

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS

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# Escape the Night

Richard North Patterson

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## About the Author

**ESCAPE THE NIGHT - a powerful novel of suspense and scandal, of surveillance and threat, of amnesia and obsession, of parents and children - and the long buried secret that links them all in a deadly chain.**

Peter Carey is the son of privilege - and an heir to terror. Poised on the brink of power over a mighty family dynasty, he is also the victim of a recurring nightmare that suddenly becomes all too real.

The fate that claimed his parents many years before now stalks him too. But the key to his survival lies locked deep in Peter's own mind. And he must discover it before the final night closes in.

## About the Author

Richard North Patterson's eleven novels include the international bestsellers *Degree of Guilt*, *Eyes of a Child*, *The Final Judgement*, *Silent Witness*, *No Safe Place* and *Dark Lady*. His novels have won the Edgar Allan Poe Award and the Grand Prix de Littérature Policière. A graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University and the Case Western Reserve School of Law, he studied creative writing with Jesse Hill Ford at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He and his wife, Laurie, live with their family in San Francisco and on Martha's Vineyard.

ALSO BY RICHARD NORTH PATTERSON

*Dark Lady*  
*No Safe Place*  
*Silent Witness*  
*The Final Judgement*  
*Eyes of a Child*  
*Degree of Guilt*  
*Private Screening*  
*The Outside Man*  
*The Lasko Tangent*  
*Protect and Defend*

# Escape the Night

Richard North Patterson



FOR LISA



*The gods visit the sins of the fathers upon their sons.*

*EURIPIDES*

*I am thy Father's spirit,  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night, . . .  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purg'd away.*

*SHAKESPEARE,  
Hamlet, Act I, Scene V*

**PART I**

**MANHATTAN**

**JUNE 1, 1952-APRIL 19, 1959**

# CHAPTER 1

ALICIA CAREY CRIED out.

Snakes writhed on the bare walls of the labor room. The thin white gown became a straitjacket. The nurse holding the fetoscope was a withered hag.

She had been hallucinating for five hours.

She had lost dominion over her body. The scopolamine warping her senses left her numb. In lucid moments she recalled dimly the wetness of her water breaking and Charles rushing her into the cool dark. She remembered hating him more clearly than she remembered his face.

That had been twenty-six hours ago. Their driver had sped them to an emergency entrance framed by sickly cracks of light. Its doors slammed behind her. An attendant wheeled her alone to a narrow bed. The nurse shaving her pubic hair frowned at her slim hips. The doctor stabbed her with Nembutal.

Except for nausea that shot was the last thing she truly felt or perceived. The i.v. piercing her arm went unnoticed. The overhead light became the sun. She vomited.

Her makeup had run and her ash-blond hair was lank with sweat. Her legs thrashed beneath the hospital gown. Her mouth tasted bitter.

Only her eyes hadn't changed.

Since the moment of her debut, Alicia's eyes had excited and disturbed, their charged bright greenness promising intensity past reason to that man who could touch it. When Charles Carey first entered her, they had filled with tears. Carey felt as if he had lost his soul.

He sat in the waiting room with an ashtray stuffed with cigarette butts and a *New York Times* folded in his lap. He had shaved and changed into a windbreaker and slacks, but fatigue took the edge off his vitality. Dr. Schoenberg approached him with hesitance. This was unusual: few people had ever felt sorry for Charles Carey.

Charles rose. He seemed younger than thirty-two, a blade-slim man with an auburn shock of hair and a tactile gaze that grasped Schoenberg's pity and shot back a split second's resentment. Since childhood, Carey had hated sympathy for the fear it made him feel.

Charles Carey had seldom been afraid. He had made first-string back at Harvard by playing on an injured knee. Later, in the Air Corps, he had learned to fly and shot down twelve German planes. He took chances others would not take. When anti-aircraft fire tore through his fighter, he crash-landed in the English Channel. A cutter found Charles Carey treading water, one arm crooking the neck of the skinny tail gunner who had passed out from the cold. They gave him the Air Force Cross. The doe-eyed nurse who treated him took him home.

In bed, they laughed over his luck. Half facetiously, she asked whether he'd run for governor of New York if he managed to survive the war. Carey turned quiet, and said that he had something else to do.

Charles Carey became the only man to successfully defy his father.

In 1907, John Peter Carey had quit eighth grade to scuttle coal at Van Dreelen & Sons and take their books to the bindery in a horse-drawn wagon. When America entered World War I he was twenty-four and half the sales force had disappeared. John went to the sales manager. Thinking to discourage him, the man asked that Carey call on the firm's most recalcitrant customer. John Carey returned with a massive order. Later he took the man's job.

John Carey rose within Van Dreelen & Sons, marrying a Van Dreelen daughter and ignoring their own two sons. When there were no more Van Dreelen sons, he renamed the firm Van Dreelen & Carey and turned it into a predator. Publishing rivals called him “Black Jack,” less for his saturnine looks than for the authors he stole. He fished with Hemingway for marlin, loaned Fitzgerald money, drank all night with Faulkner. By 1942 John Carey’s books ruled the best-seller lists, their taloned eagle—a symbol of his own invention—staring past his shoulder from the cover of *Time* magazine, unprecedented for a publisher. “Which one is the eagle?” an assistant joked, then fretted for a week. His editors slaved in rabbit warrens, their doors left open on John Carey’s order. From behind the Louis XIV desk that graced his own oak-paneled office, John Carey issued still more edicts, their reason less important than that they be obeyed. Part of this hunger for respect became dandyism, culminating in the iron rule that all male employees wear hats. Its darker side was a stifling paternalism: John Carey backed his staff until they opposed him. Those few who did were terminated.

In 1945, Charles Carey reported to his father’s firm, without a hat.

The receptionist glanced up, startled. Within twenty minutes Charles sat in his father’s office amidst the sweet, familiar pungency of thin cigars, ordered hand-rolled from Havana. John Carey leaned forward across his desk, barrel chest straining his three-piece suit, his anger—etched like scars running from his nostrils to the corner of his mouth and then to the square of his jaw—leaping from his black hawk’s eyes. “Buy a hat,” John Carey snapped. “Today. Otherwise you’ll not set foot in this firm again.”

Charles listened with the watchful stillness he had assumed in his father’s presence since boyhood. “I’ve killed people,” he answered. “And saved others. I didn’t do those things to wear a hat.”

John Carey stared through the smoke. “You think the war made you different. It didn’t.”

“Not the war. You.” Charles’s eyes riveted his father’s. “I’ve watched you ever since Phillip and I were small and you were peddling books. You’d come in at the train station with that big trunk, trailing orders and neglect like some god that appeared and disappeared at will. Phillip never got over it. He still believes in God. / don’t. You’re just a man.” Charles finished, in a soft voice, “I’m as smart as you, perhaps smarter. But if you fire me now, we’ll never know.”

John Carey brooded for a day, then rescinded his rule. It was the cost of learning about his own son.

Their edgy truce lasted, day by day, for seven years. Where John Carey was shrewd, Charles had taste. His dash and nerve balanced his father’s toughness. He signed young writers his father could not reach—men who had returned from the war to write of things Charles knew in his bones and marrow. John Carey learned the advantage of appearing to tolerate a son: it lent him a humanizing flaw. But Charles was useful in one other way.

His brother Phillip joined the firm in 1947. As if to counter Charles’s perversity, the younger Carey willed himself into an avatar of his father, affecting dark suits and an entrepreneurial flair. As a child, Phillip had clung to his mother. In his twenties he chose to become John Carey—and to inherit his firm. Charles was his only rival; for five years John Carey teased them with his choice. He knew of Phillip’s need, and that Charles’s indifference was feigned.

Phillip festered, became fearful of mistakes. The defiant Charles prospered under pressure. He found new authors, made money for the firm. He grew in reputation. His friends were writers, athletes, actors and intellectuals. He took part in Democratic politics, was good copy for Leonard Lyons. Women responded to his zest. He had a bright, fantastic smile that banished the wariness from his face and made them wait for it again. For a while he was seen with Audrey

Hepburn, displaying the same gallant detachment that had enabled him to enjoy other women until they wanted more and, without remorse or backward glances, he would play out the end game, and gently disengage. "I'm not the tragic lover type," he once remarked.

Then he met Allie Fairvoort . . .

"How is she now?" he demanded of Schoenberg.

The obstetrician shifted on the balls of his feet. "It's a difficult labor. She either can't help, or doesn't want to."

Carey felt hot. Acrid smoke rose from the ashtray to mingle with the smell of floor wax. The waiting room—worn green rug, cheap coffee table with tattered magazines—reminded him of a bad motel. Its foreignness chafed his nerves. "Is there some way I can be with her?"

Schoenberg turned away, shaking his head. Carey gripped his shoulder. "You see, she doesn't want this baby . . ."

What Allie Fairvoort wanted was a perfect union with a man.

It was as if that single ambition sprang from all the others she'd never needed. Her family was wealthy and secure. She had learned to ski in St. Moritz and breezed through Wellesley without trying. She wrote poetry and burned it in tides of elation and despair. In college she had acted, living in some psychic twilight between her own life and the roles she played. But she had no desire to become more polished, and would not learn. She wanted neither career nor children. She attracted men, teasing and discarding them, and took no lovers. She was waiting to be consumed.

One cool spring evening, at a glittering East Side party, she saw Charles Carey, and learned his name.

He was standing near three other men, sipping a straight-up martini as they listened to a dark and pretty guest from Mississippi lecture on the Southern woman. "We're not like the others," she was saying. "We find our strength in submissiveness."

The three men, older than Charles, nodded and smiled. Charles watched her gravely, head slightly tilted, saying nothing. Taking in the cut-glass features and cobalt-blue eyes, Allie realized with a rush that he was more attractive than any man she'd known. But she was captured by his stillness: it was the stillness of someone in perfect control of his own thoughts.

"So," the young guest began, challenging her listeners, "how would you define the Southern woman?"

The bearded man nirthest to the left gave a gallant smile and said, "Dazzling." Her head bobbed down the line as the next man announced, "Mysterious," with an air of drama, the third leaning forward to purr, "Desirable," as if hoping to top the others. Allie Fairvoort thought they were fools.

The woman turned to Charles Carey. He seemed to breathe in, as if considering whether to speak. Softly he answered, "Angry and repressed."

Ten minutes later, the woman left with him.

That night Allie twisted in her bed, hating the dark-haired woman, imagining her cries as Carey's body moved on hers, his mouth seeking her nipple . . .

Two months later, lying naked under Charles Carey, Allie cried out for him to kiss her breast.

She had planned it with care. Avoiding Charles, she quietly tracked him through a mutual friend, learned that he seemed driven by things he would not reveal, tested his nerves on polo and sports cars and Black Jack Carey, dated women who were shimmering and impermanent. Quickly, she declined the offer to arrange a meeting. Instead, with the delicacy of a finely wrought drama of which she was the protagonist, Allie crept into Charles Carey's mind. A glancing smile at a party, a chance meeting at the theater, the merest hint of interest, enough for a first evening out, then another. She was planning to surprise him, just as she was planning how he would feel inside her the first time they made love.



Sensing these things, Carey still did not grasp them. He was used to women of a blithe sophistication that never surprised him, whatever form it took. Trained to coolness, he was moved by Allie's buried passion without being sure of what it meant. Instead, he began feeling that they were linked in a subtle exchange as elaborate as a minuet, and as silent. He accorded his actions new weight: quick to sleep with women, he made no move with Allie, and received no invitation. Only once did she teasingly touch the subject: in a taxicab on the way to the Stork Club she suddenly asked, "Did you ever sleep with that silly girl from Mississippi?"

Charles leaned back, curious. "I make a point of never saying. Some of the women I've known are still speaking to me."

Allie smiled in the dark. "I wonder if I will," she replied, and then was silent.

They spoke nothing more of this. Public people, they dated in public—at the ballet, opera or theater—their thoughts remaining private. They were a striking couple: Charles's look of energy without waste, Allie with the provocative air of a woman who would say what she pleased, with quicksilver movements and eyes that changed like a cat's in the light. They laughed often. He was amused by her elaborate sympathies for people she hardly knew—derelicts or writers without money—and by the way she took Manhattan personally, as if its charms and defects were meant for her. "You're laughing at me," she challenged him early on.

They had been strolling past the Pulitzer Fountain after brunch at the Plaza—Charles in a pin-stripe suit cut crisp as a knife, Allie's hair bright as champagne in sunlight as it rippled in the fresh breeze—when she abruptly knelt in front of a stranger's poodle, ruffling its ears and cooing in a happy lilt that seemed their own language. Charles and the man passed bemused smiles across the rapt pair until Allie

rose and caught Charles's look in the corner of her eye. "You *are* laughing," she insisted. "The others never have."

"They're too scared. Beautiful women do that."

She smiled at the compliment. "And you're not frightened?"

He appraised her with that same sideways tilt of the head she had first seen directed at the dark-haired woman. Without smiling he had answered, "Perhaps when I know you better."

The night it happened they had gone to *A Streetcar Named Desire* and then on to the upstairs bar at Sardi's, drinking cognac and talking about everything and nothing. Carey felt her tension: her gestures were broader, and her smile, too quick to flash and vanish, seemed wired to her nerve ends. On the way to her apartment Allie unexpectedly asked him in. Once there, she moved to the sofa without speaking and sat looking up at him.

He went to her. She kissed him avidly, pulling him down until they lay pressed against each other, then pushed him away. He stood by instinct, watching mutely as she raised her dress above her fine long legs, to show him. She quivered as he undressed.

Had Charles Carey known her fantasies, he would have said that no man could ever be that shining, and left. Unseeing, he tried to match them, then loved her for the tears in her eyes, not knowing feeling from imagination.

Allie Carey felt only sweat and revulsion as they put her on the delivery table and pushed her feet and ankles through metal stirrups bolted to its end, straddling her legs. Schoenberg and the anesthesiologist sat on metal stools by her head, next to a machine with tubes and a black rubber mask. To Allie they were dwarfs who had stolen her sense of her own body.

“I have to take the baby,” Schoenberg said. “Put her all the way under.”

Her neck twisted as the anesthesiologist pushed the mask to her nose and mouth and turned on the ether. A nurse checked the oxygen on the baby warmer and took a pack of glistening steel instruments from a bare shelf. The forceps fell clattering to the floor. As Allie passed out she could smell the faint freshness of ozone, before it rains.

It was raining when Phillip Carey reached the hospital, perfect as a male model and trailing the faintest whiff of cologne. He fished in his pocket and produced a box of English Oval cigarettes. Charles took one, snapped his lighter, had one deep drag and asked, “How’s the patriarch?”

Phillip’s smile was thin. “He said he’s both too young and too old for this sort of thing. ‘I’ll wait until they produce something,’ I think were his exact words.”

“Ever the family man.” Charles glanced at the *Times*, saw WEST BERLIN BORDER HOMES SEALED BY EAST GERMAN POLICE without interest or comprehension. “I wonder how much emotion he expended on our mother.”

“He outlived her.” Phillip shrugged. He inspected the waiting room with distaste. “Don’t let you do this with much grace, do they?”

Charles looked up with a glimmer of amusement. Phillip had grown a clipped mustache to go with his tailored clothes and pearl cufflinks. His natural movements were willowy: Charles could see the military strut of Black Jack Carey in the way he held them in, discerned a tension running parallel to his own. “Childbirth is the great leveler,” Charles answered. “Another Bolshevik plot for your friend Englehardt from HUAC: ‘I have here a list of five hundred babies . . .’”

“We’ll never agree on that, will we?”

“Politics, or babies?”

“Either one, I expect.” Phillip carefully placed his hat on the table and sat across from Charles. “How’s Allie taking to her new role? She’s not generally noted for supporting parts.”

Charles paled slightly: by now anger changed only the color of his face, not its expression. Knowing that Phillip used his conceit of Allie as actress because it touched a nerve, he remained silent: to respond would be to acknowledge the unspoken war which now embraced even childbirth, but which only John Carey could end, by dying. Instead, finishing the cigarette, Charles watched the sinuous twist of smoke as it vanished, thinking of Allie’s almost sensual relation to poetry, and how her moods—bright or melancholy—vibrated with the music she had heard. Pregnancy had cracked her like a glass.

Slowly, Schoenberg sliced her open: her hips were narrow and a Caesarean section too risky. But there was more blood than usual, and it took him a moment to see the head.

He opened his forceps, slid them through the incision, and clamped. His forehead glistened. Slowly, he pulled the baby from its mother. Its hair was matted with blood and its skin was blue from drugs and lack of air. The nurse cleaned mucus from its nose and mouth with quick jabs of a bulb syringe. Schoenberg spanked it.

Its head lolled. Schoenberg slapped it again. The baby neither cried nor moved nor breathed. Quickly Schoenberg cut its cord and rushed it to the baby warmer, clapping an oxygen mask on its face. “Damned Nembutal,” he muttered.

The baby’s leg moved. Slowly, its skin grew flushed. It squalled, then curled on its side, scarcely more conscious than its mother.

When Allie awoke several hours later she lay rigid, refusing to hold the baby or look into its face. They took it to the nursery.

Staring through the glass, Charles saw Allie Fairvoort in the blondness of its hair.

He glanced up, caught Phillip Carey's reflection as he looked down at the baby. For an instant, Charles read fear and vulnerability, felt their father pass between them like a feather in a vacuum, leaving no trace. Blindly, the baby reached toward its uncle with a tiny fist: Phillip's face softened.

"Ah," he said quietly. "The son and heir."

A nurse appeared, riffling a sheaf of forms. "Is one of you the father?"

Charles nodded. "I am."

"The mother won't give us a name."

Charles turned, hands in his pockets, watching his son as if wondering what its life might hold. Then he turned back again, facing his brother for a long, cool moment before he looked at the nurse. "John Peter Carey," he told her softly. "The second."

## CHAPTER 2

PETER CAREY LOOKED nothing like his grandfather.

By the time he was four, it was clear that Peter would always be fair, that he would grow taller than Black Jack Carey, his features more fine. He had his father's cobalt-blue eyes. They were as watchful as his father's, his bearing—slim, straight back, chin tilted up—often as still. He was quiet near his mother. At other times he would careen down the grassy slopes in Central Park, arms flailing and hair bouncing in corn-blond waves as he fled the unnamed enemy he sensed that Charles watched for, until he ran out of control, stumbling and falling and rolling in a laughing frenzy of imagined terror while he looked back toward his father for help. In his fantasies, Charles Carey always rescued him.

They teased each other endlessly. One fine April Sunday Peter fell with his face pressed in the fresh-smelling grass until Charles came near, springing up with childish inspiration to shout, "Fluffy head!" and run laughing from his father's outrage.

"Peter Carey," Charles called after him, "did you call your father a 'fluffy head'?"

Peter chuckled deep in his throat as he slowed to ensure that Charles could catch him, and then charged forward as his father swooped with outstretched arms to pull him to the ground and pin his shoulders, demanding, "Did you call your father—ex-war hero, former publishing genius and onetime escort of Audrey Hepburn—a '*fluffy head*'?"

They laughed into each other's eyes. "Yes!" Peter shouted and Charles began tickling his ribcage and roaring, "Promise

you'll never call me 'fluffy head' again," as Peter wriggled and squirmed until, his heart pumping, helpless from excitement, laughter and the need for a bathroom, he yelped, "I give up!" and they rose to take the winding path home, holding hands as they walked past fresh green trees and strangers who smiled at them—lean, striking man in a blazer, blond, laughing boy—until they reached their tall brick town house on East 60th, Charles sternly reminding Peter, "No more 'fluffy head,'" before dashing upstairs to change and await Adlai Stevenson, for dinner.

It was pheasant, served by candlelight in the Careys' dining room. Afterwards, they remained at the table—Stevenson and the Careys—sipping cognac beneath the crystal chandelier and watching tongues of orange and blue spit from the fireplace. Sensing his campaign was hopeless and liking Charles Carey, Stevenson gave himself up to laughter, hoping wistfully that John Foster Dulles might get caught with a chorus girl before November. "Perhaps a Russian ballerina," Charles was suggesting lazily, when Peter appeared in his wool sleepers to say goodnight. He kissed his mother's cool, turned cheek with a senatorial gravity that drew a wry smile from Stevenson, before edging from the room and Alicia's sight to where only Charles could see him. He stood motionless, head tilted in watchful replication of his father, until Charles turned. Face suddenly alight, Peter cupped his hands to his mouth and whispered sotto voce, "Fluffy head," as his father's eyes widened in mock horror and he scampered away, triumphant.

Watching the blond head disappear around the corner, Charles Carey knew at that moment that he loved his son more deeply than he had ever loved anyone, or ever would again. Remembering the crosscurrents that had seemed to flow from his conception, Charles hoped this love would be enough.

Alicia Carey turned from the softness in her husband's face.

Peter Carey first learned guilt from his mother's eyes.

Their green opacity followed him, even in his sleep; he could find neither love nor hate. Haunted by the suspension of their judgment, he came to fear his own actions for the anger they might hold.

Doubting himself, Peter became preternaturally sensitive to the moods of others. He watched his parents, divining from their silences an intricate skein of cause and effect. In his father's hugs, he felt his mother's loneliness.

He pondered how to reach her, searching for clues in his parents' barren touches. At length, deciding, he waited until she was alone.

She sat in the library, a volume of poetry unread in her lap, a champagne glass in her hand, staring into a shaft of afternoon sun which burned her fair, perfect profile to porcelain in the light. Peter approached on tiptoe, standing still and irresolute. She seemed not to notice. Hesitant, he asked, "Do you need a hug from a boy?"

She started, dropping the glass. It shattered on the parquet. Peter flinched, reaching out to her as Alicia stared at the shards of crystal. Her eyes, rising to meet her son's, filled with hysteria and tears. "Don't you sneak up on me!" she cried. Her hand flailed at the glittering pieces. "It's *broken* now. *Look*, dammit—*look* at what you've done."

Backing from the library, from the hatred and confusion in her eyes, Peter Carey understood what he had done. He had destroyed his mother, and stolen his father's love.

In the loveless act that led to Peter's birth, Charles Carey had felt the death throes of his marriage.

The chill had touched him months before.

Tension ran through Allie's laughter, in the way she grasped at moments, inflating them with brittle gaiety. A bottle of champagne became perfect in his company, its cold tang lingering like velvet on her tongue. At the Byline Room, she sat transfixed by smoke and darkness, the pulse



of jazz notes crowding, fighting, pushing one another for space as still others blew them out the door, until the night was magic. The filet at "21" was flawless, Maria Tallchief more tensile than Pavlova. She cried hearing Robert Lowell.

Charles Carey was her thrilling lover.

She writhed against him, body glistening with sweat, strain and hysteria until she lay exhausted, eyes fixed and staring as though in desperate search for what she had not found, and then in a rush of words she would describe to him the beauty of their act.

On their wedding night, she wept.

In subtle flight, for the first time in his life, Charles Carey retreated from reality.

Suppressed, doubt festered in his subconscious, leeching conviction from his laughter and the things they did in bed. Allie could not speak to him of her fantasies; Charles could confess his fears to no one. She became gayer and more desperate, drinking more champagne as she organized vast parties, placing new friends or entertainments as barriers between them, flirting carelessly with Phillip. Bereft of real intimacy, Charles's lovemaking turned mechanical, brain cooling to an eerie detachment in which he came full circle to the truth: his wife was an actress in bed.

He began to contemplate divorce.

The last time they made love was in the morning. Fall sunlight through their window seemed to etch his life with crystalline clarity. Coolly, deliberately, he began stroking her arm until it prickled with goosebumps, then turned her face toward his and kissed her neck, his mouth and tongue running toward her nipple, lingering there to raise it as he slid two fingers between her thighs. His tongue moved downward across her stomach to where his fingers had been, and slipped into her moistness. Her hips thrust upward. She screamed when he entered her.

As she called his name again and again, he knew that the sounds came from her throat and not her body. He made

love to her for over an hour, driving, pounding, moving slow and then fast, sliding and teasing, back glistening with sweat, jaw and sinew clenched in an agony of reaching, straining to at last wrench cries from deep inside her, until she scraped his back in a spasm of feigned climax, signaling its finish, and he looked over her shoulder, at his watch.

Two months later, Alicia Carey told him she was pregnant.

From the first weeks of her pregnancy, John Carey watched their hot, buried anger rise to split his sons. They disagreed more often; championed different books or authors; grew more caustic in debate. With mixed pleasure and concern their father guessed the reason: Phillip feared that the unborn child which now trapped his brother might become the grandson that John Carey wished.

But the strain seemed worst in Charles. In Alicia Carey's eyes—which glinted but could not connect—John Carey saw the anguish of his son reflected. Charles's confidence as a lover, unspoken and unflaunted, had fed his confidence as a man. A child bound him to the woman who had stolen it.

Curiously, this time of unhappiness became in other ways Charles's best. Finding a new black writer of rare eloquence and talent, Charles insisted that they publish his first novel, which now rode a crest of fine reviews. Three more of his young authors already had best sellers; now he acquired a novel of a Roman slave rebellion, which might become one more. Yet too often he was moody and distracted: with each month that his child's birth drew closer, his judgment frayed . . .

All at once, facing a stranger too rife with potential menace for the Careys to mishandle, John Carey saw how swiftly Charles's nerve and courage might turn back upon them.

The curiously unsettling Englehardt came from Washington, as emissary of the House Un-American Activities Committee's literary witch hunt, to warn that

those who published Charles's slave novel were tools of Joseph Stalin.

"Does Stalin read much?" Charles asked him politely.

They sat in the conference room at Van Dreelen & Carey—John Carey flanked by his sons—facing a crew-cut man with gray, lynx's eyes and no taste for irony. Dressed in a bow tie and black bargain-basement suit, he seemed colorless, odorless and tasteless, like poison gas. By his lack of facial lines Englehardt could not be over thirty, yet his youth seemed long dead, and his strange, relentless monotone had become as excruciating as the repeated drip of water. John Carey, who feared little, instinctively feared this man. He leaned back, closely watching both Charles and Phillip.

"You fail to amuse," the man replied to Charles. He had a cruel slash of a mouth and a bleak, level stare that took in the leather books and polished mahogany as though he wished them his. "Your list is riddled with left-wing writers . . ."

"Such as . . .?"

"Aside from this one?" Methodically and without inflection, the man named seventeen books by author, title and date of publication, specifying the reasons for their offensiveness. "You see," he finished quietly, "I'm not here by accident."

"Just by mistake," Charles shot back. "Although your memory is excellent."

"A professional requirement." A pride close to arrogance flashed through his eyes, the first true emotion John Carey could detect. "And the mistake is yours: purchasing this piece of propaganda just when its author has publicly refused to give testimony before our Committee. We're in a war of ideologies, and those of us who know this are curious as to which side you're on. I think you may recall John Garfield . . ."

"I recall." Charles went pale with anger. "We ate at Downey's two nights before he died, as *you* damned well know. In the eighteen months since your committee sicked

the FBI on him he hadn't had a part. His marriage had broken up, and he was much too thin. You'd read his mail and roused his friends until there weren't many left . . ."

"We were investigating . . ."

"You were sniffing through his life like a pervert through a drawerful of panties, until he had no grace or privacy—all for the crime of signing petitions. It's as sick a way to break someone as Stalin ever dreamed of—"

"I view it less emotionally—"

"I'm curious, Englehardt. How do your people like watching me? Do I keep them amused? Maybe I should join the NAACP . . ."

"Wait, Charles." Phillip leaned forward, holding up one hand as John Carey turned to watch him. "We're getting into personalities, to no point. We at least owe Mr. Englehardt a hearing . . ."

"Under HUAC rules, I hope."

"Well, I for one don't wish to publish books which aren't in the national interest . . ."

"As defined by whom, J. Edgar Hoover?" Charles spun on Englehardt before Phillip could respond. "He's *my* author. I speak for the firm here. Our answer is no. If it's subversive the public won't buy it, and we'll lose money. Their choice, our risk: *that's* the American Way, not snoopers destroying lives to enhance their own. You know where the door is, I imagine."

Englehardt's returning stare at Charles Carey was expressionless; once more John Carey felt fear, sensed the effort with which he masked his fury. When Englehardt turned toward Phillip Carey, appraising him as he would a slide beneath a microscope, he smiled with a curious look of comprehension that softened his face. For a long, silent moment they regarded each other, as if no one else were there. Without turning, he said to John Carey, "You might do well to listen to your *younger* son."

“Whatever differences we have do not concern you.” John Carey leaned into his line of vision. “I respect your motives, if not your methods. But Van Dreelen and Carey is something other than a ward of Congress. We must make our own decisions.”

Englehardt was still; only his pupils seemed to widen. He spoke with equal quiet. “Then when you make them, Mr. Carey, you should consider the scope of our investigative powers. Your decision may have great consequences—for this firm, for you, and all those who come after.” He looked back at Charles. “I’ll particularly expect to hear from *you*.”

“Oh you shall, Mr. Englehardt, you shall. I’ve been rather hoping you’d train your investigative powers on Mr. Hoover, though.” He smiled faintly. “One hears distressing rumors that he likes little boys. A lot of us who know that are curious as to which side he’s on.”

Englehardt’s gem-cutter’s stare at Charles Carey was the more piercing for his stillness. Then he shook his head, and rose from the table with a faint, lingering smile at Phillip. He walked to the door, turning back once more to survey Charles as if absorbing his thoughts and features, and left, closing the door with fearful gentleness. The room sounded with its echo.

In biting tones, Charles said to his father, “I thought for a moment that you were sitting this one out.”

John Carey looked at him with contempt. “I know you’re spoiling for the day I’m dead and you can ruin this firm singlehanded. But that’s *if*, Charles—only if *I* will it. So I find it necessary to determine just how long that job would take you.”

“I appreciate your support . . .”

“My concern is to support *writers*, not you. Compare us to the film studios, or even other publishers. Not one of our authors has had a book bounced back because these fools have pilloried him in public, or blown his brains out because we’ve helped them choke off his livelihood. Most important,

I've still got a firm to pass on, intact. I've seen to that by not begging for trouble . . ."

"This man Englehardt came *here* . . ."

"And then you gave him no way out." John Carey's voice hardened. "Never, ever, humiliate a man in front of others unless you have the power to destroy him. With this man it's the other way around: in time he may have the power to destroy *you*, and all I mean this family to keep. I watched his eyes while you were being clever. He'll remember you thirty years from now."

"I want him to—men like that only prey on weakness." Charles wheeled on his brother. "If you ever again cut me off in front of strangers, particularly someone who'll go for your throat if he sees any weakness at all, you'd better pray that it *is* you who inherits this firm. And while you're praying, pray that what happened to Garfield doesn't happen to you or anyone in this family, because there's no one who can survive that. Especially you." He rose to leave, turning in the doorway to say in a softer voice, "It's not fatal that you lack Stalin's taste, Phil. But to lack his *guts* . . ."

He turned and left.

Staring at his stricken second son, still hearing the anger of his first, John Carey felt the unborn presence of the grandson who might follow them, to sit where he now sat.

Within weeks, Phillip Carey knew that their upsetting visitor would not forget the Careys.

Their writers were abruptly hauled before the Committee; Charles's tax returns were audited; the author of the slave novel was indicted for refusing to appear. At Committee hearings, in newspapers, the name Van Dreelen & Carey was constantly repeated. One department store refused their books . . .

Phillip began hearing noises on his telephone.

He could not explain this sense of dread.