

SAISINE HIRIDITAIRE EN DROIT ROMAIN LA

Of the three Bartholomews that he'd turned up recently, he chose Prosser because, burdened by the name Enoch, Junior felt sympathy for any girl whose parents had cursed her with Zelda. "It's all the same. Cars, trains, ships, all the same," Jacob insisted. "You remember the Toya Maru? Japanese ferry capsized back in September '54. Eleven hundred sixty-eight people dead. Or worse, in '48, off Manchuria, God almighty, the boiler exploded on a Chinese merchant ship, six thousand died. Six thousand on a single ship!" Neither customers nor staff could be found in the first of the three large rooms. Only cheaper galleries were crowded with browsers and unctuous sales personnel. In an establishment as upscale as Coquin, the hoi polloi were discouraged from gawking, while the high value and extreme desirability of the art were made evident by the staff's almost pathological aversion to promoting the merchandise. She woke weeping from the dreams, and she wanted no witnesses. She wasn't embarrassed by her tears. She just didn't want to share them with anyone but Barty. Five days ago, reasoning that an unscrupulous attorney would know how to find an equally unscrupulous private detective, even across state borders, Junior had phoned Simon Magusson, in Spruce Hills, for a confidential recommendation. Apparently, there also existed a brotherhood of the terminally ugly, the members of which sent business to one another. Magusson--he of the large head, small ears, and protuberant eyes--had referred Junior to Nolly Wulfstan. By comparison, the strip club--neon aglow, theater lights twinkling----looked warm, cozy. Welcoming. Reluctantly, Jacob finally returned the cards to the packs and admitted to himself that superstition had seized him and would not let go. Somewhere in the world was a knave, a human monster--even worse, according to Maria, a man as fearsome as the devil himself--and for reasons unknown, this beast wanted to harm little Barty, an innocent baby. By some grace that Jacob could not understand, they had been warned, through the cards, that the knave was coming. They had been warned..than the crows. Tumbled on the grass, in fragments: the broken trophy for the prize rose, the symbol of his sinful. In adversity lies great opportunity, as Caesar Zedd teaches, and always, of course, there is a bright side even when you aren't able immediately to see it. The longer they were required to lie low in fear, the more likely Celestina would be to cast caution aside and return to Pacific Heights, Tom knew her well enough to be sure that she was a fighter rather than a runner. Being in hiding frustrated her. Day by day, hour by hour, with no target date for resuming a normal life, she would quickly lose patience. Rubbed raw, her dignity and sense of justice would compel her to act--perhaps more out of emotion than out of reason..As beautiful as they were, none of these women satisfied him as profoundly as Naomi had satisfied him. "Who...who're you?" Junior rasped, still badly rattled by the nightmare and by Vanadium's presence, but quick-witted enough to stay within the clueless character that he had been playing. The night seemed to be longer than a Martian month. Agnes dozed, fitfully, waking more than once, sweaty and shaking, from a dream in which her son was taken from her in pieces: first his eyes, then his hands, then his ears, his legs....He pointed at his feet. "Toes, toes, toes, toes, toes, toes, toes, toes, toes, toes." As they savored the icy martinis, she asked about the client, and Nolly said, "He bought the story. I won't be seeing him again." No doubt thinking about the land of the big bugs, into which she had pushed Enoch Cain, which was exactly what Barty had suddenly thought about, Angel said, "Honey, this is amazing, it's wonderful, but you've got to be careful." He almost opened the paper atop the quarter before seeing it. Shiny. Liberty curved across the top of the coin, above the head of the patriot, and under the patriot's chin were stamped the words In God We Trust. Judging by his great pleasure in learning, Barty didn't feel robbed of anything. To him, the world was an orange of infinite layers, which he peeled and savored with increasing delight. Fear clotted in Junior's veins, and he stood like an impacted embolism in the busy flow of pedestrians, certain that he himself would at any moment succumb to a stroke..pistol that he'd purchased in late June. The city operated a program to melt confiscated and donated weapons and to remake them into plowshares or xylophones, or into the metal fittings of hookah pipes. Confused, Panglo held out his right hand, but Jacob said, "Sorry, no offense, but I don't shake with anyone." In addition to these scavengers, another presence was here, unseen but not unfelt. The chill of this invisible entity pierced Junior to the marrow: the stubborn, vicious, psychotic, prickly--bur spirit of Thomas Vanadium, maniac cop, not satisfied to haunt the house in which he'd died, not ready yet to seek reincarnation, but instead pursuing his beleaguered suspect even after death, capering--to paraphrase Sklent like an invisible, filthy, scabby monkey here on this city street, in bright daylight..could not be a person of the best intentions. Doctors and nurses wouldn't monitor their patients with the lights off. He paid cash to the locksmith, and included in the payment were the two dimes and the nickel Vanadium had left on his nightstand. Barty followed the movement of her hand, raised his gaze to her eyes, hesitated, and then said questioningly, "No pie?". She looked around the room. "He's invisible like the Cheshire cat?" "His whole world is as real as ours, but we can't see it, and people in his world can't see us. There're millions and millions of worlds all here in the same place and invisible to one another, where we keep getting chance after chance to live a good life and do the right thing." "You must be thinking of someone else," she said, pushing a wad of bills into his hand. "Me, I'm a jellyfish in high heels." "Our little girl's going to walk backward her whole life if you drive in reverse all the way to the hospital." In January '65, while Vanadium had been in the first month of what proved to be an eight-month coma, Enoch Cain had sought Nolly's assistance in a search for Seraphim's newborn child. When Vanadium had learned about this from Magusson long after the event, he assumed that Cain had heard Max Bellini's message on his answering machine, made the connection with Seraphim's death in an "accident" in San Francisco, and set out to find the child because it was his. Fatherhood was the only imaginable reason for his interest in the baby. The search for Cain was secondary. Getting to the revolver took Priority. Regain the gun and then proceed room by haunted room to hunt him down. Hunt him down, if he was here. And if Cain didn't do the hunting first..Knacker, Hisscus, and

Nork, all talking at once, then failing silent as if they were a single organism, then talking in rotation but interrupting one another, tried to advance their agenda..If not for Celestina's slutty little sister, Bartholomew would not exist. No threat. Junior's life would be different, better..Phimie's speech had been slurred later, as well, immediately following the birth of the baby, when she had struggled to convey her desire to name her daughter Angel..The thorns had not been stripped from the long stem of the white rose. Vanadium clutched it so tightly that the sharp points punctured his meaty palm. He seemed to be unaware of his wounds..Tom said, "Now I'm going to add a human touch and a spiritual spin to all this. When each of us comes to a point where he has to make a significant moral decision affecting the development of his character and the lives of others, and each time he makes the less wise choice, that's where I myself believe a new world splits off. When I make an immoral or just a foolish choice, another world is created in which I did the right thing, and in that world, I am redeemed for a while, given a chance to become a better version of the Tom Vanadium who lives on in the other world of the wrong choice. There are so many worlds with imperfect Tom Vanadiums, but always someplace ... someplace I'm moving steadily toward a state of grace." "Simon's a funny duck," Vanadium said, "but I like him more than a little and trust him implicitly. He wanted to know what he could do to help. Initially, my speech was slurred, I had partial paralysis in my left arm, and I'd lost fifty-four pounds. I wasn't going to be looking for Cain for a long time, but it turned out Simon knew where he was." "She worried that he would need to go to the bathroom during the night and that, half asleep, he might turn the wrong way, toward the stairs, and fall. Three times they paced off the route from the doorway of his room to the hall bath. She would have walked it a hundred times and still not been satisfied, but Barty said, "Okay, I've got it." He didn't wonder about his sanity, either, as a less self-improved man might have done. No madman strives to enhance his vocabulary or to deepen his appreciation for culture.."So I drew attention to myself. Raised suspicions. One night, in St. Louis, this rube recognized me from my performing days, even though I'd changed my looks. It was a high-stakes game, but the players weren't high-class. They ganged up on me, beat me, and then smashed my hands, one finger at a time, with a tire iron." Sklent came to mind, perhaps because of the strange drawing on the girl's sketch pad. Sklent at that Christmas Eve party, only a few months ago but a lifetime away. The theory of spiritual afterlife without a need for God. Prickly-bur spirits. Some hang around, haunting out of sheer mean stubbornness. Some fade away. Others reincarnate..The machine, one in a bank of four, wasn't filled with ordinary newspapers, which cost only a dime, but with a raunchy tabloid aimed at heterosexual swingers..At the head of the line, Paul waved a red handkerchief out of the window of the station wagon.."No, the monster lives in there," Barty said, which was a joke, because he'd never suffered night frights of that-or any--sort..He didn't rely, either, on a sixth sense to detect obstacles or open spaces, which some blind people claimed to have. Sometimes instinct told him that in his path was an object that ordinarily would not have been there; but as often as not, it went undetected, and unless he was using his cane, he tripped over it. The sixth sense was greatly overrated..The Bones of the Earth."Mr. Cain, if he bothers you, would you want me to have his choke chain yanked?" Nothing he could do about it now. Having Naomi's body moved to another grave, in a cemetery without Negroes, would cause a lot of talk. He didn't want to draw more attention to himself..Copyright (c) 1997 by Ursula K. Le Guin..Only a few theater goers attended the matinee. No one sat near, so Google and Junior openly swapped packages: a five-by-six manila envelope to Google, a nine-by-twelve to Junior..He hadn't intended to enter the gallery. No one in his usual circles would attend this show, unless in such a state of chemically altered consciousness that they wouldn't be able to recall the event in the morning, so he wasn't likely to be recognized or remembered. Yet it seemed unwise to risk being identified as a reception attendee if Celestina White's little Bartholomew and maybe the artist herself were murdered later. The police, in their customary paranoia, might suspect a link between this affair and the killings, which would motivate them to seek out and."You might as well beat a cloud for raining," said Otter's mother..For a while, Junior profited enormously from Tammy's investment advice, and the sex was great. As a thank-you for the hefty trading commissions she earned-and not incidentally for all the orgasms-Tammy gave him a Rolex. He didn't mind her four cats, didn't even care when the four grew to six, then to eight..After the stupid bastards read a newspaper or smoked a few cigarettes, they finally broke down the door. Satisfyingly dramatic: the crack of splintering wood, the crash..So here it came again, the hateful past, returning when Junior thought he was shed of it. This tall, lanky, Celestina-humping son of a bitch, guardian of Bartholomew, had driven away, gone home, but he couldn't stay in the past where he belonged, and he was opening his mouth to say Who are you or maybe to shout an alarm, so Junior shot him three times..Earlier, he had placed an open fifth of vodka on the table, in front of Victoria. The nurse, no longer in the chair, sprawled on the floor as if she had emptied another bottle before this one..Agnes returned home from a pie run with the usual team-grown to five vehicles, including paid employees-to find a gathering in the yard and Barty halfway up the oak..She dealt with them equally, too, favoring neither-except in-the matter of pie delivery. On those rare occasions when she could not make these rounds herself and when she had no one to turn to but a brother, Agnes always asked for Edom's help..He turned over the two most recent discards. Neither was a jack of spades, and both were what he expected them to be..Three years ago, in St. Mary's Hospital, with Phimie's warning fresh in her mind, Celestina swore that she would be ready when the beast came, but here he came, and she was as not ready as possible. Time passes, the perception of a threat fades, life becomes busier, you work your butt off as a waitress, you graduate college, your little girl grows to be so vital, so vivid, so alive that you know she just has to live forever, and after all, you are the daughter of a minister, a believer in the power of compassion, in the Prince of Peace, confident that the meek shall inherit the earth, so in three long years, you don't buy a gun, nor do you take any training in self-defense, and somehow you forget that the meek who will one day inherit the earth are those who forego aggression but are not those so pathetically meek that they won't even defend themselves, because a failure to resist evil is a sin, and

the willful refusal to defend your life is the mortal sin of passive suicide, and the failure to protect a little yellow M&M girl will surely buy you a ticket to Hell on the same express train on which the slave traders rode to their own eternal enslavement, on which the masters of Dachau and old Joe Stalin traveled from power to punishment, so here, now, as the beast throws himself against the door, as he shoves aside the barricade, with what precious little time you have left, fight. Junior shoved through the blocked door, into the bedroom, and the bitch hit him with a chair. A small, slat-back side chair with a tie-on seat cushion. She swung it like a baseball bat, and there must have been some Jackie Robinson blood in the White family line, because she had the power to knock a fastball from Brooklyn to the Bronx..A few attractive women were here alone, proof that social mores had changed dramatically in three years. Junior was aware of their hot gazes, their need, and he knew that he could have any of them..Dessert was on the house. The waiter brought the four best items on the menu, to spare them the need to make two small decisions after having made such a big one..The dinner guest leaned back into the car, as though to retrieve something. Perhaps he, too, had been considerate enough to bring a small gift for his hostess..As though frightened of the gentle certainty in Celestina's eyes, the doctor turned away from her, and toward the window once more..Out of a sphinx face, Obadiah conjured a smile that lifted the point of his white goatee when he turned his head to look at Edom. "Ah ... so long ago," he murmured, as though speaking to himself. "So long ago ... but I remember now." He winked at Edom..Agnes considered describing the sunset to the blinded boy, but her hesitancy settled into reluctance, and by the time the stars came out, she had said not a word about the day's splendid final act. For one thing, she worried that her description would fall far short of the reality, and that with her inadequate words, she might dull Barty's precious memories of sunsets he had seen. Primarily, however, she failed to remark on the spectacle because she was afraid that to do so would be to remind him of all that he had lost..He found nothing especially gratifying, switched off the lights, and moved on to the living room. If Cain was coming home, he could glance up from the street and see lights ablaze here, so Vanadium resorted to a small flashlight, always carefully hooding the lens with one hand..". . . then how come you couldn't walk where your eyes were healthy and leave the tumors there," she remembered..On Tuesday evening, September 7, after half an hour in the lotus position, thinking about nothing whatsoever but a white pin with two black bands at its neck and the number I painted on its head, Junior went to bed at eleven o'clock and set his alarm for three in the morning, when he intended to shoot himself..The kids insisted on knowing what was meant by the line about the chicken, and this led to the laying of a coopful of Why-did-the chicken-cross-the-road jokes, which Edom and Jacob had memorized in childhood as an act of rebellion against their humorless father..Of course, he also might have shot off his own thumbs as double insurance against being drafted and sent to Vietnam..tasteful hint of it was on display; nothing about this beauty could be called cheap..Currently, the rental market was extremely tight. The first day of his search resulted only in the discovery that he was going to have to pay more than he expected even for modest quarters.. "She's got preeclampsia. It's a condition that occurs in about five percent of pregnancies, virtually always after the twenty-fourth week, and usually it can be treated successfully. But I'm not going to sugarcoat this, Celestina. In her case, it's more serious. She hasn't been seeing a doctor, no prenatal care, and here she is in the middle of her thirtieth week, about ten days from delivery."..As the unwanted change pinged against the concrete at his feet, Junior-snap, snap-saw the source of the next two rounds. They spat out of the vertical pay slot on a newspaper-vending machine; one hit his nose, and the other rang off his teeth.. "Paul told us the night he first came to the parsonage. About Agnes here ... and what had happened to Barty. And all about his late wife, Perri. I feel like I know Bright Beach already."..He looked at the two cards following the four of clubs in the stack. Neither of these was a jack of spades, either, and both were what he anticipated..Evidently, her face was knotted with the effort to remember what the child had looked like, for the physician said, "Yes? What's wrong?"..yunh," so she nodded as vigorously as she was able to do, and tightened her grip on Celestina's hand..First he tore two paper towels from a wall-mounted dispenser and held one in each hand, as makeshift gloves. He was determined to leave no fingerprints..Against the backdrop of granite monuments, Kaitlin hulked like a moldering presence from Beyond, risen out of a rotting box to take vengeance on the living..Between his surgeries and for many months thereafter, Vanadium had devoted his energies to speech therapy, physical rehabilitation, and the concoction of periodic torments for Enoch Cain, which Simon Magusson was able to implement, every few months, through Nolly and Kathleen. The idea wasn't to bring Cain to justice by torturing his conscience, since he'd allowed his conscience to atrophy a long time ago, but to keep him unsettled and thereby magnify the impact of his first face-to-face encounter with the resurrected Vanadium..Everyone agreed, and the order was placed when their waiter brought appetizers: crab cakes for Nolly, scampi for Kathleen, and calamari for Tom.. "And to the north of us," Agnes said, drawing him out, "Janey Carter went off to college last year, and she's their only child."..Phimie's stubbornly high blood pressure, the presence of protein in her urine, and other symptoms indicated her preeclampsia wasn't a recent development; she was at increased risk of eclampsia. Her hypertension was gradually coming under control-but only by resort to more aggressive drug therapy than the physician preferred to use..Slamming through the door, letting it bang shut behind him hard enough to crack the glass, crossing the porch, Tom took the beauty of the day like a fist in the gut. It was too blue and too bright and too gorgeous to harbor death, and yet it did, birth and death, alpha and omega, woven in a design that flaunted meaning but defied understanding. It was a blow, this day, a hard blow, brutal in its beauty, in its simultaneous promises of transcendence and loss..Twilight, nearly gone and purple in the west, inspired a bright violet line along the crest of an incoming bank of bay fog, as though the mist were shot through with a luminous vein of neon, transforming the entire sparkling city into a stylish cabaret just now opening for business. The night, soft as a woman come to dance, carried a steely blade of cold in its black-silk skirts..In the motel office, Junior paid for another night in advance. His preference in lodgings didn't run to greasy carpeting,

cigarette-scarred furniture, and the whispery scuttling of cockroaches in the dark, but though feeling better, he was too tired and shaky to drive..WITH BRIGHT BEACH under assault by one miserable flu and by an uncountable variety of common colds, business was brisk this Monday at Damascus Pharmacy..Tom was aware that something had happened here during the past week, an important development that Celestina mentioned on the phone but that she declined to discuss. He didn't harbor any expectations of what he'd find when she escorted him and Wally into the Lampion dining room, but if he'd tried to imagine the scene awaiting him, he wouldn't have pictured a s?ance.."My scar," he confessed, "is inexperience. For a man my age, Agnes, I'm in some ways unbelievably innocent. I wouldn't trade the years with Perri for anything or anyone, but intense as it was, our love didn't include ... Well, I mean, you may find me inadequate."..Initially, lying drowsily in the sumptuous comfort of Pratesi cotton sheets with black silk piping, Junior assumed that he was in a twilight state between wakefulness and sleep, and that the singing must be a lingering fragment of a dream. Although rising and falling, the voice remained so faint that he didn't at once identify the tune, but when he recognized "Someone to Watch over Me," he sat up in bed and threw back the covers..Junior didn't make the mistake of thinking that Magusson's new conciliatory attitude meant they were friends, that confidences could be shared or truths exchanged. The money-grubbing toad's only real friend would always be the one he saw in a mirror. If he discovered that Junior was having a great time post-Naomi, Magusson would store the information until he found a way to use it to his advantage..Unerringly, in the darkness, he found her face with both hands. Smoothed her brow. Traced her eyes with fingertips. Her nose, her lips. Her cheeks..She didn't hear gunfire this time, either, but the hard crack of splintering wood attested to the passage of at least two more bullets..Refusing to give the cop the satisfaction of a reply to the news of the unborn baby's paternity, Junior stared unwaveringly into the grave and said, "Whose funeral were you attending?".As a recreational site, Quarry Lake could be judged only a partial success. During the mining operation, trees were cleared well back from the edge of the dig, so that much of the shore would be unshaded on a hot summer day. And along half the strand, signs were posted warning Ungraded Shore: Immediate Deep Water. In places, where lake met land, the bottom lay over a hundred feet below..A speeding truck passed, stirring the fog, and the white broth churned past the car windows, a disorienting swirl..The poor girl's blood pressure soared in spite of the medication. She suffered a violent seizure..Once satiated, what she desired was a reason to deceive herself into believing that she was not a slut, that she was a victim. She didn't really want to tell anyone what he had done to her. Instead, she was asking him, indirectly but indisputably, to provide her with an excuse to keep their passionate encounter secret, an excuse that would also allow her to continue to pretend that she had not begged for everything he'd done to her.."It's a miracle both of you didn't go through that railing," the attorney agreed..Many police agencies required an officer to carry a firearm even when off duty. If the Oregon State Police had no such rule, Vanadium most likely carried one anyway, because in his crazy-as-a-snake mind..He was no longer hopeful that they could have a future together. After sampling the Junior Cain thrill machine, Celestina would want more, as women always did, but the time for a meaningful romance had now passed. For all the anguish he'd been put through, however, he deserved the consolation of her sweet body at least once. A little compensation. Payback..To celebrate, Junior went to a gallery and purchased the second piece of art in his collection. Not sculpture this time: a painting..Another small pane of glass burst. A dismaying crack of wood. His back to her, the maniac raged at the window with the snarling ferocity of a caged beast..The gunshot was louder-and the pain initially less-than he expected. Timpani-boom, timpani-boom, the explosion echoed back and forth through the high-ceilinged apartment..Some information she'd withheld from him: that the cancer might already have spread, that he might still die even after his eyes were removed-and that if it hadn't yet spread, it might soon do so..In his mind, Junior saw a quarter turning knuckle over knuckle, and he heard the maniac cop's droning voice: There's a fine George and Ira Gershwin song called "Someone to Watch over Me. " You ever hear it, Enoch? I'm that someone for you, although not, of course, in a romantic sense..LATE TUESDAY AFTERNOON in Bright Beach, as a darker blue and iridescent tide rolled across the sky, seagulls rowed toward their safe harbors, and on the land below, shadows that had been upright at work all day now stretched out, recumbent, preparing for the night..He halted, made a quick calculation, turned, and moved toward where the back door ought to be. He found it half open..A man with beautiful celadon eyes, his face beaded with jewels of rain, reached through the cut-away door and removed the blanket from Agnes..With a bark of pain, chest to chest with defeat, the killer was borne downward by the fragrant weight, in a clink and clatter of brass handles..Junior was glad for the chance to eavesdrop, not only because he hoped to learn the nature and depth of Vanadium's suspicions, but also because he was curious-and concerned-about the cause of the disgusting and embarrassing episode that had landed him here..Switching on the windshield wipers, Joey said, "That's the first time I've ever heard you admit that either of your brothers is odd."..With her brothers, she adjourned to the waiting room, where the three of them sat drinking vending-machine coffee, black, from paper cups..Nevertheless, he stepped away from the wall, and with his hands extended to full arm's length, he turned, feeling the lightless world around him. Nothing. No one..Urgency gripped the paramedics. The rescuers' equipment and the pieces of the car door were dragged out of the way to make a path for a gurney, its wheels clattering across pavement littered with debris..Celestina was amazed by her own courage in combat and by the steady calm that served her so well now. She wasn't shaken by the thought of what might have happened to her, and to her daughter, because her mind and her heart were with Wally-and because, having been watered with hope all of her life, she had a deep reservoir on which to draw in a time of drought..This was his door, however, not hers. She did not possess a ticket to ride the train that had come for him. He boarded, and the train was gone, and with it the light in his eyes. She lowered her mouth to his, kissing him one last time, and taste of his blood was not bitter, but sacred..She told him to stay on the line, stay on no matter what, told him to keep talking to her, and he hung up..He

stopped straining to see through the black room to the corner armchair. He closed his eyes and tried to lull himself to sleep by summoning into his mind's eye a lovely but calculatedly monotonous scene of gentle waves breaking on a moonlit shore..She removed a temporary cap from the second bicuspid on the lower left side and replaced it with the porcelain cap that had been delivered by the lab that morning..Murmuring on the edge of sleep, Barty spoke to his father in all the places where Joey still lived: "Good-night, Daddy.".Junior decided to attend the festivities, after all, motivated by the prospect of connecting with a woman more pliant than the Bavol Poriferan sculpture..She asked Edom to stay in the main house, so Barty wouldn't be alone while she visited Maria Gonzalez for an hour or two. He was pleased to oblige, settling down to watch a television documentary about volcanoes, which promised to include stories about the 1902 eruption of Mont Pelee, on Martinique, which killed 28,000 people within minutes, and other disasters of colossal proportions..Nothing remained to be done but to press her shoe in the butter and hammer her head into the corner of the oven door..She didn't have experience with guns, but having seen him trying to press cartridges into the magazine, she knew how to load. She inserted one round. Then a second. Enough..Her hands shook as she counted out the fare and the tip from her wallet. "I'm scared sick. Maybe you should just take me right back home..".In the closet, a limited wardrobe did not fully occupy available rod space. On the floor, shoes were neatly arranged toe-to-heel..That's obvious to us, but not always to others. Apparently, this would have been some years ago..".In fact, though he strained hard to recall their conversations, he could dredge up nothing that Seraphim had said during therapy, as if he'd been stone-deaf in those days. The only things he retained were sensual impressions: the beauty of her face, the texture of her skin, the firmness of her flesh under his ministering hands..No one had actually been here. And he still didn't believe in ghosts, so he didn't think that a spirit had been wandering his home in his absence..Now, without realizing when it had happened, he had been lowered from his knees to his right side. Head elevated and tilted by one of the paramedics. So he could expel the bile, the blood, rather than choke on it..Almost thirty years from the seminary--even farther from it if measured by degrees of lost innocence, by miles of rough experience Tom Vanadium set out to kill a man. Given the chance to disarm Cain, given the opportunity to merely wound him, he would nevertheless go for the head shot or the heart shot, play jury and executioner, play God, and leave to God the judgment of his stained soul..His eyes were strangely radiant, as she had never seen them before, as if the shining angel who would guide him elsewhere had already entered his body and was with him to begin the journey..pride, his one great shining moment but also his sinful pride. Clubbed with the trophy first, fists later. And now, here..Already, the girl had taken Barty's hand. The two kids descended from the porch into the rain. They didn't circle the oak, but stopped at the foot of the steps and turned to face the house..IMPLODE To burst inward under pressure. Like the hull of a submarine at too great a depth.

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