

TIONS MATHÉMATIQUES OU PROBLÈMES GÉOMÉTRIQUES ET TRIGONOMÉTRIQUES

By Sunday evening, a combination of factors—deep commitment to the philosophy of Zedd, explosive testosterone levels, boredom, self-pity, and a desire to be a risk-taking man of action once more—motivated Junior to splash a little Hai Karate behind each ear and go courting. Shortly after sunset, with a single red rose and a bottle of Merlot, he set off for Victoria Bressler's place. He wanted the most expensive box for Joey; but Joey, a modest and prudent man, would have disapproved. Instead, he selected a handsome but not ornate casket just above the median price. His mouth was dry when he said to Angel, "Well, it seems pretty magical to me—that flipped-coin trick." As usual, Vanadium had spoken in a monotone, putting no special emphasis on those two words. Yet Junior sensed that the detective harbored doubts about the explanation of the girl's death. Seraphim White had come to California to give birth to him in or to spare her parents—and their congregation—embarrassment. Regrettably, at 2:00 A.M., February 28, waking alone in Tammy's bed, Junior sought her out and found her snacking in the kitchen. Forsaking a fork in favor of her fingers, she was eating. For a while he enjoyed being challenged to figure the number of seconds elapsed since a particular historical event. Given the date, he did the calculations in his head, providing a correct answer in as little as twenty seconds, rarely taking more than a minute. "Well, sure," said Mary, "without dying first. That would be the easy way to get there. I'm a Lampion, aren't I? Do we take the easy way, if we can avoid it? Did Daddy take the easiest way up the oak tree?" As kinky and thrilling as it had been to make love to the girl while playing the recorded rough draft of a new sermon that she had been transcribing for her father, Junior could now recall nothing of what the reverend had said, only the tone and the timbre of his voice. Whether instinct, nervous irritation, or merely the sherry should be blamed, he was troubled by the thought that there was something significant about the content of that tape. He knocked the pepper shaker on its side, and then with a groan put it upright once more. Worse, the people who adopted Seraphim's baby might be anywhere in the nine-county Bay Area. Millions of phone listings to scan. Tom Vanadium, on the other hand, was certain that Cain, having prepared for the possibility that something would go wrong during his assault on Celestina, wouldn't be easy to locate or to apprehend. In Vanadium's view, the maniac either had a bolt-hole waiting in the city or was already out of the SFPD's jurisdiction. "I only told you about that," said Grace, "because it was a very handsome shirt, and I thought you might want to get one for Wally." Victoria Bressler lay on the floor of the small foyer, left arm extended past her head, palm revealed, as though she were waving at the ceiling, right arm across her body in such a way that her hand cupped her left breast. One leg was extended straight, the other knee drawn up almost demurely. If she had been nude, lying against a backdrop of rumpled sheets or autumn leaves, or meadow grass, she would have had the perfect posture for a Playboy centerfold. The bitch was getting tired, but Junior still didn't like his odds in a hand-to-hand confrontation. Her hair was disarranged. Her eyes flashed with such wildness that he was half convinced he saw elliptical pupils like those of a jungle cat. Her lips were skinned back from her teeth in a snarl. This device, which could automatically pick any lock with just a few pulls of its trigger, was sold strictly to police departments, and its distribution was tightly controlled. On the black market it commanded such a high price that Junior could have bought the better part of a small Sklent painting for the same bucks. He left by the back door, to avoid the aftermath seeping across the foyer floor. Fog enveloped him, cool and refreshing. In retrospect, coming here wasn't a wise move. Evidently, the detective had been following him. Now, Vanadium would puzzle out a motive for this late-night graveyard tour. At the end of his fourth month, instead of in his seventh, he said "Mama," and clearly knew what it meant. He repeated it when he wanted to get her attention. Surprisingly, dolls. Quite a few dolls. Apparently the bastard boy was effeminate, a quality he sure as hell hadn't inherited from his father. She'd crossed herself during Edom's rant about the Tri-State Tornado of 1925. Then, she'd been warding off bad fortune; now, with a smile and a look of wonder, she was acknowledging the grace of God, which, according to the cards, had been settled generously on Bartholomew. Intending to keep the front of the gallery under surveillance from behind the wheel of his Mercedes, Junior checked the time as he walked toward the car. His wrist was bare, his Rolex missing. would allow herself to feel the loss, the misery against which she was now armored. Phemie deserved dignity in this final. "I mean," said Dr. Lipscomb, "that I'm selling my practice and putting an end to my medical career. I wanted you to know." Barty rode with his mother in her green Chevrolet station wagon. Because the cakes, pies, and gifts were too numerous to be contained in one vehicle, Edom followed them in his flashier yellow-and-white '54 Ford Country Squire. When people didn't apply themselves to positive goals, to making better lives for themselves, they spent their energy in wickedness. Then, for a moment, Junior was mystified. Vanadium's movements had the quality of ritual, vaguely reminiscent of a priest raising high the Eucharist. An emergency kit in the trunk of his car contained a flashlight. He fetched it and sweetened the bribe to the valet. Every nerve in Junior's body was a tautly strung trigger wire. If something set him off, he might explode so violently that he'd blow himself into a psychiatric ward. "Once out of the coma and stabilized for a few weeks, I was transferred to a hospital in Portland, where I had to undergo eleven surgeries." Orange firelight bloomed in the living room below, a wave of heat washed over Paul, and immediately behind the heat came greasy masses of roiling black smoke, drawn to the stairwell as to a flue. Fortunately, just as he was about to declare his gut feelings to his superior and risk dismissal, he saw his potential patient. At fifteen, Seraphim was breathtakingly beautiful, in her own way as striking as Naomi, and instinct told Junior that the chance of being physically or morally polluted by her was negligible. Nolly, telling the story of his day's work, paused as the waiter delivered two orders of the crab-cake appetizer with mustard sauce. "Nolly, Mrs. Wulfstan—enjoy!" "Yes," she assured him, though her gaze had dropped from his mouth to his hand, so small, which she held in hers. He intended to mash the sole of Victoria's right shoe in the pat of butter

and leave a long smear on the floor, as though she slipped on it and fell toward the ovens..The hum, the buzz, the rattle, the grinding of machinery, power tools. Sheet steel and tougher structural steel snarling against the teeth of a metal-cutting saw..She held his face in both hands and kissed each of his beautiful jewel eyes. "You ready?" "Fifteen fifty-six?" Bill frowned. "Hell, the Chinese probably didn't even have mud back then." To the phone, the police. No dial tone. Pointless to rattle the disconnect switch. The line had been cut..A blood test might prove that Junior was the father. Accusations might sooner or later be made against him by bitter and hate-filled members of her family, perhaps not even with the hope of sending him to prison, but solely for the purpose of getting their hands on a sizable part of his fortune, in the form of child support..The restaurant wasn't fancy. A coffee shop. Aromatic bacon sizzling, eggs frying. The warm cinnamon smell of fresh pastries, the bracing scent of strong coffee. Clean, bright surroundings..She strove to appear calm, and she must have succeeded, because neither woman seemed to realize that she was scared almost to the point of paralysis. She moved woodenly, joints stiff, muscles tense..Even though the detective was on the wrong track, Junior was beginning to feel aggrieved. As any good citizen, he was willing, even eager to cooperate with responsible policemen who conducted their investigation by the book. This Thomas Vanadium, however, in spite of his monotonous voice and drab appearance, gave off the vibes of a fanatic.."Better hurry," Wally advised, gracing Celestina's other cheek with a dryer kiss..Agnes saw no arc of color from candle to candle, and she thought that he must mean for her to look at the many cut-crystal wineglasses and water glasses, in which the lambent flames were mirrored. Here and there, the prismatic effect of the crystal rendered reflections of the flames into red-orange-yellow-green-blue-indigo-violet spectrums that danced along beveled edges..Fourth and last, he was surprised that Kickmule was a legitimate surname. This information wasn't of immediate importance to him, but if ever his Gammoner and Pinchbeck identities were compromised and he required false ID in a new name, he would call himself Eric Kickmule. Or possibly Wolfgang Kickmule. That sounded really tough. No one would mess with a man named Kickmule.."Naomi, are you in there?" Junior whispered again, peering into the windows of the girl's soul..The quarter, silvery. Under the patriot's neck, the date: 1965. Coincidentally, the year that Naomi had been killed. The year that Tom had first met Cain. The year that all this had begun..Some information she'd withheld from him: that the cancer might already have spread, that he might still die even after his eyes were removed-and that if it hadn't yet spread, it might soon do so..One of the coin seekers knocked against Junior, jarring him loose of his paralysis, but when he stumbled out of the line of fire of the second vending machine, a third machine shot quarters at him..He was nearly forty years old, and a life spent fearing nature could not be turned easily into a romance with her. Some nights he still stared at the ceiling, unable to sleep, waiting for the Big One, and he avoided walks on the shore in respect of deadly tsunamis. From time to time, he visited his brother's grave and sat on the grass by the headstone, reciting aloud the gruesome details of deadly storms and catastrophic geological events, but he found that he had also absorbed from Jacob some of the statistics related to serial killers and to the disastrous failures of manmade structures and machines. These visits were pleasantly nostalgic. But he always came with roses, too, and brought news of Barty, Angel, and other members of the family. When Paul sold his house to move in with Agnes, Tom Vanadium settled into Jacob's former apartment, now a fully retired cop but not yet ready to return to a life of the cloth. He assumed the management chores of the family's expanding community work, and he oversaw the establishment of a tax-advantaged charitable foundation. Agnes provided a list of fine-sounding and self-effacing names for this organization, but a majority vote rejected all her suggestions and, in spite of her embarrassment, settled on Pie Lady Services..In the morning, after their first night together, without either of them suggesting what must be done, Barty and Angel went in silence into the backyard and, together, climbed the oak, to watch the sunrise from its highest bower. Three years later, on Easter Sunday in 1986, the fabled bunny brought them a gift: Angel gave birth to Mary. "It's time for a nice ordinary name in this family," she declared..On the third of June, he found another useless Bartholomew, and on Saturday, the twenty-fifth, two deeply disturbing events occurred. He switched on his kitchen radio only to discover that "Paperback Writer," yet another Beatles song, had climbed to the top of the charts, and he received a call from a ea woman..When Junior checked his Rolex, he realized that he didn't know how long he'd been sitting here since Ichabod had driven off in the Buick. Maybe one minute, maybe ten..So it became dangerous to practice sorcery, except under the protection of a strong warlord; and even then, if a wizard met up with one whose powers were greater than his own, he might be destroyed. And if a wizard let down his guard among the common folk, they too might destroy him if they could, seeing him as the source of the worst evils they suffered, a malign being. In those years, in the minds of most people, all magic was black..For guidance, Agnes couldn't rely entirely on any of the child rearing books in her library. Barty's unique gifts presented her with special parenting problems. Now, when he asked if he could stay up even later, to read about John Thomas Stuart and Lummo, John's pet from another world, she granted him permission..Judging by the sounds Vanadium made, Junior figured that the cop had settled once more into the armchair..Animal instinct told Junior that the business with the quarter in the diner and now these quarters in his living room were related to his failure to find Bartholomew, Seraphim White's bastard child. He couldn't logically explain the connection; but as Zedd teaches, animal instinct is the only unalloyed truth we will ever know..Nolly, Kathleen, and Sparky had prepared him for Industrial Woman, but when the flashlight beam flared off her fork-and-fan-blade face, Vanadium twitched in fright. Without fully realizing what he was doing, he crossed himself..According to the cards, Barty would be rich financially, but also in talent, spirit, intellect. Rich in courage and honor, Maria promised. With a wealth of common sense, good judgment, and luck..Although Zedd counsels living in the future, he recognizes the need to have full recollection of the past when absolutely needed. One of his favorite techniques for jolting memories loose when the subconsciously.Lipscomb women gladly obey the wishes of Lipscomb men-unless they disagree, of course, or don't disagree but are

just feeling mulish..When she looked up from Barty, she saw the attorney with his hands full of documents. "Surprise? I know what's in Joey's will." Previously, Miss Pixie Lee had been from Texas, but Angel had recently heard that Georgia was famous for its peaches, which at once captured her imagination. Now Pixie Lee had a new life in a Georgia mansion carved out of a giant peach..He looked up into the eyes of the stocky man with the birthmark. They were gray eyes, hard as nail heads, but clear and surprisingly beautiful in that otherwise unfortunate face..Each page comprised four columns of names and numbers, most with addresses. Approximately one hundred names filled each column, four hundred to a page.. "I could have been killed," Junior Cain repeated, suddenly so horrorstruck by this realization that an iciness welled in his gut, and for a while he wasn't able to feel his extremities..They hadn't been close to Naomi, who'd once said she felt like Romulus and Remus, raised by wolves, or like Tarzan if he'd fallen into the hands of nasty gorillas. To Junior, Naomi was Cinderella, sweet and good, and he was the love-struck prince who rescued her.. "Could you undo the spell you put on her?" "If they always go there, smooch--smooch, then you're going to wind up with one really fat finger." *.He was uncomfortable, achy, thirsty, but he remained utterly still and observant. After a while, he realized that the sense of oppression with which he'd awakened was not entirely a psychological symptom: Something heavy lay across his abdomen. And it was cold--so cold, in fact, that it had numbed his middle to the extent that he hadn't immediately felt the chill of it. Shivers coursed through him. He clenched his jaws to prevent his teeth from chattering and thereby alerting the man in the chair. Although he never took his eyes off the corner, Junior became preoccupied with trying to puzzle out what was draped across his midsection. The mysterious observer made him sufficiently nervous that he couldn't order his thoughts as well as usual, and the effort to prevent the shivers from shaking a sound out of him only further interfered with his ability to reason. The longer that he was unable to identify the frigid object, the more alarmed he became. He almost cried out when into his mind oozed an image of Naomi's dead body, now past the whitest shade of pale, as gray as the faint light at the window and turning pale green in a few places, and cold, all the heat of life gone from her flesh, which was not yet simmering with any of the heat of decomposition that would soon enliven it again..The chest respirator, which Joshua had evidently applied, lay discarded on the bedclothes beside her. She seldom required this apparatus to assist her breathing, and then only at night..The maniac detective was still on the floor where he had died. The red rose and the gift box occupied his hands..An SFPD patrol car swept past, its siren silent, the rack of emergency beacons flashing on its roof..They had not come to Junior yesterday in their grief, if in fact they had thought to grieve..Junior was accustomed to having women seduce him. His good looks were a blessing of nature. His commitment to improving his mind made him interesting. Most important, from the books of Caesar Zedd, he had learned how to be irresistibly charming..JUNIOR CAIN WANDERED among the Philistines, in the gray land of conformity, seeking one--just one--refreshingly repellent canvas, finding only images that welcomed and even charmed, yearning for real art and the vicious emotional whirlpool of despair and disgust that it evoked, finding instead only themes of uplift and images of hope, surrounded by people who seemed to like everything from the paintings to the canapes to the cold January night, people who probably hadn't spent even one day of their lives brooding about the inevitability of nuclear annihilation before the end of this decade, people who smiled too much to be genuine intellectuals, and he felt more alone and threatened than eyeless Samson chained in Gaza..This thought startled Agnes, disturbed her--yet, inexplicably, it also poured a measure of warm comfort into her chilled heart.. "Quick, very quick," he warned, helping Grace through the fire framed window and onto the roof of the porch..She might have attributed his problem to eyestrain from all the reading he'd done during the past few days. She might have put drops in his eyes, told him to leave the books alone for a while, and sent him into the backyard to play. She might have counseled herself not to be one of those alarmist mothers who detected pneumonia in every snuffle, a brain tumor behind every headache..Reflections of those tracks appeared as stigmatic tears on the long face of the physician..He said this as though confident Agnes would understand what he meant, with a smile and with a glint in his eyes that almost became a wink, as if they were members of a secret society in which these three repeated words were code, embodying a complex meaning other than what was apparent to the uninitiated..almost recoiled in disgust. She held the newborn so that its mother could look into.demons: hypodermoclysis ... intravenous oxytocin ... maintain perfect asepsis, and I mean perfect, at all times ... a few oral preparations of ergot as soon as it's safe to give her anything by mouth..He rolled Neddy onto one side, but no gold watch lay underneath, so he let the musician flop onto his back again.. "Sure. There's lots of places where he didn't get shot, but there's places where he got shot and died, too."..His attention, as morbid as a circling vulture, settled upon the pianist's right hand. The left was open, palm down. But the right was crumpled shut, palm up..For a while, leaning forward in his chair and staring at the floor with an intensity and an expression that could not have been inspired by the insipid vinyl tiles, Tom mulled over what she'd told him. Then: "The connection is there, but it's still not entirely clear to me. So he took perverse pleasure in raping her with her father's sermon as accompaniment . . . and maybe without his realizing it, the reverend's message got deep inside his head. I wouldn't think our cowardly wife killer has the capacity for guilt ... although maybe your dad worked a sort of miracle and planted that very seed."..He found nothing especially gratifying, switched off the lights, and moved on to the living room. If Cain was coming home, he could glance up from the street and see lights ablaze here, so Vanadium resorted to a small flashlight, always carefully hooding the lens with one hand..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." "Sure. Or why don't I pull a Rumpelstiltskin and demand one of her children for payment" ". Trembling and sweating, he turned his back to the view window. As he retreated from the creche, he expected the oppressive pall of fear to lift, but it grew heavier..He liked her face, too. She wore no makeup, and pulled her brown hair back in a bun. Some might say she was mousy, but the only things mousy that Nolly saw about her were a

piquant tilt to her nose and a certain cuteness..Agnes leaned forward in her chair: knees together, clasped hands resting on her knees, forehead against her hands..he wasn't wholly without feeling, of course. A poignant current of sadness eddied in his heart, a sadness at the thought of the love and the happiness that he and the nurse might have known together. But it was her choice, after all, to play the tease and to deal with him so cruelly.. "He must've listened on the car radio," Agnes said, digging down into the layered days in her packed trunk of memories. "He was trying to get ahead of his work, so he'd be able to stay around the house a lot during the week after the baby came. So he arranged to meet with some prospective clients even on Sunday. He was working a lot, and I was trying to deliver my pies and meet my other obligations before the big day. We didn't have as much time together as usual, and even as impressed as he must've been with the sermon, he never had a chance to tell me about it. The next-to-last thing he ever said to me was 'Bartholomew.' He wanted me to name the baby Bartholomew."..The sight of the heavily bandaged face apparently pressed all of the compassion buttons in the reverend, because he broke out of his paralytic shock and started forward-before he registered the weapon..people that he was innocent and, in fact, constitutionally incapable of premeditated murder.. "I got to admit," Nolly said, "I'm surprised these little pranks have rattled him so deeply."..Briefly, Junior felt humiliated. He wanted to drag the detective out of the car and stomp on his smug, dead face..Kathleen savored her martini. "Mmmm ... as cold as a hit man's heart and as crisp as a hundred-dollar bill from the devil's wallet.".. "I'll teach her," Wally said, moving past them to the apartment door, fishing a ring of keys out of his coat pocket..Through the big window beyond her, the charry branches of the massive oak tree formed a black cat's cradle against the sky, leaves quivering slightly, as though nature herself trembled in trepidation of what Junior Cain might do.. "We were about to order dinner from room service," Tom said, handing a menu to Paul..He'd been invited to a Christmas Eve celebration with a satanic theme, but he hadn't intended to go. The party was not being thrown by real Satanists, which might have been interesting, but by a group of young artists, all nonbelievers, who shared a wry sense of humor..During the past few years, he had discovered that a lousy few million could buy even more freedom than he had thought when he'd shoved Naomi off the fire tower. Great wealth, fifty or a hundred million, would purchase not only greater freedom, and not just the ability to pursue even more ambitious self-improvement, but also power..cocktail lounge to be her personal pickup spot. Naturally, people who worked the lounge knew her, were friendly with her. They would remember any man who accompanied the heiress to her penthouse..Reflecting upon her son's clever, diligent, and uncomplaining adaptation to darkness, she wished that she had described to him the dazzling sunset under which they had made their journey home. Although her words might have been inadequate to the spectacle, he would have elaborated on them to create a picture in his mind; with his creative skills, the world that he'd lost with his sight might be remade in equal splendor in his imagination..Agnes had lifted him to this perch. Now she smoothed his hair, straightened his shirt, and retied his loosened shoelaces, finding it even harder than she had expected to say what needed to be said. She thought she might require Dr. Chan's presence, after all..Dishes dried and put away, Jacob retired to the living room and settled contentedly into an armchair, where he would probably become so enthralled with his new book of dam disasters that he would forget to make luncheon sandwiches until Barty and Angel rescued him from the flooded streets of some dismally unfortunate town..By air from San Francisco south to Orange County Airport, then farther south along the coast by rental car, one week in the wake of Paul Damascus and his three charges, following directions provided by Paul, Tom Vanadium brought Wally Lipscomb to the Lampion house..Following a splendid lunch, having just left the fourth gallery on his list and strolling toward the fifth, Junior didn't at once see the source of the quarters. Indeed, when the first three rapid-fire coins hit the side of his face, he didn't even know what they were. Startled, he flinched and looked down as he heard them ring off the sidewalk..Their apartment was in a four-story Victorian house that dripped gingerbread, in the exclusive Pacific Heights district. It had been converted to apartments with deep respect for the architecture, years before Wally bought it..murdered would be discounted. And if every death was suspicious to him, then he would quickly lose interest in Junior and move on to a new enthusiasm, harassing some other poor devil..deodar cedars with layers of drooping branches surrounded the place, and usually they seemed sheltering, but now they loomed, ominous..He slipped the card out from under the change, turned it over. A joker. Printed in red block letters across the card was a name, BARTHOLOMEW..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.. "May 14, 1845, in Canton, China, a theater fire killed sixteen hundred seventy. On December 8, 1863, a fire in the Church of La Compana, in Santiago, Chile, left two thousand five hundred and one dead. One hundred fifty perished in a fire at a Paris charity bazaar: May 4, 1897. June 30, 1900, a dock fire in Hoboken, New Jersey, killed three hundred twenty-six. . .".Refusing to give the cop the satisfaction of a reply to the news of the unborn baby's paternity, Junior stared unwaveringly into the grave and said, "Whose funeral were you attending?"..Her hands were slender, long-fingered, graceful. The hands of an artist. They were not powerful hands..He rolled his head back and forth on the pillow. "Nope. It's still just something you gotta feel."..Eventually, he settled on a mental image of a bowling pin as his "seed." This was a smooth, elegantly shaped object that invited languorous contemplation, but it did not tease his libido..Back in January, when he received the disappointing report from Nolly Wulfstan, Junior was not convinced that the private detective had exercised due diligence in his investigation. He suspected that Wulfstan's ugliness was matched by his laziness..Saturday morning, he walked to a drugstore in town and purchased eight decks of cards. With four, he passed the day re-creating, again and again, what he'd done at the dining-room table the previous evening. The four knaves never

appeared..As Wally got behind the wheel and closed his door, Angel said, "Mommy, where's fog come from? And don't say Hawaii." scraps of night that have lingered long after dawn dart agitatedly in and out of the tree, from branch to branch..Barty wanted to hug her. He did hug her. He hugged Angel, too. He hugged Tom Vanadium..Lifted from his despair by this exhilarating wrath, Junior turned away from the mirror, looking for the bright side once more. Perhaps it was the bathroom window..On December 18, as the Beatles' "Hello Goodbye" rocketed up the charts, Junior boiled over with frustration at his inability to find either love or Seraphim's baby, so he drove across the Golden Gate Bridge, to Marin County and all the way to the town of Terra Linda, where he killed Bartholomew Prosser..Leave the lamps burning, the door unlocked. A murderer, frantic to vanish while the victim remained undiscovered, wouldn't be worried about the cost of electricity or about protecting against burglary..A pink spot in the center of Victoria's forehead marked the point of impact. Soon it would be an ugly bruise. The skull bone did not appear to have been cratered..She kissed his cheek, and he pulled his arms out from under the covers to hug her. Such small arms, but such a fierce hug..He found the strength to squeeze her hand tighter than before. "Be safe. Keep Angel safe." 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.."I'm no hero," Paul insisted. "I just got your mom out of there in the process of saving myself." To Perri's bed, a journey of only a few steps, but farther than unwanted Rome. The carpet seeming to pull at his feet, to suck like mud under his shoes. The air as thick as liquid in his resistant to his progress..He possessed vast files on tragic fires, and most of them were committed to memory. In Vienna's magnificent Ring Theater, December 8, a blaze claimed 850 lives. On May 25, 1887, 200 dead at the Opera Comique, Paris. November 28, 1942, in the Coconut Grove nightclub in Boston-when Jacob was only fourteen years old and already

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