transformed. He was no longer a war veteran. They'd taken the boy in to Dr. Whaley, and then Carl had gone off fishing. The two of them hadn't discussed Kabuo Miyamoto again, and Susan Marie soon recognized that the subject was somehow forbidden. It was forbidden in her marriage to open up her husband's wounds and look at them unless he asked her to.

Their marriage, she understood after Carl was gone, had largely been about sex. It had been about sex right up to the end, until the day Carl went out of her life: that morning, while the children slept, they'd shut the bathroom door and pulled the latch and taken off their clothes. Carl showered, and Susan Marie joined him when the stink of salmon had been washed down the drain. She washed his large penis and felt it harden in her fingers. She put her arms around his neck, locked her feet at the small of his back. Carl held her up with his strong hands clenching the muscles in her legs and leaned the side of his face against her breasts and took to licking them. They moved that way, standing up in the bathtub with the water pouring over them and Susan Marie's blond hair pasted to her face and her hands clutched around her husband's head. They washed each other afterward, taking their time about it in the friendly way of certain married people, and then Carl got into bed and slept until one in the afternoon. At two, having eaten a lunch of fried eggs and Jerusalem artichokes, canned pears and bread spread with clover honey, he went out to change the oil in his tractor. She saw him from the kitchen window that afternoon gathering early windfall apples and dropping them in a burlap bag. At three forty-five he came up to the house again and said good-bye to the children, who were seated on the porch drinking apple juice and eating graham crackers and rolling pebbles back and forth. He came into the kitchen, wrapped himself around his wife, and explained that unless the fishing was excellent he was coming home early the next morning, would be home, he hoped, by four A.M.. Then he left for the Amity Harbor docks, and she never saw him again.

21

Nels Gudmundsson stood at a distance from the witness stand when it was his turn to question Susan Marie Heine: he did not want to appear lecherous by placing himself in close proximity to a woman of such tragic, sensual beauty. He was self-conscious about his age and felt that the jurors would see him as disgusting if he did not distance himself from Susan Marie Heine and appear in general detached from the life of his body altogether. The month before, Nels had been told by a doctor in Anacortes that his prostate gland had become moderately enlarged. It would have to be removed surgically and he would no longer be able to produce seminal fluid. The doctor had asked Nels embarrassing questions and he had been forced to reveal a truth about which he was ashamed: that he could no longer achieve an erection. He could achieve one briefly, but it would wither in his hand before he had a chance to take pleasure from it. The bad part was not really this so much as it was that a woman like Susan Marie Heine inspired a deep frustration in him. He felt defeated as he appraised her on the witness stand. It was no longer possible for him to communicate to *any* woman – even those his own age he knew in town – his merit and value as a lover, for he no longer had this sort of worth and had to admit as much to himself – as a lover he was entirely through.

Nels remembered as he watched Susan Marie Heine the finest years of his sex life, now more than a half a century behind him. He could not quite believe that this was so. He was seventy-nine and trapped inside a decaying body. It was difficult for him to sleep and to urinate. His body had betrayed him and most of the things he once took for granted were no longer even possible.

A man might easily be embittered by such circumstances, but Nels made it a point not to struggle unnecessarily with life's unresolvable dilemmas. He had indeed achieved a kind of wisdom – if you wanted to call it that – though at the same time he knew that most elderly people were not wise at all but only wore a thin veneer of cheap wisdom as a sort of armor against the world. Anyway, the kind of wisdom younger people sought from old age was not to be acquired in this life no matter how many years they lived. He wished he could tell them this without inviting their mockery or their pity.

Nels's wife had died from cancer of the colon. They had not gotten along particularly well, but nevertheless he missed her. Occasionally he sat in his apartment and wept in order to empty himself of self-pity and remorse. Occasionally he attempted unsuccessfully to masturbate in the hope of rediscovering that lost part of himself he deeply, achingly missed. He was convinced at rare moments that he could succeed and that his youth was still buried inside of himself. The rest of the time he accepted this as untrue and went about the business of consoling himself in various unsatisfying ways. He liked to eat. He enjoyed chess. He did not mind his work and knew himself to be quite good at it. He was a reader and recognized his habit of reading as obsessive and neurotic, and told himself that if he read something less frivolous than newspapers and magazines he might indeed be better off. The problem was that he could not concentrate on 'literature,' however much he might admire it. It wasn't that *War and Peace* bored him exactly, but rather that his mind couldn't *focus* on it. Another loss: his eyes provided him with only half a view of the world, and reading caused his neurasthenia to flare up and made his temples throb. His mind, too, was failing him, he felt – although one could not be sure of such a thing. Certainly his memory was not as good as it had been when he was younger.

Nels Gudmundsson tucked his thumbs in behind his suspenders and looked with studied detachment at the witness.

'Mrs. Heine,' he said. 'The defendant here appeared on your doorstep on Thursday, September 9? Is that what I heard you say?'

'Yes, Mr. Gudmundsson. That's right.'

'He asked to speak to your husband?'

'He did.'

'They walked outside in order to talk? They didn't speak in the house?'

'Correct,' said Susan Marie. 'They spoke outside. They walked our property for thirty or forty minutes.'

'I see,' said Nels. 'And you didn't accompany them?'

'No,' said Susan Marie. 'I didn't.'

'Did you hear any part of their conversation?'

'No.'

'In other words, you have no firsthand knowledge of its content – is that correct, Mrs. Heine?'

'What I know is what Carl told me,' answered Susan Marie. 'I didn't hear their conversation, no.'

'Thank you,' Nels said. 'Because that concerns me. The fact that you've testified about this conversation without having heard any part of it.'

He pinched the wattles of skin at his throat and turned his good eye on Judge Fielding. The judge, his head resting on his hand, yawned and looked back with detachment.

'Well then,' Nels said. 'To summarize, Mrs. Heine. Your husband and the defendant walked and talked, and you stayed behind. Is that right?'

'Yes, it is.'

'And after thirty to forty minutes your husband returned. Is that also right, Mrs. Heine?'

'Yes, it is.'

'You asked him about the content of his conversation with the defendant?'

'Yes.'

'And he replied that the two of them had discussed the land in question? The land that your mother-in-law sold to Ole

Jurgensen more than a decade ago? The land on which the defendant's childhood home sat? Is all of that right, Mrs. Heine?'

'Yes,' said Susan Marie. 'It is.'

'You and your husband had recently put down earnest money on this land. Is that correct, Mrs. Heine?'

'Yes. My husband did.'

'Let's see,' said Nels Gudmundsson. 'Monday, September 6, was Labor Day, Tuesday the seventh Mr. Jurgensen put his land up for sale . . . was it Wednesday, then – the eighth of September – that your husband signed the contract on Mr. Jurgensen's property?'

'It must have been,' said Susan Marie. 'Wednesday the eighth sounds right.'

'And the defendant visited the next day? On Thursday, the ninth of September?'

'Yes.'

'All right, then,' said Nels Gudmundsson. 'You've testified that on the afternoon of the ninth the defendant presented himself at your door and that he and your husband walked and talked, but that you were not present during their conversation. Do I have that right, Mrs. Heine?'

'Yes, you do.'

'And furthermore,' said Nels, 'after the defendant left that afternoon you and your husband sat on the porch and had your own conversation?'

'Yes.'

'Your husband indicated an unwillingness to talk about the content of his conversation with the defendant?'

'Correct.'

'You pressed him?'

'I did.'

'He reported to you that he had indicated to the defendant a willingness to think matters over? That he would ponder whether or not he might sell the seven acres to Mr. Miyamoto? Or allow Mr. Jurgensen to do so?'

'Yes.'

'He reported to you a concern about how his mother might react if he sold to the defendant? Did I hear you say that, Mrs. Heine?'

'You did.'

'But he was pondering such a sale anyway?'

'That's right.'

'And he had indicated as much to the defendant?'

'Yes.'

'So in other words Mr. Miyamoto left your residence on the ninth having heard from your husband there was at least a possibility your husband would sell the seven acres to him.'

'That's right.'

'Your husband reported to you that he had encouraged Mr. Miyamoto to believe in such a possibility?'

'Encouraged?' replied Susan Marie Heine. 'I don't know about that.'

'Let me put it this way,' Nels said. 'Your husband did not state an unequivocal no? He did not lead the defendant to believe that no hope existed for the reclaiming of his family's land?'

'He did not,' answered Susan Marie.

'In other words, he encouraged Mr. Miyamoto to believe that at the very least a possibility existed.'

'I guess so,' said Susan Marie.

'I guess you'd have to guess,' said Nels, 'having not been present at their conversation. Having to report to the court only, Mrs. Heine, what your husband reported to you. Words that might not be one hundred percent accurate, since your husband was aware of your disenchantment about the possibility of moving, as you've said, and may well have altered the tone and substance of his conversation with Mr. Miyamo – '

'Objection,' put in Alvin Hooks. 'Argumentative.'

'Sustained,' said the judge. 'Stop rambling, Mr. Gudmundsson. Your purpose here is to ask questions of the witness that refer directly to her testimony. You must refrain from doing anything else – but you know this. Get on with it.'

'Apologies,' Nels replied. 'All right, then. Mrs. Heine, forgive

me. Your husband and the defendant – do I have this right? – had grown up together as boys?'

'As far as I know, yes.'

'Did your husband ever mention him as a neighbor. an acquaintance from his youth?'

'Yes.'

'Did he tell you how they'd gone fishing together as boys of ten or eleven? Or that they'd played on the same high school baseball and football teams? That they rode the same school bus for many years? Any of that, Mrs. Heine?'

'I suppose so,' Susan Marie said.

'Hmmm,' said Nels. He pulled the wattles of skin at his throat again and gazed at the ceiling for a moment. 'Mrs. Heine,' he said. 'You mentioned during the course of your testimony these "dirty looks" Mr. Miyamoto is supposed to have aimed at your mother-in-law. Do you remember mentioning that?'

'Yes.'

'You didn't mention that the defendant had aimed similar looks at you. Is that right? Do I remember right?'

'No, I didn't.'

'Or at your husband? Did I hear you say he aimed dirty looks at your husband? Or is it just something your mother-in-law reported as having occurred?'

'I can't speak for either of them,' answered Susan Marie. 'I don't know what they experienced.'

'Of course not,' said Nels. 'And I wouldn't want you to speak for them, either. It's just that earlier – when Mr. Hooks was questioning you? – you seemed happy to do so, Mrs. Heine. So I thought I'd take a flyer myself.' He smiled.

'All right,' Judge Fielding interrupted. 'That'll do, Mr. Gudmundsson. Get on with your questioning or sit down at once.'

'Judge,' replied Nels. 'There's been a lot of hearsay admitted as evidence. That bears pointing out.'

'Yes,' said the judge. 'A lot of hearsay – hearsay you didn't object to, Mr. Gudmundsson. Because you know that

Mrs. Heine is entitled under statute to report the nature and content of a conversation held with her deceased husband. The unfortunate fact is that he cannot do it himself. Mrs. Heine is under oath to tell the truth. As a court of law, we have no choice but to trust that what she tells us is accurate.' He turned slowly toward the jurors. 'For want of a gentler title, the legal institution in question here is known as the Deadman's Statute,' he explained. 'Normally it prohibits evidence from being entered into the record – it allows me to rule it inadmissible as hearsay – because the individual in question is deceased. In criminal cases, however, the Deadman's Statute does *not* bar such evidence from being presented, as Mr. Gudmundsson well knows. Nevertheless, and quite frankly, the Deadman's Statute creates a . . . shady legal area. This is, I believe, what Mr. Gudmundsson seeks to point out.'

'Yes,' said Mr. Gudmundsson. 'It is precisely what I seek to point out.' He bowed his head to the judge, glanced at the jurors, then turned and looked fully at Kabuo Miyamoto, who still sat erectly in his place at the defendant's table with his hands folded neatly in front of him. It was at this moment that the courtroom lights flickered in the storm, flickered again, and went out. A tree had fallen on Piersall Road and knocked the power wires down.

22

Well timed,' Nels Gudmundsson said when the lights went out in the Island County Courthouse. 'I have no further questions for Mrs. Heine, Your Honor. As far as we're concerned, she may step down.'

The four tall windows, frosted with vapor from the steam radiators, allowed a gray snowfall light to descend into the courtroom. Its timbre replaced that of the overhead lights and cast a subtle pall across the citizens in the gallery, who sat looking at one another and at the ceiling.

'Very well,' Judge Fielding replied. 'One thing at a time now. Patience, patience. Let's proceed methodically, lights or no lights. Mr. Hooks, will you redirect?'

Alvin Hooks rose and told the court that the prosecution had no further questions. 'In fact,' he added, winking at Nels, 'the timing of this power outage is even more propitious than my colleague for the defense suspects. Mrs. Heine is our last witness. The state rests at the same moment the county's power supply does.'

The jurors – some of them – stirred and smiled. 'The state rests,' repeated Lew Fielding. 'Very well, then. Very good. I was at any rate going to call for a lunch recess. We will get a report from the power company and take matters from there. We shall see what we shall see. In the meantime, I would like to ask Mr. Hooks and Mr. Gudmundsson to visit with me in my chambers.'

The judge picked his gavel up and dropped it again listlessly against its walnut plate. 'Go have lunch,' he advised. 'If we begin again at all, we'll begin at one sharp – one P.M. according to *my*

watch, which now reads' – he peered at it – 'eleven fifty-three. The electric clocks in this building are useless, incidentally. Pay no attention to them.'

Ed Soames held the door open for him, and Judge Fielding disappeared into his chambers. The citizens in the gallery filed out; the reporters picked up their notepads. Soames followed the judge with the intention of lighting a pair of candles he knew to be lodged in the back of a desk drawer. Judge Fielding would need them, after all. It was dark in his chambers, darker than dusk, with only a pale light seeping through the windows. Ed had the candles lit by the time Nels Gudmundsson and Alvin Hooks had arrived and situated themselves across the desk from Judge Fielding. The candles sat between them so that they looked like three men preparing for a séance – the judge in his silk robe, Nels in his bow tie with its touch of the theatrical, Alvin Hooks dapper and elegant, his legs crossed, one knee over the other. Ed made his way to the door and excused himself for interrupting; was there anything more the judge required? If not, he would see to the jurors.

'Oh, yes,' Judge Fielding answered. 'Go and check on the boiler room, won't you? Find out how it looks to keep the radiators perking. And ring the power company and get a report. And, let's see, scare up as many candles as you can find around.' He turned his attention to the attorneys in front of him. 'What am I forgetting?' he added.

'The hotel,' Alvin Hooks answered. 'You'd better ask about their boiler, too, or the jurors aren't going to make it. They didn't fare well last night, recollect, and with the power out things will be worse.'

'Right,' Ed Soames said. 'Will do.'

'Very well, Ed,' the judge returned. Then: 'Quite solicitous of you, Alvin.'

'I'm a solicitous man,' Alvin Hooks replied.

Soames went out, grimly. The courtroom was empty except for Ishmael Chambers, who sat in the gallery with the look on his face of a man willing to wait forever. Eleanor Dokes

had tended to the jurors; they were gathered in the anteroom getting coats on. 'The judge will be conferring throughout the lunch recess,' Ed told Ishmael Chambers. 'There's no point in waiting around to speak to him. An announcement will be made at one o'clock.'

The newspaperman stood and stuffed his notepad in his pocket. 'I'm not waiting,' he said softly. 'I was just thinking about things.'

'You'll have to think about them elsewhere,' said Ed. 'I'm going to lock up the courtroom.'

'All right,' said Ishmael. 'Excuse me.'

But he left slowly, preoccupied. Ed Soames watched him impatiently. A *strange bird*, he told himself. *'Bout half the man his father was.* Maybe the missing arm had something to do with it. Ed remembered Ishmael's father and shook his head, disconcerted. He and Arthur had been friendly enough, but the boy was not someone you could speak to.

Ishmael, with his shoulders hunched, his collar turned up, his pinned coat sleeve whipping in the wind, slogged through the snow to his office. The wind blew from off the water to the northwest and swept raucously down Hill Street. Ishmael had to keep his head lowered; when he raised it needles of snow lashed his eyes. He could see, nevertheless, that there were no lights anywhere in Amity Harbor; the power was out entirely. Four cars had been abandoned at haphazard angles along Hill Street, and one near the intersection of Hill and Ericksen had slid into a parked pickup truck, crumpling the driver's-side rear panel.

Ishmael pushed the door to his office open and shut it again with his shoulder. In his overcoat and snow-flecked hat he picked up the telephone to call his mother; she lived alone five miles from town, and he wanted to see how she was faring in the storm and find out if the south end was in as bad a state as Amity Harbor just now. If she stoked it up – and hung a curtain across the pantry door – the cookstove in the kitchen should keep her warm enough.

The phone in his office was dead, however, and gave him back only a hollow silence; so was his printing press dead, for that matter, he realized now with a start. The office, furthermore, was quickly going cold, giving up its electric heat, and he sat for a moment with his hand in his coat pocket and considered the snow whirling past his window. The stump of his amputated arm throbbed, or more precisely it was as if the arm were *there* again but half-numb, a phantom limb. His brain apparently did not fully grasp – or still disbelieved – that the arm was gone. At times past, just after the war, his missing arm had caused him a great deal of pain. A Seattle doctor had suggested sympathetic denervation of the limb – doing away with its ability to feel – but Ishmael had balked for unfathomable reasons. Whatever there was to feel in his arm, pain or anything else, he wanted to feel it, he didn't exactly know why. Now he reached up inside his coat, cupped the stump of his arm in his right hand, and thought of all he had to do on account of the power being out. He must see to his mother, first of all; he must use Tom Torgerson's ham radio set and put in a call to Anacortes about printing the paper there. He wanted to talk to Nels Gudmundsson and Alvin Hooks. He wanted to find out if the Anacortes ferry was running and if the power company would project a time for getting the wires up again. It would be good to find out where the lines were down and to go out to wherever it was for pictures. It would be good to drive out to the coast guard station, too, and get a full storm report, the speed of the wind, the height of the tides, the rate of snowfall. He should probably take his mother food from town and a can of kerosene. There was a kerosene heater in the shed she could use to keep her bedroom warm, but it needed a new wick. He'd have to stop in at Fisk's.

Ishmael slung his camera around his neck and shoved out into Hill Street to take pictures. Even in good conditions it was not easy for him, a one-armed man, to steady his camera in the way he would like. It was a large box camera with an accordion apparatus for the lens, unwieldy and as heavy as a stone around his neck, and he disliked it thoroughly. When he

had a choice he bolted it to a tripod; when he didn't he propped it on the stump of his missing arm, turned his head to look over his left shoulder, and got his pictures as best he could. Doing this always embarrassed him. Twisted and turned, the camera perched precariously beside his ear, he felt like a circus grotesque.

Ishmael took three shots of the car that had plowed into the pickup truck. It was impossible to keep the snow off the lens, and after a time he gave up trying. He felt certain that he should carry his camera, though, since a blizzard like this one did not come along often – the last had hit in '36 – and was sure to do the sort of damage that constituted island news. Nonetheless, from Ishmael's perspective this inclement weather should not be allowed to overshadow the trial of Kabuo Miyamoto, which was an affair of a different sort entirely and of a greater magnitude. In the hearts of his fellow islanders, though, weather of this sort overwhelmed absolutely everything, so that even when a man stood trial for his life it was no doubt the destruction of docks and bulkheads, the trees fallen on homes, the burst pipes, the stranded cars, that would most interest San Piedro's citizens. Ishmael, a native, could not understand how such transitory and accidental occurrences gained the upper hand in their view of things. It was as if they had been waiting all along for something enormous to enter their lives and make them part of the news. On the other hand the trial of Kabuo Miyamoto was the first island murder trial in twenty-eight years – Ishmael had looked it up in back issues of the *Review* – and unlike the storm was a human affair, stood squarely in the arena of human responsibility, was no mere accident of wind and sea but instead a thing humans could make sense of. Its progress, its impact, its outcome, its meaning – these were in the hands of people. Ishmael intended to lead with it – with the trial of Kabuo Miyamoto – if somehow he could get Thursday's edition printed despite the storm.

He picked his way down to Tom Torgerson's filling station, where a half-dozen battered cars stood lined up along the fence,

gathering snow on their hoods and roofs while Tom backed yet another into place – 'They're everywhere,' he told Ishmael from the wrecker's window. 'I've seen fifteen alone on Island Center Road and a dozen more up on Mill Run. It'll take me three days just to get to 'em.'

'Listen,' answered Ishmael. 'I know you're busy. But I need to get chains on my DeSoto. It's parked up on Hill Street and I can't bring it down to you. There are four stranded cars up there you'll need to move anyway. What do you say to heading up there next? I've got the chains sitting on the floor in the backseat. On top of that I've got to raise Anacortes on your radio, unless I can find a phone that's working. I've got no power to print my paper.'

'Whole island's down,' Tom Torgerson answered. 'Nobody's got power or phone anywhere. There's trees across lines in twenty different places. Crew's over on Piersall now trying to bring town back up – maybe by morning would be my guess. Anyway, okay, I'll get somebody on the DeSoto, but I just can't do it myself. We've got two high school kids working for us, I'll send one of 'em up, okay?'

'That's fine,' said Ishmael. 'The keys are in it. Any chance I can use your radio?'

'Took it home last week,' Tom answered. 'You want to head out to the house, that's fine. It's set up there – Lois'll show you.'

'I'm heading up to the coast guard station. Maybe I'll get them to put a call through for me if your radio isn't handy.'

'Either way,' Tom said. 'You're welcome to have at it, like I said. Just go on out to the house.'

Ishmael made his way down Main Street to Fisk's, where he bought a one-gallon can of kerosene and a wick for his mother's heater. Fisk had sold all of his size D batteries and all but one of his snow shovels. Three-quarters of his stock of candles had gone out the door and four-fifths of his supply of kerosene. Fisk, Kelton Fisk, had a highly developed sense of civic duty that had led him, at ten o'clock that morning, to refuse to sell more than

a gallon of kerosene to any one island household. He stood with his feet planted wide beside the potbellied stove, polishing his glasses on the hem of his flannel shirt and, without having been prompted by Ishmael to do so, recited in detail an inventory of items that had gone out his door since eight o'clock. He also reminded Ishmael that the wick he had purchased would have to be cut after six uses.

Ishmael stopped in at the Amity Harbor Restaurant and asked Elena Bridges to put two cheese sandwiches in a paper sack for him; he didn't have time to stay and eat. The restaurant, though half-dark, was full and loud with conversation – people sat in booths and at the counter wrapped in coats and scarves, with bags of groceries underfoot, and turned their glances toward the snowfall beyond the windows. They were glad to have found a place to come in from the storm. Later, when they were done eating, it would be difficult for them to go outside again. Ishmael, waiting, listened to the conversation of two fishermen hunkered down at the counter. They were lapping up tomato soup that had been warmed on the gas stove and speculating on when the power might come on again. One wondered if high tide, with the wind behind it at fifty-five knots, might not swamp the town docks. The other said that a wind out of the northwest would bring down a lot of trees that were used to southerlies, including a white fir he feared mightily that grew on a bluff behind his cabin. He had gone out that morning and tied his boat off to a mooring buoy with tripled lines and through his binoculars could see it from his living room swinging about when the wind gusted down the bay. The first man cursed and said he wished he'd done the same with his boat, which would have to take its chances moored on slack lines with a dozen fenders out, six on either side; it was too tricky in these winds to move it.

At a quarter to one Ishmael stopped in at the office of the Island County Power & Light Company on the corner of Second Street and Main. He was loaded down now with the sack of sandwiches stuffed into one coat pocket and the new heater wick in the other,

the camera dangling around his neck, and the can of kerosene carried in his hand. The report, which had been posted on the door for San Piedro's citizens to read, listed Piersall Road, Alder Valley Road, South Beach Drive, New Sweden Road, Mill Run Road, Woodhouse Cove Road, and at least a half-dozen others as blocked by fallen trees that had brought down power lines. It projected that power would be restored to Amity Harbor by eight o'clock the following morning and requested patience on the part of citizens. The repair crew had the help of the volunteer fire department and intended to work through the night, it said; all that could be done was being done as speedily as possible.

Ishmael returned to the courthouse. He ate one of his sandwiches in the second-floor corridor, sitting on a bench with his camera beside him and the can of kerosene on the floor. The corridor, he noticed, was slick with the snow that had melted from the shoes of passersby. Those who came down it did so carefully, treading their way like novice ice-skaters – the only light was whatever passed through the windows of offices and from there through the translucent glass panels of doors. The same was true of the public cloakroom – a damp, slippery, dark place full of dripping coats, bags, hats, and gloves. Ishmael left his kerosene and his camera there on the shelf above his coat. He knew no one would steal the camera, and he hoped no one would steal the kerosene. With the power out, the latter, he supposed, was suddenly a possibility.

Judge Fielding's announcement to the gathered court was terse. The trial would adjourn until eight o'clock the following morning, at which time the power company expected to have the lights on. There were high seas between San Piedro and the mainland that were preventing the Anacortes ferry from running, so it was not possible to house the members of the jury anywhere but where they had been housed the previous evening – the cold, dark rooms of the Amity Harbor Hotel, where they would have to make the best of things, since circumstances were now beyond Judge Fielding's control and other accommodations were not available. He hoped that the

elements would not divert the jurors from the crucial and difficult matters at hand. They had an obligation, Judge Fielding said, to brave the storm and power outage as best they could, in order to keep their minds fully on the facts of the trial and the testimony of its witnesses. The judge folded his arms in front of him and leaned from the bench so that the members of the jury could see, through the shadows, his shaggy, exhausted face. 'The thought of a retrial makes me weary,' he sighed. 'I think that with a little effort we can avoid one, can't we? I hope you will pass a relatively pleasant night at the Amity Harbor Hotel, but if you do not, then be brave about it and return tomorrow with your thoughts centered on the case at hand. This is a murder trial, after all,' the judge reminded them, 'and snow or no snow, we have got to keep that foremost in our hearts and minds.'

At two thirty-five that afternoon, Ishmael Chambers put his can of kerosene, the heater wick, and two bags of groceries into the trunk of his DeSoto. Tom Torgerson's high school kid had gotten the chains on his tires, and Ishmael, bending low, checked now to see that they were tightly bound. He scraped ice from the DeSoto's windows and ran the defroster before inching out into the snow. The trick, he knew, was to stay off the brake and to keep his traveling speed low and steady, backing off the accelerator at the crests of hills and evenly gaining momentum in the dips. On First Hill he heard his chains, felt them biting, and made his way down cautiously, in first gear, leaning forward in his seat. He did not stop when he got to Main but turned immediately left instead, skidding a little, in the direction of Center Valley Road. He was less worried now. The snow had compacted under the wheels of other cars. The roads were passable if you were patient and paid attention. His chief concern was not the snow but other, more careless drivers. It would be important to watch his rearview mirror and to pull over, if that was possible, when he was being gained on.

Ishmael took Lundgren Road out of Amity Harbor because it made a steady ascent, without curves or coils, on a grade more

reasonable than Mill Run's or Piersall's, and because it had not been listed on the power company door as blocked by fallen trees. He did see, at George Freeman's place, a Douglas fir that had toppled over so that its root wad now stood twelve feet high beside George's mailbox. The top section of the tree had crushed a piece of George's split-rail cedar fence. George was out there with a chisel-toothed bucksaw, his wool hat perched on top of his balding head, working on it in the storm.

Ishmael pushed on down the back side of Lundgren and turned onto Scatter Springs Drive. In the first curve a Hudson was nosed into a ditch; in the second a Packard Clipper sedan had flipped onto its roof and sat in the brambles beside the road with its undercarriage facing toward the sky. Ishmael stopped and took photographs of it, setting his tripod on the road verge. The straight lines of the alders and maples behind the Packard, blunt and clean against a sea of snow, the hard, grayish quality of the snowstorm light, the forlorn and helpless car itself with its upturned tires gathering soft mounds of white, its passenger compartment nuzzled into the frozen undergrowth so that only the bottom halves of the windows showed – this was a storm scene if ever there was one, and Ishmael shot it with an eye toward its pathetic aspect and because it seemed to him to embody what the storm was about: a world in which a Packard Clipper lost its meaning and became unmoored from whatever purpose it originally had; it had no more practical value now than a ship on the bottom of the sea.

Ishmael was glad to see that the driver's side window had been rolled down and that no one was still in the car. He thought he recognized it as Charlie Torval's – Charlie lived on New Sweden Road and made his living building bulkheads and docks and anchoring mooring buoys. He owned a lot of driving equipment, a barge on which a crane had been mounted, and – if Ishmael remembered it right – this rust brown Packard. Perhaps it would be an embarrassment to him if an image of his upturned car appeared in the pages of the *Review*. Ishmael decided to talk to him about it before going ahead with the photograph.

In the third bend in Scatter Springs Drive – a hairpin turn where the road rolled down out of cedar woods and onto the breaks over Center Valley – Ishmael saw three men busying themselves with a snowbound Plymouth half in the road: one jumped up and down on its bumper, another squatted and kept an eye on its spinning tires, a third sat behind the wheel with his door thrown open and worked the accelerator. Ishmael threaded past without stopping and swiveled, skidding – a little gleefully, his stomach leaping – onto Center Valley Road. An odd enthusiasm for this drive and its dangers had been growing in him ever since he'd left First Hill.

The DeSoto, he knew, was a dubious snow car. Ishmael had mounted a cherry wood knob on its steering wheel in order to ease the difficulties driving presented to a man with only one arm. He had changed nothing else, though, and didn't intend to. The DeSoto, strictly an island car for more than a decade, had been purchased by Ishmael's father fifteen years before, a four-speed with a semiautomatic transmission, hypoid rear axle, and column shift. Arthur had traded in his Ford Model A plus five hundred dollars cash for it in 1939 at a lot in Bellingham. It was a modest vehicle, square and bulky in the manner of a Dodge, so long in front as to look out of balance and with its radiator grille low over the bumper. Ishmael had hung on to it in part from sheer inertia, in part because driving it reminded him of his father. Sitting behind the wheel he felt his father's contours in the way the seat molded under him.

Center Valley's strawberry fields lay under nine inches of powder and were as fuzzy through the snowfall as a landscape in a dream, with no discernible hard edges. On Scatter Springs Drive the trees had closed the road in so that the sky was little more than an indistinct, drab ribbon overhead, but down here the dramatic expanse of it was visible, chaotic and fierce. Looking out past the windshield wipers Ishmael saw billions of snowflakes falling in long tangents, driven southward, the sky shrouded and furious. The wind propelled the snow against the sides of barns and homes, and Ishmael could hear it whistling

through the wing window's rubber molding, which had been loose now for many years: it had been loose back when his father was alive, one of the car's small idiosyncrasies, part of the reason he was loath to part with it.

He passed Ole Jurgensen's house, where white wood smoke furled from the chimney and disappeared on the wind – Ole, apparently, was keeping warm. The snowfall obliterated the borders between the fields and made Kabuo Miyamoto's long-cherished seven acres indistinguishable from the land that surrounded them. All human claims to the landscape were superseded, made null and void by the snow. The world was one world, and the notion that a man might kill another over some small patch of it did not make sense – though Ishmael knew that such things happened. He had been to war, after all.

At the intersection of Center Valley Road and South Beach Drive Ishmael spied, ahead of him in the bend, a car that had failed to negotiate the grade as it coiled around a grove of snow-hung cedars. Ishmael recognized it as the Willys station wagon that belonged to Fujiko and Hisao Imada; in fact, Hisao was working with a shovel at its rear right wheel, which had dropped into the roadside drainage ditch.

Hisao Imada was small enough most of the time, but he looked even smaller bundled up in his winter clothes, his hat pulled low and his scarf across his chin so that only his mouth, nose, and eyes showed. Ishmael knew he would not ask for help, in part because San Piedro people never did, in part because such was his character. Ishmael decided to park at the bottom of the grade beside Gordon Ostrom's mailbox and walk the fifty yards up South Beach Drive, keeping his DeSoto well out of the road while he convinced Hisao Imada to accept a ride from him.

Ishmael had known Hisao a long time. When he was eight years old he'd seen the Japanese man trudging along behind his swaybacked white plow horse: a Japanese man who carried a machete at his belt in order to cut down vine maples. His family lived in two canvas tents while they cleared their newly purchased property. They drew water from a feeder creek and

warmed themselves at a slash pile kept burning by his children – girls in rubber boots, including Hatsue – who dragged branches and brought armfuls of brush to it. Hisao was lean and tough and worked methodically, never altering his pace. He wore a shoulder strap T-shirt, and this, coupled with the sharp-honed weapon at his belt, put Ishmael in mind of the pirates he'd read about in illustrated books his father had brought him from the Amity Harbor Public Library. But all of this was more than twenty years ago now, so that as he approached Hisao Imada in the South Beach Drive, Ishmael saw the man in another light: hapless, small in the storm, numb with the cold and ineffective with his shovel while the trees threatened to come down around him.

Ishmael saw something else, too. On the far side of the car, with her own shovel in hand, Hatsue worked without looking up. She was digging through the snow to the black earth of the cedar woods and throwing spadefuls of it underneath the tires.

Fifteen minutes later the three of them walked down the road toward his DeSoto. The Willys station wagon's rear right tire had been perforated by a fallen branch still wedged up under both axles. The rear length of exhaust pipe had been crushed, too. The car wasn't going anywhere – Ishmael could see that – but it took Hisao some time to accept this truth. With his shovel he'd struggled defiantly, as if the tool could indeed change the car's fate. After ten minutes of polite assistance Ishmael wondered aloud if his DeSoto wasn't the answer and persisted in this vein for five minutes more before Hisao yielded to it as an unavoidable evil. He opened his car door, put in his shovel, and came out with a bag of groceries and a gallon of kerosene. Hatsue, for her part, went on with her digging, saying nothing and keeping to the far side of the car, and throwing black earth beneath the tires.

At last her father rounded the Willys and spoke to her once in Japanese. She stopped her work and came into the road then, and Ishmael was granted a good look at her. He had spoken to her only the morning before in the second-floor hallway of the

Island County Courthouse, where she'd sat on a bench with her back to an arched window just outside the assessor's office. Her hair had been woven then, as now, into a black knot against the nape of her neck. She'd told him four times to go away.

'Hello, Hatsue,' said Ishmael. 'I can give you a lift home, if you want.'

'My father says he's accepted,' Hatsue replied. 'He says he's grateful for your help.'

She followed her father and Ishmael down the hill, still carrying her shovel, to the DeSoto. When they were well on their way down South Beach Drive, easing through the flats along the salt water, Hisao explained in broken English that his daughter was staying with him during the trial; Ishmael could drop them at his house. Then he described how a branch had hurled down into the road in front of him; to avoid it he'd hit his brake pedal. The Willys had fishtailed while it climbed the snapped branch and nudged down into the drainage ditch.

Only once, driving and listening, nodding politely and inserting small exclamations of interest – '*I see, I see, yes, of course, I can understand*' – did Ishmael risk looking at Hatsue Miyamoto in the rectangle of his rear-view mirror: a risk that filled all of two seconds. He saw then that she was staring out the side window with enormous deliberation, with intense concentration on the world outside his car – she was making it a point to be absorbed by the storm – and that her black hair was wringing wet with snow. Two strands had escaped from their immaculate arrangement and lay pasted against her frozen cheek.

'I know it's caused you trouble,' Ishmael said. 'But don't you think the snow is beautiful? Isn't it beautiful coming down?'

The boughs in the fir trees hung heavy with it, the fence rails and mailboxes wore mantles of it, the road before him lay filled with it, and there was no sign, anywhere, of people. Hisao Imada agreed that it was so – *ah, yes, beautiful*, he commented softly – and at the same moment his daughter turned swiftly forward so that her eyes met Ishmael's in the mirror. It was the cryptic look,

he recognized, that she'd aimed at him fleetingly on the second floor of the courthouse when he'd tried to speak to her before her husband's trial. Ishmael still could not read what her eyes meant – punishment, sorrow, perhaps buried anger, perhaps all three simultaneously. Perhaps some sort of disappointment.

For the life of him, after all these years, he couldn't read the expression on her face. If Hisao wasn't present, he told himself, he'd ask her flat out what she was trying to say by looking at him with such detached severity and saying nothing at all. What, after all, had he done to her? What had she to be angry about? The anger, he thought, ought to be his own; yet years ago now the anger about her had finished gradually bleeding out of him and had slowly dried up and blown away. Nothing had replaced it, either. He had not found anything to take its place. When he saw her, as he sometimes did, in the aisles of Petersen's Grocery or on the street in Amity Harbor, he turned away from seeing her with just a little less hurry than she turned away from seeing him; they avoided one another rigorously. It had come to him one day three years before how immersed she was in her own existence. She'd knelt in front of Fisk's Hardware Center tying her daughter's shoelaces in bows, her purse on the sidewalk beside her. She hadn't known he was watching. He'd seen her kneeling and working on her daughter's shoes, and it had come to him what her life was. She was a married woman with children. She slept in the same bed every night with Kabuo Miyamoto. He had taught himself to forget as best he could. The only thing left was a vague sense of waiting for Hatsue – a fantasy – to return to him. How, exactly, this might be achieved he could not begin to imagine, but he could not keep himself from feeling that he was waiting and that these years were only an interim between other years he had passed and would pass again with Hatsue.

She spoke now, from the backseat, having turned again to look out the window. 'Your newspaper,' she said. That was all.

'Yes,' answered Ishmael. 'I'm listening.'

'The trial, Kabuo's trial, is unfair,' said Hatsue. 'You should talk about that in your newspaper.'

'What's unfair?' asked Ishmael. 'What exactly is unfair? I'll be happy to write about it if you'll tell me.'

She was still staring out the window at the snow with strands of wet hair pasted against her cheek. 'It's all unfair,' she told him bitterly. 'Kabuo didn't kill anyone. It isn't in his heart to kill anyone. They brought in that sergeant to say he's a killer – that was just prejudice. Did you hear the things that man was saying? How Kabuo had it in his heart to kill? How horrible he is, a killer? Put it in your paper, about that man's testimony, how all of it was unfair. How the whole trial is unfair.'

'I understand what you mean,' answered Ishmael. 'But I'm not a legal expert. I don't know if the judge should have suppressed Sergeant Maples's testimony. But I hope the jury comes in with the right verdict. I could write a column about that, maybe. How we all hope the justice system does its job. How we hope for an honest result.'

'There shouldn't even *be* a trial,' said Hatsue. 'The whole thing is wrong, it's *wrong*.'

'I'm bothered, too, when things are unfair,' Ishmael said to her. 'But sometimes I wonder if unfairness isn't . . . part of things. I wonder if we should even expect fairness, if we should assume we have some sort of right to it. Or if – '

'I'm not talking about the whole universe,' cut in Hatsue. 'I'm talking about people – the sheriff, that prosecutor, the judge, you. People who can do things because they run newspapers or arrest people or convict them or decide about their lives. People don't have to be unfair, do they? That isn't just *part of things*, when people are unfair to somebody.'

'No, it isn't,' Ishmael replied coldly. 'You're right – people don't have to be unfair.'

When he let them out beside the Imadas' mailbox he felt that somehow he had gained the upper hand – he had an emotional advantage. He had spoken with her and she had spoken back, wanting something from him. She'd volunteered a desire. The

strain between them, the hostility he felt – it was better than nothing, he decided. It was an emotion of some sort they shared. He sat in the DeSoto and watched Hatsue trudge away through the falling snow, carrying her shovel on her shoulder. It occurred to him that her husband was going out of her life in the same way he himself once had. There had been circumstances then and there were circumstances now; there were things beyond anyone's control. Neither he nor Hatsue had wanted the war to come – neither of them had wanted that intrusion. But now her husband was accused of murder, and that changed things between them.

23

The coast guard lighthouse on the rocks at Point White was a tower built out of reinforced concrete that rose a hundred feet above the sea. In the thirty years before it went up, eleven ships came aground at the point – two mail steamers, seven timber schooners, a Norwegian freighter, and a four-masted bark with a cargo of Newcastle coal on board, inbound for Seattle in a windstorm. There was no sign of them at all anymore – they'd broken up and, over the years, washed away into the ocean. There was only a jumble of barnacle-encrusted sea rock and a view of the water stretching to the horizon, unbroken, gray, and blurred in the distance at the place where the ocean and the sky met.

On occasions when the tide ran exceptionally high, waves washed perilously close to the lighthouse, dashing its base with salt-tinged algae, which clung to it now like sea moss. Underneath the lighthouse's copper dome lay sixteen reflecting prisms and four projecting lenses floating in a bath of mercury. The coast guard kept the clockworks greased, and the lenses revolved twice each minute. And yet there were still accidents, despite everything. There seemed no way to prevent them. In a thick fog the light could not be seen and boats continued to come aground. The coast guard installed sounding boards along island beaches and anchored numbered buoys at intervals in the shipping channel, and these measures seemed sufficient to islanders until the next accident came along. A tug towing a diesel ferry from San Francisco broke up on the rocks a mile to the north; then a tug towing a barge full of peeler logs; then a salvage steamer working out of Victoria. News of such wrecks

was received by islanders with a grim brand of determinism; it seemed to many that such things were ordained by God, or at any rate unavoidable. They came out in large numbers in the aftermath of a shipwreck to stand on the beach and stare in awe at the latest foundering vessel; some brought binoculars and cameras. Old fishermen with time on their hands built bonfires out of driftwood and warmed themselves while the sea made breaches in the hulls of ships that had come hard aground. There was much discussion and finger pointing. Working without a single hard fact, islanders drew a variety of conclusions: pilot error, pilot inexperience, misread charts, crossed signals, fog, wind, tide, ineptitude. When after days a ship broke apart, or the pieces of it sank, or a salvage company gave up in despair after off-loading one twenty-fifth of its cargo, islanders watched blankly with their mouths hard-set and shook their heads once or twice. For a week or so they spoke cautiously of what they'd seen, and then it faded out of the realm of the discourse they shared together. They thought of it only at private moments.

Ishmael Chambers, in the last light of day, found himself seated in the office of the lighthouse chief petty officer, a large man named Evan Powell. The place was lit by kerosene lanterns and heated by a cast-iron wood stove. Outside a generator powered the lighthouse, so that each thirty seconds the beacon flashed against the glass of the office window. Petty Officer Powell kept an immaculate desk – a calendar blotter, twin upright pen stands, a nearly full ashtray, a telephone. He sat back in a reclining desk chair with a lit cigarette between his fingers, scratching his face and coughing. 'I've got a cold,' he explained to Ishmael hoarsely. 'I'm not firing on every cylinder right now. But I'll help you out if I can, Mr. Chambers. You need something for your newspaper?'

'I do,' said Ishmael. 'I'm putting an article together on this storm. I'm wondering if you have archives of some kind, weather records from way back, maybe, something I could take a look at. Go through old logs, something like that, try

to make some comparisons. I can't remember a storm like this one, but that doesn't mean it never happened.'

'We do a *lot* of record keeping,' Petty Officer Powell replied. 'The lighthouse has been here longer than the coast guard – I don't know how far back there's reliable information – anyway you can have a look, if you want. There's more stuff around than you'd ever want to get into. I'd be interested in seeing what you find out.'

Petty Officer Powell fell forward in his chair and carefully snubbed out his cigarette. He picked up the telephone and, dialing a single number, drew a handkerchief out of his pocket. 'Who's this?' he said gruffly into the receiver. 'I want you to see if you can find Levant. Find Levant and tell him to come down here. Tell him to bring a couple kerosene lanterns. Tell him I need him right away.'

He put his hand over the receiver mouth, blew his nose, and looked at Ishmael. 'How much time you got?' he said. 'I can spare Levant to help you out for a couple of hours, tops.'

'That's all right,' said Ishmael. 'I don't want to trouble anybody here. Just point me in the right direction.'

Evan Powell slipped his hand from the receiver. 'Smoltz,' he said. 'Get Levant. Tell him I need him right away. Find Levant for this.'

He hung up and blew his nose one more time. 'There's no shipping in this weather,' he said. 'We raised Neah Bay an hour ago. We figure the snow isn't going to let up until tomorrow afternoon.'

The radioman named Levant arrived. Levant was tall enough to be a basketball player, six five or six six, with a large Adam's apple and tightly curled black hair, and he carried a lantern and a flashlight. 'This man here is Ishmael Chambers,' Petty Officer Powell explained. 'He runs the newspaper down in town and needs to take a look into our weather records. I want you to set things up for him, get him squared away, help him out. Give him what he needs, set him up a couple lanterns.'

'Anything else?' Levant said.

'Don't miss your radio watch over it,' Powell said. 'There's two hours before you're on.'

'Listen,' said Ishmael. 'Just point me in the right direction. I don't want to take anybody's time.'

Levant led the way to the records room on the second floor, which was stacked floor to ceiling with wooden crates, file cabinets, and stacked duffel bags. It smelled of brittle paper and of mimeograph ink and had not been dusted recently. 'Everything's dated,' Levant pointed out, finding a place for a lantern. 'That's how we do things – by dates, mainly. Radio transmissions, shipping log, weather reports, maintenance – everything's in here by date, I guess. There's a date on everything.'

'You have a radio watch?' Ishmael asked. 'Are you the radioman?'

'I am now,' Levant said. 'I have been for the last couple months or so – last guys got transferred, I moved up.'

'Is there a lot of record keeping with your job? Does a radioman contribute to all of this?'

'There's a guy shorthands all the radio transmissions,' Levant explained to him. 'He writes 'em up, files 'em, they end up here in a cabinet. And that's all they're good for, seems like. They just take up space, is all. No one pays any attention.'

Ishmael picked up a manila folder and turned it toward the lantern light. 'Looks like I'm going to be awhile,' he said. 'Why don't you go about your business? If I need something I can find you.'

'I'll bring another lantern,' Levant replied.

He was alone then with the fog of his breath in the lantern light and the crates of maritime records. The room smelled of salt water and snow and of the past – it was full of the scent of lost days. Ishmael tried to concentrate on his work, but the image of Hatsue in the backseat of his car – her eyes meeting his in the rearview mirror – carried him away into his memories.

The first time he'd seen her after the war she'd tried, he recalled, to be amiable, but he had not been capable of accepting this.

He'd stood behind her with his milk and crackers, waiting in line at Petersen's. He'd stood in silence, hating her, and she'd turned toward him with a baby on her shoulder and said with a detached formality that she was very sorry to have heard about his arm, how he had lost it in the war. She was, he remembered, as beautiful as ever, a little older and harder around the eyes, and it hurt him to look at her face and at her hair, which she wore in a braid down her back. Ishmael stood there looking pale and ill – he had a cold and a mild fever – with the sleeve of his mackinaw coat pinned up, his milk and crackers clutched in his hand, and stared long and hard at Hatsue's baby while the grocery checker, Eleanor Hill, pretended not to notice that Hatsue had spoken of what others, including Eleanor, would not acknowledge – that Ishmael was missing an arm. 'The Japs did it,' Ishmael said flatly, still staring hard at the baby. 'They shot my arm off. *Japs*.'

Hatsue looked at him a moment longer, then turned toward Eleanor Hill again and opened up her coin purse. 'I'm sorry,' said Ishmael immediately. 'I didn't mean that. I didn't mean what I said.' But she showed no sign of having heard, and so he put down the crackers and milk and put his hand on her shoulder. 'I'm sorry,' he said a second time, but she still didn't turn to look at him, and she moved away from his hand. 'I'm more than sorry. I'm miserable. Do you understand? I don't mean what I say. You can't trust me when I speak anymore. I just say things. I – '

Eleanor Hill was pretending, busily, that Ishmael, a war veteran, wasn't standing in her presence speaking the words he was speaking. It was what he'd gotten when he spoke about himself, when he'd tried to say what he had to say; there was nothing he could easily explain to anyone, and nobody who wanted to listen. There were other boys who had been to the war, and he found that on occasion he could speak to them, but that didn't mean anything. 'I'm sorry, Hatsue,' he said one more time. 'I'm sorry about everything. All of it.'

He'd left without buying the milk and crackers. He went home and wrote an apologetic letter, explaining at length that

he was not himself, that he sometimes said what he did not mean, that he wished he had never said *Jap* in front of her, that he would never do so again. The letter sat in his desk drawer for two weeks before he threw it away.

Despite himself he knew where she lived and which car she drove and when he saw her husband, Kabuo Miyamoto, he felt something tighten around his heart. He felt himself grow tight inside, and for a long time he could not sleep at night. He would lie awake until two o'clock in the morning, then turn a light on and attempt to read from a book or magazine. Gradually dawn came and he would not have slept. He would go out to wander the island's trails in the early morning, at a slow pace. Once, so doing, he came across her. She was down on the beach at Fletcher's Bay, raking for steamer clams busily. Her baby slept on a blanket beside her, underneath an umbrella. Ishmael had come up the beach deliberately, and squatted beside Hatsue while she raked clams free and dropped them into a bucket. 'Hatsue,' he'd pleaded. 'Can I talk to you?'

'I'm married,' she'd said, without looking at him. 'It isn't right for us to be alone. It will look bad, Ishmael. People will talk.'

'There's no one here,' answered Ishmael. '*I've got* to talk to you, Hatsue. You owe me that much, don't you? Don't you think you do?'

'Yes,' said Hatsue. 'I do.'

She turned away from him and looked at her baby. The sun had crept up onto the child's face; Hatsue adjusted the beach umbrella.

'I'm like a dying person,' Ishmael said to her. 'I haven't been happy for a single moment since the day you left for Manzanar. It's like carrying a weight around in my gut, a ball of lead or something. Do you know how that feels, Hatsue? Sometimes I think I'm going to go crazy, end up in the hospital in Bellingham. I'm crazy, I don't sleep, I'm up all night. It never leaves me alone, this feeling. Sometimes I don't think I can stand it. I tell myself this can't go on, but it goes on anyway. There isn't anything I can do.'

Hatsue pushed the hair from her eyes with the back of her left wrist. 'I'm sorry for you,' she said softly. 'I don't want your unhappiness. I never meant for you to suffer. But I don't know what I can do for you now. I don't know how I can help you.'

'You'll think this is crazy,' Ishmael said. 'But all I want is to hold you. All I want is just to hold you once and smell your hair, Hatsue. I think after that I'll be better.'

Hatsue had looked at him, hard, for a long moment, the clamming rake clutched in her hand. 'Look,' she said. 'You know I can't. I can never touch you, Ishmael. Everything has to be over between us. We both have to put it all behind us and go on, live our lives. There's no halfway, from my point of view. I'm married, I have a baby, and I can't let you hold me. So what I want you to do right now is get up and walk away from here and forget about me forever. You have to let go of me, Ishmael.'

'I know you're married,' Ishmael had said. 'I want to forget about you, I do. I think if you hold me I can start, Hatsue. Hold me once, and I'll walk away and never speak to you again.'

'No,' she'd said. 'It can't be. You'll have to find some other way. I'm not going to hold you, ever.'

'I'm not talking about love,' he said. 'I'm not asking you to try to love me. But just as one human being to another, just because I'm miserable and don't know where to turn, I just need to be in your arms.'

Hatsue sighed and turned her eyes from his. 'Go away,' she'd said. 'I hurt for you, I honestly do, I feel terrible for your misery, but I'm not going to hold you, Ishmael. You're going to have to live without holding me. Now get up and leave me alone, please.'

The years had passed, and now her husband was on trial for the murder of a man at sea. It dawned on Ishmael, in the coast guard record room, that perhaps something pertinent to Kabuo's case could be found right here among these files. And suddenly he put aside his weather records and

began to search the cabinets, and a strange excitement grew in him.

It took Ishmael all of fifteen minutes to find what it was he wanted. It was in a file cabinet to the right of the door, near the front of the third drawer down – records for September 15 and 16 of 1954. No wind, moderate tides, thick fog, balmy. One ship through at 0120 hours, the S.S. *West Corona*, Greek owned, Liberian flag; she'd called in her position from out to the west, headed southbound toward Seattle. The radio transmissions were in shorthand: the *Corona* had put in a call from northwest of sounding board 56, looking for a fix from the lighthouse radio signal. She'd come down the strait plotting soundings as she went, but the pilot would not put his faith in this, and at 0126 hours that morning, in heavy fog, had radioed the lighthouse for assistance. There was interference and the signal was weak, so the radioman on duty had advised the *Corona*'s navigator to take a reading off sounding board 56, which lay on the north shore of Lanheedron Island, and to plot his position accordingly. The *Corona*'s navigator had ordered a whistle blast and timed the interval of the echo. He did his division and his multiplication and relayed his position to the radioman. The *Corona* was out of the lane, he reported, somewhere south of buoy 56, and would have to dogleg to the northeast, bisecting Ship Channel Bank.

Ship Channel Bank. Where Dale Middleton, Vance Cope, and Leonard George had all seen Carl Heine with his net out on the night he went into the sea. On that night an enormous freighter had plowed right through the fishing grounds, throwing before it a wake large enough to knock even a big man overboard.

At 0142, on pilot's orders, the *Corona* made its corrective dogleg while the navigator fixed twice more on the sounding board. Later the navigator took three more insurance readings – boards 58, 59, and 60. It seemed to the *Corona*'s radioman that they were safely back in the shipping lane. In the vicinity of White Sand Bay he picked up the lighthouse's radio beacon and, gaining confidence by the moment, made the big swing to the

south. The *Corona* locked onto the lighthouse radio signal and made headway for Seattle.

Everything was in triplicate – military standard carbon copies. They were signed by the radioman's assistant, a Seaman Philip Milholland – he'd transcribed the radio transmissions. Ishmael slipped three center pages of Seaman Milholland's notes free and folded them into quarters. The pages fit neatly into his coat pocket, and he let them sit there, feeling them, composing himself a little. Then he grabbed one of the lanterns and went out.

At the bottom of the stairs, in an anteroom, he found Levant slowly paging through the *Saturday Evening Post* beside a kerosene floor heater. 'I'm done,' he pointed out. 'There's just one more thing. Is Philip Milholland around somewhere? I want to talk to him.'

Levant shook his head and put the magazine on the floor. 'You know Milholland?' he said.

'Sort of,' said Ishmael. 'An acquaintance.'

'Milholland's gone. He got transferred out to Cape Flattery, Milholland and Robert Miller. That's when we moved up.'

'We?' asked Ishmael. 'Who's we?'

'Me and Smoltz, the two of us, we started in together. Smoltz.'

'When was that? When did Milholland leave?'

'That was back in September,' said Levant. 'Me and Smoltz started in September 16 as dogwatch radio team.'

'Dogwatch? Like at night?'

'Night shift, yes,' Levant said. 'Me and Smoltz work the night shift.'

'So Milholland's gone,' said Ishmael. 'He left September 15?'

'He couldn't have left the fifteenth,' said Levant. ''Cause he worked the night of the fifteenth. So he must have left on the sixteenth – that's it. He and Miller went out to Flattery the sixteenth of September.'

Nobody knows, thought Ishmael. The men who'd heard the *Corona*'s radio transmissions had gone somewhere else the next

day. They'd done their watch on the night of the fifteenth, slept through the morning of the sixteenth, and then they'd left San Piedro. The transcribed transmissions had gone into a manila folder, and the folder had gone into a file cabinet in a room stuffed full of coast guard records. And who would find them there? They were as good as lost forever, it seemed to Ishmael, and no one knew the truth of the matter: that on the night Carl Heine had drowned, stopping his watch at 1:47, a freighter plowed through Ship Channel Bank at 1:42 – just five minutes earlier – no doubt throwing before it a wall of water big enough to founder a small gillnetting boat and toss even a big man overboard. Or rather one person, he himself, knew this truth. That was the heart of it.

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Ishmael's mother had the woodstove in the kitchen going – he could see the smoke rising thick from the chimney, a ghostly white against the hard-falling snow – and was standing at the sink in her overcoat and scarf when Ishmael passed in front of her window carrying his can of kerosene. A fog of condensation had formed on the inside of the pane, so that her image appeared to him as a kind of silhouette, a vague impression of his mother at the sink, refracted and fragmented, a wash of color. As he passed by, peering through the window mist and snowfall, he saw her hand work with sudden clarity to wipe a circle of the pane dry, and then her eye met his and she waved. Ishmael held up the can of kerosene, still moving steadily toward the kitchen door. His mother had shoveled clear a path to the woodshed, but the snowfall was already covering it. Her shovel stood propped against the fence railing.

He stood in the kitchen doorway, set the kerosene down, and felt the place in his coat pocket where Philip Milholland's coast guard notes lay folded against his leg. He took his hand out and then returned it and touched the notes again. Then he picked up the kerosene and went in.

His mother had on rubber boots, unbuckled, and had used small finishing nails to tack a wool blanket across the entry to the living room. The light in the kitchen came opaquely through the wet windows; the room was warm, and on the table, neatly arranged, lay a collection of candles, a kerosene lantern, two flashlights, and a box of wooden matches. His mother had set a soup kettle full of snow on the woodstove; it hissed and snapped as Ishmael shut the door behind him. 'I've got some food in the

car,' he said, setting the can of kerosene against the wall, 'and a new wick for the heater.' He put it on the table beside the candles. 'Did you freeze last night?' he asked.

'Not at all,' replied his mother. 'I'm really glad to see you, Ishmael. I tried to call, but the phone is out. The lines must all be down.'

'They are,' said Ishmael. 'Everywhere.'

She finished pouring snowmelt water from a second kettle into jugs in the sink, then dried her hands and turned to him. 'Are people stranded?' she said.

'I must have seen fifty cars along the roads between here and town,' said Ishmael. 'I saw Charlie Torval's car upside down in the blackberry stickers up on Scatter Springs. Trees are down all over the place; there's no power anywhere. They're trying to get town back up by morning – they're doing town first, like always. If they do get it lit again you should come stay with me; we'll shut this place up and move to town, there's no need to stay out here and freeze to death. I – '

'I'm not freezing,' his mother said, pulling the scarf from her head. 'In fact, it's a little *too* hot just now. I just got done shoveling and bringing stove wood around. I'm perfectly comfortable except for my worry about what's going to happen when the plumbing thaws out. The last thing I need is a burst pipe.'

'We'll open the taps,' answered Ishmael. 'You shouldn't have any problems. There's a pressure valve in the line on the east wall in the cellar – Dad put it in, remember?' He sat down at the table and cupped the stump of his amputated arm in his hand, then rubbed and squeezed it gently. 'Thing aches when it gets this cold,' he said.

'It's twelve degrees,' said his mother. 'Are those groceries up in your car going to freeze? Maybe we should go for them.'

'All right,' said Ishmael. 'Let's.'

'When your arm is ready,' said his mother.

They brought the two bags of groceries down, as well as Ishmael's camera. His mother's flower beds were all covered

over, and the snow was lining up on her holly trees and mulberry and frosting the tops of her rhododendrons. She was, she said, worried about her flowers, whether the less hardy of them would survive the freeze – she'd lost flowers in lesser weather, she pointed out. Ishmael saw where she had worked with the wheelbarrow at bringing cordwood from the shed to the kitchen door; there were splinters around the wood block where she'd cut kindling.

His mother, at fifty-six, was the sort of country widow who lives alone quite capably; he knew that she rose at a quarter after five every morning, made her bed, fed her chickens, showered, dressed, cooked herself a poached egg and toast, steeped strong tea and sipped it at the table, then got immediately at her breakfast dishes and whatever housework needed doing. By nine o'clock, he speculated, there was nothing left she felt obligated to do, and so she read or tended her flowers or drove in to Petersen's Grocery. It was unclear to him, though, exactly how she passed her time. He knew she read incessantly – Shakespeare, Henry James, Dickens, Thomas Hardy – but he did not think this could fill her days. On Wednesday evenings twice a month she attended a meeting of her book circle, five other women who enjoyed discussing *Benito Cereno*, *Flowers of Evil*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *Jane Eyre*. She was on friendly terms with Lillian Taylor, with whom she shared a passion for flowers and for *The Magic Mountain* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. The two of them would stoop or stand in the garden picking the seeds from the feathery spires of astilbes a few weeks past their prime, then sit at a garden table shaking the seeds clean and collecting them in small manila packets. They drank lemon-scented water and ate sandwiches with the crusts cut off at three o'clock in the afternoon. 'We're dainty old ladies,' he heard Lillian exclaim once. 'We'll wear painters' smocks and blue berets and do watercolors next – what do you say to that, Helen? Are you ready to be an old biddy with her paints?'

Helen Chambers was homely and dignified in the manner of

Eleanor Roosevelt. Her homeliness composed a form of beauty; she was quite impressive to look at. Her nose was broad and her forehead stately. For her shopping trips to town she wore a camel's-hair coat and a boater festooned with ribbon and striped lace. Her husband's death had inspired in her a greater attentiveness to her books and flowers and a greater need for people. Ishmael had stood beside her at church while she greeted her friends and acquaintances with the sort of cordiality and genuine feeling he couldn't muster in himself. Often he ate lunch with her afterward. He had explained to his mother, when she asked him to say grace, that like his father before him he was an incorrigible agnostic and suspected God was a hoax. 'Suppose you had to choose right now,' his mother had once replied. 'Supposing somebody put a gun to your head and forced you to choose, Ishmael. Is there a God or isn't there?'

'Nobody has a gun to my head,' Ishmael had answered her. 'I don't *have* to choose, do I? That's the whole point. I don't have to know for certain one way or the other if – '

'Nobody *knows*, Ishmael. What do you *believe*'

'I don't believe anything. It isn't in me. Besides, I don't know what you mean by God. If you tell me what he is, Mom, I'll tell you if I think he exists.'

'Everybody knows what God is,' said his mother. 'You feel what God is, don't you?'

'I don't feel what God is,' answered Ishmael. 'I don't feel anything either way. No feeling about it comes to me – it's not something I have a choice about. Isn't a feeling like that supposed to *happen*? Isn't it just supposed to happen? I can't make a feeling like that up, can I? Maybe God just chooses certain people, and the rest of us – we can't feel Him.'

'You felt Him as a child,' his mother said. 'I remember, Ishmael. You felt Him.'

'That was a long time ago,' Ishmael answered. 'What a child feels – that's different.'

Now, in the twilight, he sat in the kitchen of his mother's house with Philip Milholland's notes in his coat pocket and

tried to feel that intimation of God he had felt as a younger person. It was not something he could conjure up again. After the war he had tried to feel God, to take solace in Him. It hadn't worked, and he had dismissed the attempt when he could no longer ignore that it felt like a pathetic falsehood.

The wind shuddered against the window behind him and the snow outside fell fast. His mother had a soup they could eat, she said: five kinds of beans, onions and celery, a ham shank, two small turnips. Was he hungry now or did he want to wait? She was happy either way, she could eat or not eat, it didn't matter to her. Ishmael pushed two slabs of fir heartwood into the fire in the cook stove. He put a kettle of water on, then sat down again at the table. 'It's plenty warm in here,' he pointed out. 'You don't have to worry about getting cold.'

'Stay,' replied his mother. 'Spend the night. I've got three extra comforters. Your room will be cold, but your bed should be fine. Don't go back out into all of that snow. Stay and be comfortable.'

He agreed to stay and she put the soup on. In the morning he would see about printing his newspaper; for now he was warm where he was. Ishmael sat with his hand in his coat pocket and wondered if he shouldn't just tell his mother about the Coast Guard notes he had stolen from the lighthouse and then drive carefully back into town to hand the notes over to Judge Fielding. But he did nothing. He sat watching the twilight fade beyond the kitchen windows.

'That murder trial,' his mother said finally. 'I suppose you've been busy with that.'

'It's all I think about,' said Ishmael.

'It's a shame,' said his mother. 'I have to think it's a travesty. That they arrested him because he's Japanese.'

Ishmael made no reply to this. His mother lit one of the candles on the table and placed a saucer under it. 'What do you think?' she asked him. 'I haven't been there listening, so I'm interested in what you have to say.

'I've covered every minute,' Ishmael answered. And he felt

himself growing cold now, and the depth of his coldness was not a surprise, and he closed his hand around Milholland's notes.

'I have to think he's guilty,' lied Ishmael. 'The evidence is very solidly against him – the prosecutor has a good case.'

He explained to her about the blood on the fishing gaff, the wound on the left side of Carl Heine's head, the sergeant who had testified that Kabuo Miyamoto was an expert when it came to killing with a stick. He told her about Ole Jurgensen's testimony and the long dispute over land. He told her how three different fishermen had reported seeing Kabuo Miyamoto fishing near Carl Heine on the night the murder happened, and he told her about the length of mooring rope. The accused man sat so rigorously in his chair, so unmovable and stolid. He did not appear remorseful. He did not turn his head or move his eyes, nor did he change his expression. He seemed to Ishmael proud and defiant and detached from the possibility of his own death by hanging. It reminded him, he told his mother, of a training lecture he'd listened to at Fort Benning. The Japanese soldier, a colonel had explained, would die fighting before he would surrender. His allegiance to his country and his pride in being Japanese prevented him from giving in. He was not averse to dying at war in the way Americans were. He did not have the same feeling about death on the battlefield that American soldiers felt. To the Japanese soldier a life in defeat was not for a moment worth living; he knew he could not return to his people having suffered the humiliation of losing. He could not meet his Maker afterward, either – his religion demanded he die with honor. Understand, the colonel added: the Jap preferred to die with honor intact, and in this the infantryman should indulge him. In other words, take no prisoners: shoot first and ask questions later. The enemy, you see, has no respect for life, his own or anyone else's. He doesn't play by the rules. He'll put up his hands, pretend to surrender, and all the while he's rigged himself to booby-trap as you approach. It's characteristic of the Jap to be sly and treacherous. He won't show what he's thinking in his face.

'It was all propaganda,' added Ishmael. 'They wanted us to be able to kill them with no remorse, to make them less than people. None of it is fair or true, but at the same time I find myself thinking about it whenever I look at Miyamoto sitting there staring straight ahead. They could have used his face for one of their propaganda films – he's that inscrutable.'

'I know who he is,' said Ishmael's mother. 'He's a striking man, his face is powerful. Like you, Ishmael, he served in the war. Have you forgotten – that – that he fought in the war? That he risked his life for this country?'

'All right,' said Ishmael, 'he served. Is that a fact pertinent to the murder of Carl Heine? Is it relevant to the case at hand? I grant you the man is "striking", as you say, and that he served in the war – are those things relevant? I don't understand what makes them relevant.'

'They're at least as relevant as your propaganda lecture,' Ishmael's mother replied. 'If you're going to remember something like that and connect it in some way to the defendant's expression – well then, you'd better be remembering other things, too, just to keep yourself fair. Otherwise you're being subjective in a way that is not at all fair to the accused. You're allowing yourself an imbalance.'

'The defendant's expression isn't part of it,' said Ishmael. 'Impressions aren't part of it; feelings aren't part of it. The facts are all that matter,' said Ishmael, 'and the facts weigh in against him.'

'You said yourself the trial isn't over,' Ishmael's mother pointed out. 'The defense hasn't made its case yet, but you're all ready to convict. You've got the prosecutor's set of facts, but that might not be the whole story – it never is, Ishmael. And besides, really, facts are so cold, so horribly cold – can we depend on facts by themselves?'

'What else do we have?' replied Ishmael. 'Everything else is ambiguous. Everything else is emotions and hunches. At least the facts you can cling to; the emotions just float away.'

'Float away with them,' said his mother. 'If you can remember

how, Ishmael. If you can find them again. If you haven't gone cold forever.'

She got up and went to the woodstove. He sat in silence with his forehead in his hand, breathing through his nose and suddenly empty – a great, airy space had blown up inside of him, a bubble of ether expanding against his rib cage – he was empty now, emptier than he had been just a moment earlier, before his mother had spoken. What did she know about the vast region of emptiness that inhabited him all of the time? What did she know about him anyway? It was one thing for her to have known him as a child; it was another for her to come to terms with the nature of his adult wounds. She didn't know, finally; he couldn't explain himself. He did not want to explain to her his coldness or reveal himself in any way. He had watched her, after all, mourn her husband's death and it had been for her in part the discovery that grief could attach itself with permanence – something Ishmael had already discovered. It attached itself and then it burrowed inside and made a nest and stayed. It ate whatever was warm nearby, and then the coldness settled in permanently. You learned to live with it.

His mother had gone cold when Arthur died; her grief for him was fixed. But this had not stopped her from taking pleasure in life, it now occurred to Ishmael. There she stood at the stove ladling soup with the calm ease of one who feels there is certainly such a thing as grace. She took pleasure in the soup's smell, in the heat of the woodstove, in the shadow of herself the candlelight now cast against the kitchen wall. The room had gone dark and tranquil now, the one warm place in all the world, and he felt empty in it.

'I'm unhappy,' he said. 'Tell me what to do.'

His mother made no reply at first. Instead she came to the table with his bowl of soup and set it down in front of him. She brought her own bowl to the table, too, and then a loaf of bread on a cutting board and a dish of creamery butter and spoons. 'You're unhappy,' she said, seating herself. She put her elbows down on the table and rested her chin against her palms.

'That you are unhappy, I have to say, is the most obvious thing in the world.'

'Tell me what to do,' repeated Ishmael.

'Tell you what to do?' his mother said. 'I can't tell you what to do, Ishmael. I've tried to understand what it's been like for you – having gone to war, having lost your arm, not having married or had children. I've tried to make sense of it all, believe me, I have – how it must feel to be you. But I must confess that, no matter how I try, I can't really understand you. There are other boys, after all, who went to war and came back home and pushed on with their lives. They found girls and married and had children and raised families despite whatever was behind them. But you – you went numb, Ishmael. And you've stayed numb all these years. And I haven't known what to do or say about it or how I might help you in some way. I've prayed and I've talked to Pastor – '

'There were guys who prayed at Tarawa,' said Ishmael. 'They still got killed, Mother. Just like the guys who didn't pray. It didn't matter either way.'

'But just the same I've prayed for you. I've wanted you to be happy, Ishmael. But I haven't known what to do.'

They ate their soup and bread in silence while the kettle on the wood-stove hissed. The candle on the table cast an arc of light across their food, and outside, through the misty windowpane, the snow on the ground caught the moonlight beyond the clouds and held it so that it suffused everything. Ishmael tried to enjoy the small pleasures of warmth and light and bread. He did not want to tell his mother about Hatsue Miyamoto and how he had, many years ago, felt certain they would be married. He did not want to tell her about the hollow cedar tree where they'd met so many times. He had never told anybody about those days; he had worked hard to forget them. Now the trial had brought all of that back.

'Your father fought at Belleau Wood,' his mother told him suddenly. 'It took him years to get over it. He had nightmares

and he suffered just as you do. But it didn't stop him from living.'

'He didn't get over it,' said Ishmael. 'Getting over it isn't possible.'

'It didn't stop him from living,' his mother insisted. 'He went right on with his life. He didn't let self-pity overwhelm him – he just kept on with things.'

'I've kept on,' said Ishmael. 'I've kept his newspaper going, haven't I? I – '

'That isn't what I mean,' his mother said. 'That isn't what I'm getting at. You know as well as I do what I'm trying to say. Why on earth don't you go out with someone? How can you stand your loneliness? You're an attractive man, there are a lot of women who – '

'Let's not go over all of this again,' said Ishmael, putting down his spoon. 'Let's talk about something else.'

'For you, what else is there?' said his mother. 'When it comes down to it – to answer your question – here's what you should do about being unhappy: you should get married and have some children.'

'That isn't going to happen,' said Ishmael. 'That's not the answer to the question.'

'Yes, it is,' said his mother. 'It genuinely, surely is.'

After dinner he lit the kerosene heater and put it in her bedroom. His parents' grandfather clock still ticked away after all these years with a maniacal endurance. It reminded him now of Saturday mornings when his father would read to him under the sheets with the clock thundering in the background. They'd read *Ivanhoe* together, taking turns, and then *David Copperfield*. Now, he saw in his flashlight beam, his mother slept under eiderdown quilts that were just beginning to yellow. He was surprised to find beside her bed the antique RCA turntable that had, until recently, resided in his father's old study. She'd been listening to Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony as performed by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra in 1947, and Ishmael, seeing it on

the turntable, imagined her in bed with that melancholy music playing and a cup of tea beside her. He imagined her with the Mozart on at nine o'clock at night.

He opened the taps in the sink and bathtub and went out to check on her chickens. There were twelve of them, all Rhode Island Reds, huddled into a ball at one end of the chicken house his father had built years before. For a moment Ishmael caught them in the beam of his flashlight; then he reached in and took up a nearby egg left untended in the cold. It was hard to the touch and he knew that inside the embryo was solidly frozen. He warmed it for a moment in the palm of his hand, then rolled it gently in the direction of the chickens. They rearranged themselves in the face of this, panicking and fluttering just a little.

He went back in and, still wearing his coat and hat, wandered through the rooms of the cold house. His breath came forth in jets of fog and disappeared into the darkness. Ishmael put his hand on the newel post at the bottom of the stairway, then removed it and shone the flashlight beam upward. Shallow moons had been worn into the risers; the bannister, he saw, had lost its luster. Upstairs, the room he'd slept in as a boy had been converted by his mother into a place to sew and iron and to store her clothes. Ishmael went up and, sitting on his old bed, tried to remember how it had once been. He recollected that on a good day in winter, when the maple trees stood bare, he could look through his dormer window out beyond the trees and see the green salt water to the southwest.

He'd had a button and a pennant collection, a thousand pennies in a large mason jar, a fishbowl, and a model tin lizzie hung from a strand of wire in one corner. They were all gone now, he didn't know where. He'd kept his glass underwater box in the corner of the closet, his mitt on top of it. On certain nights the moonlight had flooded through his dormer window and bathed everything in blue, beguiling shadows that prevented him from sleeping. He'd sit up listening to crickets and frogs and on some nights to the radio at his bedside. He'd listened mostly to baseball games –

the Seattle Rainiers of the Pacific Coast League – and he could still remember the voice of Leo Lassen barely audible beyond a field of static: '*White leads off first, dancing, dancing, ready to break, he's driving Gittelsohn ab-so-lute-ly crazy. . . . Strange is at the plate now after taking his practice cuts . . . hum, baby, hear this fine crowd on hand at Sick's Stadium greet Strange as he digs in, he's a real favorite, isn't he? Oh, you should be here tonight! Mount Rainier is out beyond the rightfield fence looming up like a great big ice cream cone. Gittelsohn is into his windup now and . . . there goes White no time for a throw White is standing up safe at second base hoooo boy! White is safe! He's stolen second base! White is safe at second base!*'

His father, too, had liked baseball. Ishmael had sat with him by the Bendix in the living room, and they had both been mesmerized by the urgency Leo Lassen imparted to a battle so many miles away in Seattle, Portland, or Sacramento. The voice from the radio – it had dropped an octave, altered pitch, slowed and lengthened measurably – was now that of someone's wayward uncle confiding the secrets of his golf game; now it miraculously glided through a tongue twister; now it suddenly sensed great depths of meaning in an ordinary double play. Arthur would slam the armrest of his chair in satisfaction at a fortunate turn of events; he was saddened when errors in judgment or carelessness cast the team into a hole. At lulls in the game he would stretch his legs out, twine his hands across his lap, and stare at the radio as it spoke to him. Eventually he slept with his head lolled forward and stayed that way until Leo Lassen went shrill again in ecstasy about the game. Freddy Mueller had hit a double.

Ishmael remembered his father half-asleep, the crescent of warm light thrown by the table lamp containing only his figure, that of the radio, and the turned-back pages of a magazine in his lap – *Harper's* or *Scientific Agriculture*. By the late innings of the game the rest of the room – a few laggard coals glowed orange beneath the fireplace grate – lay sleeping in soft, quiescent shadows. Coats hung from polished brass hooks in the foyer, and his father's books, arranged by

size, stood neatly along the glassed-in shelves of two vaultlike oak bookcases. When something momentous came to pass – a home run, a stolen base, a double play, a run batted in – his father would stir, blink two or three times, and by dint of habit bring his hand to rest on the spectacles sitting atop his magazine. His hair lay close to his skull in gray twists, and his chin tilted slightly heavenward. Gray hairs sprouted from his ears and nostrils, and more straggled forth from his eyebrows. When the game was over he would shut off the radio and fix his spectacles carefully in place by curling their stems behind his ears. They were antique steel full moons, and when he put them on he invariably underwent a quiet transformation, becoming suddenly professorial, handsome in the way that some outdoorsmen are yet scholarly at the same time. He would pick up his magazine and begin to read as if the game had never happened.

Ishmael's father had died in Seattle at the Veterans Administration Hospital. He'd had cancer of the pancreas and in the end of the liver, and Ishmael had not been there at the final moment. One hundred and seventy islanders turned out for Arthur's funeral, which was held on a warm, cloudless day in June at the San Piedro Memorial Cemetery. Masato Nagaishi, Ishmael recalled, had presented himself in the funeral's aftermath to offer condolences on behalf of the Japanese-American Citizens' League and the Japanese Community Center. 'I wish to say,' said Masato Nagaishi, 'that the Japanese people of San Piedro Island are saddened by the death of your father. We have always had great respect for him as a newspaperman and as a neighbor, a man of great fairness and compassion for others, a friend to us and to all people.' Masato Nagaishi took Ishmael's hand and gripped it in his own tightly. He was a large man with a broad face and no hair on his head, and he blinked often behind his spectacles. 'We know you will follow in your father's footsteps,' Mr. Nagaishi said forcefully, shaking Ishmael's hand. 'We are certain you will honor his legacy. For now, like you, we are all sad. We

mourn with you and honor your father. We think of you in your grief.'

Ishmael opened the closet door and looked in at the boxes stacked there. He had not gone through the things he'd packed in them in more than eight years' time. He was no longer very interested in what they contained – his books, his arrowheads, his essays from high school, his pennant collection, his penny jar, his buttons and sea glass and beach stones; they were the things of another time. He had it in mind, though, to dig out the letter Hatsue had written him from Manzanar and read it again after all these years in the spirit of an indulgence. Ever since he'd stopped to pick her up in the snowstorm he'd been indulging himself foolishly. Beneath the surface of everything else he'd been thinking about her with pleasure.

It was buried in a box, just where he'd left it, between the pages of a book on boatmanship he'd been given on his thirteenth birthday. The return address on the envelope was Kenny Yamashita's, and the stamp, curiously, was upside down. The envelope, now brittle with age, felt dry and cold to the touch. Ishmael tucked the flashlight under his armpit and sat down again on the edge of the bed with the envelope held between his fingers. The letter inside had been written on rice paper that after all these years was fast deteriorating, and he held it with the care he felt it deserved, moving it now into the flashlight beam, where he saw her delicate handwriting.

Dear Ishmael,

These things are very difficult to say – I can't think of anything more painful to me than writing this letter to you. I am now more than five hundred miles away, and everything appears to me different from what it was when I was with you last on San Piedro. I have been trying to think clearly about everything and to use all this distance to advantage. And here is what I've discovered.

I don't love you, Ishmael. I can think of no more honest way to say it. From the very beginning, when we were little children, it

seemed to me something was wrong. Whenever we were together I knew it. I felt it inside of me. I loved you and I didn't love you at the very same moment, and I felt troubled and confused. Now, everything is obvious to me and I feel I have to tell you the truth. When we met that last time in the cedar tree and I felt your body move against mine, I knew with certainty that everything was wrong. I knew we could never be right together and that soon I would have to tell you so. And now, with this letter, I'm telling you. This is the last time I will write to you. I am not yours anymore.

I wish you the very best, Ishmael. Your heart is large and you are gentle and kind, and I know you will do great things in this world, but now I must say good-bye to you. I am going to move on with my life as best I can, and I hope that you will too.

Sincerely,
Hatsue Imada

He read it over a second time, and then a third, and then he turned off the flashlight. He thought of how she'd had her revelation at the very moment he'd entered her, how the invasion of his penis had brought with it a truth she could discover in no other way. Ishmael shut his eyes and thought back to that moment in the cedar tree when he had moved, briefly, inside of her and how he had not been able to predict how pleasurable that would feel. He had no way of knowing what it would feel like to be inside, all the way in where he could feel the heat of her, and his surprise at the sensation had been overwhelming, and then she had suddenly pulled away. He had not come, he had been there for less than three seconds altogether, and in that time – if her letter was right – she'd discovered she didn't love him anymore while he'd come to love her even more. Wasn't that the strangest part? That by entering her he'd granted her the means to understand the truth? He'd wanted to be inside of her again, and he'd wanted her to ask him to be there again, and on the next day she'd gone away.

In his Seattle years he'd slept with three different women, two of whom he felt briefly hopeful about, wondering if he might in fact fall in love with them, but this had never happened. The women he slept with asked often about his arm, and he told them about his war experiences, and he decided before long that he didn't respect them and a kind of disgust developed. He was a war veteran with a missing arm, and this fascinated a certain type of woman in her early twenties who fancied herself mature beyond her years and was serious about herself. He slept with each for a few more weeks after deciding he wanted nothing to do with them – he slept with them angrily and unhappily and because he was lonely and selfish. He came inside them hard and often, keeping each up until the middle of the night, and in the late afternoons, too, before dinner. He knew that when he asked them to walk out of his life he would be even lonelier than he'd been before, and so he waited for a few weeks, both times, just to have someone around at night, just to come inside someone, just to hear someone breathing under him while he moved his hips with his eyes shut. Then his father came down to the city because he was dying, and Ishmael forgot about women. His father died one afternoon while Ishmael was in the newsroom at the *Seattle Times* banging away with his five fingers at a typewriter. Ishmael went back to San Piedro for the funeral and to tie up his father's business affairs; he stayed to run his father's paper. He lived in an apartment in Amity Harbor and kept to himself insofar as that was possible for a newspaperman on a small island. Once every two weeks or so he masturbated into the folds of his handkerchief, and that was the extent of his sex life.

Yes, he decided, he would write the article Hatsue wanted him to write in the pages of the *San Piedro Review*. It was perhaps not the manner in which his father would proceed, but so be it: he was not his father. His father, of course, would have gone hours earlier directly to Lew Fielding in order to show him the coast guard shipping lane records for the night of September 15. But not Ishmael, not now – no. Those records would stay in his

pocket. Tomorrow he would write the article she wanted him to write, in order to make her beholden to him, and then in the trial's aftermath he would speak with her as one who had taken her side and she would have no choice but to listen. That was the way, that was the method. Sitting by himself in the cold of his old bedroom, her letter held uneasily in his hand, he began to imagine it.

25

At eight in the morning on the third day of the trial – a dozen tall candles now lighting the courtroom in the manner of a chapel or sanctuary – Nels Gudmundsson called his first witness. The wife of the accused man, Hatsue Miyamoto, came forward from the last row of seats in the gallery with her hair tightly bound to the back of her head and tucked up under an unadorned hat that threw a shadow over her eyes. As she passed through the swinging gate Nels Gudmundsson held open for her she stopped to look for a moment at her husband, who sat at the defendant's table immediately to her left with his hands folded neatly in front of him. She nodded without altering her calm expression, and her husband nodded back in silence. He unclasped his hands, laid them on the table, and watched her eyes intently. The wife of the accused man appeared, briefly, as if she might turn in his direction and go to him, but instead she proceeded without hurry toward Ed Soames, who stood in front of the witness stand proffering the Old Testament patiently.

When Hatsue Miyamoto had seated herself, Nels Gudmundsson coughed three times into his fist and cleared the phlegm from his throat. Then he passed in front of the jury box with his thumbs once again hooked inside of his suspenders and his one good eye leaking tears. The arteries in his temples had begun to pulse, as they often did when he'd been sleepless. Like others there he'd passed a difficult night with no electricity or heat. At two-thirty, bitter with cold, he'd struck a match and held it close to the face of his pocket watch; he'd padded in his socks to the unlit bathroom and found the toilet water frozen in its bowl. Nels, flailing, his breath issuing forth in vaporous grunts, had

broken out the ice with the handle of his toilet plunger, propped himself against the wall – his lumbago plagued him mercilessly – and dribbled night water unsteadily. Then he'd climbed into bed again, curled up like an autumn leaf, every blanket in the house thrown over him, and lain without sleeping until dawn came. Now, in the courtroom, the jurors could see that he had not shaved or combed his hair; he looked at least ten years older. His blind left pupil seemed especially transient and beyond his control this morning. It traveled in its own eccentric orbit.

The gallery was as crowded as it had been throughout the trial. Many of the citizens gathered there wore overcoats, shoe rubbers, and woolen scarfs, having elected not to leave these things in the cloakroom: there'd been a rush to find a place to sit. They'd carried the smell of wet snow into the room – it had melted against the wool in their coats – and were grateful to be in a warm place where something of interest was going forward. Stuffing their mittens and wool caps into their pockets, they settled in conscious of their extraordinary good fortune in having escaped temporarily from the snowstorm. As always their demeanor was formally respectful; they took the law seriously and felt its majesty emanating toward them from the bench where Lew Fielding sat with his eyes halfshut, inscrutable and meditative, and from the way in which the jurors sat ruminating in rows on their elevated podium. The reporters, for their part, had focused their attention on the wife of the accused man, who wore a knife-pleated skirt on this day and a blouse with long darts through the shoulders. Her hand where it lay atop the Bible was graceful, and the planes of her face were smooth. One of the reporters – he'd lived in Japan just after the war, training automotive engineers to write manuals – was reminded of the calm of a geisha he'd witnessed performing the tea ceremony at Nara. The sight of Hatsue's face in profile elicited in him the smell of pine needles strewn in the courtyard outside the tearoom.

But inwardly Hatsue felt no serenity; her calm was a practiced disguise. For her husband, she knew, was a mystery to her, and

had been ever since he'd returned from his days as a soldier nine years before. He'd come home to San Piedro, and they'd rented a cottage out on Bender's Spring Road. It was a dead-end road overhung with alders; they could see no other homes. At night Kabuo was subject to disturbing dreams that sent him to the kitchen table in his slippers and bathrobe, where he sat drinking tea and staring. Hatsue found that she was married to a war veteran and that this was the crucial fact of her marriage; the war had elicited in him a persistent guilt that lay over his soul like a shadow. For her this meant loving him in a manner she hadn't anticipated before he'd left for the war. There was nothing of charity in it and she did not step lightly around his heart or indulge his sorrow or his whims. Instead she brought herself to his sorrow completely, not to console him but to give him time to become himself again. Without regrets she honored the obligation she felt to him and was happy to efface herself. This gave her life a shape and meaning that were larger than her dream of farming strawberries from island soil, and at the same time giving herself over to his wounds was both disturbing and rewarding. She sat across from him at the kitchen table at three o'clock in the morning, while he stared in silence or talked or wept, and she took when she could a piece of his sorrow and stored it for him in her own heart.

The advent of her pregnancy had been good for Kabuo; he'd taken a job at the cannery, where he packed salmon beside his brother Kenji. He began to talk about buying a farm and drove her up and down island roads where property was for sale. Something was wrong with each, however – drainage, sunlight, clay soil. Kabuo pulled into a turnout one rainy afternoon and explained to her in grave tones that he intended to repurchase his parents' property as soon as the chance arose. He told the story, once again, of how they had been within one last payment of owning the seven acres outright. How Etta Heine had pulled out from under them and sold their land to Ole Jurgensen. How the land was to have gone over into his name, because he was the eldest son and the first of the Miyamotos to become a citizen.

They'd lost everything because of Manzanar. His father had died of stomach cancer; his mother had gone to live in Fresno, where Kabuo's sister had married a furniture merchant. Kabuo struck the steering wheel with the side of his fist and cursed the injustice of the world. 'They stole from us,' he said angrily, 'and they got away with it.'

One night six months after his return from the war she woke up to find him gone from their bed and nowhere to be found in the house. Hatsue sat in the dark of the kitchen, where she waited for seventy-five minutes uneasily; it was raining outside, a windy night, and the car was gone from the garage.

She waited. She ran her hands across her belly, imagining the shape of the baby inside, hoping to feel it move. There was a leak in the shed roof over the pantry, and she got up to empty the pan she'd placed under it. Sometime after four A.M. Kabuo came in with two burlap sacks; he was rain soaked, there was mud on his knees. He turned on the light to find her there, sitting motionless at the kitchen table, staring at him in silence. Kabuo, staring back, set one sack on the floor, hauled the other up onto a chair, and took the hat from his head. 'After Pearl Harbor,' he said to her, 'my father buried all of this.' Then he began to pull things out – wooden swords, *hakama* pants, a *bokken*, a *naginata*, scrolls written in Japanese – and placed each carefully on the kitchen table. 'These are my family's,' he said to her, wiping the rain from his brow. 'My father hid them in our strawberry fields. Look at this,' he added.

It was a photograph of Kabuo dressed like a *bugeisha* and wielding a *kendo* stick in both hands. In the photograph he was only sixteen years old, but he already looked wrathful and fierce. Hatsue studied the photograph for a long time, particularly Kabuo's eyes and mouth, to see what she might discern there. 'My great-grandfather,' said Kabuo, pulling off his coat, 'was a samurai and a magnificent soldier. He killed himself on the battlefield at Kumamoto – killed himself with his own sword, *seppukku*' – Kabuo pantomimed disemboweling himself, the imaginary sword plunged deep into his left side

and drawn steadily to the right. 'He came to battle wielding a samurai's sword against the rifles of an imperial garrison. Try to imagine that, Hatsue,' said Kabuo. 'Going to battle with a sword against rifles. Knowing you are going to die.'

He'd knelt beside the wet sack on the floor then and took a strawberry plant from it. The rain bellowed against the roof and struck against the side of their house. Kabuo took out another strawberry plant and brought them both into the light over the table where she could look at them closely if she wanted to. He held them out to her, and she saw how the veins and arteries in his arms flowed in ridges just beneath his skin and how strong his wrists and fingers were.

'My father planted the fathers of these plants,' Kabuo said to her angrily. 'We lived as children by the fruit they produced. Do you understand what I am saying?'

'Come to bed,' answered Hatsue. 'Take a bath, dry yourself, and come back to bed,' she said.

She got up and left the kitchen table. She knew that he could see in profile the new shape their baby was making. 'You're going to be a father soon,' she reminded him, halting in the doorway. 'I hope that will make you happy, Kabuo. I hope it will help you to bury all of this. I don't know how else I can help you.'

'I'll get the farm back,' Kabuo had answered over the din of the rain. 'We'll live there. We'll grow strawberries. It will be all right. I'm going to get my farm back.'

That had been many years ago – nine years, or nearly. They'd saved their money insofar as that was possible, putting away as much as they could, until they had enough to buy their own house. Hatsue wanted to move from the dilapidated cottage they rented at the end of Bender's Spring Road, but Kabuo had convinced her the better move was to purchase a gill-netting boat. Within a year or two, he said, they would double their money, own the boat outright, and have enough left over for a land payment. Ole Jurgensen was getting old, he said. He would want to sell before long.

Kabuo had fished as well as he could but he was not really born to fish. There was money in fishing and he wanted the money, he was ambitious, strong, and a zealous worker, but the sea, in the end, made no sense to him. They had not doubled their money or even come close, and they did not own the *Islander* outright. Kabuo only pressed himself harder and measured his life according to his success at bringing salmon home. On every night that he did not catch fish he felt his dream recede before him and the strawberry farm he coveted moved further into the distance. He blamed himself and grew short with her, and this deepened the wounds in their marriage. Hatsue felt she did him no favors by indulging his self-pity, and he resented her for this. It was difficult for her to distinguish these moments from the deeper anguish of his war wounds. Besides, she had three children now, and it was necessary to turn her attention toward them and to give to them a part of what she had once given to her husband. The children, she hoped, would soften him. She hoped that through them he might become less obsessed with the dream of a different life. She knew that had happened in her own heart.

Yes, it would be nice to live in a nicer house and to walk out into the perfume of berries on a June morning, to stand in the wind and smell them. But this house and this life were what she had, and there was no point in perpetually grasping for something other. Gently she tried to tell him so, but Kabuo insisted that just around the corner lay a different life and a better one, that it was simply a matter of catching more salmon, of waiting for Ole Jurgensen to slow down, of saving their money, of waiting.

Now Hatsue sat upright with her hands in her lap in order to give her testimony. 'I'm going to ask you to think back,' said Nels, 'to events that occurred about three months ago, in early September of this year. Would it be fair to say that at that time your husband became interested in purchasing land that was for sale at Island Center? Do you recollect, Mrs. Miyamoto?'

'Oh, yes,' answered Hatsue. 'He was very interested in buying land out there. He had always been interested in buying land out there. It had been his family's land – strawberry land – and he badly wanted to farm it again. His family had worked very hard to buy it, and then, during the war, they lost everything, their land was taken from them.'

'Mrs. Miyamoto,' said Nels. 'Think back specifically now to Tuesday, September 7, if you will do that for me. A Mr. Ole Jurgensen, you might recall, a retired strawberry farmer from out at Island Center, has testified that your husband came to see him on that date to inquire about purchasing seven acres of his land, the strawberry land you mentioned. Does this ring a bell with you?'

'It does,' said Hatsue. 'I know about it.'

Nels nodded and began to knead his forehead; he sat down on the edge of the defendant's table. 'Did your husband mention he'd gone out there? Did he tell you about his conversation with Mr. Jurgensen regarding the purchase of these seven acres?'

'Yes,' said Hatsue. 'He did.'

'Did he say anything about this conversation? Anything you can remember?'

'He did,' said Hatsue. 'Yes.'

Hatsue recounted that on the afternoon of September 7 she'd driven with her children past the old farm at Island Center and seen Ole Jurgensen's sign. She'd turned the car around and driven over Mill Run into Amity Harbor, where she used the public telephone booth beside Petersen's to call her husband and tell him. Then she'd gone home and waited for an hour until Kabuo returned with the unhappy news that Carl Heine had purchased Ole's farm.

'I see,' said Nels. 'This unhappy news – this was on the evening of September 7 that your husband told you about this?'

'Afternoon,' said Hatsue. 'We talked about it in the late afternoon, I remember, before he went out fishing.'

'Late afternoon,' Nels repeated. 'Did your husband seem

disappointed, Mrs. Miyamoto, that he had not succeeded in purchasing his seven acres? Did he seem to you disappointed?'

'No,' said Hatsue. 'He was not disappointed. He was hopeful, Mr. Gudmundsson, as hopeful as I'd seen him. To his way of thinking the important thing was that Ole Jurgensen had decided to retire from farming strawberries and sell off all his holdings. Something, he said, had been set in motion – there'd been no opportunity, now there was one. He'd waited many years for this moment to arrive – now the opportunity was at hand. He was very eager, very hopeful?'

'Let's skip forward one day,' said Nels, raising his head from his hand. 'On the next day, September 8, did he talk about it? Was he still feeling, as you say, hopeful?'

'Oh, yes,' answered Hatsue. 'Very much so. We talked about it again the following day. He'd decided to go have a talk with Carl Heine, to see him about purchasing the seven acres.'

'But he didn't go. Until the next day. He waited a day, is that right?'

'He waited,' said Hatsue. 'He was nervous about it. He wanted to plan what he would say.'

'It's now Thursday, September 9,' Nels Gudmundsson said to her. 'It's two days since your husband spoke with Ole Jurgensen; two long days have passed. What, as you recall it, happened?'

'What happened?'

'He went to talk to Carl Heine – am I correct? – as Susan Marie Heine testified yesterday. According to Susan Marie Heine's testimony your husband showed up at their residence on the afternoon of Thursday, September 9, asking to talk to Carl. According to Susan Marie Heine they spoke for thirty or forty minutes as they walked about the property. She did not accompany them or overhear their words, but she has testified as to the content of a conversation she held with her husband after your husband left that day. She said that the two of them had discussed the seven acres and the possibility that your husband might purchase them. Susan Marie Heine has testified under cross-examination that Carl did not give your

husband an unequivocal no answer regarding the purchase of these seven acres. Carl did not lead your husband to believe no hope existed for reclaiming his family's property. It was her understanding that Carl had encouraged your husband to believe that a possibility existed. Now, does that seem accurate to you, Mrs. Miyamoto? On the afternoon of September 9, in the aftermath of his talk with Carl Heine, did your husband still seem hopeful?'

'More hopeful than ever,' said Hatsue. 'He came home from his conversation with Carl Heine more hopeful and more eager than ever. He told me that he felt closer to getting the family land back than he had in a long, long time. I felt hopeful, too, at that point. I was hopeful it would all work out.'

Nels pushed himself upright again and began, slowly, to pace before the jurors, brooding in silence for a moment. In the quiet the wind pushed against the window sashes; steam hissed and boiled through the radiators. With no overhead lights the courtroom, always pallid, seemed grayer and duller than ever. The smell of snow was in the air.

'You say, Mrs. Miyamoto, that you felt hopeful. And yet, as you well know, the deceased man's mother and your husband over there were not on the best of terms. There had been, shall we say, words between them. So on what grounds did you hold out hope, if I might ask? What made you optimistic?'

Yes, said Hatsue, she understood this question. She'd brought it up with Kabuo herself: would such people agree to sell him the land they'd once stolen so eagerly? 'Etta and Carl are two different people,' Kabuo had replied to this. It was up to Carl, not his mother, this time. And Carl had been his friend long ago. Carl would do what was right.

'Mrs. Miyamoto,' Nels continued. 'Your husband had his conversation with Carl Heine on the afternoon of Thursday, September 9. On the following Thursday, September 16, Carl Heine was found drowned in his fishing net out in White Sand Bay. A week intervened between the two events – six full days passed, and seven nights. A full week, or nearly a week anyway.

My question is whether during this week your husband spoke to you about Carl Heine or the seven acres in question. If he said anything to you about the seven acres or about his attempts to reacquire them. Do you recall your husband having spoken about this or having done anything pertinent to reacquiring his family's land during the week between the ninth and the sixteenth?'

Well, explained Hatsue, Kabuo felt there was nothing to do, that the next move was Carl's, that it was Carl who had to come forward. It was Carl who had to think about things and come to some conclusion. It was Carl's heart that was now in question, whether he wanted to redress a wrong his own mother had perpetrated. Did Carl feel responsible for the actions of his family? Did he understand his obligations? It was dishonorable, anyway, added Kabuo, to approach Carl once again with the same tired question; he did not wish to beg, to place himself at Carl's mercy. He did not wish to appear weak in Carl's presence or reveal a humiliating eagerness. No, it was best to be patient in such a matter. There was nothing to be gained by putting oneself forward or revealing oneself too fully. He would wait instead. He would wait one week, he explained to Hatsue, and then he would decide what to do.

On the morning of the sixteenth, while she boiled tea water, he pushed through the door in his rubber boots and rubber bib overalls and explained how he had seen Carl out at sea, helped Carl with a dead battery in the fog, and the two of them had shaken about the matter. They'd come to an agreement about the seven acres. Eighty-four hundred dollars, eight hundred down. The Miyamotos' land was Kabuo's again, after all these years.

But later that day, at one o'clock in the afternoon, a clerk at Petersen's – it was Jessica Porter – told Hatsue about the terrible accident that had befallen Carl Heine while he fished the preceding evening. He'd been found tangled in his net, dead, out in White Sand Bay.

26

Alvin Hooks began his cross-examination by perching himself on the edge of the prosecutor's table and crossing his well-shined shoes in front of him as though he were relaxing on a street corner. His hands in his lap, his fingers intertwined, he cocked his head to the right for a moment and studied Hatsue Miyamoto. 'You know,' he said, 'it's been interesting hearing from you. On this matter of the morning of the sixteenth in particular. This story you've just told us about boiling tea water when the defendant burst through your kitchen door, just terribly excited, and told you about his conversation at sea, how he and Carl Heine came to some sort of agreement? I found this all quite interesting.'

He stopped and studied her for another moment. Then he began to nod. He scratched his head and turned his eyes toward the ceiling. 'Mrs. Miyamoto,' he sighed. 'Was I fair just now in describing your husband's state of mind as "terribly excited" on the morning of the sixteenth – the morning Carl Heine was murdered? Have I by any chance misinterpreted your testimony? Did he come home on that morning "terribly excited"?'

'I would use that phrase, yes,' said Hatsue. 'He was terribly excited, certainly.'

'He didn't seem himself? His state of mind was – agitated? He seemed to you somehow . . . different?'

'Excited,' answered Hatsue. 'Not agitated. He was excited about getting his family's land back.'

'All right, so he was "excited",' Alvin Hooks said. 'And he told you this story about stopping at sea to help Carl

Heine with a . . . dead battery or something. Is that correct, Mrs. Miyamoto?'

'That's correct.'

'He said that he tied up to Carl Heine's boat and came aboard to loan Carl a battery?'

'That's right.'

'And that in the course of this charitable maneuver on his part he and Carl discussed the seven acres they'd been arguing about until that point? Is that right? And that somehow Carl agreed to sell it to him? For eighty-four hundred dollars or something? Is that all correct? Do I have it right?'

'You do,' said Hatsue. 'That's what happened.'

'Mrs. Miyamoto,' said Alvin Hooks. 'Did you, by any chance, repeat this story to anyone? Did you, for example, call a friend or a relative to deliver the happy news? Did you let your friends and family know that your husband had come to terms with Carl Heine in the middle of the night on his fishing boat – that you would soon be moving to seven acres of strawberry land, starting a new life, anything like that?'

'No,' said Hatsue. 'I didn't.'

'Why not?' asked Alvin Hooks. 'Why didn't you tell anyone? It seems like the sort of thing that would constitute news. It would seem you might tell your mother, for example, or your sisters, perhaps – someone.'

Hatsue adjusted herself in her chair and brushed uneasily at her blouse front. 'Well,' she said. 'We heard about how Carl Heine had . . . passed away just a few hours after Kabuo came home. Carl's accident – that changed how we thought. It meant there was nothing to tell anyone. Everything was up in the air again.'

'Everything was up in the air,' said Alvin Hooks, settling his arms across his chest. 'When you heard that Carl Heine had died, you decided not to talk about the matter? Is that what you're saying, am I correct?'

'You're misinterpreting,' complained Hatsue. 'We just – '

'I'm not interpreting or misinterpreting,' Alvin Hooks cut

in. 'I merely want to know what the facts are – we all want to know what the facts are, Mrs. Miyamoto, that's what we're doing here. You're under oath to give us the facts, so please, ma'am, if I might ask again, did you decide not to talk about your husband's night at sea, his encounter with Carl Heine? Did you decide not to talk about this matter?'

'There was nothing to talk about,' said Hatsue. 'What news could I announce to my family? Everything was up in the air.'

'Worse than up in the air,' said Alvin Hooks. 'On top of your husband's real estate deal going sour, a man, we might note, had died. A man had died, let us understand, the side of his skull bashed in. Did it occur to you, Mrs. Miyamoto, to come forward with the information you had about this and notify the sheriff? Did you ever think it might be proper to share what you knew, your husband's night at sea, this battery business, and so on and so forth, with the sheriff of Island County?'

'We thought about it, yes,' said Hatsue. 'We talked about it all afternoon that day, if we should go to the sheriff and tell him, if we should talk about things. But in the end we decided not to, you see – it looked very bad, it looked like murder, Kabuo and I understood that. We understood that he could end up here, on trial, and that's exactly what has happened. That's exactly how it has turned out, you see. You've charged my husband with murder.'

'Well, of course,' said Alvin Hooks. 'I can see how you felt. I can see how you might be very concerned that your husband would be charged with murder. But if, as you imply, the truth was on your side, what in the world were you worried about? Why, if the truth was really with you – why on earth, Mrs. Miyamoto – why not go immediately to the sheriff and tell him everything you know?'

'We were afraid,' said Hatsue. 'Silence seemed better. To come forward seemed like a mistake.'

'Well,' said Alvin Hooks, 'that's an irony. Because the mistake, it seems to me, was in *not* coming forward. The

mistake was in your having been deceitful. In having deliberately concealed information during the course of a sheriff's investigation.'

'Maybe,' said Hatsue. 'I don't know.'

'But it *was* a mistake,' said Alvin Hooks, pointing a forefinger at her. 'A very serious error in judgment, don't you think, in retrospect? Here we have a death under suspicious circumstances, the sheriff is out and about gathering information, and you're not coming forward to help. You're in a position to be of assistance and you're not coming forth or being honest. Frankly, it makes you suspect, Mrs. Miyamoto, I'm sorry to say it but it's true. If you can't be trusted to come forward at such a time with what you know, with vital information, how can we trust you now – you see? How on earth can we trust you?'

'But,' said Hatsue, leaning forward in her chair, 'there wasn't time to come forward. We heard about Carl's accident in the afternoon. Within hours of that, my husband was arrested. There just wasn't very much time.'

'But Mrs. Miyamoto,' Alvin Hooks replied. 'If in fact you felt it was an accident, why not come forward immediately? Why not come forward that very afternoon and tell the good sheriff what you know about this *accident*? Why not help him with the details of his investigation? Why not lend him a hand? Why not tell him your husband had boarded Carl Heine's boat to help him with – what was it now? – a dead battery, was that it? I hope you can understand how I just have to say that I just don't understand this at all. I'm stumped, I'm confused, I'm completely at a loss. I don't know what to believe and what not to believe. I'm at a loss with all of this, I really am.'

Alvin Hooks tugged at the seams of his pants, rose and swiveled around the edge of the table, then settled in his chair and pressed his palms together. 'No more questions, Your Honor,' he said abruptly. 'The witness is through. She may step down.'

'Wait a minute,' answered Hatsue Miyamoto. 'I – '

'That's enough, you'll stop right there,' Judge Fielding cut in

sternly. He glared without wavering at the wife of the accused man, and she glared at him in return. 'You've answered the questions put to you, Mrs. Miyamoto. I understand that you must be upset, but your state of mind, your emotional condition, these are not considerations I can legally contemplate under the rules governing these proceedings. The fact that you wish to speak, that you would like to give Mr. Hooks over there a piece of your mind just now – I don't blame you for having strong feelings – this just isn't allowed. You've answered the questions put to you and now, I'm afraid, you must step down. I'm afraid you have no other choice.'

Hatsue turned toward her husband. He nodded at her, and she nodded back, and in the next moment she composed herself deliberately. She stood up without saying another word and went to her seat at the rear of the courthouse where, adjusting her hat, she sat down. A few citizens in the gallery – including Ishmael Chambers – turned impulsively to look at her, but she made no move to acknowledge them. She stared straight ahead and said nothing.

Nels Gudmundsson called Josiah Gillanders, the president of the San Piedro Gill-Netters Association, a man of forty-nine with a walrus mustache and the watery, dull eyes of an alcoholic. Short, broad, and powerful, Josiah had fished alone for thirty years from the cockpit of his boat, the *Cape Eliza*. Islanders knew him as a nautical sot who affected the gait and mannerisms of a sea captain: he tipped his captain's hard-billed blue cap wherever he went on San Piedro. He wore wool dungarees and shetland sweaters and often got *dead mucked* – his term – with Captain Jon Soderland at the San Piedro Tavern. The two of them would trade stories in voices that grew louder with each pint of beer they hoisted. Captain Soderland would stroke his beard; Josiah would wipe the froth from his mustache and clap the captain on the shoulder blade.

Now, on the witness stand, he held his hard-billed captain's hat between his fingers, crossed his arms over his barrel chest,

and pointed his cleft chin at Nels Gudmundsson, who wavered unsteadily before him, blinking.

'Mr. Gillanders,' Nels said. 'How long have you been president of the San Piedro Gill-Netters Association?'

'Eleven years,' Josiah answered. 'Been fishing thirty, though.'

'Fishing for salmon?'

'Yes. Mostly.'

'On board a gill-netter, Mr. Gillanders? Thirty years an island gill-netter?'

'That's correct. Thirty years.'

'Your boat,' said Nels. 'The *Cape Eliza*. Ever had a hand aboard?'

Josiah shook his head. 'Never,' he said. 'I work alone. Always have, always will. I fish by myself, like it.'

'Mr. Gillanders,' Nels said. 'In your thirty years of fishing have you ever had occasion to board another man's boat, sir? Have you ever, while at sea, tied up to another gill-netter and come aboard for any reason?'

'Just about never,' said Josiah Gillanders, primping his mustache as he spoke. 'Maybe, at best, a half-dozen times in all my years – half-dozen times, no more 'n that. Five or six – that's all.'

'Five or six times,' Nels said. 'Can you recall for us, Mr. Gillanders, what occasioned these at-sea boardings? Do you remember what your purpose might have been, on each of these occasions, for tying up to another man's boat? Can you recollect for the benefit of the court?'

Josiah worked on his mustache again; it was a habit of his when he was thinking. ''Thout going into too much detail, I guess it was always some fellow was broke down. Some fellow had engine problems or couldn't run and needed help. Or – all right now – there was one fellow needed a hand with things on account of he'd broke his hip, I believe it was. I tied up and boarded on that one, too. Helped him out, got things squared away. But 'thout going into too much detail, you board, see, in an emergency. You board if a fellow needs a hand.'

'You board if a fellow needs a hand,' said Nels. 'In your thirty years of gill-netting, Mr. Gillanders, have you ever boarded another man's boat for some reason other than an emergency? For some reason other than the fact that the fellow on the other boat, as you say, needs a hand?'

'Never,' said Josiah. 'Fishing's fishing. Let 'em fish and don't bother me neither. We all got work to do.'

'Yes,' said Nels. 'And in your thirty years of gill-netting, sir, and in your capacity as president of the association – as a man who reviews, I would presume, various incidents between gill-netters at sea – have you ever heard of a boarding for a reason other than an emergency? Can you recall any such thing?'

'Doesn't happen,' said Josiah. 'Unwritten rule of the sea, Mr. Gudmundsson. Code of honor among fishermen. You keep to yourself and I'll keep to myself. We got nothing to say to one another out there. We're busy working, got no time for jawing, can't sit on the deck drinking rum and telling stories while someone else hauls fish. No, you don't board for no other reason than a good one – other guy's in need, he's got an emergency, his engine ain't running, his leg's broke. Then, go on ahead and board.'

'You don't suppose, then,' Nels asked, 'that the defendant here, Mr. Miyamoto, would have boarded Carl Heine's boat on September 16 for any reason other than to help him in an emergency? Does that make sense to you?'

'I never heard of no boarding for no other reason, if that's what you're asking, Mr. Gudmundsson. Only kind I know about is what I said – a man's got engine problems, his leg's broke.'

Nels set himself down precariously against the edge of the defendant's table. With a forefinger he attempted to check the erratic movement of his bad eye, but to no avail; it continued. 'Mr. Gillanders,' he said. 'Isn't it tricky to tie up at sea? Even in calm weather, in good light?'

'A bit,' said Josiah. 'It can be.'

'A night tie-up on open water? Can this be done speedily, in the manner of an attack? Could a man who wanted to

make a boarding against another's will even do so? Is it possible?'

'Never heard of it,' replied Josiah, throwing up his hands. 'Two willing skippers helps mightily, yes. Takes a bit of maneuvering, you see. Tying up against another man's will – I'd think that impossible, Mr. Gudmundsson. I never heard of no such thing.'

'You've never heard of one gill-netter boarding another's boat against his will, sir? You see such an act as physically impossible? Is that an accurate summary of what you've told us? Am I getting all of this right?'

'You're getting it right,' Josiah Gillanders said. 'Can't be done. The other man'd throw you off. Wouldn't let you line up, tie off.'

'Only in an emergency,' said Nels. 'There'd be no other logical reason for boarding. Is that correct, Mr. Gillanders?'

'That's correct. Emergency boardings. I never heard of no other kind.'

'Supposing you wanted to kill a man,' Nels said emphatically. 'Do you think you'd try boarding his boat against his will and hitting him with your fishing gaff? You're a man with many years of experience at sea, so I'm asking you to imagine this. Would that plan be a sensible one, a good one, in your estimation, sir? Would you think it workable to tie up to his boat and board him for the purpose of committing murder? Or would you try something else, some other approach, something other than a forced boarding in the fog on the open sea, in the middle of the night, against the other man's will – what do you think, Mr. Gillanders?'

'You couldn't board him if he didn't want you to,' Josiah answered. 'I just don't see that happening. Carl Heine in particular. He wouldn't be an easy man to board against – darn tough, big, and strong. There's just no way, Mr. Gudmundsson, that Miyamoto here could have made a forced boarding. It just isn't possible. He didn't do that.'

'It isn't possible,' Nels said. 'In your estimation, as a veteran

gillnetter, as president of the San Piedro Gill – Netters Association, it isn't possible that the defendant boarded Carl Heine's boat for the purpose of committing murder? The problem of a forced boarding precludes that – makes it impossible?'

'Miyamoto there didn't board Carl Heine against his will,' Josiah Gillanders said. 'Tie-up's too tricky, and Carl was no slouch. Had to be, if he boarded at all, some kind of emergency, engine problem or something. Battery, that's what his missus said. Carl had battery problems.'

'All right,' said Nels. 'Battery problems. Let's say you had a battery problem. You couldn't run. No lights. You're dead in the water. What would you do about it, Mr. Gillanders? Would you, say, put a spare in?'

'Don't carry a spare,' Josiah answered. 'Be like carrying a spare in your car. Just doesn't happen much, does it?'

'But, Mr. Gillanders,' said Nels Gudmundsson. 'If you will recall from the county sheriff's testimony, as well as from his written report, there was, in fact, a spare on board Carl Heine's boat when it was found adrift in White Sand Bay. There was a D-8 and a D-6 in his battery well, in use, and a D-8 sitting on the floor of his cabin – a third battery, albeit dead, which might presumably be thought of as a spare.'

'Well,' said Josiah. 'All of that's mighty strange. Three batteries – that's mighty strange. A dead spare – that's mighty strange, too. Everybody I know runs off two batteries, a main and the other, an auxiliary. One goes bad you can run off the other 'til you get to the docks again. And something else here, a D-8 and a D-6 side by side in the well – I never heard of that before neither, in all my time on the water. I never heard of no such arrangement – a guy'd use just one size battery – and I don't think Carl Heine would've run that way, you see, so irregular and all. I think Mrs. Miyamoto there had it true – Carl had battery problems, probably pulled his D-8, set it on his cabin floor dead, and borrowed a D-6 from Miyamoto, who ran off his other the rest of the night – that's the most likely explanation.'

'I see,' said Nels. 'Say you're dead in the water and in need of help. What would be your next move?'

'I'd get on the radio,' said Josiah. 'Or I'd hail somebody in sight distance. Or if my net was set and I was doing all right I'd wait for somebody to come into sight distance and hail them at that point.'

'Your first choice would be the radio?' Nels asked. 'You'd call for help on your radio? But if your battery's dead do you even *have* a radio? What's powering it, Mr. Gillanders, sir, what's powering your radio if you have no battery? Can you really put a call out on your radio?'

'You're right,' said Josiah Gillanders. 'Radio's dead. I can't call. You're dead to rights.'

'So what do you do?' Nels asked. 'You hail someone, if it isn't too foggy. But if it is foggy, as it was on the night Carl Heine drowned – sometime on the morning of September 16, a very foggy morning, you might recall – well then, you have to hope – don't you? – that someone passes closely by, and you have to hail whoever it is, because the chances of your seeing another boat are not too good, are they? You have to take whatever help comes along because otherwise you're in big trouble.'

'You're straight all the way,' said Josiah Gillanders. 'Spot like that, you'd better get some help, drifting along in the fog and all, right up next to the shipping lanes out there at Ship Channel Bank. Dangerous spot to be dead in the water. Big freighters come right through all the time. You'd better get yourself some help if you can – whoever, like you say, shows up out of the fog when you start blowing on your horn. All right, I'm ahead of you on this one,' Josiah added. 'Carl'd have aboard a compressed-air horn, see. He didn't need no battery to give his emergency blow. He'd be out there with his hand horn blowing away. He didn't need no battery to blow his horn.'

'Well,' said Nels. 'All right then. He's drifting in the fog near the shipping lanes, no engine, no lights, no radio, no spare battery – do you think he would welcome it if help came along?

Do you think he'd be thankful if another gill-netter came along and offered to tie up to him, help him out?'

'Of course,' said Josiah. 'Sure he'd welcome it. He's stranded at sea, he can't get under way, he can't even bring his net in, pick fish. He'd better be pretty damn thankful, you bet. If he isn't, he's off his rocker.'

'Mr. Gillanders.' Nels coughed into his hand. 'I want you to think back to a question I asked you just a few moments ago, sir. I want you to ponder this matter of murder – of first-degree murder, premeditated. Of planning to kill someone in advance of the fact, then executing the following strategy: approaching your victim while he fished at sea, tying up to his boat against his will, leaping aboard, and hitting him in the head with the butt of a fishing gaff. I want to ask you – I'm asking you again – from the perspective of a man who has been fishing for thirty years, from the perspective of the gill-netters association president – a man who presumably hears about almost everything that happens out there on the sea at night – would you, sir, consider this a good plan? Is this the plan a fisherman would make if he wanted to kill someone?'

Josiah Gillanders shook his head as if offended. 'That, Mr. Gudmundsson,' he said emphatically, 'would be the most cockeyed procedure imaginable. Absolutely the most cockeyed, see. If one fellow wanted to kill another he could find a way less foolhardy and dangerous, I guess you'd have to say. Boardin' another man's boat against his will – that, I've told you, isn't possible. Leapin' at him with a fishing gaff? That's just laughable, sir. That's pirates and stories and such like. I guess if you could get close enough to tie up – you couldn't – you'd also be close enough to shoot him, wouldn't you? Just shoot him, you see, then tie up to him real easy, then toss him overboard and wash your hands. He's going down hard to the bottom of the sea and twon't be seen again. I'd shoot him, I would, and skip being the first gill-netter in the history of the profession to make a successful forced boarding. No, sir, if there's anyone in this court thinks Kabuo Miyamoto there boarded Carl Heine's

boat against his will, bashed him in the head with a fishing gaff, and tossed him over-board – well, they're just daft, that's all. You'd have to be daft to believe that.'

'All right, then,' Nels said. 'I have no further questions for you, Mr. Gillanders. I thank you, however, for coming down here this morning. It's snowing hard outside.'

'It's snowing hard, yes,' said Josiah. 'But it sure is warm in here, Mr. Gudmundsson. It's mighty warm for Mr. Hooks there, in fact. It – '

'Your witness,' interrupted Nels Gudmundsson. He sat down next to Kabuo Miyamoto and put his hand on Kabuo's shoulder. 'I'm all through, Mr. Hooks,' he said.

'Well then, I suppose it's my turn,' Alvin Hooks answered calmly. 'I have just a few questions, Mr. Gillanders. Just a few things we need to turn about in all this heat – is that all right with you sir?'

Josiah shrugged and clasped his hands over his belly. 'Turn 'em then,' he advised. 'I'm all ears, cap'n.'

Alvin Hooks stood and strolled casually to the witness box with his hands deep in his trousers pockets. 'Well,' he said. 'Mr. Gillanders. You've been fishing for thirty years.'

'That's right, sir. Thirty. Count 'em.'

'Thirty years is a long time,' said Alvin Hooks. 'A lot of lonely nights at sea, yes? Plenty of time to think.'

'Landlubber might see it as lonely, I s'pose. A man like you might get lonely out there – a man who talks for a living. I – '

'Oh, yes,' said Alvin Hooks. 'I'm a landlubber, Mr. Gillanders. I'm the sort of man who would feel lonely at sea – all of that's true, yes. Fine, fine, perfectly fine – my personal life is out of the way, then. So let's talk about the case instead and skip these other matters for just right now – would that be all right with you, sir?'

'You're calling the shots here,' said Josiah Gillanders. 'Ask me whatever you want to ask me and let's be done with it.'

Alvin Hooks passed in front of the jurors with his hands clasped at the small of his back neatly. 'Mr. Gillanders,' he

said. 'I understood you to say earlier that no gill-netter would board another's boat except in the case of an emergency. Is this correct, sir? Did I hear you right?'

'Correct,' said Josiah Gillanders. 'You got me.'

'Is it a matter of principle among gill-netters, then, to help out another in distress? That is, Mr. Gillanders, would you consider yourself duty bound to assist a fellow fisherman in an emergency at sea of some sort? Is that about the size of it?'

'We're men of honor,' said Josiah Gillanders. 'We fish alone but we work together. There's times at sea when we need each other, see? Any man worth his salt out there is going to come to the aid of his neighbor. It's the law of the sea – you bet it is – to put away whatever you're doin' and answer any distress call. I can't think of a single fisherman on this island who wouldn't make it his business to help another man in an emergency out there on the water. It's a law, see – not written anywhere exactly, but just as good as something written. Gill-netters help each other.'

'But Mr. Gillanders,' said Alvin Hooks. 'We've heard here in previous testimony, sir, that gill-netters don't always get along very well, they're silent men who fish alone, they argue about the placement of their boats at sea, about who is stealing fish from who, and so forth, et cetera, et cetera. They're not known to be particularly friendly men, and they prefer to fish alone, keep their distance. Now, sir, even with all of this – with this atmosphere of isolation, of competition, of disregard for the company of others – is it fair to say that a gill-netting man will always help another in an emergency? Even if he doesn't like the other man, even if they have argued in the past, even if they are enemies? Does all of that get pushed aside, become suddenly irrelevant, in the face of distress at sea? Or do men harbor grudges and ignore one another, even take pleasure in the difficulties of a stranded enemy – illuminate us, sir.'

'Bah,' said Josiah. 'We're good men through and through. Don't matter what sort of scrap there's been, we help each other, that's the way we do things – why, a man'll even help

his enemy. We all know that someday we could need a hand, too; we all know we're subject to grief, see. Much as you get fried with someone else, much as he gets under your skin, you don't just let him drift away – that'd be plain sour, wouldn't it? We help each other in an emergency, it don't matter what else is going on.'

'Well then,' said Alvin Hooks. 'We'll take you at your word, Mr. Gillanders, and move on to other matters. We'll take you at your word that even enemies help each other in an emergency at sea. Now, did I understand you to say earlier that a forced boarding at sea was impossible? That conditions prevent a gill-netting man from boarding the boat of another gill-netter unless there is mutual consent? Unless the two of them agree and work together? Is that, sir, also correct? Did I understand you clearly on this?'

'You got me plain,' said Josiah Gillanders. 'That's exactly what I said – you won't see no forced boardings.'

'Well,' said Alvin Hooks. 'Mr. Gudmundsson here, my esteemed colleague for the defense, asked you earlier to imagine a scenario at sea in which one man seeks to kill another in a premeditated fashion. He asked you to imagine a forced boarding, a leap, a thrust of a fishing gaff. You, sir, said it wasn't possible. You said such a murder couldn't happen.'

'It's a sea yarn if it includes a forced boarding, and that's that. It's a pirate story and that's all.'

'All right, then,' said Alvin Hooks. 'I'll ask you to imagine another scenario – you tell me if it sounds plausible. If this sort of thing could have happened, sir, or if it's just another sea yarn.'

Alvin Hooks began to pace again, and as he paced he looked at each juror. 'Number one,' he began. 'The defendant here, Mr. Miyamoto, decides he wishes to kill Carl Heine. Is that part plausible – so far?'

'Sure,' Josiah answered. 'If you say so.'

'Number two,' said Alvin Hooks. 'He goes out to fish on September 15. There's a bit of mist but no real fog yet, so he has no trouble motoring out within sight distance of his intended

victim, Carl Heine. He follows him out to Ship Channel Bank – how's all of that, so far?'

'I guess,' said Josiah Gillanders.

'Number three then,' continued Alvin Hooks. 'He watches Carl Heine set his net. He sets his own not too far off, deliberately up current, and fishes until late in the evening. Now the fog comes in thick and strong, a big fog, obscuring everything from sight. He can't see anything or anybody, but he knows where Carl Heine is, two hundred yards off, down current in the fog. It's late now, two A.M. The water is very quiet. He has listened over his radio while other men have motored off to fish at Elliot Head. He is not sure how many are still in the area, but he knows it can't be more than a handful. And so Mr. Miyamoto at last makes his move. He hauls in his net, cuts his motor, makes sure his trusty fishing gaff is handy, and drifts down current toward Carl Heine, perhaps even blowing his foghorn. He drifts nearly right into Carl, it seems, and lies to him, says his engine is dead. Now you tell me – you told us earlier – wouldn't Carl Heine feel bound to help him?'

'Sea yarn,' Josiah Gillanders spat. 'But a ripping good one. Go ahead.'

'Wouldn't Carl Heine feel bound to help him? As you said earlier – men help their enemies? Wouldn't Carl Heine have helped?'

'Yes, he'd have helped. Go ahead.'

'Wouldn't the two men have tied their boats together? Wouldn't you have the mutual consent necessary – an emergency situation, even if feigned – for a successful tie-up at sea? Wouldn't you, Mr. Gillanders?'

Josiah nodded. 'You would,' he answered. 'Yes.'

'And at this point, sir, in the scenario, could the defendant not – a trained *kendo* master, remember, a man proficient at killing with a stick, lethal and experienced at stick fighting – could the defendant not have leapt aboard and killed Carl Heine with a hard blow to the skull, hard enough to crack it open? As

opposed to doing the job with a gunshot? Which potentially – which might – be heard across the water by somebody else out there fishing? Am I, sir, still plausible? Does my scenario sound plausible to a man of your expertise? Is all of that, sir, plausible?'

'It could have happened,' said Josiah Gillanders. 'But I don't much think it did.'

'You don't much think it did,' said Alvin Hooks. 'Your opinion is otherwise, it appears. But on what do you base your opinion, sir? You have not denied that my scenario is plausible. You have not denied that this premeditated murder might have happened in precisely the fashion I have just described, have you, Mr. Gillanders – *have* you?'

'No, I haven't,' Josiah said. 'But – '

'No further questions,' said Alvin Hooks. 'The witness can sit down. The witness can sit in the pleasant warmth of the gallery. I have no further questions.'

'Bah,' said Josiah Gillanders. But the judge held his hand up, and Josiah, seeing this, left the stand carrying his hat between his fingers.

27

The storm winds battered the courtroom windows and rattled them in their casements so vigorously it seemed the glass would break. For three days and nights the citizens in the gallery had listened to the wind beat against their houses and echo violently inside their ears as they struggled against it to make their way to and from the courthouse. They had not at all grown accustomed to it. They were habituated to the sea winds that blew across the island each spring when the mud was up and the rain fell steadily, but a wind of this magnitude, so frigid and elemental, remained foreign to them. It seemed improbable that a wind should blow so consistently for days on end. It made them irritable and impatient. The snow was one thing, falling as it did, but the whine of the storm, the stinging force of it against their faces – everyone wished unconsciously that it would come to an end and grant them peace. They were tired of listening to it.

Kabuo Miyamoto, the accused man, had not heard the wind at all from his cell, not even a murmur of it. He had no inkling of the storm outside except when Abel Martinson led him up the stairs – handcuffed for his journey to Judge Fielding's courtroom – so that emerging into the twilight of the courthouse's ground floor he felt the wind shaking the building. And he saw through the windows in each of the stairwells how the snow fell hard out of a glowering sky and boiled, borne by the wind. The cold, cottony light of a winter storm was something he gave thanks for after living without windows for seventy-seven days. Kabuo had passed the preceding night wrapped in blankets – his concrete cell was especially cold – and pacing and shivering endlessly. The deputy appointed to

watch him through the dark hours – a retired sawyer named William Stenesen – had shone a flashlight on him just before midnight and inquired if he was faring well. Kabuo had asked for extra blankets and a glass of tea, if possible. 'I'll see about that,' William Stenesen had answered. 'But Jesus, man, if you hadn't gotten yourself into this mess, neither of us would be here in the first place.'

And so Kabuo had pondered the mess he'd indeed gotten himself into. For when Nels Gudmundsson had asked for his side of the story after their chess game two and a half months ago he'd stuck with the lie he'd told Sheriff Moran: he didn't know anything about it, he'd insisted, and this had deepened his problems. Yes, he'd spoken with Carl about the seven acres, yes, he'd had an argument with Etta Heine, yes, he'd gone to see Ole. No, he hadn't seen Carl out at Ship Channel Bank on the night of September 15. He had no idea what had happened to Carl and could offer no explanation to anyone, no information about Carl's drowning. He, Kabuo, had fished through the night, then gone home and gone to bed, that was all there was to it. That was all he'd had to say.

Nels Gudmundsson, in the beginning, had been satisfied with this and seemed to take him at his word. But then he came again on the following morning with a yellow legal pad tucked beneath his arm and, a cigar between his teeth, settled down on Kabuo's bed. The cigar ashes fell into the lap of his pants, but he did not seem to mind or notice, and Kabuo felt sorry for him. His back was bent and his hands trembled. 'The sheriff's report,' he said with a sigh. 'I read it, Kabuo. The whole thing.'

'What does it say?' Kabuo asked.

'It contains a few facts I'm concerned about,' said Nels, pulling a pen from his coat pocket. 'I hope you won't mind if I ask you, once more, to give me your side of the story. Can you do that for me, Kabuo? Tell me everything all over again? Your story about the seven acres, et cetera? Everything that happened?'

Kabuo moved to the door of his cell and put his eye to the

opening. 'You don't believe what I've told you,' he said softly. 'You think I'm lying, don't you.'

'The blood on your fishing gaff,' Nels Gudmundsson replied. 'They had it tested in Anacortes. It matches Carl Heine's blood type.'

'I don't know anything about it,' said Kabuo. 'I told that to the sheriff and I'm telling it to you. I don't know anything about it.'

'Another thing,' insisted Nels, pointing his pen at Kabuo. 'They found one of your mooring lines on Carl's boat. Wrapped around a cleat on the *Susan Marie*. One of your lines, clearly, they say. Matched all your other lines with the exception of a new one. That's in the report, too.'

'Oh,' said Kabuo, but nothing more.

'Look,' said Nels Gudmundsson. 'I can't help you with this unless I know the truth. I can't build a case around an answer like "oh" when I've brought to your attention such damning evidence as your mooring line being found by the sheriff of Island County on the boat of a suspiciously dead fisherman. What good can I do you if all I get is "oh"? How am I going to help you, Kabuo? You've got to level with me, that's all there is to it. Otherwise, I can't help you.'

'I've told you the truth,' said Kabuo. He turned around and faced his attorney, an old man with one eye and trembling hands, appointed to his case because he, Kabuo, had refused to honor the prosecutor's point of view by purchasing his own defense. 'We talked about my family's land, I argued with his mother years ago, I went to see Ole, I went to see Carl, and that was the end of it. I've said what I have to say.'

'The mooring line,' Nels Gudmundsson repeated. 'The mooring line and the blood on the fishing gaff. I – '

'I can't explain those things,' insisted Kabuo. 'I don't know anything about them.'

Nels nodded and stared at him, and Kabuo held his gaze. 'You could hang, you know,' Nels said bluntly. 'There's no attorney

in the world who can help you with this if you're not going to tell the truth.'

And the next morning Nels had come yet again, carrying a manila folder. He smoked his cigar and paced the length of the cell with the folder tucked beneath his arm. 'I've brought you the sheriffs report,' he said, 'so you can see exactly what we're up against. Problem is, once you read the thing, you may decide to concoct a *new* story – you may pretend you want to level with me by concocting a more defensible lie. Once you've read this report, Kabuo, you can make something up that's consistent with it and I'll go ahead and work with that, mainly because I'll have no choice. I don't like that. I'd rather it didn't turn out that way. I'd rather know I can trust you. So before you read what's in that thing, tell me a story that squares with its details and exonerate yourself in my eyes. Tell me the story you should have told the sheriff right off the bat, when it wasn't too late, when the truth might still have given you your freedom. When the truth might have done you some good.'

Kabuo, at first, said nothing. But then Nels dropped the manila folder on the mattress, dropped it and stood directly over him. 'It's because you're from Japanese folks,' he said softly; it was more a question than a statement. 'You figure because you're from Japanese folks nobody will believe you anyway.'

'I've got a right to think that way. Or maybe you've forgotten that a few years back the government decided it couldn't trust any of us and shipped us out of here.'

'That's true,' said Nels. 'But – '

'We're sly and treacherous,' Kabuo said. 'You can't trust a Jap, can you? This island's full of strong feelings, Mr. Gudmundsson, people who don't often speak their minds but hate on the inside all the same. They don't buy their berries from our farms, they won't do business with us. You remember when somebody pitched rocks through all the windows at Sumida's greenhouses last summer? Well, now there's a fisherman everybody liked well enough who's dead and drowned in his net. They're going

to figure it makes sense a Jap killed him. They're going to want to see me hang no matter what the truth is.'

'There are laws,' said Nels. 'They apply equally to everyone. You're entitled to a fair trial.'

'There are men,' said Kabuo, 'who hate me. They hate anyone who looks like the soldiers they fought. That's what I'm doing here.'

'Tell the truth,' Nels said. 'Decide to tell the truth before it's too late.'

Kabuo lay down on his bed with a sigh and twined his fingers behind his head. 'The truth,' he said. 'The truth isn't easy.'

'Just the same,' Nels said. 'I understand how you feel. There are the things that happened, though, and the things that did not happen. That's all we're talking about.'

It seemed to Kabuo a lushly textured dream, fogbound, still, and silent. He thought about it often in his darkened cell, and the smallest details were large for him and every word was audible.

On the night in question he'd checked the *Islander*'s engine oil and quickly greased the net drum's reel drive before putting out for Ship Channel Bank in the hour just before dusk. Ship Channel, he'd understood, had been fished hard and happily on two consecutive evenings. He'd spoken to Lars Hansen and Jan Sorensen about it and made the decision to fish at Ship Channel on account of their information. The silvers were running in immense schools, they said, mostly on the flood tide. There were fish to be had on the ebb tide, too, though nowhere near as many. It would be possible to take two hundred or more working the flood alone, Kabuo hoped, and perhaps a hundred more on the ebb if he was lucky – and luck, he knew, was what he needed. Elliot Head, on the previous night, had barely covered his costs. He'd come away with eighteen fish and had furthermore set his net in the dark beside a large and labyrinthine kelp island. The tide drift had taken him down into the kelp, and he'd wasted four hours extricating himself so as not to rip his gill

net. Now, tonight, he would have to do better. He would need to have fortune on his side.

In the blue light of dusk he'd made the turn out of the harbor and run for open water. From his vantage point at the wheel of the *Islander* he saw the soft cedars of San Piedro Island, its high, rolling hills, the low mist that lay in long streamers against its beaches, the whitecaps riffling its shoreline. The moon had risen already behind the island and hung just over the big bluff at Skiff Point – a quarter moon, pale and indefinite, as ethereal and translucent as the wisps of clouds that traveled the skies, obscuring it. Kabuo, his radio on, checked his barometer; it still held steady despite talk of rough weather, cold squalls of sleet reported to the north, out of the Strait of Georgia. When he looked up again a raft of seabirds was scattering, gray silhouettes off the chop a hundred yards out, rising and then skimming over the surface of the waves in the manner of surf scoters, though there were too many to be surf scoters – he didn't know what they might be, maybe murres, he couldn't tell. Steering wide of Harbor Rocks, bucking the sea wind head-on at seven knots, he ran with the tide race pushing hard behind him and fell in with the *Kasilof*, the *Antarctic*, and the *Providence*, all of which were making for Ship Channel, too: half the fleet was headed there. Half the fleet was spread out before him, running hard for the fishing grounds at dusk and throwing wide silver wakes.

Kabuo drank the green tea in his thermos and ran through the radio channels. It was his habit to listen but not to speak, to gather what he could about men by the manner in which they expressed themselves, and to discern what he could about the fishing.

At full dusk or thereabouts he ate three rice balls, a slab of rock cod, and two windfall apples from a wild tree behind Bender's Spring. The night mist hovered on the water already, so he backed the throttle down and ran with his spotlight broadcasting over the waves. The prospect of a blind fog, as always, concerned him. A fisherman could become so lost in a blind fog he'd set his own net in a circle without knowing it or

end up working the middle of the shipping lane where the big freighters ran toward Seattle. It was better in such conditions to fish Elliot Head, since the head lay far from the shipping lane and well to the lee side of Elliot Island, out of the big water breezes.

But by eight-thirty he'd idled his engine at the bank and stood in the cockpit beside the net drum, listening, with the fog settling all around him. From the lighthouse station far to the east he could hear the low, steady intonation of the fog signal diaphone. It was the sound he associated with blind nights at sea – lonely, familiar, hushed, and so melancholy he could never listen without emptiness. Tonight, he knew, was what old-timers called *ghost time*, with fog as immobile and dense as buttermilk. A man could run his hands through such a fog, separating it into tendrils and streamers that gathered themselves languidly once more into the whole and disappeared seamlessly, without a trace. Drifting on the tide, a gill-netter moved through it as though it composed its own netherworld medium halfway between air and water. It was possible on such a night to become as disoriented as a man without a torch in a cave. Kabuo knew that other fishermen were out there, drifting as he was and peering into the fog, blindly gliding across the bank in the hope of establishing their locations. The shipping lane boundaries were marked by numbered buoys, and the hope was to stumble across one fortuitously so as to orient oneself.

Kabuo, giving up, propped a buoy bag between the stern fairleads and lit a kerosene lantern with a wooden kitchen match. He waited until the wick held strong, pumped in some air, adjusted the fuel, then set the lantern carefully in its life ring and bent down over the *Islander*'s transom to place the buoy bag on the water. With his face so close to the surface of the sea he imagined he could smell the salmon running. He shut his eyes, put a hand in the water, and in his own manner he prayed to the gods of the sea to assist him by bringing fish his way. He asked for good luck, for a respite from the fog; he prayed that the gods would clear the fog away and keep him safe from the

freighters in the shipping lane. Then he stood again in the stern of the *Islander*, square-knotted his buoy bag line to his net line, and released the brake on the net drum.

Kabuo laid his net out north to south by motoring away from it on a true blind heading as slowly as was possible. It seemed to him the lane lay to the north, though he couldn't be certain about that. The tidal drift, running east, would keep his net taut, but only if he laid it on the right bearing; if he quartered to the current, even slightly, on the other hand, he'd end up having to tow all night just to keep his net from collapsing. There was no way of knowing in dense fog how true a net lay; he couldn't see twenty corks down his line and would have to run it every hour or so with his spotlight seeking it out. Kabuo could not see the surface of the sea more than five yards beyond the bow of his boat from his place at the wheel in his cabin. The *Islander*, in fact, divided the fog, the bow literally peeling it open. The fog was dense enough to make him ponder running for Elliot Head before long; for all he knew he was setting his net in the Seattle-bound shipping lane. Besides, he had to hope no one had set due south, particularly at an angle to his own set. In this fog he'd no doubt miss the man's jacklight and twist his net up in the *Islander*'s prop, a long diversion from the night's fishing. Any number of things could go amiss.

In the stern the net slipped free from the drum and rolled over the fairleads easily toward the sea until at last the whole of it was out of the boat, three hundred fathoms long. Kabuo went back and hosed the net gurry out the scupper holes. When he was done he shut the engine down and stood on the hatch with his back against the cabin, listening for the blasts of passing freighters. Nothing, though – there was no sound now but lapping water and the distant sound from the lighthouse. The tidal current carried him gently east, just as he'd predicted. He felt better about things with his net in. He could not be certain he was not in the shipping lane, but he knew he was drifting at the same speed as every other gill-netter fishing these fogbound waters. He imagined there were thirty or more boats out there, all hidden

and silent in the dense sea fog, moving to the same tidal rhythm that moved under him, keeping everyone equi-distant. Kabuo went in and flicked his mast light on: red over white, the sign of a man night fishing, not that it did any good. Not that the light was worth anything. But on the other hand he'd done all he could about matters. He'd set his net as well as possible. There was nothing to do now but be patient.

Kabuo brought his thermos into the cockpit, then sat on the port gunnel and sipped green tea, listening into the fog uneasily. Farther south he could hear someone idling, the sound of net unraveling from a drum, a boat under way at a crawl. There was an occasional dim crackle from his radio set, but other than that nothing. In the silence he sipped tea and waited for the salmon: as on other nights he imagined them in motion, swift in pursuit of the waters they'd sprung from, waters that held both past and future for them, their children and their children's children and their deaths. When he picked his net and held them pinched at the gills he felt in their silence how desperate their sojourn was, and he was moved in the manner a fisherman is moved, quietly, without words. Their rich silver flanks would feed his dreams and for this he was thankful and sorrowful. There was something tragic in the wall of invisible mesh he'd hung to choke the life from them while they traveled to the rhythm of an urging they could not deny. He imagined them slamming against his net in astonishment at this invisible thing that finished their lives in the last days of an urgent journey. Sometimes, hauling net, he came across a fish thrashing hard enough to elicit a cracking *thump* when it banged off the *Islander*'s transom. Like all the others, it went into the hold to die over the course of hours.

Kabuo put his thermos together and took it into the cabin. Once again he flipped through the radio channels, and this time he caught a voice – Dale Middleton's – chattering away in a slow island drawl: 'I done just got the bug out of my squelch,' it said, and then someone answered, 'What for?' Dale replied he'd had just about enough of setting by the shipping lane in soup fog for a dozen silvers, a few dogfish, a couple of hake, and what's

more taking flack off his radio. 'I near can't see my own hands,' he said. 'I near can't see the nose on my own face.' Somebody, a third party, agreed the fishing had gone sour, the bank seemed all dried up real sudden, he'd been thinking on fishing at Elliot Head, couldn't tell but maybe things was better there. 'Leastwise off this shipping lane,' replied Dale. 'One good swing I got laid out now, that'll do it for me here. Hey, Leonard, your net coming up clear? Mine here's lookin' like a oil rag. Damn thing's darker 'n burnt toast.'

The fishermen on the radio discussed this for a while, Leonard saying his net was fairly clean, Dale asking him if he'd greased it lately, Leonard claiming to have seen a buoy marker, number 57, off to port. He'd worked off it for a half hour or so but never came on to 58 or 56, never fixed himself properly. Far as he was concerned he was lost in the fog and intended to stay that way – leastwise 'til his net was up, then he'd think about matters. Dale asked him if he'd picked once yet, and Leonard sounded disappointed. Dale described the fog again and said he guessed it was as thick as it gets, and Leonard, agreeing, said he remembered one last year at Elliot Head in rougher seas – a bad scene, he'd added. 'The Head'd be good about now,' replied Dale. 'Let's fog-run our way on down there.'

Kabuo left his radio on; he wanted to hear about it if a freighter came down the strait and put in a call to the lighthouse. He slid the cabin door open and stood listening, and in time came the air blasts, both muted and melancholy, of boats moving off the fishing grounds, the fog whistles of gill-netters running blindly east, farther off all the time and so less audible. It was time to pick, he decided, and then if necessary to make his own fog run to the fishing grounds off Elliot Head – a run he preferred to make alone. The boats out there now were moving on blind bearings, and he didn't necessarily trust their skippers. He'd wait an hour more, then pick and run if he came up short on fish.

At ten-thirty he stood on the beaver paddle in the cockpit, picking his net and stopping now and then to throw strands of kelp into the water. The net, under tension, rained seawater onto

the deck along with sticks and kelp. He was happy to find there were salmon coming up as well, big silvers mostly over ten and eleven pounds, a half-dozen ten-pound chums, too, even three resident black-mouth. Some dropped to the deck coming over the transom, others he deftly maneuvered free. He was good at this part of things. His hands found their way through the folds of the net to the long flanks of dead and dying salmon. Kabuo lofted them into the hold along with three hake and three pale dogfish he intended to take home to his family. There were fifty-eight salmon, he counted, for this first set, and he felt grateful about them. Kneeling for a moment beside the hold, he looked down at them with satisfaction and calculated their worth at the cannery. He thought of the journey they'd made to him and how their lives, perhaps, would buy his farm back.

Kabuo watched for one long moment – an occasional fish flaring at the gills or jerking – then pulled the hatch cover over them and sprayed sea slime out the scupper holes. It was a good haul for a first set, enough to keep him fishing the bank – there was no reason for him to go elsewhere. Chances were that, fog and all, he'd made his drift dead center by happenstance; he'd had the luck he'd prayed for earlier. So far everything had gone right.

It was close to eleven-thirty, if his watch was right, the last of the flood still carrying him east, and he decided to motor west again in order to fish the tide turn. On the turn the salmon would pile up, milling on the bank by the hundreds, in schools, and some to the east would back in on the ebb so that his net would load up going both ways. He hoped for another hundred fish from his next set; it seemed a reasonable prospect. He was glad to have stuck it out in the fog and felt vindicated somehow. He'd made his drift successfully. There were fish in his hold, more to be had, and small competition to get them. He guessed more than two-thirds of the fishermen in the area had made the fog run for Elliot Head with their horns sounding across the water.

Kabuo stood at the wheel in his cabin with a cup of green tea

on the table behind him and flipped once more through the radio channels. There was no talk now. All the men who couldn't help talking had moved on, it appeared. Out of habit he checked his engine gauges and took a reading from his compass. Then he throttled up, turned tight, and motored west, adjusting to the north less than five degrees in the hope of stumbling across a buoy marker.

The bow of the *Islander* cut through the fog for ten minutes or more. One eye on the binnacle, the other on the spotlighted water before his bow, Kabuo inched forward on blind faith. He was, he knew, motoring against the grain of boats drifting down the bank. The protocol among gill-netters in such conditions was to lay on one's foghorn at one-minute intervals and to keep a sharp ear turned toward the fog on the chance of receiving a reply. Kabuo, moving into the tidal drift, had signaled his position a half-dozen times when an air horn replied off his port bow. Whoever it was, he was close.

Kabuo backed into neutral and drifted, his heart beating hard in his chest. The other man was too near, seventy-five yards, a hundred at best, out there in the fog, his motor cut. Kabuo laid on his horn again. In the silence that followed came a reply to port – this time a man's voice, calm and factual, a voice he recognized. 'I'm over here,' it called across the water. 'I'm dead in the water, drifting.'

And this was how he had found Carl Heine, his batteries dead, adrift at midnight, in need of another man's assistance. There Carl stood in the *Islander*'s spotlight, a big man in bib overalls poised in his boat's bow, a kerosene lantern clutched in one hand and an air horn dangling from the other. He'd raised his lantern and stood there like that, his bearded chin set, expressionless. 'I'm dead in the water,' he'd said again, when Kabuo pulled up against his starboard side and tossed him a mooring line. 'My batteries are drawed down. Both of them.'

'All right,' said Kabuo. 'Let's tie up. I've got plenty of juice.'

'Thank God for that,' answered Carl. 'It's good luck to have run across you.'

'Kick your fenders out,' Kabuo said. 'I'll drift right up in close.'

They tied their boats together in the fog, underneath the *Islander*'s spotlight. Kabuo shut his engine down while Carl stepped across both gunnels and came aboard his boat. He stood in the doorway shaking his head; 'I drawed 'em both down,' he repeated. 'Volt meter's down around nine somewhere. Alternator belts were loose, I guess. I got 'em tightened up better now, but meanwhile I'm dead in the water.'

'Hope we're not in the lane,' said Kabuo, peering up at the *Susan Marie*'s mast. 'Looks like you put a lantern up.'

'Lashed it up there just a bit ago,' said Carl. 'Best I could do, seems like. Lost my radio when the juice ran out, couldn't call anyone. Couldn't do anything to help myself, just drifting along this last hour. Lantern's probably useless in this fog, but anyway I've got it up there. It's all the lights I got just now, that and the one I've been carrying. Probably isn't worth nothing to nobody.'

'I've got two batteries,' Kabuo answered. 'We'll pull one and get you started.'

''Preciate that,' said Carl. 'Thing is I run D-8s, you see. S'pose you run off 6s.'

'I do,' said Kabuo. 'But it'll work if you've got room. Anyway, we can refit your well. Or rig up some longer cables? It should go in just fine.'

'I'll measure,' said Carl. 'Then we'll know.'

He crossed back over the boat gunnels then, and Kabuo hoped that underneath his facade there was part of him wanting to discuss the land that lay between them silently. Carl would *have* to say something one way or the other simply because the two of them were at sea together, moored boat to boat but to nothing else, adrift and battling the same problem.

Kabuo had known Carl for many years; he knew that Carl avoided circumstances in which he had to speak. He spoke mostly of the world of tools and objects when he had to speak at all. Kabuo remembered trolling for cutthroat with

Carl – they were twelve years old, long before the war – in a borrowed, weathered rowboat. It was just after sunset and the phosphorescence in the water boiling underneath Carl's rowing oars inspired him to comment – a boy so moved by the beauty of the world he could not keep himself from utterance: 'Look at those colors,' he'd said. And even at twelve Kabuo had understood that such a statement was out of character. What Carl felt he kept inside, showing nothing to anyone – as Kabuo himself did, for other reasons. They were more similar in their deepest places than Kabuo cared to admit.

Kabuo pried the cover from his battery well and loosened the cables from the terminals. He lifted one of his batteries out – twice as large as a car battery and twice as heavy as well – and carried it out to where he could rest it on his gunnel and pass it to Carl Heine. They stood each on his own boat, and the battery passed between them. 'It'll fit,' said Carl. 'There's a flange in the way. It's soft. I can bang it back.'

Kabuo reached down and took his gaff in his hand. 'I'll bring this,' he said. 'We can hammer with it.'

They passed into Carl's tidy cabin together, Kabuo carrying a lantern and the gaff, Carl in front with the battery. A cased sausage hung from a wire beside the binnacle; the cot was neatly made up. Kabuo recognized Carl's neat hand in things, his way of establishing a rigid order, the force that had driven him, years before, to keep his tackle box shipshape. Even his clothes, no matter how worn-out, were conspicuously neat and well kept.

'Give me that gaff,' Carl said now.

He knelt on one knee beside his battery hold and banged with the gaff at the metal flange. Kabuo, beside him, was aware of his strength and of the facility with which he approached this problem; he made each stroke count, put his shoulders into each, and did not hurry his blows. Once his right hand slipped, though, and grazing the soft metal came away bloody, but Carl did not halt. He gripped Kabuo's fishing gaff harder and only afterward, when the battery was in the well, did he put his palm

to his mouth and hold it there, taking back his blood in silence. 'Let's try starting up,' he said.

'You sure,' asked Kabuo, 'you got those belts tight? No point in starting up otherwise, you know. You'll just run this battery down, too, and we'll have another problem.'

'They're tight now,' said Carl, working on his palm. 'I put a wrench on 'em good.'

He pulled out the choke and threw his toggle switches. The *Susan Marie's* engine wheezed twice below the floorboards, then coughed, rattled, and fired up when Carl backed down the choke.

'Tell you what,' said Kabuo. 'You keep that battery for the rest of the night. I can't wait around 'til you draw back up, so I'll just run off the one I've got and catch you back at the docks.'

Carl slid the dead battery out of the way, tucked it in to the right of the wheel, then snapped on the cabin light and took a volt meter reading with his handkerchief pressed against his hand. 'You're right,' he said. 'I'm charging now, but this'll take awhile. Maybe I'll find you later.'

'Catch fish,' said Kabuo. 'Don't worry about it. I'll see you back at the docks.'

He worked the battery hold cover into place. He picked up his gaff and waited there. 'I'm off,' he said finally. 'I'll see you.'

'Hold on,' answered Carl, still working on his hand – looking at it and not Kabuo. 'You know as well as I do we both got something to talk about.'

'All right,' replied Kabuo, his gaff in his hand. And then he stood and waited.

'Seven acres,' said Carl Heine. 'I'm wonderin' what you'd pay for 'em, Kabuo. Just curious, that's all.'

'What are you selling them for?' Kabuo asked. 'Why don't we start with what you want for them? I guess I'd rather start there.'

'Did I say I was selling?' Carl asked. 'Didn't say one way or the other, did I? But if I was, I guess I'd have to figure they're mine and you want 'em pretty bad. Guess I'd ought to charge

you a small fortune, but then maybe you'd want your battery back, leave me out here stranded.'

'The battery's in,' Kabuo answered, smiling. 'That's separate from the rest of things. Besides, you'd do the same for me.'

'I *might* do the same for you,' said Carl. 'I have to warn you about that, chief. I'm not screwed together like I used to be. It isn't like it was before.'

'All right,' said Kabuo. 'If you say so.'

'Hell,' said Carl. 'I'm not saying what I mean. Look, goddamn it, I'm sorry, okay? I'm sorry over this whole damn business. I'd a been around, it wouldn't have happened how it did. My mother pulled it off, I was out at sea, fighting you goddamn Jap sons a – '

'I'm an American,' Kabuo cut in. 'Just like you or anybody. Am I calling you a Nazi, you big Nazi bastard? I killed men who looked just like you – pig-fed German bastards. I've got their blood on my soul, Carl, and it doesn't wash off very easily. So don't you talk to me about Japs, you big Nazi son of a bitch.'

He still held the gaff gripped tightly in one hand, and he became aware of it now. Carl put one boot on the *Susan Marie's* port gunnel and spat hard into the water. 'I am a bastard,' he said finally, and stared out into the fog. 'I'm a big Hun Nazi son of a bitch, and you know what else, Kabuo? I still got your bamboo fishing rod. I kept it all these years. I hid it in the barn after my mother tried to make me go and return it over to your house. You went off to prison camp, I caught a mess of sea runs. Damn thing's still in my closet.'

'Leave it there,' said Kabuo Miyamoto. 'I forgot all about that fishing rod. You can have it. To hell with it.'

'To hell with that,' said Carl. 'It's been driving me crazy all these years. I open up my closet and there it is, your goddamn bamboo rod.'

'Give it back, if you want,' said Kabuo. 'But I'm telling you you can keep it, Carl. That's why I gave it to you.'

'All right,' said Carl. 'Then that settles it. Twelve hundred an acre and that's final. That's what I'm paying Ole, see.

That's the going price on strawberry land, go and have a look around.'

'That's eighty-four hundred for the lot,' answered Kabuo. 'How much are you going to want down?'

Carl Heine spat into the water one more time, then turned and put out his hand. Kabuo put the gaff down and took it. They did not shake so much as grip like fishermen who know they can go no further with words and must communicate in another fashion. So they stood there at sea in the fog, floating, and locked their hands together. Their grip was solid, and there was the blood from Carl's cut palm in it. They did not mean for it to say too much overtly, and at the same time they wished for it to say everything. They moved away from this more quickly than they desired but before embarrassment overtook them. 'A thousand down,' said Carl Heine. 'We can sign papers tomorrow.'

'Eight hundred,' said Kabuo, 'and it's a deal.'

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When Kabuo had finished telling his story on the witness stand, Alvin Hooks rose and stood before him insistently working on a hangnail. Studying his fingers as he delivered his words, he attended in particular to his cuticles. 'Mr. Miyamoto,' he began. 'For the life of me I can't understand why you didn't tell this story from the start. After all, don't you think it might have been your citizenly duty to come forward with all of this information? Don't you think you should have gone to the sheriff and told him about this battery business you claim occurred on the high seas? I would think you would, Mr. Miyamoto. I would think you would go to Sheriff Moran and tell him all of this just as soon as you heard that Carl Heine had died so horribly.'

The accused man looked at the jurors now, ignoring Alvin Hooks entirely, and answered quietly and evenly in their direction, as if there were no one else present. 'You must understand,' he said to them, 'that I heard nothing about the death of Carl Heine until one o'clock on the afternoon of September 16 and that within just a few hours of my having heard of it Sheriff Moran arrested me. There was no time for me to voluntarily come forward with the events as I have just delivered them. I – '

'But,' Alvin Hooks intervened, placing himself between Kabuo and the jurors, 'as you've just said yourself, Mr. Miyamoto, you had in fact – what did you say? – a few *hours* in which to seek out the sheriff. You heard about this death, an afternoon passed, and then you went down to the Amity Harbor docks with the intent of putting out to sea. You intended to fish until the morning of the seventeenth, at which time, if you'd decided

to come forward, at least *sixteen* hours would have passed since you'd heard of the death of Carl Heine. So let me put this another way, a bit more consistent with reality – did you, Mr. Miyamoto, *intend* to come forward? Were you about to come forward with your battery story at the time of your arrest?'

'I was thinking about it,' said Kabuo Miyamoto. 'I was trying to decide just what I should do. The situation was difficult.'

'Oh,' answered Alvin Hooks. 'You were thinking about it. You were weighing whether or not to come forward and tell Sheriff Moran, in a voluntary way, about this battery incident.'

'That's right,' said Kabuo Miyamoto. 'I was.'

'But then, as you say, Sheriff Moran came to you. He appeared at your boat on the evening of the sixteenth with a search warrant, is that correct?'

'He did.'

'And you were still considering, at that point in time, whether or not you should tell him your battery story?'

'I was.'

'But you didn't tell him your battery story.'

'I guess not. No, I didn't.'

'You didn't tell him your battery story,' Alvin Hooks repeated. 'Not even in the face of imminent arrest did you offer any sort of explanation. Here stood Sheriff Moran with your fishing gaff in hand, telling you he intended to have the blood on it tested, and you didn't tell him about Carl Heine's cut palm – wasn't that what you told the court, that Carl cut his palm using your fishing gaff? And that this is the explanation for the blood on it?'

'That's what happened,' said Kabuo Miyamoto. 'He cut his palm, yes.'

'But you didn't offer that as an explanation to the sheriff. You said nothing about having seen Carl Heine. Now why was this, Mr. Miyamoto? Why did you claim complete ignorance?'

'You must understand,' said Kabuo. 'The sheriff had appeared

with a warrant in hand. I found myself under suspicion of murder. It seemed to me best not to say anything. To wait until I . . . had a lawyer.'

'So you didn't tell the sheriff your battery story,' Alvin Hooks said again. 'Nor did you tell it after your arrest, even when you *had* an attorney. Instead you claimed – am I correct about this? – you claimed to know nothing about the death of Carl Heine, you claimed not to have seen him on the night of the fifteenth at the Ship Channel Bank fishing grounds. These claims of yours, these claims of ignorance, were all recorded in the sheriff's investigative report, which has been admitted as evidence in this trial. Your story, then, immediately *after* your arrest, differs from the one you've told today, Mr. Miyamoto. So I ask you – where lies the truth?'

Kabuo blinked; his lips tightened. 'The truth,' he said, 'is as I have just described it. The truth is that I loaned Carl a battery, helped him get his boat started, made arrangements for my family's seven acres with him, then motored away and fished.'

'I see,' said Alvin Hooks. 'You wish to retract the story of complete ignorance you told Sheriff Moran in the wake of your arrest and replace it with this new one you've just now told us? You wish us to believe this new story?'

'Yes, I do. Because it's true.'

'I see,' said Alvin Hooks. 'Well, then. On the morning of September 16 you returned from a night's fishing and informed your wife of your at-sea conversation with Carl Heine. Is that correct, Mr. Miyamoto?'

'It is.'

'And then?' asked the prosecutor. 'What next?'

'I slept,' said Kabuo. 'Until one-thirty. My wife woke me up at one-thirty or thereabouts with the news about Carl's death.'

'I see,' said Alvin Hooks. 'And then what?'

'We sat and talked,' said Kabuo. 'I ate lunch and took care of some bills I had to pay. About five I headed down to the docks.'

'About five,' said Alvin Hooks. 'And did you stop anywhere along the way? Errands, perhaps? Did you visit anyone or go anywhere? Speak to anybody about anything?'

'No,' said Kabuo. 'I left around five and went straight to my boat. That was all there was to it.'

'You didn't, say, stop at the store to stock up on supplies? Nothing of that sort, Mr. Miyamoto?'

'No.'

'At the docks,' said Alvin Hooks. 'Did you see anyone? Did you stop at another boat for any reason, speak to any other fishermen?'

'Straight to my boat,' said Kabuo Miyamoto. 'I didn't stop for anything, no.'

'Straight to your boat,' Alvin Hooks repeated. 'And there you were, preparing for a night of fishing, when the sheriff came along with his warrant.'

'That's right,' said Kabuo. 'He searched my boat.'

Alvin Hooks crossed over to the evidence table and selected a folder from it. 'The sheriff indeed searched your boat,' he agreed. 'And the details of his search, Mr. Miyamoto, are recorded in this investigative report I'm holding right here in my hand. In fact, in the course of cross-examining the sheriff, your counsel – Mr. Gudmundsson – made reference to this report, including an item on page twenty-seven which says – 'Alvin Hooks shuffled through the pages, then stopped and tapped his forefinger against it, tapped it three times, emphatically. Once again he turned toward the jurors, swiveling the sheriff's report in their direction as if to suggest they read along with him despite their distance across the courtroom.

'Now this is highly problematic,' Alvin Hooks said. 'Because the sheriff's report states that in your battery well there were two D-6 batteries. "Two D-6 batteries in well. Each six celled" – that's what it says, right here.'

'My boat runs on D-6s,' answered Kabuo. 'There are many boats that do so.'

'Oh, yes,' said Alvin Hooks. 'I know about that. But what

about the fact that there were *two* batteries? *Two* batteries, Mr. Miyamoto. If your story is true, if you loaned one to Carl Heine as you say you did – if you pulled one out of your own battery well in order to loan it to Carl Heine – shouldn't there have been just *one* present when the sheriff made his search? I've asked you about the course of your day, how you spent your afternoon, and at no point did you tell us that you stopped at the chandlery to purchase yourself a new battery, at no point did you say anything suggestive of time spent purchasing or finding a new battery. You didn't tell us that you spent any time getting another battery down in your well – so why, Mr. Miyamoto, why did the sheriff find *two* batteries on your boat if you'd loaned one to Carl Heine?'

The accused man looked once again at the jurors and let a moment of silence pass. Once again his face showed nothing; it was impossible to know what he was thinking. 'I had a spare battery in my shed,' he said evenly. 'I brought it down and put it in before the sheriff showed up with his warrant. That's why he found two batteries when he searched. One of them had just gone in.'

Alvin Hooks put the sheriff's report in its place on the evidence table. With his hands behind his back, as though contemplating this answer, he made his way toward the jurors' platform, where he stopped and turned to face the accused man, nodding at him slowly.

'Mr. Miyamoto,' he said, and his tone suggested admonition. 'You are under oath here to tell the truth. You're under oath to be honest with the court, to be forthcoming with the truth about your role in the death of Carl Heine. And now it seems to me that once again you wish to change your story. You wish to say that you brought a battery from home and inserted it in your battery well during the hour before your boat was searched, or something of that sort – you're adding this now to what you said before. Well then, all right, that's all well and good, but why didn't you tell us this earlier? Why do you change your battery story every time a new question is raised?'

'These things happened almost three months ago,' said Kabuo. 'I don't remember every detail.'

Alvin Hooks held his chin in his fingers. 'You're a hard man to trust, Mr. Miyamoto,' he sighed. 'You sit before us with no expression, keeping a poker face through – '

'Objection!' cut in Nels Gudmundsson, but Judge Lew Fielding was already sitting upright and looking sternly at Alvin. 'You know better than that, Mr. Hooks,' he said. 'Either ask questions that count for something or have a seat and be done with it. Shame on you,' he added.

Alvin Hooks crossed the courtroom one more time and sat down at the prosecutor's table. He picked up his pen and, revolving it in his fingers, looked out the window at the falling snow, which seemed to be slowing finally. 'I can't think of anything more,' he said. 'The witness is free to step down.'

Kabuo Miyamoto rose in the witness box so that the citizens in the gallery saw him fully – a Japanese man standing proudly before them, thick and strong through the torso. They noted his bearing and the strength in his chest; they saw the sinews in his throat. While they watched he turned his dark eyes to the snowfall and gazed at it for a long moment. The citizens in the gallery were reminded of photographs they had seen of Japanese soldiers. The man before them was noble in appearance, and the shadows played across the planes of his face in a way that made their angles harden; his aspect connoted dignity. And there was nothing akin to softness in him anywhere, no part of him that was vulnerable. He was, they decided, not like them at all, and the detached and aloof manner in which he watched the snowfall made this palpable and self-evident.

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Alvin Hooks, in his final words to the court, characterized the accused man as a murderer in cold blood, one who had decided to kill another man and had executed his plan faithfully. He told the court that Kabuo Miyamoto had been driven by hatred and cold desperation; that after so many years of coveting his lost strawberry fields he had found himself, in early September, in a position to lose them for good. And so he'd gone to Ole Jurgensen and heard from Ole that the land was sold, and then he'd gone to Carl Heine and Carl had turned him away. He'd pondered this crisis during his hours at sea and come to the conclusion that unless he acted, his family's land – for from his point of view it *was* his family's land – would slip from his grasp forever. Like the man he was – a strong man of bold character, trained from an early age at the art of stick fighting; a man Sergeant Victor Maples had described for the court as not only capable of committing murder but willing to commit it as well – this strong, cold, unfeeling man decided to solve his problem. He decided to end the life of another man who stood between him and the land he coveted. He decided that if Carl Heine was dead, Ole would sell him the seven acres.

So it was that he trailed Carl to the fishing grounds at Ship Channel Bank. He followed him out, set his net above him, and watched while the fog concealed everything. Kabuo Miyamoto was a patient man and waited until the deepest part of the night to do what he had in mind. He knew that Carl was not far off, a hundred and fifty yards at best; he could hear his engine in the fog. He listened and then finally, at about one-thirty, he laid hard on his foghorn. In this way he attracted his victim.

Carl, Alvin Hooks explained, came out of the fog towing his net behind – he'd been nearly ready to pick salmon from it – to find the accused man, Kabuo Miyamoto, 'adrift' and 'in need of help'. It was here, he said, that the treachery of the defendant was surely most horrible – for he relied on the code among fishermen to assist one another in times of trouble and on the residue of friendship he knew remained from the youth he and Carl had passed together. Carl, he must have said, I am sorry for what has come between us, but here on the water, adrift in the fog, I plead with you for your help. I beg you to tie up and help me, Carl. Please don't leave me like this.

Imagine, Alvin Hooks implored the jurors, leaning toward them with his hands outstretched like a man petitioning God – imagine this good man stopping to help his enemy in the middle of the night at sea. He moors his boat to his enemy's boat, and while he is busy making fast a line – you will note there is no sign, anywhere, of struggle, such was the treachery of the defendant over there – his enemy leaps aboard with a fishing gaff and strikes a blow to his head. And so this good man falls dead – or nearly dead, that is. He is unconscious and mortally wounded.

Let us imagine, too, said Alvin Hooks, the defendant rolling Carl Heine over a gunnel and the splash on the black night water. The sea closes over Carl Heine – it seeps into his pocket watch, stopping it at 1:47, recording the time of his death – and the defendant stands watching the place where it seals up, leaving no trace behind. But just under the surface the tidal current is working – stronger than the defendant had imagined it – and carries Carl into the folds of his own net, which still trails out behind. The buckle of his bib overalls catches in the webbing and Carl hangs there, under the sea, the evidence of Kabuo Miyamoto's crime waiting to be discovered. It is one of three things the defendant hasn't counted on – the body itself, the bloody fishing gaff, and the mooring line he'd left behind in his haste to leave this scene of murder.

Now he sits in this court before you, Alvin Hooks told

the jurors. Here he is in a court of law with the evidence displayed and the testimony given, the facts all aired and the arguments made and the truth of the matter manifest. There was no uncertainty any more and the jurors were bound to do their duty to the people of Island County. 'This is not a happy occasion,' Alvin Hooks reminded them. 'We are talking about convicting a man of murder in the first degree. We're talking about *justice*, finally. We're talking about looking clearly at the defendant and seeing the truth self-evident in him and in the facts present in this case. Take a good look, ladies and gentlemen, at the defendant sitting over there. Look into his eyes, consider his face, and ask yourselves what your duty is as citizens of this community.'

Just as he had throughout the trial, Nels Gudmundsson rose with a geriatric awkwardness that was painful for the citizens in the gallery to observe. By now they had learned to be patient with him as he cleared his throat and wheezed into his handkerchief. They had learned to anticipate how he would hook his thumbs behind the tiny black catch buttons of his suspenders. The jurors had noted how his left eye floated and how the light winked against its dull, glassy surface as it orbited eccentrically in its socket. They watched him now as he gathered himself up and cleared his throat to speak.

In measured tones, as soberly as he could, Nels recited the facts as he understood them: Kabuo Miyamoto had gone to Ole Jurgensen to inquire about his land. Mr. Jurgensen had directed him to Carl Heine, and Kabuo had sought out Carl. They had spoken and Kabuo had come to believe that Carl was pondering the matter. And so, believing this, he waited. He waited and on the evening of September 15 a circumstance of fate, a coincidence, brought him through the fog at Ship Channel Bank to where Carl was stranded at sea. Kabuo had done what he could in these circumstances to assist the friend he had known since childhood, a boy he'd fished with years earlier. And finally, said Nels, they spoke of the land and resolved this

matter between them. Then Kabuo Miyamoto went his way again and fished on into the dawn. And the next day he found himself arrested.

There was no evidence presented, Nels Gudmundsson told the jurors, to suggest that the accused man had planned a murder or that he'd gone to sea in search of blood. The state had not produced a shred of evidence to suggest premeditation. Not a single witness had been brought forward to testify about the defendant's state of mind in the days prior to Carl's death. No one had sat beside Kabuo at a tavern and listened to him rail against Carl Heine or announce his intent to kill him. There were no receipts from any sort of shop where a murder weapon had been newly purchased; there were no journal entries or overheard phone calls or late-night conversations. The state had not proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the crime the defendant had been charged with had in fact occurred. There was more than reasonable doubt, added Nels, but reasonable doubt was all that was needed. There was reasonable doubt, he emphasized, so the jury could not convict.

'The counsel for the state,' added Nels Gudmundsson, 'has proceeded on the assumption that you will be open, ladies and gentlemen, to an argument based on prejudice. He has asked you to look closely at the face of the defendant, presuming that because the accused man is of Japanese descent you will see an enemy there. After all, it is not so long since our country was at war with the Empire of the Rising Sun and its formidable, well-trained soldiers. You all remember the newsreels and war films. You all recall the horrors of those years; Mr. Hooks is counting on that. He is counting on you to act on passions best left to a war of ten years ago. He is counting on you to remember this war and to see Kabuo Miyamoto as somehow connected with it. And, ladies and gentlemen,' Nels Gudmundsson pleaded, 'let us recall that Kabuo Miyamoto *is* connected with it. He is a much-decorated first lieutenant of the United States Army who fought for his country – the United States – in the European theater. If you see in his face a lack

of emotion, if you see in him a silent pride, it is the pride and hollowness of a veteran of war who has returned home to *this*. He has returned to find himself the victim of prejudice – make no mistake about it, this trial is about prejudice – in the country he fought to defend.

'Ladies and gentlemen,' Nels pressed on, 'perhaps there is such a thing as fate. Perhaps for inscrutable reasons God has looked down and allowed the accused man to come to this pass, where his very life lies in your hands. An accident of some kind befell Carl Heine at a moment that could not be less propitious or less fortunate for the accused. And yet it happened. It happened and Kabuo Miyamoto has been accused. And here he sits awaiting your verdict, in the hope that although fate has acted against him, human beings will be reasonable. There are things in this universe that we cannot control, and then there are the things we can. Your task as you deliberate together on these proceedings is to ensure that you do nothing to yield to a universe in which things go awry by happen-stance. Let fate, coincidence, and accident conspire; human beings must act on *reason*. And so the shape of Kabuo Miyamoto's eyes, the country of his parents' birth – these things must not influence your decision. You must sentence him simply as an American, equal in the eyes of our legal system to every other American. This is what you've been called here to do. This is what you must do.

'I am an old man,' Nels Gudmundsson continued. 'I do not walk so well anymore, and one of my eyes is useless. I suffer from headaches and from arthritis in my knees. On top of all this I nearly froze to death last night, and today I am weary, having slept not a wink. And so, like you, I hope for warmth tonight and for an end to this storm we are enduring. I would wish for my life to continue pleasantly for many years to come. This final wish, I must admit to myself, is not something I can readily count on, for if I do not pass on in the next ten years I will certainly do so in the next twenty. My life is drawing to a close.

'Why do I say this?' Nels Gudmundsson asked, moving nearer

to the jurors now and leaning toward them, too. 'I say this because as an older man I am prone to ponder matters in the light of death in a way that you are not. I am like a traveler descended from Mars who looks down in astonishment at what passes here. And what I see is the same human frailty passed from generation to generation. What I see is again and again the same sad human frailty. We hate one another; we are the victims of irrational fears. And there is nothing in the stream of human history to suggest we are going to change this. But – I digress, I confess that. I merely wish to point out that in the face of such a world you have only yourselves to rely on. You have only the decision you must make, each of you, alone. And will you contribute to the indifferent forces that ceaselessly conspire toward injustice? Or will you stand up against this endless tide and in the face of it be truly human? In God's name, in the name of humanity, do your duty as jurors. Find Kabuo Miyamoto innocent as charged and let him go home to his family. Return this man to his wife and children. Set him free, as you must.'

Judge Lew Fielding looked down from the bench with the tip of his left forefinger set against his nose and his chin propped against his thumb. As always he had the air of a weary man; he looked reluctantly awake. He appeared to be half-alert at best – his eyelids drooped, his mouth hung open. The judge had been uncomfortable throughout the morning, annoyed by the sensation that he had not performed well, had not conducted the proceedings adroitly. He was a man of high professional standards, a careful and deliberate, exacting judge who held himself to the letter of the law, however soporifically. Having never presided over a trial of murder in the first degree before, he felt himself in a precarious position: if the jury returned a guilty verdict the decision would be his alone as to whether the accused man should hang.

Judge Lew Fielding roused himself and, pulling at his robe, turned his gaze toward the jurors. 'This case,' he announced, 'now draws to a close, and it will be your duty in just a

few moments to retire to the room reserved for you and deliberate together toward a verdict. Toward that end, ladies and gentlemen, the court charges you to take into account the following considerations.

'First of all, in order to find the defendant guilty you must be convinced of every element of the charge beyond a reasonable doubt. *Beyond a reasonable doubt*, understand. If a reasonable doubt exists in your minds, you cannot convict the accused man. If there is in your minds a reasonable uncertainty regarding the truth of the charge made here, you must find the defendant not guilty. This is a duty you are bound to by law. No matter how strongly you feel yourselves compelled to act in any other manner, you can convict only if you are certain it is correct to do so beyond a reasonable doubt.

'Second,' said the judge, 'you must keep in mind the specificity of the charge and address that charge exclusively. You have only to determine one thing here: whether or not the defendant is guilty of murder in the first degree, and nothing else. If you determine that he is guilty of something else – of hatred, of assault, of manslaughter, of murder in self-defense, of coldness, of passion, of second-degree murder – none of that will be relevant. The question is whether the man brought before you is guilty of *first-degree* murder. And first-degree murder, ladies and gentlemen, implies a question of *planned intent*. It is a charge that suggests a state of mind in which the guilty party *premeditates a murder in cold blood*. That he thinks about it ahead of time and makes a conscious decision. And here,' said the judge, 'is a difficult matter for jurors in cases of this sort. For premeditation is a condition of the mind and cannot be seen directly. Premeditation must be inferred from the evidence – it must be seen in the acts and words of the human beings who have testified before you, in their conduct and conversation, and in the evidence brought to your attention. In order to find the defendant guilty, you must find that he *planned and intended* to commit the acts for which he has been charged. That he premeditated murder, understand. That he went forth

in search of his victim with the conscious intent of committing a premeditated murder. That it did not happen in the heat of the moment or as the accidental result of escalating violence but was rather an act planned and executed by a man with murder on his mind. So once again the court charges you to consider only first-degree murder and absolutely nothing else. You must be convinced beyond a reasonable doubt of one thing and one thing exclusively: that the defendant in this case is guilty of murder in the first degree, premeditated.

'You were selected as jurors in this case,' Judge Lew Fielding continued, 'in the belief that each of you could, without fear, favor, prejudice, or sympathy, in sound judgment and clear conscience, render a just verdict on evidence presented in conformity with these instructions. The very object of our jury system is to secure a verdict by comparison of views and discussion among jurors – provided this can be done reasonably and in a way consistent with the conscientious convictions of each. Each juror should listen, with a disposition to be convinced, to the opinions and arguments of the other jurors. It is not intended under the law that a juror should go into the jury room with a fixed determination that the verdict shall represent his opinion of the case at that moment. Nor is it intended that he should close his ears to the discussions and arguments of his fellow jurors, who are assumed to be equally honest and intelligent. You must, in short, *listen* to one another. Stay objective, be reasonable.'

The judge paused and let his words sink in. He let his eyes meet the eyes of each juror, holding the gaze, momentarily, of each. 'Ladies and gentlemen,' he sighed. 'Since these are criminal proceedings, understand, your verdict – whether guilty or not so – must be a unanimous one. There is no call for haste or for anyone to feel that they are holding up the rest of us as you deliberate. The court thanks you in advance for having served in this trial. The power has gone out and you have passed difficult nights at the Amity Harbor Hotel. It has not been easy for you to concentrate on these proceedings while you are worried about

the conditions of your homes and the welfare of your families and loved ones. The storm,' said the judge, 'is beyond our control, but the outcome of this trial is not. The outcome of this trial is up to you now. You may adjourn and begin your deliberations.'

30

At three o'clock in the afternoon the jurors in the trial of Kabuo Miyamoto filed out of the courtroom. Two of the reporters tipped their chairs back precariously and sat with their hands clasped behind their heads, speaking casually to one another. Abel Martinson handcuffed the accused man, then allowed his wife to speak to him once before urging his prisoner toward the basement. 'You're going to be free,' she said to Kabuo. 'They'll do the right thing – you'll see.'

'I don't know,' her husband replied. 'But either way, I love you, Hatsue. Tell the kids I love them, too.'

Nels Gudmundsson gathered his papers together and slid them into his briefcase. Ed Soames, in a generous mood, kept the courtroom open to the public. He understood that the citizens in the gallery had no warm place to go. Many of them sat languidly along the benches or milled in the aisles discussing the trial in hushed and speculative tones. Ed stood with his hands behind his back beside the door to Judge Fielding's chambers in the obsequious pose of a royal footman, watching everything impassively. Occasionally he checked his watch.

In the gallery Ishmael Chambers mulled over his notes, looking up every now and again to take in Hatsue Miyamoto. Listening to her testify that morning he'd been keenly aware of his private knowledge of this woman: he'd understood what each expression suggested, what each pause signified. What he wanted, he realized now, was to drink in the smell of her and to feel her hair in his hands. It was all the more acute for not having her and wanting, like the wish he had to be whole again and to live a different life.

Philip Milholland's notes were in Ishmael's front left pants pocket, and it was just a matter of standing up, crossing over to Ed Soames, and asking to see Judge Fielding. Then bringing the notes out and unfolding them, and watching the look on Soames's face, then taking them back from Soames again and pushing his way into the judge's chambers. Then Lew Fielding blinking down through his glasses, pulling the candelabra on his desk a little closer – the flickering taper dancing left and right – and at last the judge peering over his glasses at him as the weight of Philip Milholland's notes began to press against his mind. *The freighter began its dogleg at 1:42. Carl Heine's pocket watch stopped at 1:47.* It spoke for itself.

What was it Nels Gudmundsson had said in closing? '*The counsel for the state has proceeded on the assumption that you will be open, ladies and gentlemen, to an argument based on prejudice . . . He is counting on you to act on passions best left to a war of ten years ago.*' But ten years was not really such a long time at all, and how was he to leave his passion behind when it went on living its own independent life, as tangible as the phantom limb he'd refused for so long to have denervated? As with the limb, so with Hatsue. Hatsue had been taken from his life by history, because history was whimsical and immune to private yearnings. And then there was his mother with her faith in a God who stood at the wayside indifferently while Eric Bledsoe bled to death in the surf, and then there was that boy on the deck of the hospital ship with the blood soaking his groin.

He looked at Hatsue again where she stood in the midst of a small group of Japanese islanders who whispered softly to one another and peered at their watches and waited. He examined her knife-pleated skirt, the blouse she wore with long darts through the shoulders, her hair bound tightly to the back of her head, the plain hat held in her hand. The hand itself, loose and graceful, and the way her ankles fit into her shoes, and the straightness of her back and her refined, true posture that had been the thing to move him in the beginning, back when he was just a child. And the taste of salt on her lips that time when for a second

he had touched them with his own boy's lips, clinging to his glass-bottomed box. And then all the times he had touched her body and the fragrance of all that cedar . . .

He got up to leave, and as he did so the courtroom lights flickered on. A mute kind of cheer went up from the gallery, an embarrassed, cautious island cheer; one of the reporters raised his fists into the air, Ed Soames nodded and smiled. The gray, sullen hue that had hung over everything was replaced by a light that seemed brilliant by comparison to what had gone before. 'Electricity,' Nels Gudmundsson said to Ishmael. 'Never knew I'd miss it so much.'

'Go home and get some sleep,' answered Ishmael. 'Turn your heater up.'

Nels snapped the clasps on his briefcase, turned it upright, and set it on the table. 'By the way,' he said suddenly. 'I ever tell you how much I liked your father? Arthur was one admirable man.'

'Yes,' said Ishmael. 'He was.'

Nels pulled at the skin of his throat, then took his briefcase in his hand. 'Well,' he said, with his good eye on Ishmael, the other wandering crazily. 'Regards to your mother, she's a wonderful woman. Let's pray for the right verdict in the meantime.'

'Yes,' said Ishmael. 'Okay.'

Ed Soames announced that the courtroom would remain open until such time as a verdict was reached or until six P.M., whichever came first. At six he would let the gathered court know about the current status of things.

In the cloakroom Ishmael found himself beside Hisao Imada as they both struggled into their overcoats. 'Many thanks for giving to us a help,' Hisao greeted him. 'It make our day much better than walking. We have our many thanks to you.'

They went out into the hallway, where Hatsue waited against the wall, her hands deep in her coat pockets. 'Do you need a ride?' asked Ishmael. 'I'm going out your way again. To my mother's house. I can take you.'

'No,' said Hisao. 'Thank you much. We have made for us a ride.'

Ishmael stood there buttoning his coat with the fingers of his one hand. He buttoned three buttons, starting at the top, and then he slipped his hand into his pants pocket and let it rest against Philip Milholland's notes.

'My husband's trial is unfair,' said Hatsue. 'You ought to put that in your father's newspaper, Ishmael, right across the front page. You should use his newspaper to tell the truth, you know. Let the whole island see it isn't right. It's just because we're Japanese.'

'It isn't my father's newspaper,' answered Ishmael. 'It's mine, Hatsue. I run it.' He brought his hand out and with some awkwardness slipped another button into place. 'I'll be at my mother's,' he told her. 'If you want to come speak to me about this there, that's where you can find me.'

Outside he found that the snow had stopped – only a few scattered flakes fell. A hard winter sunlight seeped through the clouds, and the north wind blew cold and fast. It seemed colder now than it had been that morning; the air burned in his nostrils. The wind and the snow had scoured everything clean; there was the sound of snow crunching under Ishmael's feet, the whine of the wind, and nothing else. The eye of the storm, he knew, had passed; the worst of it was behind them. And yet there was still a blind chaos to the world – cars turned front first to the curbs, abandoned where they had skidded unpredictably; on Harbor Street a white fir fallen against the snow, its branches snapped off at splintering angles, some of them piercing the ground. He walked on and found two cedars across the road, and beyond that the town docks were mostly swamped and under water. The outermost pilings had broken loose, the wind had shoved against the outside piers, and two dozen boats had piled up against one another and finally up onto the sunken piers, where they listed against their mooring ropes.

The white fir's root wad had pulled out of the ground and stood now like a wall more than twenty feet high with a tuft of

snow-laden ferns and ivy sprouting over the top of it. Whitecaps roiled among the capsized boats and caused them and the docks to surge and roll, and the tops of the cabins and drum reels and gunnels were loaded down with snow. Occasionally sea foam broke across the boats and water washed through their cockpits. The tide and the wind were pushing in hard now, and the current funneled through the mouth of the harbor; the green boughs and branches of the fallen trees lay scattered across the clean snow.

It occurred to Ishmael for the first time in his life that such destruction could be beautiful.

The reckless water, the frenzied wind, the snow, the downed trees, the boats dashed against their sunken docks – it was harsh and beautiful and disorderly. He was reminded for a moment of Tarawa atoll and its seawall and the palms that lay in rows on their side, knocked down by the compression from the naval guns. It was something he remembered too often. He felt inside not only an aversion to it but an attraction to it as well. He did not want to remember and he wanted to remember. It was not something he could explain.

He stood there looking at the destruction of the harbor and knew he had something inviolable that other men had no inkling of and at the same time he had nothing. For twelve years, he knew, he had waited. He had waited without knowing he was waiting at all, and the waiting had turned into something deeper. He'd been waiting for twelve long years.

The truth now lay in Ishmael's own pocket and he did not know what to do with it. He did not know how to conduct himself and the recklessness he felt about everything was as foreign to him as the sea foam breaking over the snowy boats and over the pilings of the Amity Harbor docks, now swamped and under water. There was no answer in any of it – not in the boats lying on their sides, not in the white fir defeated by the snow or in the downed branches of the cedars. What he felt was the chilly recklessness that had come to waylay his heart.

* * *

It was a boat builder who lived out on Woodhouse Cove Road – a gray-bearded man named Alexander Van Ness – who was primarily responsible for holding up a verdict in the trial of Kabuo Miyamoto. For three hours – until six o'clock – he persisted in the same inexorable vein: that Judge Fielding's admonitions should be heeded with the utmost seriousness and that reasonable doubt existed. The twelve jurors had argued over the meaning of the word *doubt*, then over the meaning of the term *reasonable*, then over both put together. 'Well,' Alexander Van Ness had concluded, 'I guess it comes down to a feeling, doesn't it? If I feel uncertain, if I feel that I doubt, that's all that matters, right?'

It had seemed to the others that he would not budge, and they had prepared themselves, by five forty-five, for another long night at the Amity Harbor Hotel and for the necessity of taking the matter up with Alexander Van Ness at eight o'clock the next morning.

'Now look here,' Harold Jensen argued desperately. 'Nobody ain't ever sure about nothing. It's *un*reasonable to be so dog-headed stubborn. What's reasonable comes out of the rest of us, right here. You're what's unreasonable, Alex.'

'I can see what you're driving at,' Roger Porter added. 'I know what you're trying to say, Alex, and I've thought that way about it myself. But look here and think about the straight-off evidence. That mooring line come off his boat. That blood was on his fishing gaff. Mostly he lied about replacing his batt'ry, things like that, it was *fishy*. He just didn't show me nothin'.'

'Me neither,' put in Edith Twardzik. 'Didn't show me a thing, either. It was just suspicious how he sat there like that and said one thing about it to the sheriff one time and then later changed his melody. A person can't go changing his tune 'thout the rest of us thinking on it, Mr. Van Ness – don't you believe that man's a liar?'

Alex Van Ness agreed amiably; the defendant had indeed lied. But that made him a liar, not a murderer. He wasn't accused of lying.

'Now look again,' said Harold Jensen. 'What do you figure

drives a man to lie? You think a man's got to go and lie when he ain't done nothin' worth lying about? A lie's a cover-up every time, it's something a man says when he don't want the truth out. The lies that man's been telling about this, they tell us he's got to be hiding something, don't you agree with that?'

'All right,' answered Alexander Van Ness. 'Then the question is, what's he hiding? Is he necessarily hiding the fact he's a murderer? Does that follow for sure and nothing else? I'm telling you I have my doubts, and that's all I'm trying to tell you. Not that you're wrong, just that I have my doubts.'

'Now listen to this,' snapped Edith Twardzik. 'Supposing a man's got his gun to your son's head and 'nuther one at your wife. He tells you to take yourself exactly one minute and decide whether he ought to shoot your son or your wife, which should he shoot, and if you don't decide, he'll shoot them both. 'Course you're going to have some doubts no matter which way you decide. There's always something to fret about. But meanwhile, while you're fretting, the man's getting ready to pull both triggers, and that's all there is to it, all right? You aren't ever going to get past your doubt so you have to face it head-on.'

'It's a good example,' answered Alex Van Ness. 'But I'm not really in that situation.'

'Well, try looking at it another way, then,' said Burke Latham, a schooner deckhand. 'A big old comet or a chunk of the moon could come crashing down through the roof just now and fall on top of your head. So maybe you'd better move yourself case such a thing might happen. Maybe you'd better have your doubts 'bout whether your chair is safe. You can doubt everything, Mr. Van Ness. Your doubt ain't reasonable.'

'It'd be unreasonable for me to move to another chair,' Alex Van Ness pointed out. 'I'd run the same risk anywhere in the room – same risk you run from your seat, Burke. It's not worth worrying about.'

'We're not talking about the evidence anymore,' Harlan McQueen told them. 'All these hypothetical examples aren't

getting us anywhere. How're we going to convince him what's reasonable without talking about the facts presented by the prosecutor, step by step, each one? Now, look here, Mr. Van Ness, don't you think that mooring line has to tell you something?'

'I think it does,' said Alex Van Ness. 'It tells me that Kabuo Miyamoto was probably on board Carl Heine's boat. I don't have much doubt about that.'

'That's one thing,' noted Edith Twardzik. 'That's something, anyway.'

'That fishing gaff,' said Harlan McQueen. 'It had a man's blood on it, Carl Heine's blood type. Can that slip past your doubt?'

'I don't much doubt it was Carl's blood,' Alex Van Ness agreed. 'But chances are it came from his hand. I think there's a chance of that.'

'There's a chance of everything. But you add a chance from here and a chance from there, too many things get to being a chance, they can't all be that way. The world ain't made a coincidences only. If it looks like a dog and walks like a dog,' Burke Latham asserted, 'then most prob'ly it is a dog, that's all there's going to be to it.'

'Are we talking about dogs now?' asked Alex Van Ness. 'How did we get on to dogs?'

'Well, what about this?' said Harlan McQueen. 'The defendant heard about Carl's body being found, but did he go to the sheriff and tell him how the night before he'd seen Carl out fishing? Even after they arrested him, he just kept saying he didn't even know a single thing about it. Then, later, he changed his story, came up with this battery explanation. Then he even altered that, said he put in a spare battery, but only on cross-examination. At this point it's his story against the prosecution's, and I'm finding him a little hard to believe.'

'I don't believe anything about him, either,' Ruth Parkinson said angrily. 'Let's get this done and over with, Mr. Van Ness. Stop being so unreasonable.'

Alex Van Ness rubbed his chin and sighed. 'It's not that I can't

be convinced,' he said. 'I'm not so stubborn I can't be made to see the light. There's eleven of you and one of me. I'm all ears and I'll listen to anything. But I won't be in such a hurry as to go in there while I still have what I think are reasonable doubts and condemn the defendant to the hangman's rope or fifty years in prison. You ought to sit back and relax, Mrs. Parkinson. We can't hurry this.'

'Been here almost three hours,' said Burke Latham. 'You saying there's a way to move slower?'

'The mooring line and the fishing gaff,' Harlan McQueen repeated. 'Are you with us on those things, Mr. Van Ness? Can we push forward from there?'

'The mooring line, okay, I'll give you that. The fishing gaffs a maybe, but assume I'll go with you. Where do you take me from there?'

'The different stories he told. Prosecutor really cornered him on having two batteries on board. If he'd really loaned one to Carl Heine, there should have only been one.'

'He said he replaced it. He explained that well enough. He – '

'He added it in at the last minute,' cut in McQueen. 'Made it up only when he was cornered, didn't he? He had his story pretty well lined up, but he left that detail out.'

'True,' said Alexander Van Ness. 'There should have only been one battery. But let's suppose he did board Carl's boat – maybe it was to talk about the land business, maybe Carl attacked him, maybe it was selfdefense or manslaughter, an argument that got out of hand – how do we know this was murder in the first degree, planned out ahead of time? All right, it could be the defendant's guilty of something, but maybe not what he's charged with. How do we know he boarded Carl's boat with the intention of killing him?'

'You heard what all them fishermen said,' Roger Porter answered. 'No one ever boards a boat at sea except in an emergency. He wouldn't have come aboard just to talk, you see. Fishermen don't do things that way.'

'If they only board in an emergency,' said Alex, 'then the

battery story makes good sense to me. A dead battery – that's an emergency. It kind of shores up his story.'

'Oh, come on,' said Edith Twardzik. 'Harlan's right about the battery story. Miyamoto didn't anytime loan one to Carl Heine, otherwise he'd only a had one himself. That battery story just won't wash.'

'It was a sucker's ruse,' Burke Latham explained. 'Just like the prosecutor said. Miyamoto pretended he was dead in the water, drifted right down on top of Carl and took advantage of him. That's exactly what happened.'

'Wouldn't put it past him,' said Roger Porter. 'The man looks damn sly to me.'

'That sucker's ruse story,' said Alex Van Ness. 'To me that's just a stretch too far. Drifting down out of the fog like that and exactly into the very man you've got it in your mind to kill. Here it is the middle of the night, fog as thick as pea soup, thicker, and you're expecting you'll just neatly drift in and find the boat you're looking for? That, to me, is a stretch.'

At six o'clock Ed Soames made the announcement: the jurors had adjourned for the night. No verdict had been reached thus far. The courthouse was going to be closed, he added. Everybody should go on home and get a good night's rest, turn up their electric heaters. They could return at nine o'clock in the morning if they wished to know where matters stood.

The jurors ate dinner at the Amity Harbor Hotel and talked of other matters. Alexander Van Ness ate meticulously, wiping his hands on his napkin often and smiling at the others, saying nothing.

31

The power was not yet on along South Beach, and as Ishmael Chambers drove through the snow he glanced into the candlelit windows of the homes he'd known since childhood. The Englunds, Gunnar Torval, Verda Carmichael, Arnold Kruger, the Hansens, the Syvertsens, Bob Timmons, the Crows, Dale Papineau, Virginia Gatewood and the Etheringtons from Seattle who seven years ago had moved to the island for good; he supposed they regretted it now. Foot-long icicles hung from their eaves and the snow lay in drifts against the north side of their house: they should have gone on being summer people. The Crows had both passed away years before, and now their son Nicholas inhabited the place, steadfastly carrying on the border war with Bob Timmons, who had phlebitis in his legs these days and walked stiffly to clear the branches from where they fell among his cedar trees. Nothing had changed and everything had changed. Dale Papineau still drank too much and had no money to speak of. Verda Carmichael was gone.

Ishmael found his mother at her kitchen table once again, reading the last chapter of *Sense and Sensibility* by lantern light and drinking tea with sugar and lemon concentrate. She wore a coat and boots in the house, and her face looked bland and old with no mascara, for which she asked Ishmael's forgiveness. 'I'm getting to be so old,' she admitted. 'There just isn't any way around it.' Then just as before she gave him soup to eat, and he told her how the jurors had not reached a verdict and how the lights were on once more in town and how the docks had been destroyed by storm winds. His mother railed against the possibility that the jurors would be driven by hatred and

prejudice; she hoped that in such an eventuality Ishmael would write an editorial. His newspaper, she said, had a responsibility at such times; his father before him had known that. Ishmael nodded and agreed with her; he would write a strong editorial. Then he suggested they pass the night at his apartment with its electric heat and hot water. His mother shook her head and claimed she was content to stick it out at South Beach; they could go to Amity Harbor in the morning if they wanted. So Ishmael loaded the cookstove with firewood and hung his coat in the hall closet. Philip Milholland's notes stayed in his pants pocket.

At eight o'clock the power came on again, and he flipped the furnace switch. He roamed through the house turning off lights and turning up the baseboard heaters. The pipes, he knew, would begin to thaw now, and he decided to sit and listen to the house while it came back to itself. He made tea and took it into his father's old study, a room with a view of the water in daylight and of his father's much-loved rhododendrons. And he sat in silence at his father's desk, in his father's chair, with a single light on. He waited while the furnace gradually warmed the house, and then Ishmael heard water moving in the pipes and the drip from the taps he'd left open. He waited awhile longer before moving through the house again to see that the pressure was strong everywhere, and then he shut down the taps. Everything seemed to have held up.

At nine o'clock his mother kissed his cheek and said she was going to bed. Ishmael returned to his tea in the study, where he pondered his father's books. His father had been, like his mother, a reader, though his idea of good literature differed from hers; he was far less given to novels, in the main, though he read his fair share of them, too. His books stood neatly along the glassed-in shelves of four vaultlike oak bookcases: the collected Shakespeare, Jefferson's essays, Thoreau, Paine, Rousseau, Crèvecoeur, Locke, Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, Dickens, Tolstoy. Henri Bergson, William James, Darwin, Buffon, Lyell, Charles Lamb, Sir Francis Bacon, Lord

Chesterton. Swift, Pope, Defoe, Stevenson, Saint Augustine, Aristotle, Virgil, Plutarch. Plato, Sophocles, Homer, Dryden, Coleridge, Shelley, Shaw. *A History of Washington State, A History of the Olympic Peninsula, A History of Island County, Gardens and Gardening, Scientific Agriculture, The Care and Cultivation of Fruit Trees and Ornamental Shrubs.*

His father had loved his fruit trees. He'd tended quietly to his apples and rhododendrons, his chinaberries and mulberry hedges, his rows of vegetables and flowers. He could be found on fall afternoons with a rake in hand, or a splitting maul perhaps. One year he'd painted the eaves and dormers, the clapboards and the deep-shaded summer porch, taking his time, finding pleasure. He never hurried. He did not appear to wish for something else. There were his evenings reading and dozing by the fire or working slowly at his desk. In his study lay two large Karastan rugs, woven in a mountain village in Turkey, the gift of a soldier he'd fought beside at Belleau Wood long ago. Each had knotted, carefully combed tassels, fleur-de-lis borders, ornate medallion designs, and minute scalloping amid a motif of connected eight-spoked wheels, all in rust and fire orange. The desk, too, was pleasing – his father had built it himself. It was a vast expanse of cherry wood the size of an English baron's dining table; smoked glass covered most of its surface. Ishmael recollected his father at work here, his neatly arranged manila folders spread out before him, his yellow legal pad laid off to his right, an array of heavily scrawled index cards, onionskin typing paper in both goldenrod and white, a thick dictionary on a stand, a thicker thesaurus, and a heavy black Underwood typewriter, the desk lamp pulled down low over the keys and his father blinking through his bifocals, slow and expressionless, absorbed in his words, afloat in that pool of soft light. He'd had a cordial, lonely, persevering face, and Ishmael turned now to stare into it, for there was a portrait of Arthur hung on the wall just to the left of a bookcase. There he sat in his high, stiff collar, no more than twenty or twenty-one, a young logger on his day off from the woods. Ishmael knew his father had

come to logging with a romantic's sense of grandeur, viewing it at first as grandly heroic, in keeping with the spirit of manifest destiny. He'd come to outgrow this with the passing of time, and then he passed his evenings reading; sleep had seized him like a dark claw while other boys drank their hearts out. He'd educated himself in his spare time, had saved his money with the earnestness of a Horatio Alger, started his own newspaper, gone to war, come home, pressed on, moved forward. He'd built his own house, hauling river stone, milling lumber, a man prominently and wondrously strong far into his forties. He did not mind writing garden club features, school board reports, horse show notices, golden anniversary announcements – he pruned them as carefully as he pruned his hedges, rounding them toward perfection. He'd been, at best, an anguished editorialist; he was incapable of fully indulging himself when it came to condemnation. For he'd recognized limits and the grayness of the world, which is what endeared him to island life, limited as it was by surrounding waters, which imposed upon islanders certain duties and conditions foreign to mainlanders. An enemy on an island is an enemy forever, he'd been fond of reminding his son. There was no blending into an anonymous background, no neighboring society to shift toward. Islanders were required, by the very nature of their landscape, to watch their step moment by moment. No one trod easily upon the emotions of another where the sea licked everywhere against an endless shoreline. And this was excellent and poor at the same time – excellent because it meant most people took care, poor because it meant an inbreeding of the spirit, too much held in, regret and silent brooding, a world whose inhabitants walked in trepidation, in fear of opening up. Considered and considerate, formal at every turn, they were shut out and shut off from the deep interplay of their minds. They could not speak freely because they were cornered: everywhere they turned there was water and more water, a limitless expanse of it in which to drown. They held their breath and walked with care, and this made them who they were inside, constricted and small, good neighbors.

Arthur confessed to not liking them and at the same time loving them deeply. Was such a thing even possible? He hoped for the best from his fellow islanders, he claimed, and trusted God to guide their hearts, though he knew them to be vulnerable to hate.

Ishmael understood, sitting in his father's place, how he'd arrived at the same view of things. He was, it occurred to him, his father's son, and now he brooded in the same spindle-back Windsor chair his father had brooded in.

Ishmael remembered following his father one afternoon as he roamed the grounds of the Strawberry Festival in search of photographs and winning quotes. By three o'clock the sun had swung down over the west goalposts of the high school football field. The tug-of-war, sack hop, and three-legged races were over, and a languidness had inevitably crept over things, so that here and there grown men slept in the grass with newspapers over their faces. Many of the picnickers had eaten to excess and now sat heavy and dulled in the sun, which poured over the scene a clear, clean radiance, a piercing island summer light. The odor of baked salmon hung stale in the air, slightly bitter and slightly acrid from the long smoldering smoke of burning alder leaves, and lay like an invisible pall over the exhausted revelers.

Ishmael walked beside his father past the concession booths where shortcake, bagged popcorn, and caramel apples were sold and down toward the displays of strawberries. And then his father stopped to bring his camera to his eye and photograph the fruit that was the point of it all, and at the same time, peering through his lens, he held up his end of a conversation: 'Mr. Fukida,' he'd called out. 'A banner year for strawberries. How are prices holding up?'

Mr. Fukida, a leathery old farmer in overalls and a billed cap, answered in English that was too precise, too perfect. 'Prices are very good,' he said. 'In fact, excellent, berries selling very well. Mrs. Chambers just now purchased sixteen crates.'

'I see,' said Arthur. 'Sixteen crates. No doubt I'll be asked to help with them, then. Can I trouble you, Mr. Fukida, to move

a little to your left? This should make an excellent photograph, you and your beautifully displayed strawberries.'

Mr. Fukida, Ishmael recalled, seemed to have no eyes. His lids had sealed themselves nearly together; occasionally a thin tear trailed out. Working its way along the cracks in his face, it would eventually end as a shine against his cheekbones, which were prominent high points in an otherwise gaunt set of features. He smelled of ginger and onion root tonic and, when he smiled – teeth large as old beach stones – of powdered garlic, too.

'Mrs. Chambers will put up some excellent jam,' Arthur had said, without pride. He shook his head now, admiring with genuine avidity the spread of fruit before him; strawberries arranged in turned-up cedar flats, heavy and pungent, deeply crimson and firm, a regal abundance of them. 'Fit for a queen,' Arthur had said. 'My hat is off to you.'

'Good soil. Good rain. Sunshine. Six children.'

'There must be a secret you're not mentioning. I've tried growing strawberries myself, a few times, and with most of the same ingredients.'

'More children,' said Mr. Fukida, and grinned so that his gold crowns glinted in the sun. 'More children, yes, that is the secret. That is important, Mr. Chambers.'

'Well, we've tried,' said Arthur. 'We've tried hard, Lord knows. But Ishmael here, my boy Ishmael here – he's a match, easily, for two lads, for three! We have high hopes for him.'

'Oh, yes,' Mr. Fukida had said. 'We wish good fortune for him, too. We believe his heart is strong, like his father's. Your son is very good boy.'

Ishmael went up the worn-out stairs to the room he'd slept in for so many years and dug the book on boatmanship out of its box in the closet. There was the envelope with Kenny Yamashita's return address, the upside-down stamp, her smooth handwriting. There was the letter written on rice paper, fast fading after all these years, as brittle as old leaves in winter. With his one hand it would be possible in seconds to squeeze Hatsue's

letter into motes of dust and obliterate its message forever. *'I don't love you, Ishmael. . . . When we met that last time in the cedar tree and I felt your body move against mine, I knew with certainty that everything was wrong. I knew we could never be right together . . .'*

He read the letter a second time, gravitating now toward its final words: *'I wish you the very best, Ishmael. Your heart is large and you are gentle and kind, and I know you will do great things in this world, but now I must say good-bye to you. I am going to move on with my life as best I can, and I hope you will too.'*

But the war, his arm, the course of things – it had all made his heart much smaller. He had not moved on at all. He had not done anything great in the world but had instead reported on road-paving projects, garden club meetings, school athletes. He had coasted along for years now, filling the pages of his newspaper with words, burying himself in whatever was safe, typesetting the ferry schedule and the tide table and the classified advertisements. So perhaps that was what her eyes meant now on those rare occasions when she looked at him – he'd shrunk so thoroughly in her estimation, not lived up to who he was. He read her letter another time and understood that she had once admired him, there was something in him she was grateful for even if she could not love him. That was a part of himself he'd lost over the years, that was the part that was gone.

He put the letter away in its box and went down the stairs again. His mother, he found, was asleep in her bed, snoring a little, a rough rattling in her throat; she looked very old in the light from the hallway with her cheek buried against her pillow, a sleeping cap pulled low on her forehead. Her face was a map of wrinkles, and looking at them he felt more deeply how he would miss her when she was gone. It did not matter whether he agreed with her about God. It was only, instead, that she was finally his mother and she had not given up on loving him. His trips to South Beach, he understood now, were as much for his own heart as they were for hers; he had fooled himself for years into

thinking otherwise. He had acted as if her death someday – for someday he would have to face the fact that her death would leave him alone in the world – would not pose a problem for him.

Beneath the stars, with his overcoat on, he wandered out into the cold. His feet took their own direction through the cedar woods and underneath the canopy of branches he smelled the old fragrance of the place of his youth and the clean scent of the newly fallen snow. Here under the trees it was fresh and untouched. The branches of the cedars were hung with it and beyond them the sky lay immaculate and decembral, the stars chilled points of light. He followed his feet to where the path met the beach – where a wall of honeysuckle bloomed in summer, intertwined with salmonberries and wild roses – and cut through the dell of snow-covered ferns to the hollowed cedar tree of his youth.

Ishmael sat inside for a brief time with his coat wrapped tightly around him. He listened to the world turned silent by the snow; there was absolutely nothing to hear. The silence of the world roared steadily in his ears while he came to recognize that he did not belong here, he had no place in the tree any longer. Some much younger people should find this tree, hold to it tightly as their deepest secret, as he and Hatsue had. For them it might stave off what he could not help but see with clarity: that the world was silent and cold and bare and that in this lay its terrible beauty.

He got up and walked and came out of the woods and into the Imadas' fields. The way was clear between the rows of buried strawberries and he followed it with the starlight striking off the snow, bathing everything in an aqueous light. And finally he was on the Imadas' porch and then in the Imadas' living room, sitting with Hatsue and her mother and father where he had never been before. Hatsue sat beside him, just beside him, close, wearing a nightgown and her father's old bathrobe, her hair awash in light along her back, falling in cascades around her hips, and he reached into his pocket and unfolded the

notes Philip Milholland had written on September 16, and Ishmael explained what the shorthand meant and why he had come at ten-thirty in the night to speak to her after all these years.

32

There was no way to call Lew Fielding with the news because the phones were all dead along South Beach. So the four of them, cups of green tea in hand, the barrel stove murmuring and clicking in its corner, spoke quietly about the trial of Kabuo Miyamoto, which was for them the only subject possible, as it had been for many days. It was late now, the room very warm, the world outside frozen and bathed in starlight, and Ishmael told Hatsue and Hisao and Fujiko that as a reporter who had covered the courthouse in Seattle he felt comfortable offering a present conjecture: that Philip Milholland's notes would force Judge Fielding to call for retrying the case. That the judge would declare a mistrial.

Hatsue recalled that in the course of his testimony the sheriff had described finding a coffee cup – tipped on its side, the sheriff had explained – on the floor of Carl Heine's cabin. It meant, she said, that Carl's gill-netting boat had been rocked by a freighter in the middle of the night – *something* had knocked that coffee cup down, and since Carl had never picked it up it had to be that the very same something had knocked *him* down as well. It *had* to be, she repeated. Her husband's case should be thrown out.

Spilled coffee didn't really prove very much, Fujiko urged her daughter to see. Hisao shook his head in agreement. There had to be more than spilled coffee, he said. Kabuo was facing something very large. He would need more than a coffee cup tipped onto its side to get him out of jail.

Fujiko refilled Ishmael's teacup carefully and asked how his mother was faring. She said she had always thought highly of his family. She complimented Ishmael on the quality of his

newspaper. She brought a plate of butter cookies and pleaded with him to eat one. Finally Hatsue's baby began to whimper – they could hear him plainly from one of the back rooms – and Fujiko disappeared.

Just after midnight Ishmael took his leave, shaking hands with Hisao and thanking him for the tea and asking him to thank Fujiko, too. Then he went out. Hatsue followed him onto the porch, wearing rubber boots and her father's old bathrobe, her hands deep in her pockets now, the fog of her breath streaming out of her mouth and billowing over her nose and cheeks. 'Ishmael,' she said. 'I'm grateful.'

'Look,' he replied. 'When you're old and thinking back on things, I hope you'll remember me just a little. I – '

'Yes,' said Hatsue. 'I will.'

She moved closer then, and with her hands still buried deep in her pockets kissed him so softly it was like a whisper against his cheekbone. 'Find someone to marry,' she said to him. 'Have children, Ishmael. Live.'

In the morning his mother roused him at six-fifty, saying that the wife of the accused man was here, waiting for him in the kitchen. Ishmael got up and splashed cold water against his face and put on his clothes and brushed his teeth. When he came down his mother was standing by the cookstove and Hatsue was at the table sipping coffee, and when he saw her he remembered once again how softly she had kissed him the night before. 'Do you want me to leave?' his mother asked from her place in front of the woodstove. 'I'll leave, of course, so you can talk.'

'We'll go in the study,' answered Ishmael. 'Why don't we try the study, Mrs. Miyamoto? Why don't we go in there?'

'Take your coffee,' his mother suggested. 'I'll top it off for you first.'

They made their way to the study, Ishmael leading. The first light of morning – a wintry orange hue dappling the sky – appeared high and far in the distance above the salt water, faint beyond the leaded windows. The rhododendrons were all

loaded down with snow; icicles hung from the eaves. Everything looked seized by a white stillness.

Hatsue had plaited her hair into a long braid, glistening, dark, and thick. She wore a thick-ribbed woolen sweater, a pair of navy dungarees, and a pair of calf-high fisherman's boots, and she stood now looking at the portrait of Arthur from long ago, in his logging days. 'You look just like him,' she said to Ishmael. 'I always thought you looked like your father – the eyes especially.'

'You didn't walk over here in the dark and snow just to tell me that,' answered Ishmael. 'What do you have on your mind?'

'I thought about it all night,' said Hatsue. 'Do you remember when my husband testified? He said that Carl had a lantern up. A kerosene lantern lashed to his mast. That he'd put it there because his lights weren't working. He'd lashed a hand-held kerosene lantern high up on his mast.'

Hatsue rubbed her hands together, then separated them again, lightly. 'My idea,' she said to Ishmael, 'is that if that lantern's still up there, right now, wouldn't it mean his batteries really *were* dead? Supposing you looked up Carl's mast and saw a kerosene lantern lashed up there, just like Kabuo said. Wouldn't that tell you something? That his lights were out and he'd lashed up a lantern as a sort of emergency measure? Don't you think that would prove something?'

Ishmael sat down on the edge of his father's desk, scratched his chin, and thought about it. Art Moran's report, the way he recalled it, hadn't said a word about a kerosene lantern lashed up high in Carl's mast, but on the other hand Art could have missed it. Such a thing was possible. At any rate, it was worth finding out.

'All right,' said Ishmael. 'Let's go into town. Let's go in and have a look.'

They took the DeSoto over snow-dazzled roads decorated with cracked and fallen branches and with the green twigs of cedars and hemlocks. The storm had passed and on the west side of

Lundgren Road five children stood at the crest of the hill with sleds and inner tubes at their feet, looking down at the run-out below, a bowl surrounded by slender alder trees and a thicket of low bare vine maple. Ishmael turned west on Indian Knob Hill Road, and they passed the Masuis' strawberry fields and then the Thorsens' milk cow barn and Patsy Larsen's chicken houses. Hatsue sat with her mittens in her lap and her hands held close to the car heater. 'We ought to go to see my husband first,' she said. 'We ought to tell him what's going on. I want to show him the coast guard notes.'

'The jury reconvenes at eight,' answered Ishmael. 'If we can get a look at Carl's boat first, we can go to the courthouse with everything. We can put a stop to the whole business. We can end it all,' he said.

She was silent for a long time, watching him. She looked at him closely and pulled her braid down over her shoulder so that it lay against the front of her sweater. 'You knew about that freighter,' she said finally. 'It wasn't something new, was it.'

'A day,' answered Ishmael. 'I sat on it for a day. I didn't know what I should do.'

She said nothing in the face of this and he turned toward her silence to see what it might mean. 'I'm sorry,' he said. 'It's inexcusable.'

'I understand it,' answered Hatsue.

She nodded and rubbed her hands together, then looked out at the sun-dappled snow. 'Everything looks so pure,' she said. 'It's so beautiful today.'

'Yes, it is,' agreed Ishmael.

At the sheriff's office in Amity Harbor they found Art Moran hunched down at his desk beside an electric heater. When Art saw the two of them come through the door, he dropped his pen at the edge of his desk blotter and stood and covered his eyes with his hands. 'Wait a minute, let me guess,' he said. 'You people are on a mission.'

Hatsue brought out the coast guard notes and, smoothing

them down with the palm of her hand, laid them in the center of his desk.

'Mr. Chambers discovered these,' she said. 'He brought these to me last night.'

'And?'

'A freighter out there,' said Ishmael. 'The night Carl Heine died, a freighter came through Ship Channel Bank, just like – '

'You playing detective?' Art said. 'You trying to be Sherlock Holmes? We got the mooring rope and that fishing gaff with Carl's blood on it – those things speak for themselves, don't they? What else does a body need?'

'Look, Art,' Ishmael answered. 'I suggest that if you're capable of reading shorthand you take a look at those notes there. I think they ought to make you consider at least going down to take another look at Carl's boat, okay? See if there's anything that's been missed, Art. In light of what's on your desk there.'

Art nodded. He nodded at Hatsue, too, for just a moment, and then he sat down beside the electric heater again and took the coast guard notes between his fingers. 'I kin read shorthand,' he said.

He was in the middle of reading the notes to himself, Ishmael and Hatsue watching him, when Abel Martinson came through the door in a pair of knee-high logger's caulk boots and a military issue polar parka, its fur-lined hood pulled tight around his head, his nose and chin a deep red. 'The phones are up,' he announced to the sheriff. 'They just got 'em up, about half the island. Town's got phones and south from there, all the way out to the lighthouse.'

'Listen,' replied the sheriff. 'Listen here, Abel. We're going down to Beason's Cannery dock, to Sommensen's warehouse, okay? You, me, Ishmael here, the lady'll wait at the cafe or something, get herself a breakfast. Can you get yourself a breakfast or something? 'Cause you're a little too close to all of this. You're a little too close to this already. I don't like the smell of it, okay?'

'It's me,' said Ishmael. 'It isn't her. This comes from me all the way.'

'Just the same,' said Art Moran. 'Go get yourself some eggs, Mrs. Miyamoto. Read the papers, maybe.'

Abel blew his warm breath against the lock before opening Sommensen's warehouse – a mildewed barn built of creosoted timbers, put up more than fifty years earlier. Even in the snowstorm it smelled of salt and tar and more faintly of diesel fuel and rotting lumber. Its sea doors opened onto the harbor so that boats could motor in and then out again once repairs were made. Its tin roof kept island rains out; with its two hoists, scaffolding, and wide-elbowed piers, it was a good place to overhaul a boat in winter. For the past two and a half months the sheriff's department had rented it from Arve Sommensen for the purpose of sequestering the *Susan Marie* and the *Islander* in berths side by side. It had been padlocked and on occasion patrolled by Abel Martinson, who kept the key in his pocket. Nothing, he insisted, had been tampered with. The boats had sat in the warehouse untouched since the seventeenth of September.

Abel opened the sea doors wide and a gray light flooded in. Ishmael looked immediately at the *Susan Marie's* mast and then all along her cross spar. No lantern hung anywhere.

They went into Carl Heine's cabin. Ishmael stood in the doorway looking out while the sheriff ran a flashlight across everything – the cased sausage beside the binnacle, the short bunk, the ship's wheel, the battery well. 'You know,' said Ishmael, 'when you were testifying, Art, you mentioned a coffee cup on the floor here, remember? Where was that exactly, the coffee cup? Do you remember exactly where it was?'

'I picked it up,' said Abel Martinson. 'It was right there, in the middle of the floor.'

'Everything else was neat and clean? Just the cup, that's all?'

'Like you see it,' said Abel. 'We didn't change anything – just the cup. I picked it up; a habit, I guess. Something's on the floor, a mess, I pick it up. Can't help myself.'

'Next time, help yourself,' said Art Moran. 'You're making a sheriff's investigation, don't change anything a-tall.'

'Okay,' answered Abel. 'I won't.'

'The cup,' said Ishmael. 'A cup on the floor. Doesn't it suggest this boat got waked? Don't you – '

'There's no *other* evidence,' cut in Art Moran. 'A guy gets waked hard enough to go overboard, you'd expect maybe more 'n a coffee cup on the floor. Everything's so neat and clean.'

They went out and stood just to port of the cabin door while Ishmael maneuvered a flashlight beam up and down the mast. 'You remember that business about the lantern?' said Ishmael. 'How Carl hung a lantern up there? Did you guys take that down?'

'Hold your flashlight still,' answered Abel. 'Just above the cross spar. There.'

He shone his own flashlight upward then, so that two beams shone against the mast now. There were cut lashings of net twine visible there, loose ends dangling, ten or twenty figure eights, cut through cleanly on an angle.

'That's where his lantern was hung,' said Ishmael. 'He'd hung a lantern up there, lashed it up, because all his lights were dead. That's where Carl hung his lantern.'

'We never took no lantern down,' said Art. 'What are you talking about?'

Abel Martinson hoisted himself on top of the cabin, propped one foot against the cowling, and shone his flashlight upward one more time. 'Mr. Chambers is right,' he said.

'Listen,' said the sheriff. 'Climb up there, Abel. Haul yourself up there and take a closer look. And don't touch *any*thing.'

'I'll need to push off your hands,' said the deputy, shoving his flashlight in his pocket. 'Give me a boost and I'll go up.'

The sheriff gave Abel Martinson a boost, and he lunged in his polar coat toward the cross spar. He wrapped one arm over it and hung there, the boat rocking, while his other hand fished for the flashlight. 'Looks like a rust streak 'crost these lashings,' he said. 'Like it could be off the handle of

a lantern, maybe. Where the handle rubbed against them, maybe.'

'Anything else?' said the sheriff.

'You can see where the lashings been cut,' observed Abel. 'Somebody took a knife to 'em. And hey – something else – this stuff on the mast? It looks like it might be blood.'

'From his hand,' said Ishmael. 'He cut his hand. It was in the coroner's report.'

'There's blood on the mast and the spar pole,' said Abel. 'Not much, but I think it's blood.'

'He cut his hand,' repeated Ishmael. 'He cut his hand making room for Kabuo's battery. Then he got his power back up. Then he climbed up there to take his lantern down because he didn't need it anymore.'

The deputy slid down and landed hard. 'What's with all this?' he said.

'Something else,' said Ishmael. 'You remember Horace's testimony? He said Carl had a shuttle of twine in one pocket and an empty knife sheath knotted to his belt. You remember Horace saying so, sheriff? How the knife sheath was empty, unbuckled? A shuttle of twine and an empty knife sheath. I – '

'He climbed up to take his lantern down,' said Abel. 'That freighter came along and knocked him from the mast. The knife and the lantern went overboard with him – the knife and the lantern were never found, right? – and – '

'Pipe down a minute, Abel,' said Art Moran. 'I can hardly hear myself think.'

'He hit his head on something,' said Abel. 'The freighter wake hit, the boat rolled over, and then he fell and hit his head on something and slid on out of the boat.'

Ten minutes later, in the port side gunnel just below the mast, they found a small fracture in the wood. Three small hairs were embedded in the crack, and Art Moran carved them free with his pocketknife and tucked them into the sheath in his wallet that also held his driver's license. They looked at the hairs in a flashlight beam and then they all fell silent. 'We'll take these up

to Horace,' decided Art. 'If they end up to be from Carl Heine's head, the judge will have to take things from there.'

At ten o'clock Judge Fielding sat down with Alvin Hooks and Nels Gudmundsson. At ten forty-five the jurors were told that they were released from any further duties; the charges against the accused man had been dismissed; new evidence had come to light. The accused man himself was set free immediately and walked out of his cell without leg irons or handcuffs; standing just outside its door, he kissed his wife for a long time. Ishmael Chambers took a photograph of this; he watched their kiss through his viewfinder. Then he went back to his office, turned up the heat, and loaded paper in his typewriter. And he sat staring at it for some time.

Ishmael Chambers tried to imagine the truth of what had happened. He shut his eyes and exerted himself to see everything clearly.

The *Susan Marie* had gone dead in the water – the bolt shook loose in her alternator pulley bracket – on the night of September 15. In a drowning fog, impatiently drifting – and too proud to just lay hard on the air horn he carried in anticipation of times such as these – Carl Heine must have cursed his misfortune. Then he lit his two railroad lanterns, slipped his twine shuttle into his back pocket, and hauled himself up to the cross spar on the mast, a lantern slung temporarily down his back, his rubber bib overalls slipping. The cotton twine he used for mending net bound the lantern to the mast easily, but Carl put in extra lashings anyway, figure eights laid one over the other, pulled taut and finished crisply. He hung for a moment, his armpit against the spar, and knew that his light was futile against the fog; nevertheless he adjusted the flame higher before clambering down. And he stood in the cockpit listening, perhaps, with the fog closed in around him.

And perhaps after a while he took his other kerosene lantern and picked out the five-eighths wrench from his toolbox to tighten the alternator pulley belts, cursing again just under his

breath: how was it possible he'd neglected this, failed to check it as a matter of course, come to such a pass as his present one (which ordinary seamanship might have prevented), and he a man who prided himself silently on the depth and purity of his seamanship? He tightened the belts, pressed his thumb against them, then went out once again and stood leaning against the port gunnel. Carl Heine listened to the fog and to the sea, to the other boats moving off the bank with their whistles sounding incessantly and to the water softly lapping against his boat as he drifted with the tide, moving east. He stood with one foot up, the kerosene lantern handy, the air horn clutched in his hand. Something in him would not use the horn, and for a good long time, an hour or more, he debated whether he should use it anyway, and he wondered if there were fish in his net. It was then that he heard a boat not far off, the sound of a foghorn blown deliberately, and he turned his ear in its direction. Six times it came, nearer at each blast, and with his watch he timed the precision of its intervals – one minute went by between each. When it drew inside of one hundred yards he gave a single blast on his air horn.

The *Islander*, her hold full of fish, and the *Susan Marie*, dark and dead on the water – a kerosene lantern lashed to her mast, her skipper poised in her bow with his chin set – came together in the fog. Then Kabuo's mooring lines were made fast to deck cleats in the efficiently wrought half hitches Carl Heine could lay out with no thought or hesitation. A battery changed hands, it was somewhat too large, a metal flange was beaten back. Carl's hand was sliced down the palm, there was blood on Kabuo's fishing gaff. An agreement was arrived at eventually. The things that needed to be said were said between them, and Kabuo pushed off into the night.

Maybe it had seemed to Kabuo Miyamoto, alone on the sea shortly afterward, a fortuitous thing to have come across Carl Heine in circumstances such as these. Perhaps it had seemed just the sort of luck he'd long thought he needed. His dream, after all, was close to him now, so close that while he fished he must have

imagined it: his strawberry land, the fragrance of fruit, the fold of the fields, the early-summer ripening, his children, Hatsue, his happiness. Oldest son of the Miyamotos, great-grandson of a samurai, and the first of his lineage to become an American in name, place, and heart, he had not given up on being who he was; he had never given up on his family's land or the claim they had to it by all that was right, the human claim that was bigger than hate or war or any smallness or enmity.

And all the while he was thinking this way, celebrating this sudden good fortune in his life and imagining the fragrance of ripening strawberries, he was drifting in the darkness, drifting in fog, with the low moan from the lighthouse barely audible and the steam whistle blasts from the S.S. *Corona* growing louder and coming closer with each moment. And a half mile to the south and west of the *Islander* Carl Heine stood in his cabin door and listened uncertainly to the same whistle blasts now penetrating through the fog. He had made black coffee and held his cup in one hand; the kettle had been stowed in its place. His net was out and running true behind as far as he could tell. All of his lights were burning strong now. His volt meter showed thirteen and a half volts charging, and the *Susan Marie* ran hard and steady, her spotlight suffused in the fog. It was twenty minutes before two o'clock in the morning, enough time left to catch plenty of fish – the coffee would keep him awake long enough to fill his hold with salmon.

Surely Carl had listened to his radio, the lighthouse radioman dispensing advice, the freighter's navigator calling in positions, taking readings off Lanheedron Island, then suddenly deciding on a bisecting dogleg right through Ship Channel Bank. Carl had tried listening into the fog, but the thrum of his own engines masked all other sound, and he had to shut down and drift. He stood again listening and waiting. At last there came another steam whistle blast, closer this time, definitely drawing closer, and he slammed his coffee cup to the table. He went outside then and considered getting hard waked, the big swell from the freighter going right through him, and it seemed to him he was

secure to take it, there was nothing to get bounced around very much, everything was in its place.

Except the lantern lashed to the mast. A big freighter wake would smash it to pieces; Carl would have seen it that way.

And so he paid for his fastidious nature, his compulsion to keep things perfect. He paid because he had inherited from his mother a certain tightness through the purse strings. Drifting on the water, the *Corona* bearing down on him in the fogbound night, he figured he needed less than thirty seconds to haul himself up his mast. Save a lantern that way. What were the risks? Does a man ever believe in his own imminent death or in the possibility of accident?

And so because he was who he was – his mother's son, tidy by nature, survivor of the sinking of the U.S.S. *Canton* and thus immune to a fishing boat accident – he climbed his mast with confidence. He climbed it and in so doing opened the palm wound he'd incurred banging against the battery well's metal flange with Kabuo Miyamoto's fishing gaff. Now he hung by his armpit from the cross spar, bleeding and listening into the fog, working his knife from its sheath. Again there came the blast of the freighter's whistle, the low hum of its engines audible to port, so close he twitched in surprise at it, and then with his blade he exerted pressure through the figure-eight lashings he'd made a few hours earlier. Carl came away with the lantern's handle between his fingers and went to lock back his knife.

It must have been that in the ghost fog that night he never saw the wall of water the *Corona* threw at him. The sea rose up from behind the fog and welled underneath the *Susan Marie* so that the coffee cup on the cabin table fell to the floor, and the angle of deflection high up the mast was enough to jar loose the astonished man who hung there not grasping the nature of what was happening, and still he did not foresee his death. His bloody hand lost its grip on the mast, the rubber of his overalls ceased to grip, his arms flew out and his fingers opened, casting the lantern and the knife into the water, and Carl Heine fell swift and hard against the *Susan Marie*'s port gunnel. His head cracked

open above the left ear and then he slid heavily beneath the waves, water seeping into his wristwatch, stopping it at 1:47. The *Susan Marie* rocked a full five minutes and while gradually she settled once again the body of her skipper settled, too, into his salmon net. He hung there in the phosphorescence of the sea, gathering light and undulating, and his boat moved now on the tidal current, brightly lit and silent in the fog.

The wall of water moved on. It traveled a half mile speedily and then gathered beneath the *Islander* so that Kabuo felt it, too. It traveled with nothing more to interrupt it and broke against the shore of Lanheedron Island just before two o'clock in the morning. The whistle of the freighter and the lighthouse diaphone sounded again in the fog. Kabuo Miyamoto, his net set, his radio off, the fog as palpable as cotton around him, replaced the line he'd left on Carl's boat with a reserve he kept stowed in his galley. Perhaps he'd squatted for a moment, building a bowline into the manila, and heard the steam whistle of the passing freighter sounding low across the water. It would have been as sorrowful a sound in that heavy fog as anyone could readily conjure or imagine, and as it grew louder – as the freighter drew closer – it would have sounded all the more forlorn. The freighter passed to the north still blowing, and Kabuo listened to it. Perhaps in that moment he remembered how his father had buried everything Japanese beneath the soil of his farm. Or perhaps he thought of Hatsue and of his children and the strawberry farm he would one day pass to them.

The steam whistle from the freighter faded eastward. It sounded at intervals with the fog whistle from the lighthouse, a higher note, more desolate. The fog closed it in, muffling it, and the freighter's note went deep enough so that it seemed otherworldly, not a steam whistle but a cacophony of bass notes rising from the bottom of the sea. Finally it merged with the lighthouse signal so that the two of them sounded at the same moment, a clash of sound, discordant. There was a dissonance, faint, every two minutes across the water, and finally even that disappeared.

Kabuo Miyamoto came home to embrace his wife and to tell her how their lives had changed; the lighthouse dogwatch drew to a close, and Philip Milholland stuffed his notes into a folder and threw himself into sleep. He and the radioman, Robert Miller, slept steadily into the afternoon. Then they awoke and left San Piedro Island, transferred to another station. And Art Moran made his arrest.

Well, thought Ishmael, bending over his typewriter, his fingertips poised just above the keys: the palpitations of Kabuo Miyamoto's heart were unknowable finally. And Hatsue's heart wasn't knowable, either, nor was Carl Heine's. The heart of *any* other, because it had a will, would remain forever mysterious.

Ishmael gave himself to the writing of it, and as he did so he understood this, too: that accident ruled every corner of the universe except the chambers of the human heart.