

# ON THE ORIGINS AND DYNAMICS OF BIODIVERSITY THE ROLE OF CHANCE

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Footsteps in the hall drew their attention to the open door, where the surgeon appeared in his loose cotton greens..From Sparky, Tom Vanadium had borrowed a master key with which he could open the door to Cain's apartment, but he preferred not to employ it as long as he could enter by a back route. The less often he used the halls that were frequented by residents, the more likely he would be able to keep his flesh-and-blood presence a secret from Cain and sustain his ghostly reputation. If too many tenants got a look at his memorable face, he would become a topic of discussion among neighbors, and the wife killer might tumble to the truth.."One hour," he announced, establishing a countdown. In sixty minutes, his internal clock would rouse him from a meditative state..By the time Junior passed the three offices and found the men's room, Neddy had occupied it. The door was locked, which must mean this was a single-occupant john..Earthquake weather. Southern Californians had many definitions of that term, but Edom knew he was right this time. Thunder would roll again soon, but it would arise from underfoot..Too much, far too much to contend with, and so unfair: finding the Bartholomew needle in the haystack, hives, seizures of vomiting and diarrhea, losing a toe, losing a beloved wife, wandering alone through a cold and hostile world without a heart mate, humiliated by transvestites, tormented by vengeful spirits, too intense to enjoy the benefits of meditation, Zedd dead, the prospect of prison always looming for one reason or another, unable to find peace in either needlework or sex..The sound made by the dropping corpse indicated that cushioning trash lined the bottom of the bin, and also that it was no more than half full. This improved chances that Neddy wouldn't be discovered until a dump truck tumbled him into a landfill-and even then perhaps no eyes would alight upon him again except those of hungry rats..Rico, her own husband-a drunkard and a gambler-had run off with another woman, abandoning Maria and their two small daughters. No doubt, he had departed in a spotlessly clean, sharply pressed, perfectly mended ensemble..Now, if Victoria reported to Vanadium that Junior had shown up at her door with a red rose and a bottle of Merlot and with romance on his mind, the demented detective would be on his ass again for sure. Vanadium might think that the nurse had misinterpreted the business with the ice spoon, but the intent in this instance would be unmistakable, and the crusading cop-the holy fool-would never give up..Without sigh or complaint, he would walk back to her with the purse. The errand was no trouble. In fact, returning the purse would give him a chance to get another good-night kiss.."But before you leave St. Mary's," the physician said, "I'd like a few mutes of your time. It's very important to me. Personally..".Barty never cried. In the hospital neonatal unit, he'd been a marvel to the nurses, because when the other newborns were squalling in chorus, Barty had been unflinchingly serene.."Phimie said the creep thought it was funny, but using Daddy's voice as background music also ... well, aroused him, maybe because it further humiliated her and because he knew it would humiliate our father. But we never told Daddy that part of it. Neither of us saw any useful reason for telling him..".rearview mirror was not hung with one of those tacky decorative deodorizers. The seats, regularly treated with leather soap, were softer and more supple than they had been when the car had shipped out of.Paul Damascus had gotten numerous invitations to dinner. No one thought that he should be alone on this difficult night.."They're all the family I have," Junior said with what he hoped sounded like sorrow and long-suffering love..During the past ten days, he'd proved that he was clever, bold, with exceptional inner resources. He needed to tap his deep well of strength and resolve now, more than ever. He'd been through far too much, accomplished too much, to be brought down by mere biology..By habit, she shifted her attention to his eyes, because though the scientific types insist that the eyes themselves are incapable of expression, Agnes knew what every poet knows: To see the condition of the hidden heart, you must look first where scientists will not admit to looking at all..and half rotten. She tore it. With the small scissors, she opened the shoulder seam from the inside.."It's that bad and worse," Grace said firmly. "Even if they catch him, you're going to live with the quiet fear that he might escape one day. As long as you know he can find you, then you're never going to be completely at peace. And if you love this city so much that you'll put Angel in jeopardy ... then who have you been listening to all these years, girl? Because it hasn't been me..".In bed, lights out, Junior marveled at his daredevil spirit. He never stopped surprising himself..Champagne, then, and two shopping bags packed full of Armenian takeout. Sou beurek, mujadereh, chicken-and-rice biryani, stuffed grape leaves, artichokes with lamb and rice, orouk, manti, and more. Following a Baptist grace (said by Grace), Wally and the three White women, a fourth present in spirit, sat around the Formica-topped table, feasting, laughing, talking about art and healing and baby care and the past and tomorrow, while up on Nob Hill, Neddy Gnathic sat tuxedoed at a lacquered black piano, sprinkling diamond-bright notes through an elegant room..Back in January, when he received the disappointing report from Nolly Wulfstan, Junior was not convinced that the private detective had exercised due diligence in his investigation. He suspected that Wulfstan's ugliness was matched by his laziness..On December 18, as the Beatles' "Hello Goodbye" rocketed up the charts, Junior boiled over with frustration at his inability to find either love or Seraphim's baby, so he drove across the Golden Gate Bridge, to Marin County and all the way to the town of Terra Linda, where he killed Bartholomew Prosser..Barty approached stair climbing as a mathematical problem, calculating the precise movement of each leg and placement of each foot necessary to successfully negotiate the obstacle. He proceeded less slowly on the next three steps than he had on the first three, and thereafter he ascended with growing confidence, pumping his legs with machinelike precision..If Agnes knew that Jacob had been helping her game, she might never play cards with him again. She would not approve of what he had done. Consequently, his great skill as a card mechanic must be forever his secret..'She didn't reach into your thoughts and pluck out the name Rowena. Or Beezil or Feezil..'.The baby felt too light to be real. She weighed five pounds fourteen ounces, but she seemed lighter than air, as though she might float up and out of her aunt's arms..Reverend White's polished, somewhat theatrical, yet sincere voice rose out of the past to issue this threat in Junior's memory as he had issued it that night, from a tape recorder, while Junior had been dancing a sweaty horizontal boogie with Seraphim in her

parsonage bedroom..PZ7.L5215 Tal 2001 [Fic]-dc21 2001016554.sport shirt just for no reason at all, because she thought he'd look nice in it?". Three equally modest rooms opened off this lounge. Two housed complete dental units, and the third provided cramped office space shared by the receptionist and the doctor..An affecting but difficult-to-define note in Dr. Lipscomb's voice brought Celestina slowly out of the office chair, to her feet. Perhaps it was wonder. Or fear. Or reverence. Perhaps all three..During the cleaning, installation of new carpet, and painting that had followed the removal of the diarrhetic pig set loose by one of Cain's disgruntled girlfriends, the wife killer had spent a few nights in a hotel. Nolly took advantage of the opportunity to bring his associate James Hunnicolt--Jimmy Gadget-onto the premises to provide a customized, undetectable, exterior window-latch release..This was not the same card he'd found at his bedside, under two dimes and a nickel, on the night following Naomi's funeral. He had torn that one and had thrown it away..On the fourth floor, at Dr. Klerkle's suite, the hall door stood ajar. Past office hours, the small waiting room was deserted..Great hobnailed wheels of pain turned through Agnes, driving her into darkness for a moment..As though giving voice to her worst fear had made it come true, Agnes was seized by a contraction so painful that she cried out and clutched the paramedic's hands tightly enough to make him wince. She felt a peculiar swelling within, then an awful looseness, pressure followed at once by release..Perhaps the paramedic had given him an injection, a sedative. the howling ambulance rocked along on this most momentous day, Junior Cain wept profoundly but quietly--and achieved temporary peace in a dreamless sleep..The accountant lived in a white Georgian house on a street lined with huge old evergreens.. "Are you all right?" he asked as he opened the passenger's door and helped her into the car.. "Joey was, after all, an insurance broker," Vinnie reminded her. "He was going to look out for his family..". Taking her silence for assent, Tom continued: "Your father is gone from here, gone forever, but he still lives in other worlds. This isn't a statement of faith alone. If Albert Einstein were still alive and standing here, he'd tell you that it's true. Your father is with you in many places, and so is Phimie. In many places, she didn't die in childbirth. In some worlds, she was never raped, her life never blighted. But there's an irony in that, isn't there? Because in those worlds, Angel doesn't exist-yet Angel is a miracle and a blessing." He looked up from the city to the woman. "So when you're lying in bed tonight, kept awake by grief, don't think just about what you've lost with your father and Phimie. Think about what you have in this world that you've never known in some others-Angel. Whether God's a Catholic, a Baptist, a Jew, a Muslim, or a quantum mechanic, He gives us compensation for our pain, compensation right here in this world, not just in those parallel to it and not just in some afterlife. Always compensation for the pain ... if we recognize it when we see it..". Kathleen watched him with obvious amusement, aware that he was savoring her suspense as much as he was the appetizer..A s?ance was what it appeared to be at first. Eight people were gathered around the dining-room table, which stood utterly bare. No food, no drinks, no centerpiece. They all exhibited that shiny-faced look of people nervously awaiting the revelations of a spirit medium: part trepidation, part soaring hope..From time to time, customers had crossed the cocktail lounge to drop folding money into a fishbowl atop the piano, tips for the musician. A few had requested favorite -tunes..Perhaps Dr. Parkhurst, too, was disturbed by this fascistic and fanatical spew sampling, because he became brusque. "I have a few appointments to keep. By the time I make evening rounds, I expect Mr. Cain to..She shook her head. "No way back." She pointed to the sketch pad on the floor. "I pushed him there..". "Some Baptists are opposed to drink, Doctor, but we're the wicked variety. Though all we have is a warm bottle of Chardonnay..". Wally Lipscomb parked in his garage, switched off the engine, and started to get out of the Buick before he saw that Celestina had left her purse in the car.. "You know Mommy," Barty said, almost desperately sponging up the sight of his little girl's face and wringing the images into his memory to sustain him in the next long darkness..and humble. They managed to worry up tuition for art school, but Celestina worked as a waitress to pay for her studio apartment and other needs..One detail. One only. It was a crucial detail, however, one that she absolutely must confirm before she left St. Mary's, even if she would be required to look at the child once more, this spawn of violence, this killer of her sister..He realized that like so many women, Seraphim wanted it, asked for it-yet had no place in her self-image to accommodate the truth that she was sexually aggressive. She wanted to think of herself as shy, demure, virginal, as innocent as a minister's daughter ought to be which meant that to get what she wanted, she required Junior to be a brute. He was happy to oblige..In spite of its dazzle and power and comfort, however, the car was not able to lift his spirits as he cruised the hills of the city. Somewhere along these darkly glistening streets, in these houses and high-rises clinging to steep slopes awaiting seismic sundering, the boy was sheltered: half Negro, half white, full doom to Junior Cain.. "Indeed, you did," said Magusson. "And I dismissed him as a well intentioned crusader, a holy fool. Looks like you had a better take on him than I did, Mr. Cain..". He was a patriotic guy, and he preferred American rock to the British brand. He had nothing against the English, no prejudices against people of any nationality. Nevertheless, he believed that the American Top 40 ought to feature American music exclusively..Havnor Great Port is the city at the heart of the world, white-towered above its bay; on the tallest tower the sword of Erreth-Akbe catches the first and last of daylight. Through that city passes all the trade and commerce and learning and craft of Earthsea, a wealth not hoarded. There the King sits, having returned after the healing of the Ring, in sign of healing. And in that city, in these latter days, men and women of the islands speak with dragons, in sign of change..One moment, girl and yellow vinyl ball. The next moment, gone as if they'd never been.. "Yes. More about that later, just let me make it clear that an interest in physics doesn't make me a physicist. Even if I were, I couldn't explain quantum mechanics in an hour or a year. Some say quantum theory is so weird that no one can fully understand all its implications. Some things proven in quantum experiments seem to defy common sense, and I'll lay out a few for you, just to give you the flavor. First, on the subatomic level, effect sometimes comes before cause. In other words, an event can happen before the reason for it ever occurs. Equally odd ... in an experiment with a human observer, subatomic particles behave differently from the way they behave when the experiment is unobserved while in progress and the results are examined only after the fact-which might suggest that human will, even subconsciously expressed, shapes reality..". "Who?" she shouted, though they were perched side by side on a black-leather love seat..He must be careful in his approach to her. He dared not rush into this. Think it through. Devise a strategy. This valuable opportunity must not be wasted..FOR THE BETTER PART of a week, on doctor's orders, Agnes avoided stairs. She took sponge baths in the ground-floor powder room and slept in the parlor, on a sofa bed, with Barty nearby in a bassinet..Junior wasn't concerned that the shots would attract unwanted attention. These large rural properties and a plenitude of muffling trees made it unlikely that the nearest neighbor would hear anything..Surprised, Tom leaned in his chair to look more directly at the blind boy. On the telephone, Celestina had mentioned only that Barty was a prodigy, which didn't quite explain the aptness of the oak-tree metaphor..Instead, he focused on the hand in the flashlight beam: four long, thin, chalk-white digits bent to the heel; thumb thrust up stiffly, as though Neddy hoped to

hitchhike out of the Dumpster, out of death, and back to his piano in the cocktail lounge on Nob Hill.. "You sounded as though you were in a lot of distress. You were frightened of this Bartholomew..". "Periodic violent emesis without an apparent cause can be one indication of locomotor ataxia, but you've no other symptoms of it. I wouldn't worry about that unless this happens again..". Neddy cooperated by not deigning to look back. Eventually, he stopped a young man who, judging by the name tag on the lapel of his blazer, was a gallery employee. They put their heads together in conversation, and then the musician headed through an archway into the second showroom.. "Tame him or bury him," said Losen, and turned to more important matters.. A shiver of awe traveled Celestina's spine, because she knew what the physician's next words would surely be.. The maniac detective was still on the floor where he had died. The red rose and the gift box occupied his hands.. To the open casement window, into the men's room. Still seething with rage. Angrily cranking shut the twin panes while lazy tongues of fog licked through the narrowing gap.. Because he hadn't heard Victoria Bressler speak in so long-and then only on two occasions-and because the woman on the phone had spoken so softly, Junior couldn't tell whether or not their voices were one and the same.. He moved the shaker across the tablecloth, rocking it back and forth to convey that he was strolling without a care in the world.. The toast now came to Celestina. "To Phimie, who will be with me in memory every hour of every day for the rest of my life, until she is with me again for real. And to ... to this most momentous day..". She must have sensed his assessment of her and realized that she had little chance of charming him, for she turned at once away and never looked in his direction again.. "Peach, raisin, walnut pies," Agnes said, "with regular bottom crust and a chocolate-crackle top crust..". Flanked by Dumpsters and trash cans, through steam rising out of grates in the pavement, past parked delivery trucks, here came the dead cop. Running.. An elderly Negro gentleman answered the door. His hair was such a pure white that in contrast to his plum-dark skin, it appeared to glow like a nimbus around his head. With his equally radiant goatee, his kindly features, and his compelling black eyes, he seemed to have stepped out of a movie about a jazz musician who, having died, was on earth once more as someone's angelic guardian.. With no job to return to, he dawdled over lunch. He was actually tumescent with a growing sense of freedom that was as thrilling as sex.. Once satiated, what she desired was a reason to deceive herself into believing that she was not a slut, that she was a victim. She didn't really want to tell anyone what he had done to her. Instead, she was asking him, indirectly but indisputably, to provide her with an excuse to keep their passionate encounter secret, an excuse that would also allow her to continue to pretend that she had not begged for everything he'd done to her.. Again he fired into the lock, squeezed the trigger a second time, and discovered that no rounds remained in the magazine. Extra cartridges were distributed in his pockets.. "Oh, dear God," she whispered, and although she had always been a strong woman who stood on a rock of faith, who drew hope as well as air with every breath, she was as weak now as the unborn child in her womb, sick with fear.. Everyone was silent. The day was morgue-still. The crows had fled the sky, but a single hawk gilded soundlessly, like justice with its prey in sight, high above the tower.. "It was in your heart, too, and anything that's in your heart is there for anyone to see. Will your father marry us?..". He still had work to do here. Properly disposing of Thomas Vanadium, however, was the most urgent piece of business.. Furious, he squeezed off two shots. Passing the living-room archway, Tom saw Jacob in the armchair, under the reading lamp, slumped as if asleep over the book. His crimson bib confirmed that he wasn't just sleeping.. This house was similar to the Kleftons'. Though stucco rather than clapboard, it had gone a long time without fresh paint. A crack in one of the front windows had been sealed with strapping tape.. Paul checked the back of the Suburban, since he fancied himself the wagonmaster. He wanted to be sure that the goods were loaded in such a way that they were unlikely to slide or be damaged. "Packed tight. Looks just fine," he declared, and closed the tailgate door.. Antihypertensive drugs were administered intravenously, and Phimie was confined to bed, attached to a heart monitor.. Junior was impressed and delighted by her clever assumption of it strictly professional voice and demeanor, which convincingly masked her intense desire. Sweet Victoria was a worthy conspirator.. Widening his eyes in calculated surprise, Junior said, "Are you a police officer?..". "This was back on January 24, 1556," said Edom with unhesitating authority, for he had memorized tens of thousands of facts about the worst natural disasters in history.. The slur faded from his voice in minutes, but he suspected that straining too long to sustain this borrowed vision could result in a stroke or worse.. Their station wagon stood along the service road, at least a hundred yards from the grave. With no wind to harry it, the rain fell as plumb straight as the strands of beaded curtains, and beyond these pearly veils, the car appeared to be a shimmering dark mirage.

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