

# Already Dead

*by* Dave Clapper

It was already dead and was hanging from her ceiling. Another one. A trifle really, but still.

He pulled a stool from the kitchen, positioned it underneath. Climbed up, removed the dead thing.

It fit easily into the palm of his hand and he bounced it there, regarding it with some interest. It didn't exactly look native, although he wasn't sure he'd know native from exotic. At rest, its eyes faced his.

He took it into the bathroom, lifted the lid on the toilet, tilted his hand sideways, and let the thing fall in. He watched the ripples moving out from its body until the water calmed. As the last wave faded, he reached over and depressed the lever. Within moments, her tiny terrorist was gone, rushing from sight in a porcelain whirlpool.

As new water started refilling the bowl, he lowered the lid and sat down, eying the palm of his hand, dotted with pinprick yellow stains. The whine of the plumbing eventually faded and he stood.

He returned to the bedroom, stood just inside the door and watched her. Her nightgown was sweat-dampened and rolled up above her waist. He looked down at his hand again, then back at her—thought of the vanquished foe and all the others that had preceded it. Cleared his throat.

“I don't think I can do this anymore.”

