

*K I N G*    **R A D I O**

Frank Lauder

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This book is dedicated to the memory of  
**Harry.A.Lauder**

*K I N G*   **R A D I O**



Book 1

**Breaking Waves**

*"Dance with me, dance with me,  
our music ends too soon"*  
***Johnny Mercer***

## Chapter 1.

### **King Radio**

'King', The tall man with the stooped back left the desk and slowly straightened, cartoon painfully, before beginning to pace the small room for the umpteenth time in some sort of hyperactive mood, turning at reducing intervals that themselves underlined thus the fact that in some way he was anxious, his pace and agitation covering the space between window and door, work desk and storage shelf increasingly rapidly.

### **The Room.**

The room here is overall brown in colour,

and set high up in a tall middle-aged city block, itself apparently as stooping as the occupant of this room. The room is simultaneously rather dusty. The window at it's far end is endlessly open to the void, and there is little intrusive sound from outside at this height, save for an occasionally deep, almost unheard, background rumble, while the endless chains of space and wind outside yaw and creak metallicly both audibly and visibly beneath its distant hardwood rim.

This described sensation of fathomless space has more to do with the dynamics of wind than the orientation of the building itself, which somehow fails to act as a receiver for the combined wind funnel of sound that the polished acetate and glass of the looming city blocks in the central distance create, then push out from their stacks like a series of trumpets. Up at this height then, this block is strangely silent most of the time, especially when, on a quiet night, the careful ear hears away in another vector of the middle distance, the sound of breakers on a beach, when the wind is up and in the right direction. Because the windows are so often open and the climate is a warm one, the interior of the room and its contents are overlaid by the fine rhyme of pollution that any cloud of traffic exhaust always carries with it. Logically.

One more extraordinary thing though, about

this window: there is a mixed array of stub aerials set against the outside wall some way beneath the window, and the enquiring mind is set to wonder not only how the tall stooped man has managed the suicidal task of suspending such equipment at such a height and inclination, undaunted by imminent mortality and sudden squalls of wind, but also most of all, what their function could possibly be.

The interior woodwork of the room is of course relatively old, but dry, and has never been properly maintained, though it is still in surprisingly good condition. From the hardwood frame the window itself looks out onto the sort of myriad of avenues and streets that anyone would expect in a bustling city and sees, again in the middle distance, the tall flexing stalks of concrete towers, just off geometry. The stacks of the central city blocks.

And then, a kilometre distant, the hint of an edge of deep blue ocean and the traces of palm trees fringing the cup of a bay.

Just a hint of that, with the brown exhaust haze lying thin as a knife between the dense air of the traffic and the cooler air of the air stream.

This eyrie maintains thus a slender contact with reality, and though good as a receiving point for the radio equipment in this apartment has only a limited scope as a watchtower. Mind you, with the electronic equipment here in this room one would

rarely need one's eyes.

You see the man here, stooping and tall as he is, the King of the Airways, has thought this question of visibility and invisibility out already - and equally - has already forgotten the question - for his interest is in sound: purity: pure, perfect sound and all its wonders: the equipment that can carry all its confection - and wonderful various modulations - because in his experience of the world all truth is hidden in sound - from the sigh of a woman, the shriek of the Fox to the report of the Carbine, sound contains the questions to many answers.

Perfect answers. As perfect as answers ever could be.

**Now**, from his lonely eye-line some way back in the space, the King regards the view for a brief moment.

The altered shape of the window from here, looks out onto the neat, greys, browns and verdant green rectangles of a sector of the city, generated by the production of the streets at some now distant time, and at some variance with the view first described.

This is his image of the city, most days, most times.

A light, warm, slightly salty wind bustles

against the side of the block.

He turns away. Disinterested. This is everyday, whereas the mechanics and mathematics of sound continue always to be a question. That is where the future, is though he knows not exactly how that is where it will all end.

There is a certain amount of heat generated in the interior of the room.

How? The interior of the room is ordered in its own technical way: the equipment which lines one wall winks lights and illuminated LCD's.

Further down below the line of the desk are the power units which generate the by-product of heat, keeping the space up here artificially dry and warm. The power units and transformers have grey cases which show their vital signs with glowing dials and maintain the consistency of supply. There is an order to everything.

Perfection in sound requires perfect attention to detail. Small details must be perfect, thus mathematical.

You see, where the order fails is in itself a logical place. For example, chaos itself is order - the corner of the room contains a box, and each time a solid memory, cassette or (obsolete) spool tape is full, the King will write something upon the label and mark the log, then fling the equipment into the box without getting up from his control

seat. Perfect, the creation of something so logical in it's own way.

**The failing sunlight** gathers orange and red and creates as it's by-product a wavelength distorting effect, such that the lights in the equipment begin to make reading slightly uncomfortable; this happens at roughly the same time every day and the King has, of course, considered everything: thus he has set up a bar-shaped reading lamp which segregates its light to any area of detail, or to his notepad or the scuffed but meticulously kept log. He clicks the switch 'On'.

With an effort, the King concentrates his eyes on the tabloid newspaper in front of him: ....  
*'The Bizarre events at 'Walker's Mansion' Last Thursday.'*

**Some five kilometres away** a man called O'Hara was drinking coffee and smoking a small cigar.

**Back** in the mid-town block, inside the control room, the light had changed. The King glanced up, sensing something. Such movement in the Sun could affect the solar panels. Damn!

One of the diodes had started to dance: he

moved sideways along the panel of control switches and touched one of them, simultaneously pushing the fader up: then a remote voice swam into focus almost lazily, as if just awakening, maybe yawning:

"...like the Sunday rag?"

It was merely the fragment of a conversation, a pattern of voices: in space, delicate, shifting rhythms - an unravelling of factual reality - he took another sip of the now cold coffee: pushed the master control forward thirsty for more sound -

"Not particularly... but there's nothing going on criminologically today"

"Oh, I don't know, there was another peculiar murder last week"

"Ouch"

"What?"

"Oh, just the light, something like a mirror, blinding... what was that?"

"The murder in the papers"

"Oh, you mean the one here"

"..Yes ..look ...*'The bizarre events at Walkers' Mansion'*"

"Yes, I've been reading about it... no sign of any motive ... call-girl and rich client ... no linking factors ... one for the records, so far as I can see .. plenty of those in the unsolved department"

There was a silence while each voice wrestled with papers, or memory, or just manipulated a few

facts. A dry rustling on the recording material as if the media were prematurely, acceleratedly, ageing.

**Then:**

"I don't know whether it's that we're theorists, but I can't seem to find any interest in this sort of thing lately" said the first, lower, voice.

"Arse ... that's what a young mans mind defaults to... I'm not just a computer boffin you know", said the second.

"So I noticed !" said the first, the man called O'Hara.

"No", said his compatriot, Nicholas "...it's that lecturer in the Sociology Department that I'm nuts about".

"Oh ?"

"Drop the theories O'Hara.. let's face it .. I'd quite concretely like to get up her skirt"

A sniggering sort of laugh.

"Umm"

"Well?"

"Think more clearly for a moment, think about this". O'Hara clicked a key experimentally.

"Stuff it, I want to loose weight, go swimming, get involved...!... I was married too long.. and now I'm free !"

"Free as a desert?" a third voice chimed in.

"Hey, take it easy Nicky""

"Well, you're probably right. Michael-", said O'Hara's voice ". I could use some of that too .. I haven't touched a woman for longer than I care to remember"

"Well, you should try it some time, before you die, O'Hara!". Nicholas.

"Oh, it'll happen one day without me having to push it"

"If you want to wait till you're ninety!"

"I have too much to do, what with setting-up all the new databases and that"

"Think about yourself, O'Hara, for a change."

"Well, I will, when I have the time.. I'm busy, now anyway,".

**The man inside the distant room**, the King, pulled the fader back to zero, the voices from the speaker seeming to dwindle, and concentrated once more upon his reading.

The worn mechanism on one recorder scraped, struggled and then steadied.

He turned the page of the tabloid and the headline came once more into view: 'Murder at Walker's Mansion'..'

**Days were wont to unwind slowly** in the Computer Access Suite. Particularly when O'Hara

wracked his brains and could think of nothing (often).

But things change - at first with a lumpen slowness and now faster and - now his brainchild '*The Master Program*' had begun to show signs of activity, productivity.

Perhaps it would work eventually - as no program designed to trap criminals with a few keystrokes had ever worked before. Perhaps one day all criminals would be caught by a few deft and knowing keystrokes upon a distant keyboard. Ideals grow to become reality, well they do in theory, anyway.

Nevertheless, O'Hara knew that he was close to that great day, was confident of the outcome, and waited merely for the great moment - after all, he'd worked towards that moment for most of his active technologically criminological life.

That would be one for the record books!

### **O'Hara turned the page.**

Leafing through the pages of innumerable newspapers was an inevitable product of the search for all available information: the concept at least was that eventually all media sources, using word-search, spoken word to data programs and computer accessible filing banks would gain a large body of relevant and valuable peripheral

information about a myriad of cases which would inevitably, in a data sense, lead back towards a predictable point. Predictable to the resources of a computer network, that was. All possible sources would eventually be capable of being accessed, due to the refinements that he was slowly developing in the program itself.

**Slowly.** That was his problem at the moment, time. He was scanning for more information, hopefully, and thus the latest tabloid headline "Murder at 'Walker's Mansion'", had been thrust into his hands and now held his attention.

"This one falls into some sort of pattern !"  
He said to himself, conversationally.

"I expect you're right"

"What ?"

"Data?"

"Oh, nothing" said O'Hara, polishing his glasses.

**This sort of work** is inevitably tedious. The last week had flown by, while he had fiddled with the computer and bespoke the program even more perfectly than it had been tailored before. Now there should be no problem to find linked sets of circumstances, establish the underlying 'Third and Fourth Level patterns.'

"Amazing how time flies when you're achieving something!", said Nicky hopefully.

Weeks and weeks had passed, disappeared.

"Click, click, click. Ouch, wrong entry."

**His finest achievement** came ever more tantalisingly close to him. He knew it in his bones. Perhaps he had it in his hands even now - and did not know it - the whole unit seemed to be buzzing with mysterious energy, like a beehive: a build-up followed by a rather deflated anticlimax followed by another treacherous build-up.

"I want to be able to solve widespread crimes of this sort simply by pressing the 'Enter' key of my computer... one day I'll achieve it, I really will !" was how he'd drafted it in his submission for the research grant, which even now was beginning to run right down.

He turned the page of the newspaper and peered over it:

"What?" said a voice.

"Nothing"

He put the tabloid down and turned the inner page over so that the latest lurid message would be easy to find and catalogue. That was for whoever was doing the input in the next few weeks.

On the shelf several piles of un-collated material lay unattended, most of them similarly

folded. The latest headline was about a murder in a remote colonial mansion, a so called 'Weekender's' resort. But for a criminologist who did research for a living this was nothing particularly new. That was the problem, how to separate one 'Third Level pattern' from another, one 'Fourth Level MO' (Modus Operandi) from pure accident.

The fading photograph of a headless torso with huge breasts and in full colour, hung upside down from under the untended pile of mouldering newspaper. Some sort of confusion between locker-room trophy-ism and criminological inexactitude.

"God, it's suddenly become cold", O'Hara shivered.

"No, it hasn't.. see what I said yesterday about too little sex and loss of condition, it's probably low blood sugar". Nicholas, close to his elbow, moved away, humming something or other. Nicholas was tone deaf, which explained a lot.

**The atmosphere in the room was, as usual,** pretty warm and the air itself, perhaps because of the subdued, low energy lighting, dense. Time, also as usual, had become a bit of a blur.

O'Hara stood looking down at the coloured rectangles of a graphic's screen, his head down over his work, feeling a delicately cold draft upon his neck, when a subtly full scent assailed his nostrils.

The sensation was so strong and so unexpected that it made him stop in mid thought: he cantilevered his eyes around him, almost unwilling, unwittingly searching for something....

**The day** had dawned, unusually, rather grey, which was no spur to lax energy.

By early afternoon the King was once more at his work, he'd woken from his customary mid-day stupor and regained his temporarily lost motivation.

He sat as usual, at the control panel, watching the re-awaking, post-prandial dials with the usual amount of interest; they were, after all, his family. A judicious, watchful eye is what they ultimately required. Reasonable, yet judicious.

An LCD bobbed up and down, catching his attention for some reason, and he clicked a switch: he moved the fader below that port and all at once an errant sound whined like a banshee and then mutated, as the logic circuit caught it and brought it through the tortuous circumlocution of the hand-built equipment around the room, finally into digital logic; until it itself unexpectedly became a voice:

"Uh.. this is the Criminology Department"

**Now there was a hollowness on the line.**

The voices yawned as if turning away, the phasing continuing for a moment as if he were about to lose tuning: it must have been a passing powerful radio source or a transponder: he looked suspiciously out of the window into the blinding afternoon haze, as if his weak eyes could see right across the city, into all the places into which he had placed his small packages: his plants he called them. Green and brown and small. Yes, these small, dull, plastic, nuclear packages could easily be mistaken for plants.

The voices steadied then dimmed. He turned a knob and the dial on another LCD changed it's numbers; then after a moment the voices, if indeed they were the same ones, ducked, dimmed, faltered, and finally continued:

"Oh"

"And I collate data"

"Here?"

"Usually"

"Those papers and things.."

"Right"

A long, expectant, empty moment; something somewhere whirred:

"Do you use other media...?"

"Yes, of course... computers of course... old fashioned things too, like faxes, telex..."

"Morse code?"

"Morse code caught the first international murderer... it was a Doctor someone..."

"Really?"

"Really!... Doctor... oh I've forgotten his name" There was a certain frustration on the line

"Crippen". The tinny, empty phrases echoed through the headphones with the coldness of mechanical logic and the warmth of biological energy precisely combined and then filtered by this machine as if to preserve them forever. The line deteriorated for a moment, losing depth and tone, then rallied, warmed somehow.

There was an empty silence, followed by some inexplicable laughter.

**"Oh Oh...You're clever too..!"** More laughter. Then more seriously, the female voice momentarily darkened, almost imperceptibly, as it turned away from the microphone: there was a long, distorted pause until the conversation started again, pursuing a new vein -

"Magnetic media?"

"What do you mean?"

"Solid memory... Video!"

"Well, of course"

"Aah!" a moment of immense satisfaction.

A silence.

**"Memory... what an interesting idea"**

"Could be the way to something interesting... and you've never used wild recorded evidence for your data?"

"Not yet.. if you showed me the way you use it perhaps I could!"

**To the suspicious mind** the voice held all kinds of questions.

Now a strong radio source came between the transmitter and receiver, or perhaps the tone of the voices had dropped; anyway, the dials began to jiggle and the volume to fade away almost to nothing:

**"... Like a ... killing".**

Distortion had crept in making the words almost unintelligible, if indeed they were those words.

The logic circuits were struggling with the amount of intermittent corruption on the signal. The hand at the control panel moved a few switches, then the signal began to correct itself, almost like a melody;

"No, like data, pure data, that's all" the transmission sounded unexpectedly hollow .

"Oh... and occasionally I dance - the *Lambada!*"

A higher, contralto, voice laughed and the listening electronics flattened the sound to within their own logical cycle:

*"So do I"*

"What else is there to say"

*"I'm lost for words"*

"Lost?" The voice was suddenly dark and somehow edged with threat, but undetected by the other.

Then, again for unexplained reasons, at last the voices seemed to laugh together disjointedly in unexpected, echoing, fractal, chorus.

## Chapter 2.

### **Work, Women and Murder**

'Sound', O'Hara straightened up from the cramped seat of the desk and rubbed his head whilst beginning to pace his study; his stride being long. This meant that he had to turn at reducing intervals, breaking his overall rhythm, which in its turn thus disclosed his background anxiety, as he covered the space between window and door, desk and bookshelf in the small area increasingly rapidly.

Money, Sex, Murder... the three great levellers... what else, after all. He took the thumbled volume of 'The Metaphysical Poets' down from the

bookshelf and leafed through the pages, seeking somewhere for solitude, or interest, or something that would guide him or soothe him.

John Donne. One of his favourite poets. He could always find solace and humour there. Plenty of the three great levellers, though, too.

He bumped into a few things along his way, dislodging Skinners 'Beyond Freedom and Dignity', among other volumes, onto the rug. But O'Hara did not notice that, it was a mere detail -books are to some extent the bane of an academic's life.

There were more important things to this anyway, because something was troubling him.

Now, he picked the paperback volume up and rubbed his eyes. Now he dropped his glasses. He picked the spectacles up and opened his eyes wide, as if wishing to see reality once more, then once more put the spectacles on.

Cool air touched his cheek. His attention was diverted.

Now he noticed, that from his eye-line the narrow brown rectangle of the study window at this remove looked out onto the neat, cool greens of the science block, which prompted him to speculate that, contrasting with the Sociologists, who weren't ordered enough in their own minds to keep their area tidy, were the Scientists who had mathematical order in their minds, which again, in it's own perfect

scale of things, would naturally trace back to the order of the lawns and the block.

Such a perfect, hermetic, brew for the practical philosopher musing on the relationships of form, to function, to dynamics, to space, to final totality - creating the superb balance of the perfect knife edge. After all, to everything there is it's counterpart. Everything inevitably ends in some sort of gritted homily, some perfect middle way.

O'Hara's mind questioned; just why ? *“All this is irrelevant in the fact of it: an irrelevant factor...I mean, we are ultimately in the laps of the Gods.. powerless..”*

He ruminated on Chaos, Order and Confusion for a moment and settled for Order.

There is after all, an order to everything. There is no action without a reaction, no motion without it's own motive or logic, it's own spin-off of energy.

Another homily. Always another.

He watched the sky for something, some move, some sign.

**Outside** the building the air moved slightly, almost imperceptibly.

To one who was aware of such things then there was a little scattered transparent vibration as the clouds moved aside and the Sun came out from

behind the clouds, washing a millisecond later over the papers on the desk, the contrast between darkness and light making reading very uncomfortable, and there was a reason for all this.

O'Hara finally ceased pacing, sat down, and made himself comfortable.

It seemed irrelevant, that relationship between perfection and form: the relationship between the cause and the effect; the intimacy of natural rhythms interlacing and producing something quite profound: how was that idea ?...'*If you create a cloud of vapour in the Pacific it turns into a typhoon in the South Atlantic...*' Cause and effect - and symmetry.

That was the root of the philosophy which was driving him to create his brainchild - the 'Master Program'.

Today, however, he was busy with other things.

Despite the silence of the Computer Access Suite he could not deny that there were things at the forefront of his life - but, intriguingly - something still pricked at the back of his mind. Something to do with the disturbances in the wind perhaps?

With an effort, O'Hara re-focussed his eyes on the yellowing newsprint of the paper in front of him: '*... the bizarre events at the Old Colonial Mansion,*

*Saturday ....'*

The light changed in the confinement of the space as a small cloud passed in front of the Sun.

The article was contained beneath the banner of the headline:

*'The murder of an up-market call-girl at the Brownstones' Mansion, Saturday Night was made the more strange in that the Modus Operandi was a copy-cat of that followed at other murders in this area of the country over the last several years'.*

**A voice** broke in unexpectedly;

"Like the Sunday rag?!"

"How do you bring yourself to like papers like that one?"

"Well, I always get it!"

"As far as I can see it's mostly used car Ads!".

"Or tits."

He bent forward with a effort. The article continued:

*'The Police, in the guise of Detective Ron Rakh say, however, that this particular MO is so*

*commonplace in this sort of murder that they cannot see any particularly good reason to link the scatter of murders, which have been detected.*

*Detective Rakh states that:*

*"The MO is one which we find at very many homicides of this sort, and is thus not necessarily a linking factor, however*

*Mr. O'Hara, at the Department of Computer Criminology at the University in this city*

*has stated that any information given to him that can be collated and used in his programs which seek to implicate criminals by way of linking information and of course the MO's of various crimes, and any relevant data will be received with interest"*

**O'Hara was surprised** - that was nice of them - to remember him!

"Now all we need is people who can read well enough to cut through the ads, decipher that gobbledegook, pick up that idea and shower us with

info.!"

Nicholas laughed a hollow sort of laugh.

O'Hara looked up and with an unexpected effort re-focussed his eyes into the eyes of his friend (he really must get his eyes tested, they seemed to have deteriorated over the past few months)

"...but there's nothing doing criminologically today, anyway" *What did that mean?*

"Oh, I don't know, there was another juicy murder last week." *What did that mean?*

"Ouch."

"What?"

"Oh, just the light. .in my eyes... *what was that?"*

"The murder in the papers."

"Oh, you mean the one here?" said O'Hara, remembering that this was becoming so usual that he'd already forgotten it. He turned over a pile of papers and motioned at one; "..Yes they call it '... the extraordinary events at the Mansion'"

"No that's an old paper - I mean the most recent one"

"Well, that's another one, anyway".

"God, how many of these are there then?"

"Dunno, never dare to ask"

"I guess you get callous - they just become numbers.. no blood or lives or anything"

"That thing at the Mansion" the voice was

impatient, he gathered his wondering thoughts;

"Yes, I've been reading about it... no sign of any motive ... call-girl and rich client ... no linking factors ... another one for the records, so far as I can see .. plenty of those in the unsolved department"

He made an action as if heaving a sack of coal onto a pile of other sacks of coal.

O'Hara continued reading for a moment:

*'..the woman, a prostitute in her early thirties', was found naked on a bed in the weekend apartment that she was sharing with her john, a prominent showbiz lawyer.... she was face down, and had been strangled with a ligature made from her own brassiere..."*

**O'Hara sat back**, shuffled the papers and put aside the file that he held. The warm sun was reflected from the laminated desk top. The study was beginning to get uncomfortably warm.

"I don't understand all these murders... it's appalling..." and then a moment; "...apart from which I don't any more know whether it's that we're theorists, but I can't seem to find any interest in this sort of thing lately. In the end murder is just

unpleasant, bloody, nasty - and extremely boring"

"That's true - and one thing..... you'll never get academically famous for solving them either "

"Oh, I don't know - The Master Program could become really famous.. and then.."

"Theories.. you're hallucinating !"

"Perhaps I am. But maybe I'm trying to break some kind of mould."

O'Hara began perspiring. Truly, this change of temperature between cold and sudden heat was making him feel a bit odd. He loosened his collar.

"Damn confusion !"

O'Hara tried a weak joke:

"Better than doing them !"

"There's money in every nasty thing these days: why not do them and then write a nasty book about it all and then frighten the punter in the street into buying them..."

"And get rich !"

"Just the ticket !"

"Bloody Bucks!"

Silence, while they set to their work. At length:

"God, I'm.. bored".

"That's not boredom...that's sexual frustration, my man".

O'Hara shifted helplessly in his seat.

"Speak for your self, Nicky boy!"

"Thought I'd help you out a bit, O'Hara".

O'Hara pretended to read on.

"Ever onward, ever onward into the setting Sun". Said Nicholas, shifting in his seat.

O'Hara broke the silence:

"It's the bloody weather... have you ever noticed that women wear less and show more when it's warm?"

"Did I ever.. do cats have fleas!"

"Oh, this is interesting.."

O'Hara was diverted for a moment by some detail.

For a moment there was more silence:

"When they're ripe their tits stick out like.. like..."

"Oh, lay off"

"Skirt ... that's what a young mans mind defaults to" Nicholas was serious for a moment.

"It's that new junior lecturer in the Sociology Department that I'm nuts about!"

"Think about emptying the CPU memory, Nicholas"

"You do it!"

"Oh? What about your '*Theory of Criminality, then?*'" Nicholas had been writing a theory about Criminality for what seemed years.

"Drop the theories ..O'Hara ! ...one thing isn't theory.. - I've been watching the way that that

light dress pushes up against her crotch when the wind blows. It leaves nothing to the imagination! ... I mean *NO*-thing" Silence.

**Nicholas** looked just about done in.

"Must be the heat"

"I'd put it down to hormones... one whiff of 'em and you're living somewhere else entirely!"

"Umm"

"Walking along the street after some woman like a demented bloodhound !"

"Aah, living in the present at last.. the hot and cold wind of reality !"

"No, just spring, and tits sticking out of thin fabric!"

"You have the whole week-end to go ape, O'Hara", laughed Nicholas.

"Week End! Two lousy days! - what's that?.. I've got to get this bloody Master Program bespoke and finished, and start solving crimes - or else the money'll run out and we're all sunk..!"

"You're right O'Hara; but just remember there's some little piece out there whose equipment's throbbing for you.."

"After this is finished..!"

"Or never - whichever comes sooner - you should try it some time anyway ... before you forget

how to do it - or die."

"It has to be that way... it'll happen one day without me having to push it - I know it."

"Sure, if you want to wait till you're ninety!"

"Listen, Nick, I have too much to do, what with setting-up all the new databases and all that stuff."

"Think about yourself for goodness sake, my friend!"

"Well, I will, when I have the time"

**O'Hara** worked on, frustrated by everything, now, hunched over his desk.

After a few minutes Nicholas left, ostensibly to get a coffee, in pursuit of that Holy Grail in the Sociology Department.

O'Hara was content with that - he needed peace, quiet - after all he had work to do: he had to get on, to finish what he had begun. It had become an obsession - finding linking factors that could trap criminals via the computer keyboard or 'The Master Program'.

It was the multiplicity of crimes which had so far foiled him; after all, how is one to categorise all those states, and where do the factors which link them lie ? - and, problematical above all, any program, whatever it is, requires a simple set of

bases upon which to swing the trick, something common, basic and yet elemental, upon which to hang the facts so that one day they will suddenly coalesce upon the screen. O'Hara was convinced that he was close to the solution, that it must be there, ever tantalising.

Now, that was remarkable: sure enough, in the last few weeks he had noticed that the patterns had begun to converge, that the logic's that he sought had moved imperceptibly closer, become suddenly more clear. He was almost there, and maybe just in the nick of time too - you have to make a living after all.

**A week later**, O'Hara was back in the musty, thick air of the computer rooms, and Michael was just leaving:

"I expect you're right"

"What ?" The door banged without another word.

"Oh, nothing". To empty air.

The week had flown by, while he had fiddled with the computer and bespoke the program even more perfectly than it had been tailored before. Now it was late in the evening, and he had nothing planned. Dammit, more soggy hamburgers and

warm sugary drinks!

Then, unaccountably, a cool draught flowed for a moment between the screens and the desks in the deserted 'Computer Access Suite'.

O'Hara noted it mentally and put it down to the air conditioning; it could play havoc with the larger machines: he imagined the arched eyebrows when the Capo de Capi of the Computer Department saw the temperature readouts at the end of the week.

Anyway, O'Hara stood looking down at a display composed of coloured rectangles on the screen of a hefty monitor: his head to one side over the work, and now a delicate, sweet, scent seeming to surround him.

"What?" He was confused; besides, his eyes were slightly out of focus, recently he had had this problem - it was all this work with screens.

The air was being displaced, the air moved as if to allow the passage of something moving in the space - he could sense it: there was somebody standing there who must have entered as Michael left through the silenced twin sets of doors - only he hadn't noticed a thing.

"What you're doing, of course..!"

Someone had said something. O'Hara barely registered:

"What?"

"What you're doing, of course !"

"Oh!" The sequence was all out of sequence. The problem with living with reality while dealing with cold mathematical theory was that the two had no logical interface: thus making the jump was often ....difficult.

**With this still in mind,** he turned and found himself looking into the eyes of a woman only slightly shorter than himself. He hardly had time to check her out with his eyes, myopic as they were: his hands suddenly itched.

"Oh"

He clawed for a seat and sat down.

"It's simple really !"

"Oh ? Is it ?" She said, somehow supportive in his infirmity.

"Yes.."

He had the sensation that she was reading his mind. Peculiar. A woman with red lips, like a siren:

"Is it?" The lips formed the words slightly out of synch and yet with stereo carefulness... they seemed all at once to him, uncommonly sweet. An uncomfortable echo of the real world.

O'Hara went on mechanically for some bizarre reason, incapable of ceasing:

"The data that the computer school developed for you: simply feed it through from G

drive to your station by using the switch word in the manual that they gave you.. simple.... just like they said."

"Oh ?"

"Simple"

She laughed, or at any rate, smiled.

He noted her eyes, dark, Spanish eyes, her hips, her slender arms... Oh, this was becoming like some sort of romantic fantasy. He became rather brusque:

"I don't know you, though"

"Oh, my name is Julia Morrison, I'm a tutor in the Sociology Department"

"That was what I'd .." He felt suddenly apologetic for some reason. There was no point being officious, anyway, she must have used her Smart Card to get in, or been let in by someone with a particular reason to do so, that was clear, and that was the only way in to this room, anyway.

She looked apologetic for a moment -

"I'm just looking around for new material... new ideas".

"Well good !" said O'Hara, backing down suddenly in his mind and with nowhere to go.

"Well.. good ?"

"So you're interested in Criminology - stroke-computers"

"It's been a topic of mine for ages".

The conversation suddenly, unusually, quickened;

"Oh - well, that's certainly interesting.." said O'Hara, a mad idea suddenly in his eye, " you see .. oddly enough, I have this new program which I've bespoke, I'm sure it'd be very interesting... for you, I mean: perhaps you'd like a copy... it's a third level linked factor program.." Too fast, slow down!

"That was what I'd..."

"Had you ?" (Maybe she had) Changing gear, anyway.

"You are Doctor Newin?"

"*No - he left - about...*" his eyes sought the clock on the wall and on their journey noted that her breasts were full and that he could see their outlines perfectly through the thin fabric of the blouse "*...about two hours ago*". He felt rather breathless, weak. He struggled desperately for a new, magnetic topic.

"Oh, sorry.. I was expecting..". She seemed somehow put off, and he begun to tense. It was chemical. (Just read what Skinner has to say about it.)

"Unfortunately not". He searched for something to say .. "*..B-but that was very useful.*"

"Good !" He was sure it was chemical. Certain. Skinner, and all.

"This is the criminology section"

He went on sorting some papers in an abstracted way.

"Oh, yes?" She moved closer to him, looked down at the papers, stretched out a hand, pushed away at them.

"I collate data." The chemistry had become much lighter, they almost...

"Oh !" A sort of relief. They both looked at the pile of data, then: yes, he could see she was smiling at him, he could see that - yes she was.

"Good". She pursed those suddenly wonderful red lips as if about to take her leave of him.

O'Hara struggled like a drowning man for a word - any word: some sort of madness gripped him there in his grey academic weeds, wrenched him by the throat;

"And occasionally I dance the Lambada!" It came out perfectly, with precision, timing. Insane. How?

She laughed:

"So do I !"

"How perfect!". He almost croaked. (Apart from *'I know it's all chemical.. it's beyond freedom..!'*)

"I'm lost for words"

"Really?"

"Perhaps"

It was as if she were reading his mind..

Absurd.

They both laughed. His throat was tense and sore and his hands were shaking, though she did not notice that.

Or did she? Perhaps she knew?

One thing; they themselves hardly knew it, but in retrospect later he knew that then they were locked into that ancient cycle: seeking for each others lips, eyes, forgetting all around them and exquisitely wishing for that thing that was yet not there but would be between them in the end, growing awareness grasping for the slightest hold.

It was as if they were both blind. Certainly O'Hara with his weak eyes was, even in retrospect.

**Then he looked at his watch** and marvelled that an hour could have gone so fast.

"Well?" O'Hara found those cool dark eyes upon his face once again.

Soothing and beguiling and, well, romantic.

God! They were still sitting in the Computer Access Suite - and his eyes had hardly moved, neither had he bothered for a moment about the latest piece of software. And it was -*Romantic?*

'Perhaps this is beyond freedom, in a happy no-where land where you don't have to think any more.'

"We could go to the bar and get a drink"

"That's a notable idea"

"Notable?"

"Notable!"

"Gosh sometimes I wish I were a poet and could dump all this electronic junk and just.. fly away."

"Like," she said, winding-up her memory and suddenly delivering her thoughts, with a merry-ness that was somehow slightly, unaccountably disconcerting,, lachrymose:

"Were there world enough,  
and time,  
this coyness lady, would be  
no crime ."

She laughed

"Crime!"

**Dwelling** upon the words as if not to let them go - that was itself absurd.

"Yes.. how strange, I was just thinking about him today - Donne".

"I do like a man who enjoys literature"

O'Hara released a deeply held breath. 'How?'

"Yes !"

"John Donne !"

"Absolutely !"

It was like making a contract, really simple, comfortable, absurd.

**"What do you drink?"**

The emphasis had changed. The cream – rolled, aseptic walls of the university had gone and now she faced him out of a warm darkness and smiled as if she had known all along that they would be there facing each other in some sort of quiet combat. As if she knew. As if she had known. What a strange phrase.

Could she see his wrinkles ?

He took the time in-between the pulses of background jazz to reconsider this woman.

'In reality', he told himself for a leveller, '...she's not that hot', though he had to admit that she had begun to start a restless pulse in his neck when he thought about her. He was lying to himself - of course she was. Intelligent, gentle, sexual.

Julia had dark hair of an indeterminate hue and, and this was the point, very neatly drawn features, rather small but at the same time quite perfect. Her breasts were not particularly large, yet full, and her figure was characterised mainly by her very shapely legs. He could feel an intense radiation when he was near her, a kind of buzz at an organic level. And that gave him that dizzy sensation that

begged a whole galaxy of questions. Just what the answers to the questions were he would find out, given a bit of luck.

These then, were the elements of this sudden attraction. And the chemistry. Oh, Boy! The chemistry!

He had the sudden impulse that this should be catalogued the better to understand, but the absurdity of this idea was such that he dropped it.

The clink of cold bottle and the sound of alcohol pouring into glass broke the full flow of sound by the bar. Now there were a handful of hacks clutching at her, trying to catch her eye. No, she was his. It was as clear in both their minds as that. O'Hara was suddenly irritated, because for him at that moment there were only those eyes, her eyes, he knew what a victim he could become in an unguarded moment.

"No.. I.." and he clutched at her shoulder, feeling as if his hand itself was crabbed.

Then at the next moment she had fallen against him, impelled by someone further along the bar falling askew on their stool; then there was the relieving gust of laughter, that lightened it.

There was a pleasure in it, a leap of creativity between them. A sweet smell, the scent of Desire.

Now, unexpectedly, the buzz of the background became a sudden hum, sharp. It must

have been chemical, that was all, that was the only way you could describe it, but who cared anyway, after all, love is blind.

Perhaps all this would take a while. O'Hara had much to learn, even at his age.

It did take a while, a few weeks.

Longer than he ever wished it to.



## Chapter 3.

### **Linking Factors**

O'Hara shook his sleepy head.

It was new, and somehow he was suddenly light, light and happy.

New. The newness of the Science Block was what had startled his eyes that morning. It was downright odd that he could have simply forgotten how something so frequently part of his life looked - and then someday walk around a corner and experience it suddenly, as if his eyes had always been closed before. And this newness, like any newness, was somehow sparkling, perhaps because

it was the newness of a structure unaffected by normal constraints.

O'Hara, walking to work in the windowless Data Block, stood in front of the sparkling new Science Block for a few seconds and marvelled at the neatness of all its parts. His eyes zinged with the lightness and the brightness of everything.

He cleaned his glasses experimentally.

After all, he had grown used to the normal round of academic architecture and 'crucially depleted' structures. But now – this brand new morning, suddenly as if a veil had been lifted from his eyes, he had seen the Science Block in all its new, perfect virility.

How was it that he hadn't seen its glory so clearly, and with such acuity, before ?

**Around the University Campus** the more 'fashionable' Faculty members toyed with the idea of the new block, saying '*Italian Arkitect*' with an assumed German accent, assuming thus all the false charm of the doggerel of a television commercial, yet not understanding that the word '*Arkitect*' in German in this context meant designer - but that anyway is the novelty of anything new, an idea, an advert, a building: you can make minor mistakes but everything will be taken to all of a sudden come right, because nobody really cares to change their

mistakes. If the design were originally taken to be 'Right', naturally. O'Hara had noted some sort of academic consensus on this among the Faculty.

Naturally of course it had occurred to O'Hara - who had never walked through the Science Block, but was tempted now that he had met the delectable Julia and suddenly found himself daydreaming about her (just so that he could run in to her one of those bright days, maybe just make a date) - that the building must in all the idealism of academic theory have an interior that reflected its outer sculptured forms in some echoed and equally elegant ways: these Villas and collegiate spaces, those elegant domes and fairways, sweeping clear spaces and atria, these pools and sanctuaries and plenary halls and theatres and elegant tutorial studies, those function rooms and syndicate rooms; such elements of course, naturally, logically in the binding logic of beauty, of the Golden Section, the constructs of centuries of wise men - must be reflected in some brilliantly ingenious way outside as well as they were constructed inside. Like a Human body, really. Or was it the other way round?

The word one could use to describe this was not fashionable any more, O'Hara creaked his brain to remember and found that it was still relevant though the buzzwords and the syntax might have changed, it was the word 'Tectonic'. O'Hara decided

that he should let himself enter the complete and Tectonic 'experience' of the new Science Block.

However now wherever he walked, sighted, took air and new breath, gained vista, elegantly strolled, ran, jogged, swam, around the building; it just unaccountably always reminded him for some cruelly unjust reason, of just another Aircraft Hanger. Problems, problems.

Cruel though it was, O'Hara had to say it, not 'Read my Lips'; rather, look at the facts: this elegant expensive structure looked like the hangar of one of those enormous new aeroplanes that they said everyone was scared to fly in.

Very Tectonic, you might say.

But O'Hara knew himself that he was after all more or less a theoretical peasant in all this. A man with feet of clay, understanding nothing, not even the 'Master Program'. Would that they could see that - such that when he talked about what he had not found with a Professor from the Architecture department, everything would be explained to him painstakingly - word by word, logic by logic.

Such was the riddle of the new Science Block, intended to alleviate all known modern maladies - in terms of movement that was. There was just one problem here - referring to these new but ancient maladies: because, despite all this understanding, catering for ones every ailment, all

he knew for sure was that the continuous ticking pain he felt in his back, particularly during those tedious nights in the computer rooms, was not eased at all by all the expensive ergonomic luxuries of the new building.

For one thing, he'd been looking for a wooden chair for ages. Just a simple Captains chair. The chair awarded him in the Computer Access Suite was a grand one, with plastic screw-things, and a handle and a back that looked just like a spine of some sort. It was made of just about anything, save wood.

Yes, he'd seen the vice-chancellor throw up his hands in joy when the head of funding showed him the huge, neat, model with the cotton-wool trees, at the official do, yes, everyone was thrilled, and ensured thus of keeping their jobs. Yes, the building was finished, now.

Security was a wonderful thing.

Anyway.. that's what the architect had said: at the opening 'Symposium'- the structure, any structure - was somewhat of a mirror: it must logically be outside reflecting that which was inside; that itself would be perfectly logical. Only he was too blind to see it.

**He took off his glasses** again, to clean them for a moment. Come to think of it, hadn't someone

said that this block had been built on an old graveyard or something?

Such thoughts are unnecessary.

The word Logic suited this site. A nice place to be a Criminologist. Logically, naturally.

"Nice, Eh ?" Michael had appeared at his side

"We should be able to do some serious Criminology here," O'Hara said, dropping his glasses.

"You betcha, Cowboy", said Michael laughing, "... real serious"

Michael walked away, tucking the new University guide book under his arm, whistling the torn fragments of a tune.

O'Hara walked round the block and entered the Computer Access Suite using his Smart-Card and the morning wore on, as usual.

The usual administrative chores had to be completed, the latest reports filed, the last forms filled and the extensive survey of criminal habits and what Michael called 'Repeat Behaviour' annotated, given references and then put back into the computer in order to start the process of sorting data. Quite boring.

All this took time, and the researchers, sitting in their cramped corners, all over the building were overrun with the extent of the work.

Many of them, of course, were, unknowingly,

obliquely working on his latest project: not necessarily directly, but often laterally: the information they entered being sorted - and much of it being automatically placed on file in his data banks, using parameters ordained by his program, the 'Master Program', called '*Watson*' by the researchers who came upon it, possibly because it seemed antiquated, and it was said, would never work. Ah, but that would all become clear!

He called it 'Holmes' in riposte.

"Even more boring - but necessary", said an assistant, brightly, clicking away. Cheerfully, lying.

O'Hara had this block in his guts, this recurrent pain somewhere, he knew not exactly where, somewhere in his stomach. He jabbed himself savagely if he felt the pain, and it just disappeared, just like that.

Problem wise, privately, O'Hara had his reservations about the 'Master Program'. If it failed to work he would lose his job, that was all. Simple really. The void had begun to beckon, and O'Hara had begun to panic, privately.

"It must work !", he said to himself, as if to move the programme along: "...It must work - that's logical!"

Screens blinked. Keys clicked. Money dissolved.

"Linking factors..." Nicholas read from the

flag which appeared on the screen, as the computer splashed figures and sorted data.

He watched the glittering cursor as it scurried like an electronic ant, over the pages one after another.

"Bloody irrelevant .."

There was a echo.

"It had better fucking work!" said the voice of the Vice Chancellor in his dreaming spire, thumping the desk and fearing for his funding, and his easy job. "After all how many arses did I have to kiss to get this damn job !"

**Back on earth, meantime,** O'Hara was thinking to add something to his journal - but as he pulled the book out from its hiding place he heard the dull tock of Nicholas' knuckles against the wood of the study door:

"Can I come in?"

"Sure"

"What's bugging you?"

"Only the factors".

".. after all, how do you link such factors?" said O'Hara simultaneously, on Earth, in his study.

"We shall see", said Nicholas, turning over the pages of the manual on his knee and co-ordinating the keyboard on the desktop. He turned over a few sheets, sounding mellow; "We shall see"

- and then as an afterthought, "How about sound ?..  
How could we link-in sound ?"

"Sound ?"

"Here, in the manual: it says:

"The value of sound as a  
recording medium for data should  
not be underestimated - the  
inception of a sound selection  
and word relating program is an  
important factor in the future  
outlook and development of any  
Master Program of this sort'

O'Hara looked rather blankly at the sheet:

"I wrote that, I don't have that sheet in my  
manual... and I wrote the friggin' manual !"

"Probably added by some helpful soul".  
Nicholas handed him over the green sheet.

"Thanks - I'll copy it off and return this one,  
odd though, I didn't write that, I'm sure – I mean..."

**Later** that day, O'Hara walked across the  
leafy, airy, square which lay in front of the  
University blocks.

In contrast with the greens around the new  
Science Block, the gardens which formed the  
entablature and thus confronted the facade of the  
Union building, one of the older buildings on the

site, were green and beginning to overgrow the pool - itself an harmonious but acid-thick grey-green, with the speckled noses of multicoloured black, silver, grey, neon, purple. transparent, greenish, orange, and white fish occasionally breaking the surface with oily plopping sounds and causing torpid ripples to spread languorously.

The pace of the traffic along the irregular, potholed stone, gravel and concrete roadway, spread across the three hundred metres of flat ground belting the entrance of the University was sluggish as usual in the new Sun. This strip of decaying hard-core and gravel had originally been intended to be the main University access road, but that grandiose function had somehow been forgotten now.

He saw a yellow frog hop across the lawn and then flip like a diver, back into the dense green safety of the pool.

**O'Hara** sat on a seat in the Computer Access Suite and rifled the pages of the newspaper which had been left there for his attention.

The red band across the flag at the head of the first page, was smudged with the concussion of smeared press rollers; then underneath it in heavy black blocks: *'Murder Of Moll A Madman's Murder?'*

He re-focussed his eyes:

"So what's this?"

"Could be interesting".

Michael was flicking through back issues of Computer Magazines, looking for something.

"A pattern?"

"No such luck! - Just a maniac"

"Well - that's what I reckon!"

"Oh?" Michael stopped for a break, and picked up the manual. O'Hara was proud of: the manual for his 'The Master Program', with the unidentifiably vagrant green sheet added to it, fresh from the copier..

"Yes, and the beginning of a repeating pattern"

"Life is a bloody repeating pattern - well, that's my theory".

"Maybe this is about life"

"Or Death - Death, maybe?"

**The air was thick with smoke.**

Michael lit another Gauloise with the butt-end of the last one.

"They all repeat in infinity."

"So do butt-ends!"

"Huh ...how's that?"

"Haven't you noticed the headlines over the past months?"

"I collate data, that's the idea, to catch them

from.. the keyboard. Headlines are the least of my problems -"

"The mouse's eye view, from the keyboard - to coin a phrase"

"Very PC !"

Then suddenly an idea struck him:

"..That's the idea - the keyboard - where've I heard that before ?"

"Where ?.. the idea.. after all that's why we're here, to get the darned program tailored right"

"Oh, ho !" He coughed. O'Hara took a sip of ancient brackish coffee from the chronically unstable plastic cup.

He wanted to explain.

"No, I'm beginning to see that it works, really". Well, he had to convince someone.

"Why... what d'you mean ?"

O'Hara coughed.

"It's just that I've seen the program begin to resolve itself, the programming is beginning to ease itself out... I reckon we're beginning to have enough facts to begin cracking cases like that one there". (What's a little lie between friends!)

O'Hara gestured generously, lying about lying.

"I Dunno, I must just be stuck in all this academic stuff", said Michael, "..but we seem to be as far from anything as we ever were !"

"It'll come clear, Michael. Give it a bit of time!"

"I just hope you're right, that's all".

"Anyway...it's got to work, or next year we loose our funding and suddenly we'll both be coffee pullers downtown, somewhere."

"Look on the bright side of it - we may be broke but we'll be able to meet for coffee in the afternoons."

"Yes, there's something to be said for a life in the Sun."

O'Hara coughed again and, unbeknown to him -outside the windowless Computer Access Suite, the Sun came out from behind a strangely shaped cloud, which might well have inspired Salvador Dali, were he alive and in that place at that time. Life is full of these dichotomies, isn't it?.

**"Radio, Sun, bloody clouds, darn 'em."**

The grey face peered through thick horn -rimmed glasses as the dial winked it's way through the internal scale in delicate shades of silver.

The speaker crackled but was silent.

That had been the pattern for the last few moments, and, detecting that, the stooped man at the desk was displeased: then, suddenly the sound of a voice broke through and the last moment of the conversation, or whatever it was, wavered, fixed

like a flag in stop-motion, upon the arcs of the wave scanner screen next to his elbow.

The wail resolved itself as a series of blips and dashes, which then alarmingly decreased their volume and became, magically, a set of almost unrelated, disjointed, words.

"Yes, it was like th-"

The female voice broke away and the man with the grey face made a grimace.

Now the sound was back again.

"What?"

"No, it really wasn't like that!"

"That's only what you're saying"

"Umm"

"Well".

The man with the glasses turned a switch and the sound deck near him began to record the signal.

The silence was like a dense blanket after the loud coruscation of voice. Now he lay the headphones down, and sat back wearily.

*"Lambada*, you know, the dance !"

"Oh, LAMBADA ! - why didn't you say", Julia laughed and wrinkled-up her eyes behind the green umbra of the sunglasses "*Lambada*, like Salsa Etcetera!"

"It's a word"

"A weird?"

"No. A word"

"Speak up"

"A weird, then".

"Ha ha!"

"Speak up Dammit"

"Ha ha ha!"

"Mmm"

"What?"

"Too much Planter's Punch, that's what it is!"

She was right, O'Hara's eyes had begun to gently slide out of focus.

They were sitting out on the balcony of Julia's apartment.

*'Among the clouds, among the clouds, among the blue clouds and the white dribblets of evening sky'* he thought..

He jingled the ice in his glass.

"I'm quite.. sloshed".

She laughed, offering her teeth to the sky. An arc of smiles in stop motion.

"Want another drink?"

He had to give that serious consideration, after all, it took a lot of thought after several Planter's Punch's.

The palm tops shivered a few metres away as if they were suddenly cold.

"I'm thinking"

"Uh huh!"

"Coconut milk."

A newspaper lay on the table and the pages flapped over in the eddying wind.

For a moment he saw the headline - "Murder in..."

He had to force his eyes away from the paper for some reason the inertia holding him tight in its grip.

"Mmm !", he said, meaning "just anything, don't let this stop !".

Julia made her uncertain way to the drinks cabinet and dropped white diamonds of ice on the rug, laughing all the while. One day she would return.

O'Hara found himself laughing for some secret, sweet, paranoid reason, some unutterably marvellous reason.

**The layout of the interior** of the apartment gave a complete visual contrast to the heat of the high balcony among the clouds.

The living area swept almost gracefully back on the left, to a bedroom which he had not adequately seen, and on the other side to the bathroom, beautifully appointed and then the combined stainless steel greys and scrubbed and oiled worn wood browns of the complete kitchen, beyond which there were several doors.

What Julia had called: 'The Studio', and 'My

place to dream in'. perhaps he would find that out.

But now, was a hot day sliding into night, and beneath the cotton T-shirt and trousers he was peppered with a spice thin layer of sweat; not at all unpleasant.

He stood at the edge of the living space while she clattered in the kitchen, (or was that the bathroom.)

He felt very pleasantly drunk.

Then she came up to him in the shadow and opened her mouth and leaned against him softly.

"We are children of the shadows."

"What?"

"I'm being a philosopher tonight...*we are children of the shadows!*"

There was nothing to say., he felt intensely lonely and alive and possessive, all at once. That was all.

After a while, as if reading his intention rather than his conscious mind, she moved away a step, then began to unbutton his shirt.

"There's something I want to do, now". She was abstracted, as if caught up in the complexities of buttons and ties and..

"Oh yes? Well, do it then !"

"We should make love"

"Her mouth was at the level of his belt, and now on momentary edge, he swung her up, afraid.

"No, not yet !"

"Let's shower, be fresh and clean for each other...Oh, the Campari makes me say things I never thought I ..." Her mouth was uneven, unstable.

"I want you too". O'Hara was without touch.

She moved against him, teasing at him. His hands, which had developed a life all their own, stopped shaking, perhaps to compensate, as he eased her skirt down.

He slid his fingers under the tight body she wore and felt the silken weft of the stretch material give against his knuckles. He eased his fingers down the cream run of her skin and finally between her legs and pulled the press studs back, brushing the back of his hand against her tight trapped skin - to find her hair enticingly sharp, cropped and cool, ready for him.

"You're beautiful and fresh !"

"Of course I am. I wanted to be fresh for you."

She gave only a little moan as his mouth grazed for a moment between her thighs.

"Ever so slow"

Whatever they did, it was slow, and gentle and enormously passionate.

The blue sea overhead watched as he leaned over her, as they curled on the rug, as they twisted

and pulsed beneath the Moon.



## Chapter 4.

### **Warm Parts**

In the darkness the green dots on his watch face were cold neon close to his nose, when he opened his eyes.

He waited a moment, savouring the deliciousness of existing, only existing.

The air was cool, and in the background, if he listened intently, he could just hear the sound of the sea, subdued.

Near dawn in the sky. Moments of colour ice cold and then promising fiery hot. That moment

when the temperature seems to drop before it begins to rise to make the day all new. The Palms making tiny shuffling noises, almost as if they were impatient for dawn.

**O'Hara turned over: warm.** Who needed dawn, he could stay here forever!

Julia lay akimbo, her chest gently heaving like a slow peaceful sea, her knees open and frozen in the midst of the movement of another unending wave.

Now he snuggled down in the luxury of the trough of warmth between her legs. Such luxury.

This was a fragrant moment of his, with the scent of her. A moment of impractical *penseé*, something almost forgotten that he had re-discovered with great pleasure and surprise in these last few weeks within himself.

He had to discuss it with himself, something about her, about his love of her, of woman.

**Later**, he wrote in his thumbed Journal:

*'..there is a something  
that they have,  
a special secret warmth  
that I admire,  
or adore, or something  
nameless that I*

*can't express: perhaps  
its that I'm  
jealous of them,  
and that's why I  
want to be with them.  
But being a man  
anyway, I've experienced  
several female lives I  
guess, in the  
close knowledge, in the smell,  
the vibration and the warmth  
of them.  
Fucking them, being loved  
and being  
held close in that  
secret Cheshire-cat  
smile of their regard.  
But - one thing is that  
in that way  
I don't have to live  
the myopia of being  
female, of being any  
gender at all, I  
can soar, - I have the  
hawk's-eye view.  
Maybe that's a lot  
better than being  
lost in the time,*

*the sticky un-knowingness,  
the helpless fate  
of being organic and  
timed and limited by my  
fallopian tubes.  
But survival is their key  
and I admire  
that blind striving to succeed. I  
admire that ability to produce  
in me  
without obvious force or muscle,  
using those powerful hormones of  
theirs, a need for admiration,  
a need for...'*

**He broke off thinking for a moment** as she moved, and muttered a little something in her sleep.

'...I have to know, my greed is to know, and I must know in order to survive.'

'Women survive to procreate - and my function is that I must know, to survive .....using you as my pillow?'

**"What?"** She'd woken suddenly, sharply.

"Nothing"

"Oh, I thought you said.."

She was at once awake.

Dawn was come. The room was full of the light tips of blue and yellow that began to filter in with the change of dark to light.

"Oh" She sat up in bed and her breasts showed ovals as she moved, the nipples hard and pink.

Without saying anything she left the bed and went into the bathroom; there was the sound of water running from the faucet.

He lay on the bed, his eyes still half heavy in that ancient reverie.

A moment later she was standing there, her body ripe and firm, watching him, rubbing her eyes with the back of her hand. He closed his eyes.

"You're hard", she said, fixing his cock with a seeking glance and moving around the bed and crouching by him, stroking it with her strong fingers as if it were some mysterious pet.

"Do you want me to sit on your face... will you come?"

He said nothing. his eyes were closed.

She moved over him and he could feel her hand and her mouth begin the rhythm around his cock. She certainly knew how to do what she was

doing.

Her tongue scooped along this length and he grew harder still.

She was crouched over him, her legs splayed to allow him whatever access he required. He opened his heavy eyes and his sight was filled by her crotch; pink inner lips and swollen outer lips - the shaven shadow-edges of hair framing her vagina with a symmetry that had its own elegant, functional beauty.

Now he looked along her and saw the crown of his cock distending her cheek as if she were sucking some heavenly toffee-apple.

Her eyes were closed and she had bent her head slightly as if this were all an immense sacrament of pleasure. Then she sat back on him and he tasted the clear water of her lips and clitoris with his tongue.

He ran his fingers along the close cropped hair of her pubis and sucked gently at her, as she began to move in ancient rhythm with him.

"Oh !"

"Mmm" Slowly.

It was enough to merely enjoy, very slowly.

Communication, apart from monotones, was unimportant.

She broke off and watched his caressing of her with some surprise and yet mystery: only for a

moment:

"Where did you learn that?"

"Mmm"

Now, elegantly, somnambulantly, as if extending her dream - lazily, slowly, she arched her belly - stretching luxuriantly, and then the orgasm rippled from her, engulfing his nose as the lips ripened and softened.

"I'm sorry if I'm drowning you"

The knowing hand on his cock increased its rhythm.

"Oh God, I'm so tired," she said suddenly, moving crookedly and mechanically, sliding her crotch to one side.

Without thinking, in one movement she turned and sat on his stomach and her breasts scooped towards him then, so that now he could only seize them and pull the nipples in towards one another.

"Mmm..." she said, with deep contentment; as the ocean held her in its thrall, and she had to say it finally: "I'm coming.... Ooh!"

She sagged her chest towards him and her eyes appealed for mercy.

He was for his part exhausted, merely enjoying the sensation like some distant Virtual

Reality voyeur, tight in the stomach and now suddenly avalanched and tired too - so early in the morning.

Besides, his cock was slipping out of her, he had lost any co-ordination now..

He stopped the motion.

"I have no manners", she said, and curled up all of a sudden and slept, smiling, fragrant and warm,