

## THE GARDEN OF ART

"Because of a certain awareness you've had since childhood," Celestina said, recalling what he'd told her in San Francisco. "It's chilly and foggy and late, and there might be villains afoot at this hour," he intoned with mock gravity. "The two of you are Lipscomb women now, or soon will be, and Lipscomb women never go unescorted through the dangerous urban night." The social worker's office once more. Rain tapping lightly at the window where Dr. Lipscomb had stared intently into the fog as he tried to avoid confronting the life-changing revelation that Phimie, speaking with the special knowledge of the once-dead, had shown him. From his early adolescence, Edom was drawn to gardening, taking special pleasure in the cultivation of hybrid roses. He'd been only sixteen when one of his blooms earned first place in a flower show. When his father learned about the competition, he regarded Edom's pursuit of the prize as a grievous sin of pride. The punishment left Edom bedridden for three days, and when he came downstairs at last, he discovered that his father had torn out all the rose bushes. Not every coincidence, however, has meaning. Toss a quarter one million times, roughly half a million heads will turn up, roughly the same number of tails. In the process, there will be instances when heads turn up thirty, forty, a hundred times in a row. This does not mean that destiny is at work or that God-choosing to be not merely his usual mysterious self but utterly inscrutable-is warning of Armageddon through the medium of the quarter; it means the laws of probability hold true only in the long run, and that short-run anomalies are meaningful solely to the gullible. 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. Regrettably, his radiant smile only emphasized, by contrast, the dire shortcomings of the face from which it beamed. Lumpish, pocked, wart-stippled, darkened by a permanent beard shadow with a bluish cast, this countenance was beyond the powers of redemption possessed by the best plastic surgeons in the world, which was no doubt why Nolly applied his resources strictly to dental work. Instead, as he settled into the offered chair, he withdrew a picture of Perri from his wallet. It was an old black-and-white school photograph, slightly yellow with age, taken in 1933, the year he'd begun to fall in love with her, when they were both thirteen. At this extreme end of town, no streetlamps lit the pavement. With only moonlight to reveal him, he wasn't likely to be recognized if anyone happened to glance out a window. Though they had expected the cause of the explosion, both Paul and Harrison were halted by shock at the sight of all this ruination. They had expected to find the car jammed into the wall of the house, never this far inside. The speed required to penetrate this distance into the structure beggared Paul's skills of calculation and made him wonder if even recklessness and alcohol were sufficient to produce, such a catastrophe. Every time Junior glanced back, Vanadium was following his wake through the throng. Stocky but almost gliding. Grim and grimmer. Hideous. And closer. From Christmas through February, he dated a beautiful stock analyst and broker-Tammy Bean-who specialized in finding value in companies that had rewarding relationships with brutal dictators. Celestina told them about Nella Lombardi and about the message Phimie delivered to Dr. Lipscomb after being resuscitated. "Phimie was, . . . so special. There's something special about her baby, too." 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. His mouth was dry when he said to Angel, "Well, it seems pretty magical to me-that flipped-coin trick." ISBN 0-15-100561-3 I. Fantasy fiction, American, [I. Fantasy. 2. Short stories.] I. Title. "Cancer," she whispered, and superstitiously reproached herself for speaking the word aloud, as though thereby she'd given power to the malignancy and ensured its existence. Junior worried, however, that they had noticed him after he pulled to the curb twice behind them, that they were keeping an eye on him, ready to bolt if he got out of the car, in which case they might all make it inside before he could cut them down. By the time he ordered cr?me brulee for dessert, he was able to laugh at himself. Had he expected to see a ghost enjoying a cocktail and free cashews at the bar? The tenderness with which Grace acceded to Phimie's desire, at the expense of her own peace of mind, filled Celestina with emotion. She'd always admired and loved her mother to an extent that no words-or work of art-could adequately describe, but never more than now. Rising, Celestina said to Tom, "Last Tuesday night, we had to switch on the lawn sprinklers. This will be much better." Junior couldn't see the lights of the nearest other houses. Either those structures were screened by trees or the neighbors weren't home. "It's that bad and worse," Grace said firmly. "Even if they catch him, you're going to live with the quiet fear that he might escape one day. As long as you know he can find you, then you're never going to be completely at peace. And if you love this city so much that you'll put Angel in jeopardy ... then who have you been listening to all these years, girl? Because it hasn't been me." "Nervous," he said, and howled when one of the paramedics proved to be a sadist masquerading as an angel of mercy. No inquiring voice echoed off the passage walls, no accusatory shout. He was alone with the cadaver in this mist-shrouded moment of the metropolitan night-but perhaps not for long. The sensual memories of his torrid evening with Seraphim had left Junior aroused. Unfortunately, the only female nearby was Industrial Woman, and he wasn't that desperate. On one wall hung an impressive array of gardening tools. In the corner was a potting bench. This show was hopeless, disastrous, stupid, foolish, painful, lovely, wonderful, glorious, sweet. Great anger was apparent in the way that the uneven, red block letters had been drawn on the wall in hard slashes. But the lettering looked like the work of a calm and rational mind compared to what had been done after the three Bartholomews were printed. Angel, as if in God's own hands, stared with round-eyed wonder at the physician. "You can learn em." As Junior paced the hotel room, his fear made way for anger. All he wanted was peace, a chance to grow as a person, an opportunity to

improve himself And now this. The unfairness, the injustice, galled him. He seethed with a sense of persecution..Against the backdrop of granite monuments, Kaitlin hulked like a moldering presence from Beyond, risen out of a rotting box to take vengeance on the living..AS GREASY WITH FEAR sweat as a pig on a slaughterhouse ramp, Junior woke from a nightmare that he could not remember. Something \*is reaching for him-that's all he could recall, hands clutching at him out of the dark-and then he was awake, wheezing. Night still pressed at the glass beyond the venetian blind. The pharmacy lamp in the corner was aglow, but the chair that had been beside it was no longer there. It had been moved closer to Junior's bed..Swift and yellow, Angel flew to her mother, grabbing at one of the bunched drapes as if she might hide behind it..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."..Those spike-sharp eyes, - tenpenny gray, nailed Junior to the bed, pinning him for scrutiny..A matronly nurse arrived, alerted to the patient's return to consciousness by the telemetry device associated with the heart monitor..When he came to himself, sick and weak from the poison and with an aching skull, he was in a room with brick walls and bricked-up windows. The door had no bars and no visible lock. But when he tried to get to his feet he felt bonds of sorcery holding his body and mind, resilient, clinging, tightening as he moved. He could stand, but could not take a step towards the door. He could not even reach his hand out. It was a horrible sensation, as if his muscles were not his own. He sat down again and tried to hold still. The spellbonds around his chest kept him from breathing deeply, and his mind felt stifled too, as if his thoughts were crowded into a space too small for them..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."..Celestina looked out a kitchen window and saw Agnes in the Lampion driveway, where the three-vehicle caravan was assembled. She was loading her station wagon..The bow business had started a few months ago. Angel said she wanted to look pretty in her sleep, in case she met a handsome prince in her dreams..Awed, dropping to one knee before Barty, Tom fingered the sleeve of the boy's shirt..Junior intended to add one stocky ghost to the party. Perhaps on a summer night in years to come, at the edge of the light fall from his Coleman lantern, a fisherman would see a semitransparent Vanadium providing entertainment with an ethereal quarter..Jacob scared people. He was 'Edom's identical twin, with Edom's boyish and pleasant face, as soft-spoken as Edom, well barbered and neatly groomed. Nevertheless, on the same mission of mercy as Edom, Jacob would leave the pie recipients in a state of deep uneasiness if not outright terror. In his wake, they would bar the doors, load guns if they owned any, and lay sleepless for a night or two..During the drive, he alternated between great gales of delighted laughter and racking sobs wrought by pain and self-pity. The voodoo Baptist was dead, the curse broken with the death of he who had cast it. Yet Junior must endure this final devastating plague..After the song concluded, Junior felt better. His heartbeat soon returned to normal. The damp palms of his hands grew dry..The accountant lived in a white Georgian house on a street lined with huge old evergreens.."Will do. Check out those paintings he collects. People pay real money for them, even people who've never been in a looney bin."..Unsupervised meditation without seed, in sessions longer than an hour, entails risk. To his horror, Junior would discover some of the dangers in September..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..Wally's help, not just with the apartment, but with his time and love, had made an incalculable difference..Because of his blindness and his intellectual gifts, Barty was home schooled; besides, no teacher was a match for his autodidactic skills, nor could anyone possibly inspire in him a greater thirst for knowledge than the one with which he had been born. Angel went to this same informal classroom, and her sole fellow student was also her teacher. They aced the periodic equivalency tests that the law required. Their constant companionship seemed to be all play, yet was filled with constant learning, too..He stashed two suitcases full of clothes and toiletries-plus the contents of Pinchbeck's safe-deposit box-in the van, and then added those precious items that he'd be loath to lose if the hit on Bartholomew went wrong, forcing him to leave his Russian Hill life and flee arrest. The works of Caesar Zedd. Sklent's three brilliant paintings. The needlepoint pillows, to which he'd colorfully applied the wisdom of Zedd, constituted the bulk of this collection of bare essentials: 102 pillows in numerous shapes and sizes, which he had completed in just thirteen months of feverish stitchery~.Every distorted shape, every smear of color, every swath of light and shudder of shadows resisted her attempts to relate them to the world she knew, as if shimmering before her were the landscape of a dream..When Agnes pressed for a diagnosis, Dr. Chan quietly pleaded the need to gather more information. After Barty had seen the oncologist and had additional tests, he and his mother would return here in the afternoon to receive a diagnosis and counseling in treatment options.."We want the scary one, 'specially if it has spiders, Pixie Lee said squeakily but defiantly..She traded silence for silence. Then: "Kiddo, I'm still totally confused by this stuff."..Indeed, as Celestina and the kid reached the foot of the steps to this second house, Bartholomew pointed, and the woman turned to look back. She appeared to stare straight at the Mercedes, though the fog made it impossible for Junior to be sure..The musician's behavior required explanation. After wending through the crowd, Junior located the man in front of a painting so egregiously beautiful that any connoisseur of real art could hardly resist the urge to slash the canvas to ribbons..Into the autumn of 1967, Junior reviewed hundreds of thousands of phone listings, and occasionally he located a rare Bartholomew. In San Rafael or Marinwood. In Greenbrae or San Anselmo. Located and investigated and cleared them of any connection with Seraphim White's bastard baby..The third-floor apartment directly over Enoch Cain's unit had been leased by Simon Magusson, through his corporation, ever since it became available in March of '66, twenty-two months ago..The friendship, the work, and not least of all the sense of home and belonging that everyone felt within minutes of crossing Agnes's threshold-these

things appealed to Celestina and Grace. But they didn't want Paul to feel that his hospitality was unappreciated..A few gasps and exclamations. A sweet giggle and applause from Angel. The reactions were surprisingly mild..The guest room. Bring Grace to the window. Disengage the latch. No good. Warped or painted shut. Small panes, sturdy mullions too difficult to break out..Maria's belief in the efficacy of this ritual was not as strong as her faith in the Church, but nearly so. As she leaned over the votive glass, watching the final fragment dissolve into ashes, she felt a terrible weight lifting from her..A sudden cold breeze blew down out of the moon, bearing a faint alien scent, and the black boughs of the trees billowed and rustled like witches' skirts..Maria said, "It is ... the only thing ... I can do for him now, for you. I be nobody, not.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..Jacob grunted, but probably not because he'd heard what had been said about him, more likely because he'd just turned the page to find a photo of dead cattle piled up like driftwood against the American Legion Hall in some flood-ravaged town in Arkansas..Tom Vanadium's uninflected but curiously hypnotic voice, his pensive manner, his gray eyes so beautiful in that fractured face, his air of measured melancholy, and his evident intelligence gave him a presence that was simultaneously as solid as a great mass of granite and yet otherworldly..She whispered then: "You are my little lampion, Barty. You light the way for me."..During the past three years, he'd suffered much because of these sisters, including most recently the humiliation in the Dumpster with the dead musician, Celestina's pencil-necked friend with a propensity for postmortem licking. The memory of that horror flared so vividly-every grotesque detail condensed into one intense and devastating flash of recollection-that Junior's bladder suddenly felt swollen and full, although he had taken a long satisfying leak in an alleyway across the street from the restaurant at which the postcard-painting poseur had enjoyed a leisurely dinner with Ichabod.. "I'll always know your face," he promised. "Even if you have to go away and you're gone a hundred years, I'll remember what you looked like, how you felt."..After a minute, he slipped his hand into his pocket. The quarter was still there..proud," she said, smiling as she quoted one of their father's most familiar sermons, "nor powerful-". "I'm not a burglar, Mr. Cain. No client has enough money to make me risk prison. Besides, even if you could steal their files, you would probably discover that the babies' identities are coded, and without the code, you'd still be nowhere."..Later, as Bonita and Francesca proudly served their mother's individually molded Christmas-tree-shaped servings of flan, which they themselves had plated, Barty leaned close to his mother and, pointing to the table in front of them, said softly but excitedly, "Look at the rainbows!"..Junior didn't know much about guns. He didn't approve of them; he had never owned one..These kids were the same age, yet listening to them was akin to hearing Angel do her charming shtick with an adult who had a lot of patience, a sense of humor, and an awareness of generational ironies.. "Well, certainly, I understand," said Panglo, slowly lowering the offered hand, although he clearly didn't understand at all..Focus. Get Ichabod all the way inside. Act now, think later. No, no, proper focus requires an understanding of the need to ize: scrutinize, analyze, and prioritize. Get the bitch, get the bitch! Slow deep breaths. Channel the beautiful rage. A fully evolved man is self-controlled and calm. Move, move, move! "I don't stumble. Not much, anyway." To the girl, Bartholomew said, "Angel, are you okay?".. "New York City, March 25, 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire-one hundred forty-six dead."..Celestina breezed through the open door with Angel. "No vanilla wafers. You'll be up all night with a sugar rush."..By "all of that," he meant the groceries that she and Joey often sent along with the pies, the occasional mortgage payment they made for someone down on his luck, and the other quiet philanthropies..For eight nights thereafter, Agnes padded the floor with folded blankets on both sides of the boy's bed, insurance against a middle-of-the-night fall. On the eighth morning, she discovered that Barty had returned the blankets to the closet from which she'd gotten them. They were not jammed haphazardly on the shelves-the sure evidence of a child's work-but were folded and stacked as neatly as Agnes herself would have stored them..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..In spite of major earthquakes pending, explosions of dynamite hauling trucks on the highway, tornadoes somewhere churning, the grim likelihood of a great dam bursting along the route, freak ice storms stored up in the unpredictable heavens, crashing planes and runaway trains converging on the coastal highway, and the possibility of a sudden violent shift in the earth's axis that would wipe out human civilization, they risked crossing the boundaries of Bright Beach and traveled north into the great unknown of territories strange and perilous..Gradually he grew calm. His great frosty exhalations diminished to a diaphanous dribble that evaporated two inches from his lips..Into her fevered mind came an image of a milk-glass infant, as translucent as Joey at the back door of the ambulance. Fearing that this vision meant her child would be stillborn, she said, My baby, but no sound escaped her..The Selective Service physician quickly declared Junior to be maimed and unfit. Quietly but with passion, Junior pleaded for a chance to prove his value to the armed forces, but the examiner was unmoved by patriotism, interested only in keeping the cattle line of other potential draftees moving past him at a steady pace..room, heavier and colder than the ice bags that were draped across Junior's midsection..Panic set in when he began to wonder if these intestinal spasms were going to prevent him from leaving Spruce Hills. In fact, what if they required hospitalization?.Too much had happened in those rooms. They were stained dark with family history, and in the night, when either Edom or Jacob slept under that gabled roof, the past came alive again in dreams..All day, for reasons he couldn't quite put into words, Junior had carried that quarter in a pocket of his bathrobe. From time to time, he had taken it out to examine it..Along the hall to his room. Fast and low through the doorframe. Wary of the closet door standing two inches ajar..Because the tower stood on a ridgeline that marked the divide between county and state property, most of the attending constabulary were county deputies, but two state troopers were present, as well..Junior kept a file on each man, nevertheless, in case instinct later told him that one of them was, in fact, his

mortal enemy. He could have killed all of them, just to be safe, but a multitude of dead Bartholomews, even spread over several jurisdictions, would sooner or later attract too much police attention.. "That's right," Celestina told Wally. "This isn't wagering. What's wrong with you?". She worried that her anxiety would prove contagious, that when her fear infected her boy, he would be less able to fight whatever hateful thing had taken seed in his right eye.. This was not the time to ponder the nature of the relationship between the treacherous Miss Bressler and Vanadium. Junior had a bloody trail to cover, and precious time was ticking away.. As Junior stood at Seraphim's grave, his breath smoked from him in the still night air, as though he were a dragon.. In a stolen black Dodge Charger 440 Magnum, Junior Cain shot out of Spruce Hills on as straight a trajectory to Eugene as the winding roads of southern Oregon would allow, staying off Interstate 5, where the policing was more aggressive.. Caution discarded, Junior went inside, for the same reason that a dedicated opera aesthete might once a decade attend a country-music concert: to confirm the superiority of his taste and to be amused by what passed for music among the great unwashed. Some might call it slumming.. At the end, with the salt Tom and the pepper Tom standing side by side in their different but parallel worlds, Maria said, "Seems like science fiction.".. Being blind had few consolations, but Barty found that not being able to look at his uncles' files and books was one of them. In the past, he never really, in his heart, wanted to see those pictures of dead people roasted in theater fires and drowned bodies floating in flooded streets, but a few times he peeked. His mom would have been ashamed of him if she'd discovered his transgression. But the mystery of death had an undeniable creepy allure, and sometimes a good Father Brown detective story simply didn't satisfy his curiosity. He always regretted looking at those photos and reading the grim accounts of disaster, and now blindness spared him that regret.. "Three hundred and ninety-six of the dead were children under the age of ten," Jacob continued. "A passenger train was tumbled off the tracks, killing twenty. Another train with tank cars got smashed around, and oil spilled across the flood waters, ignited, and all these people clinging to floating debris were surrounded by flames, no way to escape. Their choice was being burned alive or drowning.".. The stump was capped at the end of the internal cuneiform, depriving Junior of everything from the metatarsal to the tip of the toe. He was delighted with this result, because successful reattachment would have been a calamity.. In a pocket of his smock was his letter to Reverend Harrison White. He hadn't sealed the envelope, because he intended to read to Perri, his wife, what he'd written, and include any corrections she suggested. In this, as in all things, Paul valued her opinion.. Elsewhere in the cemetery, about 150 yards away, another interment service-with a much larger group of mourners-had begun prior to this one for Naomi. Now it was over, and the people were dispersing to their cars.. "Quitting medicine?" Celestina asked, baffled by his announcement and his upbeat attitude.. Each booth was at a large window, and each window provided a view of the street. Vanadium wasn't out there, watching from the sidewalk, either: no glimpse of his pan-flat face shining in the December sun.. the stems, thorns sharp against his tongue. And then Agnes. Agnes in the yard, screaming. 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.. "I'm really not sad, Mom. I'm not. I don't like it this way, being blind. It's ... hard." His small voice, musical as are the voices of most children, touching in its innocence, spun a fragile thread of melody in the dark, and seemed too sweet to be speaking of these bitter things. "Real hard. But being sad won't help. Being sad won't make me see again.".. As nimble as a geriatric cat, crying out with pain, Junior nevertheless sprang onto the deep windowsill and shoved against the twin panes of the window. They were already partly open-but they were also stuck. Crouched on the deep sill, pushing against the parted casement panes of the tall French window, using not just muscle but the entire weight of his body, leaning into them, the maniac tried to force his way out of the bedroom.. Worried that tears would frighten Barty, that indulging in a few would result in a ruinous flood, Agnes held back the salt tides. A mother's duty proved to be the stuff from which dams were built.. Not limited to a survey of the nursing staff on a single floor of the hospital, Junior used the elevators to roam higher and lower. Checking out the skirts.. The rough massage had only just begun to bring a little relief to Junior's legs when Sparky returned with six stoppered rubber bags full of ice. "This was all the bags they had down at the drugstore.".. To the window. The warm room sucked cooling fog out of the night, and she leaned across the sill into the streaming mist.. Startled, Celestina said, "Good grief, you're spooky. How could you know what I'm thinking?". Their station wagon stood along the service road, at least a hundred yards from the grave. With no wind to harry it, the rain fell as plumb straight as the strands of beaded curtains, and beyond these pearly veils, the car appeared to be a shimmering dark mirage.. When her hand went limp in Celestina's, her body sagged, too, and her eyes were no longer either focused or rolling wildly. They shimmered into stillness, darkled with death, as the cardiac monitor sang the one long note that signified flatline.. Since childhood, he had been waiting for this moment-if indeed it was The Moment-and he had nearly lost hope that the much-desired encounter would ever come to pass. He had expected to find others with his perceptions among physicists or mathematicians, among monks or mystics, but never in the form of a three-year-old girl dressed all in midnight-blue except for a red belt and two red hair bows.. He gently drew the covers over his wife's ruined body, to her thin shoulders, but arranged her right arm on top of the blankets. He straightened and smoothed the folded-back flap of the top sheet.. The musician's eyes met Junior's for an instant, widening with surprise. Obviously he knew that Gammoner was a lie. So he must be aware of Junior's real identity.. He used the kitchen phone, at the corner secretary. The blood had been cleaned up long ago, of course, and the minor damage from the ricocheting bullet had been repaired.. Embarrassed, Kathleen stopped singing, but to the other woman, Nolly said, "It is a lovely voice, isn't it? Haunting, I think.".. The second medic wheeled the gurney to the rear of the van, calling for one of the policemen to accompany him to the hospital.

Apparently, he needed help if he was to deliver the baby and also stabilize Apes while en route..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?".NOLLY WULFSTAN, private detective, had the teeth of a god and a face so unfortunate that it argued convincingly against the existence of a benign deity..Joey was not illuminated by the light of this world. Agnes realized that he was translucent, his skin like fine milk glass through which shone a light from elsewhere..In reality, it had been a homely device, a mere box. In memory, it seemed ominous, charged with the evil portent of a nuclear bomb..With remarkably little splash, the sedan eased into the water. Briefly it floated, bobbling near shore, tipped forward by the weight of the engine. As the lake flooded in through the floor vents, the vehicle settled steadily-then sank rapidly when water reached the two partially open windows..their work, tears were followed by reminiscences that brought a smile and soothed, and hope was always found to be the flower that bloomed from every seed of hopelessness.."Longer to wait between Christmases," she said. "And between birthdays. I'd save a bunch of money on gifts."..twenty-eight pounds. Typically, seven to eight pounds of this is the fetus. The placenta and the amniotic fluid weigh three pounds. The remaining eighteen are due to water retention and fat stores..They wanted to go up to Barty's room, but she refused them, because there was nothing more they could do for the boy than they had done for her. "He wants to finish reading Starman Jones, and I'm not letting anything interfere with that. We're leaving for Newport Beach at seven in the morning, and you can see him then.".."Not so bad, two thousand," Tom heard himself say idiotically. "I mean, compared to nearly four million."..Therefore, after the nasty shooting, as the Bartholomew hunt continued, so did the good life..He couldn't remember on what principle he'd considered firing Magusson. In spite of his faults, the attorney was highly competent.."But before you leave St. Mary's," the physician said, "I'd like a few mutes of your time. It's very important to me. Personally."..He phoned her before leaving, to be sure she was home. She didn't work weekend shifts at the hospital; but maybe she would have gone out on this night off. When she answered, he recognized her seductive voice-and devilishly muttered, "Wrong number."..make a worrywart life-insurance salesman like me seem just as light hearted as a schoolgirl."..AS THE WULFSTAN PARTY was being seated at a window table, slowly tumbling masses of cottony fog rolled across the black water, as if the bay had awakened and, rising from its bed, had tossed off great mounds of sheets and blankets.

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