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*Extract from
a newly completed novel
by Jamie Collinson*

Ghost kept flashing nervous looks at him. Vulture knew that his friend was just worried, but it still pissed him off each time he did it.

He also knew that after this was over, the darkness at the edges of his mind would swamp the fire, and then things would be much worse. But for now, all he felt was the rage. He'd given himself to it entirely. That part had been easy.

His sister was in Kindred Hospital. She was standing on the lawn when his stupid fucking brother ran back to the house. The fool had brought death home to his family instead of fighting like a man. Running was one thing, but running back to your mother's house, where your sister was playing on the lawn?

The soon-to-be-dead fuck who'd shot his brother had hit his sister too. Two bullets – one that broke her femur and opened the artery, and another that smashed her

where those things meant because he'd when he was still in

The doctors had walk right, that she'd kids.

His mother was at living room floor, When he'd left her,

her hands where she'd gripped her rosary too hard and cut into her palms. His own hands were white around the steering wheel, and when he relaxed them they ached. He was breathing hard. Ghost kept glancing at him.

Butcher lived on 96th, near Normandie. Vulture pulled up out front. The drive had taken only two minutes, and not only because everything seemed to be moving at double speed. Westmont was a small place, a patch of concentrated evil in South L.A. It was like the ground had cracked open, he sometimes thought, and hell had leaked out.

Westmont didn't belong to either Los Angeles or Inglewood, so neither city cared about it. It had no government of its own. That made him laugh. What the fuck did they think would happen in a place like that?

The County Sheriffs policed it. They changed 105th street to be one way so they could catch fools after drive-bys. Every now and then they raided apartment blocks with shotguns and battering rams, and everyone threw



their drugs and guns onto the roof. At night when they cruised by, shining their torches at you, you just showed them there was no gun in your belt, and they left you alone.

Vulture didn't carry a gun until he needed one – like now.

Photograph: *LA Noir*; Jamie Collinson