



**Le Jardin des Os**  
Kadrey, Richard

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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 Tonnie's *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

### **Also available on Feedbooks for Kadrey:**

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We begin each day with pentothal and a song. The pentothal aids in our hypnotism. Admittedly, this must sound like an exotic and (certainly an archaic) practice, but it's all part of our calling here in the Immortality Enterprise. We are technocrats who are one step away from priests, and we hold our rituals and sacred places dear. Such as the Weeping Rooms.

This simple name has an important double meaning. Families can gather in the Weeping Rooms to shed tears for the loved one about to enter the protein vats. (Yes, they will be reborn, but tears are a healthy way to honor the end of each incarnation.) Those resurrection candidates who have no family do not go unmourned. The Weeping Rooms are lined with neural inductors, modified fetal cerebral-cell-wrapped nanofilaments that absorb narrowly-targeted EEG patterns from the room's inhabitants. When no family is available, the rooms themselves can replay the emotions that they have absorbed, weeping biologically-correct tears for those who are in need of grieving.

I am a diver by trade (as was my father), and I tend Le Jardin des Os, the Bone Gardens, harvesting femurs, skull caps, and phalanges from coral clumps growing in oceans of saline. My brother, Enrico, performs similar tasks in the floating islands of neural tissue that drift on the artificial tide. The one place neither of us likes to go are the tissue chambers. Pale, force-grown flesh clusters on a massive stainless-steel matrix, like quivering clumps of tofu. Speed-grown from vats of specially-treated stem cells, this flesh will become the skin-wrapping for each candidate's new body. And it was thinking of this, thinking of flesh, new bodies and old, that I committed my greatest sin, both to a man and to my calling.

I shouldn't have been able to commit my act of betrayal. Our daily hypnotism rituals are designed to prevent such things. But Mesmer's science relies, to a degree, on the subject's cooperation and if the subject is resistant or distracted, it simply will not take. This was my state of mind that day of my sin. I was distracted by an important piece of news: Jericho Dauphine-Gordini — the man who headed up the entire Immortality Enterprise — was, himself, a candidate for resurrection. To say that Gordini was powerful is to say that a typhoon might muss your hair. Immortality treatments are the most expensive and sought-after medical procedure in the world. The wealthy will undergo any amount of pain, of indignity, for it. They will pay anything. Amounts totaling the gross national products of many small nations pass through Immortality Enterprise's bank accounts every year. And, rightly, some of that should belong to my brother and me.

Our father had once been close to Gordini. In fact, they'd been partners. But vast wealth and power aren't enough for some people. Their satisfaction isn't complete until they prevent others from equaling them. Their hunger cannot be filled until they know that they are utterly alone in their success. This was Gordini's relationship to my father, the man who created the vast technological underpinning for immortality treatments. But he had no mind for business. One day he saw this made concrete, but by then it was too late. His business was gone, and he was left as one of the company's laborers, a diver and a bone farmer. My brother and I followed him, in turn. Enrico is like my father, vaguely content with the physical intricacies of the job. I, for better or worse, am more like Gordini and could never accept the unfairness of our state — or his. I knew that sooner or later, I would have my chance at revenge.

The process was fairly straightforward for someone who knew the Enterprise's dirty little trade secrets. We are both a medical facility and an industrial plant. One doesn't create vast fields of flesh and human organs without toxic runoff, both the poisons in industrial chemicals and organic runoff from dying and corrupt bodies. The stuff is piped into steel storage tanks before being redirected to the filtration system. The storage tanks are old and they leak — not enough to endanger the staff, but enough to fill a syringe or two.

We line workers are only subjected to security searches when we enter and leave the facility, not while we're on duty. Hiding two finger-size autoinjectors among my equipment that day was nothing. I carefully inserted my poison surprise into the marrow base of one particular bone cluster. This was my beauty, the largest, most perfect rose in my garden, and the only collection of bones worthy of an Enterprise master such as Gordini. Perfect murder is an act of patience. I felt as if I'd been holding my breath for my entire life and could suddenly breathe for the first time.

At the end of each work day, we gather for the atropine shot that will boost us from our hypnotic state. Before we depart, we sing a threnody, an ritual sorrow song for the departing bodies. I sang with extra sincerity that night. Many commented on the quality and strength of my voice on that occasion. I was genuinely moved, with godlike knowledge of the pain to come.

I will watch Gordini rot and drink to his dying flesh every night. And when he dies and his body re-enters the Enterprise, I will poison him again. This is the aspect of immortality that neither Gordini nor my father ever considered: revenge, once accomplished, can occur over and over

on the resurrected body of your enemy. And when I die and am resurrected, I will kill Gordini again. And again. I will never leave the Bone Gardens. They are my calling.

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