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THE FIFTEENTH CHARACTER



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ROSEMARY BORDER

The Fifteenth Character

Rosemary Border

Illustrated by
David Hine

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press
Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford New York
Auckland Bangkok Buenos Aires Cape Town
Chennai Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi
Kolkata Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi
São Paulo Shanghai Taipei Tokyo Toronto

OXFORD and OXFORD ENGLISH
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ISBN 0 19 423173 9

© Oxford University Press 2000
First published 2000
Sixth impression 2003

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Printed in China

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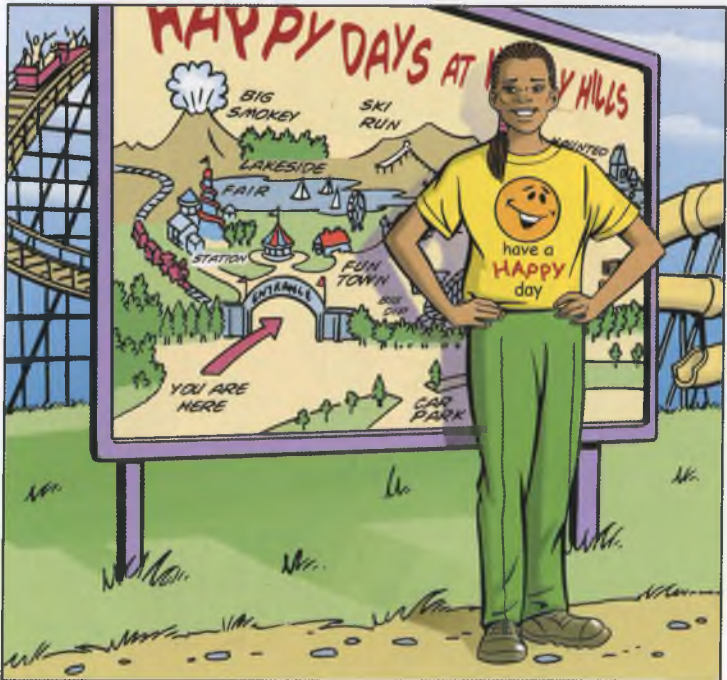
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JOBS FOR TODAY

Every day lots of different people come to Happy Hills because there are lots of exciting things to do.

Sally Brown works at Happy Hills in her holiday. She is a student and she wants to be a teacher.

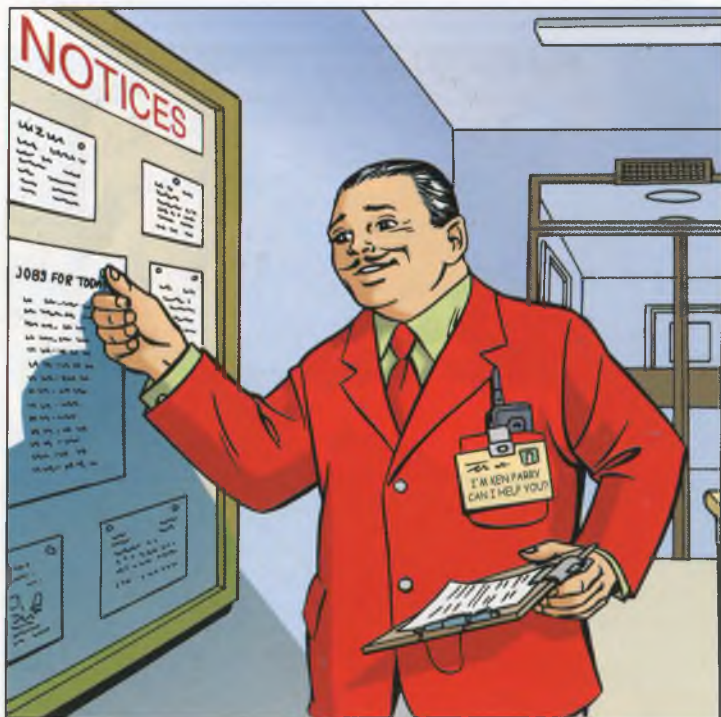
'I need the money,' she tells her family, 'and it's an interesting job.' But she is always very tired in the evening.



The Fifteenth Character

The workers at Happy Hills arrive early in the morning. They all wear clean green trousers and yellow shirts. They must smile a lot and be nice to all the visitors.

Every morning Mr Parry puts a list of *Jobs for Today* in the workers' canteen. Mr Parry wears different clothes. His shirt is green and his trousers are white, and he wears a red coat with *I'm Ken Parry. Can I help you?* on his pocket. The visitors call him Ken, but all the workers call him Mr Parry.

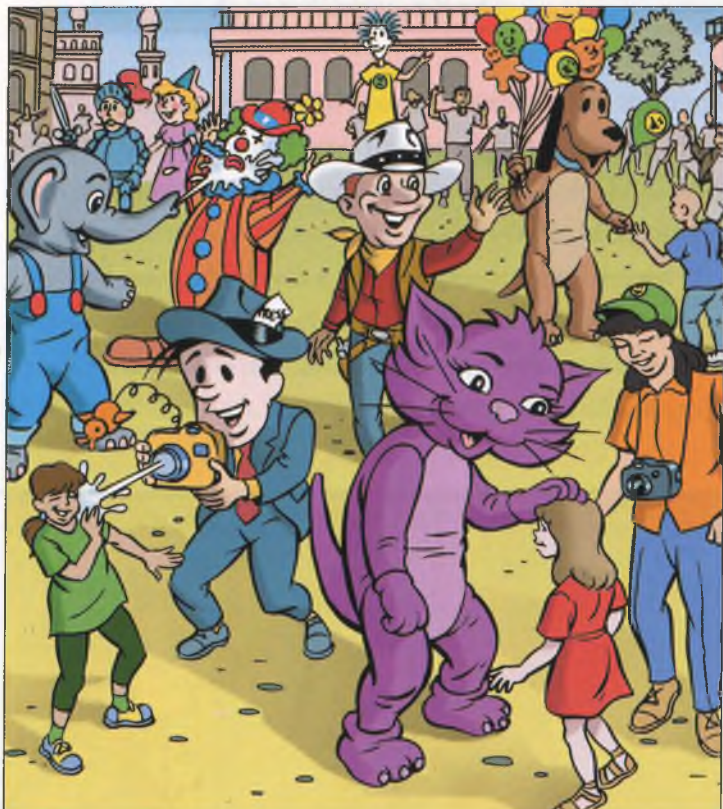


Today Sally arrives at Happy Hills at eight o'clock. On her shirt there is a picture of a smiling face and *Have a Happy Day* in black and red writing. She goes to the canteen and looks for Mr Parry's list.

'What job am I doing today?' Sally thinks. 'Am I making tea, or helping in the children's play house?'

But Sally is wrong. The list says, 'Sally Brown – Connie Cat. Break: eleven o'clock.'





‘Oh no!’ thinks Sally. Nobody likes wearing the costumes. But at Happy Hills the characters are very important. The visitors like to take photos of their children with Cowboy Joe, Charlie Clown, Baby Blue Eyes, Photo Phil, Big John, Connie Cat, Big Apple, Miss Flower, Edward Elephant and all their friends.

Everybody always asks the same questions, ‘Are you very hot in your costume?’ and ‘How do you eat and drink?’

The Fifteenth Character

Edward Elephant has the best job. He has a bag of water under his costume. He can spray the visitors with water. And Photo Phil and Charlie Clown make everybody laugh. But Connie Cat cannot do that. She can only say *miaow* to the children all day.

Sally looks for her costume. A tall man in a cowboy costume is standing beside her.

‘Hullo, Sally,’ says the cowboy. ‘It’s me – William.’ William is a student too. He is Sally’s friend. ‘Which costume are you looking for?’

‘Connie Cat. When’s your break?’

‘Eleven o’clock.’

‘Me too.’



2

HERE COMES ZAPP!

It is nine o'clock. The doors open, but there are not many visitors today. They all have invitations and they show them to Mr Parry. A very famous man is coming to Happy Hills, so Mr Parry is very excited.





‘Zapp’s coming today. He’s opening the new Zapp-o-copter,’ says William to Sally.

‘Stop talking and do some work!’ says Mr Parry.

Zapp is a singer. Sally loves listening to his songs and she has all his CDs. There is a picture of him in her room too.

The Fifteenth Character

The Zapp-o-copter is very exciting. People can sit in little helicopters and go up and down very fast. The visitors stand behind a blue rope and wait for Zapp.

‘Please stay behind the rope,’ says Mr Parry.

Suddenly there is a noise in the sky. Everybody looks up.

‘It’s Zapp’s helicopter!’ says William.



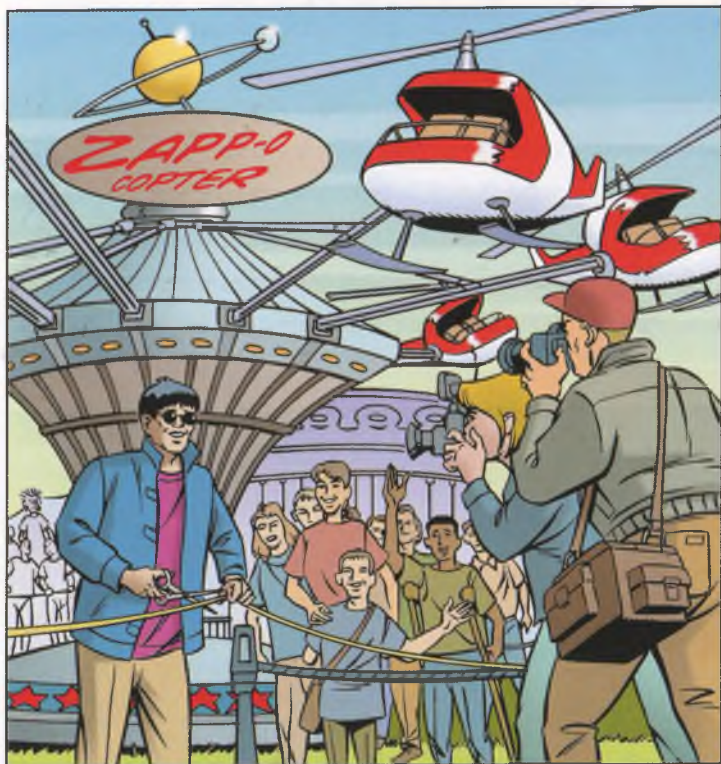
The Fifteenth Character

The helicopter comes down and Zapp gets out. He smiles at the visitors.

‘Oh – he’s wonderful!’ says a young girl. She gives Zapp a flower. He gives her a big smile and says, ‘Thank you’.

Sally is hot and thirsty in her costume. She wants to talk too, but Mr Parry is watching.





3

ZAPP'S NEW SONG

Mr Parry takes the singer to the Zapp-o-copter. Zapp cuts the rope.

'Thank you, Zapp. Now please can you sing for us?' says Mr Parry.

'OK! But the people must help me!' he says. He begins to sing. Everybody knows the song and sings it with him.

The Fifteenth Character

‘Thank you,’ says Zapp. You’re all wonderful singers. Now look at this.’ He takes a CD out of his pocket. ‘This is my new song,’ he says.

‘Please sing it for us!’ say the TV men. But Zapp smiles. ‘No, no – you must come to my big concert next Saturday.’ He puts the CD in his pocket again.



The Fifteenth Character

‘Now let’s go on the Zapp-o-copter!’ says Zapp. He sees a teacher with some children. ‘Would they like to come too?’ he asks her. ‘Of course,’ says the teacher. They help the children into the helicopters.

Zapp smiles and smiles. The photographers take lots of pictures. Photo Phil arrives too. He is one of the Happy Hills characters. He takes a photo of the children – and sprays them with water! Everybody laughs.





Zapp is having a wonderful day. He speaks to the TV people. The photographers take photos of him with all the characters. Zapp meets Charlie Clown. Charlie gives him a flower – and the flower sprays him with water. Everybody laughs.

Sally meets Zapp too, and she is very excited. But she cannot talk to him because she is wearing her cat costume and Mr Parry is watching.

4

WHERE'S ZAPP'S CD?

'Come on, it's eleven o'clock,' says William. 'Let's go to the canteen for our break. We've got ten minutes.'

They sit down in the canteen and take off their heads. Sally is thirsty. Her face is hot and red. William is hot and thirsty too. They have a long drink of cold water. 'That's good!' William says. Then he looks at his watch. 'Ten past eleven,' he says. 'Come on, Sally. Back to work!'



The Fifteenth Character

They finish their drinks and put their heads on again.

Suddenly a lot of people come into the canteen.

‘What’s the matter?’ says William.

‘Zapp’s CD!’ says Mr Parry. ‘He can’t find it!’





Everybody is unhappy, but Zapp is angry too.

‘That CD’s important, Parry,’ he says. ‘You must find it.’

‘I’m doing my best, Zapp,’ says Mr Parry. ‘Don’t hit me, please – I’m doing my best!’

The Fifteenth Character

A lot of things happen very quickly. The visitors want to go home, but suddenly Mr Parry closes all the doors.

‘Nobody can leave,’ he says. ‘I’m sorry, but Zapp’s CD’s very important and we must find it.’

Mr Parry makes a telephone call. Very soon four police arrive in a big white police car. They ask a lot of questions.





The police look everywhere for the CD. They read Mr Parry's list of visitors. They count the visitors carefully and look in all their pockets and bags.

There is a lot of noise. People are angry and tired. They want to go home now. And Zapp is speaking very quietly into a little black telephone. Photo Phil goes to him and says, 'Smile, please!'

'Go away!' says Zapp angrily.

The Fifteenth Character

Now the police want to talk to the workers. One stays with the visitors and three police speak to the workers in the canteen. Zapp comes with the police.

‘You must find that CD!’ says Zapp.

‘We’re doing our best, Zapp,’ say the police.

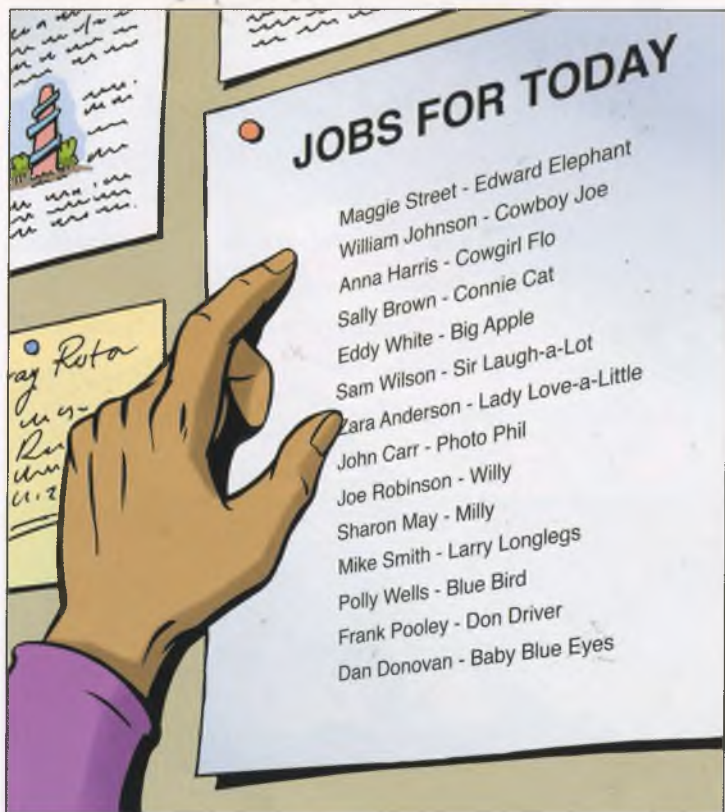


THE FIFTEENTH CHARACTER

Sally waits quietly with the other workers. She looks at Mr Parry's *Jobs for Today* list and counts the names.

There are twenty-nine names on the list today. Fifteen people are *helpers*. They wear green trousers and yellow shirts and help the visitors. Fourteen people are *characters* and wear costumes.





‘Wait a minute,’ thinks Sally. ‘There are fourteen characters on the list. But there are fifteen characters here!’

She reads the list again, very, very carefully. ‘Edward Elephant – yes, he’s here. Connie Cat – that’s me. Cowboy Joe – that’s William. Photo Phil – yes, he’s here. Big Apple – yes. Sir Laugh-a-Lot and Lady Love-a-Little . . . Wait a minute, Charlie Clown isn’t on the list – but Charlie’s *here* in this room!’

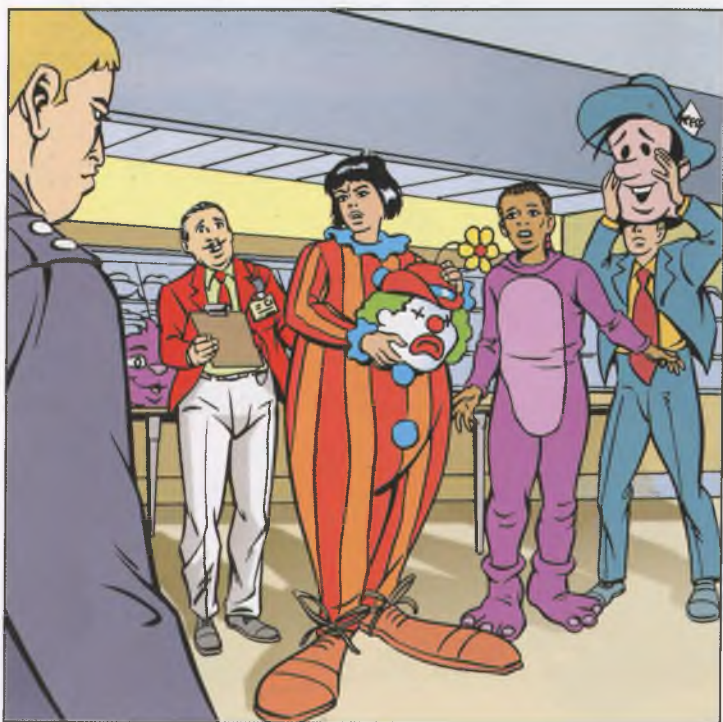
The Fifteenth Character

'Excuse me, Mr Parry,' says Sally. 'There are fourteen characters on your list, but there are fifteen in the room now. Charlie Clown isn't on the list, but he's here.'

Mr Parry reads the list and counts the characters. 'You're right, Sally,' he says.

'Take off your heads!' Mr Parry says to the characters. They take off their heads.

Charlie Clown is a woman.





‘Why are you wearing that costume?’ asks Mr Parry.

The woman begins to run away, but William stops her.

The police take off her costume – and find a big pocket. In it they find Zapp’s CD. The singer smiles again.

The Fifteenth Character

It is Saturday night. Sally and William are in London because they are going to Zapp's concert. There are lots of excited people and TV photographers outside the hall. Everybody wants to hear Zapp's new song.

'Where are your tickets?' says the man at the door to Sally.

'We haven't got any tickets,' says Sally. The man begins to look angry. Sally smiles and takes something out of her pocket. 'Is this invitation OK? It's from Zapp.'



ACTIVITIES

Before Reading

1 Look at the front and back cover of the book. Now complete these sentences.

1 This story happens . . .

a in the future.

b in today's world.

c sometime long ago.

2 The characters look . . .

a frightening.

b exciting.

c funny.

2 Read the back cover of the book. Guess the answers to these questions.

1 What is Happy Hills?

2 What does Sally do?

3 What goes wrong?

4 Is Zapp a man or a woman?

ACTIVITIES

While Reading

1 Read pages 1–4.

Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Sally Brown is a student. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 The workers at Happy Hills must wear white shirts and red trousers. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Sally always puts a list of <i>Jobs for Today</i> in the canteen. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 The visitors like to take photos of their children with the Happy Hills characters. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Read pages 5–8, then match the sentences halves to make five complete sentences.

- 1 Sally works at Happy Hills . . .
 - 2 Edward Elephant has the best job . . .
 - 3 Mr Parry is excited . . .
 - 4 William is wearing a cowboy costume . . .
 - 5 Sally has a picture of Zapp in her room . . .
- a because today he is Cowboy Joe.
 - b because a very famous man is coming to Happy Hills.
 - c because she loves his songs.
 - d because she needs the money.
 - e because he can spray the visitors with water.

3 Read pages 9–12.

Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Zapp comes to Happy Hills in a helicopter. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Zapp sings his new song. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 The photographers take lots of pictures of Zapp with the characters. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Zapp smiles and smiles. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4 Read pages 13–16, then join the sentences with *and* or *because*.

- 1 Charlie Clown gives Zapp a flower. The flower sprays him with water.
- 2 Sally can't talk to Zapp. She is wearing her cat costume.
- 3 Sally is thirsty. Her face is hot and red.

5 Read pages 17–21. Who says or thinks these sentences?

- 1 'Nobody can leave.'
- 2 'Smile please!'
- 3 'You must find that CD!'
- 4 'Wait a minute . . . There are fifteen characters here!'

6 Read pages 22–24, then answer these questions.

- 1 Where do the policemen find Zapp's CD?
- 2 Who stops the girl?
- 3 Where do Sally and William go on Saturday night?
- 4 Why don't they need tickets?

ACTIVITIES

After Reading

- 1 Put these twelve sentences in the right order to tell the story.
- a Sally comes to work and looks at *Jobs for Today*.
 - b 'Take off your heads!' Mr Parry tells the characters.
 - c Zapp tells everybody about his new CD.
 - d Zapp arrives in a red helicopter.
 - e Mr Parry runs into the canteen. 'Zapp can't find his CD!' he says.
 - f Sally counts the characters. 'There are fourteen characters on the list,' she says, 'but there are fifteen characters here!'
 - g The singer cuts the rope and opens the Zapp-o-copter.
 - h Zapp gives Sally an invitation to his big concert.
 - i Today Sally is Connie Cat and her friend William is Cowboy Joe.
 - j Charlie Clown gives Zapp a flower – and the flower sprays him with water.
 - k Four policemen arrive and ask a lot of questions.
 - l The policemen find the CD in Charlie Clown's pocket.

2 Choose the right words for each picture. Write a letter in each box.



The children are saying:



The police are saying:



Sally is saying:



The policewoman is saying:

- a 'What have you got in your pockets, please?'
- b 'This is exciting!'
- c 'Come on – you're coming with us.'
- d 'Is this invitation OK? It's from Zapp.'

Glossary

- break** a time when people can stop work to have tea or coffee
- canteen** a room where workers eat and drink
- character** a person or animal in a story or film
- concert** a time when someone plays or sings in a big room for a lot of people
- costume** special clothes
- count** (*vb*) number objects or people
- famous** (*adj*) someone who many people know is famous
- hall** a big room where someone sings or plays music for a lot of people
- holiday** a time when we do not go to work
- invitation** a letter asking someone to come to a party or concert
- job** work that people do for money
- list** a lot of names on a piece of paper
- miaow** the sound a cat makes
- pocket** a place in your shirt or trousers where you can put things
- song** something that people sing
- spray** send out water through the air

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THE FIFTEENTH CHARACTER

'It's an interesting job,' says Sally about her work at Happy Hills. And today is a very exciting day because Zapp the famous singer is coming. Everybody is having a wonderful time. But suddenly something goes wrong – very wrong.



CASSETTE AVAILABLE

Cover illustration by David Hine



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UNIVERSITY PRESS

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ISBN 0-19-423173-9



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