

## **AMIC EVOLUTION OF THE SOUTHERNMOST ANDES CONNECTIONS WITH THE SCOTIA ARC**

Perhaps his sister intuited what Edom was about to say, because she didn't let him get started.. "No, no. But being around him so much, inevitably I absorb some details. He's a compelling speaker when the subject interests him." In the foyer again, about six feet inside the front door, he stood the wineglass on the floor. He placed the bottle of Merlot beside the glass, the red rose beside the bottle.. When the ophthalmologist saw her misery, his kind face softened further, and his pity became palpable.. He did not answer Hound's question.. She worried that her anxiety would prove contagious, that when her fear infected her boy, he would be less able to fight whatever hateful thing had taken seed in his right eye.. The sensual memories of his torrid evening with Seraphim had left Junior aroused. Unfortunately, the only female nearby was Industrial Woman, and he wasn't that desperate.. "We've been planning this a long time," Angel assured her. "I've climbed the tree a hundred times, maybe two hundred, mapping it, describing it to Barty, inch by inch, the trunk and its four divisions, all the major and minor limbs, the thickness of each, the degree of resilience, the angles and intersections, knots and fissures, all the branches down to the twigs. He's got it cold, Aunt Aggie, he's got it knocked. It's all math to him now.." and half rotten. She tore it. With the small scissors, she opened the shoulder seam from the inside.. Amused, Wally said, "You artists do love to dramatize-or have I forgotten the San Francisco blizzard of '65?"". During the following day, January 6, as Phimie was wheeled around the hospital for tests in various departments, Celestina remained in 724, working on her portfolio for a class in advanced portraiture. She was a Junior at the Academy of Art College.. If Junior were weak-minded enough to succumb to madness, this was the moment when he should have fallen into an abyss of insanity. He heard an internal cracking, felt a terrible splintering in his mind, but he held himself together with sheer willpower, remembering to breathe slowly and deeply.. Before the pianist could cry out, Junior drove him between the toilet and the sink, slamming him against the wall hard enough to knock loose his breath and to cause the water to slosh audibly in the nearby toilet tank.. Since he knew where Celestina would be on January 12, there was no point in taking risks to find her sooner. He had plenty of time to prepare for their encounter, time to savor the sweet anticipation.. Now, if Victoria reported to Vanadium that Junior had shown up at her door with a red rose and a bottle of Merlot and with romance on his mind, the demented detective would be on his ass again for sure. Vanadium might think that the nurse had misinterpreted the business with the ice spoon, but the intent in this instance would be unmistakable, and the crusading cop-the holy fool-would never give up.. "Angel," Phimie said urgently, and then, with an effort that made a blood vessel swell. Although she had acutely felt the loss of Joey during the past three years, she had never missed him as much as she missed him now. Marriage is an expression of love and respect and trust and faith in the future, but the union of husband and wife is also an alliance against the challenges and tragedies of life, a promise that with me in your corner, you will never stand alone.. "Science. Quantum mechanics. Which is a theory ... of physics. But by theory, I don't mean just wild speculation. Quantum mechanics works. It underlies the invention of television. Before the end of this century, perhaps even by the '80s, quantum-based technology will give us powerful and cheap computers in our homes, computers as small as briefcases, as small as a wallet, a wristwatch, that can do more and far faster data processing than any of the giant lumbering computers we know today. Computers as tiny as a postage stamp. We'll have wireless telephones you can carry anywhere. Eventually, it will be possible to construct single-molecule computers of enormous power, and then technology-in fact, all human society-will change almost beyond comprehension, and for the better." After Agnes read the final words on the final page, Barty was drunk on speculation, chattering about what-might-have-happened-next to these characters that had become his friends. He talked nonstop while changing into his pajamas, while peeing, while brushing his teeth, and Agnes wondered how she would wind him down to sleep.. She was shaking and so afraid, not thinking clearly, and for a moment she didn't understand what he meant, what he wanted, and then she saw that the window on his side of the car was shattered, too, and that the door beyond him was badly torqued, twisted in its frame. Worse, the side of the Pontiac had burst inward when the pickup plowed into them. With a steel snarl and sheet-metal teeth, it had bitten into Joey, bitten deep, a mechanical shark swimming out of the wet day, shattering ribs, seeking his warm heart.. Filled with the songs of swallows that evidently preferred these precincts to the more famous address of San Juan Capistrano, this mild March morning was perfect for pie deliveries. Agnes and Grace had produced a bakery's worth of glorious vanilla-almond pies and coffee toffee pies.. She protested that her ruined body had neither any comforts to offer a man nor the strength to be a bride.. Not cheerful, life-loving, high-spirited, churchgoing Naomi. She saw every day through a golden haze that came from the sun in her heart.. Her name was Victoria Bressler, and she was an attractive blonde. She would never have been serious competition For Naomi, because Naomi had been singularly stunning, but Naomi, after all, was gone.. Perplexed by their peculiar behavior, even slightly unnerved, Tom answered Maria's question. "I'm afraid there's nothing else I can do, nothing more of a fantastic nature." As usual, Vanadium had spoken in a monotone, putting no special emphasis on those two words. Yet Junior sensed that the detective harbored doubts about the explanation of the girl's death.. But the boy played no tricks against his father. He took his beatings in silence and learned to hide his gift.. Suddenly remembering the doctor's assurance to Neddy that they would be out of this building by week's end, Celestina said, "But we've nowhere to go." Junior locked the door. He started the engine and drove out of the cemetery faster than was prudent on the winding service road.. What if the stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, evil spirit of Thomas Vanadium, which had earlier pursued Junior through another alleyway in broad daylight, had followed him into this one in the more ghost-friendly hours of the night, and what if that spirit were standing just outside the Dumpster right now, and what if it closed the bifurcated lid and slipped a bolt through the latch rings, and what if Junior

were trapped here with the thoroughly strangled corpse of Neddy Gnathic, and what if the flashlight failed when he tried to switch it on again, and then what if in the pitch-blackness he heard Neddy say, "Does anyone have a special request?". During the drive, he alternated between great gales of delighted laughter and racking sobs wrought by pain and self-pity. The voodoo Baptist was dead, the curse broken with the death of he who had cast it. Yet Junior must endure this final devastating plague.. "I'm a healer, not a prosecutor. I'm not in the habit of making accusations, especially not against my own patients." If their relationship had not been limited to a single evening of passion, if they had not been of two worlds, if she had not been underage and therefore jailbait, they might have had an open romance, and then her death would have touched him more deeply.. On the morning of November third, Barty asked Maria to inquire of Agnes what she would like to have read to her. "Then when she answers you, just turn and leave the room. I'll take it from there." Before Junior had become a physical therapist, he had considered studying to be a dentist. A low tolerance for the stench of halitosis born of gum disease had decided him against dentistry, but he still could appreciate a set of teeth as exceptional as these.. In the crisis, the rack holding her oxygen bottle had been rolled to the bed. The breathing mask lay on the pillow beside her.. Celestina extended her left hand, which shook so badly that she nearly knocked over both their wineglasses. "I will." Turning, turning, turning, the mysterious warning in his mind: The spirit of Bartholomew ... will find you ... and mete out the terrible judgment that you deserve.. Among Junior's many gifts, his ability to focus might have been the most important. Bob Chicane, his former instructor in matters meditative, had called him intense and even obsessive, following the painful incident involving meditation without seed, but intensity and obsession were false charges. Junior was simply focused. He moved the shaker across the tablecloth, rocking it back and forth to convey that he was strolling without a care in the world.. These weren't lakes of blood, just smears, so Junior could wipe them up quickly, once he got the corpse out of the hallway, but the sight of them further infuriated him. He was here to bring closure to all the unfinished business of Spruce Hills, to free himself from vengeful spirits, to better his life and plunge henceforth entirely into a bright new future. He wasn't here, damn it, to do building maintenance.. After using a paring knife to section and core an apple, Paul withdrew a sheet of stationery from his desk and uncapped a fountain pen. His penmanship was old-fashioned -in its neatness, as precise and appealing as fine calligraphy. He wrote: Dear Reverend White .... Seraphim White had come to California to give birth to him in or to spare her parents-and their congregation--embarrassment.. Indeed, he would get through the rest of 1965 without resorting to another homicide. The nonfatal shooting in September would be regrettable, quite messy, painful-but necessary, and calculated to do as little damage as possible.. "Me, me," Celestina said. "In fact, fianc'es should come first." The glittering room appeared unchanged. Even the piano player seemed to be the man who'd been at the keyboard back then, though his yellow-rose boutonniere and probably his tuxedo, as well, were new.. In the faraway, at the limits of night and fog, the dog bit off his bark in expectation.. Junior strove to appear properly mortified. "Thought I heard something. Searched the apartment." The full nature of the nightmare continued to elude him, but he became convinced that good reason for his fear existed, that the dream had been more than a dream. He had a nemesis named Bartholomew not merely in dreams, but in the real world, and this Bartholomew had something to do with ... babies.. When he got no response, he wedged the toe of his right loafer under the guy's chest and, with some effort, rolled him onto his back.. Heart jumping like the heart of a fox-stalked rabbit, she ran from the driveway into the yard. She would have cried out if her throat hadn't seized up with terror at the sight of her boy at neck-breaking height. By the time she could speak, she realized that a shout, or even the unexpected sound of her plaintive voice, might unnerve him, cause him to misstep, and bring him caroming down, limb to limb, in a bone snapping plunge.. As though giving voice to her worst fear had made it come true, Agnes was seized by a contraction so painful that she cried out and clutched the paramedic's hands tightly enough to make him wince. She felt a peculiar swelling within, then an awful looseness, pressure followed at once by release.. Barty wanted to hug her. He did hug her. He hugged Angel, too. He hugged Tom Vanadium.. This Dry Sack-assisted effort at recollection, however, brought back to him one thing in addition to all the sweet lubricious images of Seraphim naked. The voice of her father. On the tape recorder. The reverend droning on and on as Junior pinned the devout daughter to the mattress.. Ford dealership, which he'd closed for business until three o'clock: lamentations, lunch, and moving reminiscences of the deceased shared among the shiny new Thunderbirds, Galaxies, and Mustangs. That venue would provide Junior with the witnesses he required for his reluctant, tearful, and perhaps even angry concession to the Hackachaks' insistent materialism.. On the high marsh-Dragonfly-A description of Earthsea.. 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 RAIN THAT HAD threatened to wash out the morning funeral finally rinsed the afternoon, but by nightfall the Oregon sky was clean and dry. From horizon to horizon spread an infinity of icy stars, and at the center of them hung a bright sickle moon as silver as steel.. As though the fog were a paralytic gas, Junior stood unmoving in the middle of the sidewalk. He really didn't want to climb into that Dumpster.. Three years ago, in St. Mary's Hospital, with Phimie's warning fresh in her mind, Celestina swore that she would be ready when the beast came, but here he came, and she was as not ready as possible. Time passes, the perception of a threat fades, life becomes busier, you work your butt off as a waitress, you graduate college, your little girl grows to be so vital, so vivid, so alive that you know she just has to live forever, and after all, you are the daughter of a minister, a believer in the power of compassion, in the Prince of Peace, confident that the meek shall inherit the earth, so in three long years, you don't buy a gun, nor do you take any training in self-defense, and somehow you forget that the meek who will one day inherit the earth are those who forego aggression but are not those so pathetically meek that they won't even defend themselves, because a failure to resist evil is a sin, and the willful refusal to defend your life is the

mortal sin of passive suicide, and the failure to protect a little yellow M&M girl will surely buy you a ticket to Hell on the same express train on which the slave traders rode to their own eternal enslavement, on which the masters of Dachau and old Joe Stalin traveled from power to punishment, so here, now, as the beast throws himself against the door, as he shoves aside the barricade, with what precious little time you have left, fight. Junior shoved through the blocked door, into the bedroom, and the bitch hit him with a chair. A small, slat-back side chair with a tie-on seat cushion. She swung it like a baseball bat, and there must have been some Jackie Robinson blood in the White family line, because she had the power to knock a fastball from Brooklyn to the Bronx..Of course, he had the Pinchbeck and Gammoner identities waiting, two escape hatches. But he didn't want to use them. He liked his life on Russian Hill, and he was loath to leave it..Refusing to give the cop the satisfaction of a reply to the news of the unborn baby's paternity, Junior stared unwaveringly into the grave and said, "Whose funeral were you attending?".Yet had the obstacles been piled twice as high, the time had come to put into words what they felt for each other and to decide what they intended to do about it. Celestina knew that in depth and intensity, as well as in the promise of passion, Wally's love for her equaled hers for him; out of respect for her and perhaps because the sweet man doubted his desirability, he tried to conceal the true power of his feelings and actually thought he succeeded, though in fact he was radiant with love. His once-brotherly kisses on the cheek, his touches, his admiring looks were all still chaste but ever more tender with the passage of time; and when he held her hand-as in the gallery this evening-whether as a show of support or simply to keep her safely beside him in a crosswalk on a busy street, dear Wally was overcome by a wistfulness and a longing that Celestina vividly remembered from Junior high school, when thirteen-year-old boys, their gazes filled with purest adoration, would be struck numb and mute by the conflict between yearning and inexperience. On three occasions recently, he seemed on the brink of revealing his feelings, which he would expect to surprise if not shock her, but the moment had never been quite right..He was too sensitive a soul to be able to take either a handsaw or a power saw to a corpse..Being blind had few consolations, but Barty found that not being able to look at his uncles' files and books was one of them. In the past, he never really, in his heart, wanted to see those pictures of dead people roasted in theater fires and drowned bodies floating in flooded streets, but a few times he peeked. His mom would have been ashamed of him if she'd discovered his transgression. But the mystery of death had an undeniable creepy allure, and sometimes a good Father Brown detective story simply didn't satisfy his curiosity. He always regretted looking at those photos and reading the grim accounts of disaster, and now blindness spared him that regret..Applying his intelligence now, he employed simple meditation techniques to calm himself and to slow his heartbeat. The cop was trying to rattle him into making a mistake, but calm men did not incriminate themselves..She didn't have an appetite, anyway. Joey was too much on her mind. The safe birth of a healthy child was a blessing, but it wasn't compensation for her loss. Although by nature resistant to depression, she now had a darkness in her heart that would not relent before a thousand dawns or ten thousand. If a mere nurse had insisted that she eat, Agnes would not have been persuaded, but she couldn't hold out against the insistent importuning of one special seamstress..In his seventies but vigorous and full of fun, Sparky liked to take an occasional jaunt to Reno, to pump the slot machines and try a few hands of blackjack. The off-the-record, tax-free monthly checks from Simon were gratefully received, ensuring the old man's cooperation with the conspiracy..Over the following hour, as Walter Panglo guided Jacob through the planning of the funeral, Jacob recounted the gruesome details of numerous airliner crashes, shipwrecks, train collisions, coal-mine disasters, darn collapses, hotel fires, nightclub fires, pipeline and oil-well explosions, munitions--plant explosions.....The enormous canopy of the oak didn't shelter the lawn beneath it. The leaves spooned the rain from the air, measuring it by the ounce, releasing it in thick drizzles instead of drop by drop.."A ship without an anchor can never be at rest," he answered. "It's at the mercy of the sea."..In the front wall of the living room, where once had been a fine bay window, the parsonage lay open to the sunny day. Tom shrubbery, carried in from outside, marked the path of destruction. In the very middle of the room, plowed against a toppled sofa and a thick drift of broken furniture, a battered red Pontiac sagged to the left on broken springs and blown tires. A portion of the crazed windshield quivered and collapsed inward, while plumes of steam hissed from under the buckled hood..At the front, a soft spotlight a focused on the life-size crucifix. The only additional illumination came from the small bulbs over the stations of the cross, along both side walls, and from the flickering flames in the ruby glass containers on the votive-candle rack..The Rolex. Because most of the trash in the huge bin was bagged, finding the watch would be easier than Junior had feared..Avoiding the graveled driveway, on which he was more likely to scuff his freshly polished loafers, he approached the house across the lawn, beneath the moon-sifting branches of a great pine that made itself useless for Christmas by spreading as majestically as an oak..She sat on the end of the table, where Barty had sat, now at eye level with the standing physician.."Can't pay us as well as Losen does. But we could live," Otter argued..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..A new quarry, operated by the same company, lay a mile farther north. This was the old one, abandoned after decades of cutting..The word diarrhea was inadequate to describe this affliction. In spite of the books he'd read to improve his vocabulary, Junior could not think of any word sufficiently descriptive and powerful enough to convey his misery and the hideousness of his ordeal..He shook so badly that he couldn't remove the cap from the bottle. He was proud to be more sensitive than most people, to be so full of feeling, but sometimes sensitivity was a curse..Ghosts. Sklent was an atheist, and yet he believed in spirits. Here's how that works: Heaven, Hell, and God do not exist, but human beings are as much energy as flesh, and when the flesh gives out, the energy goes on. "We're the most stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, evil species in the universe," Sklent explained, "and some of us just refuse to die, we're too hardass to die. The spirit is a prickly bur of energy that sometimes clings to places and people that were once important to us, so then you get haunted houses,

poor bastards still tormented by their dead wives, and crap like that. And sometimes, the bur attaches itself to the embryo in some slut who's just been knocked up, so you get reincarnation. You don't need a god for all this. It's just the way things are. Life and the afterlife are the same place, right here, right now, and we're all just a bunch of filthy, scabby monkeys tumbling through an endless damn series of barrels." 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..With his sister's financial backing, Edom purchased a flower shop in '71, after ascertaining that the strip mall in which it was located had been even more soundly constructed than the earthquake code required, that it didn't stand on slide-prone land, that it did not lie in a flood plain, and that in fact its altitude above sea level ensured that it would survive all but a tidal wave of such towering enormity that nothing less than an asteroid impact in the Pacific could be the cause. In '73, he married Maria Elena (that boy-girl thing, after all), whereupon she became Agnes's sister-in-law in addition to having long been a full sister in her heart. They bought the house on the other side of the original Lampion homestead, and another fence was torn down..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..He hurt too much to recover quickly and take advantage of the woman's brief vulnerability. Clambering to his feet, he backed away from her and fumbled in a pocket for spare cartridges.."You should be with your children," Agnes worried. Maria looked up. "My babies are sitted with my sister."..With a shiver, Kathleen said, "We'd like to know more about why we did the things we did for you. Why the quarters? Why the song?"..A quick review of these book spines revealed that the treasured Zedd collection wasn't here..Frantically, he squirmed around on the floor until he was facing the entrance to the kitchen. Through tears of pain, he expected to see a Frankensteinian shadow loom in the hall, and then the creature itself, gnashing its fork-tine teeth, its corkscrew nipples spinning..A mere silhouette against the fluorescent glare, Vanadium stepped it the hall. The bright light seemed to enfold him. The detective shimmered and vanished the way that a mirage of a man, on a fiercely hot desert highway, will appear to walk out of this dimension into another, slipping between the tremulous curtains of heat as though they hang between realities..One of the hardest things that she had ever done was to leave him then, alone in his room, with the hateful something still quietly growing in his eye. She wanted to move the armchair close to his bed and watch over him throughout the night..The hospital room was softly lighted, and shadows roosted on all sides like a flock of slumbering birds.."It's all right," Tom assured her. To Angel, he said, "No, I'm not sad. And you know why?"..By the time he went to bed Saturday night, the cards that had been only that morning were showing signs of wear..If either of them suspected that she was lying, it was Edom. He looked puzzled, but he didn't pursue the issue..On January 3, 1968, Paul was fewer than 250 miles from Spruce Hills, Oregon. He wasn't aware of that town's proximity, however, and he didn't, at the time, have it as his destination.."There's no clear evidence of birth defects, but a couple tests reveal some worrisome anomalies. We'll know when we see the child."..A surprising number of the women who had been his lovers were recreational drug users, and over the past couple years, he had met several dealers who supplied them. From the least savory of these, he purchased five thousand dollars' worth of cocaine and LSD to establish his credibility, after which he inquired about forged documents..If he didn't find the Rolex and get back to his car before the reception ended, he'd forfeit his best chance of following Celestina to Bartholomew.."Do you want me to call and confirm how Vanadium was harassing you up here?" asked Magusson..The cord wasn't long enough to allow Celestina to take the telephone handset with her, so she put it down on the nightstand, beside the lamp..He slipped behind the door and raised the pewter candlestick over his head. Weighing perhaps five pounds, the object made a formidable bludgeon, almost as good as a hammer..Bartholomew might be a teenager living with his parents or a dependent adult residing with family; if so, he wouldn't be revealed in this search..because the phone would not be listed in his name. Or maybe the guy loathed his first name and never used it except in legal matters, going by his middle name, instead..In the Suburban with Wally and Grace, as they waited to hit the trail, Celestina said, "He took her to a movie again, Tuesday night."..He had noted all seven names on the bassinets, but he read them again. He sensed in their names-or in one of their names-the explanation for his seemingly mad perception of a looming threat..The window didn't face the street. It overlooked a five-foot-wide passageway between this house and the next. The police might not spot him leaving..Heart racing, but reminding himself that strength and wisdom arose from a calm mind, Junior stood in the center of the small kitchen, slowly turning to study every angle of the room..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..Suddenly, even in the heart of a great city, the alleyway seemed as lonely as an English moor, and not a smart place to seek asylum from a vengeful spirit. Casting aside all pretense of self-control, Junior sprinted for the next street, where the sight of multitudes, swarming in winter sunshine, filled him not with paranoia or even uneasiness, anymore, but with an unprecedented feeling of brotherhood..They came to the house in Boatwright Street after dark. They kicked the door in, and Hound, standing among the armed and armored men, said, "Him. Let the others be." And to Otter he said, "Don't move," in a low, amicable voice. He sensed great power in the young man, enough that he was a little afraid of him. But Otter's distress was too great and his training too slight for him to think of using magic to free himself or stop the men's brutality. He flung himself at them and fought them like an animal till they knocked him on the head. They broke Otter's father's jaw and beat his aunt and mother senseless to teach them not to bring up

crafty men. Then they carried Otter away..Junior levered up, scrambled up, vaulted over, and crashed into the deep bin, with every intention of landing on his feet. But he overshot, slammed his shoulder into the back wall of the container, fell to his knees, and sprawled facedown in the trash..The expectation with which Tom had been greeted on his arrival was as thin as the air at Himalayan heights compared to the rich stew of anticipation now aboil.. "Having spent most of the last twenty years in this apartment, not being the one who has a car, how would I meet a Negro magician?" "Angel," Phimie said thickly, searching her sister's eyes for a sign of understanding..Had he ever thought he could get away with this? He must have been delusional, temporarily mad..Books were stacked high on a nearby table, favorite novels and volumes of verse, all of which Agnes had read before. With time so limited, she preferred the comfort of the familiar to the possibility that new writers and new stories would fail to please. Paul read to her often, as did Angel. Tom Vanadium sat with her, too, as did Celestina and Grace..The spirit of Bartholomew . . . will find you ... and mete out the terrible judgment that you deserve..He went directly to the kitchen and drew a glass of water at the sink faucet. He swallowed two antiemetic tablets that he had brought with him, to guard against vomiting..Fully clothed, she lay atop the bedspread. She intended to listen to a little classical music before brushing her teeth..

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