

## **KENDWAS SECRET THE PREQUEL TO THE ZANZIBAR MOON**

Startled, he braked to a halt. Agnes didn't say anything until Joey had taken three or four deep. Besides, the possibilities repulsed him. The very thought of a splendid-looking woman like Victoria submitting to a grotesque like Vanadium would have withered his soul if he had possessed a soul. Junior knelt beside her and pressed two fingers to the carotid artery in her neck. She had a pulse, maybe a little irregular but strong. She was astonished and moved. "I'm a hopeless throwback to the nineteenth century. How could you realize what's been on my mind?" She could have gone at him with the chair once more, but it was falling apart. Instead, she abandoned furniture for the promise of a firearm, dropped to her knees, and snatched the discarded pistol magazine off the floor. She was sopping, shivering. Water streamed from her soaked hair, down her face, as she wiped at her beaded eyelashes with one dripping hand. "That's the Oreo. After I ate it up, the cookie went smooosh--smooosh into my finger." The paramedic pulled shut the door, leaving Joey outside in the night, in the storm, in the wind between worlds. Junior actually raised his trembling left hand to his ear, expecting to find the quarter tucked in the auditory canal, held between the tragus and the antitragus, waiting to be plucked with a flourish. 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. Thunder less distant now. Around her--the crackle of police radios, the clang of tools being readied, the skirl of a stiffening wind. Dizzying, these sounds. She couldn't shut her ears against them, and when she closed her eyes, she felt as though she were spinning. Only a few theatergoers attended the matinee. No one sat near, so Google and Junior openly swapped packages: a five-by-six manila envelope to Google, a nine-by-twelve to Junior. When the ophthalmologist saw her misery, his kind face softened further, and his pity became palpable. Glasses off the table. He seized one of the pewter candlesticks, as well, knocking the candle out of it. He sat on the edge of the bed and held her right hand. She had passed away such a short time ago that her skin was still warm. "Maybe." In truth, Tom didn't believe that any of this could be learned even by one adept taking instruction from another adept. They were born with the same special perception, but with different and strictly limited abilities to interact with the multiplicity of worlds that they could detect. He wasn't able to explain even to himself how he could send a coin or other small object elsewhere; it was something he just felt, and each time that the coin vanished, the authenticity of the feeling was proved. He suspected that when Barty walked where the rain wasn't, the boy employed no conscious techniques; he simply decided to walk in a dry world while otherwise remaining in this wet one--and then he did. Woefully incomplete wizards, sorcerers with just a trick or two each, they had no secret tome of enchantments and spells to teach to an apprentice. If blood tests revealed that Junior wasn't the father, Vanadium would have a motive. It wouldn't be the right motive, because Junior truly hadn't known either that his wife was pregnant or that she was possibly screwing around with another man. But the detective would be able to sell it to a prosecutor, and the prosecutor would convince at least a few jurors. Sitting on a stool at the counter, he ordered a cheeseburger, coleslaw, french fries, and a cherry Coke. "We have reason to believe that the man who raped your sister is stalking you." Junior had come to the gumshoe four days ago, with business that might have made a reputable investigator uncomfortable. He needed to discover whether Seraphim White had given birth at a San Francisco hospital earlier this month and where the baby might be found. Since he wasn't prepared to reveal any relationship to Seraphim, and since he resisted devising a cover story on the assumption that a competent private detective would at once see through it, his interest in this baby inevitably seemed sinister. "Skinny, pasty-faced, chattering sissy," he hissed, still so furious with Neddy that he wanted to jam the pianist's head in the toilet even though he was dead. Jam his head in and stomp on him. Stomp him into the bowl. Flush and flush, stomp and stomp. Eventually, a braless blonde in shiny white plastic boots, a white miniskirt, and a hot-pink T-shirt featuring the silk-screened face of Albert Einstein, said, "Sure, I know her. Had some classes with her. She's nice enough, but she's kind of nerdy, especially for an Afro-American. I mean, they're never nerdy--am I right?" "By law, adoption records are sealed and so closely guarded that you'd have an easier time acquiring a complete roster of the CIA's deep cover agents worldwide than finding this one baby." This show was hopeless, disastrous, stupid, foolish, painful, lovely, wonderful, glorious, sweet. He slipped the card out from under the change, turned it over. A joker. Printed in red block letters across the card was a name, BARTHOLOMEW. A cold wind raised a haunting groan as it harried itself around and around in the bronze hollow of the bell atop the church steeple, shook dead needles from the evergreens, and resisted Paul's progress with what seemed to be malicious intent. Miles ago, between the towns of Brookings and Pistol River, he had decided that he wouldn't again walk this far north at this time of year, even if the guidebooks did claim that the Oregon coast was a comparatively temperate zone in winter. Agnes's faith told her that the world was infinitely complex and full of mystery, and in a peculiar way, Barty's talk of infinite possibilities supported her belief and gave her the comfort to sleep. Monday morning, New Year's Day, Agnes carried two suitcases out of the back door, set them on the porch, and blinked in surprise at the sight of Edom's yellow-and-white Ford Country Squire parked in the driveway, in front of the garage. He and Jacob were loading their suitcases into the car. Writing came with reading, and in a notebook, he began to make entries about points of interest in the stories that he enjoyed. His *Diary of a Book Reader*, as he titled it, fascinated Agnes, who read it with his permission; these notes to himself were enthusiastic, earnest, and charming--but literally month by month, Agnes noticed that they grew less naive, more complex, more contemplative. "This will stay with you," Mary said. "It's shared sight from all the other yous in all the other places, but you won't have to make any effort to hold on to it. No headaches. No problems ever. Merry Christmas, Daddy." He opened the solid doors on the bottom of the breakfront,

did not find what he was looking for, checked in the sideboard next, and there it was, a small liquor supply. Scotch, gin, vodka. He selected a full bottle of vodka..He still had a sour taste in his mouth, although it was not as disgusting as it had been. All the odors were wonderfully clean and bracing--antiseptics, floor wax, freshly laundered bedsheets--without a whiff of spades. Friday night, she had ripped the cards in thirds and had been carrying the twelve pieces with her since then, waiting for this quiet Sunday evening..He paid cash to the locksmith, and included in the payment were the two dimes and the nickel Vanadium had left on his nightstand..He shouldered past two counter waitresses, past the short-order cook who was working eggs and burgers and bacon on the open griddle and grill. Whatever expression wrenched Junior's face, it must have been intimidating, for without protest but with walled alarm, the employees squeezed aside to let him pass..Between Isleton and Locke, Junior first became aware of several points of soreness on his face. He could feel no swelling, no cuts or scrapes, and the rearview mirror revealed only the fine features that had caused more women's hearts to race than all the amphetamines ever manufactured..Reflecting upon her son's clever, diligent, and uncomplaining adaptation to darkness, she wished that she had described to him the dazzling sunset under which they had made their journey home. Although her words might have been inadequate to the spectacle, he would have elaborated on them to create a picture in his mind; with his creative skills, the world that he'd lost with his sight might be remade in equal splendor in his imagination..The slur faded from his voice in minutes, but he suspected that straining too long to sustain this borrowed vision could result in a stroke or worse..Agnes's chilled bones. Pushing a tangle of wet hair away from her face, she realized that her hands were shaking..Agnes pulled the stack of cards in front of her. She discarded the first two, as Maria would have done, and turned over the third..Angel, on the window seat, wore nothing but white. White sneakers and socks. White pants. White T-shirt. Two white bows in her hair..Junior strove to appear properly mortified. "Thought I heard something. Searched the apartment." Griskin, a former convict, had served eleven years for second-degree murder before the lobbying efforts of a coalition of artists and writers had won his parole. He possessed a huge talent. No one before Griskin had ever managed to express this degree of violence and rage in the medium of bronze, and Junior had long kept the artist's work on his short list of desired acquisitions..For eight nights thereafter, Agnes padded the floor with folded blankets on both sides of the boy's bed, insurance against a middle-of-the-night fall. On the eighth morning, she discovered that Barty had returned the blankets to the closet from which she'd gotten them. They were not jammed haphazardly on the shelves--the sure evidence of a child's work--but were folded and stacked as neatly as Agnes herself would have stored them..But first, March 23: the bad date with Frieda Bliss, and what he discovered in his apartment when he came home that night..Copyright (c) 1997 by Ursula K. Le Guin..His daughter, his affliction, his millstone, granddaughter of the boil-giving voodoo Baptist ....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..Apparently, he'd been drooling for a long time. Where his chin and throat were not sticky, a crust of dried saliva glazed his skin..Sunday, Junior hid out from Scamp, using his Ansaphone to screen her calls, and worked with such astonishing focus on his needlepoint pillows that he forgot to go to bed that night. He fell asleep over his needles at ten o'clock Monday morning..She didn't reach into your thoughts and pluck out the name Rowena. Or Beezil or Feezil..This wasn't the same Enoch Cain whom Vanadium had known three years ago in Spruce Hills. That man had been utterly ruthless but not a wild, raging animal, coldly determined but never obsessive. That Cain had been too calculating and too self-controlled to have been swept into the emotional frenzy required to produce this blood graffiti and to act out the symbolic mutilation of Bartholomew with a knife..Eye to eye with Tom, Celestina herself did some clear-seeing. "You're special, too, in lots of obvious ways. But like Angel, you're special in some secret way ... aren't you?" 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..Again he fired into the lock, squeezed the trigger a second time, and discovered that no rounds remained in the magazine. Extra cartridges were distributed in his pockets..Junior had heard of this invention, but until now he'd never seen one. He supposed that an obsessive like Vanadium might go to any lengths, including this exotic technology, to avoid missing an important call.."Does my dad like Christmas?" Barty asked, sitting on the grave grass in front of the headstone..He was uncharacteristically restive. His stoic nature, his long learned Jesuit philosophy regarding the acceptance of events as they unfold, and the acquired patience of a homicide detective were insufficient to prevent frustration from taking root in him. In the more than two months since Enoch Cain vanished, following the murder of Reverend White, no trace of the killer had been found. Week by week, the slender sapling of frustration had grown into a tree and then into a forest, until Tom began every morning by looking out through the tightly woven branches of impatience..As if he sensed her reluctance to return to Dr. Chan, Barty had kept her occupied with talk of the red planet as they approached the office building, had talked her off the street, along the driveway, and into a parking space, where finally she relinquished the fantasy of an endless road trip. At 5:45, long past the end of office hours, Dr. Chan's suite was quiet..From the plush pillow shadows of the bed, Barty said, "Oh, look. Christmas lights." His mother tried to explain. "It's as if you'd found some great jewel," she said, "and what's one of us to do with a diamond but hide it? Anybody rich enough to buy it from you is strong enough to kill you for it. Keep it hid. And keep away from great people and their crafty men!" Ferocious pirates, ruthless secret agents, brain-eating aliens from distant galaxies, super criminals hell-bent on ruling the world, bloodthirsty vampires, face-gnawing werewolves, savage Gestapo thugs, mad scientists, satanic cultists, insane carnival freaks, hate-crazed Ku Klux Klansmen, knife-worshipping thrill killers, and emotionless robot soldiers from other planets had slashed, stabbed, burned, shot, gouged, torn, clubbed, crushed, stomped, hanged, bitten, eviscerated, beheaded, poisoned, drowned, radiated, blown up, mangled, mutilated, and tortured uncounted victims in the pulp magazines that Paul had been reading since childhood. Yet not

one scene in those hundreds upon hundreds of issues of colorful tales withered a corner of his soul as did a glimpse of Barty's empty sockets. The sight wasn't in the least gory, nor even gruesome. Paul cringed and looked away only because this evidence of the boy's loss too pointedly made him think about the terrible vulnerability of the innocent in the freight-train path of nature, and threatened to tear off the fragile scab on the anguish that he still felt over Perri's death..He had time to think of quite a few, because he drove five miles per hour below the posted speed limit. He couldn't risk being stopped for a traffic violation when Thomas Vanadium, the human stump, was dead and bundled in the back..Widening his eyes in calculated surprise, Junior said, "Are you a police officer?".Celestina rose, heart suddenly clumping in her breast, like heavy footsteps hurrying away from an approaching bearer of bad news, but she herself couldn't run, could only stand rooted in her hope-and hear in her mind six versions of a bleak prognosis in the two seconds before the doctor actually spoke..No. Ridiculous. Naomi wasn't slumped across him. He wasn't sharing his bed with a corpse. That was E.C. Comics stuff, something from a yellowed issue of Tales from the Crypt..Entering the bedroom, Junior had expected to cast aside his pistol and draw a knife. But he was no longer in a mood for close-up work. Fortunately, he'd managed to hold on to the gun..Already the fortune foretold, which she had strived to dismiss as a game with no consequences, was coming true..Glancing at his wristwatch with alarm, Edom bolted up from his chair. "Look at the time! Agnes gave me a lot to do, and here I am rattling on about earthquakes and cyclones."or the barber. Never was he afraid to fall asleep, and having fallen asleep, he appeared to have only pleasant dreams..Considering his battered and stitched face, considering also his tragic and colorful history, Vanadium spoke with remarkably little drama. His voice was calm, nearly flat, rising and falling so little that he almost talked in a monotone..He let go of the girl's chin, and at once she scrunched into the corner of the window seat, as far away from him as she could get. The knowing look in her eye wasn't that of an ordinary child, not that of a child at all. Not his imagination, either. Terror, yes, but also defiance, and this knowing expression, as though she could see right through him, knew things about him that she had no way of knowing..-and wherever he went, between his shows, he always gave free performances at nursing homes, schools for the deaf-".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.."You remember things?" the girl asked, her fingertips still pressed lightly to his cheek..Permissions Department, Harcourt, Inc., 6277 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, Florida 32887-6777. www.harcourt.com "Darkrose and Diamond" first appeared in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction..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 drool. Her eyes rolled, wild with fear, and seemed not to be focused on anything."Where's your mother this morning?" he asked, for he'd expected to have to shoot his way through a lot more than one adult to reach both children. The Lipscomb house had proved empty, however, and fortune had given him the boy and girl together, with one guardian..The muffling fog quieted the city as much as obscured it, and the alley was surprisingly still. Many of the businesses were closed for the night, and as far as Junior could discern, no delivery trucks or other vehicles were parked the length of the block.."Your forgiveness won't make any of it right," he said, "nothing could, but it might start to give me a little peace.".She closed her eyes, and he thought that she was gone, but then she opened them again. "There is one place beyond all the ways things are."In San Francisco, Seraphim Aethionema White lies beyond all hope of resuscitation. So beautiful and only sixteen..A great boom. Concussion rocked the floor and shuddered the walls and made the roof timbers squeal as though unsuspected colonies of bats had taken flight by the thousands all in the same instant.."Well, you see, that's the funny thing about all the important choices we make. If we make a really big wrong choice, if we do the really awful wrong thing, we're given another chance to continue on the right path. So the very moment I stupidly stepped off the curb without looking, I created another world where I did look both ways and saw the rhinoceros coming. And so-".The girl smiled, as stunningly beautiful as he remembered her, but she was no longer fifteen, as she had been when last he'd seen her. Since her death in childbirth nearly three years ago, she'd matured and grown lovelier than ever..At the front door of the funeral home, as Panglo was showing him out, Jacob leaned close. "Joe Champion didn't have any gold teeth."."It's an uncommon reaction," the physician acknowledged, "but not so uncommon as to be rare.".When he reported for a physical and a reassessment of his draft classification, on Wednesday, December 15, he left the insert in his hitching shoe; however, he limped like old Walter Brennan, the actor, hitching around the ranch in The Real McCoys..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.".With his startling combination of a Mediterranean complexion and rust-red hair, his good looks, and his fit physique, Paul had the exotic appearance of a pulp-fiction hero. In particular, he liked to imagine that he might pass for Doc Savage's brother..When Celestina first entered his ICU cubicle, the sight of his face scared her in spite of the surgeon's assurances. Gray, he was, and sunken-cheeked-as though this were the eighteenth century and so many medicinal leeches had been applied to him that too much of his essential substance had been sucked out..The disease hadn't corrupted her heart, and it had left her face untouched, as well. Lovely, she was, as she had always been..1969 through 1973: the Year of the Rooster, chased by the Year of the Dog, followed fast by the Pig, faster by the Rat, with the Ox passing in a stampede pace. Eisenhower dead. Armstrong, Collins, Aldrin on the moon: one giant step on soil untouched by war. Hot pants, plane hijackings, psychedelic art. Sharon Tate and friends murdered by Manson's girls seven days before Woodstock, the Age of Aquarius stillborn, but the death unrecognized for years. McCartney split, Beatles dissolved. Earthquake in Los Angeles, Truman dead, Vietnam sliding into chaos, riots in Ireland, a new war in the Middle

East, Watergate..Most likely, if Victoria was entertaining, the visitor's car would have been parked in the driveway..When people didn't apply themselves to positive goals, to making better lives for themselves, they spent their energy in wickedness. Then.Mysteriously, on the first day of sunny weather in weeks, the 707 had crashed into Jamaica Bay, Queens, killing everyone aboard. Now, in 1965, it remained the worst commercial-aviation disaster in the nation's history, and because of the unprecedented dramatic television coverage, the story was a permanent scar in Celestina's memory, although she had been living a continent away at the time..Thrusting his finger toward the table with each repetition of the word, Barty happily insisted, "Pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie." Fortunately, he recognized his vulnerability. Until the evening reception for Celestina White, he must spend every hour of the day in calming activities, soothing himself in order to ensure that he would be cool and effective when the time came to act..In his head, without apparent effort, Barty kept a running total of the number of seconds that he had been alive, and of the number of words in every book that he read. Agnes never checked his word totals for an entire volume; however, when she cited any page in a book that he'd just finished, he knew the number of words it contained..In the instant that Junior had shoved Naomi into the rotted railing, he had foreseen this visit from Rudy, Sheena, and Kaitlin. He'd known he could pretend to be offended at the state's offer to put a price on his loss, could feign revulsion, could resist convincingly--until gradually, after grueling days or weeks, he reluctantly allowed the indefatigable..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..On this January twilight, as Maria Elena Gonzalez drove south along the coast from Newport Beach, all men of the sea must have been reaching for bottles of rum to celebrate the fruit-punch sky: ripe cherries in the west, blood oranges overhead, clustered grapes dark purple in the east..holding hands as they watched John Wayne in *The Searchers*, David Niven in *Around the World in 80 Days*. They were so young then, sure they would live forever, and they were still young now, but for one of them, forever had arrived..And speak the tongues of man and drake..Without using his flashlight, depending only on the moon, he ascended through the cemetery to the service road..Waking from a starry night in the Old West into electric light, gazing up into a blur of faces sans cowboy hats, Agnes felt someone moving a piece of ice in slow circles over her bare abdomen. Shivering as the cold water trickled down her sides, she tried to ask them why they were applying ice when she was already chilled to the bone, but she couldn't find her voice..Too rattled to want lunch at the St. Francis Hotel or anywhere else, Junior returned to his apartment..Out of a sphinx face, Obadiah conjured a smile that lifted the point of his white goatee when he turned his head to look at Edom. "Ah ... so long ago," he murmured, as though speaking to himself. "So long ago ... but I remember now." He winked at Edom..Grace knew it, too, because she went limp with misery in his arms, ceased struggling against him..thickened with the odors of antiseptics and blood, until breathing required an effort..Greed. So easy, taking money from the rubes. Soon, instead of peeling off a little from each game, he sought bigger kills..One of the gifts of power is to know power. Wizard knows wizard, unless the concealment is very skillful. And the boy had no skills at all except in boat-building, of which he was a promising scholar by the age of twelve. About that time the midwife who had helped his mother at his birth came by and said to his parents, "Let Otter come to me in the evenings after work. He should learn the songs and be prepared for his naming day."..Although the only light on the back porch came from the pale beams that filtered out through the curtains on the kitchen windows, all these faces seemed luminous, almost preternaturally aglow, like the kiln-fired countenances of saints in a dark church, lit solely by the flames of votive candles. The rain-a music of sorts, and the jasmine and incense, and the moment sacred..Eventually, when he had gone through the entire directory, if he'd had no success, he would phone each red-checked listing and ask for Bartholomew. A few hundred calls, no doubt. Some would involve long-distance charges, but he could afford the toll.."It was... the only dream that mattered," Joey said. "You ... loving me. It was a good life because of you."..Lipscomb women gladly obey the wishes of Lipscomb men-unless they disagree, of course, or don't disagree but are just feeling mulish..Eventually Junior crossed the room to stand before Industrial Woman in all her scrap-metal glory. Her soup-pot breasts reminded him of Frieda's equally abundant bosom, and unfortunately her mouth, open wide in a silent shriek, reminded him of Frieda retching..Victoria Bressler lay on the floor of the small foyer, left arm extended past her head, palm revealed, as though she were waving at the ceiling, right arm across her body in such a way that her hand cupped her left breast. One leg was extended straight, the other knee drawn up almost demurely. If she had been nude, lying against a backdrop of rumpled sheets or autumn leaves, or meadow grass, she would have had the perfect posture for a Playboy centerfold..In the kitchen again, Junior spread the blanket on the floor, to one side of the blood. He rolled Vanadium onto the blanket, and drew the ends of it together, fashioning a sled with which to drag the detective out of the house.."I'm going to tell you something about your father that might comfort you," he said, "but you can't ask me for more than I'm ready to say right now. It's all a part of what I'll discuss with you in Bright Beach."..Of course, he also might have shot off his own thumbs as double insurance against being drafted and sent to Vietnam.."That's right," Celestina told Wally. "This isn't wagering. What's wrong with you?"..ROCKING AS IF AFLOAT on troubled waters, abused by an unearthly and tormented sound, Junior Cain imagined a gondola on a black river, a carved dragon rising high at the bow as he had seen on a..She realized she hadn't turned on the radio. Before she could reach for the switch, she was asleep..I'll put you in a twilight sleep, you babbling cretin. Where'd you earn your medical degree, you nattering nitwit? Botswana? The Kingdom of Tonga?..I didn't know her well. She didn't hang out or party much--especially after the baby.".. "Better hold on tight to her," Wally warned Celestina, braking to a halt at the intersection. "She'll float up and away, then we'll have to call the fire department to get her down."..ISBN 0-15-100561-3 I. Fantasy fiction, American, [I. Fantasy. 2. Short stories.] I. Title.. "Now this. But even if your dad had cooperated with me, nothing would have changed. Since Phimie never revealed his name, I wouldn't have been able to go after Cain any differently or more effectively."..At last: the humiliating

backless gown, the precious drugs, even a pretty nurse who seemed to like him, and then oblivion..Aftermath had a way of being discovered, often at the worst of all possible moments, which he had learned from movies and from crime stories in the media and even from personal experience. Discovery always brought the police at high speed, sounding their sirens and full of enthusiasm, because those bastards were the most past-focused losers on the face of the earth, utterly consumed by their interest in aftermath..She thought all that, but she closed her eyes and said: "I'll be okay. Give me a second here, all right?"..As the fragrances of wet wool and sodden denim rose from her sweater and jeans, Agnes switched on the heater and angled the vanes of the middle vent toward Barty. "Honey, turn that other vent toward yourself."..Something was due to happen in this peculiar, extended, almost casual haunting under which he had suffered for more than two years, since finding the quarter in his cheeseburger. While all around him in the streets, people bustled in good cheer, Junior slouched along in a sour mood, temporarily having forgotten to look for the bright side..His attention, as morbid as a circling vulture, settled upon the pianist's right hand. The left was open, palm down. But the right was crumpled shut, palm up..Junior considered slipping quietly around the house, peering in windows, to be sure she was alone, before approaching directly. If she saw him, however, his wonderful surprise would be spoiled..Now that neither of them had a doubt that the other shared the same need and that eventually they would satisfy each other, Victoria was opting for discretion. Wise woman..While you're trying to decide, hand me a knife, and I'll cut your jugular you brainless medical-school dropout..He woke several times that night, instantly alert for a ghostly serenade, but he heard no otherworldly crooning..In spring, summer, and fall, they brightened the grave with the roses that Edom grew in the side yard. In this less rose-friendly season, these Christmas bouquets had been purchased at a flower shop.. "Where did you hear that expression," she demanded, though she couldn't conceal her amusement..From the door to the sink, nervously fishing a plastic pharmacy bottle out of a coat pocket, Junior counseled himself to remain calm. Slow deep breaths. What's done is done. Live in the future. Act, don't react. Focus. Look for the bright side..With the determination of any pulp-magazine adventurer, Paul walked in sunshine and in rain. He walked in heat and cold. Wind did not deter him, nor lightning..could not be a person of the best intentions. Doctors and nurses wouldn't monitor their patients with the lights off.

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