who screwed you?"

"It was he," said Roy.

With a few short movements Mr. Teller collapsed over the exquisite *derrière*. After heaving a long sigh, he turned Roy around and licked his penis, covered with the sperm he had caused to flow: the synchronization had been as well timed as with Jack. "Next time you have sex with Bob," the banker then said, "I beg you: screw him . . . screw him for me."

They went to the bathroom. "You haven't responded to my request," said Mr. Teller. "I want you to screw Bob."



"I don't know whether I'll have the opportunity, I hardly see him any more," said Roy.

"That opportunity, you have to know how to make it happen," said Mr. Teller. "It should be simple: you were schoolmates."

Actually Roy was not at all sure that he would be able to screw Bob; this so sporty boy clearly had tastes of a very virile kind and had submitted to Jim only when taken by surprise. Roy did not find it necessary to relate that episode to Mr. Teller. "I promise you I'll try," he said, "but I don't know that I'll succeed; Bob is eighteen years old and he'll definitely feel he's lost face if he allows himself to get done by a boy of my age."

"Listen," said Mr. Teller with a serious expression, "If you want me to go on giving you three hundred dollars, you need to screw him. Otherwise I'll give you just a hundred for letting me screw you."

Suddenly Roy detested this man who was more excited by the thought of some one screwing his own son than by what they had just done. He realised that he was no more than a projection of incestuous fancies, and that his own role remained secondary. "And furthermore," Mr. Teller went on, "the hundred-dollar regime will start from to-day. A hundred dollars is already quite a sum, believe me, my little Roy. It's what I give Bob as pocket-money for a whole month, apart from the petrol he gets from my garage."

"He gets petrol from your garage without paying for it?" asked Roy.

"Yes," said Mr. Teller. "I can easily spare him that."

Roy was staggered, because Bob, when he asked his friends for a contribution towards his petrol, had claimed that he was paying for it.

"Anyway," Mr. Teller continued, "we shall have, if you like, more frequent opportunities to see each other. On Monday my wife is going into the UCLA clinic for a minor operation, which will keep her there for a time. And after that she'll be taking a rest cure. Society life and charities tire her. I'll send Bob to see

her on the afternoons you are coming. Next Thursday is a holiday. If you come, you will have earned two hundred dollars in six days." He added something that seemed to Roy in the worst possible taste: "You earned less carrying my clubs."

The clinic at the University of California at Los Angeles, in one of the huge Westwood campus buildings, was where the very rich went to have their operations. The rooms, which Mrs. Clear had seen, were unbelievably luxurious, and the care was even more attentive than at the Cedars Sinai Medical Centre. The surrounding lawns were even embellished with sculpture by Lipchitz, Matisse and Rodin.

Roy had no intention of arguing with Mr. Teller—that untrustworthy man and unnatural father—about his decision; he was thinking only of vengeance. He realized that to be assured, at his age, of receiving a substantial sum, the police chief's protection was essential. But it was not to Jack that he turned—to Jack who had tried a similar trick on him. An idea had crossed his mind like a flash. He pocketed the hundred dollars, said "Till Thursday four o'clock, Mr. Teller," and dashed down the stairs.

## Part Two—Chapter Twenty

ON the Monday, Roy had to study for a “test”. In the evening he rang his gay team-mate Din Kelly, and mingled some suggestive banter with the subject they were discussing. The jeweller’s son returned the ball. Roy asked him if he had been plugging away at the subject. The other replied that he had been plugged in before he started, because he could no longer work without a functioning plug. He enquired whether the plug was making Roy’s lambda longer, and—the response being affirmative—what its length was. Roy put down the telephone to measure his lambda, as Otis had once done for him; he was using his compass and Din beseeched him not to injure himself with the points. Din measured his own at the same time. “Yours is an inch and a quarter longer than mine,” admitted Din. “Everything about a prince is big.”

The two boys exchanged observations about the effect of manual work on the development of the lambda. Din announced that the head of his lambda had become ruby-coloured as a result of his stroking the shaft, and that the ruby was turning into amethyst. Roy urged him to go on stroking, to see whether he could make it send out a stream of pearls. When Din said he would investigate, Roy, having confirmed that the head of his own lambda was the same colour, announced that he was performing the same experiment. They both put down their telephones, and then, a few minutes later, reported that it had been successful. Their voices were unsteady; that was the end of the conversation. Roy, following the example of Bob and Jim when they had reacted so moralistically to pleasure, yelled “Faggot!” at Din—but in a playful tone.

The next day Roy did not mention this episode to Otis; anyway he too was very busy preparing for a test and did not,

apart from Roy, have any intimate relationship with his fellow members of the clandestine gay group. As he had shown when discussing Manuelito, he kept himself quite aloof from such things, and that had inspired in Roy a similar reserve towards others. For example, although one of the high school toilets—one of those, naturally, over the door of which was inscribed “Boys” rather than “Girls” (they were in different colours)—augured well for “gay cruising”, Otis disparaged, or at least avoided, these licentious pleasures, from which Manuelito derived part of his remuneration. He told Roy that a leader, in order to preserve his prestige, should not make love with his rank and file, but should have one chosen friend. “Look at what happened to Jeremy Thorpe, the leader of the British Liberal party, when he got together with a stable-boy,” Otis continued.

“His misfortunes came not so much from getting together with that fellow,” said Roy, “as from being accused of wanting to have him killed. It was a *lack* of liberalism.”

After school that day Otis dropped Roy and Din off at the latter’s home in Tower Road, where the two were going to emend their test by comparing it with the work of their team-mate. The Kelly house was close to the one in which the great star of French *chanson* Sylvie Vartan resided for much of the year, and Din sometimes spotted her charming twelve-year-old son David, who, unfortunately, was a student at the French Lycée of Los Angeles. It was said that he played a drum kit in the playground.

It was a curious thing that it did not occur either to Din or to Roy to repeat at close quarters what they had done through the intermediary of the telephone. Not a movement to check whether their plugs were in place or their lambdas were raising their heads. The liberties that had made a spicy compliment to their work in the solitude of their respective rooms, did not appear to impose on them a new kind of relationship. They had had the appeal of improvisation, and would perhaps never be repeated. It was like those acts, likewise solitary, which one sometimes happened to see under the desks at Buckley: a

fugitive relief of juvenile sexuality, without collaboration, but not without a kind of brotherhood. A mutual homage was rendered to one's sperm, with a few jerks of the wrist in one's pocket or even inside a half-opened fly, while seemingly calm and believing oneself alone, but in fact enjoying the stimulation of knowing oneself to be observed. All in all, Roy and Din had added words to these mute games only to overcome the distance.

Elsewhere in the high school these mute games remained mute in a different way. On one occasion Roy, at Otis's suggestion, had ventured into the "gay cruising" toilets to educate himself about what went on in there. He found neither a cruising black nor a cruising Mexican, but in fact a white second-year, unknown to the clandestine group, who, at one ceramic stall, was very busily frictionizing his shaft. Roy went to the adjoining stall, showed his own shaft to his neighbour, and worked at it similarly. Each of them, eyes fixed on what the other was up to, discharged in two minutes, then flushed to remove the "cream" and got away without having uttered a word. Roy had noticed that his predecessor had indulged in this game with less discretion: he had left his sperm to swim in the basin. But since seeing this excited him as much as seeing the second-year student, he presumed that it had in fact been some sophisticate, wishing to scatter sperm upon sperm.

Yet despite this double deviation, Otis remained all in all for him among the Normans. Roy no longer even went to the Esprit de France club, one of the principal ornaments of which was a superb Negress, Regine Beauvoir, leader of the athletics team which pranced past, banners and thighs at the ready, on sporty occasions. (She had wanted to learn French because of her lovely surname and lovely French Christian name.)

On the Wednesday Roy rang Bob: "I'm going to give you your Cadillac," he said.

Bob burst out laughing. "Maybe you've seen a Cadillac on sale for the price of my Ford Capri at one of the Santa Monica Boulevard car-dealers?" he responded.

“Not at all,” Roy replied. “While it might be a bargain, it certainly won’t be an old heap. Where will you be at five o’clock to-morrow?”

“At the UCLA clinic. My mother’s been there since Monday. I’m keeping her company till dinner-time.”

“Go there earlier,” said Roy, “and come home at five o’clock exactly. Go inside very quietly, and don’t bang the door. Go up to your father’s room and he’ll tell you that he’s giving you a Cadillac. It’s a surprise.”

On the line Bob seemed dumbfounded. “This is some kind of detective story, right?” he observed.

“It can be whatever you want it to be, but trust me, I promise you’ll get your car. But because it has to be a surprise, don’t breathe a word.”

Roy was jubilant as he entered the Rodeo Drive house. Mr. Teller was waiting, as feverish as usual. “I’m happy that you have no hard feelings about my decision,” he said, once they were inside. “Had you not come back, you would have lost a hundred dollars and I a great deal more. But after you’ve screwed my son, you’ll have the promised three hundred again. I’m sure you won’t deceive me by telling a lie.”

“I’ve been too busy to do anything about Bob,” said Roy, “but as you see I still have time to come to you. The sensation you bring me is stronger than anything I would have experienced with him . . . and anyway he would not have given me a hundred dollars. I didn’t ask him for money when he screwed me. Boys have sex among themselves for free . . . at least when they have the same social standing.”

These dollars that resonated through almost all Roy’s secret assignments were like a melody that accompanied his steps. Was it not, though, the melody of American society as a whole? Emma Lazarus’s sonnet, a few lines of which were inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in New York, ended thus:

*I lift my lamp beside the golden door,*

—the golden door of the world of liberty, but also of the world of gold. Roy thought again of the astonishing advice given by Napoleon Hill in his book *Think and Grow Rich*: that, in order to acquire a sum of money, it was necessary to imagine oneself already holding it in one's hands. As he began fiddling with Mr. Teller's erect organ he told himself that he had his hands on a hundred dollars already, but that the vengeful trick he had prepared was worth a great deal more.

"As my wife is not here to-day," said Mr. Teller, "and I'm due to meet Bob at the clinic, we have all the time we want. I'm going to enjoy myself looking at you in the nude and stretching you out on my bed."

"I'm sorry," said Roy, "but I have to leave around five o'clock, because I'm going to a charity function with my mother."

"Well," said Mr. Teller, "that won't prevent me from having a rather less hurried feeling than usual as I screw my ravishing little caddie who has promised to screw Bob." It really was his obsession.

When Roy, quite naked, went to stretch out on the bed, Mr. Teller said that actually he would prefer to have him on the floor, as the bed reminded him of conjugal life. He told of how, as a child, he would go to have sex in the bushland at Baldwin Hills, the part of Los Angeles where he was living—it was there that Ruth Medlock's grandparents had one of the two houses vainly coveted by Jim Jones and the People's Temple. For him this memory associated sensual delight with discomfort: so he preferred to perform on a hard surface rather than a soft bed.

Roy knew that Mr. Teller's pleasure in him came not only from a recollection of bushland, but also from the crazy dream of raping Bob. He found amusing both that he was acting as a kind of substitute, and also that thanks to his machinations both father and son would soon be colluding with him. Yet he did not imagine that this collusion would tempt the father to put his dream into practice. The spectre of Mrs. Teller, an authoritarian

battle-axe, sufficed to dispel any possibility of that nature. Besides, Roy—his parents having taken a malign pleasure in informing him of the fact—was not unaware that Mr. Teller, a junior employee at Mrs. Teller's father's bank, owed his fortune to his having seduced the daughter of the house. The Plantagenet society, the society of the Descendants of the very noble order of Jarretière, and the prodigious order of the Californian *Tastevins* came subsequently. Even though he was deceiving his wife, Mr. Teller showed her the greatest possible respect, and even feared her: so he would be all the more obliged to give his son a Cadillac.

Roy, hands crossed under his chin, looked at his wrist-watch: twenty to five. The sound of a car arriving had not bothered Mr. Teller—it could have been the neighbour across the street—but Roy, his ear as alert as his prick, heard the front door of the house quietly open and close: the bedroom was at the front. It was Bob, who had come back a little early out of curiosity, and must also be looking at his watch. Certain that the boy would be waiting in the living-room, which was underneath the bedroom, Roy became very excited at the thought that they were right overhead, and he ejaculated into Mr. Teller's hand. And, as always, this was the moment when the father discharged in his backside. In that way, without knowing it, he achieved his repressed desire to sodomize his son: only the floor separated the two friends.

Coming out of the bathroom, Roy again looked at his watch: two minutes to five. "Here you are," said Mr. Teller, handing him a bank-note, "your hundred dollars."

There was a knock at the door. "Dad, are you there?" asked Bob.

"Yes," said Mr. Teller, whose flushed face had turned pale. Bob tried to open the door. Mr. Teller pushed Roy into the bathroom and admitted his son.

"I locked the door so as not to be disturbed," he said. "I was having a rest."



Roy, all smiles, emerged from the bathroom. "Hello Bob," he said. "I came to see your father on your behalf to ask him to give you a Cadillac. He's promised me he will."

Mr. Teller was taken aback. "Yes, yes," he stammered. To get rid of his two visitors he resumed his paternal authority and added, "Bob, take Roy home."

The two boys got into the Ford that had so often taken Roy to Buckley. Not a word was spoken until they reached the Clear residence. As Roy was getting out, Bob gave him a look that combined admiration, sympathy and disgust. "F\*\*k!" he said (it was his usual expletive among friends) . . . "What a bastard you are! . . . But my father is a bigger bastard than you!" As he drove off he called back: "Thanks anyway."

## Part Two—Chapter Twenty-one

THE business relationship between the Zs. and the Clears had materialized: Mr. Z. purchased the land John told him about at the time of their first meeting at the high school. John no longer dared, even within the family circle, to parade his racialistic views. Mr. Z. had introduced him to another important Beverly Hills Jew, Abraham Spiegel, vice-president of the Los Angeles committee for Israeli bonds, and John Clear had subscribed to a certain number of these bonds, in order officially to strengthen his ties with the Jewish community, rather like those his son was secretly strengthening with the gay community.

The Clears had been invited to visit the Isaacs, whose charming daughter Diana was a senior at the Beverly Hills high school. Every spring-time they entertained seniors' parents at a traditional tea. John and Kathy had not lost this new opportunity to meet the Zs., who were there as friends of the Isaacs; also there were present no parents of a first year student other than the Clears, and no parents of a junior other than the Zs. This was a public consecration of the ties between the two families and their sons. The gathering took place in the Isaacs's garden, and the seniors amused themselves by modelling for a display of spring fashions, and even bathing costumes, from Saks Fifth Avenue. There John Clear renewed his acquaintance with a Jewish figure he had got to know through Mr. Z., Fred Kahn by name, one of the Californian directors of the Jewish National Fund. He it was who had brought back from Israel a medallion of honour awarded to "friends from the American west coast for their faith in the high ideal of Israel and of Zion". The *Beverly Hills Courier* had published a photograph of him with the Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin.

In this regard, Roy had smiled when his father exhorted him to stigmatize racialism wherever it occurred. When, some weeks earlier, the high school television presented the film *Holocaust*, made in the United States, about the Nazi anti-Semitic atrocities and the extermination camps during the last world war, Roy had admired, contrariwise, the impartiality of Otis, who had been deeply moved by what he saw, but had afterwards ventured the remark: "My father is one of the principal Beverly Hills subscribers to Israeli bonds, as I will be after him; but I'm not sure that these constant attempts to revive such frightful memories are disinterested. I'm afraid that often their sole aim is to make West Germany cough up for the state of Israel, and to that extent I disapprove, because all blackmail is odious, especially when it is founded upon suffering. I don't like the fact that my co-religionist Nahum Goldman, president of the Jewish congress and the world Zionist organization, who thought up this method—the principles of which I will not discuss—of 'rehabilitating' post-Nazi Germany, and concluded an agreement with them on this matter, boasts of having brought in hundreds of millions of dollars every year, which is, as he himself claims, 'two or three times the sum collected annually by international Jewry', a sum to which I for my part am proud to contribute. Every Jew should support the state of Israel so that it may survive, but the leitmotif 'lest we forget' seems worthy of Anita Bryant's and senator Briggs's 'save our children!'. Why did he not also conclude an agreement with East Germany? Was it the West Germans alone who tortured Jews, or allowed them to be tortured? Is the fact of their being Communists enough to whitewash criminals? So what is the use of hounding some of them when one cannot reach all of them? The 'eye for an eye' is not a principle I approve of in the laws of my ancestors. Like many other things that we have abandoned, it is the expression of a primitive society. To punish hatred is to generate and perpetuate hatred. I have no more liking for Nazi-hunters than for witch-hunters."

These words made a profound impression, and confirmed the superiority that he who uttered them had acquired in every sphere. He dared to say what a good many people thought about the systematic exploitation of these memories, just as he had dared to say what a good many people thought of pastor Luther King. This made Roy proud of his friend. Knowing Otis's anti-Hitlerian sentiments, Roy judged him as generous in this matter as when he allowed his comrade Oren Aviv to win in the motor rally recently held between the car-owning students, where they had to reach a certain point after decoding a series of trick instructions. Otis had worked it all out, but refused to accept the first prize. "I would have to apologize for my Mercedes," he had said.

"And for your intelligence," Roy put in. "All your actions are those of a master."

A little after that, Otis provided new proof of his masterliness. The school elected its king, queen, princes and princesses for the entire year, but—democratically—the president of the students' association was elected for only half the scholastic year; and a new ballot was due in the spring. Aaron Schechter was not standing again, and Mike Navarro was seeking revenge; his best placed adversary was Daniel Klein, who for two reasons hoped to succeed his co-religionist from Beverly North. This was not what Otis wanted. "Look," he said to Roy, "Julie Semel is president of our Chamber; Ivy Cohen made way, in a sense, for Aaron Schechter, and Aaron Schechter is going to make way for Daniel Klein? This isn't the Jerusalem high school. What will the parents of non-Jewish students, like your own, say—or rather, what is worse, what will they *not* say—despite the sympathy they show us? There is nothing *but* sympathy for us. I am aware of these problems because my father, who is intelligence itself, has investigated the reasons for anti-Semitism and believed it his duty to explain them to my brother and me, so that we won't fall into the traps that rebound on Judaism. We screened *Holocaust* at the school. Let's not encourage mini-holocausts in people's

minds. Mike Navarro must be elected.” The contest seemed hard, but once Otis undertook some task, success was assured. Mike Navarro was elected in the first round, with a majority that astonished every one. Never had a minority done better: less than two per cent of the students were Chicanos. Naturally Otis earned Daniel Klein’s hatred at first, but his triumph was complete when he subsequently gained the approbation of the vanquished. “In fact we have gained a triple victory,” he said. “We are keeping ourselves somewhat out of the limelight, we are demonstrating our liberalism, and we are making Beverly South happy.” On that last point, only Otis knew what that happiness had cost him. “You can see,” he told Roy, indicating the grotesque Navarro, “that I don’t always bankrupt myself on good-looking boys.”

“Yes,” said Roy, “but for those people who make use of the Chicanos in the ‘gay cruising’ toilets or at home, you will have put the prices up. Manuelito will be rubbing his hands already.”

Something else that happened every spring-time, was that the Beverly Hills high school students enrolled in the dramatic art course put on a show, with one *matinée* and one evening performance. This year it was a musical comedy: *How to succeed in business without really trying*—the story of a “businessman” who inspired a lively passion in his secretary, while the president of the company was already in love with his, and so on. The whole thing was a mish-mash of businessmen and pretty secretaries. The forty-one cast members had benefited from the advice of Richard Dreyfuss, a graduate of the school, who had received the “best actor” Oscar for the film *The Goodbye Girl*, and was one of the stars of *Encounters of the Third Type*: he had come back to give a lecture. The school orchestra performed brilliantly, as did the talented singers and dancers. The *matinée* was reserved for students with school association cards, entitling them to concession tickets; families and those who spurned economies attended in the evening.

For the Zs. and the Clears it was a further opportunity to meet in the company of their offspring, even though they had no need of instruction from this comedy about how to succeed in business.

The Stevenses and the Medlocks also came, perhaps less for the musical comedy than because they knew Otis's parents would be there. They regarded Mr. Z. as their benefactor, the first in the matter of the Synanon cult, and the second in regard to the Church of the People's Temple, and wanted to show their gratitude to him once again. Incidentally, Nick and Ruth had told their stories to the whole school, which had served to dampen the propagandists for these two cults. The result had been to increase both drug use and sexual intrigues. Both boys and girls concluded that, apart from school work, it would be better to take an interest in the realities of sex and in synthetic paradises, rather than in the often sordid pseudo-paradises set up by crooks and maniacs.

Otis's prestige was enhanced even further by these two affairs; the clandestine gay group received a number of valuable new members. Ruth, in the absence of her beloved Ken, became a Daughter of Bilitis.

Among the high-school students who took part in the musical comedy, there were two Daughters of Bilitis and two members of the clandestine gay group. Ramsey, at home with Roy and Otis at the end of the evening, remarked that even at the high school there were gays everywhere. He added that they had always been well represented in the dramatic arts. Personally he had a romantic admiration for the cinema god of the nineteen-twenties, Rudolph Valentino, and had photographs of him in the roles of the *Sheikh* and *Son of the Sheikh* pinned to the walls of his room. He recalled that more than a hundred thousand people had filed past his coffin, that no other death had caused so many female suicides, that, moreover, the two ladies he had married, which led to his arrest for bigamy, were Lesbians, and that he himself was homosexual, as the term "gay"

had not yet been invented. It was said that every year on the twenty-third of August a woman dressed in black would appear on his tomb in the Apostles' Court at the Hollywood Memorial Park. Black had been the favourite colour of this son of Italy, whose name was actually Rodolfo Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi di Valentina d'Antonguolla. His house at Benedict Canyon in Beverly Hills was decorated in black, the walls were painted black, and the windows were covered with black curtains. Ramsey found it amusing that his real name had been Valentina and not Valentino. He also thought it noteworthy that, despite his fame, this actor had made a mess of his life, since he had always hidden his homosexuality and he had been the victim of a lie imposed by the epoch in which he lived. Ramsey, who had a sentimental side, never failed when he was in Hollywood Boulevard to stop at the street of fame near the Chinese theatre, to look at Valentino's footprint on one of the star-shaped slabs that bear, with their names, various prints made by the celebrities of stage, song and screen: not only feet, but also hands—but without going on to sexual organs. In this regard, and although he stood up for all minorities, Ramsey censured the mayor of Los Angeles and certain Negro groups for having forced the Hollywood chamber of commerce and the street of fame committee, who had refused to allot one of these stars to the deceased black singer Paul Robeson, to annul that decision. Roy was amused to see that Ramsey thought the same way as his father, who had also criticized Tom Bradley's interference.

They discussed the professions in which gays did best. Ramsey mentioned dressmaking. In Los Angeles, Luis Esteves, who made gowns for Mrs. Gerald Ford, wife of the former president, Jean-Pierre Dorliac, Bob Maki, and especially Jimmy Galanos were the most prominent dressmakers. The master of them all, the Frenchman Yves Saint Laurent, had a boutique at Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, where Marc Bohan, Dior's

successor, was in the process of setting himself up. And at Saks were sold gowns from their rivals Cardin and Balmain.

Ramsey also cited the Italian couturier Valentino, who was perhaps, like Rudolph, really Valentina, and owed his fortune to Jackie Kennedy whose beauty he had draped. Roy had admired the details published about the marriage contract between the presidential widow and the now deceased Greek ship-owner; twenty-five thousand dollars a month for her expenses for so long as they remained married, ten million dollars per year if he left her, eighteen million if she left him. It was more a current account than a marriage contract. However the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the Greek had taken his revenge on the calculating American lady: he got a law passed in Greece which would prevent his widow from touching a single *drachma*. It was doubtless for that reason that the *Beverly Hills Courier* announced her marriage with the Saudi multimillionaire Adnan Khashogi, who had an annual income of five hundred million dollars. She would be happy at last. But perhaps this news was a *canard*.

Like dressmaking, hairdressing attracted gays. France had given Los Angeles the one who became hairdresser to the stars, beginning with Farrah Fawcett-Majors: José Eber. His own hair was longer than that of the ladies, and they were all crazy about him. Los Angeles was also in debt to France for having given it a great musician, Jacques Morali, who had tremendous success in the discos. He was the producer for the gay sextet "*Village People*", who often appeared at Santa Monica Civic in grand "disco parties", and comprised one highly feathered Indian, two Negroes and three whites. This group had created the classic "macho man" to which Otis said he was less receptive than Roy. "But everything that is gay is ours," he added.

And finally, almost all the great dancers were gay—great dancers and great choreographers, such as the Frenchman Maurice Béjart who had appeared in California. Rudolph Nureyev, the glory of both dance and choreography, was no



exception to this rule. He came to Los Angeles from San Francisco, a few days before the fair at the Beverly Hills high school. All seats were booked for his six evenings at the Greek Theatre. The choice of this open-air theatre had delighted the gays, for whom it paid homage to the classical land of pæderasty. (One of the districts in Los Angeles bears the name Athens, and another Florence, and in the outskirts there is an Arcadia Park.)

At one of these evenings, the school's clandestine gay group and the gay groups from various universities filled many of the terraces. After he had finished his divine dances, Nureyev and his orchestra struck up in disco fashion. Around him the gays went wild. It was like Bacchus leading a gay Bacchanal.

Ramsey maintained that the following morning numerous plugs, having escaped from their orifices, were swept up at the scene, and that the largest of all bore the initials R. N.—probably Rudolph Nureyev.

“No,” Otis told him. “It was actually R. Z.—Ramsey my dearly beloved brother.”

## Part Two—Chapter Twenty-two

THAT Saturday morning, Bob rang Roy to ask him if he would be free at four o'clock, and said he would come and collect him.

"Where are we going?" asked Roy.

"It's a surprise," Bob replied.

The Cadillac that came to pick Roy up was no forty-thousand dollar motor like Otis's Mercedes, but it must have cost at least half that: Mr. Teller had done the right thing.

"You see that I wasn't kidding you," Roy told Bob.

"That's why I'm taking you to see my father," Bob said.

Roy gave a start. "To your father?"

"Now that he no longer has any secrets from me," said Bob, "he has enlisted me as a go-between, at least where you are concerned. We struck a bargain: each time you visit him he'll give me a hundred dollars, in addition to your own three hundred—he's told me everything. When my mother is back I'll make arrangements to go out with her on the days when you come to Rodeo Drive. My services begin this afternoon."

Roy was astounded. So, the favours he provided to Mr. Teller would bring in a hundred dollars for Bob, who seemed to have guessed what they were bringing the police chief. He wondered whether there had ever been another example of such an agreement between a father and son. Gold had shaped California, and was still shaping everything there. The agreement being set up between Roy and Bob was no less extraordinary. A son conniving with an old classmate whom his father is screwing!

"I've thought a lot about our situation," Bob told Roy, "and, after all, it's quite simple. You like to be screwed and you prefer a man to a boy. Such relationships necessarily entail money. You are right to ask for it, but you want to ask for it only from some

one of your own social class. You're anxious to avoid degrading adventures. With my father, who has no confidant and knows how to get rid of the servants, you need fear no indiscretions. In choosing him, you have done me an honour, because of the intimacies that you and I have had, and that you told him about. So the secret the three of us share is infrangible. It's incredible that you understood him and sensed his inclinations. I myself knew nothing about them."

Roy could not tell Bob that some one else knew their secret and was in possession of even more formidable secrets about his father. It was that same some one who had suggested he approach Mr. Teller. So he contented himself with thanking Bob for having analysed so well the feelings that had impelled him. "In fact," he said, "I ask your father for money as though he were my own. He is a father with whom I have sex."

"Well why not," said Bob, "since the two sons have already had sex with each other . . ."

Mr. Teller received Roy with a broad smile. "Here's my young scoundrel," he said.

"Daddy, no insults," said his son.

"Oh!" replied Mr. Teller, "it's an affectionate insult." He handed Bob the envelope containing the hundred dollars. "Here!" he said, "put this letter in the post."

"There's no address," said Bob, pocketing the envelope. Roy contemplated this father who shared with his son what he paid for his sensual pleasures. He told himself that the three of them deserved one another.

After Bob left, Mr. Teller and Roy hastened upstairs to the usual room. "You played a naughty trick on me, which could have had serious consequences," the banker said, "but it only cost me a car. I refused Bob out of a sort of sadism, and in fact you did me a favour by forcing me to give in to him. You've also brought me the unimaginable joy of having my son as an accomplice. That goes beyond the satisfaction you would have

brought me by screwing him. But I have other plans for you: I want to whip you. It's not as a punishment."

Probably this fantasy took precedence over Mr. Teller's obsession with the subject of his son. Doubtless also he was aware that henceforth he could indulge all his whims.

He went up to Roy and undressed him, whispering in his ear "I'm going to blindfold you, gag you, bind your feet, legs and hands, and then I'll whip you until I draw blood."

"Draw blood?" asked Roy uneasily.

"It's a manner of speaking," said Mr. Teller. "I'll just make your pretty *derrière* rosy. After which, in I'll go!"

He fastened Roy's feet and legs together with a belt, used a rope to tie his hands behind his back, blindfolded him with a handkerchief, and was preparing to use another to gag him when Roy expressed the concern that this might suffocate him. He knew Mr. Teller was not the "Hillside strangler"; but he wished to reassure himself. "See how I'm hardly tightening this handkerchief at all," said Mr. Teller as he adjusted it. It's not meant to stop you calling out, only to give me the illusion that you are at my mercy, that your body belongs to me, and that I am free to do what I will with it. But I won't be unkind to you in any way, even if it hurts a little."

Seated in an arm-chair, with Roy standing up, Mr. Teller turned him round and round like a doll. He fondled Roy's genitals, half opened his backside, leaned his upper body to the right and to the left. The doll came to life, much more so than "gay Bob". Roy was excited at being handled by some one he could not see. His entire body seemed to have been reduced to the organs of pleasure. Mr. Teller smeared the anus with lube, raised the gag so as to slide a tongue into his mouth, carried him to the bed, leaned him over it, and using a belt, began to thrash him.

Roy was overcome by a strange sensation. These blows came to him in fact as a new sensual delight, magnifying and molesting his backside, with repercussions at the front. A

warmth invaded him, stirring up his blood between the small of his back and his crotch, where his rigid member swayed. The power of the lashes increased, but caused him no pain; burning ridges branded his bum, bringing its roundness home to him. He was intoxicated by the thought that between these two blazing cheeks the orifice of pleasure was waiting to savour its climax.

## Part Two—Chapter Twenty-three

GIVING money to the police chief always had a strange effect on Roy. An effect all the more strange in that it was accompanied by a rapid calculation of debit and credit. This time it was two hundred dollars, coming half from Mr. Teller and half from the consul-general. Jack returned a hundred to Roy, in payment for his current visit to Brentwood, and pocketed the rest. He no more asked about what had taken place with the consul than had he about Mr. Teller. Roy, for his part, judged it unnecessary to say anything about the time Mr. Teller had given him only one hundred dollars, or about the trick he had played and its astonishing consequences.

Nevertheless, in their moments of intimacy, he ventured to tell Jack that nothing could make him forget that formidable phallus which was wedded to the secret of his body and which he called to mind so often. He congratulated himself that his rectal conformation was such that one simple unction had enabled him thenceforward to receive it without the assistance of either marijuana or poppers. He accepted these only by way of a complement, not a stimulant.

Jack asked whether the gay students at the high school were carrying on their cunning campaign against Proposition 6. Roy replied that at present they were supporting an initiative taken by the Lesbian and gay community to give blood at the American Red Cross. It was a convenient way to make an impression on public opinion before the election, by demonstrating that the gay community played a worthwhile role in national life, and took on all its duties, quite apart from their representation, in the person of Don Amador, at the Revolutionary Daughters' tree-planting.

"I know!" said Jack. "They want to organize a big fair in West Hollywood Park, with attractions, picnics, and children's games.

They're also mobilizing the 'parents and friends of gays', and are advertising a brochure called 'About our Children'—children that one man doubtless begets on another. But this recruitment of children is typical. The reverend Troy Perry's Metropolitan Community Church recruits them from the age of thirteen up. And there's no reason to protect children from gays? See how any one at all who needs a blood transfusion runs the risk of getting gay blood!"

Roy maintained that he still thought this a generous initiative, and that gay university students, that is, boys over eighteen, the age at which one was permitted to donate blood, were planning to take part in the initiative. They were all having tests done, to confirm that they had no venereal diseases.

"My friend Otis Z.," Roy added, "says that gays should also participate in the sperm bank, by going along to wank themselves off in support of artificial insemination. That robs Briggs of one of his main arguments, which accuses gays of posing a danger to the propagation of the species."

"The population of Beverly Hills is already in decline," said Jack.

"Exactly!" said Roy. "Otis points out that gays of seventeen and under could give their sperm, while they don't have the right to give blood. He has calculated that at the high school alone gays between thirteen and seventeen produce on average almost two pints of sperm monthly that is completely wasted, and at ten grams per baby, would allow one hundred births per month to take place—one thousand two hundred children per year, from the school alone!"

Jack could not help laughing. "I'll leave your friend to calculate," said he, "how many children would come from the sperm produced by Los Angeles's eight hundred thousand gays."

"You're forgetting that many of those gays have children," said Roy. He gave Jack a sidelong look.

The police chief changed the subject. He was delighted that the Californian lower house had passed a law prohibiting

employers from dismissing an employee who rejected sexual approaches, or from taking on a candidate who agreed to them. "This law proposed by a deputy from San Francisco," said Jack, "shows how far things have gone in our state. A gay boss who believes he has the right to abuse those who seek work, to take them on only if he gets satisfaction, and to turf out existing employees he takes a fancy to if they don't respond. Of all the legislative measures that could have been voted for—and this one is yet to be considered by the Californian senate—it is truly the most extraordinary from the moral point of view. And you tell me I'm being hard on gays! Look at the things they do, and imagine what they'd do if they were teachers. I really hope the vote on Proposition 6 succeeds, because the gay teachers, whose shamelessness will only increase, will follow the example of the gay bosses. They'll think it natural to favouritize those students whose good graces they hope for or possess, and to be unjust to the rest."

Roy thought to himself that by maintaining that he had not paid Manuelito for sex, he had shown an attitude similar to that of the abusive bosses. Yet he thought that the law under discussion at Sacramento, like the one Briggs was proposing, would introduce a veritable inquisition in the work-place and open the way for a thousand cases of extortion, under the pretext of preventing them.

"You're a good student," said Jack, "and you don't need to have sex with your teachers to get good marks. Later on, you won't need to have sex with your employers." (These words made Roy smile, as he thought of Otis.) "But consider how the ranks of the government, of the liberal professions, of industry, of everything, could sooner or later be full of cretins who have offered their bum-holes to their masters. Decadence will then have arrived, by way of the gays . . . and by way of *that*."

"You seem to believe," said Roy, "that gays are all cretins. Most of my gay schoolfellows are, like me, among the best



students; and the teachers we think might be gay are among the best teachers.”

“What utter rubbish!” said Jack angrily. “I find liaisons of that kind unacceptable within the educational system.” Roy understood that the police chief was envious of gay teachers who could take their pick of young bum-holes free of charge.

Jack put a photocopied sheet on the table. “Look at this,” he told Roy. “It’s a speech given at a dinner in honour of the new San Francisco councillor general Harvey Milk, by the black man Dymally who I’ve mentioned before. As vice-governor of our state, he’s the second highest elected official in California. You can see what this gay progress means, and whether it does not seem necessary, even in the case of rational gays, to call a halt to it.”

Roy skimmed through the document. The vice-governor extolled Milk’s election as a “measure of tolerance”, as “significant evidence of representative democracy”. He said that “this event in San Francisco was of major importance for the country as a whole”, and that “gays would from now on be represented in the city’s government, proving that they had become an identifiable group”. He celebrated this victory as a “victory for civil rights” and affirmed that the “gay liberation movement constituted the *avant-garde* of the human rights movement”. He said that “this minority group had been perhaps the least understood and the most mistreated of all groups”. He added that the defence of gay rights was a matter of the “fundamental goals of freedom”, that “the battle continued”, and that “we should be vigilant against the kind of attack launched by the Anita Bryants and Briggses”; that gays would still be vilified by “those who oppose change in the relations between minority groups and the bulk of society”, that gay teachers would still be suspect, even if not dismissed”. He concluded: “The historical oppression of homosexuals has been so determined and so inhumane that the movement in support of gay liberation, and its results, provide one of the most

encouraging signs of a more humane society.” For that reason he said he was “proud to be at this dinner”, saluted, through Milk, the people of San Francisco, and wished him complete success in his post.

“As far as I’m concerned,” said Jack, “all these cries of victory scare me. He who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind.”

“But isn’t it senator Briggs who is sowing the whirlwind?” said Roy.

“He’s sowing order,” said Jack, “and he’s sounding the alarm.”

Looking at the revolver on the table, and all those weapons on display, Roy told himself that the blame should be laid on the profession: unlike dramatic art, dress-making, hairdressing and the dance, the police did not constitute a profession attractive to gays. A gay police chief could not help but speak the language of his profession.

## Part Two—Chapter Twenty-four

THAT evening, Ramsey brought Roy and Otis to his room. He was, as they watched, absorbed in a painstaking task: on a mirror he was using a Gillette blade to cut crystals of pure cocaine. He kept silent, for fear that his breath might disperse some fragments. Then, still using his razor blade, he separated the powder into thin lines the length of a cigarette. Each one would form the equivalent of one dose. It was by smoking this drug, he had said, that one received its most aphrodisiacal effect.

Roy waited anxiously for this new initiation. He had been told to blow his nose so as to clear his nostrils thoroughly. Ramsey, one of whose was obstructed, perhaps from too regular a use of cocaine, had an original method of removing obstructions of this kind: he put a tennis-ball under the armpit opposite the nostril in question, breathed deeply for a few minutes, and the obstruction disappeared. The three boys would not be disturbed in their amours: Mr. and Mrs. Z. had gone to Pasadena with the Clears; the American Ballet was dancing there at the Ambassador Auditorium.

Now Ramsey sprinkled a line of cocaine onto marijuana for three cigarettes. He put nothing on the ends that would go in their mouths, and he doubled the dose on his own cigarette. "Don't be envious," he said. "I'm tougher." When they had lit their cigarettes, he told them to inhale the smoke and keep it in the lungs for at least a minute.

To entertain their eyes and prepare themselves for pleasure, Otis had taken a lot of paraphernalia from a drawer. First there were dildoes in various sizes, one of which was a double—a long tube of pink plastic, without testicles, and provided with a gland at each end. With curiosity and excitement Roy handled these devices to which Jack had made reference and which he was

seeing for the first time. So, it was not only Lesbians who employed them. Seeing how interested Roy was, Ramsey asked Otis whether he had given him one yet. "I confess that I've not thought of that," said Otis. "Or rather," he added, laughing, "I thought I'd give him one in the summer holidays."

"Do you need the summer holidays to put something in your bum?" said Ramsey. He examined the dildoes and chose a medium-sized one, complete with appendages. "Here you are," he told Roy. "For the Easter holidays. But the two eggs are not edible." He opened a drawer, took out some coloured paper, wrapped up the dildo and tied the package with a silver string.

Among the other objects Otis put on the table were a big jar of lube, jars containing wanking cream, like the one Manuelito had spoken of (following Ramsey's example, Otis offered one of these jars to Roy), inflatable pouches with a hole resembling an anus, rings of brass or other metals which could be slid onto the base of one's sexual organ to prolong the erection thereof, and some portable "glory holes". Ramsey explained to Roy that this was the name given to the holes cut between adjoining compartments in public toilets—such holes existed at the UCLA, but obviously not at the Beverly Hills high school or the Buckley school—which permitted virile organs to be inserted for screwing, being sucked or being masturbated from the other side. Adepts of the practice purchased these portable holes so that they could have the illusion of enjoying this particular pleasure at home. Roy could understand an idea like that, after the sensual delight he had experienced, blindfolded, under Mr. Teller's fondlings. Ramsey said that glory holes were not an American invention: they existed in all civilized countries, and particularly in France. The grandson of a deceased French Academician, a student at the UCLA and member of the gay group, had claimed—what was doubtless a mere pleasantry—that there was a glory hole in the toilets of the temple of glory itself: the French Academy.

Finally, Roy consulted the piles of pornographic magazines such as *Spurs*, *Colt*, *Blue Boy* . . . containing photographs only of youths and men. Was it these that Gladys enjoyed? Or did her Lesbian friend in fact show her female pornographic magazines, which were absent, Otis had said, from his collection? Roy, who had never looked through such magazines, was stupefied at the sight of all those penises, some of them in action, but he noted that not one achieved the size of Jack's: the police chief did not pose for these magazines. If Roy could have doubted that America had undergone a sexual revolution, here he would have had proof of the contrary. But his sister's question about magazines of this kind, and her attitude towards gays, had already confirmed the fact that this revolution had been accomplished, even among the Children of the American Revolution: Bob was another example. Moreover the fact was so firmly established that the Beverly Hills Courier, in one of its regular columns, dedicated to what happened during the same week one year, ten years, twenty-five years or a hundred years previously, would add a humorous note, almost always with an erotic tone, about ten thousand years previously. It was probably to show that the present revolution was no more than a return to primitive customs. For example, the paper recently wrote: "The traffic in illegal pornographic rock sculptures is totally out of control. Right-thinking citizens with a concern for morality are rushing around the canyons to buy up these explicitly symbolic stones at incredible prices. One lady, eminent in her tribe, was slightly injured when her five-foot rock broke in two as she attempted to roll it down a hill." But what interested Roy at present was not jokes. The sight, even fleeting, of all these males, rarely good-looking, but with the air of being so certain of the beauty of their organs, generated within him a noticeable tumescence. He told himself that Otis had judged these magazines too severely, but that the reason for this had perhaps been not to distract him, as Otis himself had avowed. He realized

why gays and even women would enjoy these images, which took the place of reality, or made it spicier.

He also looked through one of the numbers of the *Advocate*, the great Californian gay paper of which Otis had spoken. He thought it very well produced, as was *Gay Sunshine*, the San Francisco literary periodical. Otis told him to have a look at the small-ads pages of the *Advocate*. Gigolos, masseurs, so-called students giving their penis lengths and adding: "Deep throat . . . fantastic buttocks . . ." In regard to this last, one advertisement referred to a magazine containing nothing but bums.

Despite Otis, this sexual freedom intoxicated Roy. He fumbled at his flies, the swelling of which had become insupportable, and opened his zipper to reveal his implement. "You can be certain," said Otis, "that you are feeling the effect of the cocaine smoke, rather than these magazines." Roy confirmed that the sweet tickling in his testicles matched that in his nose and his mind. "Me too!" cried Otis, suddenly bringing out a menacing penis and giving it his two hefty testicles as support.

"Lie down on the bed face to face," Ramsey told his brother and Roy, "and put the double dildo in: it'll be fun to watch. When I use it with Otis we don't have onlookers." His preference for that role had been indicated by the intention he had expressed the first time he met Roy in the sauna. The two schoolboys removed their jeans, anointed their anuses with lube and their *phalli* with wanking cream, and, starting from opposite sides of the bed, shifted towards each other, after having fitted one end of the dildo into their respective anuses. They gave a smile as the device penetrated them. Then, they rocked in a faster and faster rhythm, in time with their masturbation. The device that united them, but forced them to keep apart, prevented them from rendering that service to each another. Ramsey imitated them. Settled in his chair, his eyes fixed upon them, and his feet under his backside, he had inserted one of the dildoes, the cord of which he had tied around his waist, and he

too accelerated the movements of his body and his hand. All three ejaculated simultaneously.

"It's insane!" said Ramsey. "The cocaine in the mind transcends the sensual delight of the body. We achieve self-possession even while possessing each of the others, without the need to be inside him. Copulation is fundamentally a bestial thing, and anything that replaces it is preferable."

"You don't appreciate Roy's bum," said Otis.

"And as for me, I favour Otis's bum," said Roy.

"As punishment both of you will have to screw me, once the cocaine's made us hard again."

Roy and Otis had extracted their dildo and wrapped it in a towel. Ramsey, in his chair, kept his in position. "Now it's you who are a delight to watch," said his brother.

"I feel so wonderful," said Ramsey, "that I don't want to budge. Roll a double dose cigarette for me."

"Aren't you scared that will be too much?" said Otis.

"No," said Ramsey. "Where pleasure is concerned, nothing is excessive."

Otis got up, went to the table, mixed a marijuana cigarette with two lines of cocaine, rolled it carefully, lit it and slid it between Ramsey's lips. Then he made two normal marijuana cigarettes for himself and his friend. "You really are my second brother," he told Roy, wiping his penis and anus with great care. Roy was enchanted, and luxuriated in these attentions which reminded him of Jack.

"Do you think we'll have the same relationship later on, when we become sober-minded electronics engineers?" Otis asked him.

"Why not?" said Roy. "We'll be married, but that won't change anything. Are there not good husbands who have relations with boys and doubtless with men?"

Otis said that there was a gay club specifically for bisexuals. He had learned about its formation *via* the most recent number of the *Gay Rights Newsletter*, now renamed to *Gay Rights*

*Guardian*. "That shows," he said, "that there are many people in that situation."

"As for me," said Ramsey, "when I get married, I'll choose a girl who loves drugs. I know several of them at the university."

Suddenly, he turned quite pale. His lips muttered unintelligible words and his feet fell heavily down onto the carpet. "Don't be alarmed," Otis told Roy. "I know how to deal with an overdose." He opened a window to admit some fresh air, sat Ramsey on the floor, untied the cord of the dildo and pulled it out, bent his knees back, inclined his head forward, exposed his back and massaged it gently, found a syringe in a drawer and sterilized its tip with a lighter, filled it with the contents of an ampoule of cardiac stimulant, and injected it into Ramsey's right arm, after having rubbed the area with a medical wipe.

"You make a good nurse," said Roy, who had been shattered by the whole episode, despite Otis's reassurance.

"Ramsey," declared Otis, "has never yet had to render *me* this service, because thanks to him I can see the example that should not be followed. As I've told you, cocaine should be taken only if one is capable of not abusing it.

"But didn't Ramsey claim that he was capable of that?" said Roy.

"Alas! you see how he is," said Otis. "Happily these crises are rare. It's partly my fault, because I've been doing what he wanted. I'm a long way from trusting him again. Besides, he's going to have to stay off drugs for several weeks. At least he's reasonable about that, because he's well aware that any crisis means he must detoxify himself. He already has a provision of the vitamins necessary for that eventuality."

Little by little Ramsey lifted his head. He relaxed, opened his eyes, and smiled. "Do excuse me," he said. "I'm very bad company. I'm going to bed. I need a rest. It'll be gone to-morrow. Clear up all the stuff. Otis, put the cocaine in your desk, and keep the key." He picked up the dildo, which was still lying on the floor, and kissed it: "And as for you," he told it, "you



can help with my recovery.” He smiled at Roy and indicated the package tied up with silver string: “Don’t forget it. It’s the fourth brother.”

## Part Two—Chapter Twenty-five

RAMSEY'S adventure had had the effect on Roy and Otis of dampening their enthusiasm for the white lady—at least for the present. Even though Otis was accustomed to these crises, the fact that this time there had been a witness, with whom he could discuss the matter, gave him a clearer perception of their gravity. Also, as a diversion, after their school-work and before doing their homework, they devoted themselves to the joys of skateboarding, to which Roy remained attached. But Mr. Z. and Mr. Clear had found an article in the *Beverly Hills Courier* saying that there had been six thousand accidents involving skateboarders in southern California that year, and they cautioned against that sport.

Then Roy took up jogging, which Otis preferred. This was not long-distance running, such as was practised at Buckley or the high school, but rather a rhythmic running with elbow movements, and it had become America's great affectation. Putting a figure to it, like everything else, the *Beverly Hills Courier* had just reported that there were twenty-three million American joggers doing two miles a day—a total of forty-five million miles every twenty-four hours. "And *we* aren't included in that total!" said Otis. Roy and he, in white shorts and T-shirts, with headbands over their foreheads to keep their hair in check, ran up and then down the Beverly Hills roads below the hills, keeping to the verges. It was Roy's old skateboarding route. For variety they would go by car as far as the Trousdale Estates, stop at a good place, and start jogging there. Roy's heart gave a flutter as they went past the consul-general's mansion.

On one public holiday, Otis, Roy and Ramsey decided to accompany their parents to one of the weekly concerts at the J. Paul Getty museum in Malibu. Roy and Otis had been to this

museum at the time of its opening in 1974 after four years of construction. During the previous winter a storm had destroyed the guest house, built on the edge of a cliff: the property was separated from the sea only by the Pacific Coast Highway and a narrow ribbon of land. The New York newspapers had exaggerated the news of this damage, writing that the museum itself had been destroyed. Consequently dealers and art-lovers had telegraphed to enquire whether the collections would be put up for sale.

Roy and Otis had another reason for going to Malibu: a cult that had recently found its way into the Beverly Hills high school, the Indian guru Maharaj Ji's Divine Light Mission, had its headquarters in those parts and had aroused their curiosity. "Instead of being witch-hunters," said Otis, "we can be cult-hunters." Ramsey too had some interest in these matters. He said that along Bruin Walk, the foot-path that bisected the university grounds and was lined with notice-boards bearing information and advertising, there were a good many people distributing tracts for cults. These were direct rivals of the University's Lutheran church built nearby and accessible, moreover, to every student.

The Divine Light Mission possessed in the eyes of Otis and Roy a double attraction: the first was that its leader, now aged twenty-one, had already been recognized as such when he was fourteen—so the mission had not been invented by some crafty adult; and the second was that its representative at the school had for the last little while been Penelope Webster, the captivating final-year student very nearly chosen as queen. She was from Beverly North, which was rare among the high-school zealots. She, as seventeen-year-old champion of the girls' "Varsity Volley-Ball" team (the senior team), always seemed to take a distant interest in Roy as member of the "Freshman Basket-Ball" team, which surprised him. She was not a Daughter of Bilitis, but she must have known that he was gay. The Websters spent every week-end at their Malibu Riviera home,

and it was they who had invited the Clears and the Zs. to the concert.

Penelope, although warned against cults, had in the end risen to this one's bait—it had been set up right under her windows, close to the Pacific. A great many adepts lived there. Several of them, having no money, even though the cult itself, like all the cults, had millions of dollars, worked in the Malibu shops and helped to spread the word. Penelope, who had been misusing Quaalude, the high school's favoured drug, had given it up after joining the Divine Light Mission. This recalled the cures about which the founder of Synanon had boasted, but there was nothing of the madman or tyrant about the founder of this Mission. On one occasion Penelope had glimpsed the young guru's chubby face in his Mercedes, with his young American wife and their two little children. He almost always kept out of his adepts' sight and moved around most often in his personal helicopter. The Divine Light Mission had purchased some land for him at a cost of five hundred thousand dollars, and a princely two-storey residence had been constructed there, surrounded by walls. His teaching was "knowledge and love". Otis related how, according to Penelope, Maharaj Ji, having arrived from India aged fourteen and in the prime of his guruship, first established his cult at Denver, in Colorado, where it received the status of a tax-exempt church, then at Houston, and finally it was California that had come to seem the most productive cash cow. Penelope did not care for this pleasantry.

"At least," Mr. Z. had said, "I needn't worry about the Websters. They're not going to let some guru steal their daughter, nor will they hand their fortune over to a guru."

They set off for Malibu. Otis was in the Clears' car so as to be with Roy. He remarked on his parents' thoughts about J. Paul Getty. The Zs., like the Clears, praised the man who had been the richest in the world for having chosen this town, so close to Los Angeles, as the place to build his museum. Formerly he had resided in Los Angeles itself, where his office was located in

Wilshire Boulevard, and he occupied there just one room. He died two years after the opening of the museum, which he had never in fact seen. Having taken refuge in England for fear of being abducted, he did not return to his native land for almost twenty years. The only kidnappings in Beverly Hills, recalled Mr. Clear, had been over ten years ago. The first was when the tyre tycoon Leonard Firestone, in his North Alpine Drive home, had escaped an attempt that failed thanks to a police informer killed in the course of the operation, and the the second was the abduction of the eleven-year-old son of Herbert J. Young, the president of a finance company, who was obliged to pay a two hundred and fifty thousand dollar ransom. J. Paul Getty had been obliged to pay a vastly more elevated sum for his grandson, kidnapped in Rome, but, being a confirmed miser, he was forced to pay by the pressure of public opinion only after the gangsters sent him one of their hostage's ears. This one-eared boy lived for some time in Los Angeles, where one of John Clear's colleagues had arranged for him to rent a house. Like Rudolph Valentino he had everything painted black. The souvenirs he left of his time there amounted to little, apart from the rubber cheques that were forwarded to Getty Oil for payment—his grandfather was by that time already in the purgatory of misers.

Gladys Clear's brother-in-law, a young petroleum engineer, worked at Getty Oil. He had visited them at Beverly Hills last year, after a meeting of the company's board of directors held at the University of Claremont, near San Francisco. He brought with him a prospectus bearing the inscription: "Seek security in an uncertain world".

"It is clear," Mr. Clear had said, "that if any one in the world found security, it was the late J. Paul Getty. From eight per cent tax-exempt bonds alone he had eight million dollars income. He could build a museum and buy beautiful things."

What was curious was that in fact his avarice did not apply to his purchases of works of art, purchases which were, moreover, deductible from his taxation. The collections assembled at

Malibu exceeded in splendour those of the Huntington Gallery at Pasadena, home of Gainsborough's famous *Blue Boy*. Jack Sherman, to show Roy that his culture had a certain breadth, called *him* his "Blue Boy", because he appeared in the Los Angeles *Blue Book* and because there was a pornographic magazine called *Blue Boy*. Mr. Z.'s name appeared in none of the three social registers of Southern California, nor did he belong to many clubs, apart from the one of which he was president; formerly at The Beach and the Los Angeles Athletic he had had the richest man in the world as a fellow-member.

The restrictions and precautions applying to a visit to the museum seemed to prolong the strange obsessions of the man who had built it. It was necessary to telephone in advance to obtain access to the car-park and a ticket—the Websters had taken care of that for their friends. Visitors arriving on foot were not admitted, nor were they allowed to walk around with bare feet or in beach-wear. People were not permitted to bring dogs in, nor to leave them in parked cars. "Breaking wind prohibited," Ramsey added.

Mr. Z., with whom Mr. Clear was discussing Getty while he was parking his car, said that the late multimillionaire's avarice was in contrast with the extraordinary generosity of the Emir of Kuwait, a country whose wealth had been so prodigiously augmented by oil: this Arab potentate employed more than a hundred people solely to help him spend his money. The women supported by Getty had not lived in such favourable circumstances. Had he been happy? That seemed doubtful, judging by his photograph on the front page of one of his museum's publications: his ravaged features, marked by the stinginess of the elderly, his expressionless eyes, did not speak in favour of his thousands of millions. Roy gazed at this image, which despite everything inspired in him a certain respect because of his cult of money. Mrs. Clear remarked that the powerful nose made the forbidding features heavier, but also ennobled them somewhat. Ramsey murmured to Roy and his

brother that a large nose was the sign of a large virile member. Perhaps, Roy said to himself, the richest man in the world had been a rival for Jack Sherman. According to Ramsey, fame brought him only feminine amours, the last of which—a French divorcee of Russian origin—had been the only honourable one.

The Zs. and the Clears discussed the question of whether money brought happiness. Ramsey cited a poll conducted by the Gallup Institute which had questioned ten thousand individuals in seventy countries about the needs and preferences of mankind. The majority yearned for a place where they could be poor and happy, because, they said, they knew of no such place. The university professor who commented upon these responses added that already in antiquity similar remarks had been made: the Latin poet Ovid wrote that “love feeds on riches” and that “poverty has nothing to nurture love”.

There was a Roman villa from Herculaneum, once owned by Julius Cæsar’s father-in-law, and reproduced with admirable lavishness and taste by the J. Paul Getty museum. Alleys paved with brick and lined with Mediterranean shrubs, framing the long pool surrounded by colonnades, led on to the superb house paved with marble that had been the gift and the dream of a Mæcenæ of long ago.

The Websters strolled beneath the colonnades with the distinguished curator Stephen Garrett, whom they introduced to their guests. Penelope, who had been keeping her distance, suddenly appeared within a floral pergola, like the most beautiful living statue in the museum. She wore a circlet of pink camellias on her blond hair, a shortish white tunic, brought in at the waist with a broad belt embroidered in bright colours, and below her long bare legs her feet were shod with pink-laced sandals. Despite his reticence, Roy felt his heart beat faster when she grasped his hand in a rather excessive manner. Forgetting his timidity, he leaned towards the circlet to smell its perfume—he was as tall as Penelope. Otis and Ramsey complimented her on her elegance and charm. But it was Roy she addressed, saying

“Do you like my camellias?” This attention confirmed him in the thought that he had not made a rash judgement of this girl’s interest in him. As he was not yet fourteen, he was all the more astonished that she should have set her heart upon him. He could not help being flattered by the fact. But really, what could be less extraordinary? The best-looking boy in the school was made for the prettiest girl in the school. Besides, it was likely that this could lead to something for them.

They had arranged to meet fairly early in the morning so that there would be time for a rapid review of the collections; the concert started at half past one. They admired the sculptures with the confidence inspired by their labels, since many of them seemed to be modern. One of the bronzes, recovered from the Mediterranean and dubbed the “Getty Ephebe”, was on show for the first time. It enchanted Roy as the image of an elder brother, risen from the depths of the sea and the abyss of time. In one room a display cabinet contained a golden leaf upon which were engraved Greek letters which the curator of antiques, a Czech-American who was evidently a fount of learning, was translating for an eminent visitor. The inscription ended with the mysterious words “I am the son of the earth and of the starry heaven.—But heaven alone is my dwelling-place.”

“But the bum alone is my dwelling-place,” Ramsey whispered to Roy, who reddened up to his ears, because Penelope had heard. She smiled.

On the first floor, gained by a magnificent lift, furnishings, tapestries and paintings were on display. Time was pressing, and they hastened through these rooms full of wonders, which sang the praises of the founder and his advisers.

“You’ll be at home here,” said Mr. Z. to Mr. Clear, in front of the writing-desk of Louis XVI, king of France. There was a little friendly irony in this allusion to the Clears’ royal descent. But Roy, in the presence of this magnificent piece, of ebony and lacquer with gilded bronzes, was for once proud of it. And he was also proud that Mr. Z. had uttered those words in



Penelope's presence. As the catalogue indicated that this piece had been purchased by the Englishman William Beckford at the time of the French revolution, Ramsey explained to Roy and Otis that the personage in question had been one of the pæderasts of his century.

All that remained was to return to the ground-floor, take a quick lunch at the cafeteria, and listen to the Nova Brass Quartette.

In truth, Roy no longer doubted that he had conquered Penelope's heart. She had been sitting opposite him at one of the cafeteria tables, and her knee had at once met his own, and had then remained determinedly glued there. At the concert she had arranged to be next to him, and it was their elbows that resumed the contact. Roy was careful not to break it off, because something unprecedented was happening: for the first time in his life he was becoming erect in response to a girl. Since he was wearing very tight-fitting jeans with provocative flies—in the matter of trousers he was following Otis's instructions—it did not seem possible that Penelope had not noticed. Cheekily he took no steps to hide it. Besides, had he decided to fold his hands over his crotch, he would have lost the elbow contact. So he continued to flaunt this flattering bulge on his right thigh. Because, despite his mother's remonstrations, he had stopped wearing briefs, the bulge became all the more evident, at the place where the material was thinnest. He increased the elbow pressure that was causing this rigidity, looked at Penelope out of the corner of his eye, and saw hers fixed upon this detail of his person. He tried to imagine the condition of her own privates, if she was not indifferent to a spectacle of this kind. Physiological books he had read, the elucidations Gladys had given him, and sexual education classes at school, not forgetting *Show Me*, allowed him to imagine only rather vague things. But he was happy that Otis and Ramsey, between him and his parents, were absorbed in the music and would have noticed nothing. He was frightened of seeming ridiculous to them.

Now they were off to visit the Divine Light Mission. Malibu Riviera, where it, like the Webster's house, was situated, was about twelve miles west of the Getty Museum, beyond Malibu Beach and El Nido. They took three motor-cars. A miracle occurred: the Websters, who had not seen their arrival, believed that the Zs. would stay together, and invited Roy to come with them in their Lincoln to keep Penelope company. He sat at the back, on her right. This time Roy's heart was pounding.

"You're abandoning me," Otis said.

"There's plenty of room for three," said Mrs. Webster.

"No," said Otis, as though he had guessed everything about this little intrigue. "*Tête-à-têtes* should be encouraged." He joined Ramsey in his father's Rolls.

Time was short and the setting, so close to Mr. and Mrs. Webster, hardly conducive to intimacies, but Roy admired the way Penelope, after a few minutes of general conversation, directed the talk to trivialities of school life that could not hold the interest of her parents, who started to chat among themselves. Roy, who had by this stage made thigh contact, was even more excited than during the concert. Penelope moved in a way that surprised him, but led him to think that in her corner her mind was moving along the same lines as his. Besides, no longer needing to stand on ceremony, she was evidently fascinated by the bulge. Her hand, as much as the rest of her, seemed to be itching for action. Roy remembered the scene between Jim and Doris in Bob's car, the day before he left Buckley; a scene that had titillated him not because of the girl but because of Jim. To-day it was his own turn.

Penelope turned from the trivialities of school life to naming the beaches they were passing: Amarillo Beach, Puerco Beach, Coral-Solstice Beach. Here she had been taught to swim; there she surfed or did water-skiing. Roy realized that there was method in this geography lesson. He turned towards the door and leaned against the seat back, to hide his happy flies. That was just what Penelope wanted; her hand at once ran to the spot,

opened the zipper, slid into the jeans, grasped the member which for nearly two hours now had been in a state of excitement, caressed it voluptuously, and, with a few rapid tugs, made it weep with pleasure. Roy quickly interposed his handkerchief to ensure that a large damp patch did not show on the bleached area. At the moment of his ejaculation, Penelope had wriggled about in a more pronounced way, pressing her thighs together, and it was with a shaky voice that she pointed out Escondido Beach. Her father and mother were still absorbed in their discussion of music.

They had just passed the limits of the Malibu Riviera. The Pacific Coast Highway now ran past the Country Park and Zuma Beach. "Trancas Beach, which we're coming up to," said Penelope, "is a favourite beach for Maharaj Ji's followers. He lives at Trancas Canyon, in the hills. What drew me to him was seeing, last November, on his twenty-first birthday, aeroplanes criss-crossing the sky for half an hour, writing 'We love you, Maharaj Ji' in smoky letters. There was something fantastic about that—the word 'love' written in space."

The three motors stopped near a club at Trancas Beach. The Clears, the Zs. and the Websters, guided by Penelope, entered a vast hall in which thirty or so people were gathered. They listened to a woman, speaking into a microphone, who praised Maharaj Ji's merits and miracles. On a platform stood an empty chair, next to a huge vase of flowers. The guru had managed to persuade his disciples that his spirit inhabited the chair. The people who came in saluted the empty seat, as did those who were leaving, thanking Maharaj Ji for having honoured them with his presence. Then a student from the University of Boston said a few words. He said that he lived in Venice with a male friend and that he had come for the day to receive the divine light of knowledge, the revelation of truth. He had never seen the guru, but he had been sensing his protective shade ever since he had been a disciple.

"Me too," said Penelope, looking at Roy.

“One should live for love alone,” continued the student, “and it is through love that we reach knowledge. We are eternally grateful to Maharaj Ji for having given us this rule.” He saluted the chair.

“Excuse me,” Mr. Z. very quietly said to Penelope, “I don’t believe I’m looking at the burning bush at Sinai. But I do congratulate you on your faith.”

“It’s time to have some tea,” said Mrs. Webster.

They left. Penelope met the beautiful Olivia Newton-John, co-star of John Travolta in the film *Grease*, who had a ranch at Malibu where she bred horses. She was not a follower of the Divine Light. She was with Neil Diamond, he too a resident of Malibu.

Roy was enchanted by the subsequent gathering in the Webster residence. Just like the day when, at home, thinking of Bob and Jack Sherman, he had told himself that he was the only one who knew both of their secrets, here he was the only one of the four young persons present who had a secret connection with the other three. Otis made no allusion to it, whether because he would rather respect the mystery (something of which his delicacy was certainly capable), or because he was indifferent to it and to everything feminine, or because his earlier remark had been little more than a pleasantry without *arrière-pensée*.

Penelope was particularly attentive to Roy as she served the tea. The guru’s residence was visible in the distance, half hidden among enormous trees. In front the Pacific stretched to the horizon. The sea-breeze had always intoxicated Roy. But what intoxicated him more was looking at this girl who, beneath the mystic veils of the Divine Light, had taken hold of his penis inside his trousers and made it ejaculate, behind her parents’ backs.

## Part Two—Chapter Twenty-six

ONE Saturday evening, on the pretext of going with Otis and Ramsey to hear Les Brown playing jazz at the university's Royce Hall, Roy, in spite of the attraction this hall held for him owing to its name and its connection with Rolls-Royce, had in fact gone with them to the Odyssey, the best-known gay discotheque of Los Angeles, apart from Studio One. It was in Hollywood Boulevard, at West Hollywood. It was, moreover, the only one Otis and Roy, as minors, were able to enter, although theoretically one needed to be at least eighteen, verified by an identity card. The reason for the prohibition was not a matter of morals, but the fact that alcohol was served there. Here, however, a stamp was applied to the back of clients' hands—a stamp permitting those who left to come back the same evening without paying again—this stamp was blue for minors, white for the others, and the blue stamp meant that alcoholic drinks, including beer, were prohibited. So the Odyssey was frequented by young boys and by those who sought them out. This visit was a kind of grand première for Roy. They had chosen Saturday, the busiest day.

A vast shadowy hall, criss-crossed by laser beams and suddenly illuminated by flashes from the walls, was packed with several hundred young people doing disco-dancing. Loud-speakers poured out deafening music, perfectly synchronized with the changes in light.

Mingling with the crowd, Ramsey, Roy and Otis at once began to dance. Roy was opening out to a new life—the public life of gays. It was no longer, as at school, the gathering of a clandestine group, surrounded by alien natures, or a private gathering in the Greenway Drive residence. Here one truly got the impression of a community. The sheer number of young people showed the

power and the future of this community, of which councillor Amador was the representative at the Los Angeles city hall. The few women visible were Lesbians or sympathizers. A few couples could be seen embracing or kissing. A giant Negro and a frail white were among the most demonstrative: they grasped each other's hips and, thighs pressed together, rubbed bellies, crossing and uncrossing their legs in a frenzy. And then, at the bar, the black gently used his handkerchief to sponge the back of the white, who had taken off his T-shirt.

Ramsey had found some friends, and even one of his lecturers. The Beverly Hills high school was more discreet. "Apart from the students and workers," said Ramsey, "all these people are lawyers, doctors, 'management', tradesmen: it's the arrival of the middle classes in the gay world that is a new phenomenon in America. Until now homosexuality was the privilege of intellectuals, artists and rich people."

Roy thought of Jack's unfairness in pretending not to know about the middle-class gays, while it was in fact they who were forcing society to evolve, having been brought to this point by the élite.

Next to the hall there was a long gallery, lined with benches, and partly in the open air, where people could sit, chat and drink, away from the din of the music. It was primarily there that the boy-lovers gathered. Several of them were at work: they were trying to get the boys interested in what they were saying; the boys seemed flattered that men should fancy them, and according to Ramsey, were already well aware of the appropriate tariff for their generosity. There was indeed a tariff for them, just as there was one for Manuelito. But all it looked like was a court of love where there was no question of anything but fine language. Roy watched these good-looking boys, some of whom were his own age; they were putting their coquetry on show as they smoked the marijuana cigarettes they had just been offered, or sipped a Cocoa-Cola. Two tipsy gentlemen made a comic contrast with their neighbours: one had removed his dentures

and was brandishing them as he conversed; the other kissed the dentures.

Roy and his companions danced for a long time, breaking off now and then to visit the bar and the gallery. The good humour and freedom that reigned made for a very pleasant atmosphere. The nature and intensity of the music, with the play of light, created a kind of bewitchment. It was as though they were taking part in a stentorian service of some new religion, more robust than any of the cults. Ramsey said that the crowd grew after two in the morning, because the other discos closed at that time, and the gays were obliged to fall back upon the Odyssey, which remained open until five. Everything seemed to have been calculated to favour pæderasty, in spite of the police chief.

"The Odyssey, the Studio One, et cetera," concluded Ramsey as the three friends were leaving at around one o'clock, "are all very interesting, and even very amusing, but not, perhaps, very exciting, because they're communal. When something becomes communal it ceases to be exciting."

Otis approved. Roy recognized the Z. brothers' aristocratic principles—principles which, for that matter, he shared.

"Yet," he said, "you yourselves campaign for the gays, you have founded groups . . ."

"Yes," said Otis, "there is a duty to help those like oneself, so as to encourage the timid, to bring together the scattered and let them back each other up. But to get a hard on and open the other's flies, more profound resemblances are required." He touched Roy's flies.

Seeing that they were in the area, Ramsey suggested a quick look at the nocturnal activity in the hot spots of male prostitution, starting at Hollywood Boulevard. Passers-by were not as numerous as the prostitutes, boys between eighteen and twenty-five. Some of them were Negroes or Orientals. A number had a meaningful handkerchief hanging from the back pocket of their jeans. They all followed with their eyes any motors that slowed down. Ramsey caught sight of the great French

hairdresser with his long hair, stopping his Cadillac and calling to a boy he negotiated with, picked up, and then dropped off again a little further away: perhaps a grope or some detail had disappointed him.

Another hot spot for “gay cruising” was Selma Avenue, which runs south of, and parallel to, Hollywood Boulevard. Badly lit, it was even better suited for encounters. In fact one was taking place: policemen from a patrol car were patting the pockets and legs of three or four young persons. It was, Ramsey said, to check that they were carrying no weapons or drugs. Roy did not need to be told that. The men under Jack Sherman who were performing this check had no idea that their chief was sodomizing a boy he gave drugs to and transacted business with, who was at that moment gliding past in a Mercedes.

They stopped at Highland Avenue, near a bar called Arthur J. “Let’s go in,” said Ramsey. “It’s a most amusing place.” At the counter, ancient women were serving hamburgers to boys perched on stools. As Ramsey and his friends were hungry, they ordered the same dish, accompanied by a bottle of beer and two bottles of fruit juice. At the tables there were only boys, youngsters and men. One of the boys, wearing a huge Texan hat and boots, was no more than twelve years old. His thin face disappeared beneath his head-gear and his slender legs within their tightly-fitting leather. He was conversing seriously with three men who gave the impression of bidding against each other in an auction, as in the notorious slave-market.

One motorist approached a boy of seventeen who had made a start on a hamburger, and said something in his ear. At once the boy got off his stool, asking one of the women to keep his plate, as he would be coming back. The woman, no doubt accustomed to such arrangements, showed not the least surprise. He was away no longer than ten minutes, then returned to his place at the counter and finished his cold hamburger. “Those boys who are taken away in cars,” said Ramsey, “but not taken home, render a manual, oral or anal service, performed when parked in



a quiet street. The danger is that a police car might come by. But in fact there are people who are excited by that danger.” The word “danger” put Roy in mind of what Manuelito had said about the school toilets.

The three friends remained in the car, smoking, to watch what was going on in the street. Some boys were leaning against the boxes set on poles along the foot-path which, during the day, contained newspapers and periodicals that could be purchased by inserting a coin. They chatted among themselves without paying attention to the three other boys observing them from the interior of a splendid motor; they must have been accustomed to curiosity of this kind and presumably it was their principle not to approach prospective clients. The reason why they did not go into the bar, where they could be picked up, was doubtless that they had no money.

A boy of about fifteen, dropped off from a car like the one that had deposited the hamburger eater, joined them. He took out a wad of one-dollar notes from his pocket and fanned them so they could be counted: thirty. “That,” said Ramsey, “is the remuneration for an anal service—probably from a restaurant employee, putting his tips to use. I’ve seen motorists in a hurry asking a boy to kneel on the back seat of their car. I remember once I wanked myself off in my own car while spying on a young black who had his face near the glass and was chewing the top of the seat with his white teeth.”

Among those to whom the boy had shown the banknotes, there had been neither a show of envy nor an attempt, even simulated, to take them from him: he had done his work and deserved his payment. They knew that with a little patience they would have their turn. The boy went into the bar to get some cigarettes from the vending machine. He did not offer them to any one when he came back smoking, but leant back on a newspaper box and waited for the next client.

Their evening, despite the comments about the Odyssey and despite the sordid and almost distressing nature of the final

spectacle, had made the three friends feel like having sex. They got back to Beverly Hills. In order not to disturb the peace and quiet of the Greenway Drive house, they went to the shed near the swimming pool, situated, as at the Clears', at the bottom of the garden. They turned on the lights in the changing-room, shrouded the lamps, and laid out on the tiled floor cushions from the poolside chairs. They were so excited that they needed no cocaine.

## Part Two—Chapter Twenty-seven

THE consul-general had told Roy that he would be away for two weeks; he had to be in Washington, close to his embassy. The day after his return, Roy telephoned him. Their second meeting was fixed for that evening. The young Clear was intrigued, because last time, after the scene on the terrace, the consul, without saying why, had measured the circumference of his thighs and his rump, his height, and the length of his arms, his thighs and legs, but not that of his penis, as Otis had done and as Roy himself had done for Din. The consul was waiting for him at eleven in the Rolls, not far from the Clear residence.

Once they had arrived at the Trousdale Estates, Roy soon learned the purpose of the measurements. His host removed the boy's clothing near the indoor waterfall, and dressed him in a doeskin costume with short and extremely tight-fitting trousers. "You are even more beautiful!" he told Roy, gazing at him, turning him around and caressing him. The mere feeling of that soft doeskin had sufficed to stiffen Roy's organ, which the consul with a knowing hand pushed into a vertical position under the shorts. He unfastened the fly to expose the object of his desire, kissed its head, its shaft, its young hair and its pendants. After which, he pushed everything back into the shorts, zipped up the fly, and returned to fondling Roy fore and aft through the doeskin. "I'm going to make you ejaculate this way," he said. Almost at once Roy went into ecstasy. He was thinking of Penelope who had given him the same pleasure inside his jeans. "You're an angel," the consul told him. Quickly he pulled down the shorts, transferred Roy's seed to his anus, and effortlessly possessed him.

This house was the first in which Roy had used a bidet. He found this hygienic device practical, but it is still excluded from

the majority of American residences, owing to a remnant of Quakerism, and it is also little known among the English. At Beverly Hills it was foreigners who contributed to the march of the bidet. When Mr. Clear sold the sister of the Shah of Iran the beautiful house in which she resides, Calle Vista, she at once installed bidets in every bathroom. He knew that there were also some at Farrah Fawcett-Majors's home, the decorator of which, what is more, bore the name Characombidet. But the Zs., who had a sauna and every kind of luxury, had doubtless wanted to go along with the American disapprobation of this item. Not long ago Gladys had raised with her mother the question of having one. Mrs. Clear had retorted that a Daughter of the American Revolution should refrain from such an indecency. Roy had become adept in the bi-diurnal gymnastic performance that consisted of putting a foot on his toilet rim—happily quite low—and soaping his *derrière* in unstable equilibrium.

Next he and his host bathed in the warm water of the rivulet that formed the waterfall. A delightful perfume had been added to it and its fragrance filled the air. A sweet oriental melody could be heard. Then, wrapped in gowns, they stretched out on a divan. The consul poured some Californian champagne, mixed with peach-juice. It was, he said, a recipe invented by the owner of a bar in Venice—the Italian Venice and not the Venice of Los Angeles—in honour of the writer Hemingway. Seeing him quaff several bottles of champagne daily, the Venetian had made him this mixture, to reduce the effects of the alcohol.

“Each time you come here,” said the consul, “you will have a different costume. And inside each of them I will make you ejaculate. As you cannot be here all the time, I will take my pleasure from gazing at those marks of your ejaculations. I will add my own to them. And later I shall have the shorts cleaned and we shall start the series over again.

He got up and opened the wardrobe, revealing a collection of costumes on coat-hangers. “You can see that we’ve been working hard for you,” he told Roy, “and it’s by no means finished.

Nudies, the shop that provided stage clothing for Elvis Presley, is making one covered in sequins, in which you'll be simply mouth-watering. I am in love with you, and with your bum. To prove it, I'll give you four hundred dollars each time. No need to tell Jack."

He folded back Roy's gown in order to study and fondle his bare bum. "Never," said he, "have I seen a more beautiful *derrière* . . . Never have I been more thrillingly received into a *derrière*, gripped by a *derrière*, and pumped by a *derrière*."

Roy's front side was again responding to the caress he was so fond of. And the consul's front side was joining in. "Before I make you ejaculate again, and before *I* ejaculate again inside you," said the impassioned dignitary, "let me have the pleasure of seeing you in these garments." Turn by turn Roy donned a Mexican costume with fringed trousers; an Indian costume with feather head-dress; a choir-boy's costume (the consul was Catholic); a page-boy's uniform, which reminded Roy of his father's idea about the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, where the long vacation of his sixteenth year would let him earn a thousand dollars per month in this clothing. The friendship with the Zs. had prevented John from mentioning such a plan again. Roy had no doubt that he would earn a thousand dollars faster and more pleasantly by wearing this same uniform in a castle at Trousdale Estates, at the home of a friend of the Los Angeles police chief.

All these costumes, made to his exact measure, fitted him beautifully. The mirrors covering one of the walls reflected his image. The consul, his dressing-gown open, fingered himself while he watched. He was saving himself for the final item in the collection: a simple costume of beige silk, with a vent in the trousers. He slid a hand in, began his caresses again, and grasped Roy's shaft from behind between the thighs. "The feeling of the silk," he said, "will be as soft as the doeskin. Let's take advantage of it right away." This time he used a cream to bugger him, while making him stain his trousers.

## Part Two—Chapter Twenty-eight

THE clandestine gay group at the school was jubilant: Mervyn Dymally, the vice-governor of California, was coming to chair, together with some state senators and trade unionists, a show that would be transmitted on the institution's own television channel. It goes without saying that senator Briggs had not been invited. But the speech delivered by the vice-governor in San Francisco, which Jack Sherman had made Roy read, had been circulated by the gays' supporters, and had warmed people to this liberal-minded Negro. He was the first official supporter of the gays who had visited the school; councillor Amador confined himself to his colleges. The gays believed themselves justified in coming out of obscurity by displaying their lambdas. The vice-governor appeared delighted to discover that the Beverly Hills high school was a nursery for gays and that a number of these were Negroes. Roy congratulated himself on no longer being at Buckley, where he never could have experienced such times, nor worn a lambda without being shown the door.

According to what Otis said, having been informed by his brother, the vice governor was simply adopting the attitude of the governor himself, Jerry Brown, in whom the gays suspected they had more than a mere auxiliary. His private life remained a mystery. He was not known to have any feminine connection. He was a yoga adept. He lived very simply, refusing to move into the official residence at Sacramento or to use the large state limousine; instead he drove a small Chevrolet. His dream was to beat Carter as democratic party candidate at the forthcoming presidential elections. His involuntary ally there was Bill Carter, who undermined the popularity of his brother the president: his most recent escapades had been to urinate in public and to insult the Jews after climbing onto a table during a banquet

given for a Libyan delegation. Jerry Brown's behaviour was very different. Tall, distinguished, cultured, he had a good deal of prestige among the masses. If he were elected as president, it would be the first time there had been a bachelor president at the White House, and perhaps a gay president. He knew that the gays, almost all of them democrats, had voted for him as governor. But he hesitated, understandably, to admit to his tastes. When a journalist told him that the gays were claiming him as one of their own, he replied with an evasion: that this was perhaps because he was unmarried. Anyway, at one of the recent party conferences held at San Diego, he was asked if he would vote against Proposition 6, and responded that he would. More importantly, he asked the conference delegates to vote the same way. Senator Briggs, who had counted at least on his silence, had remained angry ever since.

The Los Angeles gays claimed that Don Amador would turn to the White House shortly after the referendum to ask Jimmy Carter himself to state his position. Since the president had to be in California at that time to support Jerry Brown's re-election, that would be a good moment to try, but it was feared that the influence of his sister Ruth, a rabid Baptist, might hold him back. He was tackling the problem, but only up to a point. During the presidential elections, he confined himself to sending his son to a gay gathering, and condemning any exclusion of government officials for political, religious or sexual reasons. He had met Harvey Milk, who told him candidly that "You are receiving me as a Jew, but not as a gay."

Mervyn Dymally's visit to the school had greatly excited not only the students but also the teachers. Those of them who were themselves gay and had begun to take sides assumed they had the right henceforward to speak out against Proposition 6 and say what a danger it was to civil liberties. Briggs, in his long interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, had argued that "a teacher's career was dreadfully attractive for a homosexual," which would

seem to throw suspicion upon every educator without distinction.

Harvey Milk was an example of the cost of being gay for a teacher and even for an official. After graduating from the Albany University in New York, where he trained for the teaching profession, he had won some stripes during the Korean war, but was dismissed for homosexuality, which prevented him from entering the profession after his return. The fact that this New Yorker from Long Island could have taken his revenge on San Francisco seemed to irritate Briggs, who, not to offend the sensibilities of the Los Angelenos, whose neighbour he was at Fullerton, denounced the great city of northern California as the “homosexual capital of the United States”. Milk, after openly defending the gays there, had been elected in November 1977, with the support of the liberals and the unions. Don Amador had been elected later in Los Angeles. But what Briggs and the anti-gays could not pardon in Milk was his having defied them by carrying on openly with his friend on the day he took the oath of office at the city hall, as the police chief had told Roy. Ramsey knew that boy’s name, Jack Lira; he was twenty-four, and Milk, on the steps of the city hall, had presented him to the crowd as his “partner in life”.

Amador, in Los Angeles, had been more discreet. It is true that, while he had a male friend, he was living with his adoptive father, a former marine officer named Amador, who was himself gay and had given him that name. Among gays there were many instances of such adoptions, which sanctified a relationship. “Donald Henry Grace” was the original identity of Donald Henry Grace Amador—the name that appears on his diploma of anthropology from the UCLA, displayed in his office at the city hall in the Civic Centre.



## Part Two—Chapter Twenty-Nine

THE police chief was as happy as a sand-boy to receive another two hundred dollars from Roy—a hundred for his most recent visit to the consul-general, and a hundred for another meeting with Mr. Teller. But to-day Jack was not giving anything back: they were going not to Brentwood but to Hollywood, to the residence of the second rich boy-lover, to whom he wanted to introduce Roy without further delay, perhaps because he himself would profit from it: the great cinema actor.

Travelling along Sunset Boulevard towards Hollywood, the police chief described for Roy the house he would see. It was just as astonishing as the consul-general's in respect of its architecture, a heterogeneous blend of French castle and Spanish convent. Jack asked Roy whether he had been to the fantastic residence of the former press magnate William Randolph Hearst near the Santa Lucia mountains, to the north-east of Los Angeles; the actor's home was like a smaller version of that. Roy had visited that residence, which was listed as a national monument, and which, although deprived of some of its furnishings after the sales its owner had been forced to make, remained a tourist destination. The Hearsts with whom the Clears were acquainted at Palm Springs—where they had the house which they now let for the entire year—were the parents of the former lord of the San Simeon manor.

Jack related that he had assisted in the search for Hearst's grand-daughter Patricia, who was kidnapped in February 1974 by the so-called "Symbionese Liberation Army" and had participated in the raid on a bank at Hillsborough in northern California. She was serving a seven-year prison term in the correctional institution at Pleasanton, not far from the scene of her crime and the apartment she had shared at Berkeley with her

former fiancé Steven Weed; it was also close to the residence in San Francisco of her father, the owner of the *Examiner*, one of that city's principal newspapers, which also had a Los Angeles edition.

The White House and the Department of Justice had been bombarded with petitions asking for a measure of clemency for this girl; among the signatories were forty-eight members of the house of representatives, five of the jurymen who had convicted her, and the former FBI agent Charles Bates who had devoted nineteen months to tracking her down, as well as the former California governor, Ronald Reagan. A committee had been formed for "the liberation of Patty", the young multimillionairess, just as there had been one for the liberation of the communistic Negress Angela Davis. It was said that she had lost over a stone since she had been in prison. She had recently become engaged to be married to one of the police officers guarding her. Her photograph in the arms of this man was published in magazines, and another photograph of the Hearst family, smiling beside the future couple. Some people recalled that the grandfather, William Randolph, had been indirectly responsible for the assassination of president McKinley, against whom his newspapers had conducted a violent campaign, writing that it was necessary "to kill bad men who are in charge of bad institutions". That was almost the same as the programme of the "Symbionese Liberation Army". Patricia seemed to have recovered from the brainwashing that had inculcated this ideal upon her. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that she instituted proceedings to change her counsel for the defence, after noticing that he was taking a tablet before pleading. She did not want, she said, a "man who could not stand upright without medicaments". Going by the photographs, this was certainly not the case with her fiancé, Bernard Shaw. It was doubtless the name that led his future mother-in-law to declare that he was "full of humour", and she also approved of his "virile and forceful appearance".

Jack, the admirer of the rich, very much approved of the petitions organized for Patricia Hearst. He even agreed with Ronald Reagan that she had been punished so severely only because she came from a rich family, and that she had been drawn into participation in the Hillsborough hold-up despite herself. On the other hand, he approved of the *Los Angeles Times* having published a series of articles intended to “revivify Hollywood”, in other words to improve its morals. The city of stars was described there as a collection of perverts and criminals. There were said to be men and women who appeared naked in front of appalled tourists, and shameless threesomes who exhibited themselves in broad daylight. As Hollywood was annexed to Los Angeles, it was part of Jack’s police district, and he confirmed that these reports were hardly exaggerated. He referred to the case of Mackenzy Phillips, the young actor found unconscious in the street under the influence of drugs. Roy smiled at the severity of Jack’s attitude towards the morals of this city which was the home of the film actor he was being taken to see.

The garden gate opened electronically; that of the castle was opened by the actor himself. Once again it was noticeable: the police chief, when he took Roy to meet some one, was never received by a servant, no more than was Roy when he paid these visits alone. Jack had passed on his host’s request for Roy to wear his school T-shirt. The actor appeared charmed that this detail had not been forgotten, and he appeared equally charmed by his young visitor. Roy gazed at this handsome man whom he had admired in so many films and who, although already of a certain age, had retained his youthful figure. He was impressed by the beauty of the *décor*, without being capable of judging whether the furniture and old masters were authentic or not.

They sat down in the centre of a vast drawing-room that had a different kind of *décor*: photographs of the actor in his various roles covered the walls. It was like the photographs of Rudolph Valentino that ornamented Ramsey’s room. And beside each

chair there were stacks of photographs, always of the master of the house, which one was encouraged to leaf through. Roy delighted his host by listing the names of the films in which he had seen him. He also said that he had spotted the actor last autumn at the Beverly Hills high school, when the drama department played *the Midsummer Night's Dream* before a large audience. They had drinks. They discussed the film *Eyes*, with Faye Dunaway, very popular in Los Angeles at the time, which all three had seen. Then Jack withdrew, as he had done at the consul-general's; the screen idol himself would take his young fan back to Beverly.

"Come and sit on my knees," he told Roy. He took him gently into his arms, fondled him and kissed his face. "You are even more lovely than Jack told me," he said, "and you have a grace and natural elegance which enhance your beauty." He caressed the knight on the T-shirt. "I was thrilled," he added, "when I learned that you were at the Beverly Hills high school and that you are one of the princes. My dream as a young boy was to go there to meet the sons of all the Hollywood stars, because my second dream was to become one of those stars. My reason for sometimes going to see performances at your school is to breathe its atmosphere. I regret having missed the musical comedy. In future I'll make sure I'm invited regularly. It will be marvellous to be in the same room as you, among all those beautiful rich boys, my beloved—because I do already think of you as mine.

"Imagine my own school," he continued, "in the poorest part of Los Angeles—Watts. My parents were among the rare whites in that black district. When one has spent one's childhood there one can understand the 1965 riot, one of the most serious in United States history. My old home, where three families lived—fifteen people in six rooms—was burned down during those events. There are two categories of men: those who had their own room as a child, and those who did not." Roy, hearing these memories of a impoverished childhood and miserable living conditions, thought of Jack, who had recalled similar

memories, relative to a different area of Los Angeles, like the one where the boys and girls of Beverly Hills had visited a primary school at Christmas. He understood the good fortune of having a completely different origin, environment, and education. Even if he took a certain pride in all that, he had less comprehension of the prestige it gave him in the eyes of those who, not having had that good fortune, took advantage of his body.

Yet one story that came to his mind helped him to understand the regrets which the absence of such good fortune could leave, even after one has come up in the world. At Buckley Bob had related a touching detail he learned from a student at the French lycée of Los Angeles. When Elvis Presley enrolled his daughter at that establishment, he asked the Kabbazes—the head master and head mistress—whether they would permit him to be present at the girl’s first French lesson. “I grew up in poverty,” he told them, “and my dream was to learn French . . . which I have never done.” At the back of the class, the greatest singer in the world listened, his eyes misted over, as his little Lisa uttered her first French words.

“You can see,” the actor went on, showing Roy the house, “that I’ve come a long way since Watts.”

“How did you get started?” asked Roy.

“Thanks to a great producer, whom I came to know on Santa Monica beach and whose companion I was. I owe him everything, even my talent. But sometimes it seems to me that had I been at the Beverly Hills high school I would have had ten times more.”

Roy told him that he had been at the Buckley school before. “I know,” said the actor. “When you come again, you can wear your T-shirt from that school. For now, take off your jeans and your T-shirt.”

Roy was stirred to feel his organ rise between the fingers of this man whom so many millions admired on the screen. “You don’t realize,” the actor told him, “that the fluid produced within these pretty balls I am fondling is more refined than my own,

thanks to your education. I'm sure your pleasure is more intense: the brain is linked to everything, and nothing can make up for second-rate impressions it receives during the early years." Roy smiled to himself at such an assertion, which he considered debatable, but he did again recall Jack and his fantasies about the rich. At the Buckley school he had known some rich little cretins, and did not assign heredity any more value than it merited. However he was touched by the way this famous man—like Jack—continued to be obsessed with poverty and his dreams of an elegant education.

The actor asked Roy to open a drawer in a Louis XV chiffonier, rather like the one in the Clears' living-room: it was stuffed with T-shirts. "Choose one," he said, "and put it on." Roy was thinking of the consul-general, who had made him put on various costumes; the actor's T-shirts completed his wardrobe. But here the stylish and picturesque were replaced by inscriptions in gilded letters, both on the back and on the chest: "Suck me" . . . "Whip me" . . . "Cover me with sperm" . . . "Screw me". All these imperatives, disparaging to his status, gave Roy a voluptuous thrill, but the second reawakened images of his sessions with Mr. Teller. He donned that T-shirt. "That's the one I was hoping for," said the actor, taking from another closet a whip with a leather lash.

Roy, elbows on the chiffonier, offered his hind-quarters like a well-bred boy. Very few lashes were needed to make his shaft stand erect. "Oh! if you could only see yourself!" said the actor. "Your bum is wonderfully responsive. It's quite pink already."

"When it's quite red," said Roy, who was giving little moans, "screw me quickly, without making me change T-shirts."

## Part Two—Chapter Thirty

THE battle over gay teachers' rights was intensifying. Both supporters and opponents wanted to make an impression before the summer holidays, when they could consolidate their positions and prepare for the campaign in the new school year before the referendum on the seventh of November. It was known that, of the fifteen municipal councillors in Los Angeles, nine were against Proposition 6. But it was also known that, according to the polls, seventy per cent. of the population were in favour, even though fifty-nine per cent. supported equal rights for gays. The two results were not contradictory; the first came from the "Save our children!" campaign. But the gays were not overly concerned even by what seemed the inevitable result of the referendum: they were certain of winning the case before the supreme court of the state or of the United States, in the name of equal protection under law. Their opponents were hoping to make the success of this appeal more uncertain. They had at their disposal much more substantial financial means, and had the advantage of being only a single group, whereas the gays were split into innumerable factions.

While, in Los Angeles, Don Amador's diplomacy had won over the majority of the council without unleashing open war—he had even brought one female councillor over to the cause—in the San Francisco general council, on the other hand, Harvey Milk was battling a former fireman, Dan White, who had expressed a deadly hatred of him: the echo of their altercations had reached as far as Los Angeles. Otis pointed out to Roy that the gays were using the weapons of rational thought or enthusiasm, whereas the others were everywhere brandishing the weapons of fanaticism. "It is indeed a contest between Fascism and freedom," he concluded.

A new proof was provided of that point when one of the Los Angeles television channels transmitted a confrontation between the reverend Troy Perry, head of the Metropolitan Community Church, and senator Briggs. The latter showed incredible violence towards a man of the Church—of the gay Church, that is. Raoul Teilhet, president of the Californian Teachers' Federation, was with the churchman, and restated the gays' argument against Proposition 6: namely that it would be a new Salem witchcraft trial. Richard Clowes, the county's school superintendent, maintained that the contrary was the case, namely that if this proposition passed it would cause "no major bloodshed nor any witch-hunt".

The gay rights assembly of southern California had copied an interesting letter, published in the New York Times, and Otis distributed it around the school. The author, Richard Claiborne, began by stating that several years of agitation for gay rights have, as was to be expected, led to a counter-movement. Homosexuality, he said, is now denounced in the press and from the pulpit, and those municipalities which, one or two years previously, made anti-gay discrimination illegal, had revoked those laws with an impressive majority. He referred to what Anita Bryant had managed in the Florida county of Dade, and to what had happened in the municipalities of many other states.

"This new attack against homosexuals, virtually on a national scale," continued R. Claiborne, "is founded upon two arguments: God disapproves of them, and they run after our children. In other words the gays are scheming to seduce our little innocents and turn them into monsters." The author of the letter started with an examination of the first argument, and declared that it would in fact be difficult to find out *what* God thought about that. He added that it was "impossible to reason with people who are in the know about what God thinks." As for the second argument, he spoke from personal experience, admitting that homosexuality can sometimes be a contagious phenomenon, but that its importance should not be exaggerated



by the belief that a boy who has homosexual experiences will necessarily become a homosexual.

He related how, at the age of eleven, he had been seduced at school by an older boy, and that, in the course of the following year, he had had relations with half a dozen further boys and also with two homosexual teachers, but that at the age of fifteen he was totally won over by girls. From that day until now, forty years later, he had never had homosexual relations, and was perfectly happy with his wife. They had gay friends, whom he did not think of for an instant as “potential sexual partners”; such an idea, he said, had “the same effect on him as the idea of a sawdust sandwich between two slices of grilled cardboard”. Otis found this pleasantry uncalled for, since a gay could say the same about the love of women.

Mr. Claiborne wrote further: “According to all the studies of sexuality, my deviation into homosexuality as a child was and is something very common. More than half the male population of the United States has had similar experiences. Why are they not gay, and why am I not so myself?” He considered that those who were most ferociously anti-gay were stupid to maintain that children would be “converted to a gay course by gay teachers”. He said that “heterosexuality was most fundamental in human nature, and that women would always offer sufficient appeal for humanity to survive”. He attributed gayness neither to environment nor to influence, but to a natural predisposition. He did not think homosexuals ran after children any more than heterosexuals did, and there he confirmed what Jack had stated on the Los Angeles television. “But even if that were so,” he added, “it would make no difference. Almost all children would still grow up straight, and those who did not would have become gay anyway.” He ended thus: “Human heterosexuality has lasted too long—millions of years—to be afraid of gay rights.” This letter expressed the common sense of America.

The Baptists responded to this argument with a second letter, which they arranged to distribute to the people of Los Angeles

and Beverly Hills—Roy did not do their deliveries there. It was headed “Gay, but not happy”, and began with the epigraph “Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he”. It contained the confession of one Ed Johnson. He said he had been initiated into gay practices during his military service overseas, had been dismissed by the psychiatrist, had come to Venice in California, using drugs and indulging in sensuality, had then gone to New York, to New Orleans, to San Francisco, and returned to Los Angeles and was picking people up in Hollywood—in the bars, the boulevard and the parks. But he had the good fortune to meet Jesus. He cited the second epistle to the Corinthians: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away.” “If you are gay,” the former soldier went on, “and you have reached the conclusion that there are better things than living from bar to bar, gazing and seeking, then I’m telling you that Jesus can make you live . . .” There followed his telephone number for complimentary discussions “in the service of Jesus Christ.”

Then the gay rights assembly counter-attacked by distributing a letter under the name “Pass for straight, but don’t be happy.” It was a confession, this one made “in the service of truth”. Another confession by a former soldier describing how he had battled to hide his inclinations from himself, had been very unhappy, had almost married, then had almost entered a monastery, and had had the more fortunate idea of going to a cinema in San Diego where, seated in the last row, he suddenly “found happiness, whose name was Joe”. A new life had begun for him, and he too gave his telephone number, for any one who needed details. The number was H.O.M.O.S.E.X. “It’s true,” Otis told Roy, “the gay rights assembly of Los Angeles does have a seven-digit number corresponding to that acronym.”

Mr. Claiborne’s letter, in mentioning “studies of sexuality” in the United States, was doubtless intended to refer to those conducted by the Kinsey Institute, affiliated to the University of Bloomington, in the state of Indiana—the birthplace of its

founder. But for two years California had had, in San Francisco, its own Institute of Sexology, the first school related to that subject in the world, as the Kinsey Institute, also known as the Institute for Sexual Research, was restricted to research, as its name indicated. The chancellor of the San Francisco institute was a Methodist pastor, Ted McIlvenna. Seventy-three thousand people had already been admitted, and four grades of diploma in sexuality were awarded there. The funds for this establishment came not only from the state of California, but also from the Methodist church and the Commission on obscenity and pornography, set up by president Johnson. The Institute possessed eleven thousand erotic films, and a library of three thousand volumes. Pæderasty—pædophilia—formed an important part of the curriculum. It was this Institute, just as much as the efforts of the gays, that was responsible for a correction made to the text-books of those “well-being classes” aimed at twelve-year-olds. The previous guide had called homosexuality “a menace to physical, mental and emotional health”. The new one insisted on “respect towards other races, national origins, appearances, and life-styles, including homosexuality”. Every member of the education department had agreed on this alteration. Having obtained the public celebration of “Gay Pride Week”, the gays had now managed to teach the students that they needed to be respected. The fury of senator Briggs and the former San Francisco fireman was understandable.

## Part Two—Chapter Thirty-one

THE black singer was the last three-hundred-dollar client Jack procured for Roy. “In fact,” the police chief said, “I’m your true love, because I’m the one who gives you least.” The singer lived in Santa Monica, between the high school and the ocean. This town, in Los Angeles county, was independent, like Beverly Hills, and had quite a few blacks, but blacks of a kind quite different from those in Watts. Being close to the Pacific made it even a relatively agreeable place, despite the auras of the redoubtable Chuck and the Synanon cult that hung over it.

The singer was already well enough known to have a claim to a star on the Hollywood Boulevard path of fame. He was dressed in white. His house, in which everything was white, was like that of a French tart circa 1900 as seen in films: tulle curtains, fringed cushions, wing chairs, ermine. Ostrich eggs were displayed on silver supports; paintings depicted men and women in white; vases of white opaline contained marguerites, tuberoses, lilies, camellias. The singer’s formidable ugliness, which recalled Jack’s, and thus fascinated Roy, was at once masked and heightened by such a *décor*.

As in the case of the Hollywood actor, Roy was introduced as a fan, and just as he had flattered the actor by citing the names of his films, he flattered the singer by citing the names of the songs of his he had on discs. As usual, Jack quickly made himself scarce.

“I don’t scare you, do I?” the singer asked, approaching Roy and kissing him.

“If you scared me I wouldn’t have come,” said Roy. “I enjoyed your performance at the Greek Theatre in Griffith Park.”

“I’ve been looking forward to your visit for ages, ever since Jack told me about you,” said the singer. “The thought of it has

been agitating my mind so much that I've written a song for you. I'll sing it."

The sentimental tone of this man with his athletic build and rough exterior touched Roy. But Jack had already accustomed him to such contrasts. The singer lay down on the carpet in front of Roy, supported by a cushion, and crooned, gazing at him and plucking at a guitar. It was a slow sentimental number made moving by his exceptional voice: not a word of it indicated the gender towards which this hymn of love was directed.

Next, he carefully undressed his visitor and stripped quite naked himself. Of all the sexual organs with which Roy was acquainted, this was the only one whose dimensions were comparable to those of Jack's. The discovery could not but be agreeable to Roy. The Negro put Roy on his back and carried him around on all fours, laughing heartily. Then he put him down, turned him over, anointed him with lube and, without the least difficulty, stuffed in his great shaft.

"You will be my god," he told Roy, while they were still entwined. "If I've written a song in your honour before meeting you, just think what I'll do now. Whenever I sing in public, on the wireless and the television, you will know that it's still for you. Never will any man have loved a woman as I will love you." Even though he was by now accustomed to these compliments, Roy heard them with as much pleasure as ever. To be adored, paid and screwed seemed his destiny, the triple crown of his charm, his refinement, and his lasciviousness. For him the smile on his mouth had become the counterpart of his contractile anus. The two movements seemed to him to be interconnected, the one visible to all, and the other secret.

"You are the flower of the white race," said the singer.

"And you," said Roy, touching the great phallus, "you are the glory of the black race."

The entertainer burst out laughing. "You're not one of those who are disgusted by blacks," he said.

Roy related, without mentioning how it ended, his first adventure with Jim, the young black at Buckley, and the second time, without the incidentals. "So," the singer said, "you've already dipped a toe in the water of Negritude!"

"With you, it's plenitude," said Roy. The singer asked whether Jim had given him money. "Come on!" said Roy, "he was a schoolmate."

"I'm pleased to hear it," said the singer. "I was beginning to think that you had sex with blacks only because they paid you. But had *I* been your school friend, I *would* have given you money to thank you for being with me." Roy reflected that this charming idea was rather like what Otis had been doing.

"When Jack told me I should give you three hundred dollars," the singer continued, "I thought he was making fun of me: boys of your age are available for ten times less. But he added that you were a luxury item, the most beautiful boy in Los Angeles (it's true) and even a descendant of the royal family." Despite his scepticism in regard to this pretension which followed him around from one rendezvous to the next, Roy was amused to see how it maximized the price for his favours. He confined himself to saying that his father was a member of the society of Americans of Royal Lineage, and that he himself was the "freshman prince" of the Beverly Hills high school. "I'm thrilled for you about your elective crown," said the singer, "but most of all it was your descent which increased my yearning to see you. While many Americans are curious about their ancestry, blacks in the United States seem to be excluded from investigations of this kind, because the Mormons ban us from the centre for genealogical research they established in Salt Lake City, which has the most amazing computers. But our brother, the writer Alex Haley, has shown us the possibility of this project. As you know, his book *Roots* was one of the best sellers of 1977."

Roy could not reveal that his father had not allowed his mother to buy this work, nor even to watch on television the film made from it, which had had eighty-seven million viewers. "The

only things that are praised these days are books by Negroes!" Mr. Clear had said. "Their singers, male and female, are all we hear!" In short, Roy, through his secret conduct, was reacting against all his parents' prejudices.

"Haley," the singer went on, "collected from his grandmother, while a child, words and names that were of African origin according to her. He explored the archives in Washington, consulted linguists, and found proof that those words came from a dialect of Senegal, in west Africa. In that way he was able to discover the traces of his original forbear, transported to America by slave-dealers. Naturally the accuracy of this narrative was contested, but among black Americans it gave rise both to a great deal of tourism to west Africa, and to frantic research in the archives. For my own part, I am now certain that my family originally came from central Africa, where the Central African Empire now is, and I attended Bokassa's coronation last December. It was magnificent. The festivities cost twenty million dollars. The imperial cloak alone, in ermine and velvet, cost a hundred and forty-five thousand dollars, and the crown ten million. There was a banquet for two thousand people, to which I was invited, and a procession of a hundred thousand men. I sang for Bokassa the First, just as I have sung for you. I told him what I had discovered, and he recognized me as a cousin. You see that I am worthy of your interest."

"Yes," said Roy, fondling the member again.

This return to realities seemed to cast a shadow over the Negro, if that were possible. It was as though he had been told that his cousinhood with the Emperor Bokassa was less interesting than this fleshy sceptre, worthy of his race. "Yes, my black prince," Roy went on. Immediately the Negro's face lit up. Roy reflected on what an extraordinary lever snobisme was, a lever at least equal to the lever of sex, and one that existed even among "people of colour": all of a sudden they needed ancestors, as though that were a measurement of nobility, just as Bokassa had needed a crown, the shimmer of which was shining

even in this white Santa Monica drawing-room. But was Roy in a position to complain about that? No more than about the legend of his own august lineage. He would hold on to the singer—had already held him in advance—by way of this puerile side, rather as Mr. Teller had believed it necessary to rise to his level by speaking of the nobiliary clubs to which he and his wife belonged.

There was another snobisme: that of money. The singer, although naturally generous, wanted to prove beyond doubt that a cousin of Bokassa kept all his promises and more. “You won’t get three hundred dollars,” he said: “you’ll get five hundred for each of our meetings, but it’s best not to tell Jack.” The truth was that Jack’s rich friends had passed the word around.



## Part Three

## Part Three—Chapter One

TO-DAY Otis and Roy were in the naked intimacy of the Greenway Drive sauna. Every day Roy felt more attached to this boy. But he was bothered by all the secrets which it was impossible to admit to him. By way of compensation, he had the idea of telling Otis something that would replace a confession and that would, without compromising any one, be the test of Otis's capacity, equal or not to his own, to defy all prejudices. At the same time, if, as he hoped, Otis agreed to his suggestion, Roy wanted to receive in return the advantage of keeping his reputation unsullied by certain adventures. Recently at school he had told Otis that he would reveal something important next time they were alone in the sauna.

Now was the moment. There they gazed at each other to their hearts' content, and no longer furtively as at the swimming pool or the showers at school. They caressed each other, fondling their straining organs. And Otis kissed Roy on the mouth. It was the first kiss of this kind that Roy had received from a boy. What had happened with Bob, Jim and Manuelito, as well as with Otis until now and with his brother, had been nothing but sex. The only kisses he had ever been given, beyond those of his parents, were those of Jack, Mr. Teller, the consul-general and the Negro singer—men's kisses. And so he was at first rather surprised by this young tongue that entered his mouth and created a new intimacy. He was all the more moved by this impulse in that Otis had as yet inhaled no cocaine.

"Now," Otis said, "am I going to learn your secret?"

"It's one result," said Roy, "of the television report that is the real origin of our friendship. After seeing it, I went out with the intention of going to Hollywood Boulevard to meet men." He paused: he was recollecting his encounter with one man—with

Jack. "After a moment," he went on, "I invented reasons for going back. I had scruples; I thought it was too late. And then our friendship took my mind off those vague ideas, just as it relieved me of Manuelito, but I'd still like to try it again and go through with it. It must be exciting to pick up a man, a stranger, ask him for money, a large sum, and to get it by having sex with him. It goes without saying that that is acceptable only if one actually has no need of money. Otherwise it's the most shameful of occupations."

"You're divine," said Otis, pressing himself against him, organ upon organ. "You have incredible ideas for a boy of thirteen and a half."

"Fourteen in two days," said Roy.

"I was reading, in a book about morality in the ancient world," Otis continued, "that the Roman empress Messalina went out at night to brothels and got herself screwed and paid like a courtesan. Your idea is the same thing. You're right, it must be exciting. Everything that overthrows moral values is exciting, like drugs and homosexuality."

The words "moral values" reminded Roy of the Buckley school's "human values". The life he was leading was indeed diametrically opposed to the principles he had been taught, but he considered himself the sole judge of his conduct, as pleasure was the only rule he had. He was delighted to have convinced his friend.

"We can go to Hollywood Boulevard together," said Otis excitedly. "We'll set exorbitant prices on our favours. We'll be the two young money-boys from Beverly North. The art will consist in doing that without being spotted by any one from Beverly. It'll be incredible. A western, below the Hollywood hills and on its boulevard—a western my grandfather would never have imagined!"

Roy congratulated Otis on not feeling restrained in any area by his religion, the one that had invented sexual morality. "And you," Otis asked him, "are *you* held back by your religion? No

doubt it's because mine is the oldest of all that it's possible for me to rise above it. I respect the Jews who follow our precepts to the letter, but the essence of a religion doesn't reside in that. I've had occasion to say it several times. The Beverly Hills Jews go out in the day-time on the Sabbath, and don't abstain from eating this or that. The Catholics themselves have almost completely given up similar practices. To-day it would be absurd to want to keep to a morality laid down centuries ago for reasons that have ceased to exist, or to continue with practices that distinguish oneself from one's neighbours with the intention of building a society on different foundations. To-day we are all supportive of each other. God doesn't disappear after these changes: he remains on the horizon, and I believe in my God as strongly as Moses did. But from that I receive insights that have nothing in common with the prescriptions in the Bible, even though I continue to respect it, in memory of what it has been for my people. Above all it has inspired in us the love of liberty. A Jew is first and foremost a free man. I pointed that out to you when I spoke about the Jews' contribution to the gay cause. So you're right to want us to cast off yet another shackle, to defy yet another interdiction. And I thank you for encouraging me to do that.

"Apropos," he went on, "what would you like for your birthday?"

"Since we met," said Roy, "you've given me the golden lambda, and soon after that a plug, and Ramsey has given me a dildo. That's enough for one year."

"For the year that's passed," replied Otis, "but here we're talking about your coming year. Would you like a lighter?"

"It would be the symbol of the flame of our friendship," said Roy.

"Good, you shall have a lighter from Cartier—the French jeweller. There's a shop at the Hilton." Roy hugged Otis.

Ramsey joined them in the sauna. Otis told him what had just been decided: the birthday gift and a money-boy adventure.

Ramsey approved of the gift, saying that he would contribute, and was amused at Roy's plan and the enthusiasm it had aroused in Otis. Nothing surprised him. Perhaps also, as the elder brother, he did not wish to appear less daring than the two schoolboys. "There's nothing to be embarrassed about in being paid for sexual pleasure," he said, "provided, of course, as Roy has said, one is not obliged to do it out of need. It's the inexcusable that is attractive. Only luxury is tolerable. Necessity is sordid." When Otis alluded to Messalina, Ramsey declared, "Since Roy descends from the French kings and he is a prince of the school, we others, who are indeed princes and kings of a kind thanks to our situation, we can feel free to do anything. But let's do it discretely so as not to upset our parents.

"Among the gays at the university," he continued, "there are some I know who have commercial relations with men, for less noble motives, but they are frank enough to admit it. Two of them are part of a network that includes, they have told me, students from all the universities in the county and the neighbouring counties: southern California, Loyola Marymount (the Jesuits), Santa Barbara, Long Beach, Technology, etc.—and this network sends them out to rich enthusiasts. There are several dozen boys on the list. They are generally paid a hundred dollars per session, but men have to pay a thousand dollars for the right to use the network. In New York there is something similar, but there it costs two thousand dollars to enrol. The distinction is humiliating for California."

The hundred dollar figure interested Roy: at fourteen it was the minimum he received, while eighteen was the beginning of university age. He was truly a money-boy *de luxe*.

Ramsey had brought along the usual paraphernalia. He was now avoiding excessive drug use, and following to the letter Adam Gottlieb's wise advice about cocaine. "To thank our friend Roy for his wonderful idea," he said, "we're going to send a cloud of delight into his nostrils." As he had done the first time, he used a drinking-straw to blow a little powder into Roy's nose.

Then he anointed Roy's anus with his blend of cocaine and lube. "Go on, Otis—take him," he said, "while he pours his sweet fountain into my mouth."

## Part Three—Chapter Two

THE following Saturday, Roy and Otis put into execution their plan for making conquests in Hollywood Boulevard. It was not a plan for meeting Jesus there like the soldier Ed Johnson whose letter the Baptists had been peddling.

Having put the car away safely, the two friends advanced along the path of battle. Otis had judged it unnecessary to hang a handkerchief to one side or the other behind their jeans. “Why,” he said, “should we seem to be committing ourselves to doing only one thing? We’re ready for anything, are we not?” They had decided to ask a hundred dollars, to distinguish themselves from ordinary money-boys, and to be on the same footing as the university students. Obviously Roy did not tell him that this was the fee for his charms with the Los Angeles police chief.

At the corner of Las Palmas Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard, near a gay bar called “Gold Cup”, they stopped in front of the famous display of all the newspapers and magazines of America and the entire world. It was here that Ramsey came for his supply of erotic journals. A very good-looking young Filipino, in tight-fitting khaki jeans, whose dappled *derrière*—and semi-erect phallus—seemed to be crying out for caresses, purchased *Blue Boy*. A girl of twelve or thirteen was examining further publications of the same type: she was completing her school’s “well-being” classes. Roy was excited by the thought that this display, accessible to the young and even to little children, was like a dispensing machine for sexual acts, mainly of a masturbatory nature. Otis remarked that freedom of expression in America, while not moribund, was under continual attack. He compared it with the gays’ situation. He spoke of the trial, the previous year, of Harry Flint, the editor of the pornographic

magazine *Hustler*, from Cincinnati, which Ramsey had followed from a distance. Flint had been sentenced, in the name of a municipal law against “organized crime”, to twenty-five years in prison and an eleven thousand dollar fine. Many journalists, while they did disapprove of the content of this magazine, defended his right to publish what he wanted, and inveighed against the fact that a local government should take upon itself the right to introduce censorship and to have it applied by a reactionary jury.

The beat poet Allen Ginsberg had experienced the same trouble thirty years earlier, when he published his first collection in San Francisco: the editor was accused of violating the Californian law on obscenity, but was acquitted. In spite of his sympathy with this high priest of rebellion, who was one of his own race, Otis found it ridiculous that the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published what is more by the University of Chicago, devoted more than a column to him, as it did to other American or foreign writers of the same category. “The position accorded to these pariahs,” he said, “is a hypocrisy aimed at excluding sex from normal society. At the same time, to provide a frisson of fear, they are puffed up excessively, as though there were a possibility that social order could be overturned by drug fiends and sex maniacs. I think along the same lines as Mr. Claiborne in his letter to the *New York Times*.”

Next they trolled in front of the bars, without mingling with the “cruising” boys, some of whom darted hostile looks at the two new-comers. None would have suspected them of living in Beverly North and arriving by Mercedes. One of these boys, with his handkerchief hanging to the right, asked whether they were at the Hollywood high school. “No,” said Otis, “we’re from the Santa Monica high school.” Roy smiled at this response, which seemed a homage to the black singer. The boy’s query was pertinent: the Hollywood high school lay between La Brea and Highland avenues, near where Otis had left his motor. This so



conveniently situated high school probably supplied many of the young recruits to Hollywood Boulevard.

Roy and Otis went into a bar to take their favourite ice-cream at the counter: a “Banana Sunday”. They were amazed that no client had yet approached them, but they realized that there had to be a period of familiarization: one caught a gaze, one moved away, one came back, one caught another gaze, one moved away again. This strategy was perhaps imposed by the circumstances and the location: the crowd, absent everywhere else, was dense in this part of the city. Those who were merely curious were there too, watching from the threshold of the bars; sometimes a couple of policemen went by. Roy, who had discovered their sensual aspect from the film about male prostitution in Los Angeles, was seeing them in a new light, after having watched them in Selma Avenue: as keepers of the peace. However, this lack of haste in coming to the point seemed to be a particularly American phenomenon, if one were to believe Ramsey, who had commented upon it when he came here with his brother and Roy. He had visited the sex shops of Greenwich Village in New York, and had observed the same manoeuvres among the clients there. One of these shops had a darkened back-room, which one could enter through a turnstile upon payment of a dollar, where there were little love-cabins. Ramsey had waited there in front of one of these cabins, his arms crossed, next to five or six young men or adults, all as still as statues, waiting for some one to take the initiative and violate them. Otis, remembering this story, said that they themselves were at this moment waiting for the same thing, but that their dark glasses could create a barrier. He had been wearing them to avoid being recognized by any people from Beverly Hills who might drive past. Inside, this precaution was no longer necessary.

A well-dressed man came up and ordered a whisky. He introduced himself using his Christian name—if it was his—to which they in turn responded using false names. The conversation began with the recent scores of the professional

football team, the Los Angeles Béliers, who had won the Western Division title five times running. They went on to the scandal at the University of Southern California, which had paid the tuition fees of fourteen swimmers so that they could win the swimming competition at the Pacific 8 Conference, a group of teams from eight west-coast universities.

After this sporty preamble, the man asked if they were gay. "Yes," said Otis, "but we're special gays. To have us you have to pay a hundred dollars."

"A hundred dollars!" said the man, laughing. "You must be joking!" Roy was used to hearing this remark in reference to a somewhat larger sum.

"The Hollywood students ask for one fifth of that," the man went on.

"We're students from Santa Monica," said Roy, "which is better."

"What would you ask if you were from the Beverly Hills high school?" asked the man.

"We're not holding an auction for high schools," said Otis. "We would charge a hundred dollars even if we were at the Hollywood high school. It shows you that we don't go with just any one."

"Is it a hundred dollars for the two of you together?" asked the man.

"A hundred dollars each," said Otis. "We're boys of good family and not dish-washers, sons of the unemployed, or runaways."

"And what do you do for that price, as boys of good family?" said the man.

"Anything you want," said Roy.

The man became more familiar. "Well I do fancy *you*," he said. Roy was flattered by this choice, but it seemed to him that Otis was somewhat piqued. "I'd like to sample this costly fantasy," said the man. "I'll take you to my place and you can

have a hundred dollars. Your friend can wait for you here. I don't live far, and we'll be back within the hour."

"I didn't come just to wait," said Otis, smiling. The two friends agreed that the first to come back would wait for the other.

This time Roy was trusting to chance, but, as always, curiosity added to his excitement. He was going with a stranger, to whom no one had introduced him, and he relived the frisson of his first meeting with Jack. The man said he was the assistant manager of an insurance company—exactly the "middle-class" type seen at the Odyssey. His car was decent; his apartment comfortable, in a Sunset-Boulevard tower. But what especially captivated Roy was the size of the man's phallus. He had to confess he had a winning touch, because until now he had never come across any one who disappointed him in that respect. He found that it drove him wild to give himself to a man about whom he knew nothing and whom he would perhaps never see again: it was pleasure for its own sake, like the glory holes, but it was also profitable pleasure. Even though the idea of having more or less steady relationships with rich men still seduced him, to-day he was discovering the sensual delight in his ability to go with any one, despite what Otis said—with any one, that is, capable of paying a hundred dollars. He even had another idea: that he could take pleasure from giving himself to a man free of charge, as he would to a boy. He had not forgotten what certain prostitutes in the television report had said about this point, and now he understood them. It would be to change a man into a friend, but a friend full of experience and endowed with a powerful phallus. Anyway, for this afternoon, Roy was not displeased to have earned a hundred dollars.

He found Otis, who was more piqued than ever: no client had made him a serious proposition; the hundred-dollar requirement had put any prospects to flight. "I've not had your success," he told Roy. "Clearly it's because I'm ugly."

“Look,” Roy told him, “since we’re brothers, here’s fifty dollars for waiting under the elm tree.” He had thought long and hard about whether he should take the liberty of proposing this sharing out to some one who had presented him with a golden Cartier lighter. The system of exchange he had set up with the police chief encouraged him. Nonetheless he added: “Don’t see anything in my gesture except the consequence of the roles we’re acting. Some one like you could not care less about fifty dollars, but I’ll find it amusing if you accept it. Your hand will cleanse my hand.”

Laughingly, Otis took the note with its portrait of president Grant, and returned it to Roy. “That’s who it’s for,” he said. Roy remembered Jack returning his hundred dollars. “I was envious because I wasn’t picked,” Otis continued, “but, whatever the amount, which means no more to you than to me, how could I profit from you? The boys we were watching the other night, who we wanted to copy for a few hours, were not envious of the thirty dollars that another one earned. You know very well that I’m fond of you, to the point of being brought here by you. I’m dazzled to watch you evolving, to watch you accomplish things of which I fundamentally disapprove, but which are your charm bursting out and being put to use.” Under the counter of the bar where they were drinking a Cocoa-Cola, he took Roy’s hand and discreetly applied it to his fly. “See what the idea that you’ve been screwed does to me,” he said.

## Part Three—Chapter Three

THUS set on the Hollywood footpath with his friend's blessing, Roy drew the conclusion that from this day onward he would not need Otis with him for any further visit to the favoured site for "gay cruising". He had discovered Hollywood Boulevard prostitution all by himself from the famous television report, and he was determined to have an experience there all by himself.

Whenever he had been studying hard, he needed to relax with a sexual act; but except for Otis his usual partners were not always available. Ramsey's dildo seemed a poor thing, even if supplemented by wanking cream, when phalluses full of true cream were on the look-out for precisely what he was in a position to offer. One week after his outing with Otis, and having completed, at ten in the evening, his preparation for the following day's examination—the "quiz"—he all at once felt a more urgent thirst for pleasure and adventure. He telephoned for a taxi, giving the address of the neighbour's house, went to wait in front of it, and soon reached Hollywood Boulevard. There were far fewer people around than in the day-time, but, as it was still early, there were far more than when he had been there with Otis and Ramsey.

He had walked no more than a few paces when a man walking in the other direction opened one side of his jacket, revealing a large badge in white enamel pinned to his shirt, bearing in blue letters the legend "I like boys". The man approached Roy. He considered introductions unnecessary: "Evening! You coming?" This robust advance, after the display of that badge which was the diametric opposite of a police badge, at once tempted the boy addressed.

Roy examined his interlocutor: an ordinary man, with a moustache, about thirty-five, another man from the

middle-classes, but a confident one who would assuredly cater to his needs very well. "Yes," he said.

"How much?" asked the man.

"Free of charge." This evening Roy would be a money-boy de luxe whose luxe consisted in not being paid. This was in order to vary his impressions and discover whether he would experience the same enthusiasm. The man quickly led him to his car, parked nearby, and they swept into each other's arms . . .

Three days later, upon rising, Roy noticed an odd itching sensation in his anus: he examined himself with a mirror and saw nothing, but then confirmed the presence of a discharge in his excretions. A cold sweat covered his body and a pulse beat at his temples: he had contracted a venereal disease. Clearly it had come from the man of the other evening. Roy remembered what Jack had told him about gay diseases, during one of their first meetings, and he had not forgotten senator Briggs's assertions. He had discussed these with Ramsey, who declared that among those who run after girls there are just as many diseases, and in support he cited the well-chosen response of the *Los Angeles Times* journalist who interviewed the senator. He added that everything of that kind could easily be cured these days. "So that's not a reason," he had concluded, "to refrain from doing what one wants to do." Roy could not wait to get to school, confess to Otis, and ask him to get the address of a doctor from Ramsey. The "well-being" classes of the ninth grade were more discreet than those of the juniors, where these diseases were discussed.

Reflecting about what had happened, Roy still felt like cursing those individuals capable of infecting a boy, and he wanted to take his revenge on an adult on behalf of all youngsters. But perhaps that one had himself been infected by a youngster. Yes, Roy said to himself, but by a youngster whom an adult had infected. An additional source of his rage was the thought that he had been contaminated by a man he had not asked for money, and, even worse, by a man who had excited him less than the

others, perhaps because there had not been the sanction, the spice of money. He also remembered his ethics lessons, and came close to thinking that this stain was a divine punishment. Nonetheless he felt that it was not enough to make him disgusted at being gay, but, in spite of Ramsey's optimistic advice—the kind of advice one gives when one is in good health—that it would teach him to be careful.

He reddened as he made his confession to Otis, who listened without flinching. Clearly the young Z. had vast stores of indulgence for Roy. "From your description," he said, "you have what is called the clap—in other words, blennorrhagia—the gonorrhœa of the Bible and senator Briggs. It is most often caught in the penis. But it's not serious. A massive dose of antibiotics will get rid of it." There was no question of going to see one of the school doctors. Ramsey had a friend, a newly graduated gay doctor, who treated the gays at the university. Otis even knew his address, having once gone there with his brother who had clap in the penis. "Don't imagine," he said, "that these diseases are confined to intercourse free of charge. They can be caught just as easily from the people who pay and from the people who *are* paid. One gay student who belongs to that network we told you about contracted the pox, as a free extra, from a generous client who paid him two hundred dollars. And Ramsey got his clap from a boy he picked up in Hollywood Boulevard to whom he paid twenty dollars—he had been given a discount. Money is no protection against illness, but it enables one to be treated. Anyway it may be that your gentleman didn't know he was infected?"

"And to cap it all," said Roy, "he will perhaps imagine he's caught the clap from me."

After their classes, Otis took Roy to see the young doctor. They had thought up a story about how Roy, accompanying him to the Arthur J. bar, had allowed himself to be sodomized by a stranger in the toilets. The doctor, who lived in Westwood near the university, so as to be more readily available to provide his

services, sent them off, armed with a prescription, to buy a box of suppositories, which were not, like those Roy had once used, intended to treat a cold, and a box of tablets, a kind of baptism of fire. He told Roy to abstain from all sexual activity for four or five days, until a further examination confirmed his recovery.

This doctor, whom Roy liked, since he “refreshed the most important thing”, had contrived to restore his good humour. “With strangers,” he had said, “you need to examine their penis; or if not, put a condom on, and get them to put one on too.”

“I blame myself for not having thought of that,” Otis had said in a fraternal way, “I’m the one responsible. Roy’s younger than me. When one has the care of a soul, one has the care of an anus.” The doctor added a few details about the visible indications of the various venereal diseases.

Although reassured, Roy spoke to Otis about his desire for vengeance. Even though he was contagious, he would love to pass on his disease to some one who ran after boys. He wished to punish the type by way of one of its representatives. He and Otis discussed the idea. The young Jew recalled his hostility to the law of retaliation: “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth”—clap for clap. “Note in addition,” he continued, “that you are going to infect boys by way of an adult.”

“That’s their look-out,” said Roy. “It will show them the underside of gay society.” Anyway Otis had to submit to Roy’s law whenever the boy astonished him with his daring and his cynicism: the vengeance upon an unknown was decided for two days later, which was a Sunday.



## Part Three—Chapter Four

THEY went to Long Beach for lunch. This city, situated south of Los Angeles, was famous for its oil, its factories, its university with over ten thousand students, its beach and its port, the principal ornament of which was the *Queen Mary*. The derricks of oil-wells, drilled at some distance out from the shore, were hidden among what looked like tower blocks on floating islands. The place merited its name: Long Beach—six miles of sandy shore. One section formed one of the most popular gay beaches of southern California, along with Malibu, Santa Monica and Venice. It was natural that Don Amador should have a chair of homosexuality at the state college in this city.

On the Sunday beach there were, besides a few families, only men and youths, presumably gay. The majority were couples. Otis and Roy took off their clothes in the car, so that they could bathe. They loved the power of these enormous Pacific waves, to meet which it was necessary to walk boldly, or else one would be pushed over, which made swimming more difficult than surfing. They laughed when the irresistible surge knocked them down. It made Roy forget his clap and he very nearly forgot his vengeance. “Don’t get a mouthful,” Otis advised him. “Remember what we were taught: Los Angeles discharges millions of tons of waste water into the ocean every day, only two thirds of which have been subject to an initial treatment.”

“Well for a start,” said Roy, “we’re nineteen miles from Los Angeles; and secondly, it is I who should be asking *you* not to get a mouthful, because I too have been subject only to initial treatment and I don’t know whether what is tickling my anus is the sea-water or something else.”

“Disgusting!” Otis said. “But I believe the sea is the queen of antibiotics.”

Police cars passed to and fro along the beach. A supervisor of bathing kept watch from the top of a little wooden tower. One man, wearing headphones, was running a metal detector along the sand and collecting any items lost by the bathers.

Otis and Roy had no wish to climb onto the *Queen Mary*, where they had sometimes dined with their parents in the Churchill room. They had lunch on the terrace of a restaurant, and then proceeded to Ripples, the best-known gay *discothèque* of Long Beach. They were permitted to enter because it was afternoon. There was no comparison with the Odyssey in Los Angeles, but the place was pleasant enough—the bar downstairs, and the dance-floor above. On a stand the Gay Rights Guardian was displayed, together with lists of the large shops and brands to be boycotted because their proprietors had financed Briggs's campaign. As American law stipulated that the source of all electoral funds should be published, the Californian secretary of state—the American-Chinese woman March Long-Eu, supportive of gays—published a running total of the sums awarded to that senator. The most recent—five thousand dollars—came from the chairman of the Carl's Jr. supermarkets. He was condemned in a small poster headed "Take action against bigotry" which was a good proof that senator Briggs had kindled a religious war. Roy smiled to see the Carls boycotted, as they were his father's friends who were going to let him earn a few dollars at week-ends in their shops when he was sixteen. That bag-filling could henceforward be treated as shelved, like the page-boy's uniform at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel.

Many of the boys present were from the Long Beach University. Roy allowed himself to be courted by a man with spectacles who introduced himself as a professor and asked him whether he was there for the night. "It's at night, actually," he said, "that you can do anything you like on the beach."

After spending some of the afternoon dancing, Roy and Otis, while waiting for dinner time and their nocturnal pleasures, chatted with a sad boy, an eighteen-year-old, who, with a

knapsack on his back, was seated all alone on a little wall next to a park. He said he had hitch-hiked from Kentucky, that he had been told how wonderful this beach was, that he had been there for two days and not yet found any soul mate: there were only couples. It was painful to see his distress. His situation was the more curious in that his person was not lacking in charm. But perhaps it was his air of sadness that made prospects keep their distance.

The two friends partook of a fish dinner in another restaurant, and then hastened back to the beach. Cars were parked on the very edge of the sand, bringing seekers after adventure. Roy had made an appointment with the man he met at Ripples, who was there waiting at the agreed location—near the watch-tower, no longer occupied by a supervisor of bathing. Out of charity Otis had gone off with the sad boy, who had dined on a sandwich on his little wall.

“Well,” he asked Roy later, “have you taken your vengeance? Just think that a whole class is going to have the clap thanks to you.”

Roy burst out laughing. “The professor’s students need have no fear: he apologized, and put on a condom.”

“Most amusing,” said Otis. “As for me, I’ve already learned from Ramsey’s experience that I should be careful with strangers. Gonorrhœa can’t be caught on the hand. Mine was more than full I can tell you, but I understand that boy’s sadness: he was suffering from overflowing testicles.”

Before going home they strolled along the shore. Couples and groups were everywhere. The regular motion of the ocean seemed to be cradling them and its immense sound covered their murmurs and cries. It was night at Long Beach, one of the nights of American liberty. The professor had told Roy that there were similar nights on the beaches of Fire Island, the gay island in the bay of New York.

## Part Three—Chapter Five

ROY was better. In his room, the following Sunday morning, he was reading, quite naked. The window was open onto the garden, where the birds were singing, and the voice of his lover the black singer was coming from the tape recorder. To gain a better understanding of the psychology of this man who worshipped him and was the most generous of all his worshippers, he was reading not *Roots*, which he presumed to be a book irrelevant to his problems, but *Giovanni's Room*, a novel by another American Negro writer, James Baldwin, who had the advantage of being a self-confessed gay. Naturally he had bought this book without telling his father, who, having given way to the Jews, was holding firm against the Negroes and still banning their literature. What is more, Mr. Clear was delighted because Haley, the author of *Roots*, who had made a fortune from this book, which sold over eight million copies, had just been bluntly accused of plagiarism, and there was question of depriving him of the Pulitzer prize. John saw in this affair further proof of the intellectual limitations of Negroes. *Giovanni's Room*, which, even though the American intelligentsia were Negrophilistic, had not enjoyed the same success, but had not stirred up the same storms, was the story of an American in Paris, torn between a man and a woman.

But still, Giovanni's room did not suppress Roy's private thoughts of Mr. Teller's room, where, the day before, Bob's father had related a different but equally stimulating story. It explained why this father mingled the image of his son with his pleasures, notably with the flagellation sessions with which he had familiarized Roy, as though to prepare him for being whipped by the great actor.

When Bob was thirteen or fourteen, and he got a C from Buckley rather than a B or an A, Mr. Teller, in Mrs. Teller's absence, would punish him in the following fashion: he would take him to his room, pull down his trousers, give him a few spanks, and then, on the pretext of humiliating him further, would pull his shirt up above the waist and leave him in that state, face against the wall, for a long interval, while giving the impression of reading the newspaper. Finding that he enjoyed this procedure and contemplating his son's *derrière*, he would masturbate himself under cover of the newspaper and, after that, let Bob go. What had encouraged him to go on with this kind of punishment was that Bob never mentioned it in front of his mother, be that because it gave Bob himself some sensual delight, or because he thought it was a secret between him and his father. Mr. Teller had given it up after noticing that Bob, while showing his backside and believing his father to be absorbed in reading the paper, was masturbating himself into his handkerchief. The chairman of the Bel Air Country Club decided that things had gone too far and it was time to draw a line. Nonetheless there remained, for both his son and himself, the memory of that silent complicity which some years later had produced, quite naturally, their total complicity in relation to the subject of Roy.

It had been to Mr. Teller's further credit to have admitted that the severity with which he subsequently treated Bob—recently, for example, the refusal to replace his car—was a kind of pique at no longer being able to give a big boy a spanking and take his trousers down. So it was out of jealousy that he had sent him to the reverend Camper to stop him masturbating. All that was beyond doubt.

At the present time a perfect harmony governed the relationship between father and son. Bob kept his promises faithfully, ratified by a hundred dollars, taking his mother out of the house on Saturdays, so as to leave the way clear for Roy. Mrs. Teller, catching up with her society life, was happy to have her

son's company. She had never seen him so considerate. He said this would help her forget her long stay at the clinic. So the system Mr. Teller had thought up was working wonderfully well. Bob and Roy, even while no longer meeting, were united by as solid a pact as that between Roy and Otis. The story Mr. Teller had related constituted a new link between the two boys, without the knowledge of the one who had been its principal character.

These recollections excited Roy, and he held back his desire to masturbate. It was rare for him to remain twenty-four hours without ejaculating, and yesterday's delights were already distant. People were in love with him, but he was in love with his own self, in love with this beautiful phallus, "handcrafted" as Otis had said, but crafted also by the hands of so many others, by their mouths, by the encasement of their anuses. And he was in love with his own anus—even more in love now that he had rediscovered its soft and gentle elasticity, after the embarrassment of the clap.

Mrs. Clear suddenly knocked on the door, and through it said—being very discreet, she never came straight into his room—"Bob Teller was jogging past the house, and wants to know whether he can come up."

Roy marvelled at the coincidence: Bob had turned up at just the right time. "Let him come in!" he cried, donning his dressing-gown. He opened the door to his mother, who seemed thrilled at the visitation: the Tellers were just as important a connection as the Zs.

"I'll get you some fruit juice," said Mrs. Clear.

Bob was superb in his jogging apparel: white shorts, Buckley T-shirt, red and white socks, trainers, and a red headband to hold his blond hair in place and soak up the drops of perspiration which might irritate his eyes. His colour was full of life, but he had a disturbed air. Roy wondered what he had come to say—perhaps a commission on behalf of his father. "I've been running for an hour," said Bob. "I'm dying of thirst and I don't have the strength to go on to my place." Hearing this lame

excuse, Roy suspected he had come for a reason other than drinking. Uracca brought the fruit juice. Her little smile, both ironic and melancholy, implied that she already understood what was going to happen: the young master no longer called Manuelito to his room because he preferred boys of his own standing—boys he was not obliged to pay.

Bob, sprawling between the arms of an easy chair, was wiping his forehead after removing his headband. He spoke about the graduation ceremony that would bring to an end his time at Buckley and turn him into a student at the University of southern California.

“A propos,” Roy told him, “I give you advance warning that even at that plain and simple university there’s a gay students’ group.”

Bob smiled and went on with his idle talk: he had not yet come out of his shell. He said that the mothers’ committee, who decided each year how the boys and girls graduating would be dressed—the previous year it had been a red jacket with white carnation in the button-hole, and the girls in long white dresses—had not yet reached agreement. His mother and several others wanted to do something revolutionary—to which, naturally, Miss Buckley was opposed; for her the American revolution was the only one—by having the boys wear a cap and gown, as was done at the public high schools. The mothers spent their days in stormy discussion at Saks, at the Bistro or at their clubs. Perhaps in the end the boys would wear red jackets again, if peace was not declared.

Listening to Bob, studying his glances, and gazing at his widely-spread thighs, Roy was certain of having correctly interpreted his intentions: this boy was transferring onto him the incestuous desire that his father was currently satisfying with him. Moreover, Roy had not forgotten what Mr. Teller had said about Bob’s feelings for him.

“And Pamela?” he asked. “Are you still going with her?”

“Obviously”, said Bob. He continued his evasions. Roy was dying to tell how he had been masturbated by Penelope—the Tellers were acquainted with the Websters—but he could not give away a secret he had concealed from Otis. So instead, to hurry things along and at the risk of shocking him, Roy decided to reveal the paternal secret relating to him. He calculated that in their present circumstances there would be nothing indecent in that.

Bob, far from blushing, seemed relieved that Roy had taken the bull by the horns. “You know,” he said, “I had a confused suspicion that my father was enjoying those things and I’m intrigued that he hasn’t hidden them from you. But I never spotted that he was wanking himself off.” As on the day he had discovered his father’s relationship with Roy, Bob added: “All the same he’s a real swine.”

“What about you wanking yourself off against the wall?” exclaimed Roy. “I find that very exciting, as you see.” To illustrate his words and take the plunge, he opened his dressing-gown a little and displayed his straining penis. “See what that story does to me, just from repeating it to you,” he said. “And I was like that just from thinking about it when you arrived.”

“In my case,” said Bob, “I was like that while jogging, because I was thinking . . . I was thinking . . . of you screwing me.” At last the word had been uttered.

Roy stood up to lock the door. “Don’t start talking about the reverend Camper afterwards,” he said.

“Yet I am grateful to him,” said Bob, “for increasing my wanking pleasure by forbidding it. How about I tell him that for months I’ve been using my mum’s vibrator and dreaming about you screwing me?” The son seemed to be excited by the “dirty words” which had already excited his father on Roy’s lips. But Roy himself often enjoyed the titillating effect of these words in conversations at school. He understood how the young loved this kind of language, which accorded with their vernal and still



dawning sexuality. Even at Buckley, somewhat less openly than at the high school, filthy oaths were widespread, and the girls were not spared. Indeed they derived pleasure from repeating them—and they were the élite among Californian youth: “I’ll screw you! . . . Arse-hole! . . . Cunt! . . . Go fuck your mother! . . .” Here Bob, who loved the word “fuck”, could have told Roy to “Go fuck my father!” even though it was actually the reverse that was happening.

The two boys, left for a moment to their reflections, as though they were listening to the voices of their rigid phalluses, suddenly moved towards each other. Roy groped for the superb member that once had penetrated him, but Bob grasped Roy’s hand and set it on his posteriors, speaking softly into his ear: “I’ve been dreaming for months about you going into my bum. I want it to be yours, in the way that your bum is my father’s. Every time I come here for that, I’ll give you the hundred dollars that he gives me when you go to see him.”

Roy marvelled at this connection between sexual delights and dollars, but he was also forced to laugh. “My friend Bob,” he said, “I find it natural that your father should give me money, but I’d be ashamed if you gave me any. All the same, I’ve found out from him that you made us pay for your petrol, when he was paying you for it!”

“Oh!” said Bob, “that was small change, and I apologize for not exempting you, in spite of the attraction you’ve always had for me, as you can feel for yourself.” Grasping Roy’s hand again, he applied it to the inflated fly of his shorts.

“I have a magnanimous nature,” said Roy. He added—with a touch of malice to get back at Bob’s pleasantries about Mrs. Clear’s fiscal delinquency: “I have no wish to ruin the Teller family.”

In a twinkling he removed his dressing-gown to display himself undraped in all his glory. Then, thrilling with delight, he unfastened Bob’s waistband, pulled off the T-shirt emblematic of plain and simple education, the shorts, the briefs, and gazed at

him naked with his socks, his trainers, and his phallus, as stiff as Roy's own. This time it was Roy who confidently began the culminating action he had been learning to perform. One of his fingers reached the orifice through which Jim, in this very room last autumn, had ejaculated. Bob, in turn, fondled him in the same place. "Ah! that hairless bum again," he said. Roy went on fingering the spot, so soft and fleecy, and still sweaty from running. Meanwhile he wetted his finger with saliva several times, and thoroughly moistened the rim of the anus, as he had done to himself at the consul-general's residence. When he slid a finger end into the interior he was agreeably surprised: the muscle was as flexible as his own. "You won't need sun-tan cream," Bob whispered.

## Part Three—Chapter Six

AGAIN Roy had seen Jack, whose virile powers never ceased to thrill him, Mr. Teller, who tied him up, gagged him, blindfolded him and flogged him, the consul-general with his sophistication and inexhaustible wardrobe, the Hollywood actor with the obscene T-shirts, and the Negro singer who played the guitar to him. Thanks to these profitable friendships in high places, and notwithstanding what he was returning to the police chief, he was now in possession of a sum of four thousand dollars. It was what his father asked for the rent of their Beverly Hills house for one month in summer. This year, Mr. Clear had decided not to let it, not because he suspected that the family had earned that sum in another way, but in order to keep up with the Zs. So the Clears would spend part of the summer at Beverly Hills. And then they would go to their house in Vermont.

While Roy was pleased to tell himself that his young *derrière* had brought in four thousand dollars and that he would be able to buy an old Cadillac, he still harboured a secret grudge against that adult world which had given him the clap, and he retained the desire to take a symbolic vengeance upon that world. Although it had not been possible to carry through his plan in relation to the Long Beach professor, he certainly did not want to become infected again in order to take the same kind of vengeance. The idea of a different kind of vengeance came to his mind while listening to another address from councillor Amador, who had spoken again about the Episcopalian Church of Los Angeles, known as “Integrity”. This was not a church building, but rather a suite in an office block in Santa Monica Boulevard, of which Roy had seen the exterior. But even though he was obliged to be gay only in secret, it was evidently not towards the head of a gay church that he wanted to bear his grudge: the

method he had conceived was blackmail. He chose his own church, All Saints, administered by the reverend Bill N. Camper.

He asked Jack, simply out of interest, whether the reverend appeared on his special list of men who had experienced moral difficulties, and the police chief said no. This only encouraged him: either he would be blackmailing an innocent or he would be forcing a hypocrite to give himself away. The reverend was a fine man, a husband and father, but Roy knew other fathers who liked boys. It was true that the reverend Camper had never given him little pats on the backside, as Bob's father had done in the past, before replacing them with to-day's lashes on his naked *derrière*.

What added to Roy's fervour was that he could not discuss his project with any one. He would have been ashamed to tell Otis about it, despite his having already introduced a boy of that quality to the principle of prostitution. But, to hide from Otis worse things than that, in the way he was hiding his other secrets, was to preserve his superiority. He remembered what Otis had said about blackmail in relation to the film *Holocaust*. In playing this heinous role with an adult, Roy himself was at the same time playing a man's role and no longer a boy's. He thought of a line from an old English poem that the reverend gentleman, in his religious instruction lessons last year, had quoted to teach the boys of the parish to go to bed early and to rise early on holidays: "Lie down with the lamb and rise with the lark." Would the reverend, to get his money's worth, lie down with the young wolf? What was certain was that he would pay up [*fr. chanter = sing*] like the lark.

He received Roy in his Camden Drive office, next to the church, smoking his pipe and reading the *Wall Street Journal*—doubtless the better to manage the parish funds. "You wanted to see me," he said to Roy. "Is it to tell me that you'll be coming back to the junior service on Sunday morning? Your disappearance from the church more or less coincided with your departure from Buckley."

Roy found it unnecessary to respond to these words: he came straight to the point. "Reverend," he said, with the same apparent frostiness, but perhaps with a greater inner turmoil, as on the occasion when he put his proposition to Mr. Teller, "I need to have three hundred dollars." This figure was his starting-point with men of a certain class.

The reverend was astounded and a little alarmed. He did not have the secret reasons harboured by the president of the Bel Air Country Club for appreciating what might come as recompense for such a request, and in any case no such recompense had yet been mentioned. He knocked his pipe in the ash-tray. "What are you saying to me?" he asked sternly.

"That I need to have three hundred dollars," Roy repeated, "and I've decided that you're the one who'll give it to me, because I can't ask my parents."

"And why do you need it?" asked the reverend.

"That's my affair alone," said Roy.

"What!" exclaimed the reverend with a look of panic, "is some one blackmailing you?"

"No," said Roy, gazing at him and taking courage from his panic, "I'm blackmailing *you*."

"What are you saying?" resumed Mr. Camper, who had turned pale.

"That you have to give me that money."

"And in return for what?" asked the clergyman.

"In return for your reputation," said Roy. "If you don't give me that amount, I'll denounce you at once to Mr. Cork, our police chief, who is a friend of my father, and I'll tell him you lured me to your place and that you wanted to violate me."

The reverend was on the verge of fainting. "You little monster!" he cried. "Such an accusation is refuted by my entire life, by my profession, by my wife and children. . . Listen, I think you are part of some evil prank. If not—he extended his hand towards the telephone—I'm the one who's going to call your mother and tell her everything. If need be *I* will call Mr. Cork."

“Such disagreeable scenes are not worth three hundred dollars!” said Roy. “Just consider, reverend, that if I have decided to impose this tax on you, as the racketeers do—not that I am one of them—it’s after mature reflection, and I am prepared to be tenacious. I will die rather than admit that you didn’t try to violate me. While there may exist nothing in your life that makes you suspect, there exists nothing in mine that makes me less credible: I am not known to have any suspicious connections; I have never committed any crime; I earn my pocket-money by distributing newspapers; I’m not in any gang; my best friends come from the wealthiest families of Beverly North; I’m a descendant of the kings of France, a Child of the American Revolution and prince of the first-years at my school. You have to do what I say.”

Even though he was more than ever savouring the sensation of his power, Roy felt a pang at perpetrating such an unspeakable act. But he considered himself absolved from blame, as in the case of his prostitution, by the fact that he had no need of money: indeed he already possessed what, for a boy of his age, amounted to a small fortune, and what was more he could be certain of adding to it in a continuous and delightful way. He was determined to remain unbending. Making use of his willpower was as exciting for him as making use of his charms. He pitied Mr. Camper, but that was just too bad! He would not let him go. This was the man who would pay in cash for the Hollywood Boulevard clap. Roy would make him pay also for having temporarily turned Bob away from the pleasure of wanking himself off.

“Supposing I agree,” said the reverend helplessly, “how can I be certain that you won’t come back with another such demand? He who once submits to blackmail, is committing himself to being extorted as many times as the blackmailer wants.”

“Mr. Camper,” said Roy, “I swear to you that I will never again ask you for anything.” Roy raised his hand towards a crucifix nailed to the wall.

“Oaths from some one of your kind! . . .” said the reverend. “And to what use do you intend to put this money? You have not yet told me. . . . I know! You’re going to buy drugs. You’re an addict. Addicts are capable of any crime. I will not give you something that ruins your health and perhaps causes you to fall into the hands of the police. You’ll be questioned about where the money you use to buy drugs came from, and you might make difficulties for me almost as bad as those with which you have the effrontery to threaten me. I am obliged to refuse you.”

“Mr. Camper,” said Roy, “do I look like an addict? From the moment I receive that money, you will have nothing further to fear from me. In short, you have always led an irreproachable existence, you even chose a profession designed to shield you from temptations and false steps. . . It was all too beautiful. You needed to have an unforeseen encounter: his name is Roy Clear.”

The reverend got up and went to another room. Roy was trembling: was Mr. Camper perhaps going to call his parents or the police? After a few minutes he returned and handed Roy three hundred-dollar notes. “Bugger off!” he said.

## Part Three—Chapter Seven

JUNE was going to be a month of nothing but festivals at the Beverly Hills high school, and for the gays of Los Angeles as well.

On the first of June, there had been talk of the school's celebrating the day of the sun, recently introduced in America. But the headmaster Sol Levine, despite his forename suggestive of the sun, rejected this extra-curricular fantasy. The day of the sun had no more luck at the Beverly Hills chamber of commerce, which vainly attempted to turn it into a children's day. This initiative had appealed to Otis, who organized a homage to the sun in the schoolyard. The clandestine gay group, the Daughters of Bilitis and the survivors of the cults came together, with many of their ordinary schoolfellows, to salute the fiery globe, at mid-day precisely, by lifting their arms and uttering loud cries. Then the school orchestra played *Lonely Looking Sky*, one of Neil Diamond's songs, the disc of which bore on its cover an image of the singer recumbent on the sea-shore in front of the setting sun. Penelope had played a part in this display.

Otis told Nick Stevens and Ruth Medlock that this festival of the sun revived a religion more interesting than any cult, and doubtless more ancient than any other religion. He brought out some of the finer points when making the same remark to Penelope, who was of his own social standing and had not abandoned her own cult. Roy declared that the Mission of Divine Light indubitably spiritualized the sun's role, and he repeated the words that the aeroplanes had written in the sky for the guru's birthday: "We love you, Maharaj Ji." Penelope thanked him with a very meaningful smile. They had rarely met since the Malibu adventure. On the point of graduating, she was



absorbed in her work. But when she grasped Roy's hand she symbolically sketched the ghost of a caress on one of his fingers. For him even that gave rise to exquisite sensations.

On the eleventh of June, the high school celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. More than ten thousand former students had said they would come, and Bernice Hutter, the former president of their Association, known as the Alumni, had worked all through the year to arrange lodgings for those no longer residing in California. Mr. Z. had offered hospitality to three of his former schoolfellows, based in New York, and Mr. and Mrs. Clear, not to be outdone, had made Gladys's room available to another of Mr. Z's. schoolfellows. The new president of the Alumni, Justin McCarthy, opened the ceremony. The Marine Band led a parade along Moreno Drive, with representative groups from the school—the gay group, being clandestine, was unable to participate. On the vast foot-ball ground an exhibition of old motor cars was displayed. Stalls had been set up, selling objects from fifty years ago, T-shirts with the name and image of the Norman knight, sweets, Pepsi-Cola and a special twenty-four page edition of *Highlights*. And finally, inside the school, the drama department were staging scenes from Shakespeare. The students guided their elders around the vast buildings. All this was televised, with interviews by Mike Navarro, president of the students' association.

The parade was led by Jim Healy, sports commentator on the television. Otis knew that the headmaster had been racking his brains to find a rather more prestigious name among the thousands of former students at the festival. This showed that the school—in spite of the quality of its teaching and the elevated station of the majority of its students, sent hardly any one into fields other than business and finance. It was always hesitant about publicizing its record of celebrities, being able to cite in the first rank only Adrienne Hall, winner of a grand prize for publicity; Admiral William P. Mack, former superintendent of the United States naval academy, and Sherman Malenkoff, dean

of the school of medicine at the UCLA. The high school of the rich was not rich in great men. No more was the Buckley school, if the truth be told.

After this, during the days of less intensive school-work which preceded graduation—on one of these, “ditch day”, all work was deferred, and it was spent traditionally around the pools or on the sand—traditional pleasures took place, giving various rival groups the opportunity to pit their imaginations against each other. The principal pleasure consisted in covering the school lawns entirely with lavatory paper—clean, it is true, despite the advice of some. As for the pools, whatever might be the appeal of the Norman pool at Beverly Hills, the seniors were enjoying in advance the one at UCLA in the Sunset Recreation Centre, which according to *Playboy* was one of the ten best places in the United States to pick up girls. Obviously boys were not mentioned.

On the twenty-third of June, on the foot-ball ground, in the presence of the parents, the seniors’ graduation ceremony completed the school year. The other students were also told about the results that concerned them. Roy obtained sixty credits, which is to say fifteen more than the minimum required to move up to the tenth grade, and Otis had a hundred and eighty, when the minimum required to move up to grade twelve, as a senior, was a hundred and fifty-five. The two friends thus had an average of B—no longer for Roy the A which at Buckley had put him in the honours list. But he was also there with his B, like Otis, and thus entered the California Scholarship Federation’s chapter 185, in southern California—a chapter as sought-after in the high schools as was the one his mother was concerned with in the national society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The quality of “worthy citizen of the school” was a prerequisite for this, over and above credits and a minimum number of points. Otis’s friendship had helped Roy gain this title, but he wondered what the reverend Camper, Jack

Sherman, Mr. Teller and the other gentlemen of his acquaintance would think of it.

After all, were there any things that were not reconcilable? Jack Sherman, apart from his peculiarities, performed his calling as police chief very well, as did those others theirs. If Roy remained a member of chapter 185 in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades, he would become a life member of the Federation and would be dubbed “bearer of the seal”, by reason of the golden seal affixed to his diploma—like the seal on his father’s diploma relative to the “training course in law enforcement”. John Clear exchanged compliments with his friend Stuart Silver, the assistant head, who had followed Roy’s academic work.

The graduate boys wore a navy-blue gown and a round cap of the same colour, surmounted by a flat rectangle from which a ribbon hung; the girls wore the same head-gear, but in white, with a white gown of similar cut, and a bunch of flowers. They were all holding multi-coloured india-rubber balloons, which they released into the air at the moment of their promotion. Penelope, the prettiest one—the true queen—fixed her eyes on Roy, in the front row. She was smiling in a special way for Roy’s benefit. He experienced a slight feeling of vanity at the thought of the secret that united him with this girl. As was customary, the two best graduates—Stephen Sloane for the boys and Alicia Ruskin for the girls—gave the farewell addresses—as the “valedictorian”. They spoke, in the name of their comrades, of their great joy at having studied in that environment, their apprehension about leaving it, and the pleasure they would take in returning.

Next came Sol Levine’s address; he wore cap and gown, like the masters. He said he was happy that the first promotion over which he had presided was that of the “golden jubilee”. He made reference to the scholarships granted to some seniors, and especially to the best Negro pupils from neighbouring schools. The Beverly Hills high school was proud to use its wealth in this

way, but it was blamed for creaming off the best from those schools for its own prestige. At the headmaster's side sat a smiling Kenneth L. Peters, the Beverly Hills superintendent of schools, a man not dispirited by his inquiries into the drug problem, and whom no one blamed for having publicized them. He was well aware that, as the proverb goes, "boys will always be boys" . . . and girls always girls, not to mention the boys who are girls as well, and the girls who are boys as well.

Finally the orchestra, already put to use during the interludes, played *Pomp and Circumstance*. Sir Edward Elgar's old march accompanied the long procession of graduates who moved in single file and alphabetical order to shake the headmaster's hand, or the hands of the teachers who presented them with their diplomas. A few difficult names were mispronounced when they were called. This continued for two hours. Roy stayed till the end, because he was anxious to congratulate Penelope upon having her diploma: obviously the name Webster put her at the end of the procession. That evening there was to be a seniors' ball, marking the true end of the festival. Neither Otis nor Roy would be present at the ball, which followed a dinner; but since it was the tradition that many things took place during this evening, when boys and girls were left to themselves—generally the participants ended up on some beach, around a fire, drinking alcohol—Roy wondered, with a touch of jealousy, who would be Penelope's fortunate companion.

The families of many students had derived great joy from taking photographs, but the only real interest was in the ones that would be published in the *Year-Book of Watch-tower*. The team bearing that name would prepare them during the long vacation. All the students would be there in individual photographs, but it was an accolade to appear in a prominent image, and especially in colour. In addition, the photographers and editors were subject to pressure from those of their schoolfellows who were anxious to obtain this privilege. Otis, having the right of entrance everywhere, took Roy to the

sacrosanct office where this work was performed. They inspected the gilded mock-up of the cover, upon which it was possible to make out, in black, the silhouettes of girls jumping or running. Otis asked the senior Brad Thayer, the editor-in-chief, whether the school had turned into a girls' school, in that there were no boys on the cover. Thayer explained that he had wanted to illustrate the theme of a song, evoking college life, which would be printed on the opening pages and contained these words: "Things to be remembered . . . —Pretty girls all in a row." Otis did not dare insist.

But he had his revenge. He had two photographs selected that were particularly dear to him. One showed Roy and him, face to face, drinking from the neck of a bottle of Cocoa-Cola (a symbolic sucking session, he said—and he added "We'll be the couple of the year"), together with two enchanting Daughters of Bilitis, cheek to cheek. The other was a malicious act directed at Gordon Swan, the failed contender for "freshman prince", who had always, rather contemptuously, kept his distance from the gay group. Otis chose from among the photographs—several of which depicted the handsome Swan—one which showed him in profile, seated on a low wall, like the boy at Long Beach, smiling under his long blond hair, his mouth open, clad in a white tracksuit with striped sides, his hands plunged between his legs inside the pockets of a kind of pullover, exactly as though he were engaged in masturbation. Photographs of the king and the princes, the queen and the princesses, adorned a purple-coloured page. For Roy it would be a fitting souvenir of a year in the course of which he had conquered all of life's secrets; but his joy would have been more complete had he been depicted with Penelope Webster rather than Laura Rogers.

The number of sporty photographs showed the importance given to sports, and distressed Otis. He found that the illustrations in the forthcoming *Watch-tower* were like those of a gymnastic club rather than an educational establishment. Certainly he was happy to remember the successes of champions

he himself had cheered on: fifteen boys and girls, including the intrepid swimmer Diana Isaacs, had been elevated to the Hall of Fame. But for him fame was something different. "This entire *Year-book*," he told Roy, "on the pretext that we are being given 'healthy minds in healthy bodies', provides a completely deceptive picture of our real activities. It gives no hint of those of us who use our minds more than our bodies, or our bodies far from the beaten track and olympic events. Even your photograph on a purple background, with a girl who is indifferent to you, is a symbol of this comedy. The one of Gordon with his hand thrust in is also deceptive, but at least it has the merit of being an indirect allusion to something. All things considered, the only photographs that will mean anything in the next *Watch-tower* will be our own and and that of the two Daughters of Bilitis."

The Zs. would not leave for their cruise in the Gulf of California until August, when the Clears would go off to their house in Vermont. John wanted to keep in contact with Mr. Z., his new friend and rich client, until the last possible day. Otis and Roy were delighted. At the end of June they took part in Gay Pride Week. Twenty thousand people paraded, releasing the balloons Otis had described, proclaiming their pride and calling for votes against Proposition 6. The mayor, at the request of Don Amador, had agreed to provide the mayoral limousine of honour, an immense pastel-coloured Cadillac that had belonged to Mrs. Eisenhower, in which the Mexican-American actress Grace Davis, queen of gaiety, sat enthroned. Mr. Clear pointed out that the violently anti-gay president Nixon, whose son had married a daughter of General and Mrs. Eisenhower, would certainly have been indignant at the use of this vehicle for such goings-on.

The pleasures of the holidays. . . Otis and Roy paid homage to the memory of Elvis Presley by listening to songs from Joe Pasternak's film *California Holiday*. They bathed and swam, either in the Clears' pool or in the Zs', and then sunbathed quite

naked on poolside chairs. The orientation of the two gardens was different, allowing them to take the sun in one when it had left the other. All the pools in Beverly North were constructed in such a way as to prevent their being seen from neighbouring houses, thanks to a screen of trees, or some other arrangement. The Zs. had a tennis court, which the Clears did not. Sometimes Otis and Roy played doubles with Ramsey and one of his friends, or with Ramsey and Bob, the Buckley champion. Roy, in fact, had given the young Teller credit with the Zs. He smiled on seeing him turn up in the Cadillac: who could have guessed the improbable circumstances of this paternal gift?

It went without saying that the sex and drug threesomes turned into foursomes, the fourth being either Ramsey's friend or Bob. But the drug was almost always only marijuana: Ramsey was still using cocaine only in moderation, and counselled moderation to his partners. Not wanting to have another crisis, he said that he would never forgive himself if he caused one in others. Often he came with a pretty girl from his university, Joyce, who liked to take cocaine sometimes and reminded Roy of Penelope. Ramsey introduced her as his fiancée and maintained that he really did intend to marry her. While waiting, he would gather all the conjugal joys, but privately, in order, he said, to respect the modesty of a future Mrs. Z.

Just as Ramsey's crisis had not removed cocaine from the Greenway Drive house, so had Roy's misadventure not removed for him, nor for Otis, the desire—which Jack had once qualified as “morbid”—to explore once more the gay areas of Los Angeles. By remaining incognito his crown as prince of the first-years would remain untarnished. “I won't compete with you any more,” Otis told him, “and anyway that would be a waste of effort. What attracts me is not having adventures, it's that you are having them. I find it stimulating to be with the best-looking boy in the city and, on certain occasions, being his pimp. Asking money for having sex would seem absurd to me. But your asking for it seems natural. Beauty needs to be paid. It is a valuable

quality and it is undeniable. Since I don't possess it, all I now perceive in it is its price." Roy smiled at this chain of reasoning which had in fact crossed his own mind when thinking about what there was in him that aroused Otis's interest: now he was hearing it from Otis himself. Bob too had said something along the same lines, in relation to the money Roy was receiving from Mr. Teller. The Californian boys all understood each other.

Roy was moved when Otis added: "I've already told my father I want to have you with me later in our electronics factory. If you go on working as you have been this year, you won't need to organize a post: it's waiting for you, and it will be up to you to make it the most brilliant possible." Otis had already hinted at this eventuality, but had never before now mentioned his father. Assuredly even Roy's father, who had been counting on this, would be thrilled to hear that it would happen, without knowing what lay behind all this closeness. "It's not your beauty alone that has bound me to you," Otis went on, "it's the fact that you have been capable of leading a double life without being carried away: you have had sex, you have taken cocaine, you have smoked grass, you have walked the pavements of Hollywood Boulevard, you have caught the clap and you are above average at the end of the school year. So you have proved that you have character and willpower, you have savoured your self and reached your goal. You are, and you will be, like myself a whole man. It's that which, where you are concerned, has given me a confidence that guarantees your future."

Roy embraced him in gratitude. He continued to be worried by the thought of all the secrets Otis knew nothing about, but it seemed a possibility that he might never come to know them. "We other Jews," continued Otis, "we are hard-headed, because of the blows we have experienced down the centuries, and it is easy for us to be occupied with several contradictory activities at once. Apart from us, not many people can do it, and that's why you've inspired in me the thoughts I've just expressed to you."



“There’s another thing I’m thinking of,” said Otis: “it’s about our future life as married men, with wives and children. We shall truly be modern men, but I doubt we’ll be like that Mr. Claiborne in the *New York Times* who touched no more boys after his fifteenth birthday.”

“I must remind you that you are seventeen,” said Roy.

“Yes,” said Otis, “we’ll be whole men and mature, perhaps precisely because we will still take pleasure from having sex together from time to time.”

Roy, at the time of his incident with Jim, who was so fearful of becoming gay and had nevertheless screwed Bob on his second visit, had his mind put at rest in just the same way about the prospects of marriage. At the moment he wanted to have his mind put at rest in regard to the prospects of remaining gay. “Will we be clandestine gays as at school, or openly gay?” he asked. “For that, we’ll need very obliging and very intelligent wives.”

“They do exist,” said Otis. “What you’ve told me about your sister demonstrates that. Ramsey has already found the cocaineist he wants to marry. Perhaps we’ll find two Daughters of Bilitis.”

But Roy was thinking of Penelope.

Nonetheless Bob’s example, like that of Ramsey, showed him that it was possible to reconcile being gay with a taste for women. Mr. Teller’s son, even while taking part in the Z. brothers’ frolics, now went regularly to be sodomized by Roy: it was his fixed idea, for reasons which they alone knew. But at Greenway Drive Bob had related to every one the history of how, on the evening of the Buckley seniors’ ball, after graduation, he had taken Pamela, his favourite, onto Santa Monica beach and ejaculated into her three orifices. As Ramsey had done in the case of Joyce, he had promised to marry her after university, if she continued her favours. They had agreed on a minimum of one hole per week. As that wild night on the beach had crumpled and stained the red jacket, the black trousers and the white gown, they had waited for a dry-cleaners to open to get

everything cleaned up. And they had returned to their families calmly, as though they had just left their schoolfellows. But Mr. Teller was not one to be annoyed about these liberties: he would have joined in.

Roy had been very stimulated by this story, especially because of the sodomitical aspect, of which, in his Summit Drive room, he requested an exact description. He imagined Penelope submitting to this assault, which combined all his principal notions of pleasure. The vagina, a glimpse of which Gladys had given him not so long ago, seemed to him an organ of mystery, where generation is lying in wait for you, and he did not yet feel he had the spirit of a father of a family. The mouth, the voluptuous resources of which he did appreciate, would have attracted him in Penelope, who had sent him her smile on graduation day. But he would have been deliriously happy to enter her backside, as people entered his own—the bottom, “the most important thing”—and as he was about to enter Bob’s. He was entering it with a threefold stimulation, even. In fact, thinking of Penelope, and of Pamela as well, he now understood Bob’s words “Ah! girls!” that had made him smile in a comparable situation, when the roles were reversed. But he doubted whether Bob, at the present moment, was turning his thoughts to Pamela.

Bum-holes had not, during the recent weeks, been the sole concern of Bob and the other Buckley graduates. The *Herald Examiner* of the eighteenth of June—a Hearst newspaper, the most important in the city after the *Los Angeles Times*—had dropped a bombshell that seemed to have pulverized the ultra-snobbish Arroyo de la Cumbre school. The following day the news was taken up by the *Los Angeles Times*, with a similar hoo-ha and further details. It was revealed that as certain academic records from Buckley had been rejected as suspect by the computers in some universities, an inquiry had confirmed that the Ds—a fail mark—had been changed to Bs, and that this had been done for students who were particularly rich. Several

members of the school's administration committee, beginning with the octogenarian Roy Disney, brother of Walt, had resigned. Roy Clear had been avenged by Roy Disney.

Certainly the Clears could never have dreamed of a more complete vengeance for the humiliations once inflicted upon their son for Kathy's fiscal delinquency. But after the initial impulse of malicious glee, they, like Roy, rallied to a cause that appeared lost. Miss Buckley, whose suicide had been feared, had not weakened for an instant. She showed her mettle as a Daughter of the American Revolution. She put the substitution of Bs for Ds down to an error in the secretary's office: an intrusive line had been marked on a small number of forms which brought about the alteration, but it had not been intentional. If these forms were those of very rich students, that was pure chance. The valiant directress announced that she was prepared to take action for defamation against the "loyal dissidents", those teachers whom Mr. Thepot had dismissed the previous year and who, having set up another school, were really belabouring her own now that this scandal was raging. "The marks were bought": thus ran one of the sub-headings in the *Herald Examiner's* article. Every one knew that for the authoress of *Education Begins at Two* it did not begin at Buckley unless the parents could pay two thousand eight hundred dollars per annum and, often, further tens of thousands of dollars as benefactors. But Roy had never heard any talk of a fee for altering the marks of those rich cretins of both sexes whose haughtiness had sometimes irritated him. These were impenetrable family secrets.

In any case, these misdeeds did not concern an excellent student such as Bob, and certainly not Pamela, and, in Roy's view, they were in the end justified, since they guaranteed the triumph of money. Otis, with the irony peculiar to his cast of mind, his liking for the reversal of moral values, and his profound knowledge of the role played by money in the student life of the high school, was of the same opinion. Jack had been

indignant about the revelations in the press, which he compared to those in the Watergate affair. His position was always on the side of authority and the rich. John Clear, to show that he too was behind Miss Buckley, in spite of the incident with the flag, had, jointly with his wife, sent her a telegram of sympathy in which he condemned the “calumniators”. Yet he did not include the words he had spoken privately to his family:

*“Get money; still get money, miss;  
No matter by what means.”*

## Part Three—Chapter Eight

OTIS and Roy's first outing was not to Hollywood Boulevard but to Sunset Boulevard, where Ramsey had just discovered a curious establishment, the address of which he had passed on to them. It was situated fairly high up on what is called Sunset Strip, or the Strip. "I won't tell you anything about it now," he added, "but when you and the proprietor are alone, tell him you know about a basement room and that you'd like to go there."

They were most intrigued. Roy wondered whether it might be a room where the horrors Jack had described involving shaven heads or chains inserted into the anus took place; but he did not want to admit that he knew about such things. Ramsey had told them about a house of male love, equipped for voyeurs: cubicles with plate-glass windows covered by a curtain which, after four "quarters" (one dollar) were inserted into a slot, was raised so that one saw a boy or a "macho-man" showing off his best features before and aft, and masturbating while the voyeur did likewise—finishing, with luck, before the curtain came down again.

Even the front of the establishment was odd, but it would have attracted the attention only of the initiated. There were lamps, pipes of jade, porcelain or plastic for marijuana or opium, syringes for injecting heroin, tubes in the most bizarre forms for puffing cocaine into one's nose, and sheets of aluminium for smoking it by applying heat underneath with a lighter, while one inhaled the smoke through a tube. Ramsey had said that the shop was permitted to display all these devices, provided no drugs were supplied. They were made out to be simple objects of curiosity. It was like Adam Gottlieb publishing *The Pleasures of Cocaine* for reasons of hygiene and morality. Roy had browsed through that book at Otis's, and had accepted the truth of what

was said in the preface: "Cocaine is now part of reality. Regardless of the millions of dollars the government has spent on stemming the tide, the tide keeps on rising . . . As long as people continue to use cocaine, it would be better to teach them how to do so in safety and with pleasure." Otis said that this conclusion applied to all forbidden pleasures.

Inside the shop, empty of other customers for the time being, were to be seen bell-jars for growing the coca from which cocaine was extracted; fertilizers for marijuana and the hallucinogenic mushrooms that many Californians planted in their gardens; insecticides to protect such plantations; and retorts for purifying cocaine when purchased mixed with other products. But there was a clear understanding that the shop, in selling these objects, had no conception of their possible use. Ramsey had said that in former times dildoes had been sold under the name "dilatators"—minus the appendages, it was true—in the guise of medical instruments.

A customer entered, and murmured a few words into the ear of the proprietor, who had not as yet put any questions to his young visitors. The two men disappeared into the rear of the shop, and the proprietor came back alone. Otis asked him about a large glass tube, provided with a pump.

"It's a hyperæmiator," said the proprietor, "a medical instrument to promote an accumulation of blood in an organ." Again medicine giving names to curious devices! The proprietor had smiled as he uttered the word "organ". Otis judged it a propitious moment to say that he and his friend would like to see the basement room. The proprietor looked them in the eye. "Who told you about it?" he asked.

"My elder brother," said Otis.

The proprietor signed them to follow him. From the rear of the shop a stairway led to the basement: a door opened and a spectacle strange indeed lay before their eyes.

At the centre of a brilliantly lit room a wide panel had been erected, with an opening, through which a boy of around twelve

was stretched out, his hands and feet resting on stools. An electrically operated dildo was coming and going in his backside, while a man manœuvred the pump of a glass tube like the one in the shop, encompassing the boy's penis. The tube was attached to his stomach with a kind of rubber girdle, and the penis, as it was being pumped, swelled up inordinately. The practical demonstration, it could be said, after the verbal explanation. The customer Roy and Otis had seen coming in was masturbating himself in front of the boy. It was a much enhanced variation on the cubicles described by Ramsey. The arrival of the two friends excited the masturbator even more, and he moved closer to the young captive and ejaculated onto his face.

Faithful to his preferred role as friendly pimp, Otis started to feel Roy up, as if wanting to encourage him to participate in this scene. But it seemed to be at an end, at least for one of the participants. The boy was released from his shackles and relieved of his tube and dildo, which had been switched off. He wiped his face and backside with Kleenex tissues. But the customer took hold of the boy's penis and spread the sides of the urethra. "Aha!" said the man, "no wonder you didn't ejaculate into the tube: you put a piece of match-stick in. You cheated."

"I have to!" said the boy. "It's the fourth time I've been in action to-day. If the machine makes me come, I don't want to bugger myself." He removed the fragment of match-stick. The man who had been operating the pump threw a handful of sawdust onto the sperm the other had spilled.

"Would you care to try it?" he asked Roy, whom Otis had unzipped.

"Why not?" Roy replied loftily, in the way he had responded the first time he was offered cocaine. To him every new sensual delight seemed irresistible. He undressed, stretched out through the gap in the pillory board, felt the dildo, now disinfected, penetrate his behind and there begin vibrating, and then, with a strange sensation, felt the glass tube surrounding his member, the volume and erection of which increased even more than

under the influence of the cream of cocaine so dear to Ramsey. He understood what the boy had said, because he ejaculated even more quickly than usual. The man at the hyperæmiator had waved an enormous member in his face—more enormous than Jack's, even—and the customer was rubbing away at himself in preparation for a repeat performance ("Don't come on me," Roy asked him), while Otis was being masturbated by the boy. These subterranean pleasures, shared with persons unknown, enraptured the two friends.

"Come back whenever you like," the proprietor said as they were leaving, "it's free of charge for youngsters."



## Part Three—Chapter Nine

JUST as he had been unable to rest until he went back to Hollywood Boulevard alone, there was now only one thing Roy wanted: to return to the establishment at Sunset where he had experienced such extraordinary sensations. The phallus on the man at the hyperæmiator had fascinated him, and Roy saw no need for Otis to witness the relationship he hoped to form with that man—that man who in respect of calibre outdid the chief of police. Giant phalluses were Roy's speciality.

There was another very young boy stretched out through the gap, sandwiched between the electric dildo and the pneumatic tube. Two individuals were being masturbated in front of the spectacle by two ephesbes, and, what interested Roy, the man from last time was there. It was he who was operating the pump, a role to which he appeared to be assigned, as well as that of exhibitionist. Roy wondered what proportions his horse-like organ might acquire inside the glass tube. When the session was over, without the cheating of last time, the man again invited him to take over from the boy. Roy accepted, but wished to verify whether it was true that when part of a match-stick was inserted into the end of the urethra, one was prevented from ejaculating. His excitement was so great that he thought he had indeed ejaculated. Nonetheless he confirmed, when he was freed, that it had been only an illusion: the tube was dry. His inflated penis remained erect, its business not yet done.

"Do you want to leave with me?" asked the man.

Roy gave a sign of assent: that was the only reason he was there.

"How much will you give me?" he asked as they were going up the stairs.

"Twenty dollars," said the man.

“That’s not enough,” said Roy categorically. “I’m not just any boy. I know men who give me three hundred dollars.”

“All the boys say that,” the man replied, smiling, “but me, I’ve never met these so very generous men—or rather so very ridiculous.

“You doubt my word?” said Roy in an offended tone. “The proof that I’m not a boy like the others is that I’m not coming with you for twenty dollars.”

While conversing, they had left the shop and were walking slowly along towards Highland Avenue. Roy felt against the material of his jeans the tickling of his still semi-erect organ, and gave some thought to that of his interlocutor. “I should have added,” he said, “that from one man I met in Hollywood Boulevard I asked only one hundred. I’ll need at least that much from you.”

“All right,” said the man. “I like you, not only because you’re good-looking, but because you’re depraved.”

“Where are you taking me?” asked Roy.

“To a motel nearby,” said the man. “I parked my car there. It’s more convenient for my amusements when I come to the shop, because I live in Lennox, quite far away, near the international airport.”

“How come I find you there every time I go to that shop?” said Roy.

“I don’t actually go there all that often, but no doubt we were fated to meet,” said the man. “I’m the one who invented the electric dildo you used. I’m an agent for domestic electrical appliances, and I invent some for my own pleasures. You’ll see: we’ll do some amazing things.”

This was the first time Roy had gone to a hotel to have sex. He was not worried in the least, because he had resolved to defy every prejudice. But, once in the room, he remembered the advice of Ramsey’s doctor about intercourse with strangers: take a good look at their penis. “That’s all I needed to show that you’re not a beginner at this,” the man said.

“I’m offering you my physical fitness,” said Roy, “it’s natural that I should verify yours.”

Everything went marvellously. The man was worthy of his super-virile appearance. He even stayed inside Roy after ejaculating, and, a short time later, ejaculated a second time. This had never happened to Roy with his other partners. He was so stimulated by this second episode, so rapid and at the same time so abundant—his canal had been flooded—that he reciprocated, under the expert hand that pumped him.

True to his word, the man gave him the hundred dollars. But when he offered to take him home, Roy, who had said he lived in Santa Monica, did not want to give out personal information to some one about whom he knew nothing, apart from what they had just been doing. He thanked the man, and gave the excuse that he had some shopping to do in the area; he said he would take the ’bus home. Since they had given each other so much pleasure, he nonetheless agreed to meet again very soon: two days later, in front of the motel, at five in the afternoon.

## Part Three—Chapter Ten

ROY said not a word to Otis about this encounter. It would be one more secret he kept from him. They went to the Pasadena Rose Bowl to see a football match between the teams of the University of Southern California and the State University of Washington. This was the place where, every year, the eight western universities, and one from the middle west, did battle for the championship. To the great vexation of the Californians, the Washingtonians won: it was their tenth win in the ten most recent “Rose Bowls”.

Roy had given his name as Ralph to the man, and would have been greatly astonished had he—who had in turn introduced himself as Luke—not been at the rendezvous. From a distance he saw him walking in front of the motel. Roy himself had no fear of being late, having calculated the time needed to travel by ’bus from Beverly Hills to Sunset Boulevard. His father had taught him economy, and even though he had more money than he knew what to do with—from time to time Roy would simply gaze at his little treasure trove—he took taxis only when it was absolutely necessary. In any case, were not most of his journeys now undertaken in Otis’s Mercedes?

The banality of the motel room had for him an additional piquancy, so accustomed was he becoming to the sumptuous décor of the mansions in which he was the secret guest. Things went just as agreeably as last time, with the mutual repetition that would, it seemed, henceforth be *de rigueur*. Roy was delighted with this agent for domestic electrical appliances who had to-day not gone to operate the pump at the shop. Luke, the “man in the street”, made a change from rich and complex personalities, just as those personalities made a change from the

police chief. The dildo showed his erotic imagination, and what gushed forth from his testicles through his prick was for Roy the symbol of the nameless vigour in which humanity is steeped.

They were both enjoying the relaxation that follows pleasure. The man had inserted a quarter dollar in a slot, which caused the mattress to vibrate for a few minutes: it was a “sweet dreams” mattress. Then he leaned over to his jacket, hanging on the back of a chair, and took out a little envelope containing white powder. “You must have used cocaine before?” he said to Roy.

“Yes,” said Roy.

“So let’s enjoy this,” said the sales agent, “while the mattress rocks us.”

When the movement ended, Roy was still enraptured by the sensation of the cocaine. “My little Ralph,” said the man in a quiet voice, “I have something serious to tell you. The powder gives me the courage to bring you up to date about things. I’m not going to give you any more money; in fact you’re the one that is going to give money to me.”

Roy sat up, pale with anger. “What are you saying?” he exclaimed.

“You have money,” the man answered, “firstly because you earn it by plying this trade, and secondly because you have a family in Beverly North with a fine house at such and such a number in Summit Drive. Your name is not Ralph, it’s Roy Clear.”

Now Roy’s pallor was no longer caused by anger, but by fear. His heart was racing; he suddenly gathered that this man was a blackmailer into whose clutches he had fallen.

Nevertheless, he did not want to appear flustered. He showed his class by responding scornfully: “What good is that to you? Any one would know my address if they watched me going home.”

“I discovered it that way the other day, by following you in my car,” said the man. “When you came with your friend, I couldn’t

follow you, because I was parked at the same place as to-day, quite far from the shop.”

“You collect addresses?” asked Roy. “In Beverly and Bel Air you can buy maps at street corners with all the actors’ houses marked on them. That doesn’t give you the right to ask them for money.”

“Yes,” said the man, who had stood up to get dressed, “but what you don’t know is that, in the charming basement at Sunset, there’s a hidden camera that films everything that happens. I have some very fine photographs of you on the machine, sandwiched between the pump and the dildo. My own face cannot be seen there, because I am careful always to keep my back to the lens. Unfortunately for me, your friend kept his head turned away; otherwise I could have killed two birds with one stone. But unfortunately for you, you are as unmistakable as on an identity card. In two days time, at five o’clock, you will bring me two hundred dollars. If not, I’ll send prints of the photographs to your parents and to the headmaster of the Beverly Hills high school: I rang the secretary, because I thought that you had to be at that school, and they confirmed that you were enrolled there.”

Beads of perspiration appeared on Roy’s forehead. The double threat seemed already a reality. He imagined his parents’ distress and disgust, an appalling scandal, his expulsion from the high school, the end of his relationships with Otis, with Jack, and with the rich or famous men to whom he had been introduced. He remembered the time when he had thought badly of his mother after the publication of her fiscal delinquency. What was that, in comparison to the frightful row that was coming, which could well end in a scandal of quite a different order? While he often felt a certain pride in thinking himself superior to his father, whose absurdities he did not embrace and whom he deceived with such perfection, he knew him sufficiently well to be certain that his reaction would be fearsome. John Clear would become once more the son of Judge Andrew Clear: Roy would be sent to

a reform school. He had heard about the two that existed in California, one at Sacramento and the other at Stockton, near San Francisco. All the ideas of his childhood resurfaced to show him, in the name of a kind of metaphysical morality and an immanent justice, the punishment, or at least the revenge, for his blackmailing of the reverend Camper. The fortuitous circumstance that Otis had not been filmed confined the chastisement to Roy alone. Even though it would have seemed absurd to him to assign Heaven a role in events of this kind, he saw in his case an illustration of the principle: "Ill-gotten gains seldom prosper". Was that not also illustrated by the scandal of another kind that had struck the Buckley School? While the venerable Miss Buckley was not obliged to return the money from the frauds she was said to have committed, Roy was going to be forced to give Luke, little by little, what he had earned from having sex with other men. He would thus have two pimps, apart from the charming Otis who was one only jestingly: on the one hand the Los Angeles police chief who procured rich clients for him; and on the other this gallows bird, encountered in the basement of a shop—stimulating perhaps, but loathsome.

Perspiring, trembling, and sobered he too got up and dressed, as if in a dream. "I'm sorry," the creature said, lighting a cigarette, "to give you such an unpleasant fright, but the first step is always the hardest. In future our relationship will be a delight. You have in my person some one who pleases you, some one who gives you full satisfaction—both you and I have the proof of that. My dream is to be a very rich man, surrounded by young boys. Failing that, I am now surrounded by young boys who will perhaps make me richer than selling household appliances and inventing electric dildoes. You have become one of those boys. I'm not married, and I have no children; I've put together a family for myself who will do what I say." To complete his intimidation of Roy, he took out a revolver from the inside pocket of his jacket, which recalled Jack's. "You see," said Luke, "I'm not afraid of any one."

It was from the thought of Jack that Roy sought a little comfort. He would be forced to confess his sad adventure to the police chief, just as he had been forced to tell Otis about how he got the clap.

“I suppose,” said the man, “that now you will allow me to drive you home. The day after to-morrow, you won’t even need to take the ’bus to see me: I’ll be waiting at five o’clock in my car on the corner of Summit Drive and Benedict Canyon. Don’t take it into your head to try any dirty tricks: the photographs are in a safe place.”

“And what if I haven’t got all the money you want?” asked Roy, seeking to preserve his savings.

“You’ll just have to steal it from your parents.”

The car—a battered old Pontiac—moved along one of the four lanes, from one red light to the next. The closer they came to Beverly Hills, the greater became Roy’s dread, as though the imagined drama were imminent. Suddenly he could not stifle his choking sobs. He told himself that he would soon be in the house, carrying inside him the sperm of this man who had advised him to steal from his parents.

“Come, come, don’t distress yourself so,” said the creature, patting him on the thighs. “Adversity is character-forming. I’ve been making a man of you. You’re shedding your last childish tears. Dry your eyes before you get out. Mr. and Mrs. John Clear will think you’ve been beaten up.”



## Part Three—Chapter Eleven

ONCE Roy was across the threshold, he had the impression of having escaped from a nightmare. The luxurious living-room where his mother was pretending to play the piano as usual, Uracca laying the table in the little dining-room, Mr. Clear, very happy at having sold, by correspondence, a Beverly Hills villa to an Iranian Jew, a client of Mr. Z., all restored his atmosphere of security. He would have thought it absurd to weep, and congratulated himself on having managed to control himself.

His toilet washed away the physical souvenir of the frightful man, and—almost—his words. Exhausted after all the sex, he even had an excellent appetite at dinner. In the morning, from his room, he would ring Jack; the blackmailer, living at Lennox—the man had no reason to give a false address—would be in Jack's hands. These considerations made Roy sleep more easily, just as they had relieved him from the first moment.

He rang at seven in the morning, and there was no answer. Doubtless Jack had left earlier than usual, or he was out jogging, a recent custom. Following this last hypothesis, Roy rang again three quarters of an hour later, and got onto the black maid, to whom he was obliged to identify himself as Jack's nephew, who lived at San José, between Los Angeles and San Francisco—the two boys were about the same age, and their voices sounded similar. The maid answered that the chief of police had been called to Sacramento, and would then stay at San Francisco with his children, and be back in three days' time. Roy would not be able to travel so far to see him, nor would it be possible to explain the problem on the telephone. He would have to decide on his own what to do.

From its hiding-place—behind some books—he took out the money accumulated over the past year. He counted it: at present

he had six thousand four hundred dollars. Opposite him, on his desk, was his bronze money-box, a minuscule 1908 Buick bearing the inscription "First City Bank of Chicago". He shook the box, which emitted a rather high-pitched sound: when full of "quarters" it would be around twenty dollars; there could not be more than twelve or so at present. He would need three hundred and twenty boxes like that to hold his secret hoard in one-dollar coins. The provenance of the two amounts was just as different. Roy took two hundred-dollar notes and slid them into the pocket of his jeans, as though to free himself from an obsession. He would give them to the creature the following day, but no doubt he would get them back soon, after Jack's intervention. Roy thanked his stars for having given him such a protector, without whom he would forever be at the mercy of a truly abominable man.

In the afternoon, he went to see Otis, who suggested going back to Sunset Boulevard: he wanted to sample the machine. Roy, who had not expected this caprice, had sufficient wit to invent a way out. He said that he had thought about it, that it was unwise to go to a place like that where there were minors, and that the police would sooner or later come to know of it and could burst in at any moment, and that they had been lucky that nothing happened when they were there. Otis fell in with his advice, and said that anyway he had enough dildoes at home not to need a electric one. The two friends spent the afternoon in the usual way, in the Greenway Drive garden, and then in Otis's room, with the door discreetly closed.

Ramsey, who arrived later, was pleased that they had not risked a second visit, at least to the basement. "There are places," he said, "where people like us go only once." These words, of which Roy admired the wisdom, filled him with embarrassment.

In the evening, back in his room and thinking about his rendezvous for the coming day, he became furious: so, he was preparing to lavish two hundred dollars on a creature who had

given him nothing for having sex! It was a worthy match to his clap, caught from the only man that until now had screwed him free of charge. These two hundred dollars being claimed from him were the fruit of his pleasure and also of his labour. He thought again about breaking the appointment and defying fate while waiting for Jack's return. Was it actually certain that he would recover the money? There was another solution, that would permit him to buy time: going to the meeting empty-handed. The man would repeat his threats, but would not carry them out there and then. Roy did feel the weaker party when confronted by some one who was in possession of those quite dreadful photographs, and who, being a drug addict, was capable of losing control of his actions. But he was determined not to give him money. He put the two notes back into their hiding-place. As had been suggested to him, he would steal from his parents.

After all, having already decided to flout all the prejudices, it would be just one more to snap his fingers at. But it was no longer a matter of stealing money: Mr. and Mrs. Clear only ever kept insignificant amounts at home; all their expenses were paid credit card. Each of them had a pile of them in a plastic folder (department-store cards, supermarket cards, service-station cards, not counting those from American Express, Diner's Club, Vista, the Bank of America, etc.). So he would need to steal some object—an object worth two hundred dollars.

Once his parents were in bed, Roy got up again to conduct a tour of the house. From the first floor, it might be possible to purloin from his sister's room the silver cup she won at the good citizen competition for children of the American revolution. He would be able to explain to its owner later, if the object was lost; but Gladys's name was engraved on it, which would have compromised her. The ground-floor living-room offered nothing readily transportable: the silver items—flower-pot holder, samovar, trays—were too large. But the buffet in the large dining-room, where several items of silverware were displayed,

was a possibility. Roy took a little sugar bowl—there were three of them there—to which he ascribed the required value. He shifted the other objects on the shelf a little, to hide the gap it left. Furthermore, this room was used only when there were guests. The sugar bowl would probably be back in its place before its absence had been noticed. If not, Uracca would be suspected. So much the worse for her! Manuelito would not be thought responsible: he was on holiday in Mexico with his father.

Upon reflection, Roy did not want to see an innocent woman accused of a theft with such an odious genesis. The dedication of this Mexican lady, who had been with the Clears for many years, her son's episode with Roy, and the fact that they were schoolfellows, prohibited such a cowardly act. Roy remembered his father sometimes reading aloud from the police reports in the Beverly Hills Courier, as a reminder to take precautions. There was mention there of "suspects" (the word "delinquent" was used only after they had been convicted) who, despite the vigilance of the city police, had entered a house by unknown means, and not by removing a mosquito screen as Roy did to go in and out without any one knowing. If need be, he would feign a break-in by forcing the screen on one of the windows giving onto the garden, which were accessible via the rubbish enclosure. But Jack's intervention would bring the sugar bowl back more easily than it would have brought back the dollars.

## Part Three—Chapter Twelve

NEVER had Roy been as calm as that afternoon at five when he saw his blackmailer again. He was savouring the sensation, so dear to him, of feeling himself the stronger one, since he was certain he would soon carry off a resounding victory over the fellow. He had been very careful, when getting into the Pontiac with his package, to make sure that no other car was passing, and he was wearing his dark glasses. Fortunately Penelope's house in Benedict Canyon was set back from the road—the Websters were spending the summer at Malibu, but often came to Beverly.

Roy told the creature that, rather than dollars, he had followed his advice and taken from his home an item of value, and he opened the package. He explained why he hoped that his parents would not become aware of this pilfering. "You're shrewd," said the man. "Let's not argue about the value of your sugar bowl; it's proof that you've done what I asked, that's the essential thing. I want you to think of yourself as being in my power, which is natural anyway, because we're lovers. You see that I was right to declare that you are now a man. But for sex you are still a boy. What did you do with the money you earned?"

"I spent it," said Roy.

"In future," said the man, "you will keep half of it for me. Are you going to meet any of your rich clients soon?"

"Perhaps," said Roy; "I have to telephone."

"And at home, are there a lot of items you can take without any one noticing?" asked Luke.

"I've already worked out how to do that," said Roy: "by staging a fake burglary."

"How wonderful!" exclaimed the man. "In you I have the boy I've always wanted. You have understood that the bonds which

unite us, even though they are recent, take precedence over those you have with your family. The family serves a purpose in bringing us into the world; but fundamentally it is our enemy: it detests what we are and, if it knew about it, would detest what we do. The more one opposes society, the more pleasure one has.”

“Are you involved with the gay movement?” asked Roy.

“Don’t be silly!” said Luke, “I’m only involved with myself.”

“You don’t confide in other men?” Roy asked again.

“I’m a solitary navigator on the vast ocean from which I fish up my boys,” said Luke. “I’ll let you meet some of them.”

Roy asked another question: “Has the man in the shop seen my photographs?”

“No,” said Luke, “I’m the one that develops the films. It’s not a good idea for explosive material like that to be in strange hands. The proprietor thinks I’m a nut-case, and he let me install the camera in exchange for the dildo. He’s a decent chap, but rather *naïf* for his occupation.”

Roy had begun this interrogation so that he could put Jack in the picture about the fellow, but he had little desire to associate with the little friends. In any case he would probably not have the time for that. “We’re going to the motel,” said Luke. “I’m so excited at the idea of having forced you to steal, that I would like to stop the car, cloak it with some ray that would make us invisible, and screw you here and now.” He moved Roy’s hand over to demonstrate his excitement.

Roy, in the shabby room, experienced less pleasure than last time. He was thinking of what had been said there, rather than what had been done. He relived his astonishment and his fear. And yet for him being possessed always produced the same result; he only detested his accomplice the more because he had been brought to that point as it were despite himself, just as he had been brought to this room. It was not only a physical and moral detestation that this man inspired in him, but a social one. It revolted him that a creature like this might think of making

him his equal or his succubus. He was still, despite his own habits and his own blackmailing, the son of a great estate agent and the grandson of a judge. The thoughts of family that had made him imagine his father's reaction came back to his mind and showed him the distance that separated him from his unsavoury partner. He was still a Child of the American Revolution and he was still of royal stock. Even if those two references were doubtful or absurd, they showed the milieu in which he belonged. His pleasure was not in being opposed to society, but in being on the margins of society; he saw it like Otis, who found it thrilling to overturn moral laws, but respected the laws of society and despised pariahs. He consoled himself with the thought that soon he would put a stop to this rogue who had forced him to steal once and wanted to do it again.

Luke, in fact, was questioning him about whether his parents had any jewellery it was possible to steal. "No one suspects you," he said, "because a boy of your age has few needs. Also, in the cupboards and drawers of every house like yours, there are a lot of things of value which it is easy to take away (linen, silk, gifts). One of my boys, who also comes from a good family—I know how to pick them—has been stealing from his parents for more than six months. When they do find out, the maid will be the one who's sent away."

Roy blushed at having at first made the same calculation. Luke inhaled a little cocaine, which Roy refused. "You can take a dose with you," said the creature. "It will help you make serious decisions: about stealing, for example. You haven't told me," he said, "who these men are that are so generous to you. I've never seen you at Hollywood Boulevard, nor in the other gay cruising places. That means that these men must be receiving you at home. You should give me their names and addresses."

"That's too much to ask of me," said Roy.

"You're forgetting our agreement," said Luke; "you have to do what I say."

“Up to a certain point,” said Roy. “I’ve promised to give you two hundred dollars when I have it. I promise, until then, to give you some objects. It seems to me that that’s enough for the time being.”

“Good! I won’t insist,” said Luke. “Come at the same time four days from now. You will bring me money, if you have it, or something else. What a sweet boy you are!”

Roy hastened to take a shower and an enema so as to wash away all traces of this man, whom he was certain of having been in contact with for the last time.



## Part Three—Chapter Thirteen

THE rendezvous with Jack, who was fortunately now back, was just a day before the rendezvous with the blackmailer. Roy had telephoned the police chief to tell him that they needed to meet at once, but he was not proud of what he had to report. He would have preferred to confess to Otis again, to a boy, that is, who had been in the same peril as he. But the only reason he could have had for confiding in him would be to pass on a warning, and as yet there was no necessity for that. Besides, Otis would not have been any help this time. Indeed Jack was the only appropriate person to hear Roy's confession and to understand the consequences immediately. He was the only physician capable of freeing Roy from this plague he had picked up.

Once they had moved off in the Chevrolet, Roy began his tale. Never had it been more difficult for him to say anything. The theft of the silver sugar bowl, which he hoped to recover with Jack's help, was not the least painful of his confessions.

He had been speaking very rapidly, pouring out his heart, and had just said that the man had enquired about the people he secretly visited. Suddenly, at the red light at the intersection of Benedict Canyon and Sunset Boulevard, Jack said, "Look in the right-hand rear-view mirror, and see whether you recognize the Pontiac that has just stopped behind us."

"It's Luke's car," said Roy. "I even recognize the number; I made a note of it the second time, just in case."

"I thought it might be him," said Jack. "I have a professional eye, and I've been watching that car for a while. Every time we meet I keep an eye open. Stay as calm as you can while I prepare a picnic for that criminal." He added, after having moved off, "It would be easy to shake him off, by running some red lights if

needed. But he too must have seen *my* number. It has no special meaning, except to the police, but it would allow him to discover my identity. I'm going to crush the viper in the egg."

Instead of continuing towards Brentwood, Jack turned back up towards Beverly North via Roxbury Drive and Lexington Road. "If the man is still following us, as I hope," he said, "that shows that he is armed and ready for anything." Roy confirmed that Luke possessed a revolver. The Pontiac was still behind the Chevrolet, keeping a respectable distance. "I'm heading for the area of our first chance meeting," said Jack. "It's a lonely place. This creature's grave is waiting for him there."

Roy shivered. Despite Jack's menacing words, he had not anticipated that his little adventure might end with a tragedy. He had imagined an arrest, a search of Luke's residence, but not a despatch *ad patres*. Truly this sequence of educational events was proceeding in leaps and bounds. Moreover the armed conflict that was about to take place was perhaps not without danger for him. But he was prepared to go through with the voyage; it was the outcome of his gay cruising and would be its conclusion. Who would ever have said a fortnight ago, when he was getting his good marks at school, that he would live through such a night, preceded, it is true, by days that had taken their toll?

Jack intentionally slowed down, so as not to give the impression that he knew he was being followed. Moreover the other driver had the skill to remain at a distance, but it was not very shrewd of him not to suspect that he had been noticed on these roads where, for a quarter of an hour, fewer than two cars had passed. Roy assumed that the creature had taken cocaine as a stimulant, in accordance with his recipe, and that this had affected his lucidity. On the other hand, certain that he was on the trail of one of Roy's rich clients, and convinced that he had not been noticed, because the Chevrolet could so easily have outrun him, he had no reason to abandon his pursuit. He was certainly unaware that he was tailing the police chief; otherwise he would have had no need to stay with his victim and would

have gone away to think about his discovery. He would not have dared, in the middle of the night, to confront a man whose profession obliged him to be armed.

Jack had lowered the window. A gust of warm dry air came in—the Santa Ana. “You know,” the police chief said to Roy, “that people become cruel when that wind is blowing.” Roy had not himself noticed this phenomenon, but it did seem to be established fact; he remembered having read, in one of Raymond Chandler’s detective stories, set in the Los Angeles area, that when the Santa Ana was blowing “tender-hearted little women finger the edge of the carving-knife and study their husband’s neck”. That had seemed a literary exaggeration, like the verse of John Pierpont he had learned at the Buckley school: “The yankee boy, before being sent to school, knows the mystery of that magic tool, the pocket-knife.”

At the turn-off to Pickfair Way, where Jack had once halted to enjoy himself with Roy, he stopped, turned on the interior light for a moment, gazed at his young friend, embraced him, and kissed him on the mouth. “We’ll put on a show,” he said, “to make the gentleman believe we’re going to amuse ourselves. But we will amuse ourselves in a way he is not expecting. Either he will attack and we’ll be ready for him, or he’ll wait, in the hope of finding my house, but won’t go further.” Luke had backed down past the turn-off. “Good,” the police chief told Roy, “he can’t see us now. Get out on the gutter side. Slip away, as though you were out jogging, with your handkerchief tied around your head. If you encounter a patrol car, attracted by the shots, you will say that you heard them, but that you didn’t see any one. As for me, it will be supposed that I clashed with a suspect I was following, and that I went past to stop him.”

They slid out through the half-open door. Jack went forward alone, revolver in his hand, along the mound at the edge of the road. But Roy did not take flight. He remained rooted to the spot, his heart in his mouth. He was fearful of what would become of these two men, one of whom was going to kill the

other for his sake. The song of the crickets in the stillness of the night reverberated in his ears like a drum. Jack, reaching the turning, dashed towards the car. Three shots rang out. Terror-stricken, but burning to know, Roy dashed down. Jack approached the car, where Luke was slumped at the wheel, and sent a final shot through his head.

“Ah! you’re there,” he said to Roy upon catching sight of him. You’re brave. The creature is dead, with a revolver in his hand. I’ve put a sachet of cocaine in his pocket, which I happened to have in my own. It will make it look like a settling of scores by drug dealers. Let’s go.” They ran to the Chevrolet and took off at top speed. “We will have woken Mary Pickford and Buddy Rogers,” said Jack, laughing. “A happy ending to the business. The investigation will be conducted by my Beverly Hills colleague, Mr. Cork, but I will conduct the search at Lennox. I’ll destroy the photographs and give you back the silver sugar bowl.”

“I hope the man wasn’t lying to me about where he lived,” said Roy.

“It’s unlikely,” said Jack. “You were going to be asked to go to his place. In any case, after I’ve raided the establishment at Sunset, the two investigations will be linked and you’ll have nothing to fear. Even though Cork has sometimes seen you at your home, he’ll never realize that it’s you in the photographs, which perhaps don’t even exist. The blackmailer’s art is to persuade his victims that he is the master. This one ended up as a pathetic student.”

They were not far from the Clear residence—at the place where Roy usually got out to go home on foot. “Are you feeling up to it if we carry on to my place?” asked Jack. “Action stirs the blood.”

“Sure,” said Roy. He wanted to show Jack he was worthy of him. He also needed voluptuous sensations, to dispel from his thoughts the image of that creature, so ready to ejaculate within

him twice running, who was lying up there in the car with a shattered skull.

The Chevrolet flew along to Brentwood at the maximum permissible speed. Neil Diamond, with his marvellous voice, was singing *Captain Sunshine* on the car radio. “. . . He doesn’t take much—He doesn’t do much . . .”

“A propos, do I get my envelope this evening?” asked Jack.

“I forgot it,” said Roy. “I was too worked up.”

“I have calculated,” said Jack, “that thanks to me you’ve accumulated five thousand dollars.”

“Just about,” said Roy.

“Mistakes have a price,” said Jack. “For making me kill some one to get you out of a hole, you can give me half your stash.” And he added, smiling, “I’m not like *Captain Sunshine*; I take a lot, but I do a lot.”

## Part Three—Chapter Fourteen

TWO days later the *Los Angeles Times* published a report of the murder. As Jack had anticipated, the paper said that according to preliminary police investigations, the victim—whose name was indeed Luke—had been part of a network of drug traffickers, and had suffered the rough justice of his kind.

Roy, somewhat pale, listened to his father's commentary. Mr. Clear reacted to the event only because the crime had been committed in the Beverly North region. He recalled—which struck Roy as a strange coincidence—that the last murder to sully that sacred soil had been the work of the police, when, a decade ago, they had gunned down one of the kidnappers of the ultra-rich Leonard Firestone, in North Alpine Drive—an event that had been mentioned during the trip to Malibu. Mrs. Clear said she was sure that Jack Sherman the police chief would arrest the killer. "I do hope so," said John, "but, according to the paper, Commander William Booth, spokesman for the Los Angeles police, has stated that for the first six months of the year the crime rate in the city has risen by ten per cent., and arrests have gone down by two per cent." Mr. Clear added that Jack Sherman's myrmidons had some summary executions on their consciences, notably that of a man who was found naked, with six gunshot wounds to his body. At the present time a policeman from Azusa county, south-west of Los Angeles, was being tried for the rape and murder of a woman. Being a policeman, he was appearing before the Los Angeles High Court. The papers were saying that since the rape had not been proven, he would be liable only to a maximum of ten years in prison for "second-degree murder".

More and more Roy admired the force of character that enabled him to remain imperturbable with his family or among

his friends. Bob was another who had not yet gone away on holiday, the reason being that his father was infatuated with Roy. When Ramsey took all the little group to Sunset Boulevard to buy some new appliances at the famous establishment—it was understood now that they would not venture into the basement—Roy refrained from raising any objection. Even though he remembered Jack's promise, he dreaded to cross the threshold of such a place again, even in dark glasses. But as they arrived he breathed a sigh of relief: the shop-front was closed. The police raid must already have happened. But, while the manager may have been in prison, Luke's young boys had regained their liberty. Had the one stealing from his parents for six months (was it some one from Beverly?) mended his ways, or was he still doing it out of habit?

Four days after the Pickford Way murder, Roy was again in Jack's car on the way to Brentwood. He had been telling Jack about the excursion he and his friends, the young Zs., had made to the Sunset establishment. "In a little while you'll understand even better that I keep my promises," said Jack. "And you?"

In response, Roy slipped a large envelope into his pocket.

"How much is there?" asked Jack, laughing.

"Two thousand five hundred dollars in hundred-dollar notes," said Roy.

"Hooray!" said the police chief, "I'm rich."

It had not been without regret that Roy dipped into his nest-egg, but he could not conceal things from his saviour in the way he had with Luke. Yet he did feel like weeping. This was less for what he was losing than because he had been forced to give way. Nevertheless, when he considered the tears he had shed when his blackmailer brought him home, he congratulated himself that the reason for that no longer existed. He did have the consolation of reminding himself that he had not in fact given Jack even half of what he had. But he was annoyed with him for having used the situation to get hold of part of his

earnings. Besides, if the police chief had killed the man, his aim had been to protect himself, just as much as to protect Roy. Nonetheless it had been Roy who, through his want of prudence, had been the cause of the murder, as Jack had told him. And lastly, had not the two of them made a pact based on money? And was not money the foundation of the society of which they formed part? It was natural, then, that money should excuse everything.

One of the promises Jack had kept was the one Roy had guessed: he had seized the photographs, which did indeed exist. Here they were. Roy shamefacedly gazed at himself, stretched out across that machine, between the hyperæmiator and the electric dildo. He asked himself how he could ever have submitted to such practices. "There was plenty to keep one occupied in the Sunset Boulevard basement!" said Jack. "It's almost a shame that I closed it down. But try not to unearth another place like that. What would your father have said had he seen the photos?"

In a heartfelt cry, Roy made no secret of what he had imagined: that his father would have put him in a penal institution. "Well, you're very much indebted to me," said Jack, "but I won't keep these pictures, even as a souvenir, because one never knows who will live and who will die." Using his lighter, he burnt them in an ash-tray.

"And that's not all," he said, unwrapping a package: the sugar-bowl appeared. The object was back on the buffet before its disappearance was noticed. Order had been restored: it had cost no more than two thousand five hundred dollars and a corpse.



## Part Three—Chapter Fifteen

OTIS and Ramsey were taking Roy to a party given by a couple of gay interior decorators, similar to those given by many other gays that season. Neither of the two brothers knew the people whose home they were visiting, no more than did Bob, who was coming independently. But it was now customary in Los Angeles gay circles to receive “unknown brothers” at gatherings of this kind. A contribution was required, and it was stated that any surplus, once the expenses were covered, would be added to the costs of propaganda aimed at impeding Proposition 6. These parties were publicized in the city’s gay bars. There was even a site in Melrose Avenue where all the invitations were centralized. A friend of Ramsey who knew the two interior decorators had assured him that this would be the finest party of the summer. It was a requirement that guests wear white. The cost of entry was five dollars per person.

The house was in Mulholland Drive, north of Hollywood, in the Mount Olympus district. The area was well chosen: no neighbours, and an unrestricted view at the end of a sort of gorge, where the property occupied the two slopes and the heights.

It was as though they had entered a dream setting. Loud-speakers emitted disco music with the same intensity as at the Odyssey. The sand in the pathways had been coloured yellow. Two gigantic cornucopias poured forth fruit and sandwiches into huge baskets. Drinks were distributed from kiosks. But the most extraordinary aspect of that place was the people, who evoked the age of gold. White clothing went little further than the entrance: five or six hundred boys, almost all quite naked, roamed, danced, sang, and made love. An enormous pool accommodated a certain number of them. Three or four couples

representing the Daughters of Bilitis who, out of modesty, had retained their briefs, but exposed their bosoms, were wandering around looking a little lost. They, with their long hair flowing over the waist, were as ravishing as most of the boys. The slopes of Mount Olympus in Los Angeles were, this afternoon, the Olympus of beauty and liberty. But the nakedness, nearly universal, removed from this gathering the depressing communal aspect to which Ramsey had drawn attention at the Odyssey.

Otis, Roy and he, having undressed, moved forward into the crowd. These bronzed and muscular bodies, abandoned to the joys of nature and the senses, made Roy forget the sinister images that still often filled his mind. He was the youngest and, as always, the best-looking. On a terrace, boys of fifteen or sixteen danced with each other, some half dressed, others naked. One of these last was presenting a very attractive backside below his poncho: he wore a large Mexican hat like the one the consul-general had bought for Roy with his doeskin suit. Many of these dancing boys were in the secret group at the Beverly Hills high school—notably Din, Roy's team-mate; but while to-day they had banished all appearance of secrecy, they retained the final veil—their white briefs—which Otis begged them to remove. It then became evident that, in order to attain a total whiteness, they had starched their pubic hair.

Here and there Ramsey, as at the Odyssey, ran into student friends. Older men were rare—the invitations bore the words “No old farts.” There was one couturier, an erotic poet from San Francisco, two film directors, and a French nobleman living in Los Angeles who was a colleague of John Clear in the real estate business; he acknowledged Roy calmly, realizing that secrecy would be reciprocated, and ogled his nudity appreciatively. Even though these gentlemen had evidently concluded that the epithet “old fart” did not apply to themselves, they had not relinquished their clothing.

Bob had come with three more Buckley graduates, which was just as much a surprise for Roy, as it was for one of them to see

him. Nor were they Ds become Bs. They were proud to announce that at the University of Southern California, where they and Bob had just enrolled, they would vigorously campaign with that university's gay group. Roy smiled at these passions suppressed by Mr. Thepot's iron hand at the Arroyo de la Cumbre school, and free now the diploma was assured. But it was a no less amusing surprise when Bob introduced him to some friends, boys from the French Lycée of Los Angeles. Their presence proved that gay life crossed all the barriers set up by a conventional education. They said that the school was being besieged by families who had removed their children from Buckley, because of the scandal. The Kabbazes had a waiting list of three hundred students.

Roy was gazing not only at the bodies, but also at the sexual organs. These members, sometimes of considerable proportions, hanging down, bouncing about or standing up, were like arrows that filled him with desire. He yearned to fondle them, shake them, and get them to penetrate him. But the assembly was not for the moment a complete orgy: doubtless it would become one before the night was out, because it was scheduled to continue until the following morning. Rugs had been laid out on the lawns and under the trees, to encourage public love-making. Those who wished to be more discreet had "love chambers", consisting of a camp bed surrounded by screens. Perhaps these were also intended for the pleasure of voyeurs, because some such had one eye glued to the interstices. One curious scene, on two levels, was formed by two boys, standing on two paths at different levels, who were being sucked by two other boys, kneeling in front of them: they were watching each other receive the same service and following its progress. They were helping each other with their eyes, just as their partners were helping them with their mouths, mouths that were soon simultaneously filled.

The Daughters of Bilitis had tired of the role of spectators. To the masculine pleasures that doubtless had brought them to life,

they added a demonstration, new to Roy, of feminine pleasures. Stretched out on a rug, divested of their briefs, they licked each other both fore and aft, fingers working, and orgasmed in formidable convulsions, pubes against pubes.

A circle of boys who had gathered round them fraternally applauded the final outcome. It was a counterpart to the scene at the Beverly Hills high school, when people were gazing at the two battling Lesbians. A good many onlookers had evidently taken some interest in these albeit alien engagements, as the rigidity of their phalluses showed. Both Roy and Otis were in that condition.

“So!” said Otis, looking at Roy, “you’re interested in girls.”

“They’re Daughters of Bilitis,” said Roy. “It seems you’re not exactly indifferent either.”

“Actually it’s the first time,” said Otis. Roy no longer hesitated to tell him about his adventure with Penelope at Malibu, which had been *his* “first time”. “You sneaky little thing!” said Otis. “The idea did cross my mind, but it wasn’t for me to draw your attention to a girl, seeing that you had not mentioned her to me. You know I’m in love with your pleasures, because I’m in love with you. So don’t hide them from me. I’m going to ring Penelope and arrange a party so that you can get together.”

What an adorable creature Otis was! Roy was ashamed at the thought that he would continue to hide from him so many of his pleasures. He even took pleasure from resisting the perilous temptation to confide them to him. However this latest kindness from Otis seemed to Roy one more reason to remain silent about them, out of respect for his friendship.

Evening arrived, and with it an increase in freedom. As had been hoped, it was complete once night had come. Sweet music replaced the disco sounds. Lamps of various colours, but subdued, created zones of light. Ramsey could no longer say that young Americans were people always waiting to be violated. Roy, who had had that fleeting impression at Hollywood Boulevard, saw that here the opposite was the case: if he was left

unmolested, it was only because he was walking arm in arm with Otis. In the same way as on the beach at night at Long Beach, all the two friends could make out were couples or groups, engaged in sexual delights of all kinds. The Daughters of Bilitis got started again. The Beverly Hills high school introduced themselves to the French Lycée of Los Angeles, and *vice versa*. The Buckley school, under Bob's baton, went it alone, in the roles of knights and their mounts. Roy noted that here Bob was playing the part of knight. Ramsey was sharing experiences with the university. Since, in the night, all cats are grey, the old farts, in the darker areas, were like old tom-cats that had drawn in their claws and were purring away.

The spectacle, the groans, and the words they heard as they passed, had aroused Otis's and Roy's senses. Their phalluses exhibited the same urgency as when they were watching the first performance by the Daughters of Bilitis. Roy was proud to be strutting around with an organ that had doubled in size over the past year, but Otis's was like a challenge to him. They stretched out on a rug in a quiet grove.

## Part Three—Chapter Sixteen

ROY was now tremendously stirred up in anticipation of another meeting Jack had arranged for him, which could well sweep away what remained of his tragic memories. This time it was neither a great banker, nor a great consul-general, nor a great actor, nor a great black singer: it was an Arab prince. At least this Saudi gave himself that title, in that he was the cousin of the Sheikh Shamsuddin Al-Fassi who had purchased one of the finest houses in Beverly Hills.

The name of this last personage was well known because he had been in the news for the past year. Additionally, his name was inscribed on a marble plaque, preceded by the title “Highness”, on the gate of his thirty-eight room villa which towered over vast lawns and a row of statues along Sunset Boulevard.

This sheikh, connected with the Saudi-Arabian royal family, had paid two and a half million dollars to buy the house from a Milanese industrialist. Although a number of Arabs had bought properties in southern California, Sheikh Al-Fassi was the first to move into the heart of Beverly Hills. This had generated something of a stir among the Jewish community, especially when it became known that he wanted to erect a mosque. The authorities hastened to inform him that any construction of that nature would be illegal, as the Beverly Hills landscape was listed, and the slightest change, even to the interior of houses, was subject to prior authorization. A list of such authorizations was published weekly in the *Beverly Hills Courier*.

That was the end of the mosque, but some of the sheikh’s other proposals had been contentious. He had been given permission to carry out two million dollars’ worth of work on changing the villa’s decoration, and he had furnished it in Louis

XV style. His son Mohammed, aged twenty-three, was put in charge of the works. It had not been anticipated that he would have the pubic hair of the statues along the edge of the terrace painted black, which caused a scandal, as well as his planting of plastic flowers in the lawns and in vases at the gate. From that time forward, the painted hair had been attracting general curiosity, and guides would point it out from a distance to tourists. That was all that was needed to make the house famous. Since traffic jams were the result, the police erected signs prohibiting standing in this part of Sunset Boulevard; they lay in wait for motorists contravening the law and issued fines. Never before had hair brought in more money for a municipality. So thenceforward the inquisitive would park in side-streets, and come along the footpath to gaze at, photograph, and film the sheikh's house, statues, and hair.

Soon the interest inspired by this house turned to the doings of its occupants. The young Mohammed, who had married a Belgo-Italian woman, became infatuated with a Californian television actress, and married her as well. Since she was Catholic, he could, according to Muslim law, marry her through the agency of a "good man", and this was his own business manager, a former Hollywood translator, who married him in a Los Angeles bar. This time bigamy was the reason for scandal, even though Mohammed adhered to the Saudi code which permitted him to be polygamous. Meanwhile his first wife, stirring up further ructions, telegraphed her father-in-law who was in London, and he came over by air together with an American bodyguard and his son's solicitor. During the flight the sheikh picked a quarrel with the solicitor, under the influence of alcohol, and called upon the bodyguard to give the aforementioned solicitor a slap. After the bodyguard refused, the sheikh himself slapped first the bodyguard and then the solicitor. Upon arrival at Los Angeles, both the bodyguard and the solicitor lodged a complaint for assault, and each claimed ten

million dollars from him. A doctor, slapped upon arrival for reasons unknown, lodged a third complaint.

The ready-handed sheikh explained everything later in a television interview. When he was addressed as “Sheikh”, he indicated that he should be addressed as “Highness”, exactly as inscribed on the plaque at his house: he pointed out that he was the cousin of King Khaled, that Prince Turki, vice-minister for defence in Saudi-Arabia, was his son-in-law, that, in his country, he could give a slap to those who refused to obey him, and he repeated that his son was free to marry in America as many women as he wanted. He announced that, for his part, he would follow filial example and marry the sister of his second daughter-in-law. The effect of this interview, with its haughty tone, having been deplorable, the sheikh reappeared on television. He said that he would pay the fines imposed on him by the Californian courts, and that he was inviting all his neighbours to a grand reception in the house. It was operation “open house”, like the one at the Beverly Hills high school.

Three hundred people were expected: more than a thousand came. The Clears made a point of being there, but the Zs. kept away, not wishing to set foot in an Arab home. Many Jews did not have the same scruples. Roy had accompanied his parents in this crush, amid the gold-encrusted salons, storming sumptuous buffets, without suspecting that six months later he would have a very private opportunity to see the residence again. The sheikh himself had received these strangers, shaking their hands and thanking them for the honour they were doing him. Whether from fatigue or from alcohol, his legs were unsteady. His hand was trembling and an assistant supported his arm. When he very nearly fainted, he was escorted upstairs to rest in a tiny closet: his entire house, even his bedroom, had been overrun. He left some days later, taking his son’s first wife with him, and leaving the son in the company of the second.

Disputes did not end with his departure. One Saudi, Muhsin El-Biali, a business partner of the Al-Fassis, a long-time resident



in Los Angeles, and a professor of Islamic law at the Loyola University, also attacked them, claiming that they owed him fifteen million dollars in commissions. And even Mohammed's Californian wife lodged a complaint against him for "mental cruelty" because he had forced her to eat chicken with rice and she had a horror of that dish. For his part, Mohammed returned to Saudi-Arabia after terrible scenes with El-Biali: he told him he no longer had need of his services, "now that he—Mohammed—had bought everything, including the press and the Jews". He was suspected of having married a third woman, in another Los Angeles bar. The Sunset Boulevard house was left unoccupied. The staff had been discharged. All that remained were Negro caretakers and kennels with twenty-five dogs.

A cousin of the two sheikhs had replaced the unsuitable El-Biali at the Al-Fassi Trading Co., whose business was counted in hundreds of millions of dollars, and not long ago he had secretly installed himself in their house. It was he that Roy was going to meet, and it was because of him that Roy had been refreshing his mind about the adventures of the two sheikhs, which had often been the subject of discussion at family meals.

"This prince—they should all be given that title," said Jack while he was driving Roy to the house, "is certainly not the kind of man to take several wives: he only likes boys. I had to take care of security for Shamsuddin and Mohammed when they were staying at the Century Plaza; and then for their cousin, who stayed at the same hotel, before transferring to Beverly Hills. His tastes were not revealed to me by police reports like the other people I've introduced you to. This one, fortified with his petrodollars and his generosity towards my men, didn't hide from me the fact that he was relying on me to introduce him to a young Californian and not to be bothered by that idea. Without a doubt it's the most extraordinary suggestion that's ever been made to a United States police chief. When I spoke of you to this prince of the desert, he was worried that you might be Jewish,

because often the Americans take all kinds of names, and in Beverly Hills there are a great many Jews. I told him, as evidence of your race, that you are not circumcised. Naturally I told him about all your praiseworthy attributes, and particularly about your beauty. He gave me to understand that his tastes were very unusual, and asked me whether you were easily shocked. I took the liberty of saying no, but I didn't question him further for fear of annoying him. So it will be up to you to accept or refuse. In any case you are still under my protection. But I was careful to tell him that he should give you a thousand dollars. I can guarantee that you'll be paid at least that amount. You see how I'm giving you the chance to rebuild your nest egg. My commission will be two hundred dollars, each time you go on pilgrimage to Mecca."

The motor turned off from Sunset Boulevard into the street next to Alpine Drive, near the entrance to the house. Jack rang at the entry gate. Soon, in the half light of the street lamp, a silhouette could be discerned which came across the garden and opened the gate. It was the self-styled prince.

The magnificent house, so strangely furnished, presented an appearance very different from what Roy had seen on the day of the tumultuous reception. The lights in the corridor along which he passed were dimmed. They reached a little central room in which the brighter lighting finally permitted him to see his new host, who was himself eccentric enough. The Saudi was about the same age as Mr. Teller, the consul-general and the police chief, but his dusky complexion, his jet-black hair, and his black pupils amid globes of a startling whiteness, betrayed his origin. He was wearing a pale blue silk suit, and spoke English with an Oxford accent.

Jack, as was his custom, stayed only long enough to empty his glass. Despite being under the police chief's protection, Roy was a little nervous about being alone now with a man who had "very unusual tastes". In imagination he tried to penetrate what lay behind that phrase, by way of his experiences with the men

he had been seeing. Was the Arab going to tie him up, gag him and whip him like Mr. Teller? or whip him dressed in an obscene T-shirt, like the singer? or enter him through the gap in a pair of silk trousers, like the consul? Those were the most bizarre things that had been done to him, and he had adapted to them very well indeed. Ramsey had told him about a bar in New York where the clients pissed in each other's glasses and drank the urine in place of beer.

Here it was not pissing that was at issue. The prince asked his young visitor whether he was ready to defecate. Never had a question astounded Roy more: but at last, incapable of forgetting that the part of his body whence he derived so much pleasure and profit was "what is most important", he could understand how even in its excretory functions it might interest some. Of course the idea could not but cause him a degree of disgust, but tempered with the comic, so much so that he smiled. Besides, having from the first day felt ready to sample every kind of secret sensual pleasure, he considered himself entitled to respond that yes, he was ready even to defecate. He quite approved of this way of going straight to the point; it seemed difficult to go there in any other way. "Mr. Sherman was right when he told me you would not be shocked by my tastes," said the Saudi. He deserved the thousand dollars I gave him for bringing you, and you will deserve the thousand dollars I'll give you. But admit that the dish you are going to serve up for me is an expensive one."

Roy had to admit that this Arab had a sense of humour, but he was disgusted that unbeknownst to him Jack was making money behind his back from his backside. Probably the police chief was doing the same thing with the consul-general, the actor and the singer. That was doubtless why the first and the third had asked Roy not to tell Jack about the four hundred and five hundred dollars they were giving him: Jack was certainly receiving a percentage. But after all, if this payment to Jack was remuneration for a service, Roy was outraged that he had, in addition, been giving Jack a percentage of his own remunerations

and that Jack should have extracted a further two thousand five hundred dollars from him. How powerfully had he been attached to this man who had formed him and still overwhelmed his senses! But how much more powerfully and abruptly did he now wrench himself away after the revelation of these calculations and this deception! Jack, in his own way, was doing what that creature Luke had wanted to do—that Luke of whom it had been necessary to free himself. Yes . . . but without Jack would Roy have been here?

These reflections did not make him any less attentive to the scene now in progress. As usual, he was captivated by curiosity, as well as by an awareness of participating in something unusual in the realm of stimulations. He examined, even while undressing in the bathroom to which the Arab had led him, the dusky body that little by little emerged from the silk suit. The phallus was comparable with those he had admired on the men he already knew. When they were both entirely naked, the Saudi took Roy into his arms, kissed his mouth, and caressed him, gently at first, and then, kneading his buttocks, almost brutally. Next he lay down on a rug, set up over his head a kind of wide plastic bridge, transparent as crystal, and asked Roy to relieve himself very slowly into the bowl hollowed out there. From below an electric lamp illuminated the *derrière* that was about to bear fruit, and put Roy in mind of the consul-general's lamp on the terrace. Supported on the sides of this bridge, his thighs and buttocks well spread, he opened out his anus to the prince's view. Simultaneously he leaned forward to masturbate him, while the contemplator reciprocated the service.

"You send me into ecstasies," said the latter when everything was over. "But where do you find that fragrance that you send forth? Breathing it intoxicates me, and I am from the land of incense." Still stretched out, he kept his eyes fixed on that bowl from which rose a gentle vapour that he judged superior to all the perfumes of Arabia. On the face of it, this was rendering praise to Mexican cuisine: Uracca, in honour of her own

country, where she was going to spend the coming month, had prepared several such dishes for luncheon and dinner. But Mrs. Clear had had a hand in the pastry, and she had sprinkled selected spices onto everything—spices from Provence and the Indies, of which she had dozens of bottles, arrayed on shelves. Consequently, the sausage that had filled the bowl and the aromas it was giving off were the fruit of an international collaboration. Its begetters would have been exceedingly astonished to see where and as what it had ended up.

The Arab, dragging himself away from his delights, emptied the bowl into the water-closet, washed it, and replaced the bridge in a cupboard: it would have been difficult to leave these tasks to a servant. The bathroom, like that of the consul-general, had a bidet, but the taps were of gold. Roy and the Arab made their toilet and got dressed.

“You must come once or twice a week,” the Saudi went on in elation. “You don’t live far from here. So you won’t need Mr. Sherman to bring you. Here’s my telephone number. I myself will open the door where you came in. I will live only in anticipation of your return, because I’m sentimental.” He waved a bundle of bank-notes, which he handed to Roy: “And each time, a thousand dollars! Do you hear? a thousand dollars! A thousand dollars for the fruit of your heavenly bowels!”

Roy thought of the *Get money...* which his father had taught him and recently dedicated to Miss Buckley; it had so many applications to his secret life, and this evening’s was not the least surprising. He thought of a phrase of Emerson, worthy of Ben Jonson’s verse: “Money is as beautiful as roses.” But, using Otis’s phrase in a different sense, he would henceforth know that money has an odour.

## Part Three—Chapter Seventeen

SINCE the purpose of the party at Greenway Drive was for Roy and Penelope to get to know each other, Otis had decided that as many girls as boys were needed. Ramsey invited Joyce, one of their friends brought another girl student, and Bob brought Pamela. Otis, for his part, had invited lovely Ruth, whom he had saved from the devices of Jim Jones, founder of the church of the People's Temple. Since she had become Lesbian, he believed he had nothing to fear from her should things take the same turn as at Hollywood the other day. To provide a dash of colour, he had also invited Nick Stevens, the black from the high school gay group, and former follower of the Synanon cult; he too had come with a girl student from the UCLA. They were twelve altogether. Otis had not attempted to imitate those gays who were at this time assembling hundreds of people to collect funds for opposing Proposition 6, for example the two interior decorators from Mulholland Drive. He did not care for crowds, at least in his home, and he found it sufficient to have had the high school gay group there three times; now he dealt with them a few at a time in the cafeteria. Besides, this group and the one at the university had already made collections to fund propaganda: Roy had generously contributed a hundred dollars from his gay earnings, telling himself that he could easily devote part of that money to the cause. Otis admired the gesture; Roy said he had exhausted his savings.

Mr. and Mrs. Z., with characteristic generosity of spirit, had left the house to their sons. They had even given the servants leave, so that freedom would be total, in the way Roy's rich clients did when they received him. "All I ask of you," Mr. Z. had said to Otis and Ramsey, "is not to start a fire . . . and don't soil the carpets."

Roy was stirred when he took Penelope's hand; she still applied that special little pressure, and she was more exquisite than ever. This meeting was neither fortuitous nor in the high school environment, like those that had occurred since the Malibu trip; she had been prepared for it. Otis, who so enjoyed feeding Roy's flames, had telephoned Penelope, saying that the boy was very anxious to see her again before leaving for Vermont, and she had uttered a cry of joy.

Now they were side by side in the beautiful garden, and were following their chirruping friends towards the pool. Loud-speakers emitted music almost as powerful as that in Mulholland Drive. "What luck," Penelope said, "that we have friends to bring us together. I myself don't dare to call you, and as for you, you never think of calling me."

"What?" cried Roy. "Didn't Otis do it on my behalf?"

"Otis is not you."

"Otis is seventeen, and next to you I feel like a little boy," said Roy.

"Some little boy!" said Penelope, laughing and looking at him out of the corner of her eye. The conversation had begun well. Roy too was looking out of the corner of his eye: he was looking at something to which he had never until now paid attention—two firm and pointy little breasts under the brassière in the wide neckline of the summer dress. This sight, joined to memories of Malibu, triggered a quivering behind his flies that bewitched him. Therein he found proof that the female body excited him through one of its principal characteristics; so being gay would not prevent him from loving women and from being happily married one day. This discovery was a reassurance for him. In fact, after his recent experiences in the sheikh's house, he had feared he would no longer be attracted by anything but the bizarre. He wanted to make the conquest evident at once, but Penelope's age difference did really intimidate him a little, and he felt a not disagreeable kind of passivity in waiting for her to take the initiative, as she had in the Lincoln.

Nonetheless, the thought of the extraordinary things he did which no one knew about, and which had often given him a feeling of superiority over Otis, persuaded him that he was also superior to Penelope. And after all, even if he thought of himself as a little boy, should he not prove himself as a male? He was getting ready to clasp Penelope in his arms, at the bend in the path, when she said, "If you want to please me, you will join the Mission of Divine Light."

This took his breath away; he thought she was turning to mysticism. "I thought your interest in that cult was no more than a fantasy," he told her; "but that sounds serious."

"What is there more serious than love?" said Penelope. "The Mission's teaching elevates your spirit by giving you knowledge, and so you receive more joy from your body, which is the principal end of life."

Roy was reassured about Penelope's mysticism, just as he had been reassured about the female body. He asked her whether she had ever had a relationship with some one other than him. "Would I have come here, if I were having relations with some one else?" she said. "I dared to do what I did in the car, because I've never done it before. It was you who gave me the idea, perhaps because of your youth as well as your beauty." Roy grasped her hand and kissed her finger-tips to thank her for these words. He admitted to her that he had been jealous at the thought that she might have spent graduation night on the beach among over-friendly companions. "I was in the middle of a great crowd of people," she told him. "And I was thinking of you." This time, he kissed her on the lips, greatly stirred by his own boldness. She had closed her eyes. Roy was fascinated to find that such a sensual girl could still be so sentimental. It was because she was a well brought-up girl—a well brought-up girl who must be dying to touch him and unzip his flies again. They reached the swimming pool: their intimate conversation could be resumed later.



In the changing-room, a well-stocked buffet was provided. In a refrigerator there was an extensive choice of drinks and ices. But aquatic pleasures were first on the agenda, and the dimensions of the pool easily accommodated all those present. Every one had brought their swimming costumes.

Roy had already seen Penelope at the high school swimming pool, but there had been so many people around, and so many friends had been with her, that he had scarcely been able to examine her closely. To-day, she was there only for him, and he was there only for her. As they played in the water, he brushed against that body from which she had learned to receive more joy, thanks to the Mission of Divine Light which had elevated her spirit. He loved these contradictions, which he found especially in girls, and were perhaps one of their charms.

After they had finished swimming and frolicking, they lay down in the sun to drink, nibble and chat. Naturally they discussed Proposition 6, which had roused the two opposing sides during the summer break, but the problem of the cults was not forgotten, because around the pool there were two lapsed cult followers and one girl who remained an enthusiastic member. There was nothing personal in this for any of the boys present apart from Nick. However it remained on the agenda because of things published in the press and family conversations. Ramsey said that it was not only a Californian problem, but also a national one: there were three thousand cults in the United States, which included three million individuals. This was not the situation in any other western country. But something new had emerged: an anti-cult movement, the Foundation for the Liberty of Citizens, had been created, and it sent out emissaries to “deprogramme” young people sucked in by cults and return them to their families. Its Californian office was at Chula Vista, in San Diego county. “My sister mentioned it recently on the telephone,” said Roy, “but it’s not a question that interests her; she is only interested in Proposition 6 and fighting it.”

“The courageous sister!” said Otis. “But Ruth and Nick could have been helped by that Foundation.” According to Nick, Paul Morantz, the lawyer, had been persecuted by the Synanon cult ever since he obtained the release of the young Stevens, a prisoner of the redoubtable Chuck. This lawyer had told Nick’s father that he feared he would be attacked, now that he was on the point of carrying off his second victory.

For her part, Ruth was still missing her old friend Ken, who remained with Jones in Guyana and had never answered her letters. She was not aware of what the Foundation for the Liberty of Citizens was doing in that respect, but she knew that more and more complaints had been laid against the People’s Temple, and that a San Francisco deputy at the Californian house of representatives, Leo Ryan, had taken over the leadership of the movement. If the negotiations he was carrying on with Jones from a distance were unsuccessful, he was planning to travel to Jonestown with a team of journalists to try to get people to come back. So Ruth had not lost all hope of recovering Ken. “If he comes back, will you still be Lesbian?” Otis asked her.

“Perhaps,” said Ruth, “because I suspect he’s an unconscious gay. So we’ll make a good couple.”

Penelope, smoking a marijuana cigarette, smiled mysteriously. “I’m one of those so-called victims of the cults they’re trying to deprogramme,” she declared. “In fact I say ‘so-called’ because not all the young people recruited by cults are victims, and none of the cults victimize every one. My parents leave me free to go to the Divine Light Mission, because they’re certain I have enough sense not to shut myself away there.” Roy recalled that this had been the view of his own parents and Otis’s on the subject of Penelope.

Nonetheless, the Websters, she said, worried by the rumours that were beginning to circulate about the cults, and having heard mention of the anti-cult movement, had asked their daughter to talk to one of their emissaries. So Penelope had seen

a man called Ted Patrick, whom the Foundation for the Liberty of Citizens had engaged as a specialist in “anti-brainwashing”. Usually he would shut the followers he wanted to regenerate into a room with nailed-up windows and no door-handles, and keep them there for several hours at a time. Penelope dispensed with this performance. She told him that, never having been programmed, she was not deprogrammable; she went to the Mission when she was at Malibu, and she left whenever she wanted. She was like a Catholic going to a church, a Protestant entering a temple, or a Jew going to the synagogue. She was just certain she was closer to God when she had as go-between a boy of twenty-one, who was her master, and could have been her lover. Yet the thing would not have been possible, as he was almost never seen. He manipulated neither bodies nor minds. He acted only from a distance, like the God of the Christians, or the God of the Jews, or like the Allah of the Muslims. If the Divine Light Mission was going to be closed, then all houses of prayer would have to be closed. And even if it were closed, Penelope would have no other faith than that one, with or without the guru. Ted Patrick had had no reply to these arguments, and went away empty-handed; he did not receive the fifteen hundred dollars he charged for his cures. Otis was delighted at this detail: just as he perceived a material interest at the root of most of the cults, so did he discover it in the activities of their adversaries.

Ramsey, who had discreetly made an offering to the white lady together with Joyce, said that she had confided to him that she would like to join the Divine Light Mission. Ruth confessed that Penelope’s example offered her too food for thought, and that, being a fortunate apostate from Jim Jones, she found herself drawn to Maharaj Ji. Pamela proclaimed that the mere name of the Divine Light Mission galvanized her, and she asked Penelope to take her to Malibu. The Daughter of Bilitis student enthusiastically supported that plan. “Good Lord!” cried Ramsey, “it’s an epidemic! Why on earth do all our girls want to

be programmed? We're going to deprogramme them our own way," he added, inserting his hand into the rear of Joyce's bathing costume.

Each of them did the same with their female partner, save Roy. He was surprised to see Ramsey, who had always refrained from involving Joyce in public love-making, now busily undressing her, without meeting any resistance, turning her over on the Lilo, and directing towards her posteriors a powerfully rampant instrument. Otis was giving the same treatment to Ruth, whose buttocks he had been pawing for a while—in fact that did seem to be the accepted method of deprogramming. Ramsey turned Joyce over, as Nick did his schoolgirl, the other student his student, and Bob Pamela, according to whether it was to-day the turn of the anus, or whether that orifice so beloved of all boys and apparently of all girls was to benefit from preferential treatment. With Penelope, Roy remained modest, and Otis signalled to him that he should take refuge indoors: he had already let him know that his bedroom was reserved for them. "But promise me that it will be up the bum," he had added. "There'll be no deflowering at my place."

"Let's leave," Roy said to Penelope. "We can go to Otis's room. I want to show you something." They both laughed at these words: he was already showing an organ so hard that his bathing trunks seemed about to split. They ran to the house, went upstairs, and reached the bedroom. "You seem very much at home here," Penelope said, not without a mischievous smile. She was indeed right to suspect he was at home, in view of the bonds that united him to Otis. Certainly he had engaged in sexual activity in this room as often as in the sauna, but his sensations to-day were as novel in this place as was the presence of a girl.

How ardently they embraced! With what fervour did Roy's hands uncover and seize those buttocks, the part of Penelope's body where he felt most at ease, regardless of the confined conditions! He was delirious with joy as he drew a finger along

the cleft, feeling for what was hidden there. But what delight when Penelope returned the gesture! At first she confined herself to brushing his orbs; then, becoming more forward, she lowered his trunks the better to fondle him. Their tongues met, their eyes closed. Roy felt he would faint when Penelope's finger probed him precisely where he was probing her, and even copied his forwardness by passing beyond the ring of his sphincter. She drew her face aside and murmured: "In the car at Malibu, I was dreaming of sliding a finger between your legs and penetrating you, in the way that I'm sure you've been penetrated by Otis."

"If it had only been by him!" thought Roy. He was discovering that a girl could excite him with this gesture just as much as and perhaps even more than Bob or Otis or the men in his secret world had done. It seemed to him that this liberty with one hand, with the tip of one female finger, represented for the girl who had conceived the idea and was performing the act, the height of sophistication. He accepted into the depths of his soul this finger that was moving into the depths of his bum. Penelope's gasps attested that she was enjoying this secret possession of him just as much as being similarly possessed by Roy's finger. After they withdrew from each other with the same skilful slowness, Roy moved her back onto the bed.

However, before possessing her in this manner that was intoxicating them, he gazed at the posterior on display—his first female posterior. To celebrate it he made use of the lessons he had received from so many masters. He knelt down, he admired that secret orifice; he confirmed by the sense of sight, as he had already done by the sense of touch, that absence of hair which Bob praised in his own. Then he had its aroma, which had nothing in common with what sent the sheikh's cousin into raptures: an aroma of cleanliness, of muscularity, and of musk. He wanted to count the folds over which he was moving his finger, and which his beautiful baton of flesh was about to smooth out. He traversed them with his tongue, and inserted it; it is the halfway house between the finger and that member,

more manly than boyish, with which he next stroked her buttocks before penetrating them. She was gasping in sensual delight, and touching herself between her thighs. "Bugger me" she said. The well brought-up girl was not unfamiliar with that word! Without doubt she had savoured its meaning, perhaps by herself, and certainly in her thoughts about Roy. He murmured into her ear, happy to have needed no more than saliva, so receptive was the place, just as Bob's had been—but he had heard it said that the bums of almost all girls are favourable to such treatment: "I'm going in as though I'm coming home." She seized one of his fingers and gave him, amid the corolla of her sexual organ drenched in pink, a lesson he had not foreseen, but which he executed perfectly. . .

"Well!" he said to Otis after the guests had departed, "we've prepared the ground for our marriages in the distant future."

Otis laughed: "One does not marry a girl one buggers."

Roy was stunned. "Why not," he said "give one's future wife a taste for a pleasure we will ask of her?"

"As far as I'm concerned," said Otis, "the question is otiose: I have never imagined for an instant that I might marry Ruth. . . A girl from Beverly South!"

"And you, Ramsey?" asked Roy. "We have the example of Bob, who's screwing Pamela's bum and says he's going to marry her. It's true that she's from Beverly North."

"What happened to-day with Joyce," said Ramsey, "does make our marriage problematic, but that's because I buggered her in public."

"So I still have a chance with Penelope," said Roy.

## Part Three—Chapter Eighteen

MR. TELLER and Bob were on holiday, as were the consul-general, the actor and the singer. Roy had already dropped his trousers twice more in the sheikh's home: two thousand dollars.

He was acquiring a taste for these unappetizing but very profitable operations. These days he was always asking Uracca for Mexican meals, in order that his host might relish the same aromas. Mr. and Mrs. Clear were amazed at their son's sudden taste for Chicano cuisine. He told them it was especially because of his mother's spices.

Once more he had seen Jack, who had been curious about what the Saudi had wanted him to do. The police chief was amused to hear Roy's story. "How strange!" he said. "Only multimillionaires can have such ideas." He had forgotten his diatribe against the depravities that went on in certain queer establishments in Los Angeles; those were not peculiarities of multimillionaires, nor even of Arabs. Roy did not tell him what he had learned from the Saudi. As he was keeping his third visit secret, he gave Jack four hundred dollars, out of which the police chief returned one hundred for his services at Brentwood. In the same way, Roy did not reveal that the consul-general and the Negro singer paid him four and five hundred dollars, and he hid most of his meetings with Mr. Teller. In this way he easily recovered from Jack the cost of Luke's assassination. They were quits.

Nevertheless, to complete his investigation into his instructor, Roy asked his father one day over a meal, when the conversation turned to the respective merits and demerits of the police in Beverly and Los Angeles, what the police chiefs of the two cities earned. Mr. Clear had the answer: Jack earned 2,399 dollars per

week. Roy told himself that the man could easily have got by without squeezing him. But *Get Money* was the refrain of the “Star-spangled Banner”, the national hymn.

Otis and Ramsey were about to go away. They were happy about the turn things had taken in the gays’ campaign against Proposition 6, and Roy shared this joy, but hid it from his family. At least he could pour out his feelings to his sister, when she telephoned. The polls that had in the past given seventy per cent. of the votes in favour of the Proposition, showed that to-day forty-nine per cent. were against it. “Seeing that it’s approaching fifty per cent. three months away from the referendum,” said Ramsey, “we will certainly beat them after the holidays, and Briggs will be finished.”

This poll, which had thrown the straight camp into disarray, was the result of the gays’ efforts in many areas, in giving blood at the hospitals, for example, and also in the incontrovertible declarations the medical authorities had issued to the press denying that gay teachers could make their students gay. Dr. C. J. West, director of the institute of neuro-psychiatry at the University of California at Los Angeles, had asserted in the *Los Angeles Times* that “the majority of boys had no experience of being recruited into homosexuality by a homosexual teacher, but that a few had already joined the ranks before meeting such a teacher, who was then blamed for having corrupted them, while in fact it made no difference to them whether they met him or not.” Never had the question been expounded more intelligently, except in Mr. Claiborne’s letter to the *New York Times*. Out of nineteen experts in psychology and psychiatry that the *Times* of Los Angeles questioned, and twenty-five others whose research the editors had studied, just one was of the view that a homosexual teacher might be a harmful example for his students. The gays were grateful to the mainstream press for so honestly printing this correspondence and these investigations. The impartiality of the Los Angeles press was perhaps the result of Don Amador’s level-headed addresses.



In San Francisco the situation was explosive. Dan White, the former fireman from Ireland, became so excessive in his attacks on Harvey Milk that the latter persuaded Mayor Moscone to exclude him from the city council. White himself seemed to want to return to private life: he complained that he earned less from his governmental duties than at his restaurant The Hot Potato, which he had left to take them up. Otis mentioned that the expression “a hot potato” designated a sad case, but he added that sad cases were also the most dangerous.

“Don’t think too much about all that,” he said to Roy while taking his leave. “As for me, I’ll be thinking about you.”

“And he’ll be thinking about Penelope,” put in Ramsey.

“Do you think the reason I’m taking your dildo is to remind me of her?” asked Roy animatedly.

“Who knows?” said Otis.

## Part Three—Chapter Nineteen

THE holidays in Vermont passed off as usual. Mr. Clear loved that state, because in the Union it was the one where there were fewest Negroes—0.01 per cent.—and where the republicans were in the majority. Roy's grandmother was always very kind, befitting her status as judge's widow. The previous winter she had photographed children skating on the ice-covered meadows: obviously Roy could never do likewise at Beverly Hills.

The Clear home was close to the town of Barre, renowned for its magnificent granite quarries, and not far from the state capital Montpelier, the name of which also recalled France. Even the name Vermont was simply the French translation of the Green Mountain situated at the centre of the state. The Daughters of the American Revolution honoured the memory of the "Boys of the Green Mountain", a patriotic militia in the war of independence, who managed the first feat of arms of the hostilities by capturing a fort from the English.

Clearly Roy had no expectations of seeing, on one of the six television channels in Vermont, a report about male prostitution in Montpelier or Barre. It was presumably non-existent, and the situation of the gays just as unenviable as in the other farming and rural states: it was the same in those parts of California where attitudes had least developed in their favour. One number of the *Advocate*, which Otis had lent to Roy, had published a report about "gay life in rural Pennsylvania", but the article included a town like Allentown, which had a hundred and ten thousand inhabitants, permitting a gay community to form, and to stand up to the mayor. Furthermore, the capital, Philadelphia, the urban area of which had at least half as many people as Los Angeles, boasted a gay life that exerted an influence on the rest

of the state. Burlington, the principal city of Vermont, numbered no more than forty thousand souls.

A performance at the summer theatre in Winooski Park, a concert at the music festival in Marlboro, a visit to the museum of the American spirit at Shelburne, where there were thirty-five buildings containing models of all the products and arts of the United States—Vermont took pride in having been the fourteenth admitted to the original union of thirteen states—these were the principal features of the family's entertainment. For his private entertainment Roy had, apart from the dildo, a few handfuls of marijuana for his cigarettes, which he smoked in the mountains.

Towards the end of his stay, he made the acquaintance of a boy of his own age who was collecting bilberries and flowers. He was French, from nearby Quebec, and his parents had emigrated to this part of Vermont, where they were farmers, like a good many other Québécois. This boy, although countrified, was charming. Roy made use of his elementary French and was surprised by both the accent and the vocabulary of his young companion; but principally he was delighted to express himself in a language which he loved and which had left so many traces in Vermont. As they were alone in the vast forest of pines, elms and maples—the famous silver maples—he wanted to profit from the fact: for over three weeks he had had only his own company.

They were sitting at the foot of an enormous pine tree and eating berries. Roy was put in mind of the first scene he had played with Bob. His attire further contributed to that. "Your shorts are much shorter than mine," he told the boy. "How do you make sure nothing slips out?" The little French boy gave the impression of not having grasped the point of this remark about the comparative length of their shorts. "See what happens to me if I pull mine up as high as yours," Roy went on. His member, already stiffening at the thought of this exhibition, thrust out along his thigh.

The Québécois opened his eyes wide: “Oh!” he said, “what a big *pissette* you have.”

Although this word seemed comical to Roy, he judged that the situation demanded that he accept it. He was even keen to make use of it to enrich his vocabulary. “And you,” he responded, “do you have a big *pissette*?”

The boy showed him an implement that did Canada credit. Each seized the other’s *pissette* and soon the red clover of Green Mountain—the red clover being the state flower of Vermont—was sprayed with white droplets. The boy dipped in a finger, licked it, and said it was better than maple syrup—the great product of Vermont. Roy told him that the French were famous gourmets.

When they met again the following day, he attempted to go beyond these childish games. He had considered enlisting the assistance of a marijuana cigarette, but refrained: he was not sure what his little companion’s reaction would be, even though it was a product of the fields. While walking with him in the forest, he began by patting his backside, as Mr. Teller used to do at the Bel Air Country Club. He thought of this as knocking on the door. Then he started to caress the shutters, to explore the gap between them, to seek out the keyhole. He wondered whether this boy, who was a little slow of understanding, would get the idea. To assist him, by showing him the effect of these contacts, Roy opened his flies and went on walking, his great organ bobbing in the wind. The boy revealed his own, no less imposing: thus proving that he was insensible neither to Roy’s display nor to the caresses on his posterior. Yet when Roy attempted to remove the boy’s shorts he protested that he would never let any one “put a *pissette* in his *foiron*”. As a middle course, he consented to “doing *sucette*”: natural syrup had dethroned maple syrup.

## Part Three—Chapter Twenty

AFTER the holidays, in mid-September, Otis and Roy resumed their habits, both secret and public. They returned to the Beverly Hills high school, one of them in the tenth grade, as second-year, and the other in the twelfth, as senior. The second-year had amused the senior with his tale of the Québécois. “According to Ramsey,” said Otis, “the prime minister of Canada, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, is one of us. He abolished the laws that discriminated against gays.” Otis had had no adventures during his cruise in the gulf of California, or rather, he had not looked for one: he was not fond of the Chicanos, except when it was a matter of opposing the prejudiced and keeping Judaism in check by getting one of them elected at the high school as president of the student association. But since the holidays, all he had been preparing for was another election, that of Roy as prince of the second-years. It would be held in December, as it had been in the previous year, at the time of the basket-ball tournament. Roy had convinced Otis not to canvass his election as king. “It will be a sufficiently extraordinary honour,” he told him, “to be prince two years running. Let’s not cause too much jealousy. The following year you won’t be here and I would be made to pay more for my royal crown than you would have spent on it.

He also resumed the habits of which Otis knew nothing: his visits to the police chief, to Mr. Teller, to the consul-general, to the actor, the singer and the Saudi. Uracca had returned from Tijuana with Manuelito, but Roy had consumed enough Mexican dishes, spicy or not; he would attempt to accustom the sheikh’s cousin to new fragrances. His mother had discovered some new spices at a shop in the Design Centre where, in a cardboard scene taken from old Hollywood studios, were sold only natural products: “Aunt Tilly’s Health Foods”. The Arab

was only too happy to have them. Roy reflected that assuredly no one had ever been paid more than he for going to the lavatory.

Bob, starting with Pamela at the University of Southern California—the university commencement was ten days after that of the schools—had not forgotten the road to the Summit Drive house. It all kept Roy very busy, and he had hardly any time to think of Penelope. Bob also continued to visit the Zs.; the atmosphere there of intelligence and total freedom was dear to him. They smoked, they snorted (always in moderation), and they had sex. It was no surprise to Roy when Bob allowed himself to be screwed by Ramsey, and then by Otis, and finally by Roy himself in front of them: it simplified things. Ramsey, who had kept in touch with Joyce, was fascinated by the new members of the UCLA gay group who were graduates of the Beverly Hills high school: the younger generation definitely had more courage. He urged Bob to make glory holes in the USC toilets. “It’s not for your own use,” he said, “it’s a matter of principle. It’s to show that you are all free.” He procured for him an electric drill, battery-powered, and the USC walls were pierced. Since that university, situated between Vermont Avenue (Roy felt at home with the name) and Harbour Freeway, was at the opposite side of the city to the UCLA, Ramsey was delighted at having sandwiched Los Angeles between the glory holes. “Actually,” he concluded, “they are more like loopholes opened in the massive walls of morality.”

The massive walls of orthodox education at the Buckley school had repaired their breaches. The students who had departed were replaced by others. Miss Buckley had published an article in the fashionable review *Beverly Hills* entitled *Back to School in Style*. On the cover was a picture of a little girl with a supremely arrogant expression, in a navy blue blazer with a red dragon, head turned back (asking for a slap), her school-bag clutched to her abdomen with two hands, in front of the emblazoned gate of the school, beside her Mercedes and her chauffeur. She was the exact type of Buckley child that had so

often irritated Roy. But she was also a symbol of that wall of money which is the most solid of walls: it is proof against the holes of infamy, as well as against glory holes. Even the nasty little brat was aware of that. She was already defying all the scandals of Ds changed to Bs through reflection from such a wall.

The Proposition 6 campaign was at its height. The gays were exultant: the September poll was 52 per cent. against senator Briggs. Ramsey congratulated himself on having been right in saying that once begun the movement in that direction would be irresistible. The Savonarola of Fullerton and his adherents were disconcerted at receiving this mighty blow. The gays were still giving fund-raising parties for their propaganda. The consul-general, in a departure from his diplomatic reserve, organized a sumptuous charity fête, to which all Beverly Hills came, all Hollywood, and all Los Angeles, but obviously neither Roy nor the chief of police: he collected forty thousand dollars.

From the beginning of October there was no longer any doubt that the die was cast: the poll gave 62 per cent. to the opponents of the Proposition. This result came about because a certain number of conservatives or republicans, without regard to the gay problem in itself, were unwilling to support an initiative that attacked freedoms. The former governor of California, the republican Ronald Reagan, publicly stated that he would vote against it, and his successor, the democratic governor Jerry Brown, said the same. At San Francisco the liberal mayor George Moscone made a similar declaration, as did in Los Angeles the liberal mayor Tom Bradley. Harvey Milk and Don Amador had done good work. The *Los Angeles Times* appended to the poll results an analysis of the votes according to political views: 72 per cent. of liberals were against the Proposition, 61 per cent. of moderates, and 47 per cent. of conservatives.

The publication of this poll coincided with the festivities celebrating, on the fourth of October, St. Francis of Assisi, patron of San Francisco. This year they shone with a more

distinctive lustre, notably due to the gay Catholics. It could even be said that the Italian saint had become their protector, replacing St. Ælred de Rievaulx. But Ramsey, instructed by Italian students at the UCLA, asked whether all the Italian saints were not bound to be protectors of homosexuality, and, in a more general way, of sodomy, which Italians of all eras had rhapsodized about, whether with boys or with women? He added that in the past one pope had permitted it during the summer months. Some hoaxers even claimed that he had attached numerous indulgences to this practice. The gay Catholics of Los Angeles, for their part, invoked Notre Dame de la Portioncule, who had given her name to the city of angels and whose personal name had such an agreeable sound both in Italian and in French, the two sister languages.

Proposition 6 had relegated to secondary importance two further Propositions, 5 and 7, which were also to be submitted to referendum on the seventh of November: the first concerned the prohibition of smoking in public places, and the polls already indicated that it would fail. The second related to the death penalty, and a large majority supported its retention. And finally, on the same day, there would be a vote for or against the re-election of governor Brown, whose rival was the republican Younger.

The edition of *Highlights* for Wednesday the third of November brought Roy, Otis, and all the members of the high school's clandestine gay group a satisfaction that was also a reward for their zeal: the journal published the result of a poll taken among the students by members of the journalism class on the questions that would be submitted to the citizens' vote on the seventh. Otis and his friends had little interest in the fact that 60 per cent. were in favour of Brown's re-election, 63 per cent. in favour of prohibiting smoking in public places (a result unexpected in its conformity), 47 per cent were in favour of the death penalty, but their triumph was that there were 77 per cent. against Proposition 6. The journal made it clear that this was a



victory for civil rights, and indeed that was what the gays had been repeating throughout the campaign, while Briggs had been doing his best to separate the cause of homosexuality from those rights and treat it as a monstrosity: *Highlights* announced, as well, that the national schools press association had awarded the journal its "All American" prize for the twentieth consecutive term. Otis and Roy were of the view that 77 per cent. of the students did indeed deserve that reward. But they did not deny the others the right of regarding themselves as good Americans, because they respected the freedom of every individual.

On that same third day of November, when the students of Beverly Hills high school set the tone for the voters of Los Angeles county, president Jimmy Carter was in Sacramento for a "rally" in support of the candidature of Jerry Brown and other democrats, notably Dymally, the vice-governor who had visited the school. At the end of his address, Carter conferred with Brown, who asked him to return to the microphone, where he said: "I too would ask every one to vote no on Proposition 6." What struck senator Briggs was no longer just a mighty blow, rather a thunderbolt.

And California voted no by 3,915,415 to 2,786,771, that is 58 per cent. to 42. The ratio reached 60 per cent. in Los Angeles, and 62 per cent. in Beverly Hills, which delighted Otis, Ramsey and Roy, not to mention Bob and his father, Din, and the other gay students from Beverly North. John Clear remained faithful to his principles, but Kathy, whether because she suspected her son would want it, or because she had finally been persuaded by her daughter, or because she wanted to please the Zs., voted against the Proposition. Gladys had telephoned to express her joy, which was unconfined, because she had managed to bring her husband over to the gay camp, perhaps by dint of offering herself for love *à l'italienne*. Mr. Clear had been consoled by the victory of Mr. Jarvis, whose initiative calling for the reduction of local taxes had been passed some time previously. It goes

without saying that this initiative had been supported by the Zs. as well.

In San Francisco the ratio in favour of the gays had been 74 per cent. But the highest was in Hollywood: 75 per cent.—which gratified artistic circles—and the lowest in the San Fernando valley, one of the industrial areas of Los Angeles. The workers' groups had joined with the rural groups in showing the least intelligence and tolerance. As compensation, Briggs was beaten in his own constituency, where he received only 46 per cent. of the votes.

There were demonstrations and rapturous festivities everywhere after this success. With a host of activists Roy, Otis and Ramsey travelled the length and breadth of Beverly Hills, Bel Air, the Trousdale Estates and Hollywood, tooting wildly. Ramsey was indignant because the Sheikh's house in Sunset Boulevard, the façade of which was normally illuminated every evening, together with its statues, even when the owners were absent, remained dark that evening: their cousin had not believed he could associate himself with the gays' triumph—Islam, to which he remained so close by way of the holy city of Mecca, condemned homosexuality officially and severely. Roy, who defecated at his home the following day, dared to reproach him for that.

While the gays had won in California—where, what is more, Brown had been re-elected but Dymally beaten—the battle was not over for them in the remainder of the country: at the same time they had suffered a defeat in New York, despite mayor Ed Koch's intervention, and a new defeat in Miami in Florida, where the Anita Bryant cabal, despite losing 46,000 votes compared with the previous vote, managed to retain the contrary regulations. The mayor of Anchorage, the largest city in Alaska, had had a law passed allowing for the expulsion of gay teachers: senator Briggs too was given some comfort in the land of ice and snow. In every part of the country, as in California, the majority of the churches, including the Jews and the Catholics, had shown

charity, while the Baptists remained anchored in their fanaticism. As a compensation for the unfavourable vote in New York, it was learned that a Catholic Eucharistic Church had been established there, and that its bishop, the very reverend Robert M. Clement—a name quasi-homonymous with Roy's mother's—had ordained five gay priests. The new church was called the Beloved Disciples, and it was in Greenwich Village, the centre of New York gay life. And finally, President Carter, despite his Baptist sister, continued his exchange of favours with the gays: he had expressed regrets at his inability to be present at the grand disco festival at the Sheraton Park hotel, organized by the gays of Washington to establish a gay centre in Columbia. His message was read out publicly. Thousands of people had acclaimed the popular singer Grace Jones, the star of the evening, and thousands of dollars had been raised. It was the first manifestation of this kind in the federal capital. Gay life was doing well.

On the eighteenth of that same month of November—eleven days after the victory in California—an appalling piece of news struck world opinion and principally that state, which was the worst affected; nor was the Beverly Hills high school spared. Jim Jones and the group of his followers who had withdrawn to Guyana were visited at Jonestown by the Californian deputy Leo Ryan, whose intention it was to repatriate a number of young people wanted by their families. This trip was his last resort, after the failure of the long-distance negotiations he had conducted with Jones. He was not the man to entrust his task to a deprogrammer. Some young people did accede to his entreaties and decided to return to California with him. As they were departing from the airport at Georgetown, capital of Guyana, retaliatory gunfire brought down the deputy, a camera-man, and several others, while nine hundred and twenty-three followers and the cult founder poisoned themselves, killed themselves, or were killed in the jungle, so as not to break their oath that they

would not go on living were they forced to return to the bosom of society. Ken Morris and his family had been among that number. Ruth's despair touched Otis, Roy, and all their friends who remembered that boy, a victim of the cults. Roy, who had had a hand in the murder of a man, had the impression of being closer to this collective murder than any one else in his group.

While the emotion did affect Los Angeles, it had been inexpressible at San Francisco, whence came most of those shot and poisoned at Jonestown. The official functions Jones had performed, and his friendship with mayor Moscone, gave this massacre political repercussions, which even reached the White House because of Mrs. Carter's links with the founder of the Church of the People's Temple. Black society was particularly affected, as this Church had a black majority. The fascination exerted by Jones was evident even now among the survivors: a weeping crowd filled his San Francisco temple. But at Los Angeles the law was investigating his Crenshaw Boulevard offices. Neither at the UCLA's Bruin Walk, nor at the Beverly Hills high school, were pamphlets for the People's Temple any longer distributed.

The carnage at Jonestown was still the sole topic of conversation when, on the twenty-seventh of November, a report came of the assassinations of the mayor of San Francisco and Harvey Milk. At first there was a rumour that this double murder was connected with the executions in Guyana, but there was no substance to it. The killer was Dan White, Harvey Milk's enemy, who had become the enemy of George Moscone as well, after having submitted, and then attempted to withdraw, his resignation as councillor-general. Nonetheless the San Francisco event was indirectly linked to Jonestown: Moscone had been assassinated in his office at the city hall after returning from a funeral service for those who died at Guyana. After Milk convinced him that he should refuse White's reappointment, he had been making preparations to name a new councillor-general. The mayor, in the very same office where, one year previously, a

man armed with a revolver had been arrested, had had detectors installed at the town hall entrance. White, who knew how to bypass these by going through the basement, felled him with four revolver shots, and a few moments later felled Milk with five shots. After that he gave himself up.

That night, a procession of forty thousand people, carrying torches and walking arm in arm, passed through the city towards the illuminated city hall. They were men and women Milk had championed. The popular singer Joan Baez celebrated the two dead men with funeral songs, and Dianne Feinstein, president of the general council—who reminded the press not to forget the extra ‘n’ in her forename—gave an appropriate address. The *Herald Examiner* recalled that, during the campaign, Milk and Briggs had taken part in a debate, in the course of which the senator had complained about receiving death threats. Milk had accused him of exaggeration, but had added: “Every public man is aware of these threats. I have stacks of them in my office. It’s the risk one takes: it comes with the territory.”

As though to confirm those words, and at the same time reigniting the question of the cults, a new kind of attack took place at Santa Monica: Paul Morantz, the lawyer acting for Nick Stevens’s family and another family against the Synanon cult, was bitten by a cobra when he put his hand into his letter-box, and very nearly died of the bite. Certainly the postmaster-general, in approving these deep boxes, had never considered the possibility of a venomous serpent being dropped in as a kind of correspondence. It was Morantz’s view that this crime was the work of the terrorist organization of Chuck Dederich, the founder of Synanon, which, as Nick had several times reported, was still threatening him. Otis shared this opinion. The judge of the Santa Monica high court ordered Chuck’s arrest. The Messiah was apprehended at Lake Havasu City in Arizona, where the police discovered him dead drunk. They were obliged to take him to the Phoenix hospital. The *Los Angeles Times* quoted a thought of one of his disciples on the

arrest of this man who had founded a cult to cure people of alcoholism: “It took him twenty years to build a paradise, and he could not live there.” Like the People’s Temple, Synanon was henceforth on its last legs and had lost all its adherents in the Beverly Hills high school.

Otis marvelled at the sequence of events that, in prompting him to ask his father for the name of a lawyer to rescue a young black gay’s sister, had ended with the introduction of a cobra into a letter-box. In the same way, senator Briggs, by attempting to introduce a law against gay teachers, had produced a sequence of events that ended in a double crime.

## Part Three—Chapter Twenty-one

SHORTLY after these catastrophes, a unanimous decision of the United States Supreme Court consolidated the victory won by the gays in the Californian referendum. It was specifically stated that the Pentagon did not have the right to demote officers by reason of their sexual preferences, if they did nothing reprehensible. This was the same principle that the gay teachers had always relied upon in defence of their case. The supreme court's decision referred to aviation sergeant Leonard Matlovich and sub-lieutenant Vernon Berg, two gay rights activists, who some years earlier had been discharged without stated reason and without certificate of honour. After they appealed, the two under-officers had their case reviewed and even received a payment of the allowances which they, like all gays discharged from the services, had been deprived of. So equality of rights had conquered one more domain where the late senator McCarthy had caused havoc on the fallacious pretext of state security. It was further stated that many homosexuals would retain their positions in the armed services, and that there was no reason at all to pursue those among them who might emerge from anonymity.

The Supreme Court's decision regarding gay officers had scandalized Mr. Clear, just as it must have scandalized his dear president Nixon, but Mrs. Clear stayed on the path of realism that she had followed on the question of Proposition 6. As for Gladys, she applauded this decision with the same enthusiasm with which she had applauded the referendum result.

While sub-lieutenant Berg wanted to become a teacher and was working at the Prat Institute in Brooklyn, aviation sergeant Matlovich lived in San Francisco and would have liked to replace Milk in the general council. But Dianne Feinstein, who

had succeeded Moscone as mayor, appointed another gay to that post, Harry Britt, a hotel employee, who was in charge of the democratic gay club of San Francisco, now renamed the Harvey Milk Club. The Foundation for the Liberty of Citizens, opponent of the cults, had, for its part, been under the patronage of Leo Ryan, the deputy killed at Georgetown.

Penelope, whom Roy telephoned to discuss all these vicissitudes, notably the carnage in Guyana where their old schoolfellow Ken Morris had disappeared, remained unmoved about her adherence to the Divine Light Mission. "You know," she told him quietly, "that for me *you* form part of that light. You radiate it differently from Maharaj Ji. You complement each other. His light—you materialize it, in a sense. I no longer see it in the form of rays, but as a fluid, which I believe I still feel on my hand . . . and elsewhere. I'm too busy at present with my studies, but, during the Christmas holidays, I will invite you to flood me with it . . . at the same place." These adorable words resonated in Roy's heart and in his senses.

It has been said that in troubled times, a succession of currents and counter-currents will unceasingly amaze the mind. The *Los Angeles Times* published the result of a poll conducted, in the name of the bureau of educational communications in Northbrook Illinois, for the *Who's Who of American High-School Students*. Twenty thousand juniors and seniors, selected from all the states in the union, responded to various questions put to them: 81 per cent. adhered to an organized religion, 76 per cent. had never had sexual intercourse, 60 per cent. wanted to remain virginal until they married, 54 per cent. would refuse to live with some one outside marriage, 98 per cent. had never used drugs—but 54 per cent. had friends of their age who smoked marijuana—69 per cent. thought that a teacher's sexual preferences had nothing to do with his profession, 77 per cent. had no racial prejudices—which indicated that 23 per cent. of them did retain essentially the same prejudices as Mr. Clear, at least against the Negroes—69 per cent. agreed with president



Carter's policy on the rights of man, 52 per cent. were in favour of the equal rights amendment, 50 per cent. had never consumed alcohol, 66 per cent. were in favour of bringing back the death penalty in every state (they perceived the logic of Ernest van den Haag, former professor of social philosophy at Berkeley, Columbia and Harvard, and at present at the University of New York, well known for his writings, who called for the death penalty as the sole means of preserving "the sacred right to life"), and only 2 per cent. were in favour of social security.

Otis questioned these figures, one by one, with Roy and their friends, as Ramsey did with his. They asked themselves whether Los Angeles and Beverly Hills had been included in this enquiry, because no one they knew had been questioned. The rejection of social security amused them as a sign of aristocratic disdain of contemporary society's parasitism in regard to the state; but they did think that the young people of Los Angeles county would have been more generous. To be sure, the views on teachers and the death penalty only corroborated or emphasized the very recent polls at the Beverly Hills high school, but the responses about sexual matters would have led the reader to believe that the sexual revolution had not taken place. Well, the research conducted not long ago by the Kinsey Institute, which gave proof of the freedom of young Americans' morals prior to that revolution—something recalled by Mr. Claiborne's letter in the New York Times—contradicted this *Who's Who*, just as it was contradicted by the work of the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality, established in San Francisco. "All that is missing from this enquiry," said Ramsey amusingly, "is a figure to the effect that 99 per cent. have never masturbated." And one could only laugh at the responses concerning drugs, when what went on at the high school was common knowledge, and when one remembered what Kenneth L. Peters, superintendent of schools at Beverly Hills, who had reason to be well informed, had said: that seven out of ten high school students took drugs.

The conclusions drawn from discussing this research were that it was an attempt to reassure America, following the vote in California and the tragedy in Guyana. "It's like the photographs in the *Year-Book*," said Otis, "intended to foster belief that sport absorbs all our physical activity." But here the result was not the outcome of a biased selection: the responses came from young people themselves. If they were true they would prove, at least on the questions of sex and drugs, that they already possessed all the hypocrisy of adults. Ramsey had observed this in a good many of his former gay friends at the UCLA. Despite the encouraging example of the high-school graduates, conformism swept it away, and doubtless would always sweep it away. The coming generations, which stern minds said were rotten to the core, were ready to take up the banner of American respectability.

## Part Three—Chapter Twenty-two

ROY was curious to find out whether the male prostitution at Hollywood Boulevard had changed. He presumed that after the gays' success against Briggs there would be visible signs of what had nothing to do with their ideal as such, but was a consequence of it. He would be able to find out whether he was right.

He went alone, not wishing to confess this weakness to Otis, even though he had no hidden agenda of "gay cruising". But since the beginning of the school year neither of them had again suggested sampling what went on down there. Moreover Otis, like Roy, and like Penelope, was absorbed in his new studies. So it was with a background of chemistry, biology and advanced electronics that Roy returned to that district, the busiest in Los Angeles. It reminded him of the man who had given him the clap, but that was a less serious image than the memory of Sunset Boulevard. The boys, the youngsters, and the men who were interested in them, did seem more sure of themselves. Handkerchiefs hung more visibly from the rear pockets of jeans. Gay cruising was at full sail.

In parallel with the activity of the money-boys, a kind of religious propaganda was going on, which appeared to be in competition with it, and amused Roy. It came from cults seemingly unconcerned about the events in Guyana and Santa Monica, in that they had never engaged in brainwashing. Doubtless they were hoping to profit from the discredit of the ones that were feeding the news. In the same way, in New York, the Moon cult—the Church of the Unification—was selling its journal *New World* in four hundred thousand copies, benefiting thereby from the strike at the *New York Times* and other dailies, which had been going on for months. That was the only cult left

at the Beverly Hills high school. At Pasadena, the authorities had just closed down the Universal Church of God, as a result of complaints laid against the dilapidations of its octogenarian founder Herbert Armstrong.

In front of the Chinese theatre, a small crowd had formed around representatives of the Church of Scientology who were distributing leaflets. This, with the Moon cult, was the only one Otis tolerated. He avoided Penelope's cult; her charm had already attracted to the Mission of Divine Light Joyce, Pamela, Ruth, and the other girl from the summer. Only the boys had resisted that impulse, which they judged appropriate to feminine idiosyncrasy. But Penelope had told Ramsey that the closure of the Pasadena church would drive people to the Malibu Mission, especially men. Roy had no fear of competition there.

A little further along from the Chinese theatre, the disciples of Hare Krishna, wearing yellow robes and shaven-headed, were attracting much attention. They were Californians who had embraced that Hindu cult. They were chanting "Hare, Hare—Hare Krishna—Hare, Hare . . ." Roy had discovered their existence the previous year, when he flew to Vermont with his parents; the Hare Krishnas invaded the waiting-rooms, and were asking travellers to chant with them three times the words they were at that moment uttering. Their dress and their shaven heads prevented them from having followers at the high school.

One magnificent Sikh, aged about thirty, who had been watching Roy for a while, smiled at him. Roy smiled back mechanically, without thinking he was committing himself to anything in particular. He was aware that the Los Angeles Sikhs were no more true Sikhs than were the Hare Krishnas Hindus: they were, similarly, Californians who had converted to the religion of the Punjab people. Roy had seen Sikhs in Melrose Avenue at the Aunt Tilly shop, where he sometimes went with his mother. The Sikhs, being vegetarians, were prominent customers. They wore a white turban, a white jacket and

trousers, an iron bracelet on the right wrist, and never cut their hair or beard.

The one in Hollywood Boulevard approached Roy and asked whether he would care to take a walk with him. Roy consented. He was amused in advance by the idea of disappointing the man, since he had no doubt that the Sikh was a boy-chaser like the majority of the men who were there. Perhaps this was even a false Sikh, simply a client who had disguised himself for the chase. Uniforms of all kinds add prestige, and not only in the eyes of women.

“What are you doing here?” the Sikh asked Roy.

“The same as you,” he responded insolently, “I’m looking for some one.” He decided to have a little fun with this Sikh, be he genuine or false.

“Well, you’ve found him,” said the man. “But if I was watching you, it was because of the affection and pity you inspire in me. A boy of your age, with your beauty, in such a place of perdition, moves me to tears. Before I became a Sikh, I too was in Hollywood Boulevard looking for youngsters or men.”

The conversation was taking an unexpected turn. It indicated that they were not bound for a motel, unless Sikhs had devious means of reaching the same goal. The white-clad man seemed consistent. “I come here sometimes to remember my errors,” he went on, “and from time to time I rescue youngsters. Several of them are now in our community. There are two who do not yet have beards.”

“So they’ve left their families?” asked Roy.

“That was not difficult for them, because they no longer *had* families,” said the Sikh. “They were street-boys, escapees from correctional institutions, beginners in delinquency. That is evidently not the case with you.”

“True!” said Roy. Yet he told himself that he had committed blackmail and been present at a murder.

“Soon I have to be at our restaurant at West Third Street—near Farmer’s Market—where I serve as a waiter,” said

the Sikh. "But it's not dinner time yet, only tea time. If you like, we can go down there and continue our chat in comfort."

Roy was as curious as could be.

The Sikh hailed a taxi. Roy was still not entirely persuaded of the purity of his intentions, but still he did not hesitate to follow: there would be plenty of time to leave him if need be. They got out at Fairfax Avenue, near Third Street West, which ended at the border between Beverly Hills and Los Angeles. "We wear white," said the Sikh, "because it's a symbol of our ideal of living a pure life. The turban is the crown of the spirituality that places us at the service of men. Our religion, founded in the sixteenth century by the guru Nanak, has the aim of resisting a world of superstition. The Sikhs first gained a foothold in the United States just a few years ago."

"Who is your leader at present?" asked Roy.

"Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji," said the Sikh, smiling at such a name. "We call him simply Yogi Bhajan. It was he who found the first American followers."

The restaurant displayed the sign "Conscientious Cuisine". Near the entrance, a shop displayed male and female dummies in Sikh clothing, and various ritual objects. One image depicted the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the religious centre of the Sikhs. Inside the restaurant a few customers were taking tea. The male and female staff, dressed like Roy's companion, also wore a comb, and carried a little dagger on their belts—the comb was a ritual object to indicate the toilet of the soul. They spoke very quietly, and the customers more quietly still. One young father was seated opposite his two little boys; when one of them raised his voice rather too much, the father took from his pocket a card that he put in front of the boy; upon it was written in capital letters "Do Not Speak Loudly". All that was heard after that was a subdued prattling.

The Sikh and Roy sat down at a corner table, and, before two tea-cups, a long monologue began, spoken in a murmur that added to the magic of the words, which the schoolboy quickly

sensed. “The American Sikhs,” said the survivor of Hollywood Boulevard, “are clearly in the great tradition of Sikhism, but they have enriched it with other Indian doctrines so that it is even more lofty, and they have made of it a religion that should satisfy every man. We have been inspired notably by the Tantric guru Dhagwan Shree Rajneesh, whose school is at Poona, near Bombay; you should read his wonderful books, which are collections of his teachings. A dozen or so have been published in America. We don’t recognize the castes, which still exist among the Hindu Sikhs, but for every being we open the tenth door—which corresponds to none of the nine orifices of the human body.” Roy, who was thinking of the two orifices appropriate for his pleasures, and of the three that girls had at their disposal, saw that the Sikhs counted more of them, with a different function—the eyes, the ears, the nostril, the navel—but were they not forgetting the penis and the vagina?

“The tenth door,” continued the Sikh, “is the door to your deepest self. When you come to know it, you will renounce everything that has brought you to Hollywood Boulevard: you will no longer even understand how it could have been. You will lose the taste for it all, without regret or suffering. It will be like so many dead branches, fallen from the tree of your life.”

This phrase made an impression on Roy, who loved trees. He thought of the maple planted by the Daughters of the American Revolution, between Los Angeles and Beverly Hills, and of the prayers read on that occasion. He called to mind Jack Sherman, who had been present at the ceremony, and the thought was disagreeable to him.

The Sikh continued: “I won’t talk to you about God or the heavenly powers, or about other religions, which lead people only by way of promises of reward, or threats of punishment. Besides, since a religion is the link between man and the Supreme Being, are we not truly one? And I won’t tell you not to do this, that or the other. I *will* tell you to do whatever you like. But, in doing it, observe your own self. It is necessary to do

everything before becoming enlightened, because then one erases everything that one has done and that one is unable to do again.

“I won’t talk to you about morality, but about self-awareness. It’s not a matter of knowing whether a god is watching you. It is up to you to look at yourself and judge yourself. But I can put your mind at rest: you are not responsible for all the bad things you have done. You could only have done them out of ignorance of what you are. A thief, a murderer, the most evil of men, have the ability to redeem themselves in an instant: all they need do is see themselves. They were blind when they were doing evil, killing or stealing.

“Certainly you have not killed, but you have encouraged such crimes, simply by watching violent films. Perhaps you have stolen from your parents, or stolen from men, because you were not looking at yourself. I need not even ask you whether you have taken drugs: all the boys that come to Hollywood Boulevard use drugs in one way or another. An English writer, Thomas de Quincey, who was an opiomaniac, once, without realizing it, wrote a remarkable passage about a child doomed to non-conformism by an evil deity: ‘Thus will he be made perfect in the furnace; thus will he see the things that ought not to be seen; sights that are abominable and secrets that are unspeakable.’ It is not that furnace which will make you perfect, because it will consume you. It is by leaving it that you will attain perfection, because you will at once forget the things that ought not to be seen, the abominable sights and the unspeakable secrets—the life you are leading.

“You have had sex with men for money, but it is as if you had never done it, because you will not be able to do it again. You will no longer have sex with any one, unless, once you are married, it is to be happy with your wife and have children, whom, thanks to your experience, you will preserve from what should not be seen, from what is abominable, and from what is unspeakable. Having sex is of interest only within love, and you



are at an age when love is in practice forbidden. There is no need to immerse oneself in sex: the need is to transcend it. A phenomenal inner strength is gained—the strength of artists, creators—when sex, rather than being squandered, is absorbed.

“I am not advocating any remorse to you. Whatever you may have done, you have done well to do it: to understand everything it is necessary to have done everything. Since we are parts of a whole, it is not possible to exclude from it the least part, even the meanest, because the most beautiful could not have flourished without it. All the parts of your being have the right to be satisfied, until the day when you receive the light of the tenth door. I have found you, under your angel’s cloak, as black as a crow; I am sending you home as white as snow.”

Roy went back, deeply moved by these words. They had touched a sensitive point within him. To the vague spirituality which the religious education at the Buckley School had taught him, and which had been brought out again by the most bizarre cults favoured at the high school in the past, they gave a new efflorescence on new foundations. He was not being shown the image of a God in whom he now only half believed, but he was being made aware of his conscience, which for the past year he had completely forgotten. The discovery of life, the craving for money, and the hunger for pleasure had hidden his own face from him by drawing him towards its opposite. Yes, this man with his white soul and white costume, who had led the same life and had freed himself, inspired him with the desire to break the bonds of which he had now been made ashamed. Roy was more than a little astonished that a year spent opposing the cults should have resulted in this.

He could not fail to reflect that the regeneration proposed by the Sikh might have been offered him by Christianity in very similar terms. He remembered what the Baptists had cited in their letter to the soldier Johnson: that Christ made a new creature of the man who lived in Him; that “old things are passed away”. But, like Penelope, he felt himself closer to

religiosity than to religion. In spite of all his love for Otis, he would have been incapable of adhering to the faith of the God of the Bible, just as he was detached from the God of the Gospel. The nature of revelation and of belief in the supernatural appeared to him irreconcilable with the modern spirit. At bottom, what faith he retained was concerned only with a remnant of morality. And suddenly there had been revealed to him a morality the outline of which was made the more forceful through its absence of faith.

## Part Three—Chapter Twenty-three

THE emotions stirred up by Jim Jones's insane hecatomb and the assassination of George Moscone and Harvey Milk had not yet subsided. Roy remembered what he had told Jack: that no community was responsible for the actions of a few madmen. But he was firm in his resolve to reform himself, made following his conversation with the Sikh.

In short, the shocks from outside had reawoken him to normal family life, after all the adventures he had lived through in secret, one of which had had such a dramatic end. He was enjoying a great inner peace at the thought of withdrawing from that round. It seemed to him laughable to have wanted to accumulate money. Thanks to Otis, he no longer needed it. He would give all he had to the reverend Camper for his charitable work. He would say that the blackmail had simply been a bet made with himself, and that the rest came from bingo. The idea of these winnings from the newly-established lottery, which he had thought up in order to explain to his father one day the origin of all the money, something that had amused Mr. Teller, would now serve as his pretext for divesting himself of it.

A little further reflection moderated his initial sacrificial impulse. He told himself that he would return to the path of orthodox education, after the model of the young Americans in the recent poll, but that he need not overdo either the saintliness or the sanctimoniousness. He decided to restrict Mr. Camper's gift to a thousand dollars. The remainder would be for his own charitable work—gifts to Otis and Penelope.

The most important of his reforms was simple. His rich clients would disappear from his world the moment he stopped telephoning them. He would not return to Mr. Teller's, even if Bob asked him to. But that was not to say that he would refrain

from gay life: it had given him too much pleasure. The Sikh's moral code had rescued him from prostitution, but he had no intention of emasculating himself. He would not sacrifice even his dildo at the altar of the Golden Temple of Amritsar. While he may be giving up men, he was not giving up his friends—Bob, Otis and Ramsey—and of course Penelope. He had agreed not to “immerse himself in sex”, but he saw no reason not to immerse his sexual organ into their two orifices, while waiting to immerse it into Penelope's third. With her, he was certain he would attain the enchanted realm of love, in conjunction with that of sensual delight. Since he was toying with the idea of marrying her one day, why not go on making her happy before the marriage? The children he would later give her would only be the more beautiful. Roy marvelled at the fact that his encounter at Hollywood Boulevard, in the haven of gay cruising, should have brought him closer to Penelope. The Sikh had been for him what the invisible Maharaj Ji had been for her: henceforth they were truly united in the divine light.

And equally with Otis, Ramsey, and Bob, it was not simply a matter of sex. Roy returned to Otis the tenderness that Otis had invested in him. Their characters were evolving somewhat in the same direction: the two friends had turned away from their craving for excess and novelty. They mastered themselves the better to love each other. Ramsey did not seek equilibrium to the same degree, but he fascinated them precisely by his tight-rope walking act, with cocaine as the balancing-pole. As for Bob, he had confessed to Roy that, after Pamela, no one was more dear to him, and that he had no regrets about the lack of hundred dollar commissions now the visits to his father had stopped. But Roy still had to take leave of Jack with due courtesy. This was a person he could not drop as easily as the others.

Something had prepared him not to make an exception in Jack's favour. At the time of their first encounter after the holidays, the police chief was overcome with malicious joy: he had just heard a piece of news that the papers had not reported

before Harvey Milk was killed. Three months previously, the councillor-general of San Francisco, on returning from a trip to New York, where he was born, had found his young friend hanging in his flat, and a farewell note.

“You see,” the police chief had told Roy: “it’s divine punishment for a man who has always been a provocateur. His friend, whom he presented to the crowd on the day of his election, paid for him. That’s what a public official who didn’t know how to carry out his duties deserved. And had he wanted to show himself worthy of the love he professed, he should have hung himself next to his friend.” Roy could not accept that Jack should rejoice over the death of a young man, and that he should harbour such hate for a man who had done nothing to him. Roy was no judge of what love could be between two men, but he replied that Milk could not be reproached for having dishonoured his duties, since he had been elected in a district where gays were in the majority, and that he was their representative, like Don Amador in Los Angeles.

And then later there had been something more than joy in Jack: he had been truly elated at the murder of Milk. It made him forget the defeat of Proposition 6, and he hoped that this murder would serve as a warning to gays. Roy, in whose mind Jack’s remarks about the death of the young man had faded a little in the excitement of the final days of the campaign, experienced more violently the horror of such words and of the being who uttered them.

Worse still: now Jack was jubilant about certain murders in Chicago. “It’s necessary,” he said, “for frightful things to take place from time to time among the gays to bring them down a peg or two, seeing that so many of them are sick people.”

As they were driving towards Brentwood, Roy at once told Jack about the resolution he had taken: he would not be seeing either him or any of his generous friends again. After the holiday break and his curiosity in the new school year which had led him

to continue his habits, he was now giving them up in order to live a life in keeping with his age, and would no longer think of anything but his school-work. He added that Luke's death had left him with understandable memories, and that the recent events in San Francisco and elsewhere had only made things worse.

"Listening to you, I forgot to turn off at Sunset," said Jack. "I'll go on as far as Willsburn and we can turn at Sepulveda." The police chief uttered these words under his breath, as though talking to himself. But immediately afterwards he cried out: "What! I won't see you again?"

"Perhaps that will be better for you too," said Roy. "We very nearly had an unfortunate experience: we could have another which might end badly for us both. I congratulate myself that our relationship is coming to an end without another accident. I have defied my family, but I belong to them and I'm going back to them and my friends. But you can be sure I will think of you often, with affection and gratitude."

Roy did not mention to Jack the fact that this evening was like the one when they had run into Luke: the Santa Ana was blowing. He did not need this external assistance to feel himself ready to be cruel: it was enough for him that he felt himself capable of being strong. The contradictory impressions of recent days, and the hypocrisy of his young compatriots, helped along by the hypocrisy of adults, had, after reflection, given him a disgust that made him feel able to face any conflict, beginning with this one. The Sikh's lesson had restored him to himself, but it seemed to him that in spite of the atmosphere of non-violence associated with Hindu wisdom, he would not hesitate to be violent, if need be, to recover his freedom. He was American.

Jack talked about other things. He said that the raid on the Sunset Boulevard establishment had revealed an international child prostitution network, and a trade, also international, in pornographic films depicting children. This involved working-class children, like the case of children being sold which

he had mentioned to Roy earlier, and he had just informed the French police that the traffic had reached working-class suburbs of Paris—little Americans were amusing the French, and French children the Americans. “Just imagine,” Jack concluded, “that were it not for me your photos would be on show up and down the Seine.” Roy was disturbed by this news, even though he had been a money-boy *de luxe*, and a stranger to that kind of commerce, but he saw in Jack’s words an attempt to influence his decision out of gratitude. He would not be swayed.

In Sepulveda Boulevard the car ran alongside Westwood cemetery, where two sites were still for sale at twenty-five thousand dollars, on either side of Marilyn Monroe’s tomb: they had not yet found buyers. Beverly Hills had the privilege of having no cemetery on its soil, as though death had been banished from the gilded ghetto. Roy asked Jack whether he knew where Luke had been buried. “Probably at Inglewood cemetery,” said the police chief, “it’s the one in Los Angeles nearest to Lennox.”

Inside the house at Montana Denair Cashmere, Roy ran his eyes over this room he would not enter again, which had been so often the scene of his pleasures. Jack removed his revolver. “You haven’t given me an envelope,” he said.

“That’s because I haven’t visited any of your friends since we last met,” Roy replied.

Jack went up to him and embraced him with an almost desperate ardour. “The money is secondary for us,” he said. “Do you really think I would agree to losing you? I would go mad. Do you really think that, having formed this tie, I would let it be broken from one day to the next? I’m the one who’s calling the tune, you understand?” His amorous flame had been succeeded by a kind of cold fury.

He rolled two marijuana cigarettes, poured himself a whisky, and prepared a Bloody Mary for Roy. “Your cocktail,” he said. . . . “Your cigarette.” . . . I cannot do without your company, rare as it may be. That’s why you will come back. You’ll keep on

telephoning me and coming back. And I'm going to show you that you have to do that. Also, it would be absurd to stop seeing the people I've introduced you to. We've set up an admirable system, based on both pleasure and money. I do well out of it, and you do too. You can earn whatever you want: all I have to do is ask more from your hosts. I have them under my thumb . . . and I have *you* under my thumb."

These last words made Roy's head swim. He stared at this man who said he loved him but had spoken to him like Luke, the blackmailer. He hated Jack after this revelation of his true character, which perhaps explained his profession, and which engendered the same brutality in his attitude to Roy as in his views about gays. Roy recalled what the Saudi had told him, something he had never spoken of to Jack: the thousand-dollar bakhshish paid as pimping money. He very nearly mentioned it now to shame the police chief; but he was more anxious to discover the meaning of this threat. "And exactly how do you have me under your thumb?" he asked frostily.

Jack stood up, opened a locked drawer, and took out some photographs: they were prints of those he had burned, showing Roy sandwiched between the glass tube and the dildo in the Sunset Boulevard basement. Then he replaced them. "I apologize for having kept these souvenirs," he said. "Our relationship will end, not when you decide but when *I* decide. You know very well what your father would do if he saw these photos; you have told me yourself."

"And what would he do if he found out about our relationship?" asked Roy.

"There is no proof," said Jack, "and it's impossible that there ever will be, because I am the Los Angeles police chief. And the Beverly Hills police chief is a friend of mine."

"If you have nothing to fear," said Roy, "then why did you kill Luke?"

"I killed him for your sake," said Jack. "You are well aware that you're the one responsible for that murder, and I was only



the agent. But I was also protecting our relationship. . . Now we're going to have sex, and you will understand how impossible it would be for us not to want to do it again." For Roy, Jack called to mind the blackmailer having sex with him after forcing him to steal from his parents. The two individuals were becoming more and more alike. But Roy too had things to protect that were nothing to do with Jack. He had to protect the tranquillity of his family life, his friendship with Otis, Ramsey and Bob, his love for Penelope.

Suddenly an idea filled his mind, an idea as terrifying as it was precise: to rid himself from this man, just as this man had rid himself of Luke. The police chief was a monster, even more repugnant than the blackmailer, since he was on a different level. Not only did he know Roy's address; he had entered Roy's home, and met his parents. All of that had to be rooted out. As Jack had put it, "the end justifies the means".

The revolver lay on the table, within reach of Roy's hand—the revolver that was always loaded, that had killed before and would kill again. This weapon was the instrument that would avenge other murders. Blood demanded blood. As Harvey Milk had said, it came with the territory. The location was auspicious: the house had no near neighbours, the street was deserted, and the district isolated. No one would suspect Roy. The men he had met through Jack would not for an instant imagine that he could be the murderer: he was a boy of fourteen and a bit, a boy of good family. Besides, those men would not be able to mention him without compromising themselves. Nothing the police chief had said to them implied that he was having sex with Roy, and Roy himself had never admitted it to them. What valuable advice had he—this expert mentor who was about to suffer the consequences—given Roy by teaching him the power of secrecy! No one had seen Roy in Jack's car; he was under orders to duck down whenever they passed others or were passed—a rare occurrence at those late hours. Using a revolver held no fears for

Roy; as he had told Jack, he had fired his father's in the garden at Summit Drive.

All these calculations lasted only a few seconds. There was not a moment to lose. Roy, imitating what he had seen in films, wrapped his hand in his handkerchief before picking up the weapon—the murder weapon.

A shot rang out. Struck in the middle of his back, the chief of police collapsed. Roy, his heart pounding, and the revolver in his hand, approached. To make sure the man was dead, as dead as the blackmailer had been, he again pressed the trigger and shot him through the head.

He broke the Bloody Mary glass and trampled on it. With his hand still wrapped, he opened the drawer containing the photographs and slipped them into his pocket; then he opened the door of the house in the same way, and closed it again. He was out. That was the great thing.

Not a soul, not a bark, but Roy's heart was still pounding. The Chevrolet stood in the yard; he wiped the door-handle he had used. The warm wind freshened his burning cheeks and his damp forehead. He quickly walked down the first street crossing Sepulveda, diagonally towards Sunset, and tore into a thousand pieces the pictures that had forced him to kill a man—that man who had initiated him into the life of the gays, even while detesting them. He scattered the pieces along the hedges and lawns. They were the débris of his past.

When he reached the Bel Air Country Club, where, thanks to Jack, he had seduced Mr. Teller, he tied his handkerchief around his forehead—the police chief's unnecessary advice on the night of Luke's murder—and began the current sport craze: he was no killer; he was jogging, like president Carter. His heart was pounding no longer with emotion, but to the rhythm of his running. Seeing the University of California at Los Angeles, he stopped to do some respiratory exercises: flexing and circumduction of the arms; the Santa Ana filled his lungs. He had become admirably calm again. He was not coming away

from a house where he had killed the police chief; he was coming away from an evening concert at the Royce Hall, where he had left Otis, Ramsey and Penelope.

In a few days he would be elected Prince of the second-years at the Beverly Hills high school.

*The End*

