

ISME LES CONVERSIONS EN EUROPE DE LEPOQUE MODERNE A LAPPARITION

"He came through the surgery well. He'll be in post-op for a while, then brought here to the ICU. His condition's critical, but there are degrees of critical, and I believe we'll be able to upgrade him to serious long before this day is over. He's going to make it." Nevertheless, Thomas Vanadium's hostile ghost, that terrible prickly bur of stubborn energy, wasn't done with Junior yet. Until Bartholomew was dead, the cop's filthy-scabby-monkey spirit would keep coming back and coming back, and it would surely grow more violent.. "It's partly that," she agreed. "But originally, Daddy wanted Phimie to tell, so the man could be charged and prosecuted. Though he's a good Baptist, Daddy isn't without a thirst for vengeance." "Please try not to be alarmed, Miss White, but I have a patrol car on the way to your address." On October 15, Junior acquired a third Sklent painting: The Heart Is Home to Worms and Beetles, Ever Squirming, Ever Swarming, Version 3.. Already, he was up two hours past his bedtime. In recent months, he'd exhibited the more erratic sleeping habits of older children. Some nights, he seemed to possess the circadian rhythms of owls and bats; after being sluggish all day, he suddenly became alert and energetic at dusk wanting to read long past midnight.. Ever since he'd searched Vanadium's house, over fourteen months ago, Junior had enjoyed learning about other people by touring their homes in their absence. Because he was unwilling to risk arrest for breaking and entering, these explorations were rare, other than in the homes of women whom he'd dated long enough to justify swapping keys. Happily, in this golden age of trust and easy relationships, as little as a week of hot sex could lead to key-level commitment.. Paul in the guest room again. Sweeping a bedside lamp to the floor, lifting the nightstand.. She strove to appear calm, and she must have succeeded, because neither woman seemed to realize that she was scared almost to the point of paralysis. She moved woodenly, joints stiff, muscles tense.. A table candle glowed in an amber glass. To Nolly, in this glimmering light, Kathleen's face was more radiant than the flame.. "The exquisite kind," he replied, glad that he had read so many books on the art of seduction and therefore knew precisely the right thing to say.. Channeling his beautiful rage, Junior hefted the corpse onto the windowsill, and shoved it headfirst into the alley. The fog received it with what sounded almost like a swallowing noise.. "--and we're from different worlds, which I respect. I respect you and your wonderful family ... your centeredness, your certainty. I want to do this only because it's what I owe you." Junior was educated. He wasn't merely a masseur with a fancy title; he had earned a hill bachelor of science degree with a major in rehabilitation therapy. When he watched television, which he never did to excess, he rarely settled for frivolous game shows or sitcoms like Gomer Pyle or The Beverly Hillbillies, or even I Dream of Jeannie, but committed himself to serious dramas that required intellectual involvement--Gunsmoke, Bonanza, and The Fugitive. He preferred Scrabble to all other board games, because it expanded one's vocabulary. As a member in good standing of the Book-of-the-Month Club, he'd already acquired nearly thirty volumes of the finest in contemporary literature, and thus far he'd read or skim-read more than six of them. He would have read all of them if he had not been a busy man with such varied interests; his cultural aspirations were greater than the time he was able to devote to them.. The physician saw the look and understood it. A blush pinked his long, pale face. "Celestina, you're quite beautiful, and I'm sure you've learned to be wary of men, but I swear that my intentions are entirely honorable." Without excellence, of course, there would be no civilization, no progress, no joy; and Agnes was surprised that this sharp bur of her father's philosophy had stuck deep in her subconscious, prickling and worrying her unnecessarily. She'd thought that she was entirely clean of his influence.. Beyond the windows, the winter night sifted sootily down through the twinkling city, as he sat in his living room with a glass of Dry Sack in one hand and the picture of Celestina White in the other.. Another machine beside the first, stocked with copies of a sexually explicit publication for gays, fired a quarter that hit Junior's forehead. The next snapped against the bridge of his nose.. knew Phimie died in childbirth, not an accident, and Max's instincts told him rape. I explained to your dad why Cain was the man. I wanted whatever information he might have. But I suppose ... sitting there, looking at my face, he decided that Cain is indeed the biggest hornet's nest ever, and he didn't want to put his daughter and granddaughter at greater risk than necessary." "He's an attorney, and this grieving husband comes to him with a big liability case. There's money to be made." Recalling how the title of the exhibition had resonated with him when first he'd seen the gallery, brochure, Junior felt certain now that a tape-recorded early draft of this sermon was the kinky "music" that accompanied his evening of passion with Seraphim. He couldn't remember one word of it, let alone any element that would have deeply moved a national radio audience, but this didn't mean that he was shallow or incapable of being touched by philosophical speculations. He'd been so distracted by the erotic perfection of Seraphim's young body and so busy jumping her that he wouldn't have remembered a word, either, if Zedd himself had been sitting on the bed, discussing the human condition with his customary brilliance.. Seraphim White had come to California to give birth to him in or to spare her parents--and their congregation--embarrassment.. On the two-chair bed beside her mother, Angel issued small cries of distress in her sleep. Whatever presences flocked around her in the dream, they weren't baby chickens.. He stashed two suitcases full of clothes and toiletries--plus the contents of Pinchbeck's safe-deposit box--in the van, and then added those precious items that he'd be loath to lose if the hit on Bartholomew went wrong, forcing him to leave his Russian Hill life and flee arrest. The works of Caesar Zedd. Sklent's three brilliant paintings. The needlepoint pillows, to which he'd colorfully applied the wisdom of Zedd, constituted the bulk of this collection of bare essentials: 102 pillows in numerous shapes and sizes, which he had completed in just thirteen months of feverish stitchery~. In the glamorous cocktail lounge of this elegant hotel, Junior was necessarily forced to use other of Zedd's techniques--and more brandy--to liberate from his subconscious the name of the caller on the Ansaphone. Max. The caller had said, It's Max.. Junior felt unspeakably violated. This was outrageous: the inarguably personal, very private

contents of his stomach, scooped into a plastic evidence bag, without his permission, without even his knowledge..After all he'd suffered at Cain's hands, Tom Vanadium surprised himself by laughing at these colorful accounts of the wife killer's misadventures. Indeed, laughter had seemed disrespectful to the memories of Victoria Bressler and Naomi, and Vanadium had been torn between a desire to hear more and a feeling that finding any amusement value in a man like Cain would leave a stain on the soul that no amount of penance could scrub away..As he raced into the future, the past caught up with him in the form of intestinal spasms, and by the time that he had driven only three miles, whimpering like a sick dog, he made an emergency stop at a service station to use the rest room..He smiled ruefully. "Might be ready for a wedding by then, but not a honeymoon..". "Our new roof," Bill said, pointing overhead, "will hold through any hurricane. Fine work. You tell Agnes what fine..For her, the suspense that grew throughout dinner didn't have much to do with whether or not Wally would pop the question, because if he didn't broach the subject this time, she intended to take the initiative. Instead, Celestina was more tense about whether or not Wally expected that a heartfelt expression of commitment should be sufficient to induce her to sleep with him..Nolly was, as usual, "Nolly" to everyone, but here Kathleen was "Mrs. Wulfstan"..Throughout this procedure, Barty appeared solemn and thoughtful. When he had squeezed the tenth toe, he stared at it, brow furrowed.. "I'm wondering," Nolly said, "if you're not an officer of the law anymore, in what capacity are you going to pursue Cain?". So after waiting two months for the superhot Harrison White case to cool down, Junior returned instead to Spruce Hills, traveled bald and pocked and passing as Pinchbeck, under the cover of night..Her fear, Agnes suddenly realized, arose from her father's often expressed conviction that an attempt to excel at anything was a sin that would one day be grievously punished. All forms of amusement were sinful, by his way of thinking, and all those who sought even the simplest entertainment were lost souls; however, those who desired to amuse others were the worse sinners, because they were overflowing with pride, striving to shine, eager to make themselves into false gods, to be praised and adored as only God should be adored. Actors, musicians, singers, novelists were doomed to hell by the very acts of creation which, in their egomania, they saw as the equal of their Creator's work. Striving to excel at anything, in fact, was a sign of corruption in the soul, whether one wanted to be recognized as a superior carpenter or car mechanic, or a grower of prize roses. Talent, in her father's view, was not a gift from God, but from the devil, meant to distract us from prayer, penitence, and duty..Only now, as the tide of adrenaline began to ebb, Paul wondered who could possibly have wanted to kill a man of peace and God, a man as good as Harrison White..Worrying is what mothers do best. Celestina was her mother, as far as Angel was concerned, and the child was not yet of an age to be told, and to understand, that she had been blessed with two mothers: the one who gave birth to her, and the one who raised her..Saturday and Sunday, between sessions with the directory, Junior cruised around the county on a series of pleasure drives-testing the theory that the maniac cop was no longer following him. Apparently, Simon Magusson was correct: The case had been closed..The boy didn't at once answer, and when Agnes looked up from Red Planet, she saw that he was staring oddly at her. He squinted, as if puzzled, and said, "The twisty spots just jumped off the page right up on your face..".Occasionally, when Junior returned home from a day of gallery hopping or an evening at a restaurant, Industrial Woman-the artist's title-scared away his mellow mood. More than once, he'd cried out in alarm before realizing this was just his prized Poriferan.. "Who is this?" he demanded, although for a demand, the words came out too thin, too squeaky..lawn before they knew that the prodigy's invisible cloak wouldn't accommodate him as it did the girl. Cool, drenching rain pounded Tom at once, and he scooped Barty off the steps as Grace had gathered up..Thanks to his intelligence and his personality, Barty's presence was so great for his age that Agnes tended to think of him as being physically larger and stronger than he actually was. As the scent of grass grew more complex and even more appealing, she saw her son more clearly than she'd seen him in a while: quite small, fatherless yet brave, burdened with a gift that was a blessing but that also made a normal boyhood impossible, forced to grow up at a up faster pace than any child should be required to endure. Barty was achingly delicate, so vulnerable that when Agnes looked at him, she felt a little of the awful sense of helplessness that burdened Edom and Jacob..Out of respect for his mother, Barty struggled to hold fast to his eyeless second sight, living in the idea of a world where he still had vision, until she had been accorded the honors she deserved and had been laid to rest beside his father..And like John Kennedy's death, Zedd's passing was cloaked in mystery, inspiring widespread suspicion of conspiracy. Only a few believed that he had committed suicide, and Junior was certainly not one of those gullible fools. Caesar Zedd, author of *You Have a Right to Be Happy*, would never have blown his brains out with a shotgun, as the authorities preferred the public to believe..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.. "So what I am is I'm your talking eyes..". Lowering her hand from his face, Angel said, "Do you know where bacon comes from?". Eventually, a braless blonde in shiny white plastic boots, a white miniskirt, and a hot-pink T-shirt featuring the silk-screened face of Albert Einstein, said, "Sure, I know her. Had some classes with her. She's nice enough, but she's kind of nerdy, especially for an Afro-American. I mean, they're never nerdy--am I right?". Shortly after nine-thirty in the morning, they landed in Eugene, and the cab driver who conveyed Junior to the town's largest shopping center spent more time staring at his afflicted passenger in the rearview mirror than he did watching the road. Junior got out of the taxi and paid through the driver's open window. The cabbie didn't even wait for his fiery-faced fare to turn completely away before he crossed himself.. "Maybe because we didn't want to be called witches," said Obadiah with a smile, "and give folks one more reason to hang us..". Frankness and tough talk pleased her, because too many people dealt with her as though her spirit were as frail as her limbs. She laughed with delight-but still refused him..Kneeling at her side, Junior placed the decorative pillow over her lovely face and pressed down firmly while Frank Sinatra finished "Hello, Young Lovers," and sang perhaps half of "All or Nothing at All..".

Victoria never regained consciousness, never had a chance to struggle..She wasn't listening closely to him. Numb. She felt as though she were half anesthetized. She was looking past him, at nothing, and his Voice seemed to be coming to her through several layers of surgical masks, though he now wore none at all..Tommy James and the Shondells, good American boys, had a record farther down the charts-"Hanky Panky"-that Junior felt was better than the Beatles' tune. The failure of his countrymen to support homegrown talent aggravated him. The nation seemed eager to surrender its culture to foreigners..Memory of the Spartan decor of Thomas Vanadium's house lingered with Junior, and he addressed his living space with the detective's style in mind. He installed a minimum of furniture, though all new and of higher quality than the junk in Vanadium's residence: sleek, modern, Danish-pecan wood and nappy oatmeal-colored upholstery..Too late. The parsonage was fully engulfed. With luck, they would save the church.."I've got hundreds of files on cases like that," said Jacob, "and much worse. If you're interested, I'll get you copies of some."..Junior was not immune to traditional logic, but in this case he recognized the superior wisdom of Zedd's philosophy. His dread of Bartholomew and his gut-level animosity toward a child he'd never met defied all reason and exceeded simple paranoia; therefore, it must be purest, infallible animal instinct..From Christmas through February, he dated a beautiful stock analyst and broker-Tammy Bean-who specialized in finding value in companies that had rewarding relationships with brutal dictators..Even at this post midnight hour, the lounge would sometimes be as crowded with worried loved ones as at any other time of the day. This morning, however, the only life under the threat of the scythe appeared to be Wally's; the sole vigil being kept was for him..the social worker and her family. Husband, wife, daughter, son. The little girl smiled shyly through braces. The boy was impish..One of the paramedics knelt beside the body, checking Naomi for a pulse, although in these circumstances, his action was such a formality that it was almost harebrained.."Sure. Or why don't I pull a Rumpelstiltskin and demand one of her children for payment' ".Extending his hand, watching the pianist closely, Junior said, "My name's Richard Gammoner."..Of course, you've never seen anything like it, you worthless adolescent twit. You're not old enough to have seen squat, and even if you were older than your own grandfather, you wouldn't have seen anything like this, Dr Kildare, because this here is a true case of voodoo Baptist boils, and they don't come along often!.With the second shot, the dead woman tumbled out of her chair, and the chair clattered onto its side.."I'm not saying there's anything wrong with it, you understand," Neddy whispered with a sort of fierce conciliation, "but I'm not gay, and I'm not interested in teaching you the piano or anything else. Besides, after the stories Renee told about you, I can't imagine why you think any friend of his ... hers would get near you. You need help. Renee is what she is, but she's not a bad person, she's generous and she's sweet. She doesn't deserve to be beaten, abused, and ... and all those horrible things you did. Excuse me."..After a silent moment of surprise, Nork or Knacker, or Hisscus, said, "Your sentiment is understandable, Mr. Cain, but it's customary in these matters--".Before they set out for the amusement park, Agnes pulled him aside, held him close, and said, "Listen, kid of mine, I'm not giving up. Don't think I ever would. Let's have fun today. This evening, you and I and Angel will convene a meeting of the North Pole Society of Not Evil Adventurers"-the girl had become the third member years ago" and all truths will be told and secrets known. ".Chan nodded. "Considering the advanced stage of Bartholomew's malignancies, he should have complained earlier than he did."..Looking from one to another of his companions, Tom said, "When I think of everything that had to happen to bring us here tonight, the tragedies as well as the happy turns of fortune, when I think of the many ways things might have been, with all of us scattered and some of us never having met, I know we belong here, for we've arrived against all odds." His gaze traveled back to Agnes, and he gave her the answer that he knew she hoped to hear. "This boy and this girl were born to meet, for reasons only time will reveal, and all of us ... we're the instruments of some strange destiny."..And there's more," said Vinnie Lincoln, as round as Santa Claus and cherry-cheeked with pleasure at being able to bear these gifts. "The policy contained a double-indemnity clause in the event of death by accident. The complete tax-free payout is one and a half million."..Clutching the red rose in his left hand, the brightly wrapped gift box half crushed in his right, Thomas Vanadium lay at Junior's mercy, with no tricks to perform, no quarter to set dancing across his knuckles..Vanadium couldn't know the whereabouts of the quarter. Besides, even when he'd swung the lunch tray over Junior's lap, the detective hadn't been close enough to pick the pocket of the robe..She shivered, and Edom, thinking that she had caught a chill ripped off his suit jacket and draped it over her shoulders..Three times, the singing faded away, but twice, just when he thought that she had finished, she began to croon again. The third time, the silence lasted..This humble house wasn't where you expected to hear an elaborate custom doorbell-or even any doorbell at all, since knuckles on wood were the cheapest announcement of a visitor..Maintaining a brutal strangling pressure, Junior turned his head aside, to protect his eyes. He knelt Neddy in the crotch, crunching the remaining fight out of him..She couldn't explain her anxiety to him, because he believed in the supremacy of laws, in the justice that might be delivered in this life, in a comparatively simple reality, and he would not comprehend the gloriously, frighteningly, reassuringly, strangely, and deeply complex reality Agnes occasionally perceived-usually peripherally, sometimes intellectually, but often with her heart. This was a world in which effect could come before cause, in which what seemed to be coincidence was, in fact, merely the visible part of a far larger pattern that couldn't be seen whole..On Thursday, January 4, he used his John Pinchbeck identity to purchase a new Ford van with a cashier's check. He leased a private garage space in the Pinchbeck name, near the Presidio, and stored the van there..The two women stared at each other, and at last Celestina said, "Good Lord, what's happening here? ".Wally Lipscomb parked in his garage, switched off the engine, and started to get out of the Buick before he saw that Celestina had left her purse in the car..Agnes winced. Already, another contraction. Mild but so soon after the last. She clasped her hands around her immense belly and took slow, deep breaths until the pain passed..AT ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, where Wally had brought Angel into this world three years ago, he was now fighting for his

life, for a chance to see the girl grow and to be the father she needed. He'd been taken to surgery already when Celestina and Angel arrived a few minutes behind the ambulance..Dr. Walter Lipscomb's fingers were longer and more supple than the pianist's, and he had the presence of a great symphony conductor for whom a raised baton was superfluous, who commanded attention by the mere fact of his entry. A tower of authority and self-possession, he said to the becalmed Neddy, "I am this child's physician. She was born underweight and held in hospital to cure an ear infection. You sound as if you have an incipient case of bronchitis that will manifest in twenty-four hours, and I'm sure you wouldn't want to be responsible for this baby being endangered by viral disease." daughter's existence. Angel, if that's what she were eventually to be named, lived under a threat as surely as had all the children of Bethlehem, who'd been slain according to the decree of King Herod. The baby curled one small hand around her aunt's index finger. So tiny, fragile, she nonetheless gripped with surprising tenacity..She slammed it shut before he could stop her, whether he had intended to stop her or not, and she engaged the deadbolt lock..As usual, Vanadium had spoken in a monotone, putting no special emphasis on those two words. Yet Junior sensed that the detective harbored doubts about the explanation of the girl's death.. "The piece that's intrigued me," Junior revealed, "is the one that's rather like a c-c-candlestick. It's quite different from the others." "The mass of these malignancies suggest they will soon spread-or have already spread-out of the eye to the orbit. There is no hope that radiation therapy will work in this instance, and no time to risk trying it even if there were hope. No time at all. No time. Dr. Schurr and I agree, to save Bartholomew's life, we must remove both eyes immediately." Outside, Celestina took Angel's hand as they descended the front steps to the street..just as Sinatra broke into song again, Junior thought he heard a footstep on the wood floor of the hallway, and the creak of a board. The music masked the sounds of the visitor's approach if, indeed, he was approaching..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.. "I'm paying," Celestina insisted when they were seated. "I'm now a successful artist, with untold numbers of critics just waiting to savage me." If he was left standing on the porch, the visitor would circle the house, peering in windows where the drapes were not drawn, trying the doors in hope of finding one unlocked. Fearful that Victoria was sick or injured, that perhaps she had slipped on a pat of butter and cracked her head against the corner of an open oven door, he might try to force his way inside, break a window. Certainly he would go to the neighbors to call the police..At the end of their second date, however, Frieda invited Junior up to her apartment, to see her Lientery collection and, no doubt, to take a ride on the Cain ecstasy machine. She owned seven canvases by the painter, received as partial payment of his PR bills..In fifty years, until Angel, Tom had found no other like himself and now a second in little more than a week. "I can't do what you did." He pushed on the door, but still it resisted, and he surprised himself by letting out a bellow of frustration that expressed quite the opposite of self-control, though no one listening could have the slightest doubt about his determination to commit and command..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..One apartment to the right, one to the left. Junior went to the right, to Apartment 1, where he'd seen the lights come on behind the curtained windows..To the left, a door led to a back staircase, accessible with the special key already in his hand. To the right: a key-operated service elevator for which he'd been provided a separate key.. "From time to time now, you're going to be written about," Helen warned. "Be prepared for a peevish critic or two, furious about your optimism." If he had been any other three-year-old, she would have told a compassionate lie. He was her miracle child, however, her prodigy, and he would know a lie for what it was..She remained fixated on the card that she had just dealt, and for a while she didn't speak, as though the eyes of the paper knife held her in thrall. Finally she said, "Monster. Human monster." "No, the monster lives in there," Barty said, which was a joke, because he'd never suffered night frights of that-or any--sort..The hum, the buzz, the rattle, the grinding of machinery, power tools. Sheet steel and tougher structural steel snarling against the teeth of a metal-cutting saw..Otter was reluctant to answer. He had to like Hound, but didn't have to trust him. "Shape-changing," he mumbled at last..In all the many ways things are, across the infinity of worlds and all Creation, Barty believed that no woman existed whose beauty exceeded hers or whose heart was better..Knickknacks and mementos were not to be found anywhere in the house. And until now Junior had seen nothing hanging on the barren walls except a calendar in the kitchen..Holding the mug in his right hand, Tom picked up the coin and rolled it across the knuckles of his left. Paul's quarter, after all. A two-bit temptation to panic. As gifted with physical grace as with good looks, Junior stepped into the bedroom doorway, lithely and with feline stealth. He leaned against the jamb..Animal instinct told Junior that the business with the quarter in the diner and now these quarters in his living room were related to his failure to find Bartholomew, Seraphim White's bastard child. He couldn't logically explain the connection; but as Zedd teaches, animal instinct is the only unalloyed truth we will ever know..Yet through the summer of 1966, following this call, he acted like a man who was haunted. A sudden draft, even if warm, chilled him and caused him to turn in circles, seeking the source. In the middle of the night, the most innocent of sounds could scramble him from bed and send him on a search of the apartment, flinching from harmless shadows and twitching at looming invisibilities that he imagined he saw at the edges of his vision..I believe the universe is sort of like an unimaginably vast musical with an infinite number of strings." With his bent thumb against the crook of his forefinger, he flipped the quarter. Even as the coin snapped off the thumbnail and began to stir the air, Tom flung up both hands, fingers spread to show them empty and to distract. Yet on a second look, the coin was not airborne as it had seemed to be, no longer spinning-wink, wink-before their dazzled eyes. It had vanished as though into the payment slot of an ethereal vending machine that dispensed mystery in return.."Some men," she said, "wouldn't be able to sustain desire when their

hands touched my back. I'll understand if you're one of them. It's not beautiful to the eye, and rough as oak bark to the touch. That's why I brought you here, so you'd know this before you consider where you want to go from ... where we are now." Junior was vigilant. He took note of all those who approached the piano, whether they dropped money in the fishbowl or not. CLOUDS SWARMED THE late-afternoon sun, and the Oregon sky grew sapphire where still revealed. Cops gathered like bright-eyed crows in the lengthening shadow of the fire tower. Gradually he grew calm. His great frosty exhalations diminished to a diaphanous dribble that evaporated two inches from his lips. Too far from Spruce Hills to be a popular make-out spot for teenagers, Quarry Lake was a turnoff for young lovers also because it had a reputation as haunted territory. Over five decades, four quarry workers had died in mining accidents. County lore included stories of ghosts roaming the depths of the excavation before it was flooded-and subsequently the shoreline, after the lake was filled. If that was the bright side, however, it was a piss-poor bright side (no pun intended), because he was still stuck in this men's room with a corpse, and he couldn't stay here for the rest of his life, surviving on tap water and paper-towel sandwiches but he couldn't leave the body to be found, either, because the police would be all over the gallery before the reception ended, before he had a chance to follow Celestina home. "No. Just tricks. Turn a leaf to a gold piece. Seemingly." While the horse and then the sheep grazed twelve months each, an H-bomb accidentally fell from a B-52 and was lost in the ocean, off Spain, for two months before being located. Mao Tse-tung launched his Cultural Revolution, killing thirty million people to improve Chinese society. James Meredith, civil rights activist, was wounded by gunfire during a march in Mississippi. In Chicago, Richard Speck murdered eight nurses in a row-house dormitory, and a month later, Charles Whitman limbed a tower at the University of Texas, from which he shot and killed twelve people. Arthritis forced Sandy Koufax, star pitcher for the Dodgers, to retire. Astronauts Grissom, White, and Chaffee died earthbound, in a flash fire that swept their Apollo spacecraft during a full-scale launch simulation. Among the noted who traded fame for eternity were Walt Disney, Spencer Tracy, saxophonist John Coltrane, writer Carson McCullers, Vivien Leigh, and Jayne Mansfield. Junior bought McCullers's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, and though he didn't doubt that she was a fine writer, her work proved to be too weird for his taste. During these years, the world was rattled by earthquakes, swept by hurricanes and typhoons, plagued by floods and droughts and politicians, ravaged by disease. And in Vietnam, hostilities were still underway. Scamp was a multitasking woman, with smoother skin than a depilated peach, with more delicious roundnesses than Junior could catalog, but she proved not to be the remedy for his tension. Only Bartholomew, found and destroyed, could give him peace. "More than remorse," the magician said. "Shame. I come from good people. I wasn't raised to be a cheat. Sometimes, trying to figure how I went wrong, I think it wasn't the need for money that ruined me. At least not that alone, not even that primarily. It was pride in my skill with the cards, frustrated pride because I wasn't getting enough nightclub work to show off as much as I wanted to." He turned from the cowering girl and studied the boy, who stood a few steps inside the room, holding a can of soda in each hand. The artificial eyes were convincing, but they didn't possess the knowing look that so troubled him in the strange girl. In spite of the thousands of hours that Paul was afoot, he seldom thought about why he walked. He met people along the way who asked, and he had answers for them, but he never knew if any answer might be the truth. He was wrong about this. On the final Friday of every month, in sunshine and in rain, Junior routinely took a walking tour of the six galleries that were his very favorites, browsing leisurely in each and chatting up the galerieurs, with a one-o'clock break for lunch at the St. Francis Hotel. This was a tradition with him, and invariably at the end of each such day, he felt wonderfully cozy. On other nights, she had overheard this and been touched. On this Christmas Eve, however, it filled her with wonder and wondering, for she recalled their conversation earlier, at Joey's grave: His artificial eyes were almost a month old. He'd been through surgery to have the eye-moving muscles attached to the conjunctiva, and everybody told him that the look and movement were absolutely real. In fact, they had told him this so often, in the first week or two, that he became suspicious and figured that his new eyes were totally out of control and spinning like pinwheels. On the back of the watch case, however, were the incriminating words of a commemorative engraving: To Eenie/Love/Tammy Bean. Paul said, "I wanted you ... I don't know ... I just wanted you to see her. I wanted to say ... to say. . ." Besides, he'd noticed a tendency among dopers to get maudlin, whereupon they sank into a confessional mood, seeking peace through rambling self-analysis and self-revelation. Junior was too private a person to behave in such a fashion. Furthermore, if drugs ever put him in a confessional mood, the consequence might be electrocution or poison gas, or lethal injection, depending on the jurisdiction and the year in which he fell into an unbosoming frame of mind. Now, the hateful music unnerved him. He became convinced that if he went home alone, the phantom chanteuse-whether Victoria Bressler's vengeful ghost or something else-would croon to him once more. He wanted company and distraction, after all. An exceptionally attractive woman, alone at the bar, stirred his desire. Glossy black hair: the tresses of night itself, shorn from the sky

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