

## **JAJABORI BHUPENDA FROM MY DIARY PAGES**

"Shape-taking?" "I'm interested in one of the smaller Griskins," said Junior, managing to appear calm, although his mouth was dry with fear and his mind spun with crazy images of the maniac cop, dead and rotting but nevertheless lurching around San Francisco..Sitting in the client's chair, across the cigarette-scarred desk from Nolly, Junior heard or imagined that he heard the scurry of tiny rodent feet behind him, and something chewing on paper inside a pair of rust spotted filing cabinets. Repeatedly, he wiped at the back of his neck or reached down to rub a hand over his ankles, convinced that insects were crawling on him..If Junior had realized that they were driving only a block and a half, he wouldn't have followed them in the Mercedes. He would have gone the rest of the way on foot. When he pulled to the curb again, a few car lengths behind the Buick, he wondered if he had been spotted..She wanted so badly to believe, to see her son made whole again, and the funny thing was that she could believe, and without emotional risk, because it was true..The kiss was lovely, long and easy, full of restrained passion that boded well for nights to come in the marriage bed.. "Frozen firing pin," Cain said. His smile was venomous. "I worked on it. I hoped you'd get here in time to see the consequences of your stupid games." "Was a priest," he corrected. "Might be again. At my request, I've been under a dispensation from vows and suspension from duties for twenty-seven years. Ever since those kids were killed." Edom and Jacob flanked the gurney, each gripping one of Barty's feet through the sheet that covered them, escorting him with the same stony determination that you saw on the faces of the Secret Service agents who bracketed the President of the United States..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..Through the remainder of his dinner, he was entirely future focused, the past put safely out of mind. Until ...Bartholomew didn't merely have something to do with babies. Bartholomew was a baby.. "If you ranted at him about earthquakes, tornadoes, erupting volcanoes, and all that stuff, how could he mistake you for me?"..after he is rolled onto his back by his father, now, here, roses by the fistful jammed in his face, crushed and ground..Barty, thirteen years old but listening to books at a postgraduate college level, had no doubt studied leukemia while they were awaiting the test results, to prepare himself to fully understand the diagnosis on first receiving it. He tried not to look stricken when he heard acute myeloblastic, which was the worst form of the disease, but he appeared more ghastly in his pretense than if he had revealed his understanding. Had his eyes not been artificial, his stiff-upper-lip pose would have been utterly unconvincing..His waitress was a cutie. She flirted with him, and he knew he could have her if he wanted..From the bathroom, Junior gathered an electric razor and toiletries. He added these to the suitcases.. "No, I didn't see him," Junior reminded the attorney. "I just assumed, when this harassment started here-"..Agnes was not fully aware of how she was lifted from the car, but she remembered looking back and seeing Joey's body huddled in the tangled shadows of the wreckage, remembered reaching toward him, desperate for the anchorage that he had always given her, and then she was on the gurney and moving..After clicking off the kitchen lights, the hall light, and the light in the foyer, he pulled shut the front door, leaving the house dark and silent behind him..Wally-Dr. Walter Lipscomb, who delivered Angel and who became her godfather-never worried when the girl seemed to be developing too slowly, counseling that every child was an individual, with his or her particular learning pace. Wally's double specialty--obstetrics and pediatrics-gave him credibility, of course, but Celestina had worried, anyway..Snap, snap, snap! Three more quarters ricocheted off the left side of his face-temple, cheek, jaw.. "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."..Escorting her home didn't require either a car or a long walk, because she lived upstairs in the hotel where he'd had dinner. The top three floors of the building featured enormous owner-occupied apartments..He couldn't easily refuse the assignment. Later that year, President Lyndon Johnson, with strong backing from both the Democratic and the Republican Parties, was expected to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and currently it was dangerous for clearheaded believers in the primacy of self to express their healthy instincts, which might be mistakenly perceived as racial prejudice. He could be fired..In spite of the ravages of illness and age, beauty remained in the old woman's face. Her bone structure was superb. In youth, she must have been stunning..Room by room, closet by closet, Junior conducted a search for the detective. The cop was not here..Outside, flames churned to the left and right of the opening. The front of the house was afire..For a spirit, the maniac lawman appeared disturbingly solid. He wore a tweed sports jacket and slacks that, as far as Junior could tell, were the same clothes he'd worn on the night he died. Apparently, even the ghosts of Sklent's atheistic spiritual world were stuck for eternity in the clothes in which they had perished..From the phone, Barty proceeded directly to the refrigerator. He opened the door, got a can of orange soda, and returned without hesitation to his chair at the table..Maria Elena Gonzalez-no longer a seamstress in a dry-cleaners, but proprietor of Elena's Fashions, a small dress shop one block off the town square-joined Agnes, Barty, Edom, and Jacob on Christmas..Somehow, Vanadium's malevolent spirit was also to blame for Junior's failure to find a new heart mate, in spite of all the women he'd been through. Undoubtedly, when Bartholomew was dead and Vanadium vanquished with him, romance and true love would bloom..A spirit-shredding bleakness clawed at her, but she couldn't permit it to leave her in tatters. If she traded hope for despair, as her brothers had done, Bartholomew would be finished before he'd begun. She owed him optimism, lessons in the joy of life..He was in the kitchen at 11:20, spreading frosting on a large chocolate sheet cake while the reverend expertly frosted a coconut-layer job..By the time he went to bed Saturday night, the cards that had been only that morning were showing signs of wear..After Bellini left, Tom questioned Celestina

extensively, with an emphasis on Phimie's rape. Although the subject was painful, she was grateful for the questions. Without this distraction, in spite of her well of hope, she might have allowed her imagination to fashion terror after terror, until Wally had died a hundred times over in her mind..A pang of regret pierced her, that her boy's precocity should deny him this fine fantasy, as her morose father had denied it to her. "He's real," she asserted..Life was too short to waste it working if you had the means to afford lifelong leisure..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..At this extreme end of town, no streetlamps lit the pavement. With only moonlight to reveal him, he wasn't likely to be recognized if anyone happened to glance out a window..That night, in Barty's room, after Agnes had listened to his prayers and then had tucked him in for the night, she sat on the edge of his bed. "Honey, I was wondering.... Now that you've had more time to think, could you explain to me what happened?".A half bath downstairs. Two bedrooms and a full bath on the upper floor. All deserted..Although Dr. Lipscomb spoke almost as softly as the long-winded pianist, and though the physician's narrow face was homely and devoid of any trace of violent temperament, Neddy Gnathic flinched from him and retreated across the threshold, into the hallway..Beseechingly, with no intention of intimacy, he took Celestina's hands in his. "For years, as an obstetrician, I brought life into the world, but I didn't know what life was, didn't grasp the meaning of it, that it even had meaning. Before Rowena, Harry, and Danny went down in that airplane, I was already ... empty. After losing them, I was worse than empty. Celestina, I was dead inside. Phimie gave me hope. I can't repay her, but I can do something for her daughter and for you, if you'll let me.".Greed. So easy, taking money from the rubes. Soon, instead of peeling off a little from each game, he sought bigger kills..He'd listened to the message and thought it incomprehensible, of no import. Suddenly, tardy intuition told him that it could not have been any more important to him if it had been dead Naomi calling from beyond the grave to leave testimony for the detective..Not a word of that would come to Paul, but his frustrating speechlessness might have been for the best. From everything he knew about this hero, such effusive praise would embarrass him..Sometimes he thought he walked for Perri, using the steps she had stored up and never taken, giving expression to her unfulfilled yearning to travel. At other times, he thought he walked for the solitude that allowed him to remember their life in fine detail-or to forget. To find peace--or seek adventure. To gain understanding through contemplation---or to scrub all thought from his mind. To see the world or to be rid of it. Perhaps he hoped that coyotes would stalk him through a bleak twilight or a mountain lion set upon him on a hungry dawn, or a drunk driver run him down..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.."Blood tests should reveal whether the child's yours or not. That also might explain all this..".Snapping the cylinder into place, he rose to his feet. Already he had a new plan, and the cop's revolver was the most important tool that he required to implement it..Letting go of Maria, lowering her hand to her heart, Agnes said, "I want to see him." After making the sign of the cross, Maria said, "They must to have kept him in the eggbator until he is not dangerous. When the nurse comes, I will make her to tell me when the baby is to be safe. But I can't be leave you. I watch. I watch over..".After moving all of a hundred feet, Celestina and Wally-with Grace fretting that someone would be hurt-had torn down the high stave fence between properties, for theirs had become one family with many names: Lampion, White, Lipscomb, Isaacson. When backyards were joined and a connecting walkway poured, Barty's travels from house to house were greatly simplified, and regular visits by the Gonzalez, Damascus, and Vanadium branches of the clan were also facilitated..And so at the age of thirty-one, after more than twenty-eight years of blindness with a few short reprieves, Barty Lampion received the gift of sight from his ten-year-old daughter. 1996 through 2000: Day after day, the work was done in memory of Agnes Lampion, Joey Lampion, Harrison White, Seraphim White, Jacob Isaacson, Simon Magusson, Tom Vanadium, Grace White, and most recently Wally Lipscomb, in memory of all those who had given so much and, though perhaps still alive in other places, were gone from here..".I'm not sure which is more unusual-the site of the eruption, the number of boils, or the size of them..".He lived high, on Russian Hill, in a limestone-clad building with carved Victorian detail. His one-bedroom unit included a roomy kitchen with breakfast nook and a spacious living room with windows looking down on twisty Lombard Street..".Fifty died in London, in '57, when two trains crashed. And a hundred twelve were crushed, torn, mangled, in '52, also England..".Really? You really think that?" he asked in his flat voice, which he sometimes wished were more musical, but which he knew lent a sober conviction to anything he said. "You think something so delicious could come from a fat, smelly, dirty, snorting old pig?".Settling onto the empty stool beside this beauty, Junior offered to buy her a drink, and she accepted..Angel followed him and observed as he climbed a stepstool and unhooked the telephone handset. He dialed with little pause between digits, and spoke with each of his uncles..Her hands were locked together in her lap, gripped so tightly for so long that the muscles in her forearms ached. "What's wrong?".The right side of the girl's face appeared to be more strongly affected by gravity.A trickster, this detective. Full of taunts and feints and sly stratagems. Psychological-warfare artist..Intuition told Tom Vanadium that the removal of the paintings was significant, but he wasn't a talented enough Sherlock to leap immediately to the meaning of their absence..He had experienced considerable self-revelation during the past eighteen hours, but of all the new qualities he had discovered in himself, Junior was most proud of the realization that he was such a profoundly sensitive person. This was an admirable character trait, but it would also be a useful screen behind which to commit whatever ruthless acts were required in this dangerous new life he'd chosen..".Love you," Wally said, and Celestina repeated it, and he said, "I'm gonna stand in the hall till I hear you set both locks..".deodar cedars with layers of drooping branches surrounded the place, and usually they seemed sheltering, but

now they loomed, ominous. Whether making love or killing, he was never guided by bigotry. A private little joke with himself. But true. On the other hand, killing a stranger like Bartholomew Prosser relieved stress better than sex did. Senseless murder was as relaxing to him as meditation without seed, and probably less dangerous. This morning, only his love for his sister, Agnes, gave him the courage to drive and to become the pie man. After tucking the flashlight under his belt, he grabbed the lip of the Dumpster with both hands. The metal was gritty, cold, and wet. Junior was impressed and delighted by her clever assumption of it strictly professional voice and demeanor, which convincingly masked her intense desire. Sweet Victoria was a worthy coconspirator. Dumpsters and delivery trucks hulked against the building walls. Steam billowed out of street grates. The gray shadows were no longer disturbed by a running shade in a tweed sports jacket. "Well, maybe you're right," Bellini said somewhat acerbically, before departing, "but then you've had the advantage of an illegal search, while I'm hampered by such niceties as warrants." He remembered the collection of Caesar Zedd self-help drivel that had occupied a place of honor in the wife killer's former home in Spruce Hills. Cain owned a hardcover and a paperback of each of Zedd's works. The more expensive editions had been pristine, as though they were handled only with gloves; but the text in the paperbacks had been heavily underlined, and the corners of numerous pages had been bent to mark favorite passages. Three equally modest rooms opened off this lounge. Two housed complete dental units, and the third provided cramped office space shared by the receptionist and the doctor. Maria arrived early, expecting to assist with final details in the kitchen. Though honored to be a guest, she wasn't able to stand by with a glass of wine while preparations remained to be made. Copyright (c) 1997 by Ursula K. Le Guin. Routinely she dreamed of Joey. Not nightmares. No blood, no reliving of the horror. In her dreams, she was on a picnic with Joey or at a carnival with him. Walking a beach. Watching a movie. A warmth pervaded these scenes, an aura of companionship, love. Except eventually she always glanced away from Joey, and when she looked again, he was gone, and she knew that he was gone forever. IN HIS FORD VAN filled with needlepoint and Sklent and Zedd, Junior Cain-Pinchbeck to the world-left the Bay Area by a back door. He took State Highway 24 to Walnut Creek, which might or might not have walnuts, but which offered a mountain and a state park named for the devil: Mount Diablo. State Highway 4 to Antioch brought him to a crossing of the river delta west of Bethel Island. Bethel, for those who had taken good advanced courses in vocabulary improvement, meant "sacred place." Turning in circles, he tipped his head back, presenting his face to the streaming sky, laughing. Short and slender, Dr. Chan was as self-effacing as a Buddhist monk, as confident and as gracious as a mandarin emperor. His manner was serene, and his effect was tranquility. For forty-eight hours, he pumped himself full of prescription antihistamines, immersed himself in bathtubs brimming with numbingly cold water, and lathered himself with soothing lotions. In misery, gripped by self-pity, he dared not think about the 9-mm pistol that he had stolen from Frieda Bliss. 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. Nolly shrugged. "He can't know for sure. And anyway, he didn't get the pushed idea until he'd already taken the case." The first time, she required a pencil, paper, and nine minutes to calculate the number of elapsed seconds since an event that had occurred 125 years, six months, and eight days in the past. Her answer differed from his, but while proofing her numbers, she realized that she had forgotten to factor in leap years. She was astonished and moved. "I'm a hopeless throwback to the nineteenth century. How could you realize what's been on my mind?" While Jacob had shuffled, Agnes had taken little Barty from his bassinet into her arms. She was surprised and discomfited to discover that the baby was to have his fortune told first. "Take care you don't beat evil into him," said his aunt. "Then you have a big advantage, and you'll have to tell us all about yourselves," Agnes said. "I'll get the coffee brewing ... unless you'd like to help." The weather was good, so he went for a walk, though he crossed the street repeatedly to avoid passing newspaper-vending machines. Neddy, dressed for work but overdressed for his own funeral, slumped against the wall, head bowed, chin on his chest. His pale hands were splayed at his sides, as though he were trying to strike chords from the floor tiles. As he edged closer, to better hear the conversation, he became aware of someone staring at him. He looked up into anthracite eyes, into a gaze as sharp as that of any bird, set in the lean face of a thirty something man thinner than a winter-starved crow. Heart jumping like the heart of a fox-stalked rabbit, she ran from the driveway into the yard. She would have cried out if her throat hadn't seized up with terror at the sight of her boy at neck-breaking height. By the time she could speak, she realized that a shout, or even the unexpected sound of her plaintive voice, might unnerve him, cause him to misstep, and bring him caroming down, limb to limb, in a bone snapping plunge. Move, move, like a runaway train, leaving the dead nuns--or at least one dead musician--far behind. "No pie!" Agnes agreed. She parenthesized his head with her hands and punctuated his sweet face with kisses. She struggled, wept, pretended disgust, faked shame, swore to bring the police down on him. Another man, not as highly skilled at reading men as Junior, might have thought the girl's resistance was genuine, Sat her charges of rape were sincere. Any other man might have backed off, but Junior was neither fooled nor confused. Holding fast to the boy's right foot, Jacob observed that one elevator might descend safely but that if they took two, one or the other was certain to crash to the bottom of the shaft, considering the unreliability of all machinery made by man. On Tuesday, less than twenty-four hours after Naomi's funeral, Knacker, Hisscus, and Nork--representing the state and the county held preliminary meetings with Junior's lawyer and with the attorney for the grieving Hackachak clan. As before, the well-tailored trio was conciliatory, sensitive, and willing to reach an accommodation to prevent the filing of a wrongful-death suit. The moon shimmered, and the stars blurred-but only briefly, for her devotion to this boy was a fiery furnace that tempered the steel of her spine and brought a drying heat to her eyes. Without Franklin Chan's full approval but with his complete understanding, Agnes took Barty home. On Monday, they would return to Hoag Hospital, where Barty would receive surgery on Tuesday. An overflow crowd of mourners

had attended the services at St. Thomas's Church, standing shoulder to shoulder at the back of the nave, through the narthex, and across the sidewalk outside, and now everyone appeared to have come to the cemetery, as well..room, heavier and colder than the ice bags that were draped across Junior's midsection..After a long time the door opened and several men came in. He could do nothing against them as they gagged him and bound his arms behind him. "Now you won't weave charms nor speak spells, young'un," said a broad, strong man with a furrowed face, "but you can nod your head well enough, right? They sent you here as a dowser. If you're a good dowser you'll feed well and sleep easy. Cinnabar, that's what you're to nod for. The King's wizard says it's still here somewhere about these old mines. And he wants it. So it's best for us that we find it. Now I'll walk you out. It's like I'm the water finder and you're my wand, see? You lead on. And if you want to go this way or that way you dip your head, so. And when you know there's ore underfoot, you stamp on the place, so. Now that's the bargain, right? And if you play fair I will." Astonished and appalled by the cop's insensitivity, Junior said, "You just drop this on me? I lost my wife and my baby. My wife and my baby." For all his brilliance, however, he was still a boy who loved to run and jump and tumble. Who swung from the backyard oak tree in a rope-and-tire swing. Who was thrilled when given a tricycle. Who giggled in delight while watching his uncle Jacob roll a shiny quarter end over-end across his knuckles and perform other simple coin tricks..stopped by to help Agnes, and some offered to stay with her at night. She gratefully accepted assistance with the housecleaning, laundry, and shopping, but she declined the all-night company because of her dreams..Sitting on a stool at the counter, he ordered a cheeseburger, coleslaw, french fries, and a cherry Coke..If the policeman's gray eyes had earlier been as hard as nailheads, they were now points, and behind them was willpower strong enough to drive spikes through stone..If the detective believed that Seraphim had been raped, his natural desire to exact vengeance for his friend's daughter might motivate him to commit the relentless harassment that Junior had endured now for four days..Of course, Seraphim's child would not have a telephone. He was just a baby, dangerous to Junior in a way that was not clear, but a baby nonetheless..He swept the immediate area with the flashlight, and shadows spun with shadows, waltzing spirits in the ballroom of the night..Because he genuinely liked women and hoped always to please them, always to be discreet and chivalrous and giving, Junior did as she wished, spinning a vivid account of the grisly vengeance he would take if ever Seraphim told anyone what he'd done to her. Vlad the Impaler, the historical inspiration for Brain Stoker's Dracula--thank you, Book-of-the-Month Club--could not have imagined bloodier or more horrific tortures and mutilations than those that Junior promised to visit upon the reverend, his wife, and Seraphim herself Pretending to terrorize the girl excited him, and he was perceptive enough to see that she was equally excited by pretending to be terrorized..A car waited at the curb in front of the park. Dr. Salks two associates stood beside it and seemed to have been there awhile..Angel pointed to a Mercedes parked about forty feet behind the Buick, just as its headlights went off..The modulated electronic brrrrr was similar to the sound of the telephone in Vanadium's cramped study, on Sunday night. Junior was transported back to that place, that moment in time..To see his newborn baby girl, Barty shared the sight of other Bartys, and he so adored this little wrinkled Mary that he sustained his vision all day, until a thunderous migraine became too much to bear and a sudden frightening slurring of speech drove him back to the comfort of blindness..Her hands shook, her entire body shook, and in her mind was a hard clatter of fear like the wheels of a roller coaster rattling over poorly seamed tracks.."Wish I could describe his face. Frosty the Snowman was never that white. The surveillance van is parked right there, two spaces south of the vending machines--". "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." The end of his quest was near, so near, the right Bartholomew almost within 'mullet range. He was furious with Neddy Gnathic for possibly screwing this up..When the convulsive seizure passed, as he collapsed back on the spattered pillow, shuddering at the stench rising from his hideously fouled clothes, Junior was suddenly struck by an idea that was either..In those days they had no fixed names for the various kinds and arts of magic, nor were the connections among those arts clear. There was-as the wise men of Roke would say later-no science in what they knew. But Hound knew pretty surely that his prisoner was concealing his talents..Agnes was grateful for the speed with which these arrangements were made, but she was also disturbed. Chan's expeditious management of Barty's case resulted in part from his friendship with Joshua, but an urgency arose, as well, during his examination of the boy, from a suspicion that he remained reluctant to put into words. Dr. Morley Schurr, the oncologist, who had offices in a building near Hoag Hospital, proved to be tall and portly, although otherwise much like Franklin Chan: kind, calm, and confident..Harrison was a Baptist, Vanadium a Catholic, and although they approached the same faith from different angles, they weren't coming to it from different planets, which was the feeling Vanadium had been left with following their conversation. It was true that Enoch Cain could never be brought successfully to trial for the rape of Phimie, subsequent to her death and in the absence of her testimony. And it was also uncomfortably true that exploring the possibility that Cain was the rapist would tear open the wounds in the hearts of everyone in the White family, to no useful effect. Nevertheless, to rely on divine justice alone seemed naive, if not morally questionable..Needlepoint provided no sanctuary. Junior's hands trembled just badly enough to make accurate stitchery impossible..Junior tipped his head back and gazed up toward the section of broken-out railing along the high observation deck..When Junior walked the cracked-linoleum corridor and descended the six flights of stairs to the street, he discovered that a thin drizzle was falling. The afternoon grew darker even as he turned his face to the sky, and the cold, dripping city, which swaddled Bartholomew somewhere in its concrete folds, appeared not to be a beacon of culture and sophistication anymore, but a forbidding and dangerous empire, as it had never seemed to him before..In the main room, on his way toward the front door, Junior saw Celestina White surrounded by adoring fatheads, nattering ninnies, dithering dolts, saps and boneheads, oafs and gawks and simpletons. She was still as gorgeous as her shamelessly beautiful paintings. If the

opportunity arose, Junior would have more use for her than for her so called art..Celestina was hardly more than a child herself, pretending to have the strong shoulders and the breadth of experience to bear this burden. She felt half crushed.The customers were in a mood, most of them grumbling about their ailments. Others complained about the dreary weather, the increasing number of kids zooming along sidewalks on these damn new skateboards, the recent tax increases, and the New York Jets paying Joe Namath the kingly sum of \$427,000 a year to play football, which some saw as a sign that the country was money-crazy and going to Hell...At worst, Vanadium might begin to wonder if Junior had a link to Seraphim, might uncover the physical-therapy connection, and in his paranoia, might erroneously conclude that Junior had something to do with her traffic accident. That was nuts, of course, but the detective was evidently not a rational man.. "Sure. That's how it works with everything. Everything that can happen does happen, and each different way of happening makes a whole new place..".He wanted Celestina to sit in her seat and use her lap belt, but she insisted on cuddling next to him, as if she were a high-school girl and he were her teenage beau..Luck favored Paul: The hero was here, having breakfast. He and two other men were deep in conversation at a comer table..Focus. Prepare to kill Bartholomew and anyone who tries to protect Bartholomew on January 12. Prepare for all contingencies..He swallowed one capsule and washed it down with water. He returned the pharmacy bottle to the nightstand..Instead of sitting behind his desk, he settled into the second of two patient chairs, beside her. This, too, indicated bad news..Celestina was unable to talk reason to him, and even her mother, Grace, who was living here for the interim and who was always oil on the stormiest of waters, couldn't bring a moment's calm to the velvet squall that was Neddy Gnathic in full blow. He had learned about the baby five days ago, and he had been building force ever since, like a tropical depression aspiring to hurricane status.

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