sapiens. Lucas is more like an unevolved thugoid. I've heard that there are some photos of twins in the womb that show them hugging. If someone had taken a photo of Lucas and me there I'll bet dollars to doughnuts it would have shown him bashing me on the head.

Lucas must have grabbed all the good nutrition in there, too, because he's a lot bigger, faster, and stronger than me. I don't stand a chance on the bashing, kicking, running away, immobilizing-your-opponent-in-a-half-nelson front. As the years have passed, my two areas of superior firepower, an extensive vocabulary and a gift for voice impersonation, have sometimes proved inadequate. I have been forced to take up psychological warfare.

Lucas attacks without provocation. The other day, for example, I'm sitting reading. I finally got the new R. L. Tankard out of the library and it is extremely choice. There's this girl and she has a babysitting job in this glam apartment building, on the twenty-sixth floor. When she arrives, the baby is already asleep so she hasn't actually seen it. She's watching TV in a darkened room and she thinks she hears a noise from the baby.

"She muted the TV for a minute and in the sudden silence she heard the noise again, but louder. It was a heavy wet noise, like the sound of a big piece of raw meat being flung to the floor. She stared at the door to the nursery. It was outlined in a thin band of crepuscular light. She stood up and, with her heart pounding in her ears, she approached the room ..."

Isn't that excellent? I read it again. Sometimes I like to do that with R. L. Tankard—slow it down by reading the best parts twice before I turn the page. "Crepuscular." I roll the word around in my mouth like a hard candy. Who cares what it means? "... like a big piece of raw meat being flung to the floor." Choice.

Then, WHAP! Lucas leans over the back of the chair, rips the book from my hands, runs into the bathroom, and slams the door. I'm after him in a second but of course by the time I get there he has it locked. I learned years ago that you can click open our bathroom door with a knife. I learned this about two minutes after Lucas learned that you can wedge the bathroom door shut by pulling open the top drawer of the vanity.

I kick the door. "Give me my book back, you grommet -head."

"Make me."

I just hate that, the way Lucas can sound so smug. If possible I would appeal to a higher authority. I have no shame about finking, whining, telling, etc., when it comes to Lucas. I use whatever counter-weapons I have at my disposal. With Lucas as a brother it is sometimes necessary to have referees. I'm not ashamed to stand behind an adult peace-keeping force. Lucas regards this as an act of cowardice and wimpiness. He tries to shame me. "Why don't you run to Mummy?" But I don't care. I figure it is like some small but extremely valuable country calling on the United Nations