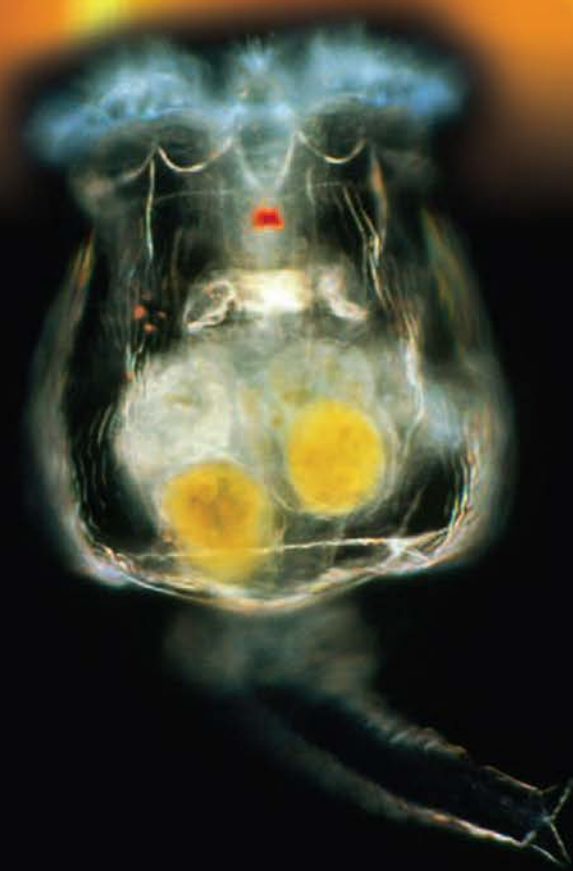


DONALD B. MALKOFF

THE
LANSING
EFFECT



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Published in the United States by Booklocker.com, Inc., Port Charlotte, Florida.

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper.

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2011

First Edition

PART 1

“The Red Death”

“The ‘Red Death’ had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its Avatar and its seal – the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution. The scarlet stains upon the body and especially upon the face of the victim were the pest ban which shut him out from the aid and from the sympathy of his fellow-men. And the whole seizure, progress and termination of the disease, were the incidents of half an hour.”

Edgar Allan Poe, in “The Masque of the Red Death”

Chapter 1

Monday, August 1, 2011

Boston

Black. It was black all around him. Yet despite the impenetrable darkness, he couldn't keep himself from moving forward, faster and more vigorously with every moment. His behavior was chaotic, almost violent. He had no idea of where he was, or what was around him, or which way to go next.

It had been like this from the moment of his birth. His brain was dominated by an aggressive and impulsive program that was completely in command of his behavior. He was compelled to find a way to move and satisfy the urges that bombarded him, urges that defied his understanding. "Move up, down, right, left, forward, backward", they ordered him. There was no time to sleep, no need to eat. Nothing else seemed to matter...only the need to push onward with every ounce of energy he possessed.

He wondered, where did this driving force come from? What could possibly satiate it and somehow quench this fire? He didn't know, and, the truth was...he didn't care. This force was the fundamental reason for his existence. It was his essence, his soul. And it was coercing him to rip apart everything that stood in his way of finding and ravishing his prey...whoever, whatever, and wherever it might be.

Without any warning, his body smashed into another object in his path. There was a momentary sense of frustration and anger, morphing into panic. He had no time left for any delays. His very life energy was being drained and he had, at most, only several more hours or days in which to succeed before it all came to an end...before *he* came to an end. Realization of this seemed to spur him into an even more furious pace. He forced aside the object in front of him, lurched forward, and the hunt resumed in the absolute blackness that was his world.

And then it happened. There was another encounter. This time, however, there was something different...there was a scent. Yes, it was faint, but it was something that he seemed to recognize, even though it had never been encountered previously. It seemed to call to him, guide his movements, and grow in strength. Within moments the scent was overpowering, and he found himself completely under its control, like an automaton. For him, the scent was like the song of the Siren. Then, suddenly, he understood. He realized at that moment that his body was pressed against a *female*. Somehow, he knew that she was a young one, a *very* young one, and she was a virgin. And it became clear to him that this female was the one ordained to be his prey. It was this female that he was meant to consume in order to fulfill his destiny. Now, for the first time, he recognized what he must do. In a frenzy, he began to encircle her. He must take her. Now. Completely. It was, after all, the ritualistic dance of life.

His body came in touch with every part of her as he moved around her and explored. She resisted. There was an attempt to move away from him. When that didn't work, she struck him with her foot. He found her mouth, open, wide, and luscious, but when he tried to force his mouth on hers, she pulled herself away from him. All the while, he could feel his whole body swelling up and increasing in size and strength. As she twisted and turned, her hair brushed up against him, beating against his face, inflaming his desire and determination. He was an animal possessed, and determined to possess his victim. His lust for her had reached crushing proportions. Then at last, when-and-where the scent...the haunting, wonderful, enrapturing scent...had reached an overwhelming peak of intensity, he savagely penetrated her body and raped her with abandon. Violently.

The deed was done. It had taken less than a minute. She was left there, alone, ravished, unmoving. Slowly, he moved on in his darkness, to look for another victim...or perhaps...to simply die.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Don Malkoff majored in physics at Harvard University, studied medicine at the University of Pittsburgh, and trained to become a board-certified neurologist at the University of Michigan. He was a researcher in the fields of electron microscopy and biology at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratories and at the National Institutes of Health at their Gerontology Branch.

After years in the private practice of medicine, Don entered into the creation of an overseas oil company, traveling throughout Europe and the Middle East as he became embroiled in a series of exciting international adventures.

On his return to the states, Don obtained a Masters Degree in computer science at the University of California, San Diego, during which time he taught computer science and also served as an expert in artificial intelligence for the US Navy. He subsequently was Chief Scientist for a number of defense corporations, with more than a hundred publications and reports focusing on a wide swath of the military and intelligence services: the economy; strategic thinking; space and remote sensing; analysis of the brain on the essence of denial and deception; matters of ships, planes, and helicopters; nuclear submarines; new methods for medical forensic analysis; and even the hunt for Osama Bin Laden.

Don retired in Northern Virginia in 2009, spending time with his wife Maggie and their beagle, “Moose”, and dabbling in photography. “The Lansing Effect” is his first venture at fiction. He hopes you find as much enjoyment in reading the book as he did in writing it.

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