



The Mad Hatter
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About Kadrey:

Richard Kadrey is a novelist, freelance writer, and photographer based in San Francisco. Kadrey's first novel, *Metrophage*, was published in hardcover in 1988 by Victor Gollancz Ltd., and went on to various other American and foreign printings in paperback. Mac Tonnies' *Cyberpunk/Postmodern Book Reviews* calls *Metrophage* "one of the quintessential 1980s cyberpunk novels," going on to describe "a gritty acid-trip through an ultraviolent L.A. where nothing is what it seems... . Alongside novels such as [William Gibson's] *Neuromancer* and Lewis Shiner's debut novel *Frontera*, *Metrophage* helped establish the cyberpunk aesthetic: relentless, paranoid and playfully cynical." Kadrey's second novel, *Kamikaze L'Amour*, is described by the same source as "mesmerizing... a surreal (and distinctly Ballardian) account of synesthesia and mutant desire set in the jungle-choked ruins of L.A." Kadrey's short story *Carbon Copy: Meet the First Human Clone* was filmed as *After Amy*. The publisher website, Amazon booksellers, and other sources list a July 15, 2007 publication date for Kadrey's next book, *Butcher Bird: A Novel Of The Dominion* (Night Shade Books). Other works include collaborative graphic novels and over 50 published short stories. His non-fiction books as a writer and/or editor include *The Catalog of Tomorrow* (Que/TechTV Publishing, 2002), *From Myst to Riven* (Hyperion, 1997), *The Covert Culture Sourcebook* and its sequel (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993 and 1994); Kadrey also hosted a live interview show on Hotwired in the 1990s called *Covert Culture*. He was an editor at print magazines *Shift* and *Future Sex*, and at online magazines *Signum* and *Stim*. He has published articles about art, culture and technology in publications including *Wired*, *Omni*, *Mondo 2000*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *SF Weekly*, *Ear*, *Artforum*, *ArtByte*, *Bookforum*, *World Art*, *Whole Earth Review*, *Reflex*, *Science Fiction Eye*, and *Interzone*. Source: Wikipedia

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They found his body near a dumpster in the alley behind a club called CBGB's. The place had been in the Manhattan Bowery for over a hundred and fifty years and was a kind of shrine to musicians from all the settled planets. People wondered if the dead man had been a musician in some previous life. Maybe he'd chosen to die in the alley as some symbolic act, perhaps of love for music, or as retribution for music having forgotten him.

Between the alcoholism that had killed him and the rats that had been working on him since, the man's body was in bad shape. He was identified through DNA records, and his daughter, a water miner on the dark side of the moon, came down to claim the body.

It shocked the old-timers in the neighborhood to find out that the stories the aged drunk had been spinning for years, about his being an astronaut and explorer on the edge of the solar system, might have been true. His name matched a name in the old public space registries, and his age was right to be a Mad Hatter — a deep space explorer back before that kind of travel was safe or even reasonable.

Aside from being the first humans to visit the gas giants beyond the asteroid belt, that early group of freelance astronauts was also notable for the absurd doses of radiation and cosmic rays they absorbed. The whole generation had been pretty much wiped out by an variety of exotic bone diseases and cancers. The ones with the more benign growths merely went mad with inoperable brain tumors.

Nagesh Shah, the current owner of CBGB's, had sometimes left coffee in back of the club for the old man. One night, just after New Year's, Nagesh ran into the astronaut's daughter as she was heading back to the moon.

"Is it true what they're saying? Was your father once a space cowboy?" he asked.

The woman reached into an interior pocket of her bulky jacket and removed a small silver case, the size of a prescription pill bottle. She opened the case and poured a pile of glittering white crystals into her hand.

"In the extraordinary pressure of Neptune's atmosphere, methane crystallizes. It rains diamonds all over the planet. Physicists predicted it. My father proved it."

"He was living on leftovers in my alley, and he had diamonds in his pocket?"

"His ship wasn't built for a flight that close to Neptune. None were back then. He killed his entire crew getting these. Then he left my

mother and me soon after he got back to Earth. Swore that one of the diamonds had flown through the ship's hull and lodged in his skull. I think that was just the brain tumor talking."

"May I hold one of the stones?" asked Nagesh.

The woman handed him the largest of the diamonds. It was the size of Nagesh's thumbnail. He held it up and looked at the clear winter stars through it. The crystal was an exquisite object.

As he handed the stone back, Nagesh said, "I wanted to go to space when I was a boy."

The astronaut's daughter poured the diamonds into their case and put it back in her pocket. "Space is like anywhere else," she said. "It's full of assholes."

The two of them shook hands briefly and went their separate ways. It was very cold out, and a light snow was starting.

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