

VOL 3 THE CHEMISTRY OF THE HYDROCARBONS AND THEIR DERIVATIVES OR OF

If they were suspicious of him, they showed no obvious alarm. The three went inside in no particular rush, and judging by their demeanor, Junior decided that they hadn't spotted him, after all..She shook her head. "No way back." She pointed to the sketch pad on the floor. "I pushed him there." "Paul told us the night he first came to the parsonage. About Agnes here ... and what had happened to Barty. And all about his late wife, Perri. I feel like I know Bright Beach already." "See this?" He placed the pepper shaker in front of her on the room-service table and held the salt shaker concealed in his hand. "Great guy. Do you have an address for her, a way maybe I could get in touch about her brother?". A music tradition was deeply rooted in the Negro community. No similar tradition in magic existed..Phimie's eyes widened, her hand tightened painfully on her sister's hand, her entire body convulsed, thrashed, and she cried, "Unnn, unnn, unnn!". Edom had turned away from the box of groceries that he was packing. Frowning at the pies, he said, "You don't think. . .". 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..Junior was educated. He wasn't merely a masseur with a fancy title; he had earned a hill bachelor of science degree with a major in rehabilitation therapy. When he watched television, which he never did to excess, he rarely settled for frivolous game shows or sitcoms like Gomer Pyle or The Beverly Hillbillies, or even I Dream of Jeannie, but committed himself to serious dramas that required intellectual involvement-Gunsmoke, Bonanza, and The Fugitive. He preferred Scrabble to all other board games, because it expanded one's vocabulary. As a member in good standing of the Book-of-the-Month Club, he'd already acquired nearly thirty volumes of the finest in contemporary literature, and thus far he'd read or skim-read more than six of them. He would have read all of them if he had not been a busy man with such varied interests; his cultural aspirations were greater than the time he was able to devote to them..She hadn't sung since the early-morning hours of October 18, and no other paranormal event had occurred since then. The waiting between manifestations scraped at Junior's nerves worse than the manifestations themselves.."I should," Tom agreed, "but the point is this. . ." With the finesse of a magician, he allowed the salt shaker to slip out of the concealment of his palm, and stood it beside the pepper. "This is also me." 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..He was no longer in his scrubs, but wore gray wool slacks and a blue cashmere sweater over a white shirt. Face somber, he looked less like an obstetrician engaged in the business of life than like a professor of philosophy forever pondering the inevitability of death.."But in 'This Momentous Day,' Bartholomew is just the disciple, the historical figure, and he's also a metaphor for the unforeseen consequences of even our most ordinary actions." It was hard for him to lie. He thought he was awkward at it because he had no practice. Hound knew better. He knew that magic itself resists untruth. Conjuring, sleight of hand, and false commerce with the dead are counterfeits of magic, glass to the diamond, brass to the gold. They are fraud, and lies flourish in that soil. But the art of magic, though it may be used for false ends, deals with what is real, and the words it works with are the true words. So true wizards find it hard to lie about their art. In their heart they know that their lie, spoken, may change the world..Now, since he didn't intend to date this woman again, he grabbed the only chance he might ever have to learn the intimate, eccentric details of her life. He began in her kitchen, with the contents of the refrigerator and cupboards, concluding his tour in her bedroom..interminably against the ignition plate before, at last, he was able to insert it. "Should be a boy, because then you'll always have a man around the house." With the infant in her arms, the heavysset nurse pressed in beside Celestina, who..Barty, at the head of the table, sensed Mary's approach only as she was about to touch him. She put a hand on his arm and said, "Daddy, will you turn your chair away from the table and let me sit on your lap?". A blood test might prove that Junior was the father. Accusations might sooner or later be made against him by bitter and hate-filled members of her family, perhaps not even with the hope of sending him to prison, but solely for the purpose of getting their hands on a sizable pan of his fortune, in the form of child support..As Nolly hung his raincoat and his porkpie hat on a rack by the hall door, Kathleen Klerkle appeared in the entrance to the nearest of the two treatment rooms. "Are you ready to suffer?". Hesitantly, the ivory tickler shook hands. "I'm ... uh ... I'm Ned Gnathic. Everyone calls me Neddy." The one piece he had purchased was by a young Bay Area artist, Bavol Poriferan, about whom art critics nationwide were in agreement: He was destined for a long and significant career. The sculpture had cost over nine thousand dollars, an extravagance for a man trying to live on the income of his hard-won and prudently invested fortune, but its presence in his living room immediately identified him, to cognoscenti, as a person of taste and cutting-edge sensibilities..The upper shelf of the closet held boxes and two inexpensive suitcases: pressboard laminated with green vinyl. He took down the suitcases and put them on the bed..That was all right, for she had done the same for Otter's elder sister, and so his parents sent him to her in the evenings. But she taught Otter more than the song of the Creation. She knew his gift. She and some men and women like her, people of no fame and some of questionable reputation, had all in some degree that gift; and they shared, in secret, what lore and craft they had. "A gift untaught is a ship unguided," they said to Otter, and they taught him all they knew. It wasn't much, but there were some beginnings of the great arts in it; and though he felt uneasy at deceiving his parents, he couldn't resist this knowledge, and the kindness and praise of his poor teachers. "It will do you no harm if you never use it for harm," they told him, and that was easy for him to promise them.."In the early hours of January seventh," Nolly continued, "Miss White died in childbirth, as you figured." "I only told you about that," said Grace, "because it was a very handsome shirt, and I thought you might want to get one for Wally." This bond between the Lampion and White families, which Grace had already heard about from Paul, came as news to Celestina as much as to Agnes. It inspired more reminiscences of lost husbands and the

wistful wish that Joey and Harrison could have met..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.."Here we are," said the driver, braking to a stop at the curb in front of the gallery..Still on her knees, she raised the weapon and realized that she was going to shoot the maniac in the back, that she had no other choice, because her inexperience didn't allow her to aim for a leg or an arm. The moral dilemma overwhelmed her, but so did an image of Phimie lying dead in bloody sheets on the surgery table. She pulled the trigger and rocked with the recoil..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..In his room, he settled on the bed with his constipating snacks and the county telephone book. Because he had packed the directory with the Zedd collection, the thief hadn't gotten it.."Don't you say that. The society isn't silly, especially not now. It's us, it's what we were and how we are, and I do so much love everything that's us."Paul watched as Barty hopped down from his chair and crossed the busy kitchen in a straight line to the wall phone, without one hesitant move..With the second shot, the dead woman tumbled out of her chair, and the chair clattered onto its side.."You might as well beat a cloud for raining," said Otter's mother..The hospital was eerily quiet, except for the occasional squeak of rubber-soled shoes on the vinyl floor of the corridor..Saturday and Sunday, between sessions with the directory, Junior cruised around the county on a series of pleasure drives-testing the theory that the maniac cop was no longer following him. Apparently, Simon Magusson was correct: The case had been closed..Knuckle over knuckle, snared in the web of thumb and forefinger, vanishing into the purse of the palm, secretly traversing the hand, reappearing, knuckle over knuckle, the coin glimmered as it turned..After carrying the two pieces of luggage to the car in the garage, he returned to the study. He sat at the desk and examined the contents of the drawers, then turned to the file cabinet..Curiosity brought him here. Curiosity and a talent for self-preservation. Earlier, Vanadium had not come to Naomi's graveside as a mourner. He had been there as a cop, on business. Perhaps he had been at the other funeral on business, too..A supply of ammunition lined the bottom of all the dresser and bureau drawers, concealed by underwear and other garments. Junior appropriated a box of 9-mm. cartridges.."Once out of the coma and stabilized for a few weeks, I was transferred to a hospital in Portland, where I had to undergo eleven surgeries."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..As outgoing as his twin uncles were introverted, Barty didn't withdraw from the festivities. Agnes never needed to remind him that family and guests took precedence over even the most fascinating characters in fiction, and the boy's delight in the company of others pleased his mother and made her proud..Regrettably, he had no choice but to conclude that she hadn't made up her mind whether to keep the baby or to seek out an illegal abortion without Junior's approval. She had been thinking about scraping his child out of her womb without even telling him..Curiously, reciting these facts usually calmed him, as though speaking of disaster would ward it off. Since Friday, however, he had found no comfort in his usual routines.."I've got one of those faces so ordinary you see it everywhere," said Edom, and decided to tell the story of the Tri-State Tornado of 1925..Because he hadn't heard Victoria Bressler speak in so long-and then only on two occasions-and because the woman on the phone had spoken so softly, Junior couldn't tell whether or not their voices were one and the same.."Nick," he suggested, as though any reason existed for her to be on a first-name basis with the man who killed her husband. "I wasn't drinking. ".Even in this soft light, Nolly could see that she was blushing like a young girl. She glanced around at the nearby tables..Tom between curiosity and emotional exhaustion, Celestina held his gaze, thinking, and finally she said, "Deal." "What's below us?" Hound pointed to the floor, paved with rough slate flags..He bolted up from the sofa, saying too loudly, "Canned hams," but at once he realized this made no sense, none, zip, so he searched desperately for something coherent to say--"Potatoes, corn chips"--which was equally ridiculous. Now Obadiah was staring at him with that concerned alarm you saw on the faces of people watching an epileptic in an uncontrolled fit, so Edom plunged across the living room as though he were falling off a ladder, toward the front door, struggling to explain himself as he went: "We've brought some, there are some, I'll get some..IMPLODE To burst inward under pressure. Like the hull of a submarine at too great a depth..Kitchen staff. All men. Some looked up in surprise; others were oblivious of him. He stalked the cramped work aisles, eyes watering from the fragrant steam and the heat, seeking Vanadium, an answer.."If you don't, your feeling gland isn't working. Want me to read you to sleep?"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..A cheer went up from family and friends, and Agnes could only imagine what it must feel like to be Barty, both blind and blessed, his heart as rich in courage as in kindness..They wore out a lot of cards and kept a generous supply of all types of decks on hand..He considered calling her, but he didn't know what he would say if she answered..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..Now Junior threw back the covers and sprang out of bed. In double briefs, he restlessly roamed the hotel room.."I'm really not sad, Mom. I'm not. I don't like it this way, being blind. It's ... hard." His small voice, musical as are the voices of most children, touching in its innocence, spun a fragile thread of melody in the dark, and seemed too sweet to be speaking of these bitter things. "Real hard. But being sad won't help. Being sad won't make me see

again." 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..She stepped on a broken-off chair leg, lost her balance, and fell backward into the side of the bed..At one point late in the afternoon, as all three Hackachaks were hurling scorn and invective at Junior, he noticed Vanadium standing in the doorway, observing. Perfect. He pretended not to see the cop, and when next he sneaked a look, he discovered that Vanadium had vanished like a wraith. A thick slab of a wraith..Agnes was only thirty-nine years old, full of plans and vigor, so Angel's words seemed premature. Yet in too few years, she would have reason to wonder if perhaps these gifted children foresaw, unconsciously, that she would need the comfort of having witnessed this climb..Wet cobblestones and tattered blacktop. Hurry, hurry. Past the lighted casement window in the gallery men's room.. "I'm captivated more by painting than I am by most dimensional work," Junior explained. "Really, the only sculpture I've acquired is Poriferan's." The adoption records on Seraphim White's baby weren't sealed by law, because custody of the child was being retained by family..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..In spite of the gloom, the boy's miraculous accomplishment was evident: his clothes and hair were dry as though he'd worn a coat and hood..This was not the same card he'd found at his bedside, under two dimes and a nickel, on the night following Naomi's funeral. He had torn that one and had thrown it away..Serving a formal dinner was Agnes's way of declaring-to herself more than to anyone else in attendance-that the time had come for her to get on with life for Bartholomew's sake, but also for her own.. "This momentous day," Thomas Vanadium said quietly, stiff gazing into the grave, "seems full of terrible endings. But like every day, it's actually full of nothing but beginnings." The front door was unlocked. This was no longer one house; it had been converted to an apartment building..WHEN DR. JIM PARKHURST made his evening rounds, Junior didn't continue to feign sleep but asked earnest questions to which he knew most of the answers, having eavesdropped on the conversation between the physician and Detective Vanadium..Darkness, the one source of childhood fear that most adults never quite outgrow, held no terror for Barty. Although for a while his bedroom featured a Mickey Mouse night-light, the miniature lamp was there not to soothe the boy, but to quiet his mother's nerves, because she worried about him waking alone, in blackness..In a neatly groomed neighborhood of unassuming houses, Vanadium's place was as unremarkable as those around it: a single-story rectangular box of no discernible architectural style. White aluminum siding with green shutters. An attached two-car garage..Outside, he realized he hadn't paid for his juice and waffles. When he turned back to the coffee shop, he saw, through one of the windows, an associate of Salk's picking up the check from his table..If Junior had not been such a rational man, schooled in logic and reason by the books of Caesar Zedd, he might have snapped there in the street, before the photograph of Seraphim, might have begun to shake and sob and babble until he wound up in a psychiatric ward. But although his trembling knees felt no more supportive than aspic, they didn't dissolve under him. He couldn't breathe for a minute, and his vision darkened at the periphery, and the noise of passing traffic suddenly sounded like the agonized shrieks of people tortured beyond endurance, but he held fast to his wits long enough to realize that the name under the photo, which served as the centerpiece of a poster, read Celestina White in four-inch letters, not Seraphim..Throughout lunch and, indeed, during his hours as an outpatient at the hospital, Barty gave no indication that he understood the gravity of his situation. He remained cheerful, charming the doctors and technicians with his sweet personality and precocious chatter..Polio, largely an affliction of younger children, had stricken her two weeks before her fifteenth birthday. Thirty years ago..Barty, she explained, would be rich in many ways. Financially rich, but also rich in talent, in spirit, intellect. Rich in courage, honor. With a wealth of common sense, good judgment, and luck..He tugged on a pair of thin latex surgical gloves. Flexed his hands. All right..As Obadiah lowered himself into a well-worn armchair, he said to Edom, "Son, don't I know you from somewhere?" "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." They wanted to go up to Barty's room, but she refused them, because there was nothing more they could do for the boy than they had done for her. "He wants to finish reading Starman Jones, and I'm not letting anything interfere with that. We're leaving for Newport Beach at seven in the morning, and you can see him then." Angel was adamant: "Nope. I could learn that. Like dressing myself and saying thank-you." Judging by his great pleasure in learning, Barty didn't feel robbed of anything. To him, the world was an orange of infinite layers, which he peeled and savored with increasing delight..do further testing, of course, but not until he's been stabilized at least twelve hours. Personally, I don't think we'll find any physical cause. Most likely, this was psychological-acute nervous emesis, caused by severe anxiety, the shock of losing his wife, seeing her die.. "I wasn't drinking," he said. "That's proven. But I admit being reckless, driving too fast in the rain. They cited me for that, for running the light." Maria Gonzalez arrived with her daughters, and while it was natural for Angel to be drawn to the company of older girls, she had no interest in anyone but Barty.. "Then you only have to wait eighteen years," he said, opening the apartment door and stepping aside once more, allowing Celestina to precede him.. "A wonderful wedding," Celestina promised her, taking a pair of pajamas from a dresser drawer..The symptoms that terrified Phimie-the headache, crippling abdominal pain, dizziness, vision problems-had entirely relented. Possibly they had been more psychological than physical in nature..Slamming through the door, letting it bang shut behind him hard enough to crack the glass, crossing the porch, Tom took the beauty of the day like a fist in the gut. It was too blue and too bright and too gorgeous to harbor death, and yet it did, birth and death, alpha and omega, woven in a design that flaunted meaning but defied understanding. It was a blow, this day, a hard blow, brutal in its beauty, in its simultaneous promises of transcendence and loss..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..He'd been a godsend to Celestina, because his love of children and a new sense of fun that he'd discovered in himself were showered on Angel. He was Uncle Wally. Waddling Wally, Wobbly Wally, Wally Walrus, Wally Werewolf. Wally Wit Duh Funny Accents. Wiggle Eared Wally. Whistling Wally. Wrangler Wally. He was Good Golly Wally the Friend of All Polliwogs. Angel adored him, adored him, and he could have loved her no more if she had been one of the sons that he had lost. Overwhelmed by her classes, her waitressing job, her painting, Celestina could always count on Wally to step in to share the child rearing. He wasn't merely Angel's honorary uncle, but her father in all senses except the legal and biological; he wasn't just her doctor, but a guardian angel who fretted over her mildest fever and worried about all the ways the world could wound a child..It was the best he could do in protest against the misuse of good work and a good ship. He was pleased with himself. When the ship was launched (and all seemed well with her, for her fault would not show up until she was out on the open sea) he could not keep from his teachers what he had done, the little circle of old men and midwives, the young hunchback who could speak with the dead, the blind girl who knew the names of things. He told them his trick, and the blind girl laughed, but the old people said, "Look out. Take care. Keep hidden."."In addition to that policy," said Vinnie, "there's another. . .--he filled his lungs, hesitated, then exhaled the air and the sum with a tremor---'seven hundred fifty thousand. Three-quarters of a million dollars."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..He's crafty, you say. Can you use him?".After just twenty-one days, the boy's adaptation to blindness was amazing but clearly the gathered audience stood in anticipation of something more remarkable than his unhalting progress and unerring sense of direction..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..Copyright (c) 1997 by Ursula K. Le Guin..Recently, Wally administered to Angel a set of apperception tests for three-year-olds, and the results indicated that she might not ever be a math whiz or a verbal gymnast, but that she might be highly talented in other ways. Her appreciation of color, her innate understanding of the derivation of secondary hues from the primary colors, her sense of spatial relationships, and her recognition of basic geometric forms regardless of the angle at which they were presented were all far beyond what was exhibited by other kids her age. Wally said she was visually, rather than verbally, gifted, that she would undoubtedly exhibit increasing precociousness in matters artistic, that she might follow Celestina's career path, and that she might even prove to be a prodigy..Edom marveled at Agnes's ability to rise above the past and to transcend so many years of torment. She was able to see the house as simple shelter, whereas to her brothers, it was-and always would be-the place in which their spirits had been shattered. Even living within sight of it would have been out of the question if they had been employed, with options..a time, from the carafe on the nightstand. She spooned the ice into Junior's mouth not with the businesslike.These would no doubt be cloyingly sentimental paintings of the bastard boy, with impossibly large and limpid eyes, posed cutely with puppies and kittens, pictures better suited for cheap calendars than for gallery walls, and dangerous to the health of diabetics..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..No. Not exactly then. Not at the sight of the coin or the detective. He had felt this way at Vanadium's mention of the name that he, Junior, had supposedly spoken in his nightmare..Instead, he focused on the hand in the flashlight beam: four long, thin, chalk-white digits bent to the heel; thumb thrust up stiffly, as though Neddy hoped to hitchhike out of the Dumpster, out of death, and back to his piano in the cocktail lounge on Nob Hill..She poured cold milk and drank it quickly. As she was rinsing the empty glass, she felt as if she might throw up, but she didn't..Glass in the door next to Agnes cracked, dissolved. Pebbly blacktop like a dragon flank of glistening scales hissed past the broken window, inches from her face..Toward the front of the house, along a hallway suddenly as dark as a tunnel, toward a vague light in the seething gloom. And here a window at the end of the hall..Did she poison herself as well? Was it her intention to kill him and commit suicide?.Both angry and mortified, yet still fearful, a walking multimedia collage of emotions, Junior left the gallery..During the walk home: slow and deep, breathing slow and deep, moving not at a brisk clip, but strolling, trying to let the tension slide away, striving to focus on good things like his full exemption from military service and his purchase of the Sklent painting..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..The receptionist, Rebecca, had stayed late, just to keep company with Barty in the waiting room. As she settled into a chair beside the boy, he asked her if she knew what gravity was on Mars, and when she confessed ignorance, he said, "Only thirty-seven percent what it is here. You can really jump on Mars."..Now, Obadiah produced a pack of playing cards as though from a secret pocket in an invisible coat. "Like to see a little something?".Agnes, Celestina, and Grace were soon working together with a harmony that was kitchen poetry. Paul had noticed that most women seemed to like or dislike one another within a minute of their first encounter, and when they found one another companionable, they were as open and easy on their first meeting as though they were friends of long duration. Within half an hour, these three sounded as if they were of one age, inseparable since childhood. He had not seen Grace or Celestina free of despair since the reverend's murder, but here they were able for the first

time to veil their anguish in the bustle of baking and the pleasure of making a new friend..Joey was standing just outside, gazing in at her. His blue eyes were seas where sorrow sailed..In truth, he was terrified. Although his need for her company was so profound that it seemed to arise from his marrow, a part of him marveled-and trembled-at his dedicated pursuit of her.. "Yeah, they think we're with Candid Camera. So Jimmy points to this United Parcel truck parked across the street and says the cameras are in there..".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..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..By Thursday, September 23, due to Junior's accident and surgery, the draft board-which had reinstated his I -A status after he'd lost the exemption that had come with his former job as a rehabilitation therapist-agreed to schedule a new physical examination in December.

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