

## **HISTOIRE DE BARBARIE ET DE SES CORSAIRES**

In addition to these scavengers, another presence was here, unseen but not unfelt. The chill of this invisible entity pierced Junior to the marrow: the stubborn, vicious, psychotic, prickly-bur spirit of Thomas Vanadium, maniac cop, not satisfied to haunt the house in which he'd died, not ready yet to seek reincarnation, but instead pursuing his beleaguered suspect even after death, capering--to paraphrase Sklent like an invisible, filthy, scabby monkey here on this city street, in bright daylight..Although he didn't believe in destiny, in fate, in anything more than himself and his own ability to shape his future, Junior couldn't deny how extraordinary it was that this woman should cross his path at this precise moment in his life, when he was frustrated to the point of cerebral hemorrhage by his inability to find Bartholomew, confused and nervous about the phantom singer and other apparently supernatural events in his life, and generally in a funk unlike any he had ever known before. Here was a link to Seraphim and, through Seraphim, to Bartholomew..Junior reached the window seat and stared down at her. "I don't believe that's true."..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..In the chilly darkness, his breath plumed visibly, frosted by moonlight. The rapidity and raggedness of his radiant exhalations would have marked him as a guilty man if witnesses had been present..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.."He's a wonderful boy, so very bright, so very full of life. Blindness will be hard, but it won't be the end. He'll cope without the light. It'll be so difficult at first, but this boy ... eventually he'll thrive."..She moved beside him. "For one minute, after her heart stopped the first time, she wasn't here in St. Mary's, was she? Her body, yes, that was still here, but not Phimie.".."Wrong about what, sugarpie smooosh--smooosh?" Celestina asked as Wally pulled to the curb again and parked..A cold wetness just above the crook of his left elbow. A sting. A tourniquet of flexible rubber tubing had been tied around his left arm, to make a vein swell more visibly, and the sting had been the prick of a hypodermic needle..Each booth was at a large window, and each window provided a view of the street. Vanadium wasn't out there, watching from the sidewalk, either: no glimpse of his pan-flat face shining in the December sun..Many police agencies required an officer to carry a firearm even when off duty. If the Oregon State Police had no such rule, Vanadium most likely carried one anyway, because in his crazy-as-a-snake mind,.Glancing at the plump pie in Edom's hands, the gentleman replied to Agnes in a musical yet gravelly voice worthy of Louis Armstrong: "You must be the lady Reverend Collins told me about."..Too much had happened in those rooms. They were stained dark with family history, and in the night, when either Edom or Jacob slept under that gabled roof, the past came alive again in dreams..At the top of the candlestick, the drip pan and the socket were marked by a wine-red drizzle. The color of well-aged bloodstains..Junior felt a little lightheaded. He felt strange. He hoped he wasn't coming down with the flu..Grace, Celestina, and Paul expressed amusement and amazement at Angel's critical judgment.."Well, you ought to be," Grace said, taking her pies out to the Suburban that Wally had bought solely for this enterprise..THE SANDMAN WAS powerless to cast a spell of sleep while Junior spent the night flushing away enough water to drain a reservoir..This was a memory, not a real voice. Even after you became an accomplished meditator, the mind resisted this degree of blissful oblivion and tried to sabotage it with aural and visual memories..This wasn't thrill killing-which, now that he'd had time to think about it, he realized was beneath him, even if in the service of personal growth. This would be murder for good, justifiable cause..Although the Rolex was expensive, Junior cared nothing about the monetary loss. He could afford to buy an armful of Rolexes, and wear them from wrist to shoulder..Two teenage boys and one elderly woman scrambled across the sidewalk, grabbing at the ringing rain of quarters. They caught some, but others bounced and twirled through their grasping fingers, rolling-spinning away into the gutter..When she tried to speak to him, she could no more easily raise her voice than she could extend a hand to him..Glancing at her in the rearview mirror, the driver said, "Pretty exhilarating, huh? Your first big show?"..The minister had finished. The service was over. No one came to Junior with condolences, because they would see him again shortly, at the Ford dealership buffet.."I knew," said Wally, braking for a red traffic light, "that you'd be thinking of Phimie now, and thinking of her would lead you to your father's words, because as short as her life might have been, Phimie was a Bartholomew. She left her mark.".."I hope it will," the physician said, but his emphasis was too solidly on the word hope..He no longer had any reason to follow an exercise regimen. For twenty-three years, he'd needed to maintain good health in order to meet his responsibilities, but all the responsibilities that mattered to him had been lifted from his shoulders..Surprising himself more than anyone, Edom also presented his collection to the university. Out with tornadoes, hurricanes, tidal waves, earthquakes, and volcanoes; bring in the roses. He lightly renovated his small apartment, painted it in brighter colors, and throughout the autumn, he stocked his bookshelves with volumes on horticulture, excitedly planning a substantial expansion of the rosarium come spring..And now she didn't need him anymore. He gazed at her face, held her cooling hand; his anchor was slipping away from him, leaving him adrift..The gurney, one wheel rattling. The young orderly behind it, dressed all in white. And the nurse again..Antihypertensive drugs were administered intravenously, and Phimie was confined to bed, attached to a heart monitor..He must begin by learning as much as possible about ghosts, hauntings, and the vengeance of the dead. During the remainder of 1966, only two apparently paranormal events occurred in Junior Cain's life, the first on Wednesday, October 5.."I've always wanted to learn the piano myself," Junior claimed, "but I guess you really have to start young.".."One of the four legs of the tower is dangerously fractured where it's seated into the underlying foundation caisson-".The rocking chair stopped squeaking under her. She heard the sincerity in Vinnie's voice, and as her disbelief dissolved, she was shocked into immobility. She

whispered, "My little superstition." He loved Naomi, of course, and never could deny her. Although he had been especially sweet to her that night, if he had known that they would have less than a year together before fate tore her from him, he might have been even sweeter..Angel raised her attention from the salt shaker to Tom's face, studied his scars for a moment, and said, "No." "I never spoke with God--Nor visited in Heaven--Yet certain am I of the spot--As if the Checks were given." Tammy--the stock analyst, broker, and cat-food-eating feline fetishist-whom he had dated from Christmas of '65 through February of '66, had given him the timepiece in return for all the trading commissions and perfect sex that he had given her..Edom drove, happy to assist Agnes. He was happier still that he didn't have to make the pie deliveries alone..Celestina was maneuvered aside as the surgical team began resuscitation procedures. Stunned, she backed away from the table until she encountered a wall. In southern California, as dawn of this new momentous day looms..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..On the fourth floor, at Dr. Klerkle's suite, the hall door stood ajar. Past office hours, the small waiting room was deserted..He summoned enough courage to approach the nightstand. His hand trembled. He half expected the quarter to be illusory; to disappear between his pinching fingers, but it was real.."I don't know anyone named Bartholomew." He decided that the truth, in this instance, could not harm him..IN NEED OF OIL, the hand crank squeaked, but the tall halves of the casement window parted and opened outward into the alleyway..Although a believer, Agnes was not at the moment able to spread the flowers and ferns of faith over the hard, ugly reality of death. Cowled and skeletal, Death was here, all right, scattering his seeds among all her gathered friends, one day to reap them..For more than twenty-three years, he'd given his big toe little consideration, had taken it for granted, had treated it with shameful neglect. Now this lower digit seemed precious, a comparatively small fixture of flesh, but as important to his image of himself as his nose or either of his eyes..He felt some guilt at this--but only a little. His sister had done much for him; but jobless, ruled by his obsessions, hobbled by too much of his father's dour nature, there wasn't a lot that he could do for her. Just this benign deceit with the cards.."After the war, for a while, I was able to get more mainstream work. Racially ... things were changing. But I was getting older, too, and the entertainment business is always looking for someone young, fresh. So I never made it big. Lord, I never even made it medium, but I got along okay. Until ... by the early 1950s, my booking agent found it harder and harder to line up good dates, good clubs."..How ironic it would be if Celestina, the aunt of Seraphim's bastard boy, proved to be the heart mate for whom Junior had been longing through the past few years of unsatisfying relationships and casual sex. This seemed unlikely, considering the jejune quality of her paintings, but perhaps he could help her to grow and to evolve as an artist. He was an open-minded man, without prejudices, so anything could happen after the child was found and killed..Edom, eager to learn precisely when a tidal wave or falling asteroid would bring his doom, fetched a pack of cards from a cabinet in the parlor. When Maria explained that only every third card was read and that a full look at the future required four decks, Edom returned to the parlor to scare up three more..Junior examined the music collection. The policeman's taste ran to big band music and vocalists from the swing era..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..Imagination like all living things lives now, and it lives with, from, on true change. Like all we do and have, it can be co-opted and degraded; but it survives commercial and didactic exploitation. The land outlasts the empires. The conquerors may leave desert where there was forest and meadow, but the rain will fall, the rivers will run to the sea. The unstable, mutable, untruthful realms of Once-upon-a-time are as much a part of human history and thought as the nations in our kaleidoscopic atlases, and some are more enduring..Tom proceeded, "is that an infinite number of realities exist, other worlds parallel to ours, which we can't see. For example ... worlds in which, because of the specific decisions and actions of certain people on both sides, Germany won the last great war. And other worlds in which the Union lost the Civil War. And worlds in which a nuclear war has already been fought between the U.S. and Soviets."..It didn't seem to him to amount to much. It was such an easy matter to him to make a silvery light shine in a dark room, or find a lost pin by thinking about it, or true up a warped joint by running his hands over the wood and talking to it, that he couldn't see why they made a fuss over such things. But his father raged at him for his "shortcuts," even struck him once on the mouth when he was talking to the work, and insisted that he do his carpentry with tools, in silence..He looked up into the eyes of the stocky man with the birthmark. They were gray eyes, hard as nail heads, but clear and surprisingly beautiful in that otherwise unfortunate face..Consequently, Edom was abroad in the land with pies and parcels, following a list of names and addresses provided by his sister, even though he believed an unprecedentedly violent earthquake, the fabled Big One, was likely to strike before noon, certainly before dinner. This was the last day of the rest of his life..He had been thankful that during the long trance, he hadn't wet himself. Now he would gladly have accepted any amount of humiliation rather than suffer these vicious cramps..Neither of them was aware that their personal drama, in all its clumsiness and glory, had focused the attention of everyone in the restaurant. The cheer that went up at Celestina's acceptance of his proposal caused her to start, knocking the ring from Wally's hand as he attempted to slip it on her finger. The ring bounced across the table, they both grabbed for it, Wally made the catch, and this time she was properly betrothed, to wild applause and laughter..Smiling again, speaking in a voice hardly louder than a whisper, he said, "Got a wedding date to keep."..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~.Tom had acted with the best intentions-but also with the intelligence and the good judgment that God had given him and that he had spent a lifetime honing. Good intentions alone can be the cobblestones from which the road to Hell is built; however, good intentions formed through much self-doubt and second-guessing, as Tom's always were guided by wisdom acquired from experience, are all that can be asked of us. Unintended consequences that should have been foreseeable are, he knew, the stuff of damnation, but those that we can't foresee, he hoped, are part of some design for which we can't be held responsible..Junior couldn't imagine why some Negro stranger would want to intrude. He hoped there wouldn't be trouble.."When your hands are bigger," Tom agreed, "I'm sure you could. In fact, one day I'll teach you."..And when she finally looked directly at him, blinked at him, her lashes flicking off a spray of fine droplets, Agnes saw that Barty was dry. Not a single jewel of rain glimmered in his thick dark hair or on the baby-smooth planes of his face. His shirt and sweater were as dry as if they had just been taken off a hanger and from a dresser drawer. A few drops darkened the legs of the boy's khaki pants--but Agnes realized this was water that had dripped from her arm as she'd reached across him to adjust the vent..Friday, after dinner, when he'd heard enough of Maria's method of fortune-telling to know that four decks were required, that only every third draw was read, and that aces-especially red aces-were the most propitious cards to receive, Jacob had taken great pleasure in preparing for Barty the most favorable first eight cards that could possibly be dealt. This was a small gift to cheer Agnes, on whose heart Joey's death weighed as heavily as iron chains..More likely than not, he would cross Bartholomew's path when he least expected, not as a consequence of his searching, but in the normal course of a (lay. If that happened, he must be prepared to eliminate the threat immediately, by any means available to him..As a homicide detective, Vanadium had a career-spanning ninety eight percent closure-and-conviction record on the cases he handled. Once convinced he had found the guilty party, he didn't rely solely on solid police work. He augmented the usual investigative procedures and techniques with his own brand of psychological warfare-sometimes subtle, sometimes not-which frequently encouraged the perpetrator to make mistakes that convicted him..Dr. Zedd's death, just last Thanksgiving, had been a blow to Junior, a loss to the nation, to the entire world. He considered it a tragedy equal to the Kennedy assassination one year previous..Returning to his apartment, Edom had to pass under the limbs of the majestically crowned oak that dominated the deep yard between the house and the garage..Swift and yellow, Angel flew to her mother, grabbing at one of the bunched drapes as if she might hide behind it.."As long as the case was open and you were the sole suspect," said the lawyer, "they couldn't negotiate an out-of-court settlement with you. But they were afraid that if eventually they couldn't prove you killed her, then they'd be in an even worse position when a wrongful death suit finally went before a jury."..Here, four days past Christmas, after two days of torment, Agnes knew the worst, that her treasured son must go eyeless or die, must choose between blindness or cancer of the brain..Furrowing her brow and narrowing her eyes as though prepared to scold him, she slowly lowered her face to his, until their noses were touching, and she whispered, "Because it's more fun if it's secret."..Needlepoint, meditation, and even sex had not recently provided him with significant relief of tension. The paintings of Sklent and the works of Zedd were packed in the van, where he couldn't at the moment take solace from them..Turning his attention to Barty, Obadiah broke into a smile, revealing a gold upper tooth. "Something here is sweeter than that lovely pie. What's the child's name?".."There's no clear evidence of birth defects, but a couple tests reveal some worrisome anomalies. We'll know when we see the child."..The cop had unzipped the top of her jogging suit and pulled up the roomy T-shirt..Besides, Junior was reluctant to kill Vanadium, for real this time, and risk discovering- that the detective's filthy-scabby-monkey spirit would in fact prove to be a relentless haunting presence that gave him no peace..Copyright (c) 1999 by Ursula K. Le Guin. "Dragonfly" first appeared in Legends..Once he had toured the exhibition, managing not to shudder openly, he tried to hang out within hearing distance of Celestina White, but without appearing to be listening with special intensity..Before setting out from home, Joey had buckled his lap belt, but because of Agnes's condition, she hadn't engaged her own. She rammed against the door, pain shot through her right shoulder, and she thought, Oh, Lord, the baby!.The quiet passion in Vanadium's voice was genuine, expressed with reason but not fervor, not in the least sentimental or unctuous-which made it more disturbing. "Vibrations in one string set up soft, sympathetic vibrations in all the other strings, through the entire body of the instrument.".."You did just fine, Tom, just fine," Agnes said in a consoling tone that she might have used with a boy whose performance, at a piano recital, had been earnest but undistinguished. "We were all quite impressed."..faiths and inhibiting rules that confused humanity, when he was sufficiently enlightened to believe only in himself, he would be able to trust his instincts, for they would be free of society's toxic views, and he would be assured of success and happiness if always he followed these gut feelings..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..He assumed that she hadn't phoned the police to make a formal report. No need to go out of her way to slander Junior when Thomas Vanadium had been prowling the hospital at all hours of the day and night, ready to lend an ear to any falsehood about him, as long as it made him appear to be a sleazeball and a wife killer..Barty's reading and writing skills appeared to be related to his talent for math, as well. To him, language was first phonics, a sort of music that symbolized objects and ideas, and this music was then translated into written "syllables using the alphabet-which he saw as a system of math employing twenty-six digits instead of ten..Hope was the handmaid to Agnes's faith. She always held fast to the belief that the future would be bright, but right now she was hesitant to test that optimism even with a harmless card reading. Yet, as with

the fifth place setting, she was reluctant to object. No turning back. In the fuming blackness, they would become disoriented in seconds, fall, and suffocate as surely as they would burn. Besides, the open window, providing draft, would draw the fire rapidly down the hallway at their backs. Murmuring reassurances, Celestina put a hand on the girl's head and smoothed her brow, her hair, until the sour dream was sweetened by the touch. The room was bright enough for him to confirm that he was alone. The interior of the box in which Naomi now resided could be no more silent than this house. At sunset, the boy stood in the backyard, gazing up through the branches of the giant oak as an orange sky darkened to coral, to red, to purple, to indigo. When red aces weft followed by disturbing jacks, Agnes had pretended to take her son's card-told fortune lightly, especially the frightful part of it. In fact, a coldness had twisted through her heart. He was able to play peekaboo in his fifth month instead of his eighth, stand while holding on to something in his sixth instead of eighth. Mocked by the silvery ping-ting-jingle of the maniac detective emptying his ghostly pockets, Junior ran. Knacker or Hisscus, or Nork, was talking about an offering, as though Naomi were a goddess to whom they wished to present a penance of gold and jewels. During Junior's brief stroll, the sidewalk ended, giving way to the graveled shoulder of the road. He saw no one on foot, and no vehicles passed him. Wednesday, with a swiftness that confirmed its eagerness to make a deal, the state supplied records on the fire tower. For five years, a significant portion of the maintenance funds had been diverted by bureaucrats to other uses. And for three years, the responsible maintenance supervisor filed an annual report on this specific tower, requesting immediate funds for fundamental reconstruction; the third of these documents, submitted eleven months prior to Naomi's fall, was composed in crisis language and stamped urgent. The words of Robert Louis Stevenson, well read, poured another time and place into the room as smoothly as lemonade pouring from pitcher into glass. "D'you have a bag?" In the spring and summer of '66, he flew to Memphis, Tennessee, stayed a few days, and walked 288 miles to St. Louis. From St. Louis he hiked west 253 miles to Kansas City, Missouri, and then southwest to Wichita. From Wichita to Oklahoma City. From Oklahoma City east to Fort Smith, Arkansas, from whence he rode home to Bright Beach on a series of Greyhound buses. Beveled, crackled, distorted, divided into petals and leaves, Deed's face beyond the lead-ad glass, as he leaned closer to try to peer inside, was the countenance of a dream demon swimming up out of a nightmare lake. "Not so unbelievable," said Jacob. "Forty-five thousand people every year die in automobiles. Cars aren't transportation. They're death machines. Tens of thousands are disfigured, maimed for life." Junior strove to appear properly mortified. "Thought I heard something. Searched the apartment." Agnes was so weary, her eyes so sore and grainy, that even this soft radiance stung. She almost closed her eyes and gave herself to sleep again, that little brother of Death, which was now her only solace. What she saw in the lamplight, however, compelled her attention. Junior was pleasantly surprised by his flexibility and by his audacity. He was, indeed, a new man, a daring adventurer, and by the day he grew more formidable. 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. Life was too short to waste it working if you had the means to afford lifelong leisure. The heavy hand would come down on his shoulder, he would be spun around against his will, and there before him would be those nailhead eyes, the port-wine stain, facial bones crushed by a bludgeon. Kitchen to dining room, dining room to hallway, keeping his back to the wall, easing quickly along, then into the foyer. Wait here, listening. She wanted to go to San Francisco with Celestina, to have the baby in the city, where the father-and not incidentally her friends and Reverend White's parishioners-would never know she'd given birth. The more her parents and sister argued against this plan, the more agitated Phimie became, until they worried that they would jeopardize her health and mental stability if they didn't do as she wished. At last he said, "And there he is, hands in front of his face, quarters bouncing off him, these kids and this old lady scrambling around him to snare some change." In January '65, while Vanadium had been in the first month of what proved to be an eight-month coma, Enoch Cain had sought Nolly's assistance in a search for Seraphim's newborn child. When Vanadium had learned about this from Magusson long after the event, he assumed that Cain had heard Max Bellini's message on his answering machine, made the connection with Seraphim's death in an "accident" in San Francisco, and set out to find the child because it was his. Fatherhood was the only imaginable reason for his interest in the baby. Fortifying herself with more coffee, Jolene said, "Edom, you were going to tell us how Joey's coping with fatherhood." As he was wheeled headfirst into the operating room, Barty raised off the gurney pillow. He fixed his gaze on his mother until the door swung shut between them. Carrying the brochure, Vanadium returned to the bathroom and switched on the overhead light. He stared at the slashed wall, at the name red and ravaged. He wasn't entirely sure what all he hoped to find. Perhaps an envelope or a cash box with folding money, which a fleeing murderer would surely pause to take with him. Suspicions might be raised if he left it behind. Perhaps a savings-account passbook. The coin stopped turning across his knuckles and, as though with volition of its own, it slipped into the tight curve of his curled forefinger. With a snap of his thumb, he flipped the quarter into the air. Besides, he wasn't on the Greenbaum Gallery customer list and didn't have an invitation. madness or a brilliant deductive insight: Naomi, the hateful bitch, she poisoned me!. This is a tale of those times. Some of it is taken from the Book of the Dark, and some comes from Havnor, from the upland farms of Onn and the woodlands of Faliern. A story may be pieced together from such scraps and fragments, and though it will be an airy quilt, half made of hearsay and half of guesswork, yet it may be true enough. It's a tale of the Founding of Roke, and if the Masters of Roke say it didn't happen so, let them tell us how it happened otherwise. For a cloud hangs over the time when Roke first became the Isle of the Wise, and it may be that the wise men put it there. Reminding himself that fortune favored the persistent and that he must always look for the bright side, Junior began with the city itself and with those whose surnames were Bartholomew. This was a manageable number. The

report on the tower forced Junior to consider his mortality; fear, hurt, and self-pity roiled in him. His voice trembled with offense: "You do know, Mr. Magusson, what happened to my Naomi was an. In January 1965, Magusson had sent Cain to Nolly as a client, not sure why the creep needed a private detective. That had turned out to be the business about Seraphim White's baby. Simon's warning to be careful of Enoch Cain had helped to shape Nolly's decision to withhold the information about the child's placement. She put down her fork, glanced around the restaurant once more, and leaned across the table. Blushing brighter, she softly sang the opening lines of "Someone to Watch over Me." Then it would stop. The torment would stop. Surely. His sense of drift, of sliding aimlessly through the days, would lift from him, and he would find purpose once more in determined self-improvement. He would definitely learn French and German. He would take cooking classes and become a culinary master. Karate, too. "Your forgiveness won't make any of it right," he said, "nothing could, but it might start to give me a little peace." From time to time, he halted, leaning against the walker as if in need of rest. He took care occasionally to grimace convincingly, not too theatrically--and to breathe harder than necessary. As the nurse gave Junior the injection, Parkhurst said, "You're an exceptionally sensitive man, Enoch. That's a quality to be much admired in an often unfeeling world. But in your current condition, your sensitivity is your worst enemy." Eventually he put the quarter on the nightstand, switched off the lamp, and slipped into bed.

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