

## THE WATER GOATS AND OTHER TROUBLES

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..Angel was lying on a towel on the convertible sofa, where Grace had just changed her diaper..The rich aromas on the air would have thwarted the will of the most devout monks on a fast of penitence..As Junior stood at Seraphim's grave, his breath smoked from him in the still night air, as though he were a dragon.."Miss White was admitted to St. Mary's late January fifth," said Nolly, "with dangerous hypertension, a complication of pregnancy."..The toast now came to Celestina. "To Phimie, who will be with me in memory every hour of every day for the rest of my life, until she is with me again for real. And to ... to this most momentous day."..If either of them suspected that she was lying, it was Edom. He looked puzzled, but he didn't pursue the issue.."Love you," Wally said, and Celestina repeated it, and he said, "I'm gonna stand in the hall till I hear you set both locks.".."Where did it go?" Grace asked her granddaughter, making as much effort as she could to lighten the mood for the girl's sake..The tone sounded, as promised, and a man's voice spoke from the box: "It's Max. You're psychic. I found the hospital here. Poor kid had a cerebral hemorrhage, arising from a hyperensive crisis caused by ... eclampsia, I think it is. Baby survived. Call me, huh?"..Letting go of Maria, lowering her hand to her heart, Agnes said, "I want to see him." After making the sign of the cross, Maria said, "They must to have keepeed him in the eggubator until he is not dangerous. When the nurse comes, I will make her to tell me when the baby is to be safe. But I can't be leave you. I watch. I watch over."..She could have used the chair. Sitting, however, she wouldn't be able to see his face.."There's a fine George and Ira Gershwin song called 'Someone to Watch Over Me.'..The middle finger on his right hand throbbed under the pair of Band-Aids. He'd sliced it earlier, while using the electric sharpener to prepare his knives, and the wound had been aggravated when he'd had to strangle Neddy Gnathic. He would never have cut himself in the first place if there had been no need to be well-armed and ready for Bartholomew and his guardians..Uncommon dexterity is essential for anyone who hopes to become a highly skilled card mechanic, but it is not the sole requirement. A capacity to endure grim tedium while engaging in thousands of hours of patient practice is equally important. The finest card mechanics also exhibit complex memory function of a breadth and depth that the average person would find extraordinary..At Thanksgiving dinner, again at the three tables set end to end, in the year of the triple zero, Mary Lampion, now fourteen years old, made an interesting announcement over the pumpkin pie. In her travels where none but she could go, after seven fascinating years of exploring a fraction of all the infinite worlds, she said she sensed beyond doubt that, as Barty's mother had told him on her deathbed, there is one special place beyond all the ways things are, one shining place..A few minutes after dawn, in excellent weather, they flew out of Sacramento, bound for Eugene. Junior would have enjoyed the scenery if his face hadn't felt as if it were gripped by a score of white-hot pliers in the hands of the same evil trolls that had peopled all the fairy tales that his mother had ever told him when he was little..With the same surprising ease that she had gotten a plane out of San Francisco on a one-hour notice, Celestina booked two return seats on an early-evening flight from Oregon, as though she had a supernatural travel agent.."I've seen them," Tom assured her. "My dear, you've never smelled anything better than a field full of bacon vines."..Munching an Almond Joy, Junior returned to the phone book, with no choice but to find Bartholomew the hard way..Twice would indicate a dangerous mania. Three times would be indefensible. But once was healthy experimentation. A learning experience..FOR AMERICANS OF Chinese descent-and San Francisco has a large Chinese population-1965 was the Year of the Snake. For Junior Cain, it was the Year of the Gun, though it didn't start out that way..The aging, fugitive Nazi had been replaced at the front desk by a woman with messily chopped blond hair, a brutish face, and arms that would dissuade Charles Atlas from challenging her. She changed a five-dollar bill into coins for the vending machines and snarled at him only once in strangely accented English..Celestina had no illusions about playing detective. She would never be able to track down the bastard, and she had no stomach for confronting him..On the drive home, Junior dropped the knife down a storm drain in Larkspur. He tossed the gloves in a Dumpster in Corte Madera..After mentally reviewing what he must say, after working up a nervous edge, he dialed the SFPD emergency number..Four blocks from his office, on a street more upscale than his own, Nolly came to the Tollman Building. Built in the 1930s, it had an Art Deco flair. The public areas featured travertine floors, and a WPA-ers mural extolling the machine age brightened a lobby wall..These would no doubt be cloyingly sentimental paintings of the bastard boy, with impossibly large and limpid eyes, posed cutely with puppies and kittens, pictures better suited for cheap calendars than for gallery walls, and dangerous to the health of diabetics.."I can talk to you," he said to Salk. "You'll understand. She was hero, the only one I ever knew till I met you. I've read about them all my life, in pulp magazines and paperbacks. But Perri ... she was the real thing. She didn't save tens of thousands-hundreds of thousands of children like you've done, didn't change the world as you've changed it, but she faced every day without complaint, and she lived for others. Not through them. For them. People called her to share their problem, and she listened and cared, and they called her with their good news be cause she took such joy in it. They asked for her advice, and though she was inexperienced, really, so short of experience in so many ways, she always knew what to say, Dr. Salk. Always the right thing. She had great heart and natural wisdom, and she cared so much."..Truly, the time spent helping Agnes had given her uncountable new subjects for paintings and had begun to bring to her work a new depth that excited her. "When you pour out your pockets into the pockets of others," Agnes had once said, "you just wind up richer in the morning than you were the night before."..Here, now, came the anaconda smile. "Did you argue about the baby, Enoch? Maybe she wanted it, and you didn't. Guy like you--a baby would cramp your style. Too much responsibility."..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.. "I believe I'll just wait here until Mr. Cain wakes," Vanadium said. "I've nothing more pressing to do." As he said cards, the magician turned a knowing look toward Edom, eliciting from him a responding frown of puzzlement.. "It was. But maybe that's not the whole story. Anyway, we know the usual poses these guys strike, the attitudes they think are deceptive and clever. Most of them are so obvious, they might as well just stick their willy in a light socket and save us a lot of trouble. This, however, is a new approach. Tends to make you want to believe in the poor guy." Celestina turned in her seat to look back at Wally and Angel, who were waving. "I guess I am." Junior had made a mistake when he smashed the pewter stick into Vanadium's face after the cop was already unconscious. He should have bound the bastard and attempted to revive him for interrogation.. When he killed the Bartholomew, this haunting would finally end, too. In Junior's mind, Vanadium and Bartholomew were inextricably linked, because it was the maniac cop who first heard Junior calling out Bartholomew in his sleep. Did that make sense? Well, it made more sense at some times than at others, but it always made a lot more sense than anything else. To be rid of the dead-but-persistent detective, he must eliminate Bartholomew.. He was Father Tom again, having recommitted to his vows three years previous. At his request, the Church had assigned him as the chaplain of Pie Lady Services.. 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.. His eyes were strangely radiant, as she had never seen them before, as if the shining angel who would guide him elsewhere had already entered his body and was with him to begin the journey.. There was an otter in our brook. "He was born yesterday, not today," Edom said glumly. "When the thousand-year quake hits, skyscrapers will pancake, bridges crumble, dams break. In three minutes, a million people will die between San Diego and Santa Barbara." -nor cruel, nor hateful, nor envious, nor mean," Phimie recited, "for all these are sicknesses of this fallen world-" If someone were here in the hallway with him, it couldn't be Angel, because she would be chattering enthusiastically in one voice or another. Uncle Jacob would never tease him like this, and no one else was in the house.. Wishing he had left the gauze wrappings on his face, but afraid that the airwaves might already be carrying news of the bandaged man who had killed a minister in Spruce Hills, Junior abandoned the Dodge and hurriedly walked back to the private-service terminal, where the pilot from Sacramento waited. At the sight of his passenger, the pilot blanched and said, Allergic reaction to WHAT? And Junior said, Camellias, because Sacramento was the Camellia Capital of the World, and all that he wanted was to get back there, where he'd left his new Ford van and his Sklents and his Zedd collection and everything he needed to live in the future. The pilot couldn't conceal his intense revulsion, and Junior knew that he would have been stranded if he hadn't paid the round-trip charter fare in advance.. The quiet passion in Vanadium's voice was genuine, expressed with reason but not fervor, not in the least sentimental or unctuous-which made it more disturbing. "Vibrations in one string set up soft, sympathetic vibrations in all the other strings, through the entire body of the instrument." Harmonizing with Diana Ross, Mary Wilson, and Florence Ballard, he drove to the granite quarry three miles beyond the town limits.. Rolling onto her side, fumbling in the dark, Celestina White snared the phone on the third ring. Her hello was also a yawn.. He didn't want to risk marrying weapon and silencer here in the hall, where he might be seen. Besides, complications could arise from being splattered with Neddy's blood. Aftermath was disgusting, but it was also highly incriminating. For the same reason, he was loath to use a knife.. Not a word of that would come to Paul, but his frustrating speechlessness might have been for the best. From everything he knew about this hero, such effusive praise would embarrass him.. dropping on the conversation between Dr. Parkhurst and Vanadium, and later failing and respond to Vanadium's pointed accusations, his deception would inevitably be read as an admission of guilt in the murder. Now here was a thing, worse than the thought of a quarter in the closed hand: Neddy's eyes seemed to follow Junior as he rooted among the trash bags.. To the open casement window, into the men's room. Still seething with rage. Angrily cranking shut the twin panes while lazy tongues of fog licked through the narrowing gap.. In August, he developed an interest in meditation. He began with concentrative meditation-the form called meditation "with seed"--in which you must close your eyes, mentally focus on a visualized object, and clear your mind of all else.. In the kitchen, he sat her in a chair and let her slump forward over the breakfast table. With her arms folded, with her head on her arms and turned to one side, she appeared to be resting.. The beetle-green Pontiac waited in the driveway, with a shine that tempted nature to throw around some bad weather. Joey always kept a spotless car, and he probably wouldn't have had time to earn a living if he had resided in some shine-spoiling climate rather than in southern California.. A fine carpenter can wield a hammer with an economy of movement and accuracy as elegant as the motions of a symphony conductor with a baton. A cop directing traffic can make a rough ballet out of the work. However, of all the humble tasks that men and women can transform into visual poetry by the application of athletic agility and grace, clambering into a Dumpster holds the least promise of beautification.. Before the

pianist could cry out, Junior drove him between the toilet and the sink, slamming him against the wall hard enough to knock loose his breath and to cause the water to slosh audibly in the nearby toilet tank..We cherish the old stories for their changelessness. Arthur dreams eternally in Avalon. Bilbo can go "there and back again," and "there" is always the beloved familiar Shire. Don Quixote sets out forever to kill a windmill... So people turn to the realms of fantasy for stability, ancient truths, immutable simplicities..She snatched the handset away from Angel, told Bellini, "He's here," threw the phone on the bed, told Angel, "Stay close to me," ran to the windows, and jerked the drapes out of the way..Lord, help me here. Give me this one, just this one, and I'll follow thereafter where I'm led. I'll always thereafter be your instrument, but please, please, GIVE ME THIS CRAZY EVIL SON OF A BITCH!."What room has Mrs. Lombardi been moved to?" she asked. "I'd like to ... to see her before I go." On the afternoon of November ninth, when Paul and Barty were with her, reminiscing, and Angel was in the kitchen, getting drinks for them, his mother gasped and stiffened. Breathless, she paled past chalk, and when she could breathe and speak again, she said, "Get Angel now. No time to bring the others." Glancing at his wristwatch with alarm, Edom bolted up from his chair. "Look at the time! Agnes gave me a lot to do, and here I am rattling on about earthquakes and cyclones." His enjoyment of the art was diminished by these associations, and as Junior turned away from Industrial Woman, his attention was suddenly captured by the quarters. Three lay on the floor at her gear wheel-and-meat-cleaver feet. They had not been here earlier..Suitcases seemed to be missing. Some clothes, as well. Could mean a weekend vacation..She found the switch and clicked off the lamp again. "Good-night, young prince." The apartment had been furnished with only two padded folding chairs and a bare mattress in the living room. The mattress was on the floor, without benefit of a bed frame or box springs..When the nurse was gone, alone with his mother as they waited for the orderly to bring a gurney, Barty said, "Come close." On the other hand, killing a stranger like Bartholomew Prosser relieved stress better than sex did. Senseless murder was as relaxing to him as meditation without seed, and probably less dangerous..Nothing he could do about it now. Having Naomi's body moved to another grave, in a cemetery without Negroes, would cause a lot of talk. He didn't want to draw more attention to himself..He had experienced considerable self-revelation during the past eighteen hours, but of all the new qualities he had discovered in himself, Junior was most proud of the realization that he was such a profoundly sensitive person. This was an admirable character trait, but it would also be a useful screen behind which to commit whatever ruthless acts were required in this dangerous new life he'd chosen.."Who else? I think there's romance in the air. The cow-eyed way he looks at her, she could knock his knees out from under him just by giving him a wink." Number three on the charts was "Mr. Lonely," by Bobby Vinton, an American talent from Canonsburg, Pennsylvania. Junior sang along..On the short return trip to the ophthalmologist, Agnes crazily considered driving past Chan's office building, cruising onward--ever onward-into the sparkling December night, not just back to Bright Beach, where the bad news would simply come by phone, but to places so far away that the diagnosis could never catch up to them, where the disease would remain unnamed and therefore would have no power over Barty..Mechanics have reliably steady hands, yet Jacob's hands shook as he discarded two cards and slowly turned over the ninth draw..OUR LADY OF SORROWS, quiet and welcoming in the Bright Beach night, humble in dimension, without groin vaults and grand columns and cavernous transepts, restrained in ornamentation, was as familiar to Maria Elena Gonzalez--and as comforting-as her own home. God was everywhere in the world, but here in particular. Maria felt happier the instant she stepped through the entrance door into the narthex..In spite of the urgency of his desire, he followed a circuitous route to Victorial's, doubling back on himself twice, watching for surveillance as he drove. If he were being followed, his tail was an invisible man in a ghost car..For the past two days, Junior had eaten only binding foods, and late this afternoon, he had taken a preventive dose of paregoric, as well..When she didn't at once accept his generosity, he said, "All my life, I've lived just to get through the day. First survival. Then achievement, acquisition. Houses, investments, antiques ... There's nothing wrong with any of that. But it didn't fill the emptiness. Maybe one day I'll return to medicine. But that's a hectic existence, and right now I want peace, calm, time to reflect. Whatever I do from here on . . . I want my life to have a degree of purpose it's never had before. Can you understand that?." 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..Escorting her home didn't require either a car or a long walk, because she lived upstairs in the hotel where he'd had dinner. The top three floors of the building featured enormous owner-occupied apartments..Agnes returned home from a pie run with the usual team-grown to five vehicles, including paid employees-to find a gathering in the yard and Barty halfway up the oak..Sunday morning, when Agnes returned from church, Edom and Jacob joined her for lunch. During the afternoon, Jacob helped her bake seven pies for Monday delivery..At home, after phoning her folks, Celestina made a ham sandwich. She ate a quarter of it. Then two bites of a chocolate croissant. One spoonful of butter pecan ice cream. Everything was without taste, more bland than Phimie's hospital food, and it cloyed in her throat.."September 13, 1928. Lake Okeechobee, Florida. Two thousand people died in a flood." This humble house wasn't where you expected to hear an elaborate custom doorbell-or even any doorbell at all, since knuckles on wood were the cheapest announcement of a visitor..Heedless of the rules of standard police procedure, Tom raced to the doorway, crossed the threshold, and saw Barty throw a can of soda at the shaved head and pocked face of a transformed Enoch Cain..Bartholomew was dead but didn't know it yet. Pistol in hand, cocoon in tatters, ready to spread his butterfly wings, Junior pushed the door to the apartment inward, saw a deserted living room, softly lighted and pleasantly furnished, and was about to step across the threshold when the street door opened and into the hall came Ichabod..Kathleen Klerkle, Mrs. Wulfstan, sitting on the edge of Nolly's desk, looked diagonally across it at the visitor in the client's chair. Actually, Nolly had two chairs for clients. Kathleen could have sat in the second; however, this seemed to be a more appropriate pose for a

hawkshaw's dame. Not that she was trying to look cheap; she was thinking Myrna Loy as Nora Charles in *The Thin Man*-worldly but elegant, tough but amused..An outrageously sexy redhead hit on him as he selected from an array of bomb-shaped canapes on a tray held by a waiter dressed as a ragged and soot-smearred blast survivor. Myrtle, the redhead, preferred to be called Scamp, which Junior entirely understood. She wore a DayGlo green miniskirt, a spray-on white sweater, and a green beret..In the first two weeks, when she wasn't on pie caravans, Agnes received guests in numbers that taxed her. But there were so many people she wanted to see one last time. She fought hard, giving the disease all the what-for that she could, and she held fast to hope, but she received the visitors nonetheless, just in case..Losen, a sea-pirate who called himself King of the Inmost Sea, was then the chief warlord in the city and all the east and south of Havnor. Exacting tribute from that rich domain, he spent it to increase his soldiery and the fleets he sent out to take slaves and plunder from other lands. As Otters uncle said, he kept the shipwrights busy. They were grateful to have work in a time when men seeking work found only beggary, and rats ran in the courts of Maharion. They did an honest job, Otter's father said, and what the work was used for was none of their concern..daughter's existence. Angel, if that's what she were eventually to be named, lived under a threat as surely as had all the children of Bethlehem, who'd been slain according to the decree of King Herod. The baby curled one small hand around her aunt's index finger. So tiny, fragile, she nonetheless gripped with surprising tenacity..proud," she said, smiling as she quoted one of their father's most familiar sermons, "nor powerful-". "We were about to order dinner from room service," Tom said, handing a menu to Paul..I know what you're thinking," her mother said, reaching across the table and placing one hand over Celestina's. "I know how useless you feel, how helpless, how small, but you must remember this . . .Because his lacrimal glands and tear ducts were intact, Barty could cry with his plastic eyes. Consequently, it didn't seem all that much more incredible to be seeing with them..Junior strove to appear properly mortified. "Thought I heard something. Searched the apartment."..Something was very wrong with her, and she tried to speak, but again her voice failed her..Outside, he discovered that some worthless criminal wretch had broken into his Suburban during the night. The suitcase and Book-of-the-Month selections were gone. The creep even swiped the Kleenex, the chewing gum, and the breath mints from the glove, compartment..Nolly raised his martini glass in a toast. "To Kathleen Klerkle Wulfstan, dentist and associate detective."..After the paralytic bladder seizures had passed and Junior had drained Lake Mead, Chicane recommended plenty of caffeine and sugar to guard against an unlikely but not impossible spontaneous return to a trance state. "Anyway, after pumping alpha waves for as long as you just did, you shouldn't actually need to sleep anytime soon."..glimmered along the barrel of a hypodermic syringe in the hand of the paramedic..Of firm but pliable rubber, custom-formed to his disfigured foot, a shoe insert filled the void left by his missing toe. This simple aid ensured that virtually all footwear was comfortable, and by November, Junior walked with no discernible limp..This morning, Damascus had left the house early, before Vanadium came downstairs, which was perfect for Junior's purposes. While the maniac cop was finishing his shave and shower, Junior crept upstairs to check his room. He discovered the revolver in the second of the three places that he expected it to be, did his work, and returned the weapon to the nightstand drawer in precisely the position that he had found it. Narrowly avoiding an encounter with Vanadium in the hall, he retreated to the ground floor. After some fussing over the most effective placement, he left the quarter and the luggage-just as Vanadium, the human stump, clumped down the stairs. Junior experienced an unexpected delay when the detective spent half an hour making phone calls from the study, but then Vanadium went into the kitchen, allowing him to slip out of the house and complete his work..WHEN AT LAST Paul Damascus reached the parsonage late Friday afternoon, January 12, he arrived on foot, as he arrived everywhere these days..Now Junior threw back the covers and sprang out of bed. In double briefs, he restlessly roamed the hotel room.. "Really? You really think that?" he asked in his flat voice, which he sometimes wished were more musical, but which he knew lent a sober conviction to anything he said. "You think something so delicious could come from a fat, smelly, dirty, snorting old pig?"..His mother tried to explain. "It's as if you'd found some great jewel," she said, "and what's one of us to do with a diamond but hide it? Anybody rich enough to buy it from you is strong enough to kill you for it. Keep it hid. And keep away from great people and their crafty men!"..He preferred to venture inside the house while some lights remained on. He didn't want to be reduced to creeping stealthily in the dark through strange rooms: The very idea filled his guts with shiver chasing shiver..Sudden rain spared her the need to finish the sentence. A few fat drops drew both their faces to the sky, and even as they rose to their feet, this brief light paradiddle of sprinkles gave way to a serious drumming..Downstairs again, as Agnes reached the foot of the stairs, she began to worry that she had done too thorough a job on the khakis and that the extent of the damage would raise suspicions..The night seemed to be longer than a Martian month. Agnes dozed, fitfully, waking more than once, sweaty and shaking, from a dream in which her son was taken from her in pieces: first his eyes, then his hands, then his ears, his legs....."-and wherever he went, between his shows, he always gave free performances at nursing homes, schools for the deaf-". "I mean," said Dr. Lipscomb, "that I'm selling my practice and putting an end to my medical career. I wanted you to know."..To his surprise, when Naomi expressed an interest in romance, Junior was a bull again. He would have thought he had left his best stuff at Reverend Harrison White's parsonage..By the time Junior passed the three offices and found the men's room, Neddy had occupied it. The door was locked, which must mean this was a single-occupant john..Second-stage labor was supposed to last about fifty minutes in a woman bearing her first child, as little as twenty if the birth was not the first, but she sensed that Bartholomew was not going to come into the world by the book..Later, at home, after Agnes sent Edom back to his apartment, she opened a bottle of vodka that she had bought on the way back from Maria's. She mixed it with orange juice in a waterglass..The masterpiece that Junior purchased was small, a sixteen-inch-square canvas, but it cost twenty-seven hundred dollars. The entire picture-titled *The Cancer Lurks*

Unseen, Version 1-was flat black, except for a small gnarled mass, bile-green and pus-yellow, in the upper-right quadrant. Worth every penny..Celestina didn't hear gunfire, but she couldn't mistake the bullets for anything else when they cracked through the door..On the morning of November third, Barty asked Maria to inquire of Agnes what she would like to have read to her. "Then when she answers you, just turn and leave the room. I'll take it from there." .64 just a little bit ago," the girl said. "I was sitting on the porch, having a Popsicle, and I just figured it out." "That's the roaster tower," said Licky. "Where they cook the cinnabar to get the metal from it. Roasters die in a year or two. Where to, dowser?".Using the straight edge of a ruler to guide his eye down each column, Junior searched for Bartholomew, ignoring surnames. He had already checked to see if anyone in the county had Bartholomew for a last name; no one in this directory did.."What aren't you telling us?" her mother pressed, intuiting the existence of a larger story, if not the amazing nature of it..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..stopped by to help Agnes, and some offered to stay with her at night. She gratefully accepted assistance with the housecleaning, laundry, and shopping, but she declined the all-night company because of her dreams..In the sermon that brought him a moment of fame that he'd found more uncomfortable than not, Daddy had used the life of Bartholomew to illustrate his point that every day in every life is of the most profound importance. Bartholomew is arguably the most obscure of the twelve disciples. Some would say Lebbaeus is less known, some might even point to Thomas the doubter. But Bartholomew certainly casts a shadow far shorter than those of Peter, Matthew, James, John, and Philip. Daddy's purpose in proclaiming Bartholomew the most obscure of the twelve was then to imagine in vivid detail how that apostle's actions, seemingly of little consequence at the time, had resonated down through history, through hundreds of millions of lives-and then to assert that the life of each chambermaid listening to this sermon, the life of each car mechanic, each teacher, each truck driver, each waitress, each doctor, each janitor, was as important as the resonant life of Bartholomew, although each dwelt beyond the lamp of fame and labored without the applause of multitudes..After the detective returned the box to the nightstand, the coin began to turn again.."Nicholas Deed." On her tongue, the name was as bitter as a dissolving aspirin..Devil mountains, sacred islands, sacramental rivers and cities, Jesuits: These spiritual references at every turn made Junior uneasy. This was a haunted night, no doubt about that. He wouldn't have been greatly surprised if he had glanced at his rearview mirror and seen Thomas Vanadium's blue Studebaker Lark Regal closely tailing him, not the real car raised from Quarry Lake, but a ghostly version, with the filthy-scabby-monkey spirit of the cop at the wheel, an ectoplasmic Naomi at his side, Victoria Bressler and Ichabod and Bartholomew Prosser and Neddy Gnathic in the backseat: the Studebaker packed full of spirits like a bozo-stuffed clown car in a circus, though there would be nothing funny about these revenge-minded spooks when the doors flew open and they came tumbling out..The short walk across the room, to the hero's table, looked more daunting to Paul than the trek he'd just completed. He was nobody, a small-town pharmacist who missed more work each month, who relied increasingly on his worried employees to cover for him, and who would lose his business if he didn't get a grip on himself. He had never done a great deed, never saved a life. He had no right to impose upon this man, and now he knew he hadn't the nerve to do so, either..She was lost in his eyes: She wanted to pass through his eyes as Alice had passed through the looking glass, follow the beautiful radiance that was fading now, go with him through the door that had been opened for him and accompany him out of this rain-swept day into grace.

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