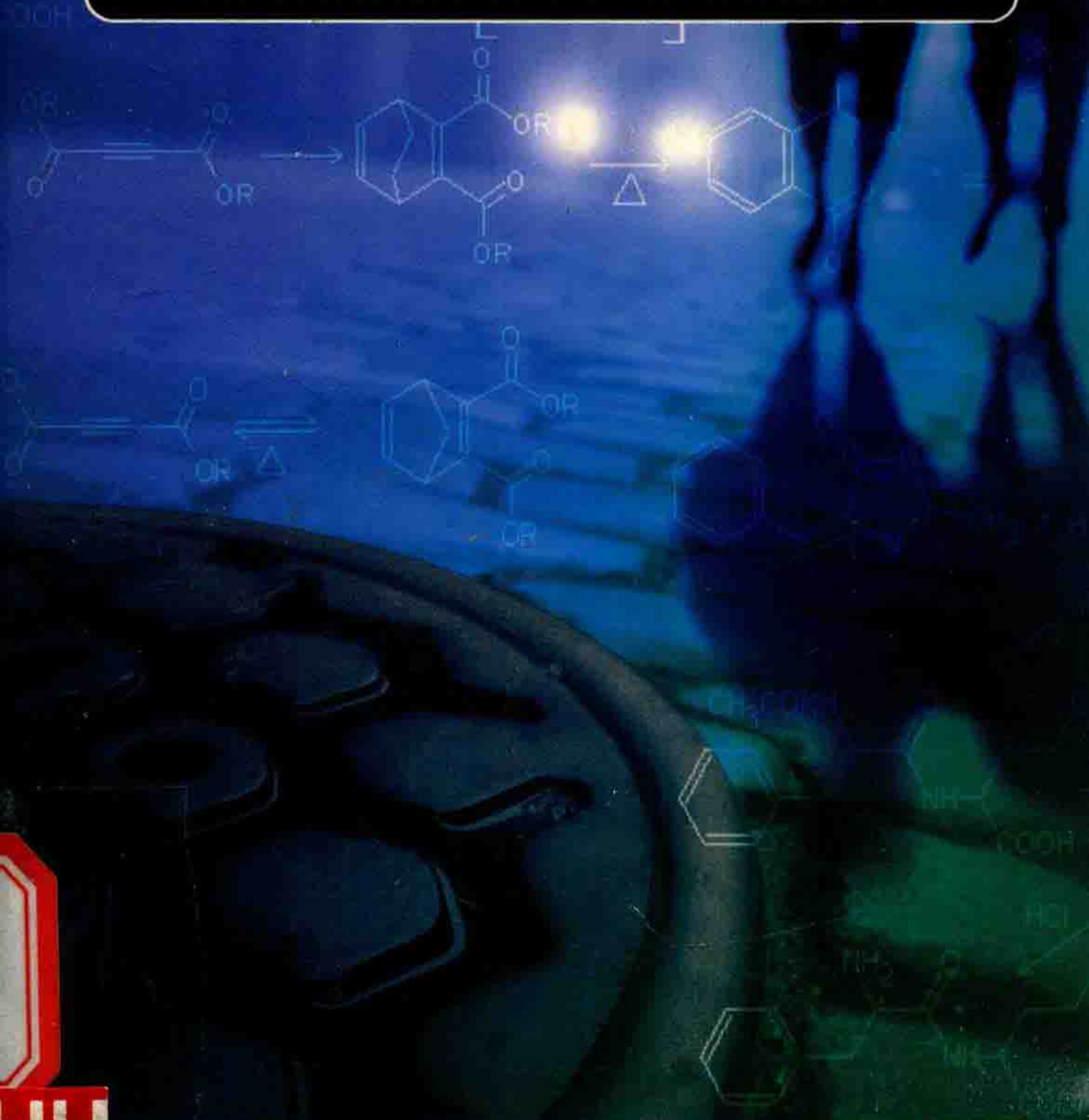


An original novel based on the critically acclaimed hit CBS series!

CSI:NY™

BLOOD ON THE SUN



Edgar Award-winning author

STUART M. KAMINSKY

CSI:NY™

BLOOD ON THE SUN

a novel

Stuart M. Kaminsky

Based on the hit CBS series "CSI: NY"

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AN UNTIMELY DEATH

"Can you give us the names of the men who were part of this morning's *minyan*?" asked Stella.

Glick hesitated, shrugged, and said, "Ten of us. Me, Asher, Rabbi Mesmur, Simon Aaronson, Saul Mendel, Justin Tuchman, Herman Siegman, Sanford Tabachnik, Yale Black, and Arvin Bloom."

"All regulars?" asked Aiden.

"All except Mendel and Bloom," said Glick. "I don't know Bloom. He came with one of the members, spent some time talking to my brother. Mendel still works. Can't always make it. The others are retired. The *minyan*, the *shul*, are their life."

"Is there some reason your brother would have stayed after the *minyan*?" asked Stella.

"No," said Glick, sipping his cup of coffee. "He had to get to work."

"He did say something about having to do something at the synagogue after the *minyan*," Yosele remembered. "He said it would take only a few minutes."

"It took more than a few minutes," said Glick, looking down. "It took his entire life."

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Dead of Winter

To the Krechmans—Sheldon, Carole and
my lovable and loving Aunt Goldie.

The communication of the dead is tongued with
fire beyond the language of the living.

—*T. S. Eliot*

Prologue

The STALKER WATCHED from the window of Seth's Deli, a copy of the *Post* open in front of him, a mug of decaf coffee in his hand. He had already paid in cash and left a twenty-percent tip. Once, a long time ago, he had waited tables. It had been a far different setting, but the dishes and cups had been just as dirty, with people leaving used napkins in which they had blown their noses or spat upon or stuffed into quarter-filled coffee cups.

He sat so that he could watch the glass doors of the building across the street. It was the perfect place to wait for her to come out. The problem was that he couldn't come here too often. He didn't want to be remembered, even though, given the morning swirl of waitresses and customers and the clanking of plates and the calling in of orders, it was unlikely he would be noticed.

The cliché was that New Yorkers were too self-absorbed and in a hurry to pay much, if any, attention to other people.

But most of the people around him were only New Yorkers because for the moment, for a few weeks, months, or years, they resided here. They were white, brown, black, or yellow, and many had either the hint of an accent or the thick coating of one from another part of the country, or another part of the world.

He, on the other hand, had been born in the city and, with only one long absence, had remained in it. His family had come over from County Cork in Ireland before the Civil War. He had relatives who had died in that war, and some every war since, including his father.

He was at home in the city. Or he had been until the person he was stalking had taken the life of the last person on earth he loved.

The double glass doors of the building across the street opened and she walked out. Another woman, whom he had seen with her before, was at her side, as was a man in a shirt and tie. The women were carrying blue plastic kits that looked vaguely like fishing tackle boxes. The man was empty-handed, but the Stalker knew that tucked into a holster at the back of the man's belt was a pistol.

He got up from the table, folded the newspaper

under his right arm and moved toward the door. He would make his notes in the book in his pocket as soon as he had time. He had filled eight identical books with notes. Those books sat in a neat pile in his dresser drawer, lined up chronologically. The first one began three months ago.

As he stepped into the morning heat and looked up at the sun, he felt a hint of satisfaction. The day would be hot, gritty. He would need a long shower and shampoo, but that would come later, much later.

Heat waves, like the one the city was presently going through, probably claimed more lives each year than floods, tornadoes and hurricanes combined. And the greatest human toll was in the cities, where the area of heat-absorbing dark roofs and pavements exceeds the area covered by cooling vegetation. Rural areas got some relief when temperatures dropped at night. The people of a city like New York were under further risk of health damage because of pre-existing stress on the body's respiratory and circulatory systems partly due to air pollution.

People were irritable, just as they had been in 1972 when New York suffered a two-week heat wave that claimed 891 lives. The Stalker had been here in 1972, but he did not remember suffering. Suffering had come twenty years earlier in a land far away, a land about which he cared little. The

heat of 1972 had been no more than a minor annoyance. He remembered that the burning heat had kept people inside, cut his income in half for two weeks. Today people were also staying home. The present temperature was a humid 103 degrees. Power was failing as people turned on their air conditioners full blast. Emergency rolling blackouts were in effect.

He knew where the three people across the street were headed: the garage where the Crime Scene Unit cars were parked. His rental car, a dark blue Honda Civic, was parked directly in front of the deli in front of a fire hydrant. He would not be towed. He would get no ticket. He had turned down his sunshade so that the card he had placed there could be seen. The card read: EMERGENCY MEDICAL Treatment, CITY OF NEW YORK.

He used his remote button to open the car's doors and climbed into a chamber of searing heat. He removed the card from the sunshade, put it on the seat next to him and left the shade down.

He sat silently, savoring the moment of sudden, intense sauna heat before starting the car and turning on the air conditioner, which blew hot air into his face for a few seconds before starting to cool.

He did not delude himself as he drove slowly into traffic. He knew what he was. He was a stalker. Actually, he took pride in the title. He was good at it, had studied it. But he wouldn't be a stalker

much longer. He would become an executioner, and the person whose photograph he now removed from his pocket and placed on the seat next to him would be the executed.

In the photograph—as in life—she looked serious, pretty, confident; a woman, not a girl. Stella Bonasera was her name, and she had made an error, a terrible, irreversible error, for which she would pay. Soon.

1

MAYBELLE ROSE WAS SCREAMING.

It was a little after eight on a Tuesday morning on an usually quiet street in Forest Hills, a few miles from Flushing Meadows Park and Shea Stadium. Maybelle, black, overweight, around fifty, was standing in front of a white two-story house.

In the house next door, Aaron Gohegan was shaving, his electric shaver almost silent. He heard the screams and, shaver in hand, moved to the bedroom window, past his wife, Jean, who, night mask over her eyes and purple plugs in her ears, snored gently.

Maybelle Rose was looking around frantically, her screaming mixed with weeping.

Aaron, currently in his undershirt and trousers and barefoot, always left for work in Manhattan at 8:15 a.m. It had been his routine for twelve years.

He had a reputation for punctuality and reliability, at fifty-two the youngest vice president at Raven-son Investments.

Today, he knew, as his eyes met Maybelle's, that reputation would suffer. Aaron put on the neatly pressed white shirt he had hanging on the closet door, slipped on his socks and shoes and headed out of the bedroom and down the stairs.

Behind him, his wife was dreamily saying something he didn't understand.

Maybelle was screaming louder now, hoarse, frantic, looking around for help as Aaron stepped through his front door.

As Aaron ran across the lawn toward Maybelle, Maya Anderson, the seventy-one-year-old widow who lived across the street, also hurried toward the screaming woman.

As the two neighbors came closer they could see thick beads of sweat on Maybelle's face.

Maybelle, who weighed almost 250 pounds, sagged into the arms of Maya Anderson, who weighed slightly more than 150. Amazingly, the older woman managed to hold up the now sobbing woman until Aaron stepped in to help.

On wobbly thick legs, Maybelle, gasping for air, turned her eyes toward Aaron, a pleading look on her face.

"What happened?" asked Maya gently.

Maybelle turned her head toward the older

woman and tried to speak. Nothing came out but a dry rasp and something that might have been a word.

Aaron and Maya gently sat Maybelle down on the lawn. She was breathing rapidly, trying to catch her breath. Then she said, "Dead."

"Dead?" Aaron repeated. "Who?"

"All of them," Maybelle said, looking over her shoulder at the house behind her.

The door to the house was open. Aaron, who had been a medic in the first Gulf War, rose and turned toward the house. Maybelle's breathing was even harsher now. She reached for her chest and muttered, "Oh my sweet Jesus."

"I think she's having a heart attack," Aaron said, reaching into his pocket for his cell phone.

"The devil came to that house," Maybelle whispered.

"Don't talk," said Maya as Aaron punched in 911.

But Maybelle had one more thing to say.

"The blood, sweet Jesus. They are washed in the blood of the lamb. They're floating in the blood of the lamb. The devil . . ."

Aaron decided not to enter the house until the police arrived.

Six hours earlier, Danny Messer had gotten on an A train. There was no one in the car but Danny,

who put down his backpack, sprawled on a seat, took off his glasses and rubbed the bridge of his nose.

He had spent the last sixteen hours, with two short breaks, looking at maggots, most of which had been found in the torn stomach cavity of ten-year-old Teresa Backles. Teresa's body had been buried under garbage in a Dumpster behind a subsidized apartment complex in Harlem. There were times when the garbage wasn't picked up for a week or more. This had been one of those times. The heat had accelerated the growth of the maggots and the decomposition of the girl's body.

Danny put his glasses back on and closed his eyes, seeing crawling white maggots. They were the Crime Scene Investigator's friend, revealing secrets of the dead, but that didn't stop Danny from thinking that someday he . . .

He had determined that the girl had died five days earlier. He could almost pinpoint the hour. The maggots were sometimes better at that than the medical examiner, especially if you knew what you were looking for. Danny knew.

Danny had put on a mask and climbed into the Dumpster, going through every item, including rotting, ant-covered takeout food and a single skinny dead rat with its mouth open, showing its teeth.

Teresa's mother's boyfriend had lied about when he had last seen Teresa. The maggots had told