

LARRACHEUR DE LARMES

Not cheerful, life-loving, high-spirited, churchgoing Naomi. She saw every day through a golden haze that came from the sun in her heart..This time, however, the singing lasted longer than before, long enough for him to become suspicious of the heating ducts. These rooms had ten-foot ceilings, and the ducts opened high in the walls..Find the father, kill the son. In just nine days, Junior bedded four beautiful women: one on Christmas Eve, the next on Christmas Night, the third on New Year's Eve, and the fourth on New Year's Day. For the first time in his life-and on all four occasions-his joy in the act was less than complete..Like a disc fish with silvery scales, the coin lay in the cup of Junior's palm. Directly over his life line..He returned to the house and extinguished the three blown-glass oil lamps on the living-room coffee table. Out, as well, the silk-shade lamp..Earthquake weather. Southern Californians had many definitions of that term, but Edom knew he was right this time. Thunder would roll again soon, but it would arise from underfoot..Mary Lampion, little light, was home-schooled as her father and mother had been. But she didn't study just reading, writing, and arithmetic. Gradually she developed a range of fascinating talents not taught in any school, and she went exploring in a great number of the many ways things are, journeying to worlds right here but unseen.. "No. Rowena dropped those names after the twins' first year. She and I were the only ones who ever used them. Our private little joke. Even the boys wouldn't have remembered." He still had work to do here. Properly disposing of Thomas Vanadium, however, was the most urgent piece of business..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.. "If he gets back within the next hour, better ring me at his place so I can scoot." "What aren't you telling us?" her mother pressed, intuiting the existence of a larger story, if not the amazing nature of it.. "I suppose anyone could fill some empty gelatin capsules with the syrup," said Parkhurst. "But-" "Roll your own, so to speak. Then he could palm a few of them, swallow 'em without water, and the reaction would be delayed maybe.To achieve certain narrative effects, I've fiddled slightly with the floor plan and the interior design of St. Mary's Hospital in San Francisco. In this story, the characters who work at St. Mary's are fictional and are not modeled after anyone on the staff of that excellent institution, either past or present..She thought that she already knew all about humility, about the necessity of it, about the power of it to bring peace of mind and to heal the heart, but in the following few minutes, she learned more about humility than she had ever known before..Recently, Wally administered to Angel a set of apperception tests for three-year-olds, and the results indicated that she might not ever be a math whiz or a verbal gymnast, but that she might be highly talented in other ways. Her appreciation of color, her innate understanding of the derivation of secondary hues from the primary colors, her sense of spatial relationships, and her recognition of basic geometric forms regardless of the angle at which they were presented were all far beyond what was exhibited by other kids her age. Wally said she was visually, rather than verbally, gifted, that she would undoubtedly exhibit increasing precociousness in matters artistic, that she might follow Celestina's career path, and that she might even prove to be a prodigy..Not many men wore hats these days. Since his teenage years, Nolly had favored a porkpie model. San Francisco was often chilly, and he began losing his hair when still young.. "Well, the lab could detect abnormally high salt levels, but that wouldn't matter in court. He could say he ate a lot of salty foods." Following a splendid lunch, having just left the fourth gallery on his list and strolling toward the fifth, Junior didn't at once see the source of the quarters. Indeed, when the first three rapid-fire coins hit the side of his face, he didn't even know what they were. Startled, he flinched and looked down as he heard them ring off the sidewalk.. "Periodic violent emesis without an apparent cause can be one indication of locomotor ataxia, but you've no other symptoms of it. I wouldn't worry about that unless this happens again." Thursday evening, his third in the hotel, he returned to the lounge for cocktails and another steak. The same tuxedoed pianist provided the entertainment..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..As he turned the corner onto Jasmine Way, he felt his heart lift in expectation of the sight of his home. It wasn't a grand residence--a typical Main Street, USA, house-but it was more splendid to Paul than Paris, London, and Rome combined, cities that he would never see and would never regret failing to see..Zedd taught in this world where dishonesty is the currency of social acceptance and financial success, you must practice some deceit to get along in life, but you must never lie to yourself, or you are left with no one to trust..Again he fired into the lock, squeezed the trigger a second time, and discovered that no rounds remained in the magazine. Extra cartridges were distributed in his pockets..He would come. She knew. She had always known, but had half forgotten. There was something special about Angel, and because of that specialness, she lived under a threat as surely as the newborns of Bethlehem under King Herod's death decree. Long ago, Celestina glimpsed a complex and mysterious pattern in this, and to the eye of the artist, the symmetry of the design required that the father would sooner or later come..The candlestick was dry. Holding this pewter bludgeon with a paper towel, Junior replaced it on the table as he had found it. He picked up the candle from the floor and married it to the stick..Fear of the unknown is a weakness, for it presumes dimensions to life beyond human control. Zedd teaches that nothing is beyond our control, that nature is just a mindlessly grinding machine with no more mysteries in it than we will find in applesauce..Worse than the tenderness in the bones, the bleeding gums, the headaches, the ugly bruises, worse than the anemia-related weariness and the spells of breathlessness, was the suffering that her battle caused to those whom she loved. More frequently as the days passed, they were unable to conceal their worry and their sorrow. She held their hands when they trembled. She asked them to pray with her

when they expressed anger that this should happen to her-of all people, to her, and she wouldn't let them go until the anger was gone. More than once, she pulled sweet Angel into her lap, stroked her hair, and soothed her with talk of all the good times shared in better days. And always Barty, watching over her in his blindness, aware that she would not be dying in all the places where she was, but taking no consolation from the fact that she would continue to exist in other worlds where he could never again be at her side..Using the straight edge of a ruler to guide his eye down each column, Junior searched for Bartholomew, ignoring surnames. He had already checked to see if anyone in the county had Bartholomew for a last name; no one in this directory did.. "But the breed is nervous, dear. With a nervous breed, you just never know, do you?." "Well," Agnes said, "thank the Lord, we don't have tornadoes here in California."..After a while, when no plane crashed on top of him, Jacob got up, went into the kitchen, and mixed a batch of dough for Agnes's favorite treats. Chocolate-chip cookies with coconut and pecans..Twenty minutes later, at home, he poured sherry over ice. Sipping, he stood in the living room, admiring his two paintings..By the time he got back to Spruce Hills, the early night had fallen. The pearly, waxing moon floated over a town that glimmered mysteriously among its richness of trees, flickering and shimmering as though it were not a real town, but a dreamland where a multitude of Gypsy clans gathered by the lambent amber light of lanterns and campfires..When Nolly sighed and frowned, his lumpish face seemed in danger of sliding off his skull, like oatmeal oozing off a spoon. "Mr. Cain, much as I regret it, I'm afraid I'm going to have to return half of the retainer you gave me."..As shaken as she had been at Phimie's side, she couldn't trust her memory. Perhaps she hadn't seen what she thought she'd seen..He usually ate lunch alone in his office. The room was the size of an elevator, but of course didn't go up or down. It went sideways, however, in the sense that herein Paul was transported into wondrous lands of adventure..Junior stood at the window for a long time, not because he was pretending to rest, and not because any of the attending nurses was a looker. He was transfixed, and for awhile he didn't know why..The pair of sliding doors at the living-room archway stood half open. Beyond, voices drew Paul against his will..self-controlled as he would need to be in any interrogation conducted by this brush-cut, thick-necked toad..Although he ate more meals in restaurants than not, he hadn't ordered a burger in twenty-two months, since finding the quarter embedded in the half-melted slice of cheddar, in December of '65. Indeed, since then, he'd never risked a sandwich of any kind in a restaurant, limiting his selections to foods that were served open on the plate..At first light, a nurse arrived to perform preliminary surgical prep on Barty. She pulled the boy's hair back and captured it under a tight fitting cap. With cream and a safety razor, she shaved off his eyebrows..Yet his curious attraction to these newborns kept him at the window, and he began to believe that unconsciously he had intended to come here from the moment he guided his walker out of his room. He'd been compelled to come. Drawn by some mysterious magnetism..Four blocks from his office, on a street more upscale than his own, Nolly came to the Tollman Building. Built in the 1930s, it had an Art Deco flair. The public areas featured travertine floors, and a WPA-ers mural extolling the machine age brightened a lobby wall..A fine carpenter can wield a hammer with an economy of movement and accuracy as elegant as the motions of a symphony conductor with a baton. A cop directing traffic can make a rough ballet out of the work. However, of all the humble tasks that men and women can transform into visual poetry by the application of athletic agility and grace, clambering into a Dumpster holds the least promise of beautification..Nolly raised his martini glass in a toast. "To Kathleen Klerkle Wulfstan, dentist and associate detective."..He hadn't lied to his mother. She assumed that by some quantum magic, he had regained his sight permanently, and that this came with no cost. He merely allowed her to go to her rest with the comforting misapprehension that her son had been freed from darkness..He still had a sour taste in his mouth, although it was not as disgusting as it had been. All the odors were wonderfully clean and bracing--antiseptics, floor wax, freshly laundered bedsheets-without a whiff of..Returning his attention to his own shoes, Jacob said, "So ... what am I supposed to do about this?"..He didn't bother to press Vanadium's hand around the weapon. There wasn't going to be a wealth of evidence for the Scientific Investigation Division to sift through, anyway, when the fire was finally put out: just enough charred clues to allow them an easy conclusion..to prayer instead, asking for the wisdom to understand why this was happening to her and for the strength to cope with her pain and with her loss.."Imagine me thinking you'd be gone," she said to Barty. "Your old mum is losing it. I never made a deal with Rumpelstiltskin, so there's nothing for him to collect."..As yet, he hadn't taken either an antiemetic or antihistamine to ward off vomiting and hives, because he wanted to medicate -against those conditions as shortly before the violence as was practical, to ensure maximum protection. He'd intended to dose himself only after he followed Celestina home from the gallery and could be reasonably certain that he had located the lair of Bartholomew.."All under here's worked out long since" Licky said. And Otter had begun to be aware of the strange country under his feet: empty shafts and rooms of dark air in the dark earth, a vertical labyrinth, the deepest pits filled with unmoving water. "Never was much silver, and the watermetal's long gone. Listen, young'un, do you even know what cinnabar is?"..Although she would have felt ridiculous phrasing this question in these words to any other three-year-old, no better way existed to ask it of her special son: "Kiddo ... do you realize you're speaking of your dad in the present tense?"..Edom's twin, Jacob, who had never held a job, lived in the second apartment. He'd been there since graduating from high school..He was a man of medicine and science, who had been served well by hard logic and by an unwavering commitment to reason. He wasn't prepared easily to accept the notion that logic and reason, while essential tools to anyone hoping to lead a full and happy life, were nevertheless sufficient to describe either the physical world or the human experience..That would not be a productive use of his time. Satisfying, but not prudent. Zedd tells us that time is the most precious thing we have, because we're born with so little of it..Into new avenues of the labyrinth he moved, but then back again, back upon his own trail, twisting, turning, from the occult to modern literature, from history to popular science, and here the occult once more, always the shadow glimpsed so fleetingly and so peripherally that it

might have been imagination, the scent of a woman no sooner detected than lost again in the perfumes of aging paper and bindery glue, twisting, turning, until abruptly he stopped, breathing hard, halted by the realization that he hadn't heard the singing in some time. "I see. Sometimes. Just quick. For like a blink. Like when you stand between two mirrors. You know?" She heard the door, and when she opened her eyes, the bay had already slid out of the car, into the downpour again. She called him back, but he kept going. Only a small group of mourners gathered for this service. Junior and Naomi had been so intensely involved with each other that, unlike many young married couples, they had made few friends. 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. Captivated by catastrophe, so lost in his book that he might as well have stepped magically inside of it and closed the covers after himself, Uncle Jacob didn't answer. He also sought a supplier of high-quality counterfeit ID. This proved easier than he anticipated. Among these people was an old man whom they called, among themselves, the Changer. He showed Otter a few spells of illusion; and when the boy was fifteen or so, the old man took him out into the fields by Serrenen to show him the one spell of true change he knew. "First let's see you turn that bush into the seeming of a tree," he said, and promptly Otter did so. Illusion came so easy to the boy that the old man took alarm. Otter had to beg and wheedle him for any further teaching and finally to promise him, swearing on his own true and secret name, that if he learned the Changer's great spell he would never use it but to save a life, his own or another's. Junior forgot all about seduction. "And she--what?--She adopted her sister's baby?" "By the way he acted, you'd have sworn that he gave me and Angel shelter in the storm, back then, instead of turning us out to freeze in the snow." Fortunately, just as he was about to declare his gut feelings to his superior and risk dismissal, he saw his potential patient. At fifteen, Seraphim was breathtakingly beautiful, in her own way as striking as Naomi, and instinct told Junior that the chance of being physically or morally polluted by her was negligible. "Cancer," she whispered, and superstitiously reproached herself for speaking the word aloud, as though thereby she'd given power to the malignancy and ensured its existence. "I believe the universe is sort of like an unimaginably vast musical with an infinite number of strings." Police identified Junior as the prime suspect, and newspapers featured his photograph in most stories. They referred to him as "handsome," "dashing," "a man with movie-star good looks." He was said to be well known in San Francisco's avant-garde arts community. He got a thrill when he discovered that Sklent was quoted as calling him "a charismatic figure, a deep thinker, a man -with exquisite artistic taste so clever he could get away with murder as easily as anyone else might get away with double-parking." "It's people like him," Sklent continued, "who confirm the view of the world that informs my painting." At best, Vanadium might decide Junior had come here to learn what other funeral his nemesis had attended-which was, in fact, the true motivation. But this made it clear that Junior feared him and was striving to stay one step ahead of him. Innocent men didn't go to such length. As far as the fruitcake cop was concerned, Junior might as well have painted I killed Naomi on his forehead. "I've already told them," Joey said, wheeling away from her and yanking open the door of the foyer closet with such force that she thought he would tear it off its hinges. "Ouch," said Edom, and this earned him loving smiles from Maria, Agnes, and Barty. The three of them, gathered around her in the quick, held fast to her, as if Death couldn't take what they refused to release. Ordinarily, she would have returned to the first of the candles and offered a second fragment to Saint Peter. In this case, however, she entrusted it to the least known of the apostles, because she was sure that he must have special significance in this matter. In the years since I began to write about Earthsea I've changed, of course, and so have the people who read the books. All times are changing times, but ours is one of massive, rapid moral and mental transformation. Archetypes turn into millstones, large simplicities get complicated, chaos becomes elegant, and what everybody knows is true turns out to be what some people used to think. Stopping at the door without opening it, Vanadium turned to stare at Junior, but said nothing. deodar cedars with layers of drooping branches surrounded the place, and usually they seemed sheltering, but now they loomed, ominous. squint-eyed, sharp-faced night clerk must not have been the owner, because he wasn't the type to have dreamed up cute spellings for the sign out front. Judging by his appearance and attitude, he was a former Nazi death-camp commandant who fled Brazil one step ahead of the Israeli secret service and was now hiding out in Oregon. 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. Yes, she did, she had one, but not much of one, and compared to the McIntosh in Google's throat, this was just a bitty crab apple, easy to overlook, not excessive for a woman. Thrilled to have inspired this awe in her, he closed the book. "Remember what we talked about a long time ago? You asked me how come, if I could walk where the rain wasn't. . . ." Barty looked at Angel, and Angel looked at Barty, and they dropped to their knees on the grass before their daughter. They were both grinning ... and then their grins stiffened a little. As to the distressing matter of Seraphim's daughter, Junior at first decided to return to San Francisco to torture the truth out of Nolly Wulfstan. Then he realized that he'd been referred to Wulfstan by the same man who had told him that Thomas Vanadium was missing and was believed to be Victoria Bressler's killer. This was a memory, not a real voice. Even after you became an accomplished meditator, the mind resisted this degree of blissful oblivion and tried to sabotage it with aural and visual memories. Someone named Bartholomew had adopted Seraphim's son and named the boy after himself Junior applied the patience learned through meditation to the task at hand, and instinctively, he soon evolved a motivating mantra that continuously cycled through his mind while he studied the telephone directories: Find the father, kill the son. In this brighter light, he further examined the gallery brochure and discovered Celestina's photograph. She and her sister were not as alike as twins, but the resemblance was striking. He was about to

lift the body out of the chair when he heard the car in the driveway. He might not have caught the sound of the engine so distinctly and so early if the stereo had not been in the process of changing albums.. "Tame him or bury him," said Losen, and turned to more important matters.. Embarrassment flushed her when she realized that the paramedic had cut away the pants of her jogging suit. She was naked from the waist down.. Yet, with no recollection of rising from his chair, he found that he had shouldered his backpack and crossed the room. The three men looked up expectantly.. summoned an expression no less dubious than that of a policeman listening to the alibi of a suspect with bloody hands. Then: "I'm quite sure that Wroth Griskin does not make candlesticks. If that's what you're looking for, I'd recommend the housewares department at Gump's." When the ophthalmologist saw her misery, his kind face softened further, and his pity became palpable.. "In addition to that policy," said Vinnie, "there's another. . .--he filled his lungs, hesitated, then exhaled the air and the sum with a tremor--'seven hundred fifty thousand. Three-quarters of a million dollars." The artist, six feet four and two hundred fifty pounds, looked markedly more dangerous in person than in his scary publicity photo. Still in his twenties, he had white hair that fell limp and straight to his shoulders. Dead-white skin. His deep-set eyes, as silver-gray as rain with an albino-pink undertone, had a predatory glint as chilling as that in the eyes of a panther. Terrible scars slashed his face, and red hash marks covered his big hands, as though he'd frequently defended himself barehanded against men armed with swords.. Junior flung back the covers and came to his feet, but his knees proved weak, and he sat at once on the edge of the bed.. "August, 1931. Along the Huang He River in China. Three million seven hundred thousand people died in a great flood," Edom said.. "There must be something important I'm supposed to do here that I don't need to do everywhere I am, something I'll do better if I'm blind." He was uncomfortable, achy, thirsty, but he remained utterly still and observant. After a while, he realized that the sense of oppression with which he'd awakened was not entirely a psychological symptom: Something heavy lay across his abdomen. And it was cold--so cold, in fact, that it had numbed his middle to the extent that he hadn't immediately felt the chill of it. Shivers coursed through him. He clenched his jaws to prevent his teeth from chattering and thereby alerting the man in the chair. Although he never took his eyes off the corner, Junior became preoccupied with trying to puzzle out what was draped across his midsection. The mysterious observer made him sufficiently nervous that he couldn't order his thoughts as well as usual, and the effort to prevent the shivers from shaking a sound out of him only further interfered with his ability to reason. The longer that he was unable to identify the frigid object, the more alarmed he became. He almost cried out when into his mind oozed an image of Naomi's dead body, now past the whitest shade of pale, as gray as the faint light at the window and turning pale green in a few places, and cold, all the heat of life gone from her flesh, which was not yet simmering with any of the heat of decomposition that would soon enliven it again.. Agnes pulled the stack of cards in front of her. She discarded the first two, as Maria would have done, and turned over the third.. Apparently, he didn't lean back far enough, because amazingly he landed on his feet in the winter-faded grass. The shock buckled him, and he dropped to his knees. Still cradling Grace, he lowered her to the ground as gently as he'd ever lowered fragile Perri onto her bed--quite as if he had planned it this way.. "We were about to order dinner from room service," Tom said, handing a menu to Paul.. "It's a miracle both of you didn't go through that railing," the attorney agreed.. If he hadn't been such a rational, stable, no-nonsense person all of his life, Junior might have thought he was losing his mind.. In her campaign to keep her weight gain to a minimum, anorexia was her ally. She learned to find pleasure in hunger pangs.. These would no doubt be cloyingly sentimental paintings of the bastard boy, with impossibly large and limpid eyes, posed cutely with puppies and kittens, pictures better suited for cheap calendars than for gallery walls, and dangerous to the health of diabetics.. support as he had only pretended to need it previously. He felt as if he had become the mere shell of a man and that the right note would shatter him as a properly piercing tone can shatter crystal.. Between new women and needlepoint pillows, he participated in s'ances, attended lectures given by ghost hunters, visited haunted houses, and read more strange books. He even sat for the camera of a famous medium whose photographs sometimes revealed the auras of benign or malevolent presences hovering in the vicinity of her subject, though in his case she could discern no telltale sign of a spirit.. sport shirt just for no reason at all, because she thought he'd look nice in it?". "Sitters. Friends, relatives of friends. People I can trust. I can afford sitters if I'm getting only dinner tips." Apparently Maria wished that she'd brought a rosary to dinner. With the fingers of her right hand, she pinched the knuckles of her left, one after the other, as if they were beads.. A cast-bronze figure, fixed to lacquered walnut in want of raw dogwood, suffered above the bed. This crucifix, contrasting starkly with the white walls, reinforced the impression of monastic economy.. As kinky and thrilling as it had been to make love to the girl while playing the recorded rough draft of a new sermon that she had been transcribing for her father, Junior could now recall nothing of what the reverend had said, only the tone and the timbre of his voice. Whether instinct, nervous irritation, or merely the sherry should be blamed, he was troubled by the thought that there was something significant about the content of that tape.. "I know how to build boats, how to sail boats." Instead, as he settled into the offered chair, he withdrew a picture of Perri from his wallet. It was an old black-and-white school photograph, slightly yellow with age, taken in 1933, the year he'd begun to fall in love with her, when they were both thirteen.. At home, after phoning her folks, Celestina made a ham sandwich. She ate a quarter of it. Then two bites of a chocolate croissant. One spoonful of butter pecan ice cream. Everything was without taste, more bland than Phimie's hospital food, and it cloyed in her throat.. As terrible as the situation was for Barty, Agnes knew that it was equally difficult for Paul. She could only hold him in the night, and let herself be held. And more than once, she told him, "If worse comes to worst, don't you go walking again." They wanted to go up to Barty's room, but she refused them, because there was nothing more they could do for the boy than they had done for her. "He wants to finish reading Starman Jones, and I'm not letting anything interfere with that. We're leaving for Newport Beach at seven in the morning, and you can see

him then." In retrospect, he realized meditation didn't suit him. It was a passive activity, while by nature he was a man of action, happiest when doing. Now that neither of them had a doubt that the other shared the same need and that eventually they would satisfy each other, Victoria was opting for discretion. Wise woman. Mary was at play here, and the sight of her, his first in seven years, almost brought Barty to his knees. She was the image of her mother, and he knew that this must be at least a little bit what Angel had looked like when, at three, she had initially arrived here in 1968, when she explored the kitchen on that first day and found the toaster under a sock. In July, she went for a walk on the shore with Paul Damascus, expecting to do a little beachcombing, to watch the comical scurrying crabs. Somewhere between the seashells and the crustaceans, however, he asked her if she could ever love him. "Me, I don't like anything old. This White chick's got a weird thing for old people, old buildings, old stuff in general. Like she doesn't realize she's young. You want to grab her, shake her, and say, 'Hey, let's move on,' you know?" "She. Was eating. Dried apricots." Junior spoke almost in a whisper yet the ridge was so quiet that he had no doubt each of these uniformed but unofficial jurors heard him clearly. "Walking. Around the deck. Paused. The view. She. She. She leaned. Gone." Junior tossed garments on the floor and across the bed to create the impression that the detective had packed with haste. After being imprudent enough to blast Victoria Bressler five times with his service revolver-perhaps in a jealous rage, or perhaps because he had gone nuts-Vanadium would have been frantic to flee justice. Junior worried that he might not locate the correct Dumpster among the many. Yet he didn't switch on the flashlight, suspecting that he would be better able to find his way if the conditions of darkness and fog were exactly as they had been earlier. In fact, this proved to be the case, and he instantly recognized the hulking Dumpster when he came upon it. 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. At the farthest end of the loft from the stereo speakers, voices nevertheless had to be raised in even the most intimate exchanges. The artist who had created In the Baby's Brain Lies the Parasite of Doom, Version 6, however, possessed a voice as deep, sharp-edged, and penetrating as his talent. You have the teeth to do it, Junior thought, but he restrained himself from saying it. "This can't be a dead end." Mrs. Cain's little boy felt small, weak, sorry for himself, and terribly alone. The detective was still here, but his presence only aggravated Junior's sense of isolation. On this momentous day, however, drawing provided no solace. Frequently, her hands shook, and she could not control the pencil. Their evenings together were comfortable bliss, though usually they just watched television, or he read to her. She enjoyed being read to: mostly historical novels and occasional mysteries. He had nothing against Negroes. He didn't wish them ill. He wasn't prejudiced. Live and let live. He believed that as long as they stayed with their own kind and abided by the rules of a polite society, like everyone else, they had a right to live in peace. 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. "Besides, I still live by my vows as much as possible, though I've had the longest continuing dispensation on record." A smile on that cracked countenance could be touching, but an ironic look now worked less well; it gave Kathleen a chill. "Vanity is a sin I've more easily been able to avoid than some others." On the serving tables, the canap? trays held only stained paper doilies, crumbs, and empty plastic champagne glasses. "No. Lampion. Somewhere in your father's French background, there must have been lamp makers. A lampion is a small lamp, an oil lamp with a tinted-glass chimney. Among other things, in those long ago days, they used them on carriages." "Cash," Junior said. "I'll pay cash, with whatever amount of deposit is required." The sirens shrieked so loud that he felt a sympathetic vibration in his dental fillings, and with a sharp cry of brakes, a great red truck turned the corner, at once followed by a second. The sight of the heavily bandaged face apparently pressed all of the compassion buttons in the reverend, because he broke out of his paralytic shock and started forward-before he registered the weapon. "Thursday it is," he said, clearly delighted to be receiving only a third of the fair-market rental from his apartment.

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