

## E DE LA VIE PUBLIQUE ET PRIVIE DE TOUS LES HOMMES QUI SE SONT FAIT REM

Two staff members were at the front desk, when last he'd seen them, out of sight now and too far away to hear the crooning. Junior had been waiting at the doors when the library opened, and thus far he'd encountered no other patrons..Eventually, dinner over, cleanup finished, when Maria and the uncles had gone, Agnes and Barty faced the stairs together. She followed, holding his cane, which he said he preferred not to use in the house, prepared to catch him if he stumbled..Sitting on the edge of the bed, taking his hand, she stared at his sweet little bow of a mouth, whereas before she would have met his eyes. "Tell me.".Recalling how the title of the exhibition had resonated with him when first he'd seen the gallery, brochure, Junior felt certain now that a tape-recorded early draft of this sermon was the kinky "music" that accompanied his evening of passion with Seraphim. He couldn't remember one word of it, let alone any element that would have deeply moved a national radio audience, but this didn't mean that he was shallow or incapable of being touched by philosophical speculations. He'd been so distracted by the erotic perfection of Seraphim's young body and so busy jumping her that he wouldn't have remembered a word, either, if Zedd himself had been sitting on the bed, discussing the human condition with his customary brilliance..In the noble ruin of his face, Thomas Vanadium's smoke-gray eyes were striking, filled with a beautiful ... sorrow. Not self-pity. He clearly didn't regard himself as a victim. This, Kathleen felt, was the sorrow of a man who had seen too much of the suffering of others, who knew the evil ways of the world. These were eyes that read you at a glance, that shone with compassion if you deserved it, and that glared with a terrifying judgment if compassion wasn't warranted..Her brothers' solemnity irritated Agnes. They appeared to be taking this reading seriously, as though it were far more than just a little after-dinner entertainment..Grace, of course, was a strong woman for whom faith was an armor against far worse than embarrassment. Celestina knew that Mom would suffer immeasurably more heartache by remaining in Oregon than what pain she might experience at her daughter's side, but Phimie was too young, too naive, and too frightened to grasp that in this matter, as in all others, her mother was a pillar, not a reed..Finally sleeping, he had anxiety dreams of being in a public rest room, overcome by urgent need, only to find that every stall was occupied by someone he had killed, all of them vengefully determined to deny him a chance for dignified relief..In his seventies but vigorous and full of fun, Sparky liked to take an occasional jaunt to Reno, to pump the slot machines and try a few hands of blackjack. The off-the-record, tax-free monthly checks from Simon were gratefully received, ensuring the old man's cooperation with the conspiracy..Celestina checked her wristwatch and saw that she was running late. With Angel's short legs and layers of red, there was no point in trying to hurry..He bought knives. And then sheaths for the knives. He acquired a knife-sharpening kit and spent the evening grinding blades..She was not going to be as forthright with Barty as she had insisted that Joshua Nunn be with her, in part because she was too shaken to risk forthrightness..Scamp spent Wednesday ravishing him. It wasn't love, but there was comfort in being familiar with his partner's equipment..In the cab, pulling into traffic, the driver said, "The mister tells me you're the star of the show tonight.".So these are reports of my explorations and discoveries: tales from Earthsea for those who have liked or think they might like the place, and who are willing to accept these hypotheses: things change: authors and wizards are not always to be trusted: nobody can explain a dragon..Focus, Caesar Zedd teaches, is the sole quality that separates millionaires from the flea-ridden, sore-pocked, urine-soaked winos who five in cardboard boxes and discuss vintages of Ripple with their pet rats. Millionaires have it, winos don't. Likewise, nothing but the ability to focus separates an Olympic athlete from a cripple who lost his legs in a car wreck. The athlete has focus, and the cripple doesn't. After all, Zedd notes, if the cripple had it, he would have been a better driver, an Olympic athlete, and a millionaire..No longer pinned to the bed by an intravenous feed of fluids and medications, provided with pajamas and a thin cotton robe to replace his backless gown, Junior was encouraged to test his legs and get some.The hardest was being in this room at the very moment when Phimie had moved on. Celestina knew beyond doubt that this was the worst thing she would have to endure in all her life, worse than her own death when it came..open grave. In his hand: the white rose, its thorns slick with his blood. He dropped the bloom, and it fell out of sight, into the gaping earth, atop Naomi's casket..He half expected to hear Thomas Vanadium in the distance, softly singing "Someone to Watch over Me.". "You can't take much of anything by mouth for a few hours yet," said the nurse. "Nausea is too great a risk. Retching might start you hemorrhaging again.". "Mommy, watch!" He turned in the deluge with his arms held out from his sides. "Not scary!".She had expected horror, although perhaps not a horror quite as stark as this, and she had also expected to be crushed by it, destroyed, because although she was able to survive any misery that might be visited upon her, she didn't think that she possessed the fortitude to endure the suffering of her innocent child. Yet she listened, and she received the terrible burden of the news, and her bones did not at once turn to dust, though unfeeling dust was what she now preferred to be.. "Is it as bad as that?" Celestina wondered plaintively, though she knew the answer. "I love San Francisco. The city inspires my work. I've built a life here. Is it really as bad as that?".Leavening his tortured voice as best he could with shock and hurt, as though deeply wounded by the need to speak these words, Junior Cain said, "You ... you think I killed her, don't you? That's crazy.".The ghost cop was forty feet behind him, beyond ranks of other pedestrians, every one of whom might as well have been faceless now, smooth and featureless from brow to chin, because suddenly Junior could see no countenance other than that of the walking dead man. The haunting visage bobbed up and down as the grim spirit strode along, vanishing and reappearing and then vanishing again among all the bobbing and swaying heads of the intervening multitudes..Junior realized that thick drool oozed out of the right corner of his mouth. Shakily, he raised one hand to wipe his face.. "Consider what I told you," Dr. Salk urged. "Your Perri would want you to think about it.".Grace declined food, but Tom ordered for her, anyway, selecting those

things that by now he knew Celestina liked, guessing that the mother's taste had shaped the daughter's. In her arms she held Bartholomew. The infant was not heavily bundled, for the weather was unseasonably mild. The nurse raised her eyes from Agnes to this other person. "Yes a chip of ice would be all right." Holding up his misshapen hands, knobby knuckles toward Agnes, Obadiah said, "How do you think they became like this?" "Do you know him?" Edom asked, gazing longingly now at the open door, from which Jacob had turned away. "Obadiah Sepharad?" "Yes," she admitted, her face still close to his, "I'm afraid. But Dr. Chan is a fine surgeon, and this is a very fine hospital." Instead, he imagined Vanadium's blunt fingers moving over the intravenous apparatus with surprising delicacy, reading the function of the equipment as a blind man would read Braille with swift, sure, gliding fingertips. He imagined the detective finding the injection port in the main drip line, pinching it between thumb and forefinger. Saw him produce a hypodermic needle as a magician would pluck a silk scarf from the ether. Nothing in the syringe except deadly air. The needle sliding into the port .... If they were suspicious of him, they showed no obvious alarm. The three went inside in no particular rush, and judging by their demeanor, Junior decided that they hadn't spotted him, after all. Maybes are for babies, Zedd tells us in Act Now, Think Later. Learning to Trust Your Instincts. Not that he failed to perform well. As always, he was a bull, a stallion, an insatiable satyr. None of his lovers complained; none had the energy for complaint when he'd finished with them. "You'll do better away from the ships, all the fighting and raiding. The King's working the old mines at Samory, round the mountain. There you'd be out of his way. Work for him you must, if you want to stay alive. I'll see that you're sent there. If you'll go." He snatched up the wine list before she could look at it. "If you're paying, then I'm ordering whatever costs the most, regardless of what it tastes like." Imagination like all living things lives now, and it lives with, from, on true change. Like all we do and have, it can be co-opted and degraded; but it survives commercial and didactic exploitation. The land outlasts the empires. The conquerors may leave desert where there was forest and meadow, but the rain will fall, the rivers will run to the sea. The unstable, mutable, untruthful realms of Once-upon-a-time are as much a part of human history and thought as the nations in our kaleidoscopic atlases, and some are more enduring. Widening his eyes in calculated surprise, Junior said, "Are you a police officer?" To the phone, the police. No dial tone. Pointless to rattle the disconnect switch. The line had been cut. Moving out of the doorway, into the bedroom, he said, "What book would that be?" A table candle glowed in an amber glass. To Nolly, in this glimmering light, Kathleen's face was more radiant than the flame. "To support my eyelids. And because without anything in the sockets, I look gross. People barf. Old ladies pass out. Little girls like you Pee their pants and run screaming." "I don't know." He was silent a moment. "That's what's going to be interesting." Considering Junior's actions on his last night in Spruce Hills, eleven months ago, he must be cautious now. Without incriminating himself, pretending ignorance, he hoped to learn if his carefully planned scenario, regarding Victoria's death and Vanadium's sudden disappearance, had convinced the authorities-or whether something had gone wrong that might explain the quarter at the diner. Junior could neither speak nor even mewl in agony. All the saliva had been draining forward, out of his open mouth, for so long that his throat was parched and raw. He felt as though he had munched on a snack of salted razor blades that were now stuck in his pharynx. His rattling wheeze sounded like scuttling scarabs. When the pianist eventually launched into "Someone to Watch over Me," he didn't appear to be responding to a request, considering that a few other numbers had been played since the most recent gratuity. The tune was, after all, in his nightly repertoire. Shaking her head, Celestina said, "I can only pay for a studio apartment, something small." "You look very, very handsome this morning, Mr. Barty," squeaked Pixie Lee, who was something of a flirt. "You look like a big movie star. It was then that village sorcery, and above all women's witchery, came into the ill repute that has clung to it since. Witches paid dearly for practicing the arts they thought of as their own. The care of pregnant beasts and women, birthing, teaching the songs and rites, the fertility and order of field and garden, the building and care of the house and its furniture, the mining of ores and metals-these great things had always been in the charge of women. A rich lore of spells and charms to ensure the good outcome of such undertakings was shared among the witches. But when things went wrong at the birth, or in the field, that would be the witches' fault. And things went wrong more often than right, with the wizards warring, using poisons and curses recklessly to gain immediate advantage without thought for what followed after. They brought drought and storm, blights and fires and sicknesses across the land, and the village witch was punished for them. She didn't know why her charm of healing caused the wound to gangrene, why the child she brought into the world was imbecile, why her blessing seemed to burn the seed in the furrows and blight the apple on the tree. But for these ills, somebody had to be to blame: and the witch or sorcerer was there, right there in the village or the town, not off in the warlord's castle or fort, not protected by armed men and spells of defense. Sorcerers and witches were drowned in the poisoned wells, burned in the withered fields, buried alive to make the dead earth rich again. As the last of the flan was served and Maria's girls took their seats once more, Barty blinked at the candles and said, "Gone now," even though the tiny spectrums still shimmered in the cut crystal. He turned his full attention to the flan with such enthusiasm that his mother soon stopped puzzling over rainbows. Bartholomew might be a teenager living with his parents or a dependent adult residing with family; if so, he wouldn't be revealed in this search, because the phone would not be listed in his name. Or maybe the guy loathed his first name and never used it except in legal matters, going by his middle name, instead. "I suppose anyone could fill some empty gelatin capsules with the syrup," said Parkhurst. "But-" "Roll your own, so to speak. Then he could palm a few of them, swallow 'em without water, and the reaction would be delayed maybe. Miss White," he continued, still facing the window, "not long before you arrived in surgery this morning, your sister died on the table. We hadn't delivered the baby yet, and perhaps couldn't have done so, by cesarean, in time to prevent brain damage, so for both the sake of the mother and child, heroic efforts were made to bring Phimie back and ensure continued circulation to the fetus until we could extract

it." Everyone confronted Agnes with expressions of puzzlement and expectation, and she looked from one to another. Paul. Maria. Francesca. Bonita. Grace. Edom. Jacob. Finally Celestina..NORTHBOUND ON THE coastal highway, headed for Newport Beach, Agnes saw bad omens, mile after mile..Getting out of the stuffy car into air much chillier than it had been when he'd left this place, Junior stood unsteadily as the police and the paramedics gathered around him. Then he led them through the wild grass to Naomi, moving haltingly, stumbling on small stones that the others navigated with ease..And although Simon would have denied it, would even have joked that a conscience was a liability for an attorney, he possessed a moral compass. When he traveled too far along the wrong trail, that magnetized needle in his soul led him back from the land of the lost..Breath repeatedly catching in her throat, heart thudding, Agnes watched her son through the open car door.."I hope it was all right I let him in, Mr. Cain." Sparky had a capuchin's overbite, too. "He told me it was an emergency.."Both the red and the white wines were too cheap for Junior's taste' so he drank Dos Equis beer and got two kinds of high by inhaling enough secondhand pot smoke to cure the state of Virginia's entire annual production of hams. Among the two or three hundred partyers, some were tripping on some exhibited the particular excitability and talkativeness typical of cokeheads, but Junior succumbed to none of these temptations. Self-improvement and self control mattered to him; he didn't approve of this degree of self indulgence..Agnes drew him into her arms and lifted him off the desk and embraced him tightly, with his head on her shoulder and his face nestled against her neck, as she'd held him when he was a baby..Averting his eyes from Vanadium's face, Junior moved farther up the stocky body. He folded back the tweed sports jacket to reveal a shoulder holster..Junior had thought the news was the lab report, which had found no ippecac in his spew. All that had been distraction..Draped across his midsection, the terrible cold weight had chilled his flesh; but now his bone marrow prickled with ice at the thought of the birthmarked detective sitting silently in the dark, watching. Junior would have preferred dealing with Naomi, dead and risen and seriously pissed, rather than with this dangerously patient man..For each of them, Agnes put one scoop of vanilla ice cream in a tall glass of root beer, and after changing quickly into their pajamas, they sat together in Barty's bed, enjoying their treats, while she read aloud the last sixty pages of Starman Jones..Maria stopped praying with her knuckle rosary and resorted to a long swallow of wine..Think, think. A three-minute drive to the Lampion place. Maybe two minutes, running stop signs, cutting comers..PAUL DAMASCUS WAS walking the northern coast of California: Point Reyes Station to Tomales, to Bodega Bay, on to Stewarts Point, Gualala, and Mendocino. Some days he put in as little as ten miles, and other days he traveled more than thirty..Although Junior felt honor-bound to give Victoria first shot at him, he certainly didn't owe her monogamy. Eventually, when he had shaken off suspicion as finally as he had shaken off Naomi, he would be in the mood for a dessert buffet, romantically speaking, and one éclair would not satisfy..One of his favorite gifts for Christmas 1967 was a twelve-hole chromatic harmonica with forty-eight reeds providing a full three-octave range. Even in his little hands, and with the limitations of his small mouth, this more sophisticated instrument enabled him to produce full-bodied versions of any song that appealed to him.."This is going to be an enormous settlement," the attorney promised. "And there's more good news. County and state authorities have agreed to close the case on Naomi's death. It's now officially an accident." "Take care he doesn't turn your belt on you with a spell!" said his uncle..EARLY CHRISTMAS EVE, gallery brochure in hand, Junior returned to his apartment, puzzling over mysteries that had nothing to do with guiding stars and virgin births..A tune clinked off the keys of a phantom piano in Junior's mind, "Someone to Watch over Me." The hawk-eyed watcher was the pianist at the elegant hotel lounge where Junior had enjoyed dinner on his first night in San Francisco, and twice since..And here, now, into the kitchen through a door with a porthole in the center. Into sizzle and clatter, into clouds of fried-onion fumes and the mouthwatering aromas of chicken fat and shoestring potatoes turning golden in deep wells of boiling cooking oil..MONEY FOR THE DEAD. The decomposing flesh of a beloved wife and an unborn baby transmuted into a fortune was an achievement that put to shame the alchemists' dreams of turning lead to gold..According to the newspapers, the police also credited him with the murders of Naomi, Victoria Bressler, and Ned Gnathic (whom they had connected to Celestina). He was wanted, too, for the attempted murder of Dr. Walter Lipscomb (evidently Ichabod), for the attempted murder of Grace White, and for assault with intent to kill Celestina White and her daughter, Angel, and for the assault on Lenora Kickmule (whose foxtail-bedecked Pontiac he had stolen in Eugene, Oregon)..Pain again, but not a mere contraction. Such an excruciation, unendurable. The hobnailed wheels ground through her once more, as though she were being broken on a medieval torture device..Lipscomb turned to Celestina. "Before lapsing into semicoherence again, your sister said, 'Beezil and Feezil are safe with her,' which may sound less than coherent to you, but not to me." Judging by his great pleasure in learning, Barty didn't feel robbed of anything. To him, the world was an orange of infinite layers, which he peeled and savored with increasing delight..He found the strength to squeeze her hand tighter than before. "Be safe. Keep Angel safe." "It's just that you never know what anyone's hand has been up to recently," Jacob explained. "That respectable banker down the street might have thirty dismembered women buried in his backyard. The nice church-going lady next door might be sleeping in the same bed with the rotting corpse of a lover who tried to jilt her, and for a hobby she makes jewelry from the finger bones of preschool children she's tortured and murdered." The following April, when he proposed to her, she wouldn't have him. "You're sweet, Paul, but I can't let you throw your life away on me. You're this ... this beautiful ship that will sail a long way, to fascinating places, and I'd only be your anchor." She shook her head, and red bows fluttered. "No. 'Cause you didn't just move it around." Ministering to Perri, Joshua had pulled back her blankets. The fabric of the pale yellow pajama pants couldn't disguise how terribly withered her legs were: two sticks..Even someone of saintly habits and selfless behavior might be a monster in his heart, filled with unspeakable desires, which he might act upon only once or never..If he killed Bartholomew and got away clean, as he expected that he would, then he could subsequently return everything

in the van to the apartment. He was just being prudent by planning for his future, because the future was, after all, the only place he lived..Celestina smiled distractedly. Since arriving at the hotel an hour ago, she had been openly debating with herself whether to call her parents in Spruce Hills or to wait until later in the afternoon, when she might be able to report not just that she had a fianc?, and not only that she had a fianc? who'd been shot and nearly killed, but also that his condition had been upgraded from critical to serious. As she'd explained to Tom, in addition to worrying them with the news about Cain, she'd be stunning them with the announcement that she was going to marry a white man twice her age. "My folks don't have one ounce of prejudice between them, but they sure do have firm ideas about what's appropriate and what's not." This would ring the big bell at the top of the White Family Scale of the Inappropriate. Besides, they were preparing for the funeral of a parishioner, and from personal experience, Celestina knew their day would be full. Nevertheless, at ten minutes past eleven, after picking at her breakfast, she finally decided to call them..Evidently, Jacob had made a quick trip to his apartment over the garage and, with no thought for mice and dust, had not closed the back door. Junior said, "You've caused me a lot of trouble, you know." He'd been building a beautiful rage all night, thinking about what he'd been through because of the girl's temptress mother, whom he saw so clearly in this pint-size bitch. "So much trouble..". "Tame him or bury him," said Losen, and turned to more important matters..His inner turmoil boiled ever more fiercely, and the external evidence of it grew more obvious. In the cool air of the fading afternoon, he perspired as profusely as a man already being strapped into an electric chair; it streamed, gushed. He shook, shook, and he was half convinced that he could hear his bones rattling together like the shells of hard-boiled eggs in a rolling cook pot..Initially, lying drowsily in the sumptuous comfort of Pratesi cotton sheets with black silk piping, Junior assumed that he was in a twilight state between wakefulness and sleep, and that the singing must be a lingering fragment of a dream. Although rising and falling, the voice remained so faint that he didn't at once identify the tune, but when he recognized "Someone to Watch over Me," he sat up in bed and threw back the covers.. "Well," Kathleen said, "even if the money wasn't so nice, I'd be sorry to see this case end..". She protested that her ruined body had neither any comforts to offer a man nor the strength to be a bride.. "That's exactly how I hoped he would be." Relieved, he followed Agnes to the living room. "Listen, Aggie, you know, I don't have anything against Jacob, but-". Mysteriously, on the first day of sunny weather in weeks, the 707 had crashed into Jamaica Bay, Queens, killing everyone aboard. Now, in 1965, it remained the worst commercial-aviation disaster in the nation's history, and because of the unprecedented dramatic television coverage, the story was a permanent scar in Celestina's memory, although she had been living a continent away at the time.. On the back of the watch case, however, were the incriminating words of a commemorative engraving: To Eenie/Love/Tammy Bean.. Bent like an ape, he humped the musician north along the alley. The original cobblestone pavement had been coated with blacktop, but in places the modem material had cracked and worn away, providing a treacherously uneven surface made even more treacherous by a skin of moisture shed by the fog. He stumbled and slipped repeatedly, but he used his anger to keep his balance and be a winner, until he found a distant enough dumpster.. Tom Vanadium liked this man at once. Cop instinct told him that Damascus was honest and reliable. Priestly insight suggested even more impressive qualities.. In his mind's eye, Junior saw the coin in transit of the blunt fingers, moving more swiftly than previously because its passage was lubricated by blood.. For Agnes and Barty, one stop remained, where some of the joy of Christmas would always be buried with the husband that she still missed every day and the father that he would never know.. Judging by the smeariness of the letters and by the fact that some had run before they dried, the writing instrument hadn't been a felt-tip marker, as Vanadium first thought. A spattering of red droplets on the closed lid of the toilet and across the beige marble floor, all dry now, gave rise to a suspicion.. He turned the knob. The door eased inward, but he pushed it open only a fraction of an inch.. With Barty's presence, Christmas Eve dinners had become even more agreeable, especially this year when he was almost-three-going-on-twenty. He talked about the visits to friends that he and his mother and Edom had made earlier in the day, about Father Brown, as if that cleric-detective were real, about the puddle-jumping toads that had been singing in the backyard when he and his mother had arrived home from the cemetery, and his chatter was engaging because it was full of a child's charm yet peppered with enough precocious observations to make it of interest to adults.. The voice continued, issuing from a device that stood on the desk beside the phone. "Please don't bang up. This is a telephone answering machine Leave a message after you hear the tone, and I will return your call later ". A knife already lay on the counter nearby. He used it to slice four pats of butter, yellow and creamy, each half an inch thick, off the end of the stick.. Using all is powers of concentration, which were formidable, Junior sought to silence the phantom Chicane. At first, the voice steadily faded, but soon it grew louder again, and more insistent.. Reading about child prodigies, Agnes learned that most if not all math whizzes also possessed musical talent. To a lesser but still impressive extent, many young geniuses in the music world were also proficient at math.. "I thought there was a burglar," Junior groaned, but he knew better than to spit out his entire story at once, for then he would appear to be reciting a script.. "There's a valuable lesson in that," Agnes said. "Others can learn from it if you care to share. But if you want to record your life only up to the card cheating, that's okay, too. Even that far, it's a fascinating journey, a story that shouldn't be lost with you when you pass on. Libraries are packed with biographies of movie stars and politicians' most of them not capable of as much meaningful self-analysis as you'd get from a toad. We don't need to know more about celebrities' lives, Obadiah. What might help us, what might even save us, is knowing more about the lives of real people who've never made it even medium but who know where they came from and why..". She had put aside a half-finished pencil portrait of Phimie to develop several of Nella Lombardi.. Behind them, the door rebounded forcefully from a rubber-tipped stopper and closed with a thud. The lock wasn't engaged, however, and they might be interrupted momentarily.. of color had to search for mentoring, especially in 1922, when twenty year-old Obadiah

dreamed of being the next Houdini..Judging by the sounds Vanadium made, Junior figured that the cop had settled once more into the armchair..He hit Celestina with the big question, the huge question, just as she paused in her babbling to suck in a deep breath, the better to spout even more nonsense, whereupon this panicky inhalation caught in her breast, caught so stubbornly that she was certain she would need the attention of paramedics to start breathing again, but then Wally popped open the box, revealing a lovely engagement ring, the sight of which made the trapped breath explode from her, and then she was breathing fine, although snuffling and crying and just generally a mess. "I love you, Wally."..He thought he heard the tick-scrape-rattle-clink of Industrial Woman on the prowl. In the living room. Now the hall. Approaching..An hour later, when Barty decided he wanted a soda, he switched off the book and asked Angel if she would like something to drink..Too far from Spruce Hills to be a popular make-out spot for teenagers, Quarry Lake was a turnoff for young lovers also because it had a reputation as haunted territory. Over five decades, four quarry workers had died in mining accidents. County lore included stories of ghosts roaming the depths of the excavation before it was flooded-and subsequently the shoreline, after the lake was filled..That saving smile once more returned lost harmony to the scarred and broken face. "Not me. From my perspective, psychology is just one more of those easy sources of false meaning-like sex, money, and drugs. But I will admit to knowing a thing or two about evil."..Nolly said, "We've never really had a song of our own, in spite of all the dancing we do. I think this is a good one. But so far, you've only sung it to another man."..Simon's a good man. Now that he pretty much knows Cain pushed the wife, he doesn't feel better about representing him just because the payoff was big. And in the current case, he's not Cain's lawyer, so there's no conflict of interest, no ethics problem, so he's got a chance to set things right a little."..The symptoms that terrified Phimie-the headache, crippling abdominal pain, dizziness, vision problems-had entirely relented. Possibly they had been more psychological than physical in nature.. "Even when I was a young boy," Tom continued, "the world felt a lot different to me from the way it looked to other people. I don't mean I was smarter. I've got maybe a little better than average IQ, but nothing I could brag about. Flunked geography twice and history once. No one would ever confuse me and Einstein. It's just, I felt ... such complexity and mystery that other people didn't appreciate, such layered beauty, layers upon layers like phyllo pastry, each new layer more amazing than the last. I can't explain it to you without sounding like a holy fool, but even as a boy, I wanted to serve the God who had created so much wonder, regardless of how strange and perhaps even beyond all understanding He might be."..They could not have been more solemn or more respectful if Naomi's corpse--stitched back together, pumped full of embalming fluid, painted with pancake makeup, dressed in white, with her cold hands clasping a Bible to her breast-had been reposing in a casket in this very room, surrounded by flowers and awaiting the arrival of mourners. They were all polite, soft-spoken, sad-eyed, oozing unctuous concern--and so full of feverish calculation that Junior wouldn't have been surprised if they had set off the ceiling-mounted fire sprinklers..Besides, he didn't want the police in San Francisco to know that he'd been suspected, by at least one of their kind, of having killed his wife in Oregon. What if one of the locals was curious enough to request a copy of the case file on Naomi's death, and what if in that file, Vanadium had made reference to Junior waking from a nightmare, fearfully repeating Bartholomew? And then what if Junior eventually located the right Bartholomew and eliminated the little bastard, and then what if the local cop who'd read the case file connected one Bartholomew to the other and started asking questions? Admittedly, that was a stretch. Nevertheless, he hoped to fade from the SFPD's awareness as soon as possible and live henceforth beyond their ken..A MOMENTOUS DAY for Celestina, a night of nights, and a new dawn in the forecast: Here began the life about which she'd dreamed since she was a young girl..Babies of unwed mothers-especially of dead unwed mothers, and especially of dead unwed mothers whose fathers were ministers unable to endure public mortification-were routinely put up for adoption. Since Seraphim had given birth here, the baby would be-no doubt already had been-adopted by a San Francisco-area family..The gas oven might blow up in his face, at last bringing him peace, but if it didn't, he would at least have cookies for Agnes.. "Maybe because we didn't want to be called witches," said Obadiah with a smile, "and give folks one more reason to hang us."..The previous April, the lads from Liverpool had claimed all five of the top five. Real Americans, like the Beach Boys and the Four Seasons, were forced to settle for lower numbers. It made you wonder who had really won the Revolutionary War.

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