

BOSTON

THE NOVEL



ERROL LINCOLN UYS

OUTLINE

BOSTON, THE NOVEL

by

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About the Outline

The outline presents broad ideas for the novel. It does not and cannot show character development, the finer nuances and emotions that surface as a writer moves forward. Some major players will surely be as depicted here: Adam Trane, Recompense West, Nixie Fletcher, Benjamin Steele, Farrell Lynch, Lawrence Steele, Lily Banks-Fletcher. Others I've yet to meet wait off-stage. Many story suggestions will stand as presented, others will evolve as part of the bigger picture, still others will be supplanted by tales only my characters can reveal.

I bring to Boston, the same talents I showed in my collaboration with James A. Michener on his South African novel: "Uys showed such a mastery of and predilection for plotting that again and again he came up with dazzling ideas I could not have thought of by myself... Uys's ability to catch an idea and run with it is remarkable."

I bring the same genius that mastered the story of Brazil: "Uys has accomplished what no Brazilian author from José de Alencar to Jorge Amado was able to do. He is the first to write our national epic in all its decisive episodes, from the indigenous civilization and the El Dorado myth, everything converging like the segments of a rose window to that reborn and metamorphosed myth that is Brasilia. He is the first outsider to see us with total honesty and sympathy and full empathy with the decisive moments in our history and their spiritual meaning. Descriptions like those of the war with Paraguay are unsurpassed in our literature and evoke the great passages of *War and Peace*."

"No one before knew how to bring to life Brazil and her history. Uys's characters are brilliant and colorful, combining elements of the best swashbuckler with those worthy of deepest reflection. Most stunning is that it took a South African, now a naturalized American, to evoke so perfectly the grand but interrupted dream that is Brazil." (*Le Figaro*)

I offer a very detailed outline primarily to show that I've a grasp of my subject, a special feel for plotlines and themes that flow through the story of Boston seen at ground level, a rattling tale on cobblestone streets and bustling wharves, the lore of captains and castaways, merchant princes and servants, zealots and dissenters, visionaries, empire builders and fortune hunters.

Their adventures sweep from the wild fens of Lincolnshire to the streets of seventeenth-century London, from blighted hills of County Cork to battlefields of the American Civil War, from Cape Horn to savage Nootka Sound and Whampoa on the Canton River, and in World War II across the stormy Atlantic to Murmansk, Russia. Brahmin autocrats buttressing the ramparts of Beacon Street; Catholic bullies chasing down Jews on Blue Hill Avenue; yellow buses driving black and white students across a divided city; workers from thirty nations coming together for the Big Dig . . . A monumental cast, real and fictional, shaping the destiny of old and new Boston, itself like a living entity ever changing and re-defining its limits.

Book One

THE BEAVER

**I
1623-1638**

In September 1623, on the final leg of a voyage from England, the one hundred and forty ton *Katherine* is battered by storms off the coast of Massachusetts, its crew in a life and death struggle to keep the ship off the rocks of Nahant.

Aboard are two men who hail from Horncastle, a town in the Lincolnshire wolds equidistant from Lincoln and Boston. Besides a common birthplace, the pair couldn't be more different.

William Blaxton, son of Horncastle's minister, was born in 1595 and attended grammar school before going to Emmanuel College on a scholarship granted by the Earl of Lincoln. He earned the degree of Bachelor of Arts and in 1619 was made a deacon and priest. A pale, rather tall young man, Reverend Blaxton is always in canonical black, seldom smiling, his brow deeply furrowed.

ADAM TRANE'S roots go back to the thirteenth century when the first Trane crept out of the Wildmore Fens and infested Horncastle. For centuries, the Tranes have been in the horse business never far from the stables or farrier's yard, oftentimes just a trot away from the gallows.

Eighteen-year-old Adam has a large head, straight back and large feet inherited from his Trane ancestors. His figure is small and robust, not unlike the Wildmore ponies bred for the Nottinghamshire coal pits. When not working with horses, Adam was in the fens poaching wildfowl and pilfering fodder on the Earl of Lincoln's property. Twice in his eighteen years Adam has come perilously close to sharing the fate of Nick Trane and Ned Trane, two uncles hanged for stealing sheep.

Trane is Reverend Blaxton's indentured servant. He has already proved a poor bargain for his master, brawling with sailors and "attempting uncleanes" with a female servant, for which *Katherine's* captain called for ten strokes with a cat-o'-nine tails. Mr. Blaxton agreed with the punishment but took no pleasure in seeing his servant thrashed. The young woman coupled freely with others, including the bo'sun who wielded the cat. She was to be ducked, the block reeved and ready, but the reverend begged mercy for this Magdalene, a cheery creature going by the name of **RECOMPENSE WEST**.

As the *Katharine* struggles to make land in the heavy weather, one passenger braves the storm on deck casting his eyes on a familiar shore he thought he would never see again.

WAPIKICHO, WHITE CRANE is one of twin sons of **TASAWIN, FEATHER-WALKER**, a sachem of the Massachusett, "People at the Hill of Arrowhead Stone." A tall, well-formed young man with intense black eyes, **WAPIKICHO** has been known to play the jester, a merry joker even in the worst of times; his brother **WITAWAMET, WHITE EAGLE**, was always by nature quiet and sober. Every female in the clan looked up to their mother, **CHITANAWOO, STRONG AND BOLD**, a woman of parts and character.

The twins have a sister, **PEMOLINI, EVER-BELOVED**, three years older and plump as a partridge, married to a Frenchman, **CHIKAWANKA JACK, PORCUPINE JACK**. – Or so they were when Wapikicho last saw them, for it's been ten years since he was taken from these shores and has no knowledge of the family he left behind.

Ten years past, in the summer of 1613 Tasawin and his band of three hundred left their winter camp on the Charles River and headed for the coast and a site at Sha-um-ut, "Near the Little Neck," a wooded peninsula dominated by a mountain with three rising hills. The clan camped on a shelf of land overlooking a canoe landing where in the far distant future other inhabitants will throng, raucous, bustling Scollay Square.

The summer Feast of Green Corn, where the first kernels are offered to Cantantowwit, Great Spirit, climaxed with a ball game played between rival bands, the goals a mile apart on sands swept even

as a board. Wapikicho and Witawamet were champions of the Shawmut, their strongest challenge from the band of Nanepashemet, “New Moon.”

One player in Nanepashemet’s squad excited special interest: Jacques le Havre, one of five men who survived a shipwreck at Cape Cod. Captured by the Wampanoag, they were passed along to other tribes and bartered for as curiosities. Two died in the hands of their captors. Twenty-seven-year-old Jacques, a ship’s gunner, found a kind master in Nanepashemet.

At the Feast of Green Corn, Chikawanka-Jack, “Porcupine Jack,” so named for the spiky bristles on his chin, leapt to his feet for a dance with plump Pemoleni. To the castaway’s delight, Tasawin saw his daughter’s joy and bought the Frenchman from Nanepashemet for a fat beaver tail and a brass farthing found on a beach.

In September 1614, Tasawin and Wapikicho went to trade for wampum with the Narragansett. On the journey back to Shawmut, they halted at Wampanoag village of Patuxet, where they found an English ship lying offshore.

Captain Thomas Hunt sailed from England the previous April with Captain John Smith, exploring the coast of “New England,” as Smith called these lands finding nowhere more favored than “the country of the Massachusett, which is the paradise of all these parts . . . The seacoast shows you all along large cornfields and great troops of well-proportioned people.”

At Patuxet, Hunt lured twenty-seven of his well-proportioned hosts aboard his ship for the slave market of Malaga, Spain, Tasawin and Wapikicho among the kidnapped Indians. Father and son were separated at Malaga, Tasawin sold to a knight of Malta, and Wapikicho going to a monastery in Seville. A month later word came that the Maltese ship was lost at sea.

Wapikicho’s life as a slave began gently enough with the Franciscans. Then he passed into the hands of Dom Duarte Oviedo, an Oporto wine merchant who owned “pieces” from Africa and Brazil and wanted to add an exotic New England specimen to his pens. Wapikicho, jester of his family, did little that pleased Dom Duarte and was frequently beaten or locked up in the triple stocks. One night he

escaped aboard a vessel that cleared the Duoro thinking he was bound for Massachusetts Bay. Instead, he landed in the heart of London, half-naked and drunk from a cask of port he broached.

Wapikicho stumbled into the arms of Master Thomas Tucker, a bibulous devotee of street theater who decked him out in paint and feathers and presented him to the mob of London. Master Tucker brought two American princesses to the show, in reality wild Irish girls with bronzed faces initially terrified by Wapikicho. His dancing partners soon found much to admire in the lost savage and took turns to make him feel at home in the city, letting him roger them night after night.

Spotted by the London agent of Sir Ferdinando Gorges who paid Master Tucker handsomely for his star performer, Wapikicho was finally given a chance to return home: “You speak our language. When we go to the Massachusett, you will talk for us.”

Aboard the *Katharine*, Wapikicho’s excitement is tempered by fear. At Sir Ferdinando’s house, he heard a man who returned from New England speak of a Great Sickness: “Such a mortal stroke, the savages died like rotten sheep . . . There are but a small number living, so that the place is made so much more fit for the English nation to inhabit.”

The *Katharine* carries settlers for a new plantation led by Captain Robert Gorges, Ferdinando’s son. The ship’s course is set for Shawmut, but crosswinds force the vessel to the bottom of the bay. They finally land at Wessagusset, site of a former settlement by a London adventurer, Thomas Weston. Abandoned six months before, Wessagusset’s rude log houses provide shelter for the newcomers.

Wapikicho is impatient to find his family, but only when the landing is complete will Captain Gorges allow him to leave with an escort. Other natives returned to these shores have tricked their sponsors and run away for good. Wapikicho’s escort is made up of three armed men, plus Reverend Blaxton and his servant.

The boy from the wild fens of Lincolnshire is unsure of his footing in New England’s “howling wilderness.” Adam carries a rusty dirk and a stout piece of timber, as they march toward Blue Hills and the Indian village of Massachusetts Field. Reverend Blaxton baffles his servant, showing untrammelled

delight in the “New Eden,” his tunic flying as he races along behind Wapikicho. To Adam, the Indians are “Tartars,” and just as dangerous.

The Englishmen get a chill reception from Chickataubut, great sachem of the Massachusett. The sachem won’t forgive the English for desecrating his mother’s grave. Settlers from New Plymouth stole the bearskins that covered the sepulcher and trampled on offerings left for the Manitou.

Wapikicho’s joy at finding the wigwam of his mother, Chitanawoo, is short-lived when he learns that what he feared is true: the Great Sickness carried away most of the Shawmut clan. His brother Witawamet died only six months before, though Chitanawoo is vague about the circumstances of his death. “Ask the *Wotawenagee*,” is all she tells Wapikicho. The English settlers take this Massachusett word to be “Good Men,” until they learn its true meaning: “Cut-Throats.”

Chitanawoo refuses to talk about Witawamet but tells Wapikicho how the end came at Shawmut. The first blow was not from disease but the Abnaki (known also as Tarratines.) Late summer 1615, Abnaki war parties penetrated Massachusetts Bay and cut a bloody swath across the islands toward Shawmut. In the absence of Tasawin, Chitanawoo led the defense of the peninsula, no ally braver than her son-in-law Chikawanka Jack. Jacques held a barricade at the Little Neck against a horde of Abnaki successfully beating off the attack.

The following year, the raiders returned with devastating force. Jacques was slain and Witawamet taken captive. He escaped from an Abnaki village in mid-winter, lost in the Lakes of the Clouds, the White Mountains. He crawled into the cave of Oshuam, half-dog, half-wolf. The pair made a truce and stayed together through winter, surviving on roots and tubers and small animals trapped by Witawamet. When spring came, Witawamet started for Shawmut, Old Dog at his side.

Witawamet’s spirit soared at the sight of the three hills of his home. He found a canoe on the banks of the Charles, beckoned Old Dog climb in and paddled toward the landing place. Not a single plume of smoke from his people’s fires. Had the Abnaki raids begun early this year? Did something else delay his people’s trek from their winter camp?

At the muddy cove, Witawamet and Old Dog discovered the truth. Wherever they looked, they saw the dead. Not the bloody work of Abnaki but the plague brought by men from Europe.

Witawamet found Pemoleni's body in his mother's wigwam but no sign of the others. He climbed frantically up the mountain and searched to the horizon, observing not a single canoe, not a soul on the islands. He climbed down and was near the spring on the western slope when he heard frantic barking.

Old Dog had found the only survivors of the Great Sickness: Chitanawoo and Jacques Petit, the child of Pemolini and Porcupine Jack.

In November 1623, Adam Trane causes a catastrophe that almost reduces the settlement of Governor William Bradford and his Plymouth brethren to ashes.

Adam and his master are in Robert Gorges's party when he goes to Plymouth to hold a council with the Separatist leaders. Bradford reluctantly acknowledges the lieutenant governor's authority while privately considering Gorges "a rash young man whose folly and distemper will bring trouble on himself and ourselves too."

Wapikicho makes a gruesome discovery at Plymouth. Impaled on a pole is the bloody head of his brother, Witawamet, severed by Cut-Throats at Wessagusset.

Reverend Blaxton considers the Indians "poor silly lambs" he was called by God's providence to redeem. He confronts Miles Standish, mercenary commander of Plymouth, "a man of very small stature, yet of a very hot and angry temper." Rumors of an uprising sent Standish and eight men to Thomas Weston's plantation six months earlier. They invited the war chiefs Witawamet and Pecksuot, a third warrior and a seventeen-year-old boy to dine with them in a settler's cabin. Standish and his men stabbed the three warriors to death. The boy they hanged in sight of his friends.

Standish doesn't deny the massacre and boasts about an indescribable number of wounds Witawamet received before he succumbed. "The bloodthirsty creatures are devoted vassals of the devil,"

Standish roars at Blaxton. “I will raise the Lord’s terrible swift sword to strike them or any other enemy who threatens our peace.”

When the Gorges party heads back to Wessagusset, they march off without Adam Trane, a sore disappointment to his master who believes his servant has run away.

Adam is aboard the *Katharine* anchored off Plymouth and bound for Virginia. He is below decks locked in the embrace of his earlier love. – Recompense West’s owner is shipping her to Jamestown where planters will pay a pretty penny for a hard-working girl. – When the November nights turn frigid, Adam and Recompense go ashore with members of *Katharine*’s crew and bed down in the house of a fisherman, an old sinner marooned among the saints.

On November 5, Guy Fawkes Day, the roistering seamen make a great fire in the fisherman’s house. Adam and his Eve bed down next to the warm hearth. Adam throws on more and more fuel, hotter and hotter, until the fire breaks out of the chimney and ignites the thatch. The blaze consumes four houses and threatens the brethren’s common store before it is extinguished.

Adam slinks out of Plymouth taking the path back to Wessagusset with an Indian who carries messages to Gorges. Recompense West is rescued from the inferno by one of the saints, Brother Garrick Stone, who buys her indentures for seven years, beginning a long and terrible ordeal for the godly covenanter.

A brutal winter sees the Wessagusset settlers battling sickness and boredom, Robert Gorges is in failing health, his gentlemen companions stricken with ennui. In spring 1624, Gorges and his friends return to England, leaving the settlement in the care of Reverend William Morrell and his assistant, Blaxton. Morrell shares his fellow cleric’s delight in the natural wonders of New England but has few good words for the inhabitants:

*“They’re wondrous cruel, strangely base and vile
Quickly displeased and hardly reconciled.
Themselves they warm, their ungirt limbes they rest*

In straw, and houses, like to sties.”

Morrell sails back to England in 1625 leaving Blaxton at Wessagusset as Gorges’ agent and minister of the dwindling colonists.

The reverend’s incorrigible servant adapts to the wild fens of New England, proving himself useful to his master in decoying ducks and geese in the marshes and tramping up-country with a wild bunch of young Indian hunters. He is even friendlier with their sisters who find “Hopokan” – “Strong Pipe” – a free and eager lover.

Nineteen-year-old Wapilanee, a forest beauty with noble features, long hair and black eyes shows no interest in Hopokan. Wapilanee’s family perished in the Great Sickness. She lives with her aunt, sachem Chitanawoo, and nine-year-old Jacques Petit, a gangly long-boned fellow with all the makings of the boisterous Frenchman who fathered him. The little ‘Tartar’ attaches himself to Adam instinctively smelling out a fellow rabble-rouser.

When Blaxton visits Massachusetts Fields, no one is more attentive to the gentle Englishman than this dark-eyed doe. William writes poetry for the nymph and crafts laurel wreaths for her sweet head, but only longing he feels is to see Wapilanee crowned as the first convert in New England. In letters to Sir Ferdinando, Blaxton decries the Separatists’ failure to Christianize a single native as a grave neglect of a sacred duty.

Wapilanee takes William on an expedition from Blue Hills across the narrow neck of land to the abandoned Shawmut peninsula. – The early English settlers adopt the French name for the peninsula, *Trimontaine*, later Tremont. – William discovers the copious freshwater spring on the western slope of the highest hill and delights in a location with cool breezes, blueberry and blackberry bushes and champion meadow just beyond.

In summer 1625, a new group of planters and forty servants settle three miles north of Wessagusset at Mount Wollaston, as they call the plantation in honor of their captain, Richard Wollaston.

The real leader is Thomas Morton, born a sportsman, bred a lawyer, ingrained an adventurer. Morton first came to New England in 1622, a member of the earlier Wessagusset settlement. His three-month stay left an indelible impression: “In mine eye ’twas Nature’s Masterpiece – her chiefest magazine of all. If this land be not rich, then is the whole world poor!” He found the Massachusetts Indians “more full of humanity than the Christians. The more savages the better quarter, the more Christians the worser quarter I had.”

In spring 1626, Wollaston left for Virginia with fifteen servants. He sold their indentures and ordered his second-in-command, Rasdall, to bring fifteen more. With only ten servants remaining and the plantation threatened with extinction, Thomas Morton strikes the first blow for freedom in New England.

“Will you be transported to Virginia to be sold like slaves or will you stay at *Mar-re-Mount*, my lads? Lusty, brave and free as the air you breathe?”

A great huzzah seals Morton’s declaration of independence and the birth of *Mar-re-Mount*, as he re-christens Mt. Wollaston.

Adam is at the meeting, his huzzahs loudest of all. He is twenty-one now, still a servant in name to Blaxton though has long gone his own way while hunting and trading furs for his master. In the winters, William has taught him to read and write but Adam far prefers the chatter in the wigwams to the mysteries of Homer and Pliny.

Trane becomes one of *Mar-re-Mount*’s liveliest adventurers, his craft as woodsman making him Morton’s trusted lieutenant. *Mar-re-Mount* prospers, its Indian allies serving as hunters and guides in the quest for beaver, Indian women gathering sassafras and sarsaparilla. At one time, five ships crowd the small bay off Squantum Head coming to trade with Morton.

The Plymouth brethren grow beside themselves with envy heavily indebted as they are to their London investors. The Separatists also see *Mar-re-Mount* as a mecca for non-believers, with a Lord of Misrule who maintains a School of Atheism.

In April 1627, Morton and his acolytes prepare their wildest spree yet. They fell the tallest pine in a nearby forest and haul it to the summit of Mar-re-Mount. Garlanded with spring flowers, the eighty-foot spar is topped with a pair of antler horns and raised aloft for the ancient revels of May. “Mine Host of Merry Mount” composes a drinking song for his guests:

*Give to the nymph that's free from scorn
No Irish stuff nor Scotch over-worn.
Lasses in beaver coats, come away,
You'll be welcome to us night and day.*

Reverend Blaxton is at the festival, the ancient gods holding no fears for the classical scholar. Morton is a regular guest at Wessagusset often staying overnight with the reverend, who is the only other educated man in those parts.

Chickataubut and his people come to the Maypole from Massachusetts Fields. Morton's friendship has gone a long way toward dispelling the notion that all Englishmen are Cut-Throats.

In the middle of the revels, a heinous crime shatters the peace and threatens a bloodbath.

Thrush, a pockmarked brute with a cropped ear, the scum of London's Rotherhithe Wharf, is with a party of sailors from the *Prophet Daniel*. He sees Wapilanee and Jacques Petit go to fetch lobsters impounded in a rock pool and follows the pair. Little Jacques fights desperately to save the girl but is smashed to the ground. Thrush rapes Wapilanee on the beach below Squantum Head. When he goes to assault the girl a second time, she breaks free and flees toward the end of the promontory. Wapilanee, loveliest of the lasses in beaver coats, leaps to her death.

There's an uproar at Mar-re-Mount. Adam Trane diffuses the crisis, swiftly mustering his warrior friends and plunging into the wilderness after Thrush. They catch him on the long, narrow neck to Shawmut and summarily execute him. His right hand and mutilated ear are taken to Chickataubut as proof that the deed is done.

William Blaxton is shattered. For days, he sits alone at the spot known to this day as Chapel Rock where he mourns a flower lost forever. Adam tries to comfort his master but the reverend is inconsolable.

In May 1627, William asks Adam to perform one last service for him. Together, they pack up the reverend's books and take cuttings from apple trees in his orchard. They load his belongings aboard a shallop and sail to the landing place at Sha-um-ut. William settles down alone next to the sparkling spring where his nymph danced for him.

Morton's enemies find a pretext to destroy him with accusations of gunrunning through arming his Indian hunters. Arrested by Miles Standish, Morton watches soberly as "Captain Shrimp" and his men celebrate their victory. When they lie drunk, the Lord of Misrule escapes to his plantation.

Adam is the only stalwart at Morton's side in the defense of Mar-re-Mount. The pair load four falconets and ready enough powder and shot to pepper Captain Shrimp's men like geese on the wing. While they wait, they fortify themselves with mugs of Amontillado. Adam is reeling when the attack comes, spills out of the doorway and runs into the sword of a Separatist slicing open his nose. It's the only blood spilled in the Battle of Mar-re-Mount. Morton surrenders and is transported to England to face charges of selling guns to the Indians.

Adam witnesses the final blow against "Merry-Mount," when John Endicott, magistrate of Naumkeag (Salem) orders that the Maypole be thrown down. He re-christens the polluted spot as Mount Dagon named for the idol of the Philistines that drove Samson to destroy their temple.

One evening in fall 1628, Blaxton watches a group of people head across the Neck on Shawmut peninsula. Eighteen months since William settled on the lower slopes of the hill of Trimontaine, he built his house with help from Chickataubut's people.

William recognizes Chitanawoo walking proudly at the head of a small band of people that includes Jacques Petit. She orders a halt next to a pond filled with frogs, until now the reverend's only companions. Leaving others to set up the wigwams, Chitanawoo heads up the hill to Blaxton's house.

"No man should live alone," Strong-and-Bold says simply.

Chitanawoo, last sachem of Shawmut, is home.

II 1629-1634

Nicholas Steele considers himself the luckiest man alive in England landing at London in March 1629. Six months earlier, Nicholas was ship's factor in the *Barbican*, when Sallee pirates captured the bark on a run down to the Azores. The twenty-three-year-old faced a life of slavery on the Barbary Coast but for a ransom paid by his father.

Nicholas steps nimbly between the harlots in Cock Lane, his animated eyes picking out child cutpurses and footpads laying siege to Smithfield Market. A miasmatic mist hangs over the Fleet, the rank waterway adrift with offal cast into it by Smithfield's butchers. Daily, too, the river surrenders three or four bodies disposed of like so many human beasts. Nicholas walks up Turnmill Street toward Clerkenwell Green where the Knights of St. John built their priory in the 12th century, the convent of St. Mary erected on the opposite side of the green. In 1381, Wat Tyler's followers beheaded the Prior of St. John and left the vast pile in flames. Two centuries later the nunnery was confiscated. Clerkenwell continued as a papist refuge until three Catholics were hanged, drawn and quartered on the green. In Nicholas's day, the district has become a haven for Puritans. At Coleman Street just to the south, the sect's followers congregate at the *Star* tavern and in the Church of St. Stephen, where charismatic John Davenport walks a fine line between pulpit and prison.

Nicholas's family is waiting to greet him at their house in St. John's Lane. His father, Jeremiah Steele, fifty-two, is a cloth merchant and haberdasher. His mother, Agnes Steele, forty-five, is the

daughter of a London apothecary. Nicholas is the middle of three sons. Richard, twenty-seven, works in the family business and is recently married. Thomas is twenty-two, a graduate of Cambridge University and a clerk in Clifford's Inn.

Amid the joy at his homecoming, Nicholas discovers that the blow dealt his family by the Sallee pirates is disastrous. Jeremiah was part owner of *Barbican*, the loss of the ship and payment of his son's ransom burdening him with debt. A calamity compounded by the rot in England itself, where King Charles I believes he has a divine right to plunder every subject's purse.

Jeremiah and Agnes Steele are Puritans. Their sons share their faith in varying degrees, Thomas most fervent, Richard and Nicholas holding a middle course. They accept Calvinism but still hope for internal reform of the Anglican Church from excesses of "bishops, bailiffs and bastards bringing ruin to England."

In September 1629, the Steeles attend a lecture at the *Star* tavern, where Isaac Johnson, a wealthy landowner of Boston, Lincolnshire and a founder of the Massachusetts Bay Company, comes to promote "a planting of New England."

Swayed by Johnson's arguments for the new colony, Jeremiah and Agnes and their three sons join other emigrants at Southampton in March 1630. In his farewell sermon, Rev. John Cotton poignantly calls on the settlers not to forget old England, "the wombe that bore you and gave you sucke." Idlers on the docks have one word for those embarking: "cract-braines."

The Steeles sail in the *Arbella*, the flagship of eleven vessels carrying nine hundred people. On April 8, 1630, *Arbella* finally sets sail followed by three consorts, *Talbot*, *Ambrose* and *Jewel* in scattered formation. In May, the fleet is battered by ten days of ferocious storms that blow out sails, create mayhem among animals tethered on the pitching decks and strike terror into the people below.

On the voyage, the Steeles live at close quarters with leaders of the expedition: Isaac Johnson and his wife, Lady Arbella, sister of the Earl of Lincoln; Thomas Dudley, deputy-governor; and John Winthrop, governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony.

At forty-two, the lord of Groton Manor, West Suffolk is seen by many as too old and too gentle for the task ahead. A graduate of Trinity College and member of Gray's Inn, London in 1613, Winthrop served as an attorney in His Majesty's Court of Wards and Liveries, a "rotten bench making money out of the misfortunes of widows and orphans." Winthrop relinquished the post in disgust at the corruption he encountered.

Married at seventeen to Mary Forth, his first wife died eleven years later leaving six children. He lost his second wife on their first anniversary. A year later he married Margaret Tyndal, the great love of his life. There are eight living children, seven sons and a daughter. Three sons, including his first-born Henry, sail with him to New England. Margaret is expecting a child and is back at Groton Manor with the rest of the family, planning to follow John after the birth of the baby.

At Trinity College, "where the boys had a woman who was from chamber to chamber in the night," Winthrop awoke to the Puritan ideal and began developing the profound sense of stewardship that will guide him in New England: *We must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us . . . We must delight in each other, make each other's conditions our own . . . The Lord will be our God, and make us a praise and a glory, that men shall say of later plantations, 'May the Lord make it like that of New England.'*

Ten days before reaching land, Richard Steele's wife, Mary, goes into labor. *Arbella* fires a shot to stay the *Jewel* on a tack ahead of them. A midwife ferried over from *Jewel* delivers Mary's child safely.

On June 12, 1630, after seventy-six days at sea, *Arbella* drops anchor off Cape Ann, where the first to go ashore gather "a store of fine strawberries growing wild in the Promised Land."

Five days after the landfall, Nicholas Steele is with Isaac Johnson in one of two exploratory parties sailing to Massachusetts Bay. His brother Thomas is in a second boat with Winthrop. The

governor's party rounds Shawmut and heads up the Mystic River. Isaac Johnson's boatmen pull for the muddy cove on the north end of the peninsula.

At the ancient landing place, the solitary William Blaxton joyfully embraces his friend, Isaac Johnson, who was a fellow student at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

Striding briskly from one end of Shawmut to the other, William leads Isaac and his party on a tour of his estate. At the pond below his house, he introduces the newcomers to Chitanawoo and her people, who prepare a feast of lobsters and venison for the visitors. No sooner do they sit down to dinner in Blaxton's house, than they hear a tremendous hubbub that makes them grab their weapons.

Twelve Massachusetts warriors stand outside with a stocky, powerfully built fellow in a renegade's dress. The man wears deerskin leggings and moccasins, a Spanish cuirass and a battered French helmet. He carries sword and snaphance but his weapon of choice is an Indian war club, its crescent shaft embellished with mother of pearl.

The "Indian" is twenty-five-year-old Adam Trane returning from a fur-trading expedition. At Adam's side and just as ferocious looking is Jacques Petit, sixteen, already a giant like Porcupine Jack.

That night, while Johnson sleeps in the reverend's house, Nicholas and the others camp below the stars, their bivouac under the branches of a great elm. Nicholas sits with Adam listening to his report of "Merry Mount." Thomas Morton is back in New England, Bradford's charges against the Lord of Misrule dismissed, the adventurer returning to Nature's Masterpiece and his role as a pox on the pious.

Johnson spends two days exploring the seven-hundred-and-eight-acre peninsula, impressed by the headland's strong defenses and excellent springs at Blaxton's house and elsewhere.

Isaac and Nicholas take leave of Blaxton on the shelf of land where the village of Sha-um-ut stood.

"When will you return to Trimontaine?" William asks, as Isaac bids farewell.

"*Tri-mon-taine* . . .?" Isaac looks at the men setting the shallop's sails. "The boat helper's place?"

William knows instinctively what's on Isaac's mind. "St. Botolph's Town?"

“Yes, my friend, not ‘*Trimontaine*’— English ‘Boston.’”

In July, Winthrop makes his headquarters at Charlestown. The summer heat intensifies; fever and scurvy strike the malnourished settlers. Isaac Johnson sends Nicholas and twenty men across the estuary to Shawmut to begin a settlement. At a General Court in September, the name is officially changed to Boston.

At the same session, an “old planter” is hauled before Governor Winthrop. Thomas Morton is found guilty on new trumped up charges brought by old enemies like Endicott of Salem. The court sentences him to be put in the stocks, have his goods confiscated and his house burned. Morton sees the smoke rise above Mar-re-Mount from the *Handmaid*, a ship where he again awaits transportation to England. He takes up his pen to begin his tale of *New English Canaan* with a blistering attack on Governor Temperwell and his sect of “cruell Schismaticks.”

Winthrop moves to Shawmut peninsula in October fleeing the pestiferous air of Charlestown. By the middle of the month, one hundred and fifty people are living at Boston. The onset of winter finds them crowded into rude shacks and tents, in caves and cellars carved out of snake-infested hillsides. One colonist crawls into an empty barrel to escape the bone-chilling gales.

Two hundred settlers perish. Desperate survivors hammer at frozen mudflats to dig for mussels and clams. They throw themselves on the mercy of the Indians at the Frog Pond. Chitanawoo who has borne her share of suffering does whatever she can to help the English.

In a January blizzard, the Steeles watch in horror as their clay-daubed chimney bursts into flame and their house is destroyed. Adam Trane helps the family build an “English” wigwam. He takes Nicholas to the Massachusetts hunting grounds. The food they bring back isn’t enough to save Jeremiah. The elder Steele dies in February 1631, one of scores to lie beside Isaac Johnson in the First Burying Ground.

The wretched winter claims the infant of Richard Steele and Mary, who sail back to England in spring, their branch of the family never to return to the colony.

Nicholas becomes a small trader buying directly from ships and selling to townsfolk and farmers spreading along the valleys of the Charles and the Mystic. From this small beginning comes the great trading house of Steele & Sons reaching across the oceans from Boston to the China Sea. Spanning the centuries, too, to the boardroom of The Houqua Fund in State Street, Boston, venture capitalists of the 21st century.

Nicholas frequently crosses the bay to Noddles Island where Samuel Maverick, an “old planter” who came with Robert Gorges, holds a lively court behind a stockade armed with four “murderers.” The twenty-eight-year-old Maverick is the richest trader on the coast. He owns three African slaves, one said to have been “a Queene of her Owne Countrey.” Stung by onerous taxes and the governing council’s attempts to monopolize Boston’s trade, Nicholas and Maverick join other merchants to fight for a free market, an early indicator of bigger battles to come.

Governor Winthrop has no more zealous watchdog than Thomas Steele, who sniffs out sumptuary offenders with one slash too many on a sleeve or fancy needlework embellishing a bonnet. When the first tavern opens, Thomas cuts off tipplers at Cole’s “thrusting himself uninvited into a stranger’s company, and if the man calls for more burnt Madeira than he thinks he can soberly bear away, he countermands it and appoints the proportion beyond which the fellow cannot get one drop.”

Nicholas is on his toes around Thomas believing his brother won’t hesitate to have him thrown into the stocks for any error. It doesn’t stop Nicholas from patronizing Cole’s or tramping to a mud-walled shack on the westernmost of Boston’s hills, where two harlots from London’s Penny Lane are making a lively living in Puritan America.

Another lusty newcomer to the peninsula arrives not from England but nearby Plymouth. Recompense West is released from her yoke by Brother Garrick Stone and sent into the world with thirty

shillings, a kirtle of coarse woolen stuff and a blue bonnet. Twenty-four-year-old Recompense is reunited with Adam Trane falls joyfully back into sin with her Wildmore Tit.

Adam is totally trusted by the Massachusetts sachem, Chickataubut. In March 1631, Trane arranges a meeting between Winthrop and Chickataubut, who dines at the governor's table "as soberly as an Englishman."

Governor Winthrop's clerk is at the table and sees Adam as the equal of the heathens, "without faith, law or religion." Thomas's vigilance is rewarded when he finds that Adam and Recompense are transgressing one of the burgeoning rules set for society. It's not their fornication that damns them but a rule forbidding single men and women to live alone. Adam pays a fine of £20. Recompense is stripped naked to the waist, lashed with twenty stripes and made to walk behind a cart in shame.

Reverend Blaxton takes Recompense into his house, where she stays until July 1633 when she marries Adam. They're progenitors of the Tranes of Boston, who through the generations hark back to the wild boy of the fens and his love, always marching to a different drummer than proper Bostonians.

Blaxton personally resents the growing list of puritanical laws, including a ban against smoking a pipe in public, a small pleasure the bookish recluse enjoys. In 1634, the townspeople buy forty-four acres of William's property that are laid out as a training field and cattle pasture, the future Boston Common. A year later, the reverend mounts a white ox and quits Shawmut peninsula for Narragansett Bay. He left England, he said, because he didn't like the Lord Bishops and finds the rule of the Lord Brethren not one jot better.

Rumors of an Indian conspiracy rise periodically. The Massachusetts are too few to pose a threat, but the southern Wampanoag, Narragansett and Pequot can field thousands of warriors. Nicholas is second-in-command of a militia company headed by master gunner John Underhill. Adam and Jacques Petit enroll as scouts and interpreters.

In winter 1633/34, a smallpox epidemic rages in the Indian villages. Fifty-seven-year-old Chitanawoo, last sachem of the Shawmut, is an early victim. Chickataubut dies a week later at his village in Blue Hills. Only two English families are affected by the sickness prompting Winthrop to declare: “If God was not pleased with our inhabiting these parts, why did he drive out the native before us? And why does he still make room for us by diminishing them as we increase?”

Agnes Steele devotes herself to caring for victims entering the wigwams on Boston Common, separating the living from the dead and carrying them into the open. She enlists the help of Recompense West, the pair crossing the Neck to Blue Hills, where two-thirds of Chickataubut’s band succumbs. The stricken Jacques Petit owes his survival to Agnes.

Thomas also sees the hand of God raised against the devil in New England, and it disturbs him to witness his mother nursing the savages, but he keeps silent for now.

When the epidemic passes, Agnes visits the Frog Pond on Boston Common, walking beside the shimmering pool. She senses the presence of Chitanawoo and upon on a moonlit night, catches sight too, of Oshuam, Old Dog, waiting patiently for his young master, Witawamet.

III 1634-1638

On a September day in 1634, Nicholas Steele is at the Town Dock, when the *Griffin* drops anchor from England. The ship brings Hannah Fletcher, a romping eighteen-year-old who within the year becomes Nicholas’s wife. Another passenger landing this day has a lasting effect on the Steele family: Anne Hutchinson, a prophet to her followers in Lincolnshire, is a minister’s daughter and skilled midwife. The forty-three-year-old Anne is married to William Hutchinson, a wealthy merchant. They have eleven children and occupy a house across from Governor Winthrop, who becomes Anne’s most determined detractor.

Agnes Steele is Anne's first disciple in Boston, Agnes's knowledge of the native's pharmacopoeia bringing her to Hutchinson's attention. Their friendship alarms Winthrop's watchdog who fears the consequences of his mother's association with "a haughty female, more bold than a man." Thomas is only echoing the prejudice of his friend, John Wilson, minister of First Church, a man of such piety that at Sunday meals all at his table are commanded to speak only of God or hold their tongues.

Another newcomer is equally unsettling to Winthrop. Twenty-two year old Henry Vane, one of England's brightest young sparks, has flowing locks and flashy clothes that make him the very image of a Puritan nightmare. Vane is nonetheless a visible saint come to "savor the power of religion in New Jerusalem." On Election Day in May 1636, Boston's merchants sweep Henry into the governor's seat, with John Winthrop relegated to be his deputy. Vane takes up office with pomp and splendor trooping down Cornhill to the meetinghouse with an honor guard of halberdiers. Fifteen ships in the harbor fire a salute, their captains rewarded with a roaring banquet in Cole's ordinary.



On July 20, 1636, Adam is sailing to Narragansett Bay with fellow trader John Gallop, when they spy a pinnace riding off Block Island. Indians crowd the vessels deck. When Adam and Gallop board with their men, they find the mutilated body of owner John Oldham. They slaughter all but two of the Indians and bind the pair who surrender with ropes: *Gallop being well acquainted with their skill to untie themselves, if two be together, threw one into the sea and let him drown.*

Adam carries news of Oldham's murder back to Boston. He is dispatched with an embassy to Canonicus and Miantonomo, Narragansett sachems to whom the Block Island Indians are subject. The sachems produce Oldham's missing sons and return his goods. They reveal that two surviving assassins fled to the Pequots, who are the most feared tribe in New England.

The Narragansett reparations don't forestall a punitive expedition against the Block Islanders. In August, Adam and Nicholas march in a twenty-six-man company led by Captain Underhill, "an eccentric soldier who generally went to excess in whatever he undertook."

Forty Block Islanders resist the landing, one Indian killed before the rest flee. Disappointed by the failure to exterminate the natives, the soldiers destroy some dogs instead of men and burn the Indian settlements. On the mainland they attack a Pequot town, slay thirteen and plunder the wigwams and fields. In three weeks, the Boston men return to their homes, "a marvelous providence of God that not a hair fell from any, nor any sick or feeble person among them."

In winter 1636, Winthrop and his supporters rally against the Hutchinsonians, blocking the appointment of Anne's brother-in-law, John Wheelwright, as First Church's assistant teacher.

Winthrop's next salvo is aimed at Governor Vane, the debate between them so painful to young Henry that he bursts into tears and offers his resignation. To Winthrop's dismay, the General Court refuses to let Henry go until the regular annual election in May.

As the strife between the two factions grows, a day of fast and humiliation is kept on January 20, 1637. Invited to talk at Boston, Wheelwright illuminates Anne's belief in a Covenant of Grace offering personal salvation through faith alone, not a covenant demanding godly deeds and total obedience to the elect.

A closed session of the General Court judges Wheelwright guilty of sedition and contempt. His sentence is also postponed until May, when Winthrop's supporters expect to unseat Vane.

That February, Agnes Steele and Anne are called to the bedside of Mary Dyer, a milliner's wife suffering excruciating pain with her third pregnancy in four years. An infant is stillborn two months before term, so deformed that the women hide the fetus from Mary. They consult Reverend John Cotton, who gives the women tacit approval to bury the child near the great elm on Boston Common

Thomas follows his mother and witnesses the internment. Agnes swears him to secrecy reminding Thomas of an ancient English custom that charges midwives with interring the stillborn “in such place as neither hog nor dog, nor any other beast may come unto it, and in such sort done, as it may not be found or perceived.”

Pequot raids kill thirty settlers, including John Tilley captured in sight of Fort Saybrook. Tilley’s hands and feet are cut off. He lives three days without his limbs and wins the admiration of his tormentors “because he cried not in his torture.”

Captain Underhill and his company march to Fort Saybrook where they’re joined by the Mohegan chief, Uncas, and sixty warriors. The Pequots – “Destroyers” – were originally known as Mohegans when they invaded southern New England. A year before the war, Uncas’s band broke from Sassacus, great sachem of the Pequots, and adapted the old name of Mohegans.

When the English question his loyalty, Uncas kills a party of Pequots and presents his allies with four decapitated heads. He also captures a spy of Chief Sassacus. At Fort Saybrook, the man’s legs are tied between two posts and he is torn limb from limb.

At dawn on May 26, 1637, the English attack the Pequot stronghold at Mystic. Nicholas and Underhill breach the stockade from the southwest. John Mason and his Connecticut men storm in on the northeast. Four hundred Pequots perish in one hour, most burned alive. Two Englishmen are killed and a third of their force wounded.

Adam and Jacques Petit are in the van, when the Pequots make their last stand at a swamp near New Haven. Sassacus and twenty followers seek refuge with the Mohawks. Awed by the violence of the Cut-Throats, no tribe offers the renegades sanctuary. Instead, the Pequot chief and his bodyguards are butchered. Sassacus’ head and the forty hands of his followers are delivered to army chaplain John Wilson, who carries the bloody trophies back to Boston.

On Boston Common, captive Pequot men, women and children are placed in holding pens next to Frog Pond. Most are given to English settlers as farm laborers and house servants. Fifteen men, three boys and a girl are chosen for transportation.

Nicholas Steele is appointed factor in a ship sailing to the Caribbean where the Pequots will be sold as slaves.

On the Common, the half-breed Jacques Petit moves stealthily as he crosses the pickets to the side of sixteen-year-old **TANAWAKA, LITTLE CLOUD**, the lone female held in the slave pen with her brother, **MIKWEH, THE SQUIRREL**. At Mystic, Jacques pulled the girl out of a blazing wigwam.

Their love grows desperate with each hour that brings the girl closer to perpetual exile. Jacques appeals to Adam and Recompense for help. "I've thirty shillings from a saint of Plymouth," says Recompense. "Enough to buy one little Pequot devil!" They also arrange for Mikweh to stay behind when Nicholas sails for the Caribbean.

On Election Day, Henry Vane is ousted and Winthrop returned to the governor's seat. In November, Anne Hutchinson is summoned before the General Court at Newtowne (Cambridge) to defend eighty-two "opinions" held as blasphemous.

Agnes and Anne make the journey to Cambridge on foot in an ice storm through woods still haunted by wolves. The women arrive half-frozen and exhausted. Anne faces Governor Winthrop and forty-eight male inquisitors in a barn-like meetinghouse. The black-coats sit on wooden benches, except their leader who has a desk and a chair with a cushioned seat. Anne who is expecting her fifteenth child is forced to stand throughout the two-day trial.

At the end of the hearing, Winthrop calls for a vote on Anne's "delusions." All but three magistrates and ministers vote in favor of banishment.

In March 1638, Anne is summoned to a second hearing in Boston, where among other sins, she's accused of filling the minds of Boston's young women with promiscuous opinions that open the door to free love.

In the meeting house, Thomas is mortified to see his mother sitting on one side of Anne, and Mary Dyer, the milliner's wife, on the other side. From ten in the morning until eight at night, Anne is subjected to harangues of the black-coats. When the hearing adjourns, she can barely walk by herself. She's led to the house of John Cotton where her persecutors redouble their efforts to browbeat her into admitting her errors.

A week later, Anne returns to the meetinghouse to hear John Wilson's ultimate condemnation of an "instrument of the Devil:" *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the name of the Church, I cast you out and deliver you up to Satan . . . I do account you from this time forth to be a Heathen and a Publican.*

Thomas is standing with Winthrop when Anne leaves the church with Agnes and Mary Dyer. The governor doesn't recognize Mary and asks Thomas who she is.

"The woman who bore the monster," Thomas blurts out. His revelation exposes his mother's involvement in the secret burial of the stillborn child.

Five days after Anne leaves Massachusetts, Winthrop and Thomas supervise the exhumation of Martha Dyer's daughter. The governor describes the infant in his diary: *It had a face, but no head, and the ears stood upon the shoulders and were like an ape's. It had no forehead but over the eyes four horns, hard and sharp. It had two mouths, and in each of them a piece of red flesh sticking out; it had arms and legs as other children but instead of toes, it had on each foot three claws, like a young fowl with sharp talons.*

Agnes is hauled before the General Court. Two magistrates favor expelling her from the colony. Winthrop extends mercy toward his clerk's mother. Agnes is forbidden to meddle in surgery or physic

and cannot debate matters of religion, except with elders of the church. Disobey the gag order and she will be excommunicated and banished.

Deeply ashamed at the betrayal of his mother, Thomas flees Boston aboard a vessel sailing for England. Even as the *Jewel* departs another ship beats into the bay bringing Nicholas Steele home from the Caribbean.

IV 1650-1656

By mid-century, Nicholas Steele is a wealthy merchant and ship-owner. He faces a daunting challenge in building Steele's Wharf on the marshy waterfront north of the Town Dock. Midway through construction, storm winds blast the sea banks and rip away pilings. Nicholas has to begin from scratch but perseveres until the three hundred foot wharf is complete.

The first ship alongside is the old *Arbella*, which brings Thomas Steele back to America after twelve years. The family rarely spoke of Thomas but had news of him from Richard, Nicholas's older brother, who serves as his London agent.

Thomas earned his master's degree at Cambridge in 1642 and applied for orders two years later. He was a chaplain in the Parliamentary army at Naseby where he lost his right forearm. He is married to Martha, daughter of David Thorowgood, a printer of Puritan tracts. One of his father-in-law's pamphlets, *The Day Breaking, if not the Sun Rising of the Gospel with the Indians in New England*, describes Reverend John Eliot's success in converting natives around Boston. Inspired by the "Apostle to the Indians," Thomas founded a society to support Eliot's work and personally heard the call to "Come Over and Help Us," emblematic of the Indians' hunger for redemption since the beginning of the colony..

Thomas and Martha return in December 1650, with their children, Eden, five, and Margaret, four years, joining twenty thousand settlers, three thousand in Boston. Governor Winthrop's stewardship of the City on the Hill ended with his death the previous year but his watchdog comes back to New

Jerusalem with greater zeal. Thomas is a grim figure, with a fierce brow and his arm hewn off by a Royalist lancer, no gentle shepherd of silly lambs but a hammer of God. Martha Thorowgood is a rail-thin harridan who sees sin everywhere charged with a vast catalog of iniquities gleaned from countless tracts proofread for her printer-father. Martha believes the Indians belong to a lost tribe of Israel, an idea fostered by her cousin, Thomas Thorowgood, whose book *Jews in America or the Probability that the Americans are Jews* is a popular sensation in 1650.

Not every Boston citizen welcomes Reverend Steele. A year after Thomas left, Recompense opened *The Beaver* tavern in Dock Square, her patrons never having to suffer interference with their guzzling. *The Beaver* is famous for a potent cherry bounce: A mountain of cherry pits rises behind the tavern, where Recompense makes her devil's brew of cherries, sugar and aged rum. *The Beaver's* keeper still bears the scars of lashes inflicted for breaking the law before she married Adam. Often in her cups herself, she roars with laughter recalling that brutal day, when she took "ten strokes for ten little blokes!" The number of sons of Adam and Recompense, ranging in age from seventeen to three, all with large heads, straight backs and large feet. Not one has managed to stay off the beadle's hook, not even the youngest snatched out of Mill Creek by Beadle Jones who arrived in the nick of time to save a natural born sinner.

Adam says a prayer for his Indian friends, whose redemption will be guided by the iron hand of the new apostle. Literally, for Thomas wears a sinister metal prosthesis fashioned by a London glove maker.

Thomas visits John Eliot at Roxbury eager to learn from him, "the art of coyning Christians." Key to Eliot's work in leading perishing, forlorn outcasts to attain the higher understanding of Englishmen is to gather them in from their scattered life and place them in segregated towns where they can live without danger of contamination by degenerate settlers.

On a summer's day in 1651, Thomas begins a new Praying Town Pungasak, "Place of the Gnats." The three-thousand-acre site on the southern rim of Blue Hills encompasses a cedar swamp that

can provide a good income for the thirty families. First, Thomas must wean his charges from indolence. The root of this evil lies in a flourishing apple orchard, its crop used by the Indians to make a cider that's as good as any product of their English neighbors. A law that forbids the sale of liquor to the natives becomes befuddled when Indians set up their own stills. The keeper of *The Beaver* considers it a moot point regularly sending a cart trundling out to Blue Hills for a fresh supply of "Pungasak Gold."

Thomas compels the Indians to chop down their apple trees, except a single row to provide fruit for their tables.

Three Pungasak men watch the destruction of the orchard from an ancient quarry. The oldest of the three is Wapikicho, The Jester, now fifty-four and powwow of the Pungasak band. The youngest is Mikweh, The Squirrel, whose sister is married to the third man, Jacques Petit, thirty-seven. It was Jacques who planted the Orange Sweetings with cuttings from Reverend Blaxton's trees on the Common. The three sit drinking the last of their prized brew, a trio of devils to torment the saint who has come over to help them.

In 1652, with England and Holland at war, Dutch freebooters seize the *Falcon*, a ship belonging to Nicholas Steele, and take the prize and its crew to New Amsterdam. The vessel was on a trading voyage to the Portuguese islands off West Africa, then to Mina to pick up slaves for Barbados, and on the last leg of the triangle bringing molasses to be turned into rum at Boston. Nicholas's fifteen-year-old son, Nathaniel, is aboard *Falcon*.

Licensed as a privateer, Nicholas puts together a raiding party that includes Adam and the trio from Pungasak. They leave Boston in two shallops and sail down Long Island Sound to Manhattan. Nicholas and Adam spy out the Dutch settlement locating *Falcon* and learning that the crew is held in an old mill on Tuyn Street. At night, the raiders make their way along a wagon road beside a fortified wall being built between the Hudson and East Rivers. One party seizes *Falcon*. Nicholas leads a second group to Tuyn Street, where they surprise the night watch and release Nathaniel and the crew. Then the

Boston men fly down the Narrows and make their home run before the New Amsterdammers can give chase.

At Place of the Gnats, Thomas encourages the natives to abandon their rustic habitations and build frame houses. Cedar clapboards and shingles are cut in their own sawmill, the beginning of a regime of industry to regenerate “the saddest spectacle of misery of mere men on earth.” One third of the families erect English-style cottages around the meetinghouse. The rest continue to live in wigwams, which they find warmer and more comfortable.

As part of the new civic order, Thomas institutes regulations drafted by Martha: *They shall stop picking lice with their teeth, under penalty of five shillings. They shall wear their hair comely as the English, and whoever shall offend, ten shillings. The old ceremony of the maid walking around and living apart, twenty shillings. A woman with naked breasts, two shillings and six pence.*

Thomas and Martha don't live permanently at Pungasak but trek to Blue Hills every week. He reviews regulations and fines imposed by the elders and holds Scripture classes. Martha instructs Indian women in setting up home in the English manner, giving lessons on good housekeeping and correcting the smallest imperfections. Jacques Petit translates Martha's interminable dialogues, a task leaving him drained by day's end. Jacques revives himself with doses of cherry bounce supplied by the keeper of *The Beaver*, the *Pungasaks'* credit good for years to come.

In September 1653, the *Goodfellow* draws up to Steele's Wharf carrying five hundred and fifty Irish captives. When Cromwell's army crushed a revolt above the Shannon thousands of Irish soldiers fled to France and Spain. Their wives and children were hunted down for transportation and sale as bound servants in the American colonies and West Indies.

Goodfellow's master parades a select group of children on deck for inspection by Boston's citizens who flock to buy the Irish boys and girls. They will be bound as servants for ten years or until they reach their majority.

Martha Thorowgood buys two girls, **KYNA O'BRIEN** and **KEELEY FARLING**, nine-year-olds from the same village in County Cork, where Mancatchers snatched them from their beds.

Goodfellow's owners dispose of half their cargo and are ready to sail for Virginia when a fire breaks out in the forecabin. Dozens of children flee like rats abandoning a sinking ship. Most are fished out of the harbor or trapped on the waterfront, but a handful of the hardiest are never caught. One of the "Irish vermin" who escapes is the boy, **MALACHY LYNCH**. In the future Malachy will marry Keeley Farling. Their descendants are the fictional Lynches who gnaw away at Boston's Puritan underbelly and make a nest in the City on the Hill.

In June 1654, Reverend Eliot and Richard Mather join Governor Endicott to celebrate Pungasak's third year of existence. Martha proudly shows off the domestic skills of her housewives, who work at their spinning wheels and make English preserves and sweetmeats. Thomas presents the town elder, Ossocow, and five acolytes who deliver their confessions "*with such tears trickling down the cheeks of some, as did argue that they spoke with much holy fear of God.*"

To Thomas's dismay, the visitors decide that his natives are too premature and uncivilized to maintain a state of grace. Reverend Mather pronounces bluntly: "A church estate is too serious a business to be hewed out of such rubbish."

A month later, Thomas and Martha are heading home after a visit to Pungasak, when a wheel on their cart breaks. They return to the Praying Town on foot approaching after dark. Half a mile away, they hear drumming and singing, louder and louder until they see a crowd leaping and dancing around a bonfire outside the meetinghouse.

Wapikicho, powwow of the Pungasak, is leading the celebration of Feast of Green Corn.

Thomas rages from one side of the town to the other screaming for an end to the pagan ritual. Martha's housewives have shed their English clothes. They grab their teacher and make her dance with them barefoot and bare-breasted. Thomas hears his wife's shrieks and rescues her, the pair fleeing into the meetinghouse where they await martyrdom. They are not harmed. At dawn they flee and raise the alarm at Boston. A militia company dashes to Pungasak fearing a general uprising. They find the Indians calmly going about their old ways. Of Wapikicho and the other ringleaders, there's no sign.

The Place of Gnats is the only Praying Town that fails miserably. Its embattled saint isn't totally dispirited, for the struggle is soon joined with another enemy coming to defile New Jerusalem. Ironically, it's Nicholas's ship, *Falcon* that brings Mary Fisher and Ann Austin from Barbados, the first Quakers to reach Boston. Already scorched by the devil, Reverend Thomas Steele quickly warms to the new challenge.

V 1660-1681

Two hours before dawn on June 1, 1660, Agnes Steele leaves her son's house in the North End and walks down to the Town Dock. One of the few souls astir is the water rat, Malachy Lynch, drying out at the furnace of his master, a Ship Street blacksmith who'll hammer him if the fire isn't stoked when he comes to the anvil. Recompense is waiting for Agnes outside *The Beaver*.

They walk together to King Street and head up to the Town House. Agnes is seventy-six and moves slowly in the chill air. At the market exchange, they encounter an unusually large crowd for this hour, none engaged in trading but talking in hushed tones. Above their heads, a dim glow behind the windows of the chamber indicates that members are also gathering for the day's events.

Agnes and Recompense continue on to the Town Prison, a gloomy stone pile blackened with grime. They're here to bid farewell to a friend who has less than three hours before her execution.

It's twenty-two years since Mary Dyer gave birth to the child exhumed by Governor Winthrop and Thomas Steele. Eventually excommunicated, Mary left Massachusetts for Rhode Island and later made a visit to England, where she became a follower of George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends. When Boston passed a law banishing Quakers under pain of death, Mary and two Friends penetrated the Puritan stronghold determined to "look the bloody laws in the face." Mary saw her two accomplices hanged, while she waited with the halter around her neck. Reprieved at the last moment, she'd come back to Boston the following year and was brought before Governor John Endicott, eternal scourge of heretics. He made short work of the "prophetess:" *You will return to prison and remain there till tomorrow at nine o'clock. Then prepare yourself to go to the gallows, and there be hanged till you are dead.*

Agnes and Recompense spend an hour with Mary before the drums roll on Court Street and the Quaker begins her final walk to the hanging tree on Boston Common.

Thomas and Martha keep vigil at the great elm with their son, Eden. The fifteen year old attends Harvard College, where he has already shown himself a true defender of Christ, rebuking his fellow students for wicked words and ungodly excesses in smoking. Eden reads fifteen chapters of the Bible each day. He locks himself in his room for twenty-four hours allowing nothing but a few drops of water to pass his lips, as he begs God to cleanse one of the filthiest vessels on earth.

A twelve-foot ladder is set up against a limb of the great elm. Mary's arms and legs are bound, her skirts secured above her feet. One end of the rope is tied around her neck. Reverend John Wilson, her former pastor, gives the hangman his handkerchief as a blindfold for Mary. Ready for death, she's made to climb the ladder. The hangman mounts a second set of steps to fix the rope to the tree limb. Reverend Wilson makes one final appeal to the sinner. "Nay, man, I am not now to repent," she responds. The ladder is pulled away and Mary is swung off into eternity.

One week later, Agnes dies in her sleep. Eden fasts for three days convinced that his grandmother was carried away by the demons that came for Mary Dyer. The youth's spiritual exercises

are complicated by self-guilt, for in the room where he prays for God's rapturous touch, Eden surrenders to an orgy of masturbation. The servant girls, Kyna and Keeley, are at the center of his fantasies, his eyes pressed against the boards of their room to spy on their nakedness.



In July 1664, Nicholas's son, Nathaniel, captains a militia company in a contingent of two hundred men en route to attack New Amsterdam. Adam commands Trane's Irregulars, a mongrel militia recruited from the roughnecks of *The Beaver* and including five Trane sons in its muster. On August 28, the English blockade the Manhattan settlement and ten days later Peter Stuyvesant surrenders New Amsterdam without firing a shot. The victors celebrate in "New York City," none happier than the men of Boston who see their Dutch rivals being swept from the sea-lanes of the American colonies.

For a second time, Nathaniel becomes a captive in New York, not of freebooters but Antjie Blommetjie, the daughter of Jasper Blommetjie, a Dutch West India Company official turned slaver. "Annie Flowers" becomes the wife of Nathaniel Steele, her strong Calvinist roots facilitating her entry into Puritan society. Annie also has a tolerant spirit that puts her at odds with the hard minds that rule Boston.

When the New York expedition returns that September, they're feted on Boston Common. The highlight is a sham battle in which Trane's Irregulars trounce a company of Hollanders.

A party of Indians visiting the town witnesses the rout. Metacom, chief of the Wampanoag, comes to ask permission to buy a horse, an animal Indians are forbidden to own. King Philip, as the English call him, is a son of Massasoit who died three years earlier. Metacom's brother Wamsutta succeeded but died within a year. Metacom took power at the age of twenty-four, still grieving for a brother he believes the English poisoned.

Metacom is a tall, slim man with dignity and bearing. He wears a beaded coat and elaborate buskins, his accoutrements worth £20 alone. He sits proudly on a huge black stallion received as a gift from Governor Endicott.

Rufus Trane, ten years old and too young to be a real Irregular takes part in the mock battle. He carries the company's banner, hollering a war cry as he charges across the Common on a fiery Lincolnshire pony. Metacom gives a great whoop in response thrilled by the boy's riding. When the battle ends, the King of the Wampanoag presents Rufus with a string of wampum beads worth a fortune to a wild Boston boy.

In 1675, ten years later, Rufus Trane is an express rider who starts from Marshfield early one June morning and at three in the afternoon comes clattering over the Neck. Rufus carries an urgent message from Governor Winslow of Plymouth Colony. The Wampanoag have attacked Swansea and driven the settlers into their blockhouse. Governor Winslow declares that Plymouth will put down the uprising in a few days and no more.

It is the beginning of King Philip's War, the deadliest and costliest conflict proportionately in American history. The war engulfs New England between 1675 and 1678 and claims nine thousand victims, two-thirds of them Indians. Fifty English towns are attacked and twelve destroyed. One thousand Indian men, women and children are sold into slavery. The war costs £100,000, a sum greater than the value of all the personal property in the colonies.

- In July 1675, Trane's Irregulars and Nathaniel Steele's company strike Philip at Mount Hope on the Rhode Island border. A rearguard action by a small band of warriors allows the Wampanoag military leaders to escape to their allies, the Nipmucs.
- Wapikicho is eighty years old when "The Great Fight" begins. He is a councilor at Punkapoag, a Praying Town established by Eliot at the cedar swamp opposite abandoned Pungasak. The Jester has waited a lifetime to avenge the murder of Witawamet and girds his old loins for battle with the Cut-Throats. Wapikicho and The Squirrel lead a dozen Christian Indians to Philip's camp in the Connecticut Valley.

- Jacques Petit is torn between love for his mother's people and his intimate relationship with Adam. Jacques decides to stay at Punkapoag. English vigilantes suspect the Indians of raiding outlying farms in Dedham and terrorize the Praying Town. In October 1675, Jacques and his family are among five hundred Praying Indians interned on Deer Island in Boston Harbor.
- Thirty-six inches of snow falls in November 1675 turning the war zone into a frozen wasteland. A bigger chill descends on the English when Canonchet, chief of the three-thousand-strong Narragansett, joins Philip. The colony musters an additional one thousand men to assault the Narragansett stronghold in the Great Swamp. The attackers are forced back in a blinding snowstorm suffering heavy casualties. Nathaniel is severely wounded. The English regroup and set fire to the wigwams, as they did with the Pequots thirty-five years before, massacre seven hundred people and take three hundred as slaves.
- In February 1676, fifty-one-year-old Martha Thorowgood makes a perilous journey from Boston to Northampton to be with her daughter Margaret expecting her first child. An Indian raiding party led by Mikweh, The Squirrel, descends on the frontier town, slaying eleven and capturing Martha and Margaret. At a camp near Monadnock, the venerable Wapikicho takes special delight in tormenting the wife and daughter of the black-coat who chopped down his apple trees. Margaret is near her time and begs the Indians to let her go home. They strip her naked and make her squat in their midst, as they sing and dance around her. At a signal from the Jester, they split Margaret's head and throw her body on a bonfire. (The same fate that befell the real Mary Rowlandson's companion in her *Narrative*.)
- Thomas Steele goes to *The Beaver* to ask Adam's help in ransoming his wife and daughter unaware that Margaret is dead. Jacques Petit leads the Irregulars to Mount Monadnock, where they find Wapikicho's camp deserted. The band has moved to Philip's camp. Martha Thorowgood's perfect housekeeping stands her in good stead, for King Philip has heard of her prowess with needle and thread and orders. He orders her to make him a new shirt.

- While Martha sews to save her life, Trane's Irregulars race to her side but never reach her. Wapikicho's warriors ambush Adam's company outside Springfield. Rufus is riding ahead of the column and turns back heroically cutting a path through the attackers to reach his father. Adam is mortally wounded and breathes his last, no saint of the City on the Hill, just a merry, merry man going to do a jig with the lovely lasses in beaver coats. Rufus takes the troop on the warpath carrying the *Headbreaker*, his father's old club, and exacting a terrible vengeance. At *The Beaver*, a center post is garlanded with strips of cloth nailed up by Irregulars awarded two yards of trucking material for every Indian scalp delivered to the Town House.

- Nathaniel and Eden pay a ransom of £30 for Martha fetching her from Philip's camp, the last Englishmen to see Metacom alive. King Philip is betrayed and shot by one of his warriors on August 12, 1676, effectively ending the war in Massachusetts. Rufus hunts down and captures Wapikicho and Mikweh. Dragged to Boston and summarily tried they're handed over to the Irregulars. Wapikicho is tied to the great elm on the Common. Mikweh is ordered to shoot him with the promise of a reprieve. The Jester is dispatched with a single bullet. Rufus roars with laughter telling Mikweh he was sorely mistaken to think he would go free. A rope is brought and The Squirrel hoisted aloft.

In her seventies, Widow Recompense cheerfully fills the role of "Mine Host," merrily fortifying Irregulars with liberal doses of cherry bounce. Recompense runs the tavern with the help of Keeley Farling, who grew up as a servant in the house of Thomas and Martha Steele. Keeley is married to Malachy Lynch who still labors for the tyrant of Ship Street and still suffers the occasional rain of anvil blows. They have three daughters, Margery, Fiona and Fenella, from seven to twelve years old.

Kyna O'Brien, who was with Keeley in the *Goodfellow*, remains in service with the Steeles. She is a drab thirty-six year-old spinster who spends her days running and fetching Martha Thorowgood and her nights praying to be a Model Servant of the Lord. Kyna is obsessive jealousy of Keeley Farling, envying her independence and her marriage to Malachy.

Kyna's frustration boils over with a lurid report to Thomas and Eden, now a minister, about the three Lynch girls. She describes seeing them taken with fits in the yard of *The Beaver*, leaping and dancing around the mountain of cherry pits. Recompense cavorts wildly with the girls howling incantations for the entranced children.

This first evidence of what will become a "stupendous case of witchcraft" galvanizes Reverend Eden. He finds no shortage of envious neighbors willing to testify against a wealthy widow. Fenella, the oldest of the Lynch girls, is taken for observation in Eden's house and subjected to probing physical examinations by Eden and his father. They find no evidence of the devil's succages, but the child's fanciful replies to their questions leave no doubt that Fenella was marked to be a handmaiden of Lucifer.

On April 20, 1680, Recompense is charged with witchcraft and put on trial in Boston. A stream of witnesses testify about diabolical goings-on at *The Beaver*: *I and William Sloan being at Widow Recompense's ordinary, affirm that earth in ye chimney corner moved and scattered on us. I was hit a great blow but it was so swift none could tell what it was. An iron ladle, also a piece of wood a foot long, struck Sloan.* Others speak of demonic creatures assaulting them as they sat on *The Beaver's* three-seater privy. *A white Thing like a Cat, which did play at my legs until I did kick it . . . It gave a loud cry, which in all reason was the cry of an imp.*

After two days of damning testimony, a jury finds Recompense guilty of witchcraft and sentences her to death.

Rufus appeals directly to Nathaniel Steele, now a member of the General Court. The day before Recompense is to be taken to the hanging tree, she gets a stay of execution. Her reprieve is as much due to Nathaniel's intervention as the presence of a royal commissioner come from London to expose the vices of Puritan rule. Recompense is spared but lingers in jail for a year before her release.

On May Day, 1681, the irregulars of *The Beaver* give the old witch a rousing welcome. Many there are who've seen more than their share of devils sitting on the tavern's benches with Widow Trane's magic brew revealing all the wonders of the invisible world.

Book Two

THE SHOP AT THE SEVEN STEPS

I 1744-1748

DERASTUS TRANE, “Old Disaster,” commands the watch-house on Boston Common. From ten o’clock until daybreak, Derastus and his men walk the rounds with billhook and lantern. “One o’clock, clear, and all’s well!” The cry is as much to reassure citizens as to confirm the constables aren’t sleeping on their watch.

Old Disaster’s patrol reaches into Mount Whoredom on the western slopes of Beacon Hill, a paradise for drunkards, harlots, spendthrifts and outcasts. So many bawdyhouses, says a young English cartographer, no town of comparable size can turn out more prostitutes than Boston.

“Nigger Hill” lies northeast of Mount whoredom, an insalubrious warren where free blacks and poor whites make their homes. Capable Johnson, a dancing-master by profession, is “governor” of the Hill elected by free blacks, his office a great amusement to the royal appointee in Province House but no laughing matter in Mr. Johnson’s dominion.

Sixty-two year old Derastus is the son of Rufus Trane. Derastus and his wife, Rose, have five children, their first-born **CALEB TRANE** already in his fortieth year. When Caleb was thirteen, he was apprenticed to goldsmith John Coney alongside Appolos Revoire. Unlike the elder Paul Revere, Caleb showed little flair for designing cups and porringers or making baubles. He left Coney’s shop to work for Archimedes Knefler, a gunsmith who moved to Boston from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Caleb quickly

proved himself more adept at fashioning flintlocks than jewelry, his craft in demand by the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company.

Major **ASHLEY STEELE** is a member of this illustrious regiment, a veteran of the capture of Port Royal in 1710, still impressive on the training field and well able to hold his own under the Ancient and Honorable's barrage of loyal and patriotic toasts.

In 1744, Major Ashley's eye is again on the north and a nest of "French thieves and Romish popery" at Fort Louisbourg. This bulwark on Cape Breton Island took twenty years to build, so costly to Louis XV that he fully expects to look out of his window at Versailles and see the ramparts rising on the western horizon.

Major Ashley's son, **EMORY STEELE**, commands the privateer, *Swan*, a sixty-ton schooner carrying a crew of sixty and mounting twelve carriage guns and six falconets. Emory is twenty-seven, a merchant-adventurer as sharp on the counting-house floor as spotting an enemy on the high seas.

The two Steeles, father and son, join other merchants meeting with Governor William Shirley at Province House to plan an expedition against Fort Louisbourg. In winter 1744 fifteen armed ships and a hundred transports are readied, the land force of three thousand made up of the hard-bitten sweepings from Boston's streets and a rag-tag militia recruited in New England towns.

LEMUEL STEELE, the son of Reverend Eden, is a minister like his father. Lemuel's devils are not witches nor Indians but evangelists like George Whitefield whose Great Awakening "disturbs the peace of our Jerusalem and threatens to turn our churches into Dens of Disorder."

Lemuel's younger brother, **DEEMS STEELE**, was born in 1719 a year before his father died, his mother Ann the preacher's third wife. Deems is a habitu  of the rat pits and shebeens of Mount Whoredom. Old Disaster frequently lights the way home for the rake prodding him along with his billhook as he staggers back to the North End.

Deems has a lover, **NIXIE FLETCHER**, an eighteen-year-old mulatto, who claims to be the daughter of William Fletcher, a ship boatswain who led a mutiny, drowned his captain and mate and

became a pirate. Fletcher's month-long rampage from the Carolinas to New England ended with his capture and execution at Boston, his body hung in irons on Nix's Mate in Boston harbor.

Nixie Fletcher becomes pregnant with the child of Deems. A date for a bastardy hearing is set in the Boston courts, a risky business for Nixie: putative fathers are commonly ordered to pay support but their partners are fined and whipped in public. Before Nixie's case can be heard, Deems decamps and joins the Boston men who go to Fort Louisbourg.

- In April 1745, when the New Englanders land three miles from the fortress, Caleb Trane leads a scouting party that finds the Royal Battery at the harbor entrance abandoned. Caleb's men clear the spikes from a dozen guns and turn them on the French.
- Whaleboats ferry Deems and a gang of rum-soaked provincials to the rocks below an island battery. They're planting their scaling ladders, when one bright spark gives a huzzah for a successful landing. The French answer with a hail of musket shot. Deems and his men struggle for two hours to win a foothold on the enemy's works, shot down left and right, until the survivors are forced to quit the island.
- Emory Steels disputes naval commander Peter Warren's proposal to blast his way into the harbor with his battle line. Instead, Emory and *Swan's* crew join Richard Gridley, a young lieutenant of the Ancient and Honorable Company, with a plan to manhandle the English guns up a steep bluff opposite the Island Battery. On June 8 at a range of half a mile, they open a devastating barrage; the battery is blown up one week later. After a siege of forty-six days, Louisbourg's governor surrenders the Gibraltar of America to the New Englanders.
- Sergeant **PHINEAS LYNCH**, grandson of Malachy and Keeley, is among the Boston toughs who garrison the fortress. One night, Phineas storms a tavern to break up a brawl over an Irish servant girl left behind. The maid he rescues is **PHOEBE O'CONNOR** wooed all that winter and in spring, too, by the gruff sergeant who wins her heart and takes her home to Boston as his wife. – Deems is one of the tavern brawlers, his vicious lifestyle leading to a gambling quarrel in which he's challenged

to a duel. On an icy February morning below the walls of Louisbourg, Deems Steele is felled with a shot through the heart.

Major Ashley and Emory are at the forefront of Boston merchants who make their town the most prosperous in North America. Steele's Wharf is one of forty wharves, the longest of which reaches two thousand feet into the bay. The city's trade is four times that of New York.

Ashley lives in the North End. Emory has a handsome three-story brick house on an acre of pastureland at Fort Hill, opposite the malt-house of Captain Samuel Adams.

The Steeles owe part of their success to the African slave trade. Every Boston household of consequence has at least one slave though most "choice parcels of Negro boys and girls" go directly to the southern plantations. Such a lively commerce that one Virginian laments, "the Saints of New England import so many Negroes hither I fear our colony will some time be confirmed by the name of New Guinea."

Boston itself falls prey to bands of man-catchers when Royal Navy gangs scour the taverns and streets. At Faneuil Hall, Emory joins Captain Samuel Adams and other citizens protesting the impressment warrants. Before dawn on November 16, 1747, the boats of a British man-of-war anchored at Nantasket row across the bay to Boston. The gangers swoop down on the town, grab seamen and shanghai landsmen and apprentices. Ten crewmen from the *Swan* are taken.

By mid-morning, a mob gathers below the Town House in King Street led by Caleb Trane and Capable Johnson, nabob of the Hill. The crowd lets fly with stones and brickbats forcing Governor Shirley to flee to Castle William where he summons the militia. Sergeant Phineas Lynch and his men refuse to answer Shirley's call and march instead to *The Beaver* mustering with "foreign seamen, servants, Negroes and other persons of mean and vile condition." Rear-Admiral Charles Knowles is forced to release the impressed men and boys who are welcomed jubilantly back to Boston.

The following May, Emory sails *Swan* across the Atlantic to play havoc with the Spaniards. At dusk one June day, *Swan* spots a Spanish frigate cruising off the Azores. Emory orders every man on deck and makes his crew rig sham figures with their spare clothing. Lanterns illuminate these extra hands. The ship's twelve guns are supplemented by six pieces of wood. *Swan* closes on her quarry threatening a broadside if they fail to heave to. The Spaniards beg a truce until morning. Emory responds with a warning shot across their bow forcing them to strike their colors. One hundred prisoners are ferried over to the privateer, "ready to hang themselves at the sight of six wooden guns and scarce enough sailors to hoist topsails."

On July 4, 1748, *Swan* makes a graceful landing at Steele's Wharf. Major Ashley and Emory host a victory banquet at the *Bunch of Grapes*. A pint of Madeira for each guest, salmon, veal, beef, mutton, fowl and ham, everything paid for with the gold of the dons. At midnight, Old Disaster stands ready to guide Major Ashley home, respectfully offering his arm to the "Ancient and Honorable."

II 1768-1776

Nixie Fletcher didn't get her day in court. She presented herself big with child on the threshold of Reverend Lemuel, who did not doubt that Deems was responsible. Lemuel gave Nixie £50 on condition she didn't reveal the father's identity. She used the money to set herself up in business opening a shop on the Hill with the support of Capable Johnson. The "Governor" had his eye on the voluptuous mulatto but was never able to entice her into his seraglio. Nixie became the lover of Peter Coelho, a fisherman from the Portuguese islands. They had two children, Azor and Isanna, but hadn't got round to marrying when Black Pedro was lost on the Grand Banks in 1762.

Nixie took up with another seaman who went by the name of Michael Johnson. A mulatto of African and Nipmuc Indian extraction, Johnson was descended from the warrior Wapikicho, who married a Nipmuc girl four years before he was shot on Boston Common. In 1722, Wapikicho's

granddaughter formed a union with a black slave and gave birth to a son the following year. Johnson isn't the name the infant was born with. Despite a law forbidding it, the child was illegally enslaved and stayed in bondage until he was twenty-seven. In 1750 Crispus Atucks ran away from his master in Framingham and went to sea taking the name of "Michael Johnson" and dividing his time between Boston and the Bahamas. A year ago, Crispus and Nixie had their first child, **JUNIUS FLETCHER**.

Nixie Fletcher owns the Shop at the Seven Steps that local wags declare to be paved with gold. Smuggler's gold, for most who do business with the pirate's daughter make their living outwitting the King's customs officers. The wealthiest man in New England, John Hancock, considers Madame Fletcher a genius of the people helping merchant princes rob the royals and provide seed money for the tree of liberty.

MILO LYNCH, son of Phineas and Phoebe O'Connor, was thirteen when he began hauling contraband goods from landing places on the South Shore to Boston. Ten years later, he has yet to be nabbed by the revenueurs. He works by day at John Gray's ropewalk in the South End. He lives in the Manufactory House on Hamilton Place, once a hive of spinning and weaving, now a ramshackle building occupied by "outcasts of the workhouse and scum of the town." Sergeant Phineas and his wife live close by, but Milo prefers to stay with this benighted bunch who see him as a regular squire. Smuggling is an honorable profession in rum-soaked Boston, the town's distilleries drawing on men like Milo for three-quarters of the molasses used to make a million and a half gallons of liquor every year.

RICHARD 'DICK' FLETCHER, son of Nixie and Deems, is Milo Lynch's confederate in the smuggling business. Once they were enemies out to beat each other black and blue, Dick Fletcher and his gang roaring out of the North End to meet Milo and the South-Enders. Their "Pope's Day" riots turned the town into a battleground, as they fought to capture and burn each other's "Pope," a remembrance of Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot. Recently the cudgel boys made a truce turning the energy of their mobs to raising hell against Tyrants and Tories.

On a March day in 1768, Milo and Dick rendezvous at Nixie Fletcher's shop with three others, including Daniel Malcom, a well-built, handsome Irishman in his forties. Malcom is a ship's master and trader and an implacable foe of the Collector of Customs and his "waiters." They're ready at dusk, when John Hancock's *Liberty* berths at Hancock's Wharf. The tidewaiters usually work in pairs but Thomas Kirk boards alone, his partner having gone home drunk from the ancient *Beaver*, its one-hundred-and-sixty-year-old timbers lean precariously toward malodorous Mill Creek. When Kirk refuses a bribe, Malcom and his party shove him into *Liberty's* salon and nail the door shut. Over the next three hours, *Liberty's* cargo of Constantia and Madeira is off-loaded and taken to the Shop at the Seven Steps, all but twenty-five pipes that will dutifully be declared the following day.

Hancock's raiders have a scant week to celebrate their success before the fifty-gun man-of-war *Romney* anchors off Hancock's Wharf and trains its guns on *Liberty*. Tidewaiter Kirk released on a vow of silence denounces the raid and gives chief collector Harrison the proof he needs to seize Hancock's ship.

Dick Fletcher posted at the Exchange on King Street gets word of the pending action and raises the alarm. When *Romney's* boats approach Hancock Wharf, Captain Malcom, Milo and Dick and thirty sturdy fellows greet them with a barrage of stones and Hillsborough paint. *Romney's* crew fails to landing but still cut out *Liberty* and haul the ship over to the frigate.

Malcom's "banditti" rough up Collector Harrison and his son, Richard Acklom, an exquisite dandy who is inordinately proud of his flowing locks. Milo comes close to scalping the fop when he snips off Acklom's perfumed braids with a pair of rusty sheep shears. The mob beaches the *Merry Maid*, a dainty yacht hand-crafted by the Harrisons for sailing in the harbor, drags the boat up Winter Street and makes a pretty bonfire on Boston Common.

Four months later, Milo and Dick watch sullenly as the first "lobsterbacks" land on Long Wharf and march up King's Street with fixed bayonets. The Fourteenth and Twenty-Ninth Regiments are the vanguard of four thousand soldiers sent to police Boston. The Twenty-Ninth, an ill-disciplined bunch of

Scots and Irish, camp on the Common while their officers look for winter quarters. They target the Manufactory as a barracks and send Sheriff Greenleaf to evict the tenants.

Milo and Elijah Brown, a Louisbourg veteran, refuse to admit Greenleaf. The sheriff climbs into the factory's cellar and finds himself under arrest. Men of the Twenty-Ninth bivouacked across Long Acre (Tremont) rescue Greenleaf but fail to penetrate the fortress. The Manufactory's occupants hold out for seventeen days. The soldiers abandon the siege declaring the tenement too squalid for decent men to occupy. Milo heads a victory parade with old Elijah Brown carried on the shoulders of the crowd that tramps down Marlborough and Newbury Street to celebrate below an old elm ennobled as the Tree of Liberty.

EDMUND STEELE, the brother of Deems and last-born son of Reverend Eden, is a bookseller and printer with a shop on Cornhill. Edmund is a pillar of society and devout member of "Old Brick," the First Church of Boston. He has crossed the Atlantic three times to "dear England," the highlight of these visits a romp in the gardens of Hampton Court palace with King George and his courtiers.

Edmund is fifty-one and the father of three children with his first wife, Alice, who died in 1764. The next year, he married a twenty-two-year-old beauty, **SARAH MILES**, with chestnut hair and light blue eyes. Sarah's expression is gentle and charming but she blushes easily and then becomes truly ravishing. It's a look that captivates Major Everett Granger on the day he lands at Boston and sees Sarah standing in her garden. The young artillery officer breaks ranks to offer a poesy to the "loveliest flower of New England."

Edmund is no stranger to Mount Whoredom where he ventures with more discretion than Deems. One aspect of Edmund's professional life is also strictly guarded: his role as purveyor of pornography to an intimate circle of Boston bibliophiles. He supplies his customers with volumes like *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, *The Fruit-Shop* and other libertine works smuggled into the City on the Hill for the sons of old Puritans.

Captain Emory Steele, who is the same age as Edmund, now heads the trading house started by Nicholas Steele one hundred and thirty years ago. Emory is struggling to shore up the slipping fortune of Steele & Sons crippled by boycotts and taxes. Steele's Wharf is fast disappearing into the sea, its rotting timbers more a hazard than haven for shipping. At their home on Purchase Street in Fort Hill, Emory and his wife, Prudence, maintain an air of gentility amid fading trophies of Emory's privateering voyages. Their oldest son, **ROBERT STEELE**, follows his father into the trading house that has three remaining ships, one of them the old *Swan*. Fifteen-year-old **WILLIAM STEELE** is a graduate of Harvard studying medicine with Dr. Joseph Warren. There are four slaves in the Steele house, three men and a young woman, the men rented out as day laborers.

On a November day in 1768, Emory finds it pure agony to stand motionless as the artist John Copley paints his portrait. Copley's background depicts *Swan* about to depart from Steele's Wharf on a privateering voyage. When Emory's purgatory finally ends, he leaves Copley's house on Beacon Street and makes his way to Dasset Alley behind the Town House. He climbs to the first-floor printing works of Edes and Gill, publishers of the *Boston Gazette*, where members of the Long Room Club meet. The radicals coming to debate "diabolical Mischiefs of London and its representatives," include Samuel Adams, the son of Emory's Purchase Street neighbor, John Adams, John Hancock, James Otis, and the two doctors, Benjamin Church and Joseph Warren. A few artisans like the gunsmith, **JETHRO TRANE**, and Paul Revere also belong to this caucus in the middle part of town, though Trane and Revere will soon be more active in the North Caucus at the Green Dragon Tavern.

While their elders shape the course of revolution, a rising generation of liberty boys swarms the streets of Boston, a plague of pesky mosquitoes to the Redcoats. **LOYAL TRANE** is a ten-year-old terrier snapping at the heels of the "Bloody-backs!" Loyal is a pupil at "North Writing" in Bennett Street, where John Tileston holds sway over several generations of North End ruffians. "Master Johnny" has a deformed hand drawn together like a beak that he uses to rap the numb-skulled with blows that do

credit to the bill of an albatross. Loyal frequently leaves school with his large head ringing and eyes smarting, Master Johnny seen as a tyrant worse than any purple-faced Redcoat.

The Tranes live on Fleet Street where Caleb and Loyal's father, Jethro, work as gunsmiths. Destined for the same craft, Loyal does chores around the shop and delivers customers' weapons, including pieces belonging to members of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. None so honorable as Quartermaster Archibald Tiptree, whose daughter **BESS TIPTREE** is a tall, flaxen-haired thirteen-year-old who turns eyes when she promenades on Long Acre Mall. Loyal has a rival for the girl's attention in fifteen-year-old William Steele, a cadet officer in the Ancient and Honorable, who looks his sharpest on Training Day begging just one glance from Bess.

From these ranks of Steeles and Tranes, Lynches and Fletchers come the fictional protagonists of Boston's rebellion against the British. A sampling of the roles seen for them:

- At Christmas 1768, Edmund and Sarah attend a ball at Province House invited by Governor Francis Bernard, a patron of Edmund's bookshop, who prides himself on memorizing all the plays of Shakespeare. For a merry wife of Boston, no hour holds more joy than when Sarah dances with Major Granger, her cheeks aflame in that sea of scarlet. Sarah and Everett are lovers, their liaisons taking place while Edmund is engrossed with the adventures of Fanny Hill and other *filles de joye*.
- In August 1769, a banquet is held at "Liberty Hall," the open ground surrounding Liberty Tree: Milo and Dick join the crowd commemorating a riot four years earlier, when an effigy of Stamp-master Oliver was hung, along with a jackboot representing colonial secretary, Earl of Bute. On this August day, the mob roams Boston taunting soldiers and picketing houses of Tory supporters, few more despised than John Mein, publisher of the *Chronicle*. Samuel Adams intervenes personally to stop the patriots from burning Mein's printing works. Two months later, Milo and Dick lead a gang of waterfront bullies who stalk Mein on King Street. Mein and a friend flee to the main guard near the Town House. The infuriated mob pounces on George Gailer, a seaman from the *Liberty* used as a revenue cutter after its confiscation. Gailer is stripped naked and daubed with tar and feathers.

- Sarah Steele goes secretly to see Nixie Fletcher at the Shop at the Seven Steps. Pregnant with her lover's child, Sarah asks Nixie help in getting an abortion. Madame Fletcher sends her to Natick, where a half-breed midwife called Cora Petit, a descendant of Jacques Petit, attends her. Cora is one of only thirty-seven surviving Indians at the former Praying Town.
- In February 1770, a crowd of howlers and brawlers gathers outside the North End shop of Theophilus Lillie, where they erecting a sign declaring Lillie to be an IMPORTER OF ENGLISH GOODS. Lillie's neighbor, Ebenezer Richardson, a customs official is "a detestable person, an adulterer, an incestuous fornicator and perjurer," according to Samuel Adams. Richardson attempts to tear down the sign outside Lillie's shop. Loyal Trane is a leader of the attack on Richardson pelting the "damn son of a bitch" with stones and eggs and driving him back to his house. Flanking Loyal are Azor Fletcher and his sister, Isanna, a cheeky ten-year-old doted on by Madame Fletcher. Richardson loads a musket with pea-sized swanshot and threatens the rowdy children from an upper window. The boys and girls derisively challenge him to fire. Richardson pulls the trigger. Loyal is peppered in the shoulder. Another eleven-year-old Christopher Seider takes a blast of slugs in his abdomen. Attended by Joseph Warren and his assistant, William Steele, Seider dies at nine that night. The Long Room Club orchestrates a spectacular funeral with four hundred schoolboys in pairs preceding Seider's bier through the snowy streets. Six youths carry the coffin followed by two thousand mourners. Thirty chariots and chaises close the procession which covers five-eighths of a mile from Liberty Tree to the Town House.
- Milo is at Gray's ropewalk when a soldier of the Twenty-Ninth comes looking for part-time work. "Go clean my shithouse," Milo offers. The soldier takes a swing at him and is knocked to the ground. He returns with forty men who battle the rope-makers around the tar kettle getting the worst of it and being forced to flee back to barracks. The following day, Milo and two others armed with "batts" tangle with a trio of soldiers leaving one grenadier with a fractured skull. By Sunday, March 4, as church bells ring out over Boston, a state of undeclared war exists between the patriots and the Redcoats.

- The events of March 5, 1770 unfold with Milo and his cudgel boys roaming the streets and spoiling for a fight. At *The Beaver*, Crispus Attucks and Dick Fletcher are fueling themselves with rum and flip, when the bells of Old Brick ring out. The alarm is confirmed by cries of “Fire!” Simultaneously, a second cry is raised about Redcoats preparing to butcher innocent citizens in King Street. Attucks and Dick leave *The Beaver* with twenty men, pausing briefly in Dock Square to listen to a tall man in a white wig and red cloak. – It’s Emory Steele sent by the Long Room Club to prevent mischief that could precipitate a bloodbath. – Attucks and Dick ignore Emory’s call for calm and pass on to King Street where a mob is harassing the main guard. The first shots ring out and two bullets plough into Attucks’s chest. Soldiers load and fire at will. Ten more lie dead or wounded in the snow. Crispus Attucks is carried to Nixie Fletcher’s home on the Hill, where the runaway slave lies in state, the first hero of the American Revolution.

- In the “Quiet Years” from 1770 to 1773, Sarah Steele takes a string of lovers after her affair with Everett Granger ends. She riding with a brevet-colonel of Dragoons in the Milton Hunt. She straddles a royal comptroller below the cupola of Province House. “The slut Sarah Steele” sleeps her way into the highest British circles and becomes a confidante of General Gage’s American-born wife, Margaret Kemble. Sarah is one of the most trusted and resourceful spies in the secret service organized by Paul Revere. Nixie Fletcher uses all her genius as contrabandist to outwit the British traps set for her and send Sarah’s reports to the revolutionaries.

- In December 1773, Loyal Trane holds a lantern for his father, Jethro, and others in the home of printer Benjamin Edes, where they disguise themselves as Mohawk Indians. The rally in Old South closes with Samuel Adams’s famous declaration: “This meeting can do nothing more to save the country.” Jethro and his cohorts give a loud war whoop. Young William Steele, his face blackened with soot and streaked with red ochre, his head adorned with turkey feathers, marches shoulder to shoulder with Milo Lynch and his mates from The Manufactory. “To Boston Harbor! A tea-pot tonight!”

- In May 1774, Emory moves *Swan* to Marblehead in advance of the blockade of Boston harbor. He goes back to sea as a privateer and *Swan* briefly relives her glory days in the Atlantic. A British man-of-war puts an end to the old ship. Emory is captured and transported to England where he is thrown into the notorious Forton Prison. He makes a daring escape aided by **JOSEPH STEELE** of the Clerkenwell Steeles, for generations the Boston family's London agents.
- Madame Fletcher is busy despite the throttlehold on Boston's commerce, Tories and Whigs climbing the seven steps to her shop, one party looking for ways to smuggle items into town, the other seeking to move their possessions to safe houses in the countryside. Milo and Dick intrepidly facilitate this traffic by land and sea. In winter 1774, the caucus of the Green Dragon Tavern enlists the pair for a perilous mission to help deserters escape the peninsula and go over to the army of farmers. On April 19, 1775, Milo and Dick are returning after releasing three "caged birds" when they find themselves in the thick of the action at Lexington. They join one of the guerilla bands that make Lord Percy dance all the way back to Boston.
- When Paul Revere and William Dawes set out on their famous rides, a third messenger leaves Joseph Warren's Hanover Street surgery. William Steele carries a forged pass authorizing him to attend a patient in Braintree crossing the Neck and riding beyond Blue Hills to alert towns on the south. By nightfall William returns to Boston in time to meet the first boatloads of British wounded ferried over from Charlestown. When Warren quits Boston, William leaves with him and serves as medic with the Continental army forming at Cambridge. Two months later at the Battle of Bunker Hill, William sees his beloved mentor shot dead.
- In winter 1775, as rebels lay siege to Boston. Dick Fletcher makes frequent clandestine trips across Back Bay mudflats to bring supplies to Nixie. He is finally caught and incarcerated on a prison ship in the harbor. Dick gets off lightly, for his captors get no inkling that he's been carrying Sarah Steele's messages to George Washington. Sarah moves from the bedroom to the boards in Faneuil Hall, where she plays a lady of quality in *The Blockade of Boston*, a farce from the pen of General John

Burgoyne. The Redcoats are seen polluting the City on the Hill with such vulgar follies. They turn Old South into a riding stable and cart off a luxurious pew to make a sty for General Burgoyne's prized pig, "Sam Adams." All to the delight of Edmund Steele who strolls on the Mall with Lord Percy and other gentlemen, as a regimental band serenades them with a mocking medley of "Yankee Doodle."

- That terrible winter an old man and a boy make an incredible journey, five hundred miles from Boston to Ticonderoga to fetch the guns captured from the British by Ethan Allen. The cannon are loaded onto forty-two sleds drawn by eighty yoke of oxen and hauled six weeks through snows and blizzards. At the beginning of March 1776, twelve hundred men fortify a pair of hills overlooking Boston harbor within half a mile of British fortifications on the Neck. British twenty-four pounders light up the night sending shells hurtling toward the hills. By dawn the guns dragged from Ticonderoga are in position on Dorchester Heights. The British unleash a furious cannonade in old Caleb Trane is killed. The officer in command passes the lintstock to the veteran's grandson. "Fire, Loyal!" he orders. "Fire!" The lad has tears in his eyes as he lights the fuse and lets the cannon roar its challenge to Province House.

On March 17, 1776, Loyal Trane is with the first liberty boys to enter Boston. He watches from Beacon Hill as seventy-eight British warships and transports weigh anchor and head out of the great bay.

Book Three

LONG WHARF

I 1790-1803

BENJAMIN STEELE and his classmates from Latin School gather at the foot of State Street cheering the captain and crew of *Columbia*, the first American ship to girdle the globe. Nothing thrills Ben more than the sight of Attoo from “Owyhee.” The young Hawaiian’s scarlet feather cloak is set with golden suns, his head crowned with a dazzling feather helmet. Attoo moves like a living flame walking arm in arm with Captain Robert Gray to the State House steps where Governor Hancock greets them, His Excellency resplendent in Saville Row’s finery.

Ben and his mates vow to end their dreary days on Old Latin’s benches. Ship’s boys they’ll be sailing the oceans to Owyhee and the China Sea! “*Oyes! Oyes! Oyes!*” Oysters! What better way to launch their new careers than a feast at Holbrook’s mart! Oysters and porter flow like a river on this banner day in Boston. Come evening and a ten year old admiral is hard put to plot a straight course from Town Dock down Washington Street and home. It’s Ben’s good fortune that his parents are celebrating with Captain Gray and he can turn in to repair his wits for the terrors of Latin’s Master Apthorp Gould. “Sweeney” has been known to whip every boy in his school, one after the other, laying on each stripe with a ditty: “*If you’ll be good, I’ll thank you; if not, I’ll spank you.*”

Ben’s parents, Dr. William Steele and his wife Bess Tiptree, the quartermaster’s daughter, live with the widowed Emory Steele in Purchase Street. Eighty-year-old Emory and his nephew Robert control the struggling Steele & Sons. The decayed Steele Wharf has been sold and filled in for land use.

The business is now centered on a warehouse at Long Wharf with one brig *Prudence* and a mosquito fleet of fifty-ton coastal vessels.

The year 1792 sees Boston split over a new band of heretics, as unsettling as the great sinners of the past. Sarah Steele is at the center of a storm that breaks over the City on the Hill, her salon a gathering place for “foreign agitators who put modesty and every kindred virtue to the blush!”

Sarah is the richest woman in Boston. Bibliophile Edmund died six years after being swept out of Boston with the Loyalists in 1776 leaving his entire estate to his widow. Sarah quadrupled her fortune with shrewd gambles in trading voyages. In 1783, for example, she invested in a ship sent to the Falkland Islands, where the crew collected thirteen thousand sealskins. New York dealers offered fifty cents a pelt. Sarah turned them down and ordered the ship to sail around the Cape of Good Hope to Hong Kong where Chinese merchants shelled out \$5 a piece.

The storm around Sarah has its origin in her experience with General Burgoyne’s *Blockade of Boston*. Governor Hancock is happy to strut like a peacock on his own stage but adamantly refuses to consider a petition to open a theatre. The friends of the drama meet at Sarah’s house and boldly take matters into their own hands. A committee is formed and funds collected for Boston’s first temple of culture in a renovated stable on Board Alley (Hawley Street.)

Madame Steele’s aide-de-camp in this battle is a rough diamond in her circle of genius and eloquence: Lieutenant-Colonel Loyal Trane fought against the Redcoats from Saratoga to Yorktown and is just as ready to combat the Bluestockings of Boston. When the Continental Army disbanded, Loyal returned to Boston where his father Jethro and three siblings are gunsmiths. Loyal is no craftsman but does a good business selling pieces from the Trane works. He belongs to a land syndicate that owns a sizable part of Mount Whoredom re-christened “Mount Vernon.” One of Loyal’s close friends is the young architect, Charles Bulfinch, who is also a devotee of theater and agitator for its freedom.

Loyal is thirty-four and unmarried though it's common knowledge that Madame Steele and Colonel Trane are lovers. The Bluestockings point to their affair as a glaring example of immorality and impiety promoted by vulgar theatricals.

The New Exhibition Room opens on August 10, 1792 presenting a ballet called *The Bird Catcher* that features a *minuet de la cour* and *gavotte*. Six weeks later the company offers a series of *Moral Lectures*, in really forbidden works of Shakespeare in disguise. By late November, the *Tragical History of the Merchant of London* is in rehearsal with actors coming from Drury Lane to mud-bound Board Alley. The theater's enemies counter-attack in the *Chronicle* indignant that "foreigners should palm themselves on a republican people with tales of love between My Lord and Lady in this land of liberty and equality."

On December 5, as Act One of *The Tragical History* ends, Sheriff Jerry Allen serves a warrant closing the New Exhibition Room and arresting its manager. The audience riots, tears down the state's coat of arms and tramples a portrait of Governor Hancock. Loyal Trane calms the mob but on the next day they assemble in force at Faneuil Hall to support manager Harper. When his case is dismissed on a technicality, Sarah sponsors a victory dinner at Julien's Restorator to fortify Mr. Harper and his company. Within the year, Governor Hancock makes his final exit and the law becomes a dead letter until its repeal. Sarah and her circle establish a stock company to erect and operate the Boston Theater on Federal Street, "a triumph of taste and liberal feeling over bigotry and prejudice," which opens its doors in February 1794.

Loyal and Charles Bulfinch risk everything in a "tontine" building scheme that seeks subscribers for sixteen elegant brick homes on Franklin Street modeled after the row houses of Bath, England. The Tontine Crescent is completed but fails to find enough backers bankrupting Bulfinch and almost ruining Loyal. Notwithstanding, the Crescent becomes the most desirable address in town, Sarah occupying Number Eleven, a magnet for fashionable Boston.

Ben is fourteen when he sails for Europe with his father. Doctor William is in poor health and believes the voyage will be beneficial. Ben attended Latin School until he was thirteen, with the idea that he would go on to Harvard like William. He'd made several coastwise voyages with the mosquito fleet, a life he far preferred. After one semester at college, Ben entered the counting-room on Long Wharf. Six months later, he became ship's clerk aboard *Prudence*.

The brig sails first to Lisbon to trade fish and rum and ship a cargo of rice and flour for Le Havre. They sell this at a profit of two hundred percent but to get payment have to go to Paris. At the Place de la Révolution on July 28, 1794, they witness the bloody efficiency of *Le Guillotine* with sixteen beheadings in twelve minutes, including the execution of Robespierre.

Ben and William are delayed at Paris for three months letting *Prudence* sail without them to the Baltic port of Kronstadt opposite St. Petersburg. Boston ship-owners have been trading with the Russians for a decade voyaging as neutrals to avoid harassment by French or British cruisers. Ben and his father travel overland through Germany stopping at Baden spa en route to Hamburg where they take a ship to Kronstadt.

The onset of winter strands *Prudence* until spring. Ben revels in the chance to explore the capital of Catherine the Great, befriending fifteen-year-old Alexis Salikov and his sister, Eugenia, from a landed family whose estates he visits. The wretched condition of hundreds of serfs makes a deep impression on the young American fresh from the Terror in Paris. The Salikovs view the French madness with horror but with half a million Russian nobles are confident their class will endure. The Salikovs have only the barest notion of America, the visiting Bostonians as exotic as their own remote Kazakhs and other Tartars.

When William falls gravely ill, the Salikovs open their doors to him and his son. In February 1795, William dies at St. Petersburg. One week later, Silas Cummings, captain of *Prudence* succumbs to pneumonia. It's up to Ben to organize the ship's crew and ready the vessel for her return voyage. He's barely fifteen but proves himself a shrewd trader haggling for a cargo of hemp, iron and duck that will

clear \$26,000 for the ship's investors. When the Baltic ice breaks, *Prudence* is first to get away. Her young master stands alone at the taffrail wearing his father's sable-lined silk greatcoat and suddenly much older.

In August 1799, four years after he brings *Prudence* home, Ben prepares for a voyage to the other side of the world. A make or break venture for Steele & Sons, Robert Steele entrusts the nineteen-year-old with command of a new ship and Sarah who is the single biggest investor in the voyage gives her nephew her total blessing.

Ben attends a farewell dinner at Tontine Crescent, a favorite who lights up the eye of his discerning hostess. Taller than average, Ben has pitch black hair, a square determined brow, and clear blue eyes whose straight look bespeaks loyalty and indomitable energy. There's a slight roguishness that doesn't go unnoticed by a worldly aunt no stranger to merry mischief.

Madame Steele's banker, Gladwell Somersby, and his daughter are at the table. Julia Somersby is a tall, slender eighteen-year-old with a winning smile, her hostess seeing an excellent match for a bold young mariner. Sarah wishes Ben Godspeed on his long voyage counseling him to do what's right and proper for a Boston man: "Come back and marry a Boston girl!"

Ben's voyage lasts from August 1799 to May 1802 and is typical of the adventures of captains who made the name of "Boston" synonymous with America's China trade. The eighty foot *Lady Sarah* is two-hundred-and-twenty tons, carrying a crew of thirty-two and armed with ten carriage guns and eight swivels.

- The first leg of the voyage lies south to Cape Horn which they double the following February in the company of a Spanish brigantine, *San Juan Baptista*. Battered by gales along the South American coast, the two ships are separated, *Lady Sarah* driven to seek shelter under the guns of Valparaiso. Half the crew is thrown into jail on trumped-up smuggling charges. Ben pretends to abandon

his *contrabandistas* to their fate, takes *Lady Sarah* out to sea, and intercepts *San Juan Baptista*. He refuses to release the Spaniard until his men are freed, a demand the dons have no choice but to accept.

- In May 1800, two hundred and sixty days out of Boston, *Lady Sarah* arrives on “the Coast,” as New England captains call the rocky Northwest where they trade for sea-otter skins. At Nootka Sound, the ship is surrounded by a flotilla of dugouts led by Mist Jumper, a bloodthirsty Chinook female who has already killed a score of traders. *Lady Sarah*’s men are ready for the murderess, the ship’s guns going into action with a blast of grape and canister. When they stand in to the next village, the Indians come out waving green boughs as a peace sign and offering otter-skins in propitiation. The barter for furs takes ten months to spring 1801, with three thousand pelts collected, each worth fifty to seventy dollars in Canton.

- The second leg of the voyage takes them to “the Islands,” where the young captain and his crew share the joys of other voyagers: “*We feasted on hogs and pineapple and every night paired off with Hawaiian girls who we found quite amorous.*” Handsome Ben doesn’t forget his aunt’s advice but this is paradise and Lelani, a lithe princess who enchants him. *Lady Sarah* lies at Hawaii for six weeks taking on an additional cargo of sandalwood before their weigh anchor. They also carry five stowaways including Lelani, and turn back to land them amid a flood of tears and promises. Ben finds a spray of purple orchids in his cabin kept until long after the last bloom has faded.

- In July 1801, *Lady Sarah* enters the China Sea sailing to Macao where they take aboard a Chinese pilot to guide the ship to the Tiger’s Mouth and into the Canton River. They pass the Boca and anchor at Whampoa Reach twelve miles below Canton, nearest point that ships of the *Fan-Kwaes*, foreign devils, can approach the walled city. The cargo of furs and sandalwood is transferred to the *hong* of Wu-Ping Chien, also known as Houqua II. Houqua’s father had earned the displeasure of the Celestial Empire for a minor offence and was demoted to the most disreputable office in the land – the work of negotiating with foreign devils. Instead of disgust, father and son welcomed trade with the *Fan-Kwaes* and are on their way to becoming the richest men in China, if not the entire world. Ben strikes a chord

with Wu-Ping Chien, who asks him to undertake a side voyage for the Houquas' factory and fetch a precious shipment from Malacca on the Malay Peninsula.

- Ben sails through the South China Sea to the centuries-old spice port now occupied by the British. The Houquas have dealings with Malacca's Chinese traders who deliver gold and opium to *Lady Sarah*. Aldwell Taylor, the English resident, is suspicious of the American interloper, but his attempts to stop the shipment come to nothing. *Lady Sarah* heads back to Canton at the onset of the winter monsoon, battling terrific headwinds and currents on a five hundred mile run off the coast of Borneo. They reach the Tiger's Mouth safely, only to be attacked by a pirate junk in the Canton River. The brigands hurl sulfurous hand grenades on their deck and make three attempts to board. *Lady Sarah*. Ben outguns and outruns the pirates reaching Whampoa, where he skillfully maneuvers his ship within reach of a Chinese battery. The cannons open fire sinking the junk and capturing the leader, Moonsatee. He is put to death with the torture of a thousand cuts.

- The Houquas ask Ben to stay on as their personal assistant. He is duty bound to return to Boston but gratefully accepts a personal bonus of \$5,000 from Wu-Ping Chien. In November *Lady Sarah* begins the six-month voyage back to America through the Sunda Straits to Ile de France in the Indian Ocean; around the tempestuous Cape of Good Hope and across the Atlantic to St. Helena, where they square away for Massachusetts Bay. On May 15, 1802, *Lady Sarah's* landfall is greeted by a thirteen-gun salute from Castle Island. Captain Ben Steele, now all of twenty-one, ties up at Long Wharf after logging 39,760 miles since setting out from Boston 30 months ago. His voyage realizes a profit of \$120,000 for Steele & Sons and their investors.

At Tontine Crescent, Ben is saddened to find Sarah grievously ill. She lingers until September dying with her lover and her nephew at her bedside. She leaves the bulk of her fortune to Ben and a legacy to Loyal Trane.

The 1803 theater season brings Miss Adaline Woolcott from Theater Royal, Covent Garden to offer “A Cure for the Heart Ache,” which does wonders for a grieving colonel. Loyal and Adaline marry, the actress continuing to work her cure on stage and in private, a prolific player who gives the colonel seven sons and three daughters. All their children are strictly forbidden to go on stage.

By 1806, Boston’s merchants enjoy unprecedented prosperity, few more successful than Steele & Sons. The trading house owns seven ships and carries a major share of the New England-Canton trade. On July 4, as Bostonians turn out on the Common to celebrate the third decade of American independence, Ben surrenders his own freedom to marry Julia Somersby. They choose a spot on the western slope of Beacon Hill for their home, just a stone’s throw from the spring where Reverend William Blaxton danced with his forest nymph.

Book Four

JACOB'S LADDER

I 1847-1856

On Easter Saturday morning, Lord Lucan's Crowbar Brigade works the countryside around Skibbereen, west County Cork. Delmo Roux, a bastard of French-Irish ancestry, leads the wreckers. Red Delmo takes his pay from the Marquis of Scull engaged to pry the horde of peasants from his lordship's estates. Tenants like the Lynches of Lambskill who for three generations have rented land from the nobleman's family, living and dying in the same damp and filthy mud-floored cottage.

None of these Lynches has ever seen the marquis, who makes his home in Bath, England, and at Leghorn, Italy. Only once in his lifetime has the landowner spent a few days in County Cork coming to assess what extra fees he can squeeze from his tenants, a visit in response to reports of a bumper crop of rye and potatoes. The marquis doubled the rents and hurried back to Bath where he ordered a new carriage and a hunter from the same stables supplying Queen Victoria's horses.

This was before *Ukrosh*, the Great Hunger that is killing Ireland. On this Easter Saturday morning, the shadow of death lies over the Lynch family. There were eight Lynches, mother and father, four daughters and two sons before the famine. Now three remain: Fiona Lynch, the mother, the child **NELLIE LYNCH**, eight, and her brother, **FARRELL LYNCH**, nineteen years old. Fiona has famine fever and is close to the end. Nellie is thin and deathly pale, "a paleness not of a common sickness but as

if she'd been thawed out of ice, in which she'd been embedded until her blood had turned to water."

Since the beginning of the year, Farrell has had two week's relief work at eight pennies a day. Big-boned and broad-shouldered, he is gaunt and exhausted from foraging for a few miserable scraps.

There are twenty cottages on Lambskill's single street. Red Delmo intending to tumble every one before day's end. Seventeen houses stand empty, their tenants gone forever. At two occupied cottages, inhabitants obediently carry their possessions outside and watch helplessly as their hovels are demolished.

When the wreckers reach the Lynch house, Farrell blocks the doorway: "My mother is dying in her bed. For love of God, let my mama be until I can fetch the priest."

"Out with the baggage!" roars Delmo Roux.

The Crowbar Brigade shoves Farrell aside and carries the stricken woman's bedstead out of the cottage. Nellie cries with fear and horror clutching the rags that cover her half-naked mother.

Fiona Lynch dies in the ruins of Lambskill. Farrell buries his mother and makes a shelter for Nellie bidding her remain there until he returns.

That night Farrell bludgeons Delmo Roux to death. He fetches Nellie and flees Skibbereen taking back roads to the city of Cork. He's near collapse, carrying little Nell on his back, when a coach draws up and its occupant invites the pair to ride with him to the port.

Their benefactor is sixty-seven-year-old Ben Steele of Boston who has come with the *Massachusetts*, one of a hundred ships crossing the Atlantic in 1847 to bring relief to Ireland. At Cork, Ben gives the pair a few shillings for food, not expecting to see them again. When the *Massachusetts* sails twenty stowaways are flushed from the hold. Farrell and Nellie Lynch are in the crowd led to the gun-deck, where they stay for the rest of the voyage. They reach Boston on April 10, 1847, a single day that sees one thousand Irish migrants stream ashore. Over the year thirty-seven thousand refugees arrive in the city, where the nearby ruins of Ursuline Convent stand as stark reminder of smoldering prejudices against Catholics.

Farrell and Nellie live on the streets for a month before a family from Lambskill lets them move in with them. There are fifteen adults and children jammed into a pesthole on Half Moon Place between Broad Street and Fort Hill. To reach their tottering rookery, they climb a battered wooden stairway, “Jacob’s Ladder,” that leads up to Humphrey Place, whose denizens hold themselves a rung above the starvelings below.

The descendents of Milo Lynch live on the heights of Humphrey Place. Milo’s son, **TITUS LYNCH**, heads a family that continues to exist on the edge of the law keeping the “Stars,” the police, busy at various grogeries and dancing halls they own. The constables frequently descend on Titus’s shanties and cellars and make wholesale arrests for unlicensed fiddling, dancing, and other “depravities.”

Titus avoids prison thanks to the skill of his lawyer, **ASA TRANE**, a son of Loyal and Adaline. Titus is more than a client to Asa, for among many properties bought by Colonel Trane were six mansions in Fort Hill, now rotting piles inhabited by immigrants. Every week Titus sends his minions down Jacob’s Ladder to collect rents due to Trane. – Asa’s uncles and nephews continue the family trade as gunsmiths at the Trane Iron Foundry in South Boston. The heavy ordnance for the siege of Vera Cruz in the Mexican War was cast here. When not making war materiel, the factory turns out machinery for New England’s textile mills.

When cholera breaks out in the Irish ghettos, city authorities set up a quarantine station on Deer Island. Desperate for work, Farrell takes a job as a laborer on the island, not a day passing without Farrell and his mates having to dig graves for victims of the pestilence. Three-quarters of seven hundred fatalities are Irish, their remains mingled with the bones of Praying Indians interned on Deer Island two centuries ago.

Farrell returns to fetid Broad Street every night dreading that he’ll find Nellie sick with the disease. She stays healthy thanks to the concern of **MARCY LYNCH**, the sixteen-year-old daughter of Titus. The girls meet when Nellie races up Jacob’s Ladder to escape Mother Sullivan, an old hex of Half

Moon Place said to have been around when witches blackened New England's skies. Nellie becomes a regular visitor at the home of Titus and **DORCAS**, who feed and clothe their impoverished namesake. Farrell, too, gets a warm welcome from Marcy, who falls for the big Irishman.

Farrell becomes a jack-of-all-trades in Titus's dance halls. Over six feet tall, he has a pair of fists large as tea kettles that he uses with equal effect in wielding a pickaxe or pounding the head of a troublemaker. As one of Titus' rent-collectors, Farrell extracts payments as ruthlessly as the Crowbar Brigades who serve the lords of Ireland.

Farrell's work brings him into contact with Dick Fletcher's son, **JASON FLETCHER**, the best caterer in Boston, who runs "Jason's" on Congress Street. Jason's son, **BILLY FLETCHER**, is the same age as Nellie, a handsome young man who is top of his class at the segregated Smith School in the African Meeting House. Their relative, Reverend **GIDEON FLETCHER**, grandson of Nixie Fletcher and Crispus Attucks, is a Baptist minister associated with the abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Theodore Parker. When the Fugitive Slave Act comes into force in 1850, Reverend Fletcher is with other African-Americans who advocate armed resistance to southern slave-catchers hunting runaways in Boston.

Farrell marches to the drumbeat of *The Pilot*, mouthpiece of Boston's Irish community, which condemns the abolitionists as an "imbecile faction of radical insurrectionists."

In February 1851, Farrell's work as an enforcer gets the attention of fellow Irishman, U.S. marshal Patrick Riley who appoints him as special deputy assisting in fugitive slave arrests.

John Caphart, a veteran slavecatcher from Virginia, comes to Boston seeking a warrant for a runaway, Shadrack Minkins. Farrell and six deputies surround Cornhill Coffee House where Minkins works as a waiter. The runaway is frog-marched out of the coffee shop over to the Court House.

Reverend Gideon Fletcher and members of Boston's Vigilance Committee converge on the court building. Within the hour a hearing begins with half a dozen abolitionist lawyers including young Richard Henry Dana: Minkins enjoys no civil liberties or protection, all that's required is to confirm his

identity and authenticate the slavecatcher's documents, and he can be handed over. Since it's a Saturday afternoon, the hearing is adjourned to the following Tuesday, Minkins to be confined in the Court House.

Riley and Farrell are clearing the courtroom, when protestors storm the hallways and seize Minkins, sweeping him through the corridors to freedom. By nightfall, Minkins is across the Charles on his way to Concord, first leg of his flight to Montreal.

Over the next two months, Reverend Fletcher and the Vigilance Committee help dozens of fugitives leave Boston. Most aren't actively sought as runaways but flee a city rife with rumors about the dreaded Caphart and other slave hunters.

In April 1851, Farrell and other officers seize Thomas Sims, a twenty-three-year-old Georgia slave, following a desperate struggle on Richmond Street (North.) Unlike Minkins, Sims is a drinker and patron of the Ann Street bordellos and gets no sympathy from Boston's citizens. He is judged a "chattel" and handed over to his owner's agents. Three hundred men armed with cutlasses form a hollow square around the captive and march him from the Court House to Long Wharf, where he is placed aboard the brig *Acorn*. Farrell sails with the ten-man escort taking Sims to Savannah, where they're feted on their arrival. Sims is put in Savannah jail and made to hug the widow, the whipping post, every morning for a month.

Farrell and Marcy are married in 1853 uniting the two Lynch families. One key difference between Farrell and Nellie and the four generations descended from Malachy the Water Rat lies in their religion. Titus and his family are Episcopalians, a faith adopted by his great-grandfather when Catholicism was outlawed. Farrell and Marcy take their vows in one of eight Catholic churches in Boston which now has 35,000 registered Catholics.

Farrell and Marcy take rooms above The Honey-Pot in Hanover Street, one of Titus's dance halls. Nellie lives with the couple. The fifteen year old is small and slender, with raven hair down to her

waist and deep-set green eyes. Her entire schooling consists of eighteen months with the Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Mary's in the North End but she is sharp-witted and considered a good find by her employer.

Six mornings a week, Nellie rises at 4.30 a.m. and walks through the dark streets to the Beacon Hill mansion of Captain Benjamin Steele. A widower since 1846, Ben shares the house he built on Beacon Street opposite the Common with his son, **CYRUS STEELE**, and his family. Cyrus's wife, **CECILIA**, is the daughter of Transcendentalists from Brooke Farm in West Roxbury, a colony of poet farmers and philosophers propagating a New Age of Reason. Founded at the former Praying Town of Punkapoag, poor harvests and shaky premises spelled doom for the experiment that collapsed in 1846. Cecilia's parents have found a new calling as Free-Soilers in Kansas joining other Boston abolitionists to do battle against Missouri slavers and border hellions.

Nellie is one of four servants. Mary, the cook, is also Irish and in her forties; Beatrice from Vermont is in her twenties; Cincinnati, a former Louisiana slave, is sixty. The servants enjoy the benign regime of Cecilia who brings the lofty notions of Brooke Farm to the scullery with revolutionary divisions of labor and meditations on Almighty Goodness and Wisdom. Captain Ben still goes down to the Long Wharf every day, often brought to the brink of mutiny when he comes to his breakfast table and finds it totally bare. His servants are out with Cecilia delivering Easter baskets to the poor or on a similar high-minded ramble.

There are seven Steele children, the oldest the gentle-mannered **OLIVER STEELE**, who is seventeen and attends Harvard and plans to be a lawyer. Oliver's best friend is Billy Fletcher, the 15-year-old son of caterer Jason, who is frequently called to prepare a feast at the Steele mansion. The militant abolitionist Reverend Gideon Fletcher is also a regular guest.

Nellie encounters many a wondrous visitor at the house on Beacon Street but the one that delights her most is Billy Fletcher. He has the same twinkle in his eye as his great-grandma, the pirate's daughter who loved a wayward Puritan.

Farrell leads a new class of cudgel boy, the “Shoulder-Hitters,” all Irish and filled with hatred toward Know-Nothings like Angel Gabriel who goes around Boston tooting his horn as clarion call to anti-Papists and zealots in the Liberty Guard combating Rome, Rum and Robbery. Anti-immigrant Know-Nothings demand a twenty-one year residency to earn the vote. A Nunnery Committee probes Catholic schools. Catholic boys in public schools are caned for refusing to recite the Commandments. Irish militia companies are threatened with extinction.

Violence between Irish and Yankee spills over into the racial arena. Shoulder-Hitters are opposed to the betterment of blacks, slave or free, at the expense of the hungry sons of Ireland. Farrell’s mob is involved in the last and most notorious fugitive slave case in June 1854, when a judge orders Anthony Burns sent back to Virginia. Farrell marches with Irish gunners of the Columbian Artillery escorting the prisoner to a ship at T Wharf. As the bells of Boston’s churches toll for the death of liberty, Farrell, former prizefighter Bruiser Sullivan, and the Chilean Luigi Varelli, “Spanish Lew,” celebrate Burns’s departure at Adams House tavern. Spanish Lew spots Richard Henry Dana, one of Burns’ lawyers, walking down Washington Street. “Let him have it, boys!” shouts Varelli. Bruiser Sullivan smashes Dana’s head with a billy club. Farrell’s too busy finishing his drink, which is just as well for Bruiser gets two years in Leverett Street jail for the beating. No one dares finger Spanish Lew, crime boss of the North End.

A week after the Burns episode, Farrell is crossing Boston Common when he comes upon Nellie sitting beside Frog Pond with Billy Fletcher. Bystanders stop Farrell from thrashing the young black, but he drags his sister away and forbids her to return to the Steeles.

Nellie leaves Boston and takes a job in a Lowell mill. Once marvels of progressive industry, workers now complain of slave labor in twenty-year old factories choked with cotton dust. In spring 1865 Nellie leaves Lowell for Nahant where she is a chambermaid in Nahant House. “Fat old merchants in white hats and fussy old maids and dowagers” find the summer resort “sublime.” Less sublime for servants like Nellie who work twelve-hour shifts running and fetching for the very proper Bostonians.

On a day in September 1856, a sudden storm churns up the waters and batters the cliffs of Nahant, Nellie watching awe-struck as a fishing smack is driven toward the rocks. Impulsively she dashes down to the shore just as the struggle lost and the *Maid of Drogheda* swept to its doom. A flax-haired survivor is tossed ashore and lands at the feet of green-eyed Nellie.

“Aye, aye, ’tis an angel I see,” cries the schoonerman. “’Tis over, my lad, ’tis over,” he says and falls back in a swoon.

His name is **ROARK O’BRIEN** and he’s from Fingal in Dublin County. He is a refugee of the Great Hunger but entirely different from the habitants of the Broad Street rookeries. O’Brien and his fellow Fingalians came to Boston in the late 1840s and in less than a decade outstripped their Yankee rivals making money like shells. The Fingalian fishermen learnt their trade in the Irish seas where for a hundred years before migrating to Boston, they used the hook-studded trawl line. The “long line” proved a far handier way of fishing than the old Yankee’s one man, one line, and one hook. In 1851, there was one Irish-owned fishing boat among sixty smacks in Boston. A year later there were thirteen boats and by 1854, County Dubliners owned most offshore schooners in the Boston fishing fleet.

Roark O’Brien sailed the *Maid of Drogheda* across the Atlantic to the New World. The ship was thirty-five years old and decrepit, but she served him well until she broke her back on the rocks at Nahant. Within a year, the young skipper has a new trawler on the stocks at Scituate, a handsome vessel of fifty-five feet to fish the Georges Bank. When the schooner goes down the slip, she carries the name *Nellie*. A tribute to the angel Roark O’Brien met at Nahant and took as his wife.

II 1860-1872

Farrell Lynch and the Shoulder-Hitters pack Tremont Temple, when abolitionists pay homage to John Brown hanged for his raid on Harper’s Ferry. Farrell’s ruffians provide muscle for the Broadcloth

Mob led by Yankee bankers and factory owners battered by the Panic of 1857 and desperate to keep slave cotton flowing to their mills.

Oliver Steele and Billy Fletcher are in the brawl that spills out onto Tremont Street. They hold back the attackers and allow Reverend Gideon Fletcher and the anti-slavery leaders to retreat to Joy Street Baptist Church, where Frederick Douglass and Wendell Phillips re-convene the meeting. “How fitting we should seek sanctuary in a black church!” declares Phillips, as a mob of a thousand shouts for firebrands to burn down the building. The police come in force and disperse the rioters.

Oliver arrives home with a bloody nose and his clothes in tatters. Cyrus Steele disapproves of his son fighting like a “gutter Irishman,” but Cecilia applauds Oliver. When not slugging it out with Shoulder-Hitters, Oliver is a model of propriety especially in the parlor of Professor Abiel Ainsworth of Cambridge, a botanist blessed with nine daughters. Young Steele causes a flutter among these butterflies, but the one that owns his heart is the beautiful Evangeline. Even as war clouds gather, Oliver and Evangeline make plans for the future, no tragic musings of a poet, only bliss in the “home of the happy.” At Christmas they attend a glittering affair at Papanti’s, Boston’s last grand ball before the sound of the guns drowns out the music.

Captain Ben Steele took his first steps during the Revolution and sees the coming storm. The sprightly eighty-year-old belongs to a group of Boston Whigs favoring a Compromise with the South. In April 1861, he travels to Charleston with Congressman William Appleton, a Beacon Street neighbor and fellow Whig who still hopes for a settlement with the secessionists. The two go to New York where they board the steamer *Nashville* and make a rough passage to Charleston. They arrive off the bar on Thursday evening, April 11, and wait for the morning tide to turn. Ben goes on deck around 4 a.m. Suddenly, there’s a flash and a roar as the shore batteries of Fort Johnson open fire, the shells arcing through the sky to blast Fort Sumter.

In Boston on April 27, a group of Irishmen of very different stamp from the Shoulder-Hitters strike a blow for the Union. Roark O’Brien and his crew go to Gray’s Wharf, where a ship from Georgia

is docked. They demand that the *Oleander's* captain strike the Confederacy's "rattlesnake" and replace the treasonous colors with the Stars and Stripes. The southerners threaten to use their guns against the crowd. Roark and his men move to board the ship. The rebel banner is taken down and flung ashore. Jubilantly, the Irish destroy the flag and parade the shreds through the streets.

Roark and Nellie, Farrell Lynch, Oliver Steele and the Fletchers are the main protagonists in the Civil War period. Some highlights of the plotlines for their inter-twined roles:

- Oliver joins the 5th Regiment of Massachusetts Voluntary Militia, the "Minute Men," who entrain for Washington on April 21, 1861. On July 20, they march to Centreville with McDowell's army. The following day the regiment is in the Battle of Bull Run and loses nine men killed, two wounded and twenty-three captured. "Such a rout I never witnessed before," reports the division commander. "There was a fine position a short distance in the rear, where I hoped to make a stand if I could rally a few companies. In this I utterly failed." The 5th is sent back to Boston and mustered out on July 31. Oliver won't speak of his terror in an inglorious flight and shows no interest in re-enlisting. Ben frets over his grandson's reluctance to return to battle, the word "coward" never on his lips but the suspicion is there.
- In April 1862, Roark O'Brien is second-in-command of the gunboat *Neponset* in the fleet of David Glasgow Farragut who has orders to seize New Orleans. The Mississippi delta is flanked by Fort Jackson on the left and Fort St. Philip on the right. A log barrier is stretched across the river, beyond which a Confederate fleet lies in wait. Roark leads a party of raiders who blast a gap between the logs. Just after midnight on the 24th, Farragut orders the dash past the forts. *Neponset* is third in the line of attackers, the gunboat's captain killed in the first salvo. The command falls to Roark who takes the *Neponset* through the curtain of fire. They take forty hits before they're out of range, only to be engaged by a dozen enemies including the ironclad *Manassas*. The plucky *Neponset* challenges the *Manassas* and takes a hammering but keeps the enemy at bay until Farragut's flagship comes in for the kill.

Under a sky blackened by smoke from two million bales of blazing cotton, New Orleans capitulates without a shot. Farragut heads north to Vicksburg leaving the *Neponset* and its new

commander Roark O'Brien behind with an occupying force under Ben Butler of Massachusetts. Butler is "The Beast" to the folk of New Orleans disdained for his blows against Southern belles. The ladies show their contempt for Yankees by pulling their skirts aside and flashing their thighs at the invaders. The cross-eyed Beast retaliates with General Order Number 28 ordering the guilty women to be punished by public proclamation as prostitutes.

- Nellie O'Brien responds to a call for ladies of Boston to hurry over to Tremont Temple with needle and thread to make bandages for the wounded. She lands among some of the grand dames Beacon Hill who don't hide their prejudice toward a little Irish biddy. Nellie angrily quits their ranks and goes to Washington where she volunteers as a nurse with the Sanitary Commission. She has no more luck in meeting the standards of chief nurse Dorothea Dix, who demands "plain-looking women over thirty, dressed in brown or black, no bows, no curls, no jewelry, and no hoops."

Nellie is about to return home when she meets Clara Barton. The forty-year-old Barton saw that while wounded soldiers were well cared for in Union hospitals, they suffered terrible agonies waiting to be transferred from the front. Nellie joins Clara in late August 1861 and reaches Bull Run as the second battle rages. "Three thousand men were brought down from the field and lain on the ground beside the train, and so back up the hill until they covered acres," Clara later recalls. Nellie is at Antietam, the bloodiest one-day battle of the Civil War, and two months later, behind the lines at Fredericksburg, Virginia. She encounters the shattered remains of the 28th Massachusetts, all Irish boys who flung themselves against Lee's entrenchments mowing whole gaps out of their ranks.

- In March 1862, Oliver becomes superintendent of freedmen on the Sea Islands off the South Carolina coast. The fall of Port Royal the previous November saw one hundred and eighty-nine plantations with ten thousand slaves abandoned. At Boston's Old South Meeting House parishioners established the Boston Education Commission for the "industrial, social, intellectual, moral and religious elevation of the Sea Islanders released from bondage." Not a few enthusiastic supporters did so in expectation of a steady supply of cotton for the New England mills.

Oliver, Cecilia and Evangeline are among fifty-three volunteers arriving in the *Atlantic* at Beaufort on March 9, 1862. “Never did a vessel bear a colony on a more noble mission, not even the *Mayflower* when she conveyed the Pilgrims to Plymouth,” says the agent who greets them. The trio goes to St. Helena Island where they occupy Clarendon, a plantation with two hundred slaves. Oliver begins the task of introducing the former bondsmen to the regimen of free labor. The two women start a school for the slaves’ children. Cecilia returns to Boston in July finding the heat unbearable and the redeemed Ethiopians “perplexing.”

Oliver soldiers on bravely but his cotton crop is only a tenth of the plantation’s ordinary output. Evangeline’s harvest is much greater, sixty pupils crowding her benches from noon to three, the forenoon left open for the children to labor in the fields. They learn the alphabet, multiplication tables and singing:

*“For none in all the world before
Were ever glad as we,
We’re free on Carolina’s shore,
We’re all at home and free!”*

Oliver is overjoyed when Billy Fletcher arrives at St. Helena in July 1863 with the first of New England’s black regiments. Billy celebrates the Fourth of July at Clarendon with Oliver and Evangeline. Two weeks later the 54th regiment marches to attack Fort Wagner on Morris Island. Billy is carried back to Beaufort, when half the enlisted men of the 54th killed or wounded below the Confederate parapet. Oliver’s vigil at the hero’s sickbed deepens the feelings of inadequacy instilled by his terror at Bull Run. There are pickets on St. Helena and sporadic alarms, but mostly life is peaceful for the “Gibeonites,” the slaves of slaves, as skeptics call them.

- In July 1863, Farrell and his Shoulder-Hitters stir up a mob in the North End: “To Cooper Street Armory, boys – to the Gunhouse! We’ll give ’em New York.” Inflamed by the New York conscription battles two thousand Boston rioters swarm Cooper Street and lay siege to the armory with bricks, stones, clubs and pistols. In the gun-house, two brass pieces are wheeled over to the entrances,

one at North Margin Street, the other at the main entrance on Cooper. When the mob attempts to break down the heavy oak doors, the order is given to fire and the cannon sweep all before them.

The insurgents fall back leaving their dead and wounded and stream down to Dock Square. Farrell and the Shoulder-Hitters are met with powder and ball just a stone's throw from the site of the Boston Massacre. Farrell stands his ground. "Don't run like cowards, boys. Give the damn Yankees hell!" He receives a bullet in the arm, another in his head, before his mates drag him to safety.

Farrell escapes arrest as a ringleader staying with friends in Charlestown until his wounds heal. His huge fists have carved out a place for him in public but his personal life is a shambles. Marcy and their sons, **JOHN** and **TERENCE**, flee to her parents when she can no longer suffer Farrell's rages. Titus Lynch banishes his son-in-law from his grog-shops and dance halls. Farrell drifts from job to job doing heavy labor alongside the "nigars." He works on the huge Back Bay project filling in the fetid tidal flats to provide six hundred acres of new land for the city. He lives in a room on Ann Street in the North End, a notorious quarter with dens of opium eaters and prostitutes. These denizens lie low when Farrell Lynch comes roaring home after downing a flood of Medford rum, swinging his fists and cursing mankind.

- In September 1863, Asa Trane makes Farrell an offer he cannot refuse. Asa's son, Tobias, has his name picked in the draft. Asa offers Farrell \$600 to serve in Tobias's place. A fortune to Farrell who accepts and signs up as a substitute, though not happy about going to war alongside Lincoln's Negro-worshippers.

Oliver Steele's name is also drawn. Exemption is easy for a plantation superintendent and Evangeline wants him to stay, but for a week he agonizes over his decision. He opts to report for duty. He marries Evangeline before he leaves for the front, Reverend Gideon Fletcher conducting the ceremony in the slave chapel at Clarendon.

- Oliver and Farrell serve with the 110,000-man Army of the Potomac under Ulysses Grant on the advance toward the Rapidan against Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. At noon on

March 5, the battle begins at Chancellorsville on a field strewn with skulls of earlier combatants. It continues for six bloody weeks fought foot by foot through the tangled thickets of the Wilderness, around the Bloody Angle of Spotsylvania and on to the hell of Cold Harbor.

Farrell is with the 28th Massachusetts who are in action on May 6 and 7 losing ninety-seven officers and men; at Po River, Bloody Angle and Spotsylvania from May 10 to 18, with one-hundred-and-twenty-five losses; and Cold Harbor on June 3, where they suffer a further blow of fifty-seven.

Oliver serves with the 11th Massachusetts, the “Boston Volunteers.” The terror of First Bull Run returns in the Wilderness but with no place to flee he stands his ground through two days and nights of blind and bloody battle. He is shot at Cold Harbor where seven thousand Union men fall in the first eight minutes. Then the two armies sit glaring at each other for three days, no litter bearers are allowed onto this Golgotha, their commanders unwilling to ask for a truce.

Farrell is unhurt but trapped among the wounded. As he crawls away on the first night, he comes upon Oliver. He saves Steele’s life carrying him off the field and taking him behind Union lines. When the litter bearers are finally sent forward, of the thousands of wounded Union soldiers only two are still alive.

At the Wilderness, Nellie and Clara face a harrowing mission: “I saw two hundred six-mule army wagons in a line, reaching far out on the Wilderness Road, every wagon crowded with wounded men, stopped, standing in the rain and mud, wrenched back and forth all night by the restless, hungry animals. Under many a wagon, a dark spot told all too plainly where some poor fellow’s life had dripped out in those dreadful hours,” said Clara.

- Oliver’s family first gets news that he is dead, before word comes that he was spotted at an abandoned farm used as a field dressing station. When a month passes with no notice from Oliver himself, Captain Ben takes his old servant, Cincinnati and makes the arduous journey south. He meets Nellie who helps Ben track down his grandson at a military hospital in City Point, Virginia.

- In 1864 at the siege of Petersburg, Farrell watches a tunnel packed with four tons of gunpowder blow up beneath Confederate lines. He blunders in The Crater with Union troops, the enemy firing mercilessly down on them. A thousand men lie dead before the survivors raise the white flag. White soldiers are allowed to surrender. “Kill the niggers!” shout the Confederates. Hundreds of black troops are bayoneted and clubbed to death. Farrell who has rarely shown anything but scorn for African-Americans is enraged by the savagery. Fighting to save a young black, he is bayoneted. He survives his wounds and is carted off to Andersonville prison. Here he languishes for the rest of the war living like an animal in a hole in the ground.

- Roark O’Brien and the *Neponset* take part in Admiral Farragut’s daring raid at Mobile, the last major Confederate port. The Union fleet consists of fourteen wooden ships and four ironclads. Seven wooden ships are gunboats like the *Neponset*, each lashed to the port side of a larger sloop to serve as shields against the sixty-nine guns of Fort Morgan. At 6 a.m., the Union fleet moves forward, the ironclad *Tecumseh* in the lead. Ninety minutes later with the Confederate’s most powerful vessel, *Tennessee*, bearing down on her, *Tecumseh* hits a mine and sinks in thirty seconds.

Farragut sees his second ship of the line stop and throw her engines into reverse.

“What’s wrong?” he barks from a perch in his flagship’s rigging.

“Torpedoes, sir,” comes the answer from the deck.

Farragut’s voice rings out above the din of battle: “Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!”

The *Neponset*’s men hear metal primers of mines striking their hull. None explode. They evade *Tennessee*’s ram and attack and capture one of the ironclad’s supports. Pounded into submission, the *Tennessee* surrenders, effectively ending the power of the Confederate Navy.

- Oliver recovers from his wounds and returns to his post as a brevetted captain in January 1865. He takes part in Second Hatcher’s Run and again stops two bullets and is back in Beacon Hill by early March cited for “gallant and meritorious conduct in battle.” On April 3, he witnesses the city’s rejoicing as word comes of the capture of Richmond, one-hundred-gun salute firing a salute on Boston

Common. Two short weeks later, the bells of Boston's churches toll a mournful dirge as news of Lincoln's assassination falls "like a thunderbolt from a clear sky."

- Life quickly returns to normal for Nellie and Roark, their only disappointment a failure to have children. In 1867, Marcy Lynch contracts consumption and dies leaving Terence and John virtually parentless, Farrell coming back from the war permanently marked by the horrors of Andersonville. Nellie and Roark provide a home for her nephews, who rarely see their father, Farrell more often than not incarcerated in Leverett Street jail for drinking and brawling.

In fall 1872 distemper kills half the horses of Boston bringing transport in the city to a halt. On Saturday evening, November 9, a fire starts in a hoopskirt factory on the corner of Summer and Kingston Streets engulfing the buildings and beginning its advance across sixty-five acres of the city.

Farrell is at *The Eagle* tavern on Ann Street, when men struggle past trying to drag a fire engine usually pulled by six horses. Farrell shoulders his way through the crowd and puts himself in front of the engine using all his muscle to move it down toward Dock Square and on to the blaze.

In the Somerset Club, Oliver and other members first ignore reports of an "ordinary fire," but by ten the conflagration rages northward swallowing up great granite warehouses like brush heaps and making the sky glow red. Oliver and other volunteers fetch dynamite from the Ancient and Honorable armory to blow up buildings and contain the rush of the inferno as the fire reaches Washington Street and threatens Old South Church.

Nellie is on the scene to support the injured and exhausted. In the shadow of Old South, Nellie finds the body of Farrell. Her brother's heart gives out in his mighty exertions this night, twenty-five years after he came to make a new life for them in America. Through her tears, Nellie sees not the ruins of Boston but Lambskill in County Cork from which she fled with Farrell. It was a good journey.

Book Five

BOSTON COMMON

I 1927-1931

In August 1927, **LAWRENCE TRANE** returns to Boston after a four-year odyssey in the Old World, his travels taking him from the shores of the Bosphorus to the boulevards of Paris. He divided his time between a garret *atelier* on Rue de' Asses and the terrace of the Café du Dôme, Montparnasse. Lawrence is twenty-nine and has the classic features of his Lincolnshire ancestor, a disproportionately large but well shaped head, straight back and large feet. Neither handsome nor ugly, he has light brown eyes bordering on amber, a bright spirit shining in them.

Lawrence is the son of **HUGH TRANE** who heads the Trane Iron Foundry across Fort Point Channel. The company founded by Caleb and Jethro no longer turns out heavy guns or fine hunting pieces and hasn't enjoyed a boom since the Civil War. The place still employs four hundred men making boilerplate and sheet metal but seems a dying enterprise awaiting the last hammer blow.

Lawrence returns to Boston on the eve of the execution of Nicola Sacco, a shoemaker, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, a fish peddler, convicted of killing two employees of a South Braintree shoe factory during a robbery. For seven years, the world has argued over their innocence or guilt though it's widely believed they're damned for their race and religion by Judge Webster Thayer's prejudiced court.

“Dago sons of bitches,” Thayer calls the pair boasting to friends that “he got the anarchist bastards good and proper.” On August 23, 1927, thousands attend a vigil for Sacco and Vanzetti on Boston Common before their execution at Charlestown State Prison.

In the crowd Lawrence finds himself next to a striking eighteen-year-old destined to become his “lovely lass in a beaver coat.” She is **CYRENE STEELE**, the granddaughter of Judge Oliver Steele.

The family still lives in No 37½ Beacon Street built by Captain Ben. Ben’s fortune is firmly anchored in a spendthrift trust designed to keep it intact until Judgment Day. There’s not a single ship tied to the Steeles, not one chest of Houqua or dram of pepper. Cyrene’s father, **CLAYTON STEELE**, only ventures into the business district to confer with Pollock and Pierce, trustees, crusty holdovers from the days of the counting-stool. The study in Beacon Street is filled with mementoes of Ben’s voyages, his sable-lined greatcoat hanging on a peg fashioned from a belaying pin. On winter evenings, Clayton throws the heavy coat over his knees and sits with a highball navigating the columns of the *Transcript*.

Clayton Steele is forty-two, a stalwart of the Ancient and Honorable Company and a founder of the Good Government Association, the “Goo-Goos” to their enemies. Clayton’s wife, Victoria Bamford Steele, is a sentinel of the Watch and Ward Society in the front lines of the war on smut. In 1927, the society bans sixty-eight current titles and bars the works of Eugene O’Neill from Boston’s theaters. Victoria is a board member of Old South Meeting House, where she votes to keep out anarchists and rabble-rousers whose prattle will violate a “patriotic shrine.”

Eighteen-year-old Cyrene has a sister **HERMOINE**, seventeen, and a brother, **CHANDLER**, twelve. Cyrene’s independent spirit has been a problem for Victoria in the past, her mother disapproving of her playing with urchins on the Common and wandering alone into the wicked maze of Scollay Square. These are minor troubles next to Cyrene’s adventures in Bohemia with Lawrence and his friends.

Even as Victoria prepares to prune the garden of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, her daughter bares all for her painter in his studio on T-Wharf, where a polyglot colony of artists share their workspace with

North-End fishermen. The Blue Ship Tearoom and other wharf resorts are roaring speakeasies whose customers are regularly fished out of Boston harbor.

In October 1927, Nellie Lynch celebrates her eighty-eighth birthday in the brick and bow-fronted South End house that Roark O'Brien built forty-five years ago. Roark died in 1912 leaving Farrell's son, **JOHN LYNCH**, in control of the family business. **NEAL LYNCH**, John's grandson, is a lawyer who works in the fisheries head office. His main avocation is as a Curley man trawling for votes for The Boss.

James Michael Curley comes to tip his hat to Nellie, the grand old lady of Ward 17, one of the first to give the handsome brown-eyed rough-and-tumble politician her vote. Word that Curley is in his old neighborhood spreads quickly drawing a crowd to the house, where James Michael brings a tear to the eye of his hostess singing the songs of Ireland for the famine girl from County Cork.

Farrell Lynch's second son, **TERENCE LYNCH**, is absent serving ten-to-fifteen years in Charlestown jail for armed robbery. Terence's son, **REGAN LYNCH**, has also done time for petty crime as a member of the Rattlesnakes, a Charlestown gang "looping" the streets around Bunker Hill. Regan now operates in Scollay Square behind a door with faded lettering, **MASSASOIT COTTON MILLS**, a front for a bootlegging operation in the great tradition of contrabandists Milo Lynch and Dick Fletcher. Boston's "rummies" supply four thousand speakeasies in the city, four popular watering holes on the same block as police headquarters.

Regan's biggest customer is **MARVIN FLETCHER** who works the gin mills and clubs in the South End where the High Hat, Wigwam and Wally's throb to the beat of the Jazz Age. Marvin has a son, **OSCAR FLETCHER**, with a Creole beauty, **ESTELLE "STELLA" LAMARTINE**. Stella runs the classiest brothel in a district known as "Mommaland," a red-hot quarter off Massachusetts Avenue.

"Professor" **GEORGE FLETCHER** and his son, **SHELBY FLETCHER**, descendants of Crispus Attucks, belong to the Black Brahmins, as exclusive as their white counterparts. Professor

George owns a finishing school that grooms young debutantes for the annual “Snowflake Ball.” He spends Friday afternoons at the Symphony, has a summer retreat on Martha’s Vineyard and is a regular at Newport where he lectures on ballroom etiquette. The Fletchers still maintain ties with the Steeles, invited to take sherry with them on Beacon Hill every Christmas.



Neal Lynch heads Curley’s push to win Massachusetts for Al Smith, the first Irish Catholic presidential nominee. They rent the defunct Young’s Hotel on Court Street as headquarters renaming it The Bull Pen and using it for monster rallies for Smith. The candidate’s two-day visit to Boston in October 1928 is a triumph for Curley who leads the cavalcade toffed-up in a brown derby and a boxy raccoon coat. Hoover wins forty states but Massachusetts goes for Smith, with some wards giving him ninety percent of their votes. The following St. Patrick’s Day, Curley launches his mayoral campaign in a touring car with its wheels painted bright green, handing out saucer size buttons urging Bostonians to VOTE FOR AL SMITH’S FRIEND.

Clayton and Victoria support Curley’s opponent, Frederick Mansfield, a distinguished lawyer of Irish-Catholic heritage, “as spectacular as a four-day-old codfish and as colorful as a lump of mud.”

On the stump for Curley, Neal uses every dirty trick of Boston politics. He sends “vicars” into South Boston to knock on doors for Mansfield, the sight of the Protestant interlopers a red flag to the faithful. Curley billboards sprout in Boston’s neighborhoods: BRIGHTON NEEDS CURLEY, ALLSTON NEEDS CURLEY... The opposition swiftly defaces them: BRIGHTON FEEDS CURLEY, ALLSTON FEEDS CURLEY.

The airwaves crackle with slanders about graft and bossism, no clash more savage than one between Curley and Victoria Steele.

Curley is at the WNAC studio waiting his turn to go on the air as Victoria lambastes “an Irish hooligan of Tammany ilk.” She attacks Curley’s past administrations charging that no contractor could lay a tile in City Hall or supply a new school bench without a gift for “King Curley’s” Shamrock Castle on Jamaicaaway.

Curley takes the mike to answer “Mrs. Steele’s racial slurs.” She represents a decadent race, says Curley, “The New England of rum, codfish and slaves, which is as dead as Julius Caesar. “Tell the people, Vicky –” No one dares address Victoria Bamford Steele as ‘Vicky.’ – “What’s the Ladies Sewing Circle of Beacon Hill dipping into this week? *Lady Chatterley’s Lover?* *The Well of Loneliness?* “ Curley reveals that a bookseller friend assures him every banned volume in Boston is readily available in Sewing Circle 93.

“A lie!” Victoria shrieks from the WNAC anteroom. Clayton Steele, a Harvard football hero in his youth, limbers up to belt the slanderer. Curley lands a blow that decks Clayton before Neal Lynch steps in to stop the match. Quizzed about the “riot” at WNAC, Curley admits knocking down dead Yankee wood. “A fossil fit to be exhibited in a glass case at Austin and Boone’s dime museum in Scollay Square.”

Curley wins the mayoral race two weeks after the Stock Market collapse of 1929. The Crash deals a crushing blow to Boston. Tens of thousands of breadwinners are thrown out of work. On Boston Common the first victim is found dead from hunger. – One of the Boston firms that collapses is the Trane Iron Works closing its doors one hundred and seventy five years after Caleb began the enterprise on Fleet Street.

In February 1930, Victoria Steele’s Old South committee refuses to let Margaret Sanger speak in the meeting hall. Cyrene joins a picket line standing with her mouth taped shut and scribbling messages on a blackboard about Dutch Caps and French Letters. Victoria is enraged, the explosion on Beacon Hill leading Cyrene to pack her things and move to the calmer waters of T-Wharf and a permanent berth in her lover’s loft.

“Wharf Rats,” the colony of artists and writers call themselves. T-Wharf juts out from Long Wharf and is home to six-masted coal and lumber schooners. Ross tugboats berth at the end of the wharf, Boston still one of the busiest harbors in the world. T-Wharf buzzes with scores of fishing boats,

a blaze of oranges, blues, greens and reds, as colorful as the Italians who sail them. Most come from Sciacca in Sicily and ply the waters of Massachusetts Bay with the blessing of their ancient protector, Madonna de Socorso.

Lawrence's art is influenced by the Ashcan Movement of New York and follows Social Realists like Hart Benton and Shahn. The Depression is a seminal force in Lawrence's painting but destroys his chance of making a living from his work. He takes commissions from Filenes Art Department involved in the company's contributions to the Tercentenary celebrations of Boston's founding.

Cyrene works at a North End settlement house surrounded by tenements crowded with Italian immigrants and reminiscent of Broad Street's rookeries. Abigail House is supported by an Episcopalian charity that arouses the suspicion of local *Fascisti* who see a hotbed of Reds and radicals confounding Mussolini's appeal to Italian-Americans.

Abigail House is firebombed, but this doesn't stop T-Wharf fisherman Luigi Paterniani and his wife, Pietrina, belonging to the center. Luigi is a naturalized American who came to Boston with Pietrina seven years earlier. They left two boys then three and four with relatives in their hometown of Terracina on the Gulf of Gaeta until they had money to send for them. Two years ago they got the necessary papers and passports from the U.S. government and sent the steamship fares for Carlo and Arturo.

The North End *Fascisti* report to Rome that Paterniani and his wife are anti-fascists and Reds. At Terracina the Fascist secretary tells Carlo and Arturo, now ten and eleven, "You'll not go to America, now or ever." Abigail House workers appeal to the State Department and American consuls in Italy to no avail.

The Paterniani case is a cause célèbre at T-Wharf's Megansett Jr. restaurant, a second home to every Wharf Rat. In the long smoky nights when the last piano player is worn out and the fog rolls in, a deep horn sounding across the way, the painters and poets sit talking about the two lost boys. It's Lawrence Trane who says: "Damn the *fascisti*! We'll go over there and fetch them. Bring Carlo and Arturo home to their mamma and papa!"

In June 1930, Regan Lynch and Marvin Fletcher go to Halifax, Nova Scotia to take delivery of *Saracen*, an armor-plated sixty-footer rumrunner powered by three airplane engines and mounting a pair of Browning machine-guns. Designed for the dash from Stellwagen Bank to the shore, *Saracen* can do an astonishing forty knots. Regan and Marvin sail on the maiden voyage making for St. Pierre and Miquelon in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The French island-outposts are afloat with Capone syndicate liquor supplied to mother ships that ply Rum Row, as many as 300,000 cases of the “real McCoy” shipped every week. *Saracen* stows a cargo of whiskey and heads out to sea under a smokescreen of burning tires.

Unlike his pirate ancestor William Fletcher, Marvin is a miserable sailor who hugs the deck as *Saracen* dances through the waves. A Coast Guard plane spots them in the Gulf of Maine and sends a cutter, *Whistler*, on a hundred-mile pursuit down the coast of Massachusetts. *Whistler*'s engines pound away until the vessel's seams begin to open, the crew lobbing a few futile shells before they're forced to beach the waterlogged craft at Wellfleet. *Saracen* loops back to the South Shore and makes a midnight run into the North River to offload her cargo.

“So much liquor, you can swim in it,” says Mayor Reuben Salter of Boston, England, when he attends the Tercentenary celebrations that begin in June 1930 and climax in a monster parade on September 18. Forty thousand marchers, two hundred floats and one hundred bands take part in the seven-hour cavalcade with King Curley holding court on a grandstand in Tremont Street. The mayor doffs his silk hat and croons “There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight,” enough to wake the dead of Old Granary.

Victoria Steele organizes the Hancock Ball, a decorous affair in the Somerset Hotel's Louis XIV ballroom. It is marked at the witching hour of 10.30 p.m. by a lengthy monologue from “John Hancock” that effectively extinguishes all frivolity. When *Arbella*, a replica of John Winthrop's ship, makes the short voyage from Salem, Victoria's children, Hermione and Chandler, are in the landing party greeted

by Reverend William Blaxton and the Shawmut. Feather-bedecked actors from the city's burlesque houses fill the roles of Chitanawoo and Wapikicho long since vanished from these shores.

In November 1930, Regan and his Irish bootleggers battle North End rivals who came as refugees from *Il Duce*. Sicilian-born Mario di Paloma, "The Dove," landed in Boston in 1926 working his way up from petty larceny to loan sharking and by 1930, he's running a booze operation in Brockton. Paloma makes his first move against Regan by hijacking *Saracen* off Duxbury. The Italians put the crew ashore, strip the rumrunner of its cargo and blow the boat to smithereens.

Regan's mobsters hit Paloma's Brockton warehouse shooting two men and stealing a truckload of liquor.

Around midnight on March 15, 1931, Regan and two associates are ambushed on Charlestown Bridge. Paloma's triggermen kill the trio with a hailstorm of machine-gun fire before melting away across Atlantic Avenue. News gets out and Charlestown's Irish mob prepare to cross the river and burn down the North End. Italian workers coming to Charlestown Navy Yard are beaten. Police swarm into Charlestown and stop the violence from escalating.

Ninety-two year old Nellie Lynch comes to Regan's wake on Monument Avenue. Mayor Curley pays his respects to a "victim of the ignoble experiment of Prohibition." James Michael persuades the Charlestown jailers to let Terrence attend his son's funeral. Regan leaves a widow, **SARAH LYNCH**, and a son, **NOLAN LYNCH**, who is four, his wife long neglected for the showgirls of Scollay Square.

Marvin Fletcher causes a stir arriving at the wake, African-Americans rarely daring to set foot in Charlestown. Marvin's visit is a godsend to Regan's penniless widow bringing her \$5,000 from the bootlegging business.

In May 1931, Neal Lynch travels with Curley when the mayor makes a Grand Tour of Europe in the style of a Latin dictator descending on Dublin, London, Paris and Rome. In Ireland, Neal visits

Lambskill, a bare field dotted with ruins of stone chimneys, all there is to recall that Easter Saturday in 1847 when Delmo Roux and his Crowbar Brigade came to tear down the cottage where Nellie and Farrell were born.

Curley and his party aren't the only Bostonians in Europe this spring. Lawrence and Cyrene sail to Italy in May 1931 with the mission of snatching Carlo and Arturo from the Fascists of Terracina. Aboard the Italia Line's *Saturnia*, the couple suddenly decide to marry in the mid-Atlantic, a celebration that conceals their plans from a shipload of fascists going home to Mussolini's Italy.

They leave the vessel at Genoa and travel by train to Terracina. The grandfather of Carlo and Arturo is a foe of the Blackshirts and helps with arrangements for their trip to the Swiss border. A day before they leave, the authorities unexpectedly announce that the Paterniani children are selected to attend a Fascist summer camp near Naples. They're to leave in the morning. That night Lawrence and Cyrene flee Terracina with Carlo and Arturo followed by a carload of Blackshirts on a hair-raising chase along the coast. They make it to Rome and hide out in a hotel near the Spanish Steps.

Lawrence is on the street when he sees a motorcade roll past with a familiar figure in the back of the Isotta Fraschini tourer. James Michael Curley has come to greet the man he calls The Moose and salutes as "savior of Christian civilization." Lawrence goes to the Excelsior Hotel and asks Neal Lynch to help them escape.

James Michael personally persuades The Moose to let the boys go, for the sake of good Italian-American relations. And for Curley when next he asks the North End to vote for a favorite Irish son. The official Boston party leaves on the Rome-Paris express, Lawrence and Cyrene on the train with the Paterniani boys.

On June 11, 1931, when the *Leviathan* arrives in New York harbor from Europe, Curley enthusiastically points out the Statue of Liberty to Carlo and Arturo. He gives each boy a silver dollar. "Never forget who gave you your start in America," he says with a wink. "James Michael Curley!"

II 1942-1949

Lt. **CHANDLER STEELE'S** final day of shore leave falls on the last Saturday in November 1942. A graduate of Harvard and avid sailor, Chandler joined the Coast Guard after Pearl Harbor and served aboard an armed trawler on the Greenland Patrol. In July 1942, he transferred to *Mohegan*, a Secretary-class cutter on escort duty in the North Atlantic. He has made two crossings protecting convoys against Nazi wolf-packs that have sunk two hundred and sixty Allied ships in the first four months of 1942.

On his last night ashore, Chandler attends a birthday party for his friend, Archie Bell, who crews for him on *Rocket*, a Dragon-class sloop he races at Marblehead. There are ten guests including Archie's sister, Pam, a handsome girl with a crush on the tall, reddish-haired lieutenant.

Archie's party begins with dinner in the Oak Room of the Copley Plaza. A little past nine o'clock, they leave the hotel and head over to the Coconut Grove on Piedmont Street. The nightclub is packed with a thousand patrons, many of them soldiers and sailors. Just after 10 P.M., a busboy sent to replace a light bulb in the Melody Lounge strikes a match to find the socket. The flame catches the tinsel fronds of a fake palm and shoots toward the blue satin ceiling billowing above the dancers. The inferno spreads to the top floor sending a column of fire that engulfs the main room. Patrons dash for a single revolving door that becomes a death trap. In fifteen minutes, the Coconut Grove is destroyed.

The five couples are in the Melody Lounge when the fire starts. Three pairs join the rush to the first floor. Chandler and Archie go in the opposite direction toward a restroom, where Pam and Archie's fiancée, Diane, went moments earlier. They find the girls in the narrow corridor and are the last people to reach the top of the stairs.

Chandler forces them to turn back from the writhing mass at the front entrance. He remembers a door near the coatroom. Bodies are piled up in front of the exit. Chandler pushes Pam over the barrier

and into the hands of rescuers struggling to clear the opening from outside. They're pulled to safety but tragically learn that the three couples with them perished.

Chandler's return to *Mohegan* is delayed for a week, flying to Yarmouth Air Base in Nova Scotia to rejoin the cutter at a secret assembly-point for a convoy that sails in late December 1942.

On March 17, *Mohegan* is attached to Convoy HX229 bound from New York/Halifax to Liverpool. Convoy SC122 is eastbound on a parallel course. There are eighty-seven ships in the two convoys with fourteen escorts. Forty-five U-boats in three battle groups, "Robber Baron," "Harrier" and "Daredevil" converge to attack the convoys in waters known as the Devil's Gorge lying in an "air gap" out of range of land-based patrol planes.

Mohegan attacks and drives off three submarines using all its depth charges. Falling back to look for a straggler they surprise a raider being refueled by a "milch-cow" U-boat. The cutter's five-inch gun opens up as she steams to ram the enemy. The Germans dive frantically, several men abandoned on the milch-cow's deck and swept into the sea.

On March 18, long-range bombers from Iceland begin to harass the wolf packs. Five additional ships fall victim to the U-boats before the attack is called off six hundred miles from the English coast. Twenty-two Allied ships are sunk in the Devil's Gorge and 372 men lost. A long German submarine is destroyed. "Happy Time," the U-boat commanders call this period.

Mohegan picks up one hundred survivors of the convoy. No one is more solicitous toward the mariners than twenty-year-old ship's cook, **OSCAR FLETCHER**, the son of Marvin and Stella. Oscar is a fine and resourceful sailor unlike his father who was sick as a dog on *Saracen*. Oscar has also inherited the genius of caterer Jason Fletcher of Congress Street. Lt. Steele and his fellow officers marvel at what Oscar cooks up from *Mohegan's* mean rations. Of course, there's also a touch of the pirate Fletcher in Oscar's dealings with the warehousemen of Atlantic Avenue.

Fourteen-year-old **EDWARD LYNCH**, Neal's son, is built like his great-great-grandfather Farrell, a robust broad-shouldered lad with huge paws. Eddie Lynch's best friend, Brian "Cocky" Malloy, is the son of the South Boston Boy's Club boxing trainer, a former champ who boxes the ears of any hellion of West Sixth Street caught fighting outside the ring. It doesn't stop the turf wars of Southie's gangs or their raids on other neighborhoods.

At South Boston High School on March 17, 1943, three thousand attend a St. Patrick's Day event addressed by Father Edward Curran, who preaches the "Social Justice" advocated by Father Charles Coughlin. Flanked by parish priests and local politicians, Curran beats the isolationist drum and excoriates the Bolsheviks. He spews vintage anti-Semitic shibboleths gleaned from *The Protocols of Zion*. The audience greets Curran's words with roars of approval. When the meeting ends, most take their places along Broadway for St. Patrick's Day Parade.

One gang of young crusaders heads for "Jew Hill Avenue." There are sixty thousand Jews in the Mattapan-Roxbury-Dorchester area, an Old World Warsaw in a New World venue, with many refugees from pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Eddie Lynch, Cocky McCoy and their gang spot an elderly Jew walking down Blue Hill Avenue. "Old Moses!" shouts Cocky. The old man has a long gray beard. "Christ-killer!" Cocky screams giving the beard a vicious yank. The man curses in Yiddish. Cocky shoves the man off the pavement and sends him sprawling in the gutter. "Dirty Jew!" Eddie and the others chant. They see that he has a wooden leg, not "Old Moses" but Isaac Shapiro who lost the limb fighting for America at the Battle of Belleau Wood.

Eddie is careful to hide the incident from Neal Lynch. His father totally rejects these acts of anti-Semitism, a view shared by his boss, Curley. Eddie's mother, **CALLISTA LYNCH** would also disapprove of her son's gang shoving the Jew into the gutter but only because he was an old man with one leg. Callista sympathizes with Irish boys resisting what the Church militant perceives as a Jewish invasion of Catholic Boston.

In October 1943, Eddie and Cockey Malloy's gang precipitate Boston's worst anti-Semitic incident that follows nineteen attacks on Jews through the summer. Two seventeen-year-old Jewish boys are severely beaten by the gang. The police arrive on the scene and send the Irish boys on their way. The victims complain about the release of their attackers and are arrested for "taking part in a fray." At Police Station 11 in Fields Corner, Dorchester, officers thrash the pair with rubber hoses. An Irish Catholic judge fines them \$10 each.

Eddie is identified as one of the attackers and faces the fury of Neal. Neal and Curley meet with Jewish leaders to diffuse a crisis that rages six months more. Christian Fronters launch a wave of scurrilous propaganda plastering war plants and bars in South Boston and Charlestown with flyers like one dedicated to the "The First American:"

First American killed in Pearl Harbor – John J. Hennessey

First American to sink a Jap ship – Colin P. Kelly

Greatest American air hero – "Butch" O'Hare

First American to get four new tires – Abraham Lipschitz

In March 1944, Neal takes Eddie to Washington where Congressman Curley offers his constituents and the entire nation a history lesson on Jewish sacrifice for America, from the Revolution to the current conflict. For twenty minutes, James Michael reads a list of Jews awarded Purple Hearts, Silver Stars and Distinguished Service decorations, a roll of valor that fills sixteen pages of the Congressional Record.

Eddie Lynch sits silently next to his father listening to The Governor's speech. It is a lesson against bigotry Eddie will remember for the rest of his life.

Mohegan is stationed at Reykjavik, Iceland in March 1944 when an engine-room fire cripples a Canadian corvette. *Mohegan* is ordered to take the vessel's place in a Murmansk convoy. Chandler is on the bridge as thirty merchant ships and seven escorts begin the perilous fifteen-hundred-mile voyage to

the Russian port. Forty-eight hours later they come under attack by Nazi planes flying out of Norway. The raids don't let up for seven days, the time it takes for the convoy to reach its destination.

Oscar Fletcher mans one of Mohegan's ack-ack guns that bring down three enemy planes. The half-frozen gun crews are at battle stations for twenty-six hours at a stretch. The convoy arrives at Murmansk with the loss of one freighter.

In April 1944, *Mohegan* heads back to Iceland. Heavy fog shrouds the ship in the Barents Sea, but as they pass the North Cape the weather lightens. A lone Heinkel spots *Mohegan*, drops two torpedoes and misses. Two hours later four Junkers attack. A stick of bombs hits aft hurling fragments of steel from bow to stern. *Mohegan's* captain and chief officer go to inspect the damage and are killed instantly in a secondary explosion.

Command passes to Chandler Steele. The cutter's steering-engine requires sixteen hours for repairs. They finally get under way in the pre-dawn hours of April 6, Chandler plotting a course from the Norwegian coast to Scotland. They're three hundred miles away when a lone U-boat attacks *Mohegan*. One torpedo demolishes the engine room killing all on watch. A second torpedo slams into the cutter's starboard side, the explosion blowing apart the bridge-house.

Chandler is flung onto the deck severely wounded. Oscar Fletcher and another gunner carry the lieutenant to the port lifeboat lowered into heavy seas. The cutter breaks in two and sinks in minutes. The survivors are rescued by an English destroyer and taken to Loch Ewe, Scotland.

Chandler is flown to a naval hospital at Netley outside Southampton where he gets a surprise visit from Lawrence Trane. Unlike Victoria who still resents a Bohemian who made her daughter "a tramp of T-Wharf," Chandler gets on well with his brother-in-law. Lawrence reached England in April 1944 as a member of the Army Art Program, only to learn that Congress refused to fund "a piece of foolishness." Lawrence and other civilian artists are stranded, until *Life* magazine offers to employ them. – Lawrence lands in Normandy two days after the storming of Omaha Beach. On August 25, 1944, he is

with a tank unit of the Free French Forces, when the first liberators roll into his old haunts in Montparnasse.

Chandler returns to Boston and is admitted to Chelsea Naval Hospital on Admiral's Hill. – The same hill where Samuel Maverick's "murderers" guarded against attack by zealots out to ruin Maverick's rustic playhouse and the pleasures enjoyed by Chandler's ancestor, Nicholas Steele. – Chandler is hospitalized for four months from July to October 1944.

On arrival he's put in Room 208 across the corridor from a scrawny gregarious fellow who comes over to greet him:

"Chandler, you sorry son of a bitch! Handsome Henson told me they were shipping you in. You'll meet him soon enough, a madman with a knife!"

"How are you, Jack?"

"Ready for the Old Sailors Home, I'll say. A rocking chair, sunny spot on the lawn, thanks of a grateful Republic ringing in my ears."

Chandler's fellow patient is Lt. John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Chandler was two years ahead of Kennedy at Harvard, and in the same class as his older brother, Joe Jr. Chandler and Jack both roomed in Winthrop House and belonged to the Spee Club. In 1938, their shared love of sailing saw them competing together in the Intercollegiate Regatta at Osterville. Chandler never warmed to Joe Jr. finding him standoffish and humorless and disturbingly pro-Fascist. "The brutality used by the Nazis against the Jews is necessary," said Joe Jr. "It's a horrible thing but in every revolution you have to expect some bloodshed."

Jack Kennedy is in Chelsea Hospital recovering from a failed back operation. The previous August in the Solomon Islands, a Japanese destroyer sliced PT109 in two, Jack and eight surviving crew given up for dead. Kennedy's unflagging courage led to their rescue and made him a legitimate American hero. On patrol in the Pacific for three months more, his poor health finally caught up with him and he was sent back stateside.

At Chelsea Hospital, the two young men say little about their personal encounters with the horrors of war but speak of the future. In 1939, Jack had traveled to Soviet Russia, “a slave state run by a small clique of ruthless, powerful and selfish men.” He shares his forebodings of a new Red terror with Chandler. Chandler has a sense of Jack’s destiny, an aura about his frail fellow patient that sees him striding the world in seven league boots.

One August evening the invalids drag themselves off Admiral Hill to the roof garden of the Ritz-Carlton for a night of dancing with two nurses. When the couples leave the Ritz-Carlton, they find Jack’s car stolen from Newbury Street, prompting a State House representative to call for stickers for servicemen’s cars, so auto-thieves will give fighting men a break. And save the heroes, too, from love’s labor lost.

A week after Jack’s car is stolen, he’s with his family at Hyannis Port when they get news that Joe Jr. is missing believed dead over England. Joe volunteered for the Navy’s air wing in summer 1941 still an isolationist at heart but able to see the writing on the wall. He was flying a near-suicidal mission in a plane packed with ten tons of TNT to blast a German munitions factory when an electric fault detonated the explosives.

When Kennedy returns to the hospital, Chandler commiserates with a quote from Buchan’s *Pilgrim’s Way*, Jack’s favorite book. “For the chosen few, there is no disillusionment. They march on into life with a boyish grace and their high noon keeps all the freshness of the morning.”

“I appreciate that, Chandler,” Jack says quietly.

In 1946, Chandler is with a brains trust of ex-Navy men and Harvard friends who back Kennedy’s run for Congress. Nowhere is Chandler’s politicking more challenging than in the house on Beacon Street. Clayton and Victoria are lifelong Republicans alarmed at seeing their son in the camp of “a carpetbagger toting a portmanteau stuffed with his father’s loot.” There’s worse to come when the carpetbagger introduces Chandler to another campaign worker, Carmela di Antonini. A Radcliffe

graduate, Carmela is one of twelve females who enter Harvard Medical School in 1945, the first class to include women. Carmela may have breached the walls of Harvard Medical School but will have a hard time penetrating Sewing Circle 93. Victoria ignores Carmela's allure and achievements associating the young woman with what she calls, "the dusky swarm of Hanover Street."

Carmela's father, Luigi Antonini, is a professor of electronics at MIT who came to America with his family in the 1920s. Antonini was at the center of the technological battle against Germany and Japan spearheaded by MIT. An impetus that becomes the peacetime catalyst for a revolution that again makes Boston "the hub of the solar system." Chandler's contact with the professor and his protégés will lead to his unmooring the Steele fortune and establishing The Houqua Fund, a venture capital group backing the high-tech pioneers of the computer age.

This lies in the future and for now the wartime boom in the shipyards of East Boston, Quincy and Fore River is over. The sprawling army base in South Boston that brought tens of thousands to the city is deserted. Decrepit wharves and warehouses rim Atlantic Avenue. Block after block behind the waterfront is boarded up. The South End is becoming the most notorious skid row in America, the main stem on Dover Street a jungle of abortion mills, quack doctors and dope peddlers.

On November 5, 1945, Kennedy trounces his opponent by 69,093 votes to 26,007, though the Republicans take the governor's seat and sweep the venerable Democrat senator David Walsh out of office.

The following summer, Jack is a guest at the wedding of Chandler, where the ladies of Sewing Circle 93 stand guard for their distressed chairwoman. Victoria finds it hard to resist the Kennedy charm though does remind her circle that the congressman's father was blackballed at The Country Club. She confidently predicts that the son will have a short run in Congress.

Neil Lynch is the rock behind embattled Mayor Curley, now serving his fourth term in office, partly thanks to a deal with Ambassador Joe Kennedy. The congressman's father paid a \$12,000 debt for

Curley and underwrote his campaign in return for the resignation of his seat in Congress leaving it open for Kennedy to contest.

For three years, Curley has been fighting charges of mail fraud stemming from a partner's war contracts, until a jury found him guilty and a judge sentenced him to eighteen months in prison. In June 1947 Curley's appeals run out and the old political warhorse is led into the federal pen at Danbury. His golden voice falters as he invokes Shakespeare's exchange between Wolsey and Cromwell: "Had I but served my God with half the fervor that I have served the Democratic party, they would not leave me thus in mine old age naked before mine enemies."

Neal circulates a petition asking President Truman to grant clemency to Curley. One hundred thousand Bostonians endorse the request for mercy. President Truman commutes Curley's sentence sending him home in time for Thanksgiving.

Neal and Callista are at a combination Thanksgiving Dinner/ birthday party in the Jamaicaaway mansion. The lettering on Curley's cake reads: HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR BELOVED BOSS. The next morning Curley returns to City Hall where a dedicated city clerk John Hynes had served as temporary mayor. At day's end, a jaunty James Michael quips to a reporter, "I've accomplished more in one day than has been done in the five months of my absence." The remark infuriates the mild-mannered Hynes and inspires him to run for the office in 1949 winning the race and effectively ending Curley's fifty-year political career.

On Christmas Eve, December 1949, Curley's last month in office, James Michael slips out of City Hall for a private meeting with two young men. He passes Old Granary Burying Ground and heads for the Common. The two men are waiting near Frog Pond.

"Merry Christmas, Governor."

"Merry Christmas, my boys!" Curley says. "*Buon Natale!*"

Carlo and Arturo Paterniani, Curley's favorite sons of Italy, have prospered with construction contracts handed out by The Governor. They reward Curley with a gift of \$10,000 in crisp new bills embracing their benefactor like a beloved grandfather.

After the Paterniani brothers leave, James Michael rests awhile on a bench in sight of a bas-relief that depicts William Blaxton, the reverend bearing an uncanny resemblance to Curley, a suggestion made to the artist who created it for the Tercentenary. Curley is sitting there when an old adversary walks past on her way home.

"Ah, Vicky!" the mayor says, tipping his hat. "Merry Christmas, ma'am!"

Victoria Bamford Steele glares at the great hooligan. "Bah!" she growls, her low heels clattering along the snowy path as she hurries away to her fortress on the hill.

James Michael is still laughing when he leaves Frog Pond, a wily old sachem of Boston, who walks where Chitanawoo and the Shawmut greeted the dawn.

III 1949-1976

LILY BANKS is a slender, attractive child with large hazel eyes and long, shining black hair. Her features come from Black Seminole ancestors, once warrior chieftains in central Florida. On the night of July 18, 1949, eleven-year-old Lily sees the house her father built with his own hands burned to the ground. Some wreckers try to set fire to Luther Banks's orange grove dousing the trees with gasoline, but the blaze doesn't spread beyond the first row.

Luther's property is at Stuckey's Still, Groveland, thirty-five miles west of Orlando. Two nights earlier, a seventeen-year-old white housewife reported that four black men had raped her. Three alleged assailants are captured and held in Tavares jail. Six hundred whites led by unmasked Klansmen surrounded the lockup earlier that night. Sheriff Willis McCall sat on the steps of his jail and talked them

out of a lynching. Frustrated at being denied a chance to torture, hang and burn the three prisoners, the mob piled into their cars and sped off to terrorize the African-American section of Groveland.

After burning Luther Bank's farm, a carload of whiskey-swilling louts race along Route 50 toward Clermont heading for a late-night bar. They career into the path of an oncoming car that swerves and crashes headlong into a giant oak. The vehicle bursts into flames, its occupants trapped inside. In a horrible coincidence, they are Luther's wife and his mother and a friend driving them home from Orlando where the older woman had been in hospital.

After the funerals, Lily and her father stay alone on the farm living in a shack that stood there when Luther bought the property seven years earlier. Luther abandons his orchard and won't allow a single orange to be picked. He sits on a packing crate and watches his trees go to ruin.

Lily has courage and wisdom beyond her years. The only schooling she's had has been at a one-room building next to Ma Willie's general store. Ma Willie Sherman is from Arkansas, the widow of "General" Sherman, a bird-hunter who shot his way through the Everglades until felled by a stray bullet from another plumage collector. The white kids who play in the dirt around Ma Willie's store are never unfriendly, Ma Willie's daughter, Mabel, often walking a long way down the road with Lily when she heads home. Her memories of Orlando are different. She first went there when she was five, going with her mother who had to see a doctor. She wandered away from the clinic to a nearby park, where she climbed on a roundabout with other children, all who happened to be white. A woman pulled her off the ride and pushed her out of the playground. Her mother found her sitting on the pavement, weeping. On another visit with her father, she was thirsty and wanted to drink from a water fountain, but Luther stopped her. "Why can't I drink the water?" she asked. Luther didn't answer but promised his child a red cool drink and an ice cream instead, which he bought from a window hatch at the side of the Orange Blossom Café.

A September night in 1949, Henry Shepherd comes to visit Lily's father. Henry's son, Sammy, was one of the three men accused of raping the Groveland housewife. On September 8, in the palm-surrounded courthouse at Tavares, Sammy and Walter Irvine are sentenced to death. Sixteen-year-old Charles Greenlee who never met the others until thrown into a cell with them is jailed for life. "They're going to kill my boy for a rape he never did," says Henry says to Luther. "It's not the law, it's a legal lynching."

The day after Shepherd's visit, Luther writes to his sister, **IDA BANKS**, who he hasn't seen for ten years, since she joined the great migration from the South and went to Boston. Will Ida give Lily a home? His ruined farm is no place for the child, nor is Florida where the Klan is rising again.

In October 1949, Luther's sister agrees to take Lily until her brother can rebuild his life. "In Boston, you can drink the water," Luther tells his child. "You can play on the swings and no one will stop you. You can go to a proper school. You can eat ice cream in a restaurant like Orange Blossom Café not on the sidewalk."

Lily doesn't realize that her father isn't going with her and when she learns this she is devastated. Luther is gentle but insistent fighting back tears as he hands her over to Jake Johnson, who will take her to Boston. "Split-Nose" Johnson's parents own a jook joint on the road to Tavares. Split-Nose is visiting them from Connecticut, where he works for a tobacco company. Johnson came by his nickname after a fight in a cigar factory, his nose mangled with a billhook.

Lily and Johnson take the Greyhound Line from Orlando. At Sparks, Georgia, when he leaves the bus station, Split-Nose is caught in a drive for "vagrants" who get thirty days on a chain gang, a seasonal sweep to garner free labor to repair county roads. Johnson was doomed had the lawmen not brought in another "vagrant," young Lily who tearfully confirms that he's a legitimate traveler. Lily is confused and frightened as she travels north, forced to ride in the back of buses, denied food at white lunch counters, kicked off benches reserved for white women. When a bus driver sees Lily go into an

on-board toilet, he steers the vehicle onto the rough shoulder terrorizing the child. It's a way of discouraging blacks from using the new facilities on interstate runs.

Lily arrives in Boston on a gray November day in 1949. Her Aunt Ida meets her and takes her to her home in the West End, a labyrinth of decaying tenements and rooming houses. Ancient babushkas and bent-over *paisans* huddle in doorways, not one word of English falling from their lips. Rag pickers and icemen ply their trades, adding their cries to the Boston Babel. Big Normie Schipper, the fruit and vegetable man, curses in Yiddish as a light-fingered Turkish boy swipes a pomegranate. The "O Sole Mia's" of Vito Vitale, a hurdy-gurdy player coming down from the North End, drown out Normie's howls. On the corner outside Max Levy's American United Deli and Café, a bunch of young guys hang out, second and third generation West-Enders in the only village they know.

Ida Banks, a short, plump woman with a cheerful face, is divorced and stays alone in a five-story walk-up on Spring Street. She works as a nanny on Mount Vernon Street, Beacon Hill, caring for the children of the Bickels, Maryland transplants to Boston. There are eight tenants in Ida's building, including two Italian families, a Polish family, and four Jewish families. There are a several hundred African-Americans among the twenty thousand souls in the predominantly Eastern-European and Jewish quarter.

Lily quickly comes to love Aunt Ida, who enrolls the child in a Beacon Hill public school and sends her to the Elizabeth Peabody Settlement House. Several days a week, Lily spends her afternoons at the Bickel brownstone on Mount Vernon Street doing her homework in a corner of the kitchen. The Bickel children range from three to eleven, the oldest a girl the same age as Lily. Gladys Bickel's mother doesn't believe in "mixing" and her daughter rarely exchanges a word with Lily.

On Spring Street, Lily has many friends. Some ancient babushkas like to rub the little *schwartzes* head for good luck! When she goes to Max Levy's store for ice cream, she recalls her father's promise, for instead of throwing her out Mr. Levy lets her sit at the counter and drops an extra scoop in her bowl. At Christmas, Ruth Levy gives Lily a bag of Schrafft's candy and ribbons for her

hair. Many kids in the tenements come from countries where a black person was never seen. The girl from Florida delights them, a place their parents tell them where the sun never stops shining. They can't understand why Lily left this paradise.

Lily never goes back to Stuckey's Still and never sees her father alive again. In 1952, Ida gets a letter from Henry Shepherd with news that Luther Banks died of a broken heart as he walked in his ruined orchard.

Growing up in Boston in the 1950s, Lily rarely leaves the West End, except on trips with Ida and members of Tremont Temple where they worship every Sunday. To her Spring Street neighbors, Ida is a "good Negro" who never swears, drinks or curses. Lily is held up as an example for their own offspring: "Even a little *schwartz* knows to behave better than you."

As Lily gets older and moves beyond this sheltered world, she begins to see a dark side of the City on the Hill, not the blind race hatred of the South but a more refined separation that determines where blacks may live, work, eat and study. A handful of elite families occupy the "Hill" on Franklin Park, but the majority of blacks are segregated in slums of the South End and on Poverty Street in Roxbury and Dorchester. The pockets of African-Americans in the West End and on the back of Beacon Hill are invisible to the majority of white Bostonians.

When Lily is seventeen, she enrolls in a business college and earns a diploma in typing and dictation. When she looks for a job, no manager slams the door in her face but they may as well for when they see she's black, their typing pools are suddenly overflowing. Angry and dispirited after six weeks of trudging through the snow, it's Ida who brings Lily's frustration to the attention of Reverend **JEROME FLETCHER**, assistant minister at Tremont Temple. In March 1956, Lily goes to work for Reverend Fletcher and moves into the orbit of the Fletchers of Boston.

For Ida and Lily and thousands who live in the West End, the winter of 1956 is a bitter one. Since 1953 there's been a movement at City Hall to redevelop the thirty-eight -block neighborhood, one

promoter declaring, “The West End is a cancer that cries out for a municipal hysterectomy.” By 1956, the juggernaut of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) rolls toward demolishing the West End.

Ida has lived here for sixteen years and dreads being compelled to move, but every month sees more and more residents accepting the inevitable. Rows of tenements stand deserted, overrun by rats and roaches. “See, how right we are,” say the men from BRA. “The West End is a breeding ground for pestilence.” When wrecking crews close in, defenders sabotage their equipment. Concrete slabs are dropped onto cranes from rooftops. Molotov cocktails are flung at invaders’ bulldozers. Empty tenements on Spring Street are firebombed threatening the last thickly populated blocks.

One morning, Lily encounters a BRA planner surveying the widening swath of cleared land. She’s in a heated exchange with the young man, a robust fellow with a large well-shaped head, who defends the decision to raze the slum.

“We’re living in the Atomic Age in a city built for horse-and-buggy days. We’re building the New Boston.”

“For who? For rich people who’ll live in your towers with their valets and wine cellars.”

“A place will be found for everyone.”

“Yes, just so long as it’s not here, where we belong.”

The BRA man is **KENNETH TRANE**, the son of Lawrence and Cyrene, who left T-Wharf for bucolic Concord after the war. Lawrence is a Little Brown art editor and commutes to Boston twice weekly. Cyrene no longer marches for anarchists or tapes her mouth shut but is a strident voice nonetheless in the modern battles of Concord fighting for the town’s preservation. The Wharf Rats have swapped their Bohemian nights for quiet rambles between the pitch pines and birches of Walden Pond. Besides Kenneth, they have a daughter, **FRANCES “FRANNY” TRANE**, born in 1946. Franny has her father’s light brown eyes with the same lively sparkle, an uninhibited and plucky twelve-year-old who is a Massachusetts junior show-jumping champion.

Ida and Lily are the last occupants of their walk-up. Their fellow tenants leave tearfully to be scattered around the city, many older people harried into their graves by the BRA bulldozers. Ida procrastinates until City Hall formally seizes the remaining properties. The city offers Ida an apartment in a new housing project. She rejects it saying she doesn't want to live with "common people."

Again, it's Reverend Jerome Fletcher who comes to the rescue. He introduces Ida and Lily to his cousin, **OSCAR FLETCHER**, who owns a house in the South End and has an apartment to rent.

The gunner-cook of *Mohegan* has done well since the war. Oscar returned to civilian life in 1946 working at the Parker House hotel for two years and then at Locke-Ober's until 1952. He opened "Oscar's" on Massachusetts Avenue, a restaurant and music club patronized by Boston's black community and white jazz fans. The coolest dude of all is there to greet customers, Oscar's father, Marvin Fletcher, still cutting a snazzy figure in the old Mommaland quarter.

Oscar's wife, Arlene, died in 1956 leaving two children, **RAYMOND FLETCHER**, born in 1945, and **MILLIE FLETCHER**, a year later. Marvin's wife, Stella, is also dead, father and son employing a housekeeper, Joyce "Gold-Teeth" Topman, a virago from Barbados. The shabby bow-fronted brownstone owned by Oscar, Number 25, Easthampton Street, is the same house that Roark O'Brien built seventy-five-years ago for green-eyed Nellie Lynch.

Lily Banks marries Oscar Fletcher in 1959. They have two children, **JOHN FLETCHER**, born 1960, and **SHIRLEE FLETCHER**, born 1962. Hostility between Lily and Oscar's teenage son, Ray, intensifies over the years, until 1965 when Oscar kicks out the twenty-year-old after a fight with Lily. His son hits the streets and becomes a hustler and petty criminal. In 1967, Ray is involved in the riots that explode along Blue Hill Avenue and plunge the city into anarchy.

BARBARA "BABS" LYNCH is the wife of **NOLAN LYNCH**, son of Regan the Rumrunner who was gunned down on Charlestown Bridge in the Thirties. Before "The Taking" as West End people call the land seizure, Babs's grandparents, Stanislav and Lottie Kaminski lived on the first-floor of Ida

and Lily's building. The Kaminski's raised three children on Spring Street, where they'd been since they arrived in America from Poland. Their son, Joseph, left the neighborhood in 1933 when he married Marja Slowacki and moved to a Polish enclave in Irish South Boston. Their daughter, Barbara, was born there on July 4, 1937 but came to spend so much time with her grandparents that she was one of the Spring Street gang of kids. Babs was fleeing the turmoil in her own home, her father a butcher at Quincy Market whose shifts invariably ended in the bars that served the thirsty market men sending him home drunk three or four times a week.

Babs first meets Lily when she arrives from Florida in 1949, their stories seen unfolding alongside each other. In her own house, Babs overhears talk about "Nigger bastards" and every other "sonofabitch" who gets butcher Kaminski going when he's inebriated. Babs's grandparents never use such language and are good friends with their neighbor and her niece.

When Babs is five, Stanislav takes the child's hand and leads her across town to share his greatest joy. Soon after landing in Boston, Stan decided that the surest way to become an American was to learn everything about baseball. His education began with the Boston Braves at South End Grounds, but he switched to the Boston Red Sox when they moved to Fenway Park in 1912. Stan knew he made the right choice when he saw his team win four World Series Championships between 1912 and 1918.

When the Red Sox go up against the St. Louis Cardinals in the 1946 World Series, Stan and nine-year-old Babs are in the bleachers. Two-to-one favorites, the Sox lose the series and Babs cries for four hours. When her tears dry, she pulls herself together. "Wait until next year," she says to Stan brave as the rest of the faithful.

In 1954 Babs quits school in the tenth grade and takes a job as a waitress in Scollay Square. Two years later she joins the ranks of the ancient and dishonorable company of Durgin Park Dining Hall, every customer a potential target for razor-sharp barbs. Durgin Park is a stone's throw from the site of *The Beaver* where Recompense West was equally ready to take on the world.

When the BRA moves against the West End, Babs and Lily stand together in the futile protests against The Taking. This camaraderie is radically different from their positions fifteen years later when the city teeters on the brink of a race war.

In 1957 Stan and Lottie pack up and move to two rooms in Dorchester. It's heart wrenching for Babs to see her grandparents shattered by the expulsion from their home. The experience leaves a deep distrust of City Hall that fuels her anger in the struggles to come.

In 1958, Babs is waiting on tables at Durgin Park when she meets big Nolan Lynch, the image of his ancestor Farrell. They date for three months before Nolan introduces Babs to his mother, **SARAH LYNCH**. Sarah never remarried after Regan's murder and took in boarders on Monument Avenue. She dislikes Babs on sight believing her son can do better than a "Polack" waitress. A night at Nantasket Beach and sex on the backseat of Nolan's Studebaker leads to Babs becoming pregnant. They marry in 1959.

Nolan works in the *Boston Globe* pressroom ladling molten metal into casting boxes for printing plates. Before the *Globe* moves from Newspaper Row, Nolan's workdays usually end on Pi Alley where last call is at 8.45 in the morning. On his way home, Nolan often meets his mother returning from morning mass at St. Mary's. Sarah's devotion to the Church borders on the fanatic, her belief that Babs enticed her son to commit a mortal sin adding to disdain for her daughter-in-law.

Babs and Nolan have three children, **WILLIAM "BILLY" LYNCH, BARRY** and **TRACY**. With little else for her behind the lace curtains of Monument Avenue, Babs's life centers on the children during the turbulent sixties, a time that sees the Boston sky lit by fires scorching Blue Hill Avenue and brings thirty thousand war protestors to Boston Common. In Charlestown churches bells toll for sons killed in Vietnam, more boys than from any other part of town. On Bunker Hill Day, Babs stands with Townies who greet heroes of past and present but she remains an outsider.

In summer 1964, Babs and Billy go to Fenway Park where the “Yaz” and “Tony C” lead the newest crop of Red Sox hopefuls. When Tony Conigliaro bats one over the Green Monster, five-year-old Billy lets fly with a heaven-piercing yell. There’s a tear in Babs’s eye as she hugs her son fiercely and remembers white-haired Stanislav Kaminski sitting there. “This year, Billy,” she imagines Stan promise. “This year, boy!”

For Frances “Franny” Trane every year is a winner whether riding “Santayana” down Concord’s Battle Lane or climbing the grand staircase of the Ritz-Carlton to have tea with a grandmother who dotes on her. Seventy-four-year-old Victoria Steele widowed in 1956 maintains her place on the Social Register, her mastery of Sewing Circle 93 and her watch on the morals of Boston. In 1959 Victoria takes Franny to Europe for six weeks crossing the Atlantic in *Queen Mary* and going from London to Istanbul on the Orient Express. When they return, Victoria declares her traveling companion a proper young lady of Boston.

Chandler Steele’s investment in the post-war high-tech boom nets millions for the Houqua Fund, almost an embarrassment of riches in a city clothed in Depression rags. In 1959 with Boston teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, Chandler and other city leaders meet in the basement boardroom of the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company. “The Vault” drives a renewal of the City on the Hill beginning with the redevelopment of Scollay Square’s sixty acres cleared for a civic plaza on the site where Shawmut wigwams stood.

In summer 1963 when Franny is seventeen she’s a guest at the Kennedy compound in Hyannis. President Kennedy invites Chandler and a group of wartime friends and their families for the weekend. Chandler and Carmela’s children are away and Franny gets to go with her uncle and aunt. Four months later, Franny is her class at Radcliffe when news comes that the president has been shot. Her disbelief turns to utter despair, as she struggles to keep the image of a smiling JFK at the helm of *Victura* sharing a joke with Chandler as they sailed the waters of Nantucket Sound.

In June 1964, Franny and two friends, Joel and Rebecca Epstein, travel to St. Augustine, Florida to participate in Freedom Summer. The three students join a group of NAACP youth who attempt to integrate the whites-only Monson Motel putting on their swimsuits and heading for the pool. The manager pours acid into the water to prevent its pollution.

Franny and the Epsteins are beaten and arrested in a rally at St. Augustine's four-hundred-year old slave market. They're in jail when they learn of the murder of three civil rights workers in Mississippi. The next day, Lawrence Trane arrives and secures the release of the trio taking them back to Boston.

In her second year at Radcliffe, Franny is living in Cambridge and takes part in the protests that begin after the bombing raids on North Vietnam. She is with thousands who gather on Boston Common when Martin Luther King Jr. comes to talk on the training ground, and she takes part in the battles around Harvard Square. She graduates from Radcliffe, and goes to England to attend the London School of Economics, arriving as Tariq Ali and Danny Cohn Bendt lead a generation of disaffected youth to the barricades of London and Paris. In July 1968, Franny and hundreds of students storm the barriers outside the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square. Driven down a side street by mounted police, Franny stumbles and falls. She narrowly escapes the pounding hooves, pulled to safety by another demonstrator.

Franny's rescuer is 23-year-old Raymond Fletcher. An instigator of the Boston ghetto riots that destroyed fifteen blocks of Blue Hill Avenue in 1967, Fletcher was suspected of being a sniper and wounding a police officer. He fled to Canada and afterwards to England where he also attends courses at LSE when the college isn't under siege by one or another revolutionary group.

Three weeks after their meeting, Franny moves into Ray's digs on the second floor of a Victorian row house in Brixton. They're passionate and loving but tormented, too, by small differences that loom large, sometimes just a word taken wrongly. Suddenly it's as though they're standing naked, all the eyes of the past on them. The moment passes and they walk together again not always on the path of revolution. Ray Fletcher is the grandson of marvelous Marvin and this is the London of Strawberry

Fields and Penny Lane, where the flower children “turn on, tune in, drop out” in the psychedelic city. Their intense, volatile love-in lasts ten months. In November 1969 Franny stands alone at the stern of *Clerkenwell Merchant*, as the passenger-cargo ship clears the docks and moves into the Thames to begin the voyage back to Boston.

The stories of Lily Fletcher, Babs Lynch and Fanny Trane converge in the Seventies amid the agony a city divided against itself. What follows are some ideas for the roles each play in the pivotal episodes.

- On a blustery afternoon in November 1971, Lily Fletcher storms from Easthampton Street to Elijah Lovejoy School, where her youngest child, Shirlee, is a pupil. The Lovejoy is a crumbling brick building with grimy walls and sagging floors built ninety years ago and more like a prison for its six hundred children. Eighty-seven percent of the pupils are African-American, seven percent are Latino, and two percent are Asian. Twenty-four students are white. One teacher and one custodian are black; every other staff member is white. Shirlee’s class teacher, Miss Madeline Mahoney, earlier in the day punished the child for speaking out of turn striking her with a metal ruler and sending her home in tears.

Lovejoy’s headmaster and two male teachers block Lily’s path but can’t silence her outburst against “an Irish bitch from South Boston.” Headmaster O’Connor promises an investigation though is well acquainted with Mahoney’s harsh treatment of her black pupils.

In January 1972, Lily attends a meeting of the NAACP’S Public School Committee chaired by Reverend Jerome Fletcher. The members opt to file a federal lawsuit against the Boston School Committee and seek an order declaring the city guilty of systematically segregating its schools. The case falls by lot to Judge W. Arthur Garrity Jr., who will hand down his opinion fifteen months later.

- Babs finds it harrowing to visit her childhood home in South Boston, where Joseph Kaminski’s chronic alcoholism has left him a double amputee in a wheelchair, still able though to ride

down Broadway to Plank O'Malley's bar. Marja works as a waitress at Amrheins, the hangout of Southie's political bosses.

Babs has two sisters both married to Polish-Americans and living in South Boston with children of school-going age. As busing looms, the women vow to fight any law that will force them to send their kids to high-crime slums where they believe they'll be raped or murdered, fears exacerbated by Louise Day Hicks, Iron Maiden of South Boston, and other demagogues.

- Father **EDWARD LYNCH**, S.J. also has mixed feelings when he visits his mother's house on East 8th Street. Eddie is forty-four; his father Neal died in 1968. Callista is as prejudiced as ever less against Jews who've migrated out of her vision than the multitude of African-Americans now considered the prime threat to Irish Boston. Callista's oldest daughter, Irene, who lives three houses away, has two teenage sons at South Boston High.

No one in the family can say precisely what Father Eddie does, though they know he lectures at Boston College and is somehow connected to the *Portogee's* office. "The Portogee" is His Eminence Humberto Sousa Medeiros, Archbishop of Boston, a disappointment to his Irish flock who disapprove of a Portuguese-American, a former floor sweeper in a Fall River mill replacing the grand dynasties of Richard Cardinal Cushing and William Henry O'Connell. Father Eddie is the eyes and ears of Cardinal Medeiros, a thankless task given Medeiros' inclination to wash his hands of "Gethsemane," as he calls his Boston archdiocese.

- Professor Leon Harbling, a Harvard sociologist, assigns Franny to monitor the Boston school case. Her fact gathering takes her from City Hall to the streets of Roxbury, South Boston and Charlestown. Franny's reports are instrumental in Harbling's selection as one of Judge Garrity's assistants charged with finding a peace formula acceptable to all sides.

- In September 1974, Babs and Billy join thousands marching to Government Center to protest school busing. Babs and other mothers toss tea bags into a fountain on Boston Common, emulating the Boston Tea Party. Today's tyrants are "King Arthur Garrity" and royal traitors like Senator

Edward Kennedy. The senator is attacked when he speaks at the anti-busing rally. “You should be shot like your brothers,” shouts one woman.

- On the first day of busing, Lily Fletcher is in charge of the hotlines at Freedom House in Roxbury, as black children head for South Boston. The buses climbing Dorchester Heights run the gauntlet of hundreds hurling bottles and rocks and chanting racist epithets. “No Niggers in South Boston,” “Klan Kountry,” “Bus ’em Back to Africa.” Babs’s sisters and their sons battle the TPF, Boston’s tactical police force, a riot corps clad in powder blue outfits. The rioters see only “black and tan.”

- Ray Fletcher returns to Boston in 1971 cleared of the Blue Hill Avenue shooting. He is a delegate to the National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana where African-Americans chart a course for their future. A militant nationalist with Maoist leanings, Ray supports the establishment of black enclaves in the United States. He covers Boston’s “race war” for radical journals personally against busing that he sees as a threat to a separate black nation.

- Franny works in “The Bunker,” a basement command post in City Hall, as violence escalates and riots spread from South Boston to Mission Hill. Brawls erupt in school corridors, knives flash, and bomb scares empty schools. The city gets called “Little Rock of the North.”

Young David Duke, “Imperial Wizard” of the KKK, comes to Catholic Southie to promise “a great victory in South Boston for the white race.” The Grand Dragon breathes fire into his audience of six hundred, mostly youths clutching beer cans of beer, but when he asks for recruits at \$3 a head, the crowd vanishes into the night.

At the Bunker, Franny and Father Eddie Lynch are brought together by their search for answers in a city ruled by fear. Franny comes to have a deep respect for the priest’s strength of purpose. An admiration that sometimes touches Franny differently, with an affectionate glance at the big Jesuit and a journey that can never be theirs.

- Chandler and the Vault meet Mayor Kevin White in the Parkman House on Beacon Street to plan Bicentennial of events like the re-enactment of the Boston Massacre. The prospect of the NAACP and ROAR marching for “inalienable” rights takes on a vital meaning with heightened concerns about a bloody confrontation.

In March 1975, two unscheduled reenactments take place at the Old State House. At noon, Reverend Jerome Fletcher and one hundred and fifty African-Americans pay tribute to Crispus Attucks. All the living descendants of Nixie Fletcher are present, except Ray, who refuses to celebrate events tied to “two-hundred year-old white men.”

At 6 p.m. Babs and Billy are with a ROAR crowd that comes down New Congress Street led by drummers beating a funeral dirge. Pallbearers carry a coffin with the corpse of MISS LIBERTY – BORN 1770-DIED 1974.

The formal re-enactment of the Massacre begins. ROAR members watch seven “lobsterbacks” raise their rifles and fire. Five Bostonians fall. The ROAR demonstrators also drop silently to the ground beside the re-enactors. They lie next to a black man representing Crispus Attucks.

In April, President Gerald Ford comes to Boston to celebrate the Lexington-Concord battles. Franny spends the night of April 18 with Joel and Rebecca Epstein and thirty thousand protesters camped under the banners of the Peoples Bicentennial Commission. In the morning, President Ford delivers an address on Concord Bridge: “From a militia of raw recruits, the American military stands on the front lines of the Free World . . .” Across the river, the crowd roars in response: “No more war! No more war!”

Waving yellow “Don’t Tread on Me” flags, Franny and the Epsteins wade into the river trying to reach the presidential stand. Coast Guard patrol boats cut them off. Mounted police splash into the water and swing their clubs. Joel is beaten into the mud but manages to rise to his feet. He holds up his middle finger. Thousands on the hillside give their president the same send-off.

When Franny gets home drenched and muddied, Lawrence and Cyrene embrace their daughter. They don't forget they were also Water Rats sitting by the dock on T-Wharf waiting for a new dawn on Boston Harbor.

- In 1975, Lily's children, John and Shirlee, are assigned to Charlestown High. On a July evening, Lily and six Roxbury parents are invited to a meeting at City Hall to elect a Racial-Ethnic Parents Council. Their Charlestown counterparts sit in a huddle in the large conference room. Lily recognizes Babs sporting a blue windbreaker embroidered with the insignia of "Powder Keg," Charlestown branch of ROAR. Their greeting is cold and awkward. Babs has difficulty finding words under the eyes and ears of her contingent.

The meeting is conducted by Frank Powers, Charlestown High's headmaster. The Townies come with the sole purpose of blocking the attempt to form a multiracial parents' council seen as an endorsement for forced busing. After two hours, Powers gives up and calls off the parley. The black parents beat a hasty retreat from City Hall. The whites leave with their fists aloft, a crowd of Powder Keg supporters cheering them as they emerge.

- The Second Battle of Bunker Hill begins on September 8, 1975, opening day of school. The slopes of Breed's Hill teem with belligerents, the approaches manned by baton-wielding TPF men, the skies patrolled by police choppers. There are no Redcoats making for Charlestown Neck, only a line of canary-yellow buses rolling toward the pickets of Powder Keg.

Babs has opted to send her two younger children to a private school in Medford. Billy is in his senior year at Charlestown and elects to stay on and complete his schooling. When he leaves for classes on September 8, he heads up Monument Avenue toward the towering granite obelisk and the High School. Police mass on the steps below the statue of Colonel William Prescott – "Don't fire till you see the whites of their eyes." – Pockets of sign-waving Townies stand glowering at the cops.

A convoy of six buses climbs Breeds Hill flanked by motorcycles and led by patrol cars. John and Shirlee sit in the third row of the first bus, their fear-filled eyes on their mother. Lily is a volunteer

safety monitor and stands up front on the platform next to the driver. The buses pass through the jeering crowds and roll to a stop outside Charlestown High.

Billy never forgets his first glimpse of John Fletcher. He's watching from a third floor window and sees Fletcher climb out of the lead bus. All six foot seven of him. Around Billy others crack jokes about "apes" and "baboons" and other slurs. "Giraffe!" thinks Billy. Watching Fletcher lope toward the school, he can't help picturing him driving down the lane for a slam-dunk. And he's right, for John is a basketball star.

- On the second day of school, Townie mothers adopt a new form of protest. "We're going to pray for our children; we're going to pray for our town. If Martin Luther King can do it, so can the women of Charlestown." A three-year-old girl carrying an American flag leads the marchers. Babs is in the front row in shorts and sandals. "*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*" A block from Monument Square police cordon off High Street. Motorcycle cops gun their machines. Mounted police in flak jackets steady their horses. "*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.*" The women halt ten feet from the wall of policeman. The cops tighten their grip on the shafts of their clubs. "*Now and at the hour of our death, Amen.*"

Father Eddie Lynch steps up to the line and begs Babs and others to stand down. The women respond with one word: "Judas!"

An hour passes. Mothers make their children leave their ranks. Then, the four hundred advance, shoulder to shoulder. The police push back but women begin to break through the line. The TPF officers give the order to advance. "Bastards!" Babs curses the new cudgel boys. She's pummeled and hurled to the pavement. In five minutes, the women are driven from the crest of Breed's Hill.

- Billy and his Townie classmates change their Bicentennial motto of "'76" for another: "TLWC" – *The Last White Class*. Billy walks the hallways with smoldering resentment feeling robbed of what should've been his best and brightest year at Charlestown High. Half of his friends boycott school or drop out altogether. Plainclothes detectives roam the corridors. TPF storm troopers hunker down

outside. There are skirmishes and swearing matches with black students. Six weeks after the start of the school year, Headmaster Frank Power quits a job he held honorably for two decades.

After the Red Sox, Billy's second passion is basketball. When he reports for the first practice, twenty black players turn up for the try-outs. Three blacks and two whites are selected for the starting five. Billy Lynch and John Fletcher are starting guards.

Billy and John slowly build respect for each other on the basketball court and in the locker-room, with the josh and jive banter of teammates. They ride the team bus into North Dorchester and Roxbury places Billy knows only by fearsome reputation. John has to run the gauntlet of raging Townies stubbornly refusing to accept the black players. The season's high spot is Charlestown's stunning overtime defeat of league champions, Jeremiah Burke High. A home-game victory, the Charlestown team leaves the gym under police protection to avoid clashes with their elated though still confused fans.

Billy goes secretly to Oscar's Restaurant invited to celebrate John's sixteenth birthday. Billy sits down with John's family with no idea that marvelous Marvin was his granddad's sidekick in MASSASOIT COTTON MILLS during Prohibition. He, too, leaves this celebration elated but confused.

- In the violent spring of the bicentennial year, white students attack an African-American lawyer on City Hall plaza, a photo of Theodore Landsman's assailant "spearing" him with the staff of an American flag becoming a modern version of the shot heard around the world. Two weeks later, one hundred thousand Bostonians are shamed into marching for peace in their city.

On a night in May, Billy visits his Southie cousins who belong to the militant South Boston Defense League. They're with a mob that heads for the city to set fire to a replica of the Boston Tea Party ship. Billy and his cousins go over to Downtown Crossing and rage down Washington Street smashing store windows and vandalizing cars. They're outside Filene's trying to set fire to a *Globe* delivery van when they see other Defense Leaguers surround two black men at the corner of Washington and Boylston. One victim escapes, but the second is trapped in the doorway of a building and hit mercilessly. Billy and his cousins rush to join the assailants.

“O, Christ!” Billy cries out.

John is beaten senseless. He lies directly below a plaque that depicts the Liberty Tree. The same place where Milo Lynch and Dick Fletcher began their fight for freedom.

John is in a coma for five weeks in Massachusetts General Hospital, where Lily keeps vigil at his bedside. She’s there when Billy comes to visit. Lily has some suspicion about Billy’s role that night but lets it go. It means a lot to have Babs Lynch’s son sitting next to her and praying that her boy will be OK.

- Franny is alone in the study at 37 ½ Beacon Street. She loves the room filled with mementoes of generations of Steeles. The early light that falls through the bay window catches Privateer Emory Steele’s expression of perfect agony as he posed for Copley. There’s a fine oil, too, of Captain Ben’s *Lady Sarah* in Whampoa Reach. Franny is up all night working at Captain Ben’s desk, as she puts the finishing touches to her thesis, *The Unfinished Revolution*, a dissertation on the struggle for busing that Franny sees not as an end but another beginning in Boston.

The foregoing represents some of my thinking for plotlines and themes carrying the book through the 20th century. The novel doesn’t end in the 1970s but moves to the present drawing on its multi-faceted parts and characters for the finale. The story of the modern generation of Steeles, Tranes, Lynches and Fletchers includes the obvious events of the hour such as 9/11 and bitter irony of Boston’s role in an epoch-making tragedy; it shows the emergent multi-ethnic face of a city deeply scarred by racism and sectarian hatreds; it celebrates a moment old Stan Kaminski and the entire Red Sox Nation dreamed of for decades. It captures the big moments and the small unexpected twists, as when Lucy, a young archaeologist descended from the Paterniani brothers, discovers the remains of *The Beaver* tavern in the Dock Square area and unearths the great three-seater privy where Adam Trane and his Irregulars

sat enthroned. And for good measure Lucy also finds a sealed bottle of Pungasak Gold made by three devils who tormented the life out of Reverend Thomas Steele.

The Steeles

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|----------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|-------------------|-------|---------|-------|-------------------------|----------------|------------|
| | | | | Jeremiah | m. 1600 | Agnes Miller | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | 1577- | | 1584 - | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | 1631 | | 1660 | | | | | | | | |
| Richard | m. 1627 | Mary Home | Nicholas "Nicholas" | m. 1636 | Hannah Fletcher | Thomas | m. 1645 | Martha Thorowgood | | | | | | |
| 1602- | | 1604- | 1606- | | 1616- | 1607- | | 1615- | | | | | | |
| 1676 | | 1650 | 1678 | | 1680 | 1686 | | 1690 | | | | | | |
| Gilbert | Anne | Nicholas | m. 1665 | Annie Flowers | Eden | m. 1676 | Melicent | m. 1702 | Nora | m. 1717 | Ann | Margaret | m. 1675 | John Clark |
| 1633- | 1630- | 1637- | | 1647- | 1645- | | 1651- | | 1686 | | 1685- | 1646- | | 1640- |
| 1706 | 1630 | 1700 | | 1709 | 1720 | | 1700 | | 1706 | | 1760 | 1676 | | 1700 |
| George | Ashley | m.1705 | Sarah Green | Lemuel | m. 1705 | Abigail | Edmund | m. 1747 | Alice | m. 1765 | Sarah | Deems (1744) | Nixie Fletcher | |
| 1670- | 1675- | | 1687- | 1680- | | 1687- | 1717- | | 1723- | | 1743 | 1719- | | |
| 1744 | 1755 | | 1759 | 1760 | | 1762 | 1783 | | 1764 | | 1802 | 1745 | | |
| Joseph | Emory | m. 1745 | Prudence Swift | | | | 3 children | | | | | Richard "Dick" Fletcher | | |
| 1705- | 1717- | | 1721- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1800 | 1797 | | 1790 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Robert | William | m. 1778 | Elizabeth "Bess" Tiptree | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1746- | 1753- | | 1755- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1816 | 1795 | | 1840 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Benjamin | m. 1806 | Julia | James | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1785 | | 1784 | 1780- | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1875 | | 1846 | 1840 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cyrus | m. 1836 | Cecilia | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1809- | | 1816- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1902 | | 1894 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Oliver | m. 1863 | Evangeline | 6 children | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1837 | | 1841- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1901 | | 1914 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Edward | m.1884 | Erline | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1864- | | 1862- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1912 | | 1912 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Clayton | m. 1906 | Victoria | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1885- | | 1881- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1956 | | 1964 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cyrene | m. 1931 | Lawrence Trane | Hermione | Chandler | m. 1947 | Carmela | | | | | | | |
| | 1907- | | 1898- | 1910- | 1915- | | 1922- | | | | | | | |
| | 1980 | | 1977 | 1980 | 1990 | | 2001 | | | | | | | |
| | (Kenneth Trane | m.1963 | Shelley Tarrant) | Frances "Franny" | Todd | m. 1975 | Jennifer | | | | | | | |
| | 1936- | | 1943- | 1946- | 1948- | | 1949- | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Richard | | Holly | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | 1976- | | 1975- | | | | | | | |

The Tranes

| | | | | | |
|--------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | | Adam Trane | m. 1633 | Recompense West | |
| | | 1605 - | | 1608 - | |
| | | 1676 | | 1691 | |
| Harold "Hal" | m. 1655 | Grace | 8 Sons & | Rufus | m. 1680 |
| 1634 - | | 1671- | daughters | 1654 - | |
| 1700 | | 1745 | | 1736 | Catherine Blodgett |
| | | | | | 1663 - |
| | | | | | 1719 |
| | | Derastus | m. 1702 | Rose Pearson | |
| | | 1682 - | | 1697 - | |
| | | 1762 | | 1756 | |
| | | Caleb "Cal" | m. 1728 | Susannah Hill | |
| | | 1704 - | | 1720 - | |
| | | 1776 | | 1796 | |
| | | Jethro | m. 1753 | Nelly Pearsal | 6 children |
| | | 1733 - | | 1737 - | |
| | | 1802 | | 1799 | |
| | | Loyal | m. 1804 | Adaline Woolcott | |
| | | 1758 - | | 1778 - | |
| | | 1833 | | 1847 | |
| | | Asa | m. 1835 | Phyllis Carver | 10 children |
| | | 1805 - | | 1820 - | |
| | | 1888 | | 1910 | |
| | | Tobias | m. 1864 | Edana Doyle | |
| | | 1841- | | 1842 | |
| | | 1919 | | 1929 | |
| | | Hugh | m. 1890 | Harriet Truesdale | |
| | | 1866 - | | 1870- | |
| | | 1936 | | 1942 | |
| | | Lawrence | m. 1931 | Cyrene Steele | |
| | | 1898 - | | 1907- | |
| | | 1977 | | 1980 | |
| | | Kenneth | m. 1963 | Shelley Tarrant | Frances "Franny" |
| | | 1936 - | | 1943 | 1946- |
| | | | | Charlie | |
| | | | | 1965- | |

The Lynches

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|-------------------------|
| | | | Malachy | m. 1667 | Keeley Farling | | | |
| | | | 1642- | | 1644- | | | |
| | | | 1718 | | 1710 | | | |
| Fenella | Margery | Fiona | Nicholas | m. 1706 | Judith French | | | |
| 1668- | 1671- | 1673- | 1684- | | 1688- | | | |
| 1740 | 1700 | 1730 | 1744 | | 1734 | | | |
| | | Phineas | m. 1745 | Phoebe O'Connor | | | | |
| | | 1719- | | 1715- | | | | |
| | | 1789 | | 1775 | | | | |
| | | Milo | m. 1766 | Alice McCarthy | m. 1800 | Lavinia | | |
| | | 1746- | | 1749- | | 1770- | | |
| | | 1826 | | 1798 | | 1840 | | |
| | | Titus | m. 1824 | Dorcas Biggs | | | | |
| | | 1802- | | 1808- | | | | |
| | | 1866 | | 1869 | | | | |
| Roark O'Brien | m. 1857 | Nellie | Farrell Lynch | m. 1853 | Marcy | Seth | Rose | |
| 1832- | | 1839- | 1828- | | 1836- | 1825- | 1827- | |
| 1912 | | 1929 | 1872 | | 1867 | 1900 | 1890 | |
| | | John | m. 1874 | Patricia | | Terrence | m. 1880 | Teresa |
| | | 1854- | | 1856- | | 1855- | | 1864 |
| | | 1936 | | 1945 | | 1936 | | 1950 |
| | | Casey | m. 1901 | Anne | 3 children | Regan | m. 1924 | Sarah |
| | | 1880- | | 1882- | | 1900- | | 1903- |
| | | 1937 | | 1952 | | 1931 | | 1984 |
| | | Neal | m. 1925 | Callista | | Nolan | m. 1959 | Barbara "Babs" Kaminski |
| | | 1902- | | 1904- | | 1927- | | 1937- |
| | | 1968 | | 1980 | | 2000 | | |
| | | Edward | | | | William "Billy" | Barry | Tracy |
| | | 1928 - | | | | 1959- | 1962- | 1965- |

The Fletchers

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| | Nixie Fetcher (1745) | Deems Steele (1750) | Pedro Coelho "Black Pedro" (1765) | Crispus Attucks (1770) | | | | | |
| | 1727-1805 | 1717-1745 | 1725-1760 | 1723-1770 | | | | | |
| Richard "Dick" Fletcher | m. 1785 | Charlotte | Azor | Isanna | Junius | m. 1800 | Ann | m. 1817 | Mary |
| 1745-1830 | | 1765-1820 | 1756-1800 | 1758-1845 | 1767-1845 | | 1780-1811 | | 1786-1870 |
| | Jason m. 1830 | Henrietta | | | | Gideon | m. 1848 | Theresa | |
| | 1805-1880 | 1808-1876 | | | | 1818-1888 | | 1828-1898 | |
| | William "Billy" | m. 1869 | Jane | | | Anthony | m. 1875 | Nila | |
| | 1839-1919 | | 1848-1922 | | | 1854-1906 | | 1850-19 25 | |
| | Frederick | m. 1895 | Helen | | | George | m. 1918 | Loretta | |
| | 1880-1940 | | 1881-1950 | | | 1892-1979 | | 1896-1972 | |
| | Marvin | m. 1922 | Estelle "Stella" Lamartine | | | Jerome | m. 1945 | Earlene | |
| | 1896-1980 | | 1896-1955 | | | 1920-1989 | | 1923-1993 | |
| | Oscar | m. 1944 | Arlene | m. 1959 | Lily Banks | Shelby | m. 1968 | Gloria | |
| | 1923- | | 1924-1951 | | 1938- | 1947- | | 1949- | |
| | Ray | Millie | John | Shirlee | | | | | |
| | 1945- | 1946- | 1960 | 1962- | | | | | |

About the Author – Errol Lincoln Uys

The first major book assignment of Errol Lincoln Uys (pronounced “Ace”) was with James A. Michener on his South African novel, *The Covenant*. “Uys’s ability to catch an idea and run with it is remarkable,” said Michener. “He showed such a mastery of plotting that again and again he came up with dazzling ideas I could not have thought of by myself.”

Uys wrote the epic historical novel, *Brazil* (Simon and Schuster, 1986; New and Revised Edition, Silver Spring, 2000): “Uys has accomplished what no Brazilian author from José de Alencar to Jorge Amado was able to,” wrote the noted Brazilian critic, Wilson Martins, “Uys is the first to write our national epic in all its decisive episodes. He is the first outsider with the talent to understand Brazil as an imaginary creation, coherent in its apparent incoherencies, complementary in its contradictions. Descriptions like those of the war with Paraguay have no rival in our literature and evoke the great passages of *War and Peace*.”

Brazil won critical acclaim in the United Kingdom, Germany and France, where it was a bestseller (*La Forteresse Verte*.) Said *Le Figaro*: “No one before Uys knew how to bring to life Brazil and her history. Uys’s characters are brilliant and colorful, combining elements of the best swashbuckler with those worthy of deepest reflection. Most stunning is that it took a South African now a naturalized American, to evoke so perfectly the grand but interrupted dream that is Brazil.” *L’Express* concurred: “A masterpiece! Brazil has the feel of an enchanted virgin forest, a totally new and original world for the reader-explorer to discover.”

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Uys has written the non-fiction book, *Riding the Rails: Teenagers on the Move During the Great Depression* (TV Books, 1999; Routledge, 2003.) The *Boston Globe* praised this work as “A riveting document of hope and hardship. The reader can all but hear the cadence of the trains on the tracks and the lonesome wail at every whistle-stop.”

Uys is a writer and editor with thirty years’ experience in the United States, England and Africa. He was editor-in-chief of *Reader’s Digest* in South Africa and senior international editor with the U.S. edition. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts.

A detailed biography is available at the website: www.erroluys.com