

Tracy Major, a promising basketball player, and the beautiful Elizabeth Beauregard going to Johns Hopkins, are ensnared in a Trenton drug war, with disastrous results.

Trouble in Trenton

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TROUBLE IN TRENTON

A Gorgeous Tragedy

A Novel

ROBERT EMMETT MUELLER

Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by...
--- *Milton: Il Penseroso. 1. 97*

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ONE

Tracy Major, a young black man, walked through the Trenton station feeling like the wrong man in the wrong place: all eyes magnetically caught his powerful frame towering over the crowd like a giant. What madness had reached its disgusting hand out of this crumbly city and snatched him away from his insulated comfortable college existence? Everything was going so right, his life was almost perfect, he was just one step away from fame: that cross-court shot that had cinched the final, critical game was his triumphant nod to fame. The ecstatic roar of the crowd and his coach's approving smile, plus a sign from the Nets scout who sat next to him with his fisted-arm high in the air, spoke more than words. But life can change in an instant, dread can overtake a life full of success, and shatter accepted futures. An unexpected phone call spoke simple yet flaming words: "Your pappy is dead, son," his mama had muttered spiritlessly, "come home immediately!" and she hung up. His father! In the prime of his life! But why? How? Rage and misery crawled out of his heart like a pulsing crab and his body hardened, he became stone, immovable. Not his father! His sweet concerned father, who brought him into basketball as into life itself! When he called her back she barely made sense: her voice jingling, high-pitched, confused, sprinkled with crying; she said something about Willy's heart. Not possible. Willy Major was too tough; chest wide as a barrel, hands thick as a chisel. He was hot-tempered, and prone to liquor, yes, but a rock of a man.

The once deteriorating Trenton station sigh was splendid with sparkling glass and chrome; a panorama window projected an unfamiliar skyline, punctuated with modern skyscrapers, too high, too disparate, too new. Was this really Trenton, New Jersey? Yes. There was Pete Lorenzo's Cafe across the street -- it would take more than four years away to change that Italian shrine (whitey's shrine, off limits to him as a boy)! He wondered if throwing up a few skyscrapers and refurbishing the station could change the city. No. He felt that something was wrong here. Not only the city. Something personal. Youthful troubles flashed in his mind (troubles that had nearly cost him college admission). His stomach lurched, like on the eve of an important game when his reputation was on the line. For a second he forgot why he had come home. Yes. For his father's funeral! Again the image his stalwart father, nearly as tall as he, raged in the back of his mind like an annoying mirage -- dead? Not possible!

Tracy Major had sharp, brooding eyes; his features were finely chiseled, like a beautiful African sculpture; his skin dark as ebony. He knew he was handsome; that he appeared on the outside quite beautiful -- the ideal athlete, a prototypical basketball player, tall, lithe, strong, near invincible on the court. Who would have guessed that he was riddled with insecurity -- even in the midst of action? He felt strange now, dressed like a businessman, incongruously carrying a briefcase and a bag. He realized, now, in this black city, that he had assumed a white man's business dress to distinguish himself -- from whom? Where is his blackness now? Oh, he knew he was of the darkest of the dark, but he always wanted to wear his skin lightly. As a boy in high school; as a tall athletic winner, he towered above color, above everyone, black and white. Yet he could not grasp the clichés people threw at him. But when he hit the wall of whiteness at college a personal contradiction burst spectacularly in his mind. Quickly his basketball fame lifted the black baggage he ported on his back like an overstuffed human suitcase.

Yes. Until this very instant he realized that he had existed in the state of a super hallowed, near trans-human physically! The mentally perfect college hero! But now, as he realized that many people were eyeing him, he shivered in his suite as if enwrapped in a snake's skin he must quickly shed!

He searched in vain for a familiar face in the anonymous train crowd swarming around him as if trying to escape disaster. A tall, pretty white girl ogled him (he had watched her on the train, endlessly paring her rose-tipped fingernails); a small black woman (plump like his mother, with the same dishwasher dress) inexcusably bumped him, and uttered a curse under her breath (unlike his polite mother). From his tall view above the crowd he spotted a hand waving in the air; the hand was tattoo-decorated like a small flag its gold rings glittering.

"Yo! Heh man!" a distant voice yelled, squelching the crowd noise. "That be you, Major? Fuck an egg! Tracy'd'Major?" The bejeweled hand forced its way through the throng; a figure pushing toward him like a tiger plunging through a people jungle. "I'd 'cognize ya anywhere! Hot shit! In livin' black'n'white!"

That gravely voice was familiar; Tracy Major tried to match it with the beaming face, wrapped across his face like a disguise. Who the hell was it? Without thought he said, "Yes, it be me! Tracy'd'Major!" He spoke sarcastically, but smiled lest he be thought snooty. A full name, Canoe Lengres, surprisingly, came quickly to mind. The same coffee-speckled skin, snarly, nappy hair in tight, neat corn-rows, body nervous and twitchy as ever. "Hi, Canoe," he said, setting down his bag and reaching toward him for a high-five. "Kin-you Canoe?" he completed a childhood expression, trying to be friendly. The difference was in the man's body -- he couldn't connect the muscled, highly-tattooed bare arms with the recalled skinny boy -- like before and after in a muscle-building ad (or ornamented after joining a circus). "You're lookin' mighty good," Tracy said admiringly, struggling against the crowd. "You must be doin' a-lota canoein'. Your arms are majestic!"

"Yea!" the man smiled gleefully. His gold bracelets jingled (performing their ritual greeting of thumb, hand, wrist, elbow) "Spend lots'o time on de ribber!" He made a mock rowing motion (bumping people on either side), flexing his muscles proudly until they bulged like sausages about to burst. "Yer lookin' pretty damn good yerself," Canoe said, looking Tracy up and down when they were clear. "Goin' ta da fune-ral?" The second he said it his eyes popped, and he cupped his hand over his mouth. "Yo-ho! Yer pappy!" he burst out. He wondered exactly how much Tracy knew about what had happened in Trenton. "Yeah! I herd 'bout it! Sorry, man!"

"What'd you hear?" Tracy asked expecting information, but only got a shrug. "Surprised me. But when pappy missed the last game I knew somethin' wuz up. Not like pappy..." He shook his head and glanced at his watch. "Better git goin'," Tracy said, marveling that his speech had inched close to Canoe's Trentonese. "Mama said th' funeral's at ten." "

"Wana ride?" Canoe asked, again glancing around furtively. "I'll be through here in a sec. Li'l biz here. My car's outside -- "

"Nah. Ewing's just a jog away."

Canoe wrinkled his face. "You mean youall still have dat place on Ewing Street? Ewing's done blasted ta hell 'n back!" He took a second to shake his arms out, as if preparing for a boxing match. "Ya gotta watch yerself there. 'Specially dressed like

dat. You be ripped down ta nuttin'!" Canoe took a small jump above the still swarming crowd, surveying the station. "Better put yer stuff there," he pointed, "in a locker -- for safe keeping." He pulled the reluctant Tracy like a swimmer rescuing a drowned whale. "'N ain't ya got sumin less flashy? Oughta change. Disguise yerself." He gave a little chuckle. "Gotta 'xplain, Trace," A serious look flooded his face. "Things are bad here now. Not like when we wuz kids. When we could git away wid anything."

Tracy smiled. The way Canoe twitched and let his head bob back and forth was familiar -- yes, his old cop alarm! Canoe looked around surreptitiously, and continued, softly: "Yeah, things have changed. Ewing ain't our ole hood no more. Can't lie to ya. 'Sides, everybody seed ya on TV. 'N dressed like dat, y'd be an instant hit!" He thought of Tracy Major on TV. He took a deep breath, looked back toward the station hallway, his countenance switched like a child from anxiety to admiration. "Man, dat was sum scrimmage!" His face beamed into a radiant smile, his eyes wide, pulling on a diamond earring set in his grey earlobe like a tiny star in a dim sky. "Ya kin make dem fucken balls reely fly! Jis like birds! Right inta da mother's fucken nest!" Canoe Lengres was impressed, meeting Tracy Major now, a real celebrity. "We all seed ya on TV! On Channel 8. Yer a celeb in Trenton!" He suddenly became serious. "But life's a fuckin different David here. Trenton's don busted. 'N don't let the modernizin' fool ya!" he said, swinging his arms around, showing off the station like a salesman. His elbow caught a heavy man in the face; the man started to snarl; but, when Canoe snarled back harder he changed his mind and quickly ducked away. Canoe laughed outright. He caught a woman ogling Tracy; she sighed, lifting her gorgeous breasts. "Looked dat quid! My, the girls mus' go fer ya like bees t'honey! Being a star and all dat!" He smiled suggestively. But then his eyes saddened, a flush of past glories tempering his mind, and he began reminiscing, elaborately listing old experiences, painfully brought alive for Tracy. "'Member when we tagged Z-Zs all th' way from Trenton t' New Brunswick, unner th' railroad bridges? -- dat wuz re-e-el fun!" He reeled off an long string of "remember-whens" like a list of accomplishments, all hurtful to Tracy and long since forgotten. "'Member when we fought the Bonser gang?" He crunched up his powerful shoulders and his eyes blazed. "Dat wuz sumen, wern't it? Blood frum here t' paradise! Yeah man!"

Tracy wondered if they had actually done all those things? Yes! Different life; different person. He found himself upset by Canoe's spouting off these facts; they seemed like fairy tales dreamed by a fool -- no, indeed they were not fairy tales! He tried to act cool: "What's happened to th' Z-zero gang? Did the Bonser's win out after all?"

"Guess ya cud say dat. Everybody done growed up! Kid gangs now real tough mobsters. Wid all th' connections, too," he added with a smile. "You'd never believe it. The Z-z's who are left are real wise guys now. 'Cept those dat done gone down dat old death road!" He twisted his mouth and hit his side with his large fist. "Yeah. Started wid fly-bys. Bonselers, seekin' blood. Revenge. But bad Snap did lots in. Chip -- 'member him? -- OD-ed. Dix and Wonder are suppin' the stinks forever in th' Vroom building. They got caught with Horse. Most done graduated to doom!" he smiled at his image. "'N yer friend Smith -- Awky Smith -- " Canoe stopped himself, a fact popping into his mind: Smith worked for Tracy's father Willy Major; did Tracy know this? And did Tracy know what really happened to Willy Major? "Yea," he added, but prepared to

leave (lest he be questioned about things best left unsaid), "Smith's a real fucked-up shit-head man. One day they caught 'im with his prick in his ear tryin' to rape a quid... 'n' all done out wid squeek."

"Thought Awky'd be a survivor," Tracy said and was going to add 'like us' but changed his mind. He looked up at the azure sky and noted a solid mass of featherless black clouds creeping over the horizon about to pull its blanket of darkness over the modern Trenton. "Gotta go, Canoe. Think the funeral's at ten."

"Yea. Me too," Canoe agreed. A burly man in a uniform caught his attention; he began twitching and bobbing again. "Yea, gotta run!" He added: "Don't forgit t' change. I'm serious 'bout being knocked off! 'N when ya kin, come-mon down to th' canoe launching pad -- yer brudder Ray, he knows where my office is. Down by d' ribber side," he smiled weakly, "as the ole song goes! Yo-ho, boy!" and he dashed away, slithering like a snake into the forest of rushing people.

Tracy saw that the uniformed man was carrying a cell phone, clearly a New Jersey Transit security cop. What was Canoe up to? Something bad, as in the old days? Things hadn't much changed. He saw Canoe gliding away, stealthily. What was he up to, here, in the station? From his vantage point his eyes far above the crowd he could see that Canoe was trying to mingle with people from the train; he moved along in slow, measured steps, as in feigned sleep; but suddenly he sped up and became agile as a panther, dashing around, after someone. It was clear that an exchange was going to be made; with a white businessman carrying a briefcase. Yes. Canoe slam-dunked a package into the man's pocket. Then, as if he had discharged his purpose in a sudden enervating spasm, he fell limp as a washcloth, hid his eyes, acted invisible like a child, and slid back into a sleep mode.

Tracy Major shook his head and wondered about Canoe's suggestion to change clothes, disguise himself, as he said: was his smart suite a bit overdone here? He edged toward a bench, opened the bag, pulled out a jersey, stripped off his jacket and folded it neatly inside. Disguise indeed! he thought. He laughed to himself, thinking that Canoe Lengres had infected him with a touch of paranoia. And should he check the bag? Yes! Why not?

Outside it was clear, beautiful day, sunny, crystalline, and puffs of calendar clouds floated across an azure sky. Ah, it may not be so bad, he thought, returning here. But when he walked past Lorenzo's an image smacked him in the face: he and Canoe, two wild boys, throwing rocks through the stained glass window; cops catching them, the juvenile court putting them on probation -- his earliest Trenton infraction!

He continued walking up North Clinton, his step less than confident; increasingly ruined buildings emerging, depressing him. At Mercer cemetery he had a most vivid recollection; he looked through the iron picket fence and could almost see (as vivid as reality), back in the darkness, a gang bang taking place, behind the tombstones. What was her name? That sweet little woman? It was a sad vivification: boys standing in line, erect pricks in hand, ready; she squealed at first, but lay back, sobbing, her legs folded up like a sad little spider. Could he have stopped them? Doubtful. He was angry now that he hadn't tried at least. Why did he go last? Because he did not fuck her. Thought he bragged often, he had meticulously preserved his virginity! What a wimp! No. Something had always stopped him. Which was why he insisted on being the last. He was the toughest, the strongest, the one they all deferred to. Finally he

shooed them away and helped her clean up, tried to calm her, to assuage her anguish (and his guilt). And as a result he had kept himself intact; and even to this day, he had never slept with any of the girls in college; never...he said it now, to himself, with a certain ambivalent assurance, "I have never fucked anyone . . . Yes, I guess I was a different person then, but I am not so much a different person now

With that thought calming him he shook off the images and turned left past the Baptist Church on East State (where his mother prayed to her private angels); and jogged a little more toward his destination: Ewing Street; but slowed to a walk because his new shoes pinched.

He was stunned: was this Ewing Street? He half noticed a police car parked directly in front of his flat mid block. The last stream of sunlight peeked over the edge of black clouds like a stage lamp, and his once familiar street took on drama; the cloud was pulled along by a high wind, slowly turned the gaping facades dark and unreal. Ewing Street was like a broken movie set, gutted interiors like a gangster picture, foreboding tall freestanding brick chimneys, as if a catastrophe happened here, not the mock war of a destruction picture, but the slow quiet war of poverty gone worse.

Suddenly he felt a jerk at his hand. He turned and saw a kid's grinning face; a triumphant grin. Running away for all he was worth. Swinging something in the air like a windmill -- it was his briefcase! So much for a disguise! He patted his pocket to be sure his wallet was safe, with his money and credit cards -- just a few papers, a few pocketbooks and toilet items had flown away. Nevertheless he exclaimed aloud: "What the hell!" more out of annoyance than anger. He tightened his leg muscles, weak from hours sitting on the train, and tried to rev up, as on a basketball court. Movement was difficult. Where the hell did that bastard go? He was a dull super fly, no fast break, no run and gun, trying to dash up Ewing, slipping because of new leather that gave him little traction. The brat was nowhere in sight! That Jack, he thought, had a future, so nimble, so quick! Where the hell did he go?

He gave up. Canoe had been right: Ewing Street, once an upper middle-class area, was totally demolished. The buildings had crumbly, polluted exteriors, as if a strange poisoned dirt had unloaded a burden of deprivation and impurity on Ewing's unsuspecting way. Only four years ago neat flats with regularly painted porches lined the Street: why hadn't his mother written? Why hadn't his papa said anything? This destruction could not have happened overnight -- or could it? It did! Shells of themselves, the window-eyes of the tenements were boarded up by four-by-eight plywood patches, like giant rectangular band aids plugging despair; many buildings were cracked open like broken walnuts; and his old basketball court, stuck between an edge building and a warehouse, was littered with overflowing garbage cans -- impossible to play there today! Where do the teeners go? Everything was oppressive: had he gone soft living in the splendor of a southern college town all these years?

Someone called out: "Tracy? Tracy Major?" He'd know that bass voice anywhere: Simon Stoneback, a carpenter who worked with his father. But surely the thin man with sunken cheeks who walked across the corner at Ogden was not Stoney -- what everyone called him -- once stalwart of body. "Tracy Major?" the man repeated, making a sudden, recognizable swiveling motion. Yes, that was Mr. Stoneback: no longer powerful like his name, but that booming voice (like James Earl Jones on TV), and the swiveling motion, was distinctive. It always reminded him of a mythical whirlpool

(something Miss Sweetapple, his favorite teacher at Center, once described -- which myth?). "I'd recognize ya any day. 'Spite that outfit! My, oh, my, you're looking mighty fine, m'boy -- under the, cir-cum-stanc-es." The last word came out hard. "Prosperous like, too!" he added, smiling.

"Yes, sir," Tracy Major acknowledged politely, for Stoney was a man he always respected -- a man who knew everything: every neighborhood rumor, the political situation at city hall, the state of the world -- and the nature of all life. But what did he mean 'under the circumstances'? "Did you see that kid grab my briefcase?"

"No. But I ain't surprised. Hope you didn't loose anything 'portant. Happens every day here." Stoney said, confirming Canoe's prediction. "You really look great, Tracy Major. Always knew you'd be one who gets out! Despite the things ya did...back then! Look mighty fine!"

"You're looking fine too," he lied. Stoney had aged tremendously: his face was drawn and drained of its blackness: age had bleached him almost white; as if age had exhausted his black skin dye. (But Tracy remembered that Simon Stoneback was part white -- his ancestors were Portuguese slaves, descendants of the Jackson Whites. -- .he knew the details from his Black History Class. -- .who had come down from the Ramapo Mountain where they lived like hillbillies and settled first in Newark and later in Trenton.) "Good to see you, Mr. Stoneback."

"Guess you know all 'bout your pappy," the man boomed on, playing with his false teeth as if they pained him -- he pulled the top row down, nervously, baring a few of his own, transforming his face into a peculiar puppet mask with three spotty rows of teeth (his teeth rattling as he talked). "I wasn't surprised. Con-si-de-ring..."

"Yes," Tracy observed, nervously. He gave Stoneback a steady, troubled look; a small trickle leaked from his eyes. "When he didn't come down to my last game," he said, his voice thin and sad, "I knew something was wrong." His attitude had worry mixed with anxiety. "Are you coming to the funeral? Mama didn't make much sense on the phone." Remorsefully he added, his voice clear, "Willy's heart was as sound as steel. She said something 'bout his heart. Can't believe he had a heart attack..."

Simon Stoneback gave him a curious look, and turned to walk away. "Well," he muttered indistinctly over his shoulder, his teeth rattling a more intense cricket-like noise, "don't rightly think it were his heart. Under the cir-cum-stances..."

Not his heart? Then what? Tracy let his mind slip back along the corridors of his college. Coach Crowell had caught him about to leave, and he had told him that the NBA scout was in his office. Especially to see him. "He knows you got the NCAA title as a sophomore. I bet you'd be number one for the NBA draft this year! It's important to see to him. Now!" Coach Crowell's blue eyes had blazed angrily at his star player. "But I wouldn't be too confident of a first draft," he had warned. Yet to Tracy Major this chance seemed anticlimactic: too easy; something felt wrong; like a cheap devil bargaining for an over-prepared soul. He was half glad that he had this excuse to rush out, explaining to the coach that his father died, and he had to go home to the funeral. "You've got a Pro body now," his coach had said. "They want you today! Not tomorrow!" Coach Crowell added: "I know your dad -- he would want you to see the man! But if you insist," he sighed, knowing Tracy Major's determination, "I'll arrange an appointment in New York. OK?"

He barely saw Simon Stoneback drifting away, as if on a slow-moving cloud. What had he said? The words fell over him like a heavy warning. Not his heart? "What do you mean, not his heart?" Tracy yelled after him. "And what are the cops doing at my place?" The stone steps of his flat were like bad teeth leading into the gaping mouth of his front door.

Stoney Stoneback twisted back and said something Tracy did not comprehend; difficult to grasp because his teeth were rattling like crackling popcorn; the sound was almost whimsical to Tracy, if the words uttered were not so terrible: "Don't you know, my boy? Hate to tell you..." (rattle, rattle) "...but I think..." (pop, pop) "...he was done murdered!"

Tracy's mind accepted the information but his body could not assimilate it. There was just resolute disbelief. This could not be, not his father, not Willy Major. Murdered? Impossible! Just hearsay. But this was Simon Stoneback, no hearsay person. Trustworthy and always right. An ache, an awful fear, inside, somewhere strange, hard to locate: in his stomach, his heart, his head. His eyes heavily tearing; he tried to mutter something, but it came out nearly inaudible: "What? Pappy murdered?" echoing the phrase like a sleeper shocked awake.

"You must...have known," Simon Stoneback said, coming back and reaching up to put his bony arm around Tracy's shoulder. He added, reproachfully, "You had...to know. Seeing's how...you were living...all that time...in the best of colleges. High on the horse...as they say. Your pappy's dope money was supporting you," Stoneback's voice fell to a whisper. "You must've...known. But I did reason...that maybe it might of been...for the money. I mean, why you gave in...to th' ole devil Whitey! Why you turned into a first-class whitey gladiator! Thought you must have rejected your pappy's...dope money!"

"Dope money!" Tracy Major sputtered in complete disbelief. Willy Major could not possibly have had anything to do with dope -- alcohol, yes, despite years with that Alcoholics group; his father's caution against dope was a mantra spoken at every meal throughout his childhood, countering obvious neighborhood forces, working, particularly, on his younger brother, Raymond Major, who was more susceptible (having nothing like basketball to occupy his restlessness). Tracy recalled being surprised once at school when his father flashed a big roll of money; he said nothing, chalking it up to a big job payment: construction money was often in cash. But was it dope money? Impossible! Not his free and easygoing papa! He never seemed to be anguished, prey, yes, to certain vagaries common to poor struggling ghetto men: liquor, gambling -- not, as far as he knew, to sex. Perhaps when he was younger (old pictures reveal him as a proud twenty-year old, pretty enough to attract women); but now his papa transcended sexuality. Willy Major was pure, strong as an ox, a veritable Paul Robeson of a man, madly in love with a complaining wife who gave him great sex (he had heard them going strong as a boy, tussling in their squeaky bed unabatedly).

Clearly the decay of Ewing Street was not confined to its exteriors; it had crept from the dark lanes where he was forbidden as a child to play, into his very own neighborhood, and even into the four walls of his home and now into his life. The disarray of Ewing Street here in Trenton, its seedy, slow destruction, began to cover his mind like a net and catch reality...

An inexplicable sound roared in Tracy Major's head; he had to exerted heroic endeavors to clear his mind. He gradually came out of the black mist that had forced itself upon him; an intelligence began to tick inside him like clockwork -- plan and make decisions. He felt an unusual black, deadly emotion, something foreign to him; an ancient, secret and vague feeling, as if out of the darkest part of Africa. Something dark and foreboding was materializing. What was it? A quick flashback occurred, to a mock fight he had had in a classroom, run by that same myth-promoting school teacher at Center, Miss Sweetapple; she had her class playing knights slaying dragons, knights seeking -- vengeance! Yes, that's it! He knew what he had to do! Anger and fury welled up, flaming fire bursting within; almost biblical in feeling. He had to find out the facts. Yes, and do something. Something . . . revengeful!

TWO

Her very first day at the hospital, enlisted in the Trauma Center due to scant staff, Isabelle Beauregard got a frightening dose of medical horrors. A gang fight. Mostly knifings, blood, but some bullet wounds, more blood, cracked heads, blood, blood, blood... She would have been traumatized -- had there been time to reflect. Too many people, too quick, too complex the problems; too uncommon the personalities thrust at her to grasp their humanity. The pretty young doctor she assisted, a tall black man with bloodshot eyes, was clearly inured to the sick or wounded; she, a novice, naive, shy, although sharp and concerned, was simply overwhelmed. She tried to individualize each patient by searching their wide eyes for humanity; tired...but they flew by too quickly, were wheeled away as soon as the blood was stopped, their skin patch firm -- where? To oblivion (hopefully not to the undertaker's). Isabelle remained in a dizzy state of daze, unable to project a smile, a faded glint in her eyes.

"You gotta think things," the young doctor began, sensing her state, "like a movie, your favorite song. Or a good meal!" he laughed, "Or imagine you're in medical school. And they're cadavers!"

"Cadavers don't cry!"

"Indeed!" he laughed, pulling the ends of a newly-cleaned wound together and lacing it with suture, calmly as if it was a seam in the man's pants. "Just imagine it's a side of beef!" His stomach growled. "Beef -- yes, I'm hungry. It's past supper -- you hungry? Would you like -- " he began, but stopped mid-sentence when the repaired man was taken away and the next person was reeled into their bay. It was a very young boy, who could not have been over ten; he was unconscious and pathetic looking.

"He's so young!" Isabelle said.

The doctor quickly checked for wounds, muttering that there were none; put his stethoscope on the boy's heart, tapped him on the chest and shook his head; he pulled one eyelid open. "He's going fast." He straightened up and made a queer, crablike movement. "Gotta shock 'em. Quick! Pull off his shirt. Get me the defrib -- " He pointed the gadget on a nearby dolly, and saw that Isabelle was confused and trembling. "Can you manage it?" She smiled weakly, but quickly pulled herself together; she had never used the instrument before, but recalled them from TV. She did what was necessary, adjusting the shock low at the doctor's suggestion. The first one worked and the boy moaned. Isabelle took his hand gently; she bent over and looked into the boy's

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