

## **LUQUITAS JUGUETE CIMICO LIRICO EN UN ACTO Y EN VERSO**

He went upstairs to change out of his dark blue suit and badly scuffed black shoes.. "Oh!" She blotted her eyes on the heels of her hands. "Wait! Give me a second chance. I can do it better, I'm sure I can."..self-controlled as he would need to be in any interrogation conducted by this brush-cut, thick-necked toad..Suddenly she realized-Good Lord!-that someone else had a had inside her, up the very center of her, massaging her uterus in the same lazy pattern as that made by the piece of melting ice on her belly..Now, after removing the four decks of cards from the pressboard packs in which they had come, Jacob lined them up side by side on the scarred maple top of the table..Junior couldn't imagine why some Negro stranger would want to intrude. He hoped there wouldn't be trouble..Assuming this criticism was amusing hyperbole, Junior laughed, but Sklent squinted those virtually colorless eyes, and Junior's laugh withered in his throat. "Well, maybe that's how it'll work out," he said, wanting to be on Sklent's good side, but he was at once sorry he'd spoken those words in front of witnesses..Agnes rubbed noses with him again, kissed him, and rose from the edge of the bed.. "Please just call me Tom. I've been forcibly retired from the Oregon State Police, with full disability because of this face, so I'm not officially a detective anymore. Yet until Enoch Cain is behind bars, where he belongs, I'm not ready to be anything but a cop, official or not."..Whereas Paul had been confounded in his desire to express his admiration for Salk, he was able to speak about Perri at length and with ease. Her wit, her heart, her wisdom, her kindness, her beauty, her goodness, her courage were the threads in a narrative tapestry that Pad could have continued weaving for all the rest of his days. Since her death, he hadn't been able to talk about her with anyone he knew, because his friends tended to focus on him, on his suffering, when he wanted them only to understand Perri better, to realize what an exceptional person she had been. He wanted her to be remembered, after he was gone, wanted her grace and her fortitude to be recalled and respected. She was too fine a woman to leave without a ripple in her wake, and the thought that her memory might pass away with Paul himself was anguishing..Her voice was soft, almost a whisper, and charged with anxiety; but under other circumstances, it would have been sexy..Agnes was able to respond, Paul sprang up and moved away. Other friends knelt and crouched and bent to her, and she lost sight of the pharmacist as he moved off through the dispersing crowd..As they rolled along the coast, Agnes began to read to Barty from Podkayne of Mars: " 'All my life I've wanted to go to Earth. Not to live, of course-just to see it. As everybody knows, Terra is a wonderful place to visit but not to live. Not truly suited to human habitation.' ".The wedding reception-big, noisy, and joyous-spread across the three properties without fences. His mother's name was so often mentioned, her presence so strongly felt in all the lives that she had touched, that sometimes it seemed that she was actually there with them..When Junior checked his Rolex, he realized that he didn't know how long he'd been sitting here since Ichabod had driven off in the Buick. Maybe one minute, maybe ten..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 comer, 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..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..Filled with the songs of swallows that evidently preferred these precincts to the more famous address of San Juan Capistrano, this mild March morning was perfect for pie deliveries. Agnes and Grace had produced a bakery's worth of glorious vanilla-almond pies and coffee toffee pies..Houses made settling noises all the time. That was one reason why he couldn't rely much on sound to guide him through the darkness. A noise he thought had been made by the weight of his tread might as easily have been produced by the house itself as it adjusted to the..In her arms, little Barty burbled contentedly, unaware that his destiny supposedly included epic love, fabulous riches, and violence..As the last of the flan was served and Maria's girls took their seats once more, Barty blinked at the candles and said, "Gone now," even though the tiny spectrums still shimmered in the cut crystal. He turned his full attention to the flan with such enthusiasm that his mother soon stopped puzzling over rainbows..Caesar Zedd recommended not merely seizing the day but devouring it. Chew it up, feed on the day, swallow the day whole. Feast, said Zedd, feast, approach life as a gourmet and as a glutton, because he who practices restraint will have stored up no sustaining memories when famine inevitably comes..Oregon State Police might find at least one reason to be suspicious of the tragic scenario that he was creating. He didn't know much about the technology that police might employ at a crime scene, and he knew even less about forensic pathology. He was just doing the best job he could..He had difficulty picturing the detective puttering in the garden on weekends. Unless there were bodies buried under the roses.. "We don't sell no pizza," Angel said, because lately they had received a few calls for a new pizzeria with a phone number one digit different from theirs..Celestina, Grace, even Tom himself, had taken extraordinary measures to leave no slightest trail. Those very

few authorities who knew how to reach Tom and, through him, the others, were acutely aware that his whereabouts and phone number must be tightly guarded..A SEVERE THIRST INDICATED to Agnes that she wasn't dead. There would be no thirst in paradise..Agnes hadn't asked him to keep his strange feat a secret from his uncles. In truth, she had come home in such a curious state of mind that even as she'd worked with Jacob to prepare dinner and even as she'd overseen Edom's setting of the table, she hesitated to tell them what had happened on the run from Joey's grave to the station wagon. She fluctuated between guarded euphoria and fear bordering on panic, and she didn't trust herself to recount the experience until she had taken more time to absorb it.. "With this money, you won't have to cut back on the number of pies you give away--and all of that."..obsessed with humanity's sorry penchant for destroying itself either by intention or ineptitude--491 suffocated and burned alive on an evening meant for champagne and revelry..Life was too short to waste it working if you had the means to afford lifelong leisure.. "Nonsense," Agnes breezed on, "it's no imposition. You'll be a great help with my baking, the pie deliveries, all the work that I put aside during Barty's surgery and recovery. It'll either be fun, or I'll wear you down to the bone, but either way, you won't be bored. I've got two extra rooms. One for Celie and Angel, and one for Grace. When your Wally arrives, we can move Angel in with Grace, or she can bunk with me."..Everyone thought the moptops were the coolest thing ever--ever but to Junior, their music was just all right. He wasn't stirred to sing along, and he didn't find their stuff particularly danceable..If magic explained the jacks on Friday evening, maybe it was the dark variety of magic. Maybe he shouldn't be endeavoring to summon, once more, whatever spirit was responsible for the four knaves..Hound smiled. "They haven't undone what you did yet, either," he said. "Old Whiteface was crawling all over her yesterday, growling and muttering. Ordered the helm replaced." He meant Losen's chief mage, a pale man from the North named Gelluk, who was much feared in Havnor..Junior didn't find anything to explain her paranoia--though, to his surprise, he discovered six books by Caesar Zedd in her small library. The pages were dog-eared; the text was heavily underlined..When Junior tried to lift Victoria, her voluptuousness lost its appeal. As dead weight, she was heavier than he expected..His musical abilities were most likely an offshoot of his more extraordinary talent for math. He said that music was numbers, and what he seemed to mean was that he could all but instantly translate the notes of any song into a personal numerical code, retain it, and repeat the song by repeating the memorized sequence of code. When he read sheet music, he saw arrangements of numbers.. "Do you know him?" Edom asked, gazing longingly now at the open door, from which Jacob had turned away. "Obadiah Sepharad?"..Frantically, he squirmed around on the floor until he was facing the entrance to the kitchen. Through tears of pain, he expected to see a Frankensteinian shadow loom in the hall, and then the creature itself, gnashing its fork-tine teeth, its corkscrew nipples spinning..The paramedic pulled shut the door, leaving Joey outside in the night, in the storm, in the wind between worlds..On the back of the watch case, however, were the incriminating words of a commemorative engraving: To Eenie/Love/Tammy Bean..The roses filling the countersunk vases in the comers of Joey's gravestone were not Edom-grown, but they were Edom-bought. He had visited the florist himself, personally selecting each bloom from the inventory in the cooler; but he didn't have the courage to accompany Agnes and Barty to the grave..He woke several times that night, instantly alert for a ghostly serenade, but he heard no otherworldly crooning..A quick tug on each pants cuff revealed no ankle holster, which was how many cops would choose to carry an off-duty piece..He was filled with bitter remorse for having suspected Naomi of poisoning his cheese sandwich or his apricots. She had in fact adored him, as he had always believed. She would never have lifted a hand against him, never. Dear Naomi would have died for him. In fact, she had.. "How's something so delicious come from a fat, smelly, dirty, snorting old pig?"..AFTER SPENDING Wednesday as a tourist, Junior began to look for a suitable apartment on Thursday. In spite of his new wealth, he did not intend to pay hotel-room rates for an extended period..She could see now what she hadn't seen when running with him through the cemetery, because she was looking directly at him. Yet even seeing did not make it easy to believe..She stepped on a broken-off chair leg, lost her balance, and fell backward into the side of the bed..Perhaps a lot of suspects were rattled and ultimately unnerved by this behavior. Junior wouldn't be easily trapped. He was smart..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..Thereafter, he was repelled at the prospect of kissing her, and their relationship fell apart..Assisted by Edom and Jacob, Agnes--in a wheelchair--was rolled across the grass, between the headstones, to her husband's final resting place. Although no longer in danger of renewed hemorrhaging, she was under doctor's orders to avoid strain..In a stolen black Dodge Charger 440 Magnum, Junior Cain shot out of Spruce Hills on as straight a trajectory to Eugene as the winding roads of southern Oregon would allow, staying off Interstate 5, where the policing was more aggressive..and humble. They managed to worry up tuition for art school, but Celestina worked as a waitress to pay for her studio apartment and other needs..Clearly, she had learned nothing from her reading. No sincere and thoughtful student of Zedd would be as sorely lacking in self-control as Frieda Bliss.. "Your mother's an artist. Besides, you wouldn't want to put poor Mrs. Ornwall out of a job, would you?"..Averting his eyes from Vanadium's face, Junior moved farther up the stocky body. He folded back the tweed sports jacket to reveal a shoulder holster.. "I mean," said Dr. Lipscomb, "that I'm selling my practice and putting an end to my medical career. I wanted you to know."..Drawing from a well of inspiration deeper than instinct, Junior knew that if ever he crossed paths with a man named Bartholomew, he must be prepared to deal with him as aggressively as he had dealt with Naomi. And without delay..Holding his precious face between her hands, she kissed him. She met his gaze, and furiously she blinked away her tears, for she wanted to be clear-sighted, to be looking into his eyes, to see him, the truest part of him in there beyond his eyes, until that very last moment when she could not have him anymore..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..Perhaps he would not have leaped along this chain of conclusions if he'd not been an admirer of Caesar Zedd, for Zedd teaches that too often society encourages us to dismiss certain insights as illogical, even when in fact these insights arise from animal instinct and are the closest thing to unalloyed truth we will ever know..Through the remainder of his dinner, he was entirely future focused, the past put safely out of mind. Until ....He stood watching until the car cruised out of sight, and even after it dwindled to a speck and vanished in the distance, he stared at the point in the street where it had last been, stared while a breeze turned playful, tossing eucalyptus leaves around his feet, stared until at last he turned and began the long walk home..Celestina indicated to Tom that he should sit at the head of the table, facing Agnes at the foot. As Wally lowered himself into the empty chair to Tom's left, Celestina picked up two items from the sideboard and put them in front of Tom, before sitting to his right..A cause now apparent, the fear explained, Agnes held her baby more tightly. So new to the world, he seemed already to be slipping away from her, captured by the whirlpool of a demanding destiny..At Thanksgiving dinner, again at the three tables set end to end, in the year of the triple zero, Mary Lampion, now fourteen years old, made an interesting announcement over the pumpkin pie. In her travels where none but she could go, after seven fascinating years of exploring a fraction of all the infinite worlds, she said she sensed beyond doubt that, as Barty's mother had told him on her deathbed, there is one special place beyond all the ways things are, one shining place..Continuing to avert his eyes from the battered face and the two tone eyelids, Junior found the keys in an exterior pocket of the sports jacket. The credentials were tucked in an interior pocket: a single-fold leather holder containing the shiny badge and a photo ID..Without sigh or complaint, he would walk back to her with the purse. The errand was no trouble. In fact, returning the purse would give him a chance to get another good-night kiss..The night was in flight, however, and he had a lot to do before it swooped straight into morning..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..Recognizing the danger of saying the wrong thing, the potential for self-incrimination, Junior clenched his jaws and waited..Junior had expected these singular creatures, and he needed them to be as monstrous as they had always been in the past. Nonetheless, he shrank back against his pillows in dismay when they exploded into the hospital room. Their faces were as fierce as those of painted cannibals coming off a fast. They gestured emphatically, spitting expletives along with tiny bits of lunch dislodged from their teeth by the force of their condemnations.."-and when I get up off the street, my clothes are a mess, and I've got this face."The fully evolved man never has to rely on the gods of fortune, Zedd tells us, because he makes his luck with such reliability that he can spit in the faces of the gods with impunity..Among Junior's many gifts, his ability to focus might have been the most important. Bob Chicane, his former instructor in matters meditative, had called him intense and even obsessive, following the painful incident involving meditation without seed, but intensity and obsession were false charges. Junior was simply focused.Junior and Naomi had taken their dried apricots from the same bag. Reached in the bag without looking. Shook them out into the palms of their hands. She could not have controlled which pieces of fruit he received and which she ate..He had bribed a parking attendant to keep his Mercedes at the curb in a valet zone, in front of a nearby restaurant, so it would be instantly available when needed. He could also leave the car and follow Celestina on foot if she chose to stroll home from here..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..Curious to know what Neddy had said, Junior quickly approached the same gallery staffer. "Excuse me, but I've been looking for my friend ever so long in this mob, and then I saw him talking to you-the gentleman in the London Fog and the tux-and now I've lost him again. He didn't say if he was leaving, did he? He's my ride home."This was a relaxation technique that had worked often before. He had teamed it from a brilliant book, *How to Have a Healthier Life through Autohypnosis*..After Maria, Bonita, and Francesca had gone, when Agnes and her brothers joined forces to clear the table and wash the dishes, Barty kissed them good-night and retired to his room with *The Star Beast*.. "Most tornadoes stay on the ground twenty miles or less," Edom explained, "but this one kept its funnel to the earth for two hundred nineteen miles! And it was one mile wide. Everything in its path--torn, smashed to bits. Houses, factories, churches, schools--all pulverized. Murphysboro, Illinois, was wiped off the map, erased, hundreds killed in that one town."The next thing he knew, he was at the kitchen sink, turning off the water, which he couldn't remember having turned on. He appeared to have washed the bloody candlestick--it was clean--but he had no recollection of this bit of housekeeping..Paul Damascus had gotten numerous invitations to dinner. No one thought that he should be alone on this difficult night..Celestina was better equipped to embrace this transcendental experience for what it appeared to be. She was not one of those artists who celebrated chaos and disorder, or who found inspiration in pessimism and despair. Wherever her eyes came to rest, she saw order, purpose, exquisite design, and either the pale flicker or the fierce blaze of a humbling beauty. She perceived the uncanny not merely in old houses where ghosts were said to roam or in eerie experiences like the one Lipscomb had described, but every day in the pattern of a tree's branches, in the rapturous play of a dog with a tennis ball, in the white whirling currents of a snowstorm--in every aspect of the natural world in which insoluble mystery was as fundamental a component as light and darkness, as matter and energy, as time and space..And here, now, into the kitchen through a door with a porthole in the center. Into sizzle and clatter, into clouds of fried-onion fumes and the mouthwatering aromas of chicken fat and shoestring potatoes turning golden in deep wells of boiling cooking oil..On a street a half mile from the airport in Eugene, he sat in the parked Dodge long enough to gingerly unwind the bandages and use a tissue to wipe off the pungent but useless

salve he'd purchased at a pharmacy. Although he pressed the Kleenex to his face so gently that the pressure might not have broken the surface tension on a pool of water, the agony of the touch was so great that he nearly passed out. The rearview mirror revealed clusters of hideous, large, red knobs with glistening yellow heads, and at the sight of himself, he actually did pass out for a minute or two, just long enough to dream that he was a grotesque but misunderstood creature being pursued through a stormy night by crowds of angry villagers with torches and pitchforks, but then the throbbing agony revived him..Shaking the ravaged khakis at him, she said, "Then what made such a mess of these?.This venerable old building, as solidly constructed as a castle, was well-insulated; noises in other apartments rarely penetrated to Junior's. Never before had he heard a neighbor's voice distinctly enough to comprehend the words spoken-or, in this case, sung..They had not come to Junior yesterday in their grief, if in fact they had thought to grieve..could not be a person of the best intentions. Doctors and nurses wouldn't monitor their patients with the lights off..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..He'd once spoken that very sentiment to her. Golden haze, sun in the heart. His words had melted her, tears had sprung into her eyes, and sex been better than ever..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..The only light came from a reading lamp. An adjustable brass shade directed the light down onto a chair..The air was spicy with incense and with the fragrance of the lemon oil polish used on the wooden pews..Turning around in his seat, watching with amusement as Celestina fumbled nervously with the currency, the cabbie said, "You're not scared, not you. Sitting back there so silent most all the way, you weren't thinking about being famous. You were thinking about that girl of yours."FOR THE BETTER PART of a week, on doctor's orders, Agnes avoided stairs. She took sponge baths in the ground-floor powder room and slept in the parlor, on a sofa bed, with Barty nearby in a bassinet..He closed his eyes again and seemed asleep, but then as she clicked off the lamp, he murmured, "You have your halo again."On the nightstand waited a glass of water on a coaster and a pharmacy bottle containing several capsules of a potent painkiller..The funeral director and his assistant were the only people, other than Junior, remaining at the grave. They asked if they might lower the casket or if he would rather that they wait until he was gone..She tried to tell him that he was going to make it, that he would be with her for a long time, that the universe was not so cruel as to take him at thirty with all their lives ahead of them, but the truth was here to see, and she could not lie to him..So burning with anger was he that his car, by direct thermal transmission from his hands upon the wheel, should have been glowing cherry red in the January night, should have been scorching tunnels of clear dry air through the cold fog. Rancor, virulence, acrimony, vehemence: All words learned for the purpose of self-improvement were useless to him now, because none adequately conveyed the merest minimum of his anger, which swelled as vast and molten as the sun, far more formidable than his assiduously enhanced vocabulary..Although the small tin-and-plastic harmonica was more toy than genuine instrument, the boy blew and siphoned surprisingly complex music from it. As far as Apes could tell, he never hit a sour tone..Otter hesitated and said, "Yes."..He repressed the scream, however, because he sensed that if he gave voice to it, he wouldn't be able to silence himself for a long long time..After carefully wiping her fingers on a paper napkin, Maria examined the garments with interest. She carried her living as the seamstress at Bright Beach Dry Cleaners. At the sight of each rent, popped button, and split seam she clucked her tongue..The detective wasn't the only person in the world who liked "Someone to Watch over Me." Anyone in the lounge might have requested it. Or maybe this number was part of the pianist's usual repertoire.. "Couldn't carry these three ladies," he said. "Svelte as they are, they still weigh more than a backpack.".. "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."..Through miles of worry, natural beauty, imagined omens, and the iron-red sands of Mars, they drove at last to Franklin Chan's offices in Newport Beach..Now, trouble. Different from what he'd experienced before but just as powerful and terrifying. He didn't need to regurgitate, but he desperately needed to evacuate..In July 1967, at two and a half, he finally contracted his first cold, an off-season virus with a mean bite. His throat was sore, but he didn't fuss or even complain. He swallowed his medicine without resistance, and though he rested occasionally, he played with toys and paged through picture books with as much pleasure as ever..It's unsettling. For all our delight in the impermanent, the entrancing flicker of electronics, we also long for the unalterable..To be fair, with her exceptional beauty, she would have been the center of attention even in a gathering of real artists. Junior had little chance of getting at Seraphim's bastard boy without going through this woman and killing her as well; but if his luck held and he could eliminate Bartholomew without Celestina realizing who had done the deed, then he might yet have a chance to discover if she was as lubricious as her sister and if she was his heart mate..More than twice, worried nurses-and even a resident internist braved the tumult to check on Junior's condition. They asked if he really felt up to entertaining visitors, these visitors.. "Angel," Phimie said urgently, and then, with an effort that made a blood vessel swell. "Everyone knows about Vanadium. He's a crusader, self-appointed champion of truth, justice, and the American way. A holy fool, if you will. With the case closed, he has no authority to harass you."..Startled, Celestina said, "Good grief, you're spooky. How could you know what I'm thinking?".. "Who else? I think there's romance in the air. The cow-eyed way he looks at her, she could knock his knees out from under him just by giving him a wink.".. "She didn't reach into your thoughts and pluck out the name Rowena. Or Beezil or Feezil."..Now out of the kitchen, along the hall, and up the stairs, two at a time, into Victoria's bedroom. Not with the intention of snaring a perverse souvenir. Merely to find a blanket..If Agnes knew that Jacob had been helping her game, she might never play cards with him again. She would not approve of what he had done. Consequently, his great skill as a card mechanic

must be forever his secret. "I don't want an attorney." He closed his eyes, lowered his head to the pillow, and sighed. "I just want ... peace." Sometimes, while shaving or combing his hair, as he was looking in the bathroom or foyer mirror, Junior thought that he glimpsed a presence, dark and vaporous, less substantial than smoke, standing or moving behind him. At other times, this entity seemed to be within the mirror. He couldn't focus on it, study it, because the moment he became aware of the presence, it was gone. This surprised him. Of course, Oregon was not the Deep South. It was a progressive state. Nevertheless, he was surprised. Oregon wasn't home to many Negroes, either, a handful compared to those in other states, and yet until now Junior supposed that they had their own cemeteries. Instead, her father asked, "Is this emotion talking, Celie, or is this brain as much as heart?" Incredibly, the thief left behind the most valuable items: the collection of hardcover first editions of Caesar Zedd's complete body of work. The box stood open, its contents having been explored in haste, but not a single volume was missing. With a thin hiss of disgust, Junior pulled away from the thing, whatever it was, withdrew the flashlight from his belt, and listened intently for sounds in the alleyway. No voices. No footsteps. Only distant traffic noises so muffled that they sounded like the grunts and groans and low menacing growls of foraging animals, displaced predators prowling the urban mist. "From 1604 through 1610, Erzebet Bathory, sister of the Polish king, with the assistance of her servants, tortured and killed six hundred girls. She bit them, drank their blood, tore their faces off with tongs, mutilated their private parts, and mocked their screams." "Would you like a little tea and a piece of crumb cake?" Grace asked as smoothly as if, in *The Big Book of Etiquette for Ministers' Wives*, this were the preferred response to the announcement of a startling career change. He had the capacity to be exceptional at anything to which he applied himself. Bob Chicane had been right about that: Junior was far more intense than other men, possessed of greater gifts and the energy to use them. On December 18, as the Beatles' "Hello Goodbye" rocketed up the charts, Junior boiled over with frustration at his inability to find either love or Seraphim's baby, so he drove across the Golden Gate Bridge, to Marin County and all the way to the town of Terra Linda, where he killed Bartholomew Prosser. The dinner guest leaned back into the car, as though to retrieve something. Perhaps he, too, had been considerate enough to bring a small gift for his hostess. By air from San Francisco south to Orange County Airport, then farther south along the coast by rental car, one week in the wake of Paul Damascus and his three charges, following directions provided by Paul, Tom Vanadium brought Wally Lipscomb to the Lampion house. Junior lifted the pattie with a fork, found no quarter under it, and put the meat on one half of the bun. He constructed the sandwich from these fixings, added ketchup and mustard, and took a great, delicious, satisfying bite. Breath repeatedly catching in her throat, heart thudding, Agnes watched her son through the open car door. Too late. The parsonage was fully engulfed. With luck, they would save the church. In spite of its dazzle and power and comfort, however, the car was not able to lift his spirits as he cruised the hills of the city. Somewhere along these darkly glistening streets, in these houses and high-rises clinging to steep slopes awaiting seismic sundering, the boy was sheltered: half Negro, half white, full doom to Junior Cain. He found himself looking over his shoulder more than once. By the time he returned to his room, he felt half crushed by anxiety. He hurried the length of the diner, pushing past waitresses, checking out all three of the possibilities, but of course, none of them was the dead detective--or anyone else Junior had ever seen before. He was looking for--what?--a ghost, but vengeful ghosts didn't sit down to a meat-loaf lunch in the middle of a hauntin. From his early adolescence, Edom was drawn to gardening, taking special pleasure in the cultivation of hybrid roses. He'd been only sixteen when one of his blooms earned first place in a flower show. When his father learned about the competition, he regarded Edom's pursuit of the prize as a grievous sin of pride. The punishment left Edom bedridden for three days, and when he came downstairs at last, he discovered that his father had torn out all the rose bushes. "Wouldn't live in the Caribbean if you paid me," Bill said. "All that humidity. All those bugs." 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. Happy weekend. His attitude amazed her, and his strength in the face of darkness gave her courage.

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