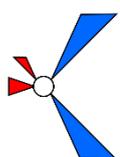


1752 AE2

bncdoc.id	C86
bncdoc.author	Thomson, Rupert
bncdoc.year	1991
bncdoc.title	The five gates of hell.
bncdoc.info	The five gates of hell. Sample containing about 43408 words from a book (domain: imaginative)
Text availability	Worldwide rights cleared
Publication date	1985-1993
Text type	Written books and periodicals
David Lee's classification	W_fict_prose

<p><1752/c></p>  <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>glass vial was always being pressed into his hand, it seemed bottomless, the hours passed and they never reached the end. They were everywhere that night. The Bar Necropolis. The Jupiter casino. A private party in some high-rise apartment block; looking down into the city from the forty-second floor, it was like being inside a radio, one of those old valve radios, and Jed almost told Creed what he thought, he almost blurted something Creed wouldn't even have understood, You must've had radios thrown away some time, didn't you? but the rush blew over and he was still staring down into the forest of lit buildings and he still hadn't spoken. Another bar, further west, in Omega. It was like that game where you were blindfolded and spun round, and then you had to try and touch someone, Creed and the Skull, they were close one moment, then they were dancing out of reach, and nothing would sound like anything when he played it back, it would sound like interference, nonsense, silence, but he stayed with it, trips to the bathroom to sluice his nose and throat, more trips to replace the tapes, because he sensed they were leading up to something, there was something at the end of this rainbow of places, not gold but something. At three in the morning everything suddenly moved back. A clearing in his head, a sudden loss of sound. It was a club. They were sitting at a round table. A candle in a red glass. Drinks. The faces of devils, all empty eyes and bright teeth. Creed was drinking water. He always drank the same brand. Drained from a glacier. Sodium-free. McGowan was talking. His words emerged from silence, as if they were the first words of the evening. Jed stared at McGowan's face as it tilted and leered, all blocks of colour and deep shadows. Jed listened hard. 'We pick them up,' the Skull was saying, 'they're guys with no links, like on the pier or down in the meat streets, they're always suckers for a few lines and a limousine. We pick them up, we take them somewhere, then we turn them blue. There's a guy we know, works in the morgue, he gets the delivery. Few hours later he calls, we're the funeral parlour, right? he's recommended us, we do the honours, bury them,' and his mouth opened like a grave, you could fall into that mouth for ever and ever, amen, and</p> <p>all those crooked grey teeth of his</p> <p>, no names that you could see, no names or dates, just blank, so nobody could find you, nobody could visit, nobody could leave flowers. 'I mean, if you're going to die you want a decent burial, stands to reason, doesn't it, and who better to give you a decent burial,' he said, 'than the Paradise Corporation. You, me,' and he levelled a hand at Creed, 'and the chairman. Creed put his glass of water down. Skull,' he said, 'just shut up, will you?' That vial again. Some amyl too, which blew Jed's head up like a mushroom cloud. In the distance, in a big gilt cage, he could see nude bodies gluing and ungluing, the sticky rhythmic contact of flesh. Male or female, he couldn't tell. Did it matter? Flesh of some kind. Tourists, maybe. Kill them later. His vision shrank. Their table again. McGowan was running on about his gun collection. It was after four when they reached the Palace. McGowan vanished with a couple they'd brought home in the car. A buzzing started up. Some kind of aid. That psychopath. Jed looked across at Creed and saw that Creed was already staring</p>
--	--

	<p>at him. Jed didn't flinch. He remembered what Sharon had said about him, remembered the chill in his eyes. Eyes that've killed. He never blinks. It's like those lizards. 'You remember what you said about loyalty?' Jed snapped back at the sound of Creed's voice. 'About it being silence?' Creed nodded. 'I remember.' 'It's kind of passive, silence,' Creed said, 'isn't it?' 'Well,' Jed said, 'you don't do anything.' 'That's what I mean. So would you go further? Do something?' There could be no hesitation here. 'Yes.' 'Make yourself comfortable, Jed. Take your jacket off.' Jed's stomach lurched. Had Creed suspected? 'No, it's all right. I think I'll keep it on.' 'What's wrong? You cold?' Sharon's words. In Creed's mouth. Did he have another virginity to lose? 'Yes,' he said. 'Just a bit.' Imagine if he had to take his jacket off. All his insurance would be gone. But Creed had turned away and Jed breathed easier. 'Do you know who</p>
--	--