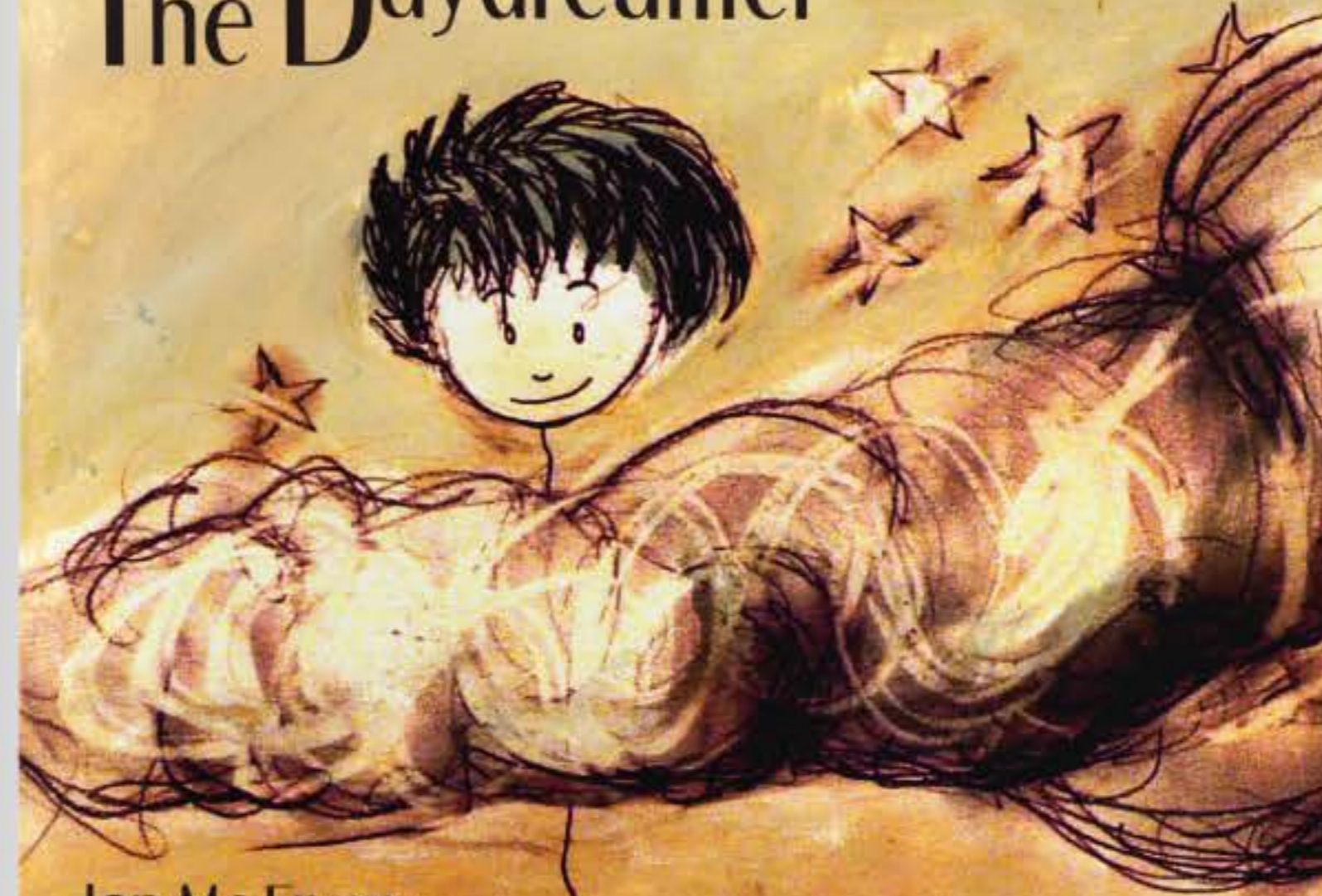


The Daydreamer



Ian McEwan





Chapter six
The baby



Kate is looking forward to the arrival of her aunt and her baby.
As soon as they arrive, she is excited.
Peter, who lives in his own world, does not show the same enthusiasm. He hates baby Kenneth.



As soon as he arrives, Kenneth storms all over the house, spreading all his basion of toys and baby gear while Peter angrily looks on. Kate does not care at all, she's plunged in a book of magic that she got as a birthday present.



Then, war explodes when Kenneth swallows Peter's precious marble. Peter starts yelling and he calls the baby a monster.



So, Kate responds: 'He is not a monster, he is a human being. You're jealous because you're not the only boy getting attention, in the house. You're going to regret your behaviour.'



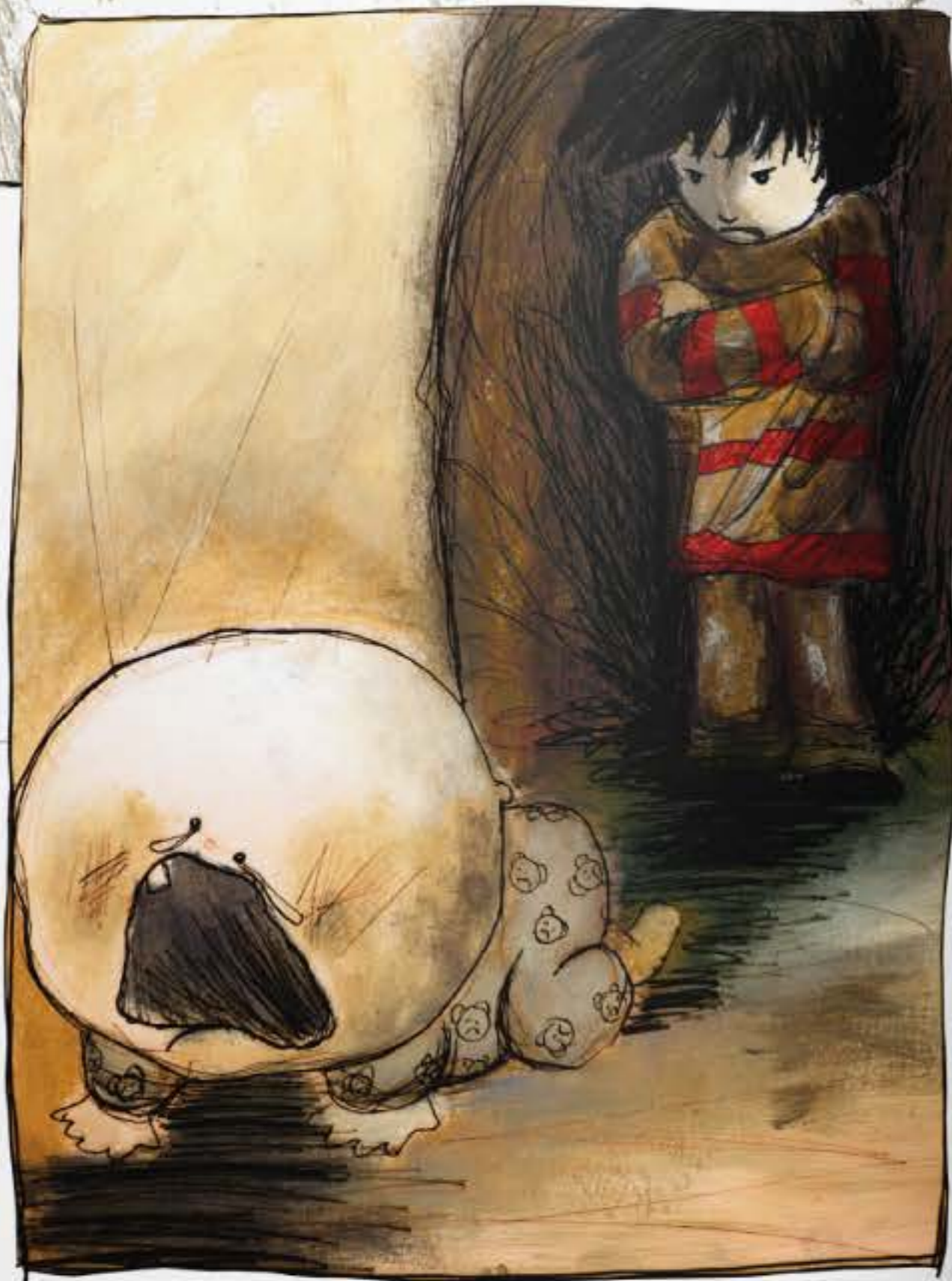
Later on, Peter sees Kenneth again, who is staring at him. Peter starts to mimic the baby's moaning language while Kate is pointing her wand toward him. He feels as if he was propelled into the skin of a baby.



Trapped in the skin of a baby, Peter lets himself be filled up by the delight of being a baby. He is so submerged in euphoria that he forgets about the spell.



In the evening, alone in the dark, he is scared. He would like to escape but he is locked up in Kenneth's bed.



The day after, he meets Kenneth who stands in Peter's skin. He frowns at him which makes him cry. Peter, then, understands the uneasiness he causes to the baby.



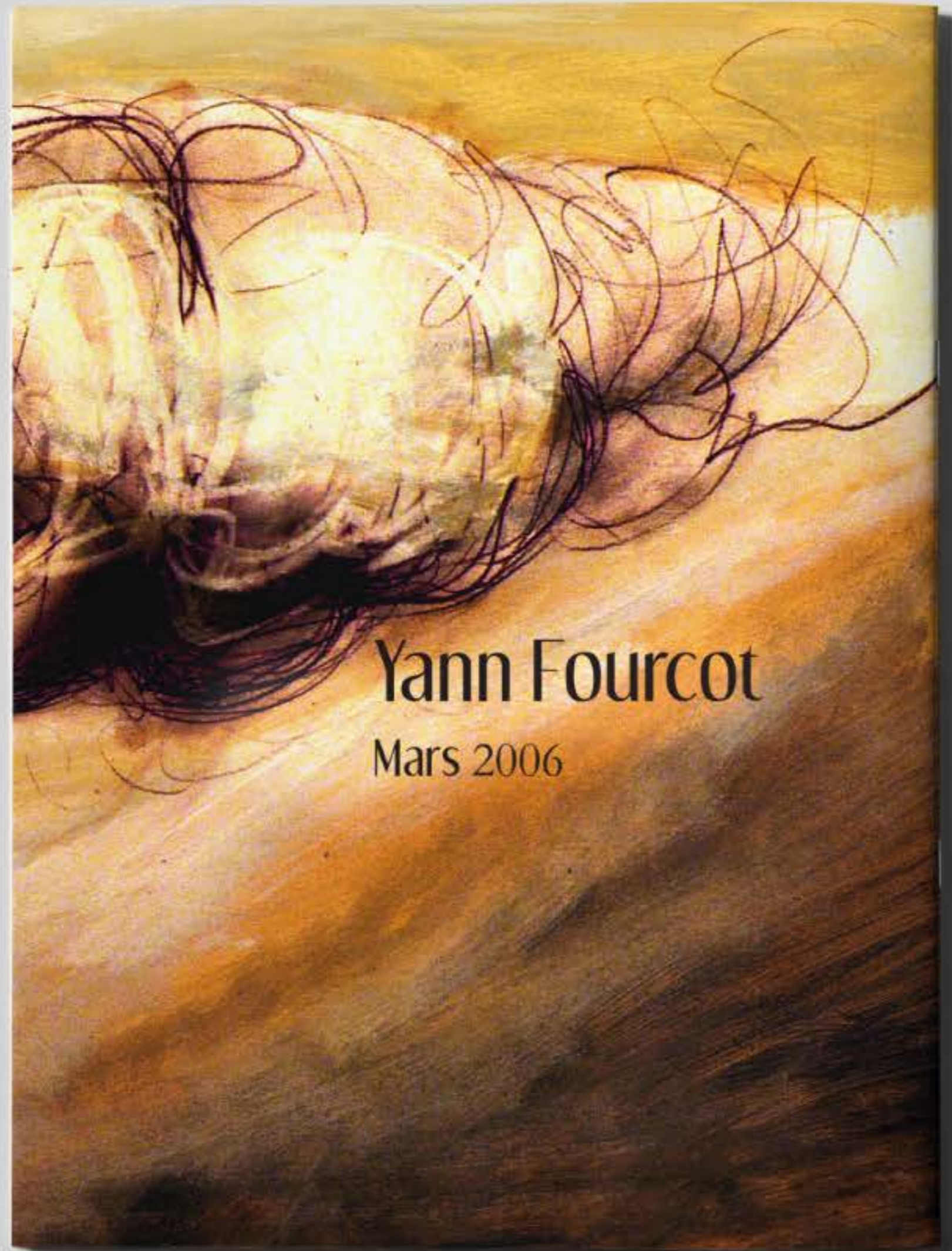
Now that Peter is living in the skin of a baby, he understands that Kenneth was not a monster but just a tiny person full of energy and submerged by all the feelings of baby life. So, Peter decides to confront Kenneth and to explain to him that there is nothing wrong with him.



But his apologies undo the spell and they enable him to get back into his body. He has just dreamed. Now that he has realised what the life of a baby feels like. He looks at Kenneth and smiles while his sister looks on puzzled.



Kate asks Peter how come he has changed so abruptly. Peter avoids the question by asking to his sister: "What about playing together. all the three of us?"



Yann Fourcot

Mars 2006

