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Celestina had chosen to shelter the bastard boy, and in so doing, she had declared herself to be Junior's enemy, though he'd never done anything to her, not anything. She didn't deserve him, really, not even one quick bang before the bang of the gun, and maybe after he shot Ichabod, he'd let her beg for a taste of the Cain cane, but deny her..Her metal hands were still crossed defensively over her breasts. The artist had welded large hexagonal nuts to her rake-tine fingers to suggest knuckles, and balanced on one nut was a fourth quarter.."He's not a real contemporary person, not anyone Cain needs to fear. So how did he develop this obsession with finding someone named Bartholomew?" He met Celestina's eyes, as if she might have answers for him. "Is there a real Bartholomew? And how does this tie in with his assault on you? Or is there any tie-in at all?".For the first time since walking to La Jolla to meet Jonas Salk, Paul planned a journey with a specific purpose..Leashed like a dog, he walked along, sullen and shivering with sickness and rage. He stared around him, seeing the stone tower, stacks of wood by its wide doorway, rusty wheels and machines by a pit, great heaps of gravel and clay. Turning his sore head made him dizzy..face with one hand, as if pulling off cobwebs. "Did you say you were in my house?".Because you can walk in the rain without getting wet, because you walk in SOME OTHER PLACE, and God knows where that place is or whether YOU COULD GET STUCK THERE somehow, get stuck there AND NEVER COME BACK, and if you can do this, there's surely other impossible things you can do, and even as smart as you are, you can't know the dangers of doing these things--nobody could know--and then there are the people who'd be interested in you if they knew you can do this, scientists who'd want to poke at you, and worse than the scientists, DANGEROUS PEOPLE who would say that national security comes before a mother's rights to her child, PEOPLE WHO MIGHT STEAL YOU AWAY AND NEVER LET ME SEE YOU AGAIN, which would be like death to me, because I want You to have a normal, happy life, a good life, and I want to protect you and watch you grow UP and be the fine man I know you will be, BECAUSE USE I LOVE YOU MORE THAN ANYTHING, AND YOU'RE SO SWEET, AND YOU DON'T REALIZE HOW SUDDENLY, HOW HORRIBLY, THINGS CAN GO WRONG..Then he looked up at the massive limbs overhead, and the mood changed: A sense of impending insight at once gave way to the fear that an unsuspected fissure in a huge limb might crack through at this precise moment, crushing him under a ton of wood, or that the Big One, striking now, would topple the entire oak..With a paper towel, Junior wiped the revolver. He dropped it on the floor beside the riddled nurse.."Thursday it is," he said, clearly delighted to be receiving only a third of the fair-market rental from his apartment..A sense of fellowship in extraordinary times drew everyone closer, to hug, to touch, to share the wonder. For a long moment, even in the symphony of the storm, in spite of all the plink-tink-hiss-plop-rattle that arose from every rain-beaten work of man and nature, they seemed to stand here in a hush as deep as Tom had ever heard..Celestina White was the center of attention, always surrounded by champagne-swilling, canape--gobbling bourgeoisie who would have been shopping for paintings on velvet if they'd had less money..Looking up at the mirror above the sink, he saw reflected not the self-improved and fully realized man that he'd worked so hard to become, but the pale, round-eyed little boy who had hidden from his mother when she had been in the deepest and darkest end of one of her cocaine-assisted, amphetamine-spiced mood swings, before she traded cold reality for the warm coziness of the asylum. As if some whirlpool of time was spinning him backward into the hateful past, Junior felt his hard-won defenses being stripped away..On the fourth floor, at Dr. Klerkle's suite, the hall door stood ajar. Past office hours, the small waiting room was deserted..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..Reverend White's polished, somewhat theatrical, yet sincere voice rose out of the past to issue this threat in Junior's memory as he had issued it that night, from a tape recorder, while Junior had been dancing a sweaty horizontal boogie with Seraphim in her parsonage bedroom..He wondered if the hawk had descended in a constricting gyre, justice coming down, but he could not lift his head to see..Delighted to be dating someone who lived neck-deep in culture especially after two months with Tammy Bean, the money maiden. Junior was surprised that he didn't score with Frieda on the first date. He was usually irresistible even to women who weren't sluts..Shortly past nine o'clock, an hour after Edom and Jacob had gone, Barty came downstairs, book in hand. "The twisties are back..".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..Vanadium flipped the quarter straight into the air and at once spread his arms, palms turned up to show that his hands were empty..ON THE FOLLOWING Tuesday afternoon in Bright Beach, across a sky as black as a witch's cauldron, seagulls flew out of an evil brew toward their safe roosts, and on the land below, humid shadows of the..Aftermath had a way of being discovered, often at the worst of all possible moments, which he had learned from movies and from crime stories in the media and even from personal experience. Discovery always brought the police at high speed, sounding their sirens and full of enthusiasm, because those bastards were the most past-focused losers on the face of the earth, utterly consumed by their interest in aftermath..Wally drove slowly, carefully, with all the responsibility that you would expect from an obstetrician, pediatrician, and spanking-new fianc?. The trip home to Pacific Heights took twice as long as it would have taken in clear weather on a night without a pledge of troth..Junior could only imagine how flattered Victoria would be to receive the attentions of a twenty-three-year-old stud, flattered and grateful. When he contemplated all the ways she could express that gratitude, there was barely enough room behind the wheel of the Suburban for him and his manhood..THE CRISP CRACKLE of faux flames, the way they made them in the days of radio dramas, back in the 1930s and '40s, when he was a boy: cellophane..Once, she left the TV and came to Tom, where

he sat talking with Paul. "It's like Gunsmoke and The Monkees are next to each other on the TV, both at the same time. But the Monkees, they can't see the cowboys-and the cowboys, they can't see the Monkees." "Would you pretend to wake up if I tried to smother you?" asked Detective Vanadium..While waiting for inspiration to present him with a better strategy, Junior returned to the telephone book in search of the right Bartholomew. Not the directory for Spruce Hills and the surrounding county, but the one for San Francisco..The nurse noted that the maximum weight capacity of the elevator allowed all of them to take the same cab, if they didn't mind being squeezed a little.."You look as if you've seen a ghost," said Vinnie, and Agnes wished the threat were as simple as a restless spirit, groaning and rattling its chains, like Dickens's Marley come to Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas Eve.."What was it like, Enoch? Did you look into her eyes when you pushed her?" Vanadium's uninflected monologue was like the voice of a conscience that preferred to torture by droning rather than by nagging. "Or doesn't a woman-killing coward like you have the guts for that? ".Holding the pistol, fully extending his right arm in execution style, the gunman approached the fallen minister..By habit, she shifted her attention to his eyes, because though the scientific types insist that the eyes themselves are incapable of expression, Agnes knew what every poet knows: To see the condition of the hidden heart, you must look first where scientists will not admit to looking at all..Junior was pleasantly surprised by his flexibility and by his audacity. He was, indeed, a new man, a daring adventurer, and by the day he grew more formidable.."No pie!" Agnes agreed. She parenthesized his head with her hands and punctuated his sweet face with kisses..The ship of night floated over the city and cast down nets of darkness, gathering millions of lights like luminous fishes in its black toils..In fifty years, until Angel, Tom had found no other like himself and now a second in little more than a week. "I can't do what you did." I believe the universe is sort of like an unimaginably vast musical with an infinite number of strings..The funeral director and his assistant were the only people, other than Junior, remaining at the grave. They asked if they might lower the casket or if he would rather that they wait until he was gone..almost recoiled in disgust. She held the newborn so that its mother could look into.Following little Bartholomew's murder, however, people might remember the man who had been asking after the mother, Celestina. Junior wasn't just any man, either; irresistibly handsome, he left an indelible impression on people, especially on women. Inevitably, the cops would be knocking on his door, sooner or later.."Which is?" His eyes widened, and his voice became husky with pretended fear. "They're always ... evil.."That won't do it." The guy was carrying a purse, whatever that meant, and when he walked through the door, he had a goofy look on his face, but his expression changed when he saw Junior..tasteful hint of it was on display; nothing about this beauty could be called cheap..A speeding truck passed, stirring the fog, and the white broth churned past the car windows, a disorienting swirl..This was better than taking slow deep breaths. Periodically, on the way to Vanadium's house, Junior spat out a string of insults, punctuated by obscenities..They knew no one named Bartholomew, and she had never heard the name from him before, but she knew what he wanted. He was speaking of the son he would never see..He had difficulty picturing the detective pattering in the garden on weekends. Unless there were bodies buried under the roses..His thought had been that Reverend White might find in Agnes, Bright Beach's beloved Pie Lady, a subject who would inspire a sequel to the sermon that had so deeply affected Paul-who was neither a Baptist nor a regular churchgoer-when he had heard it on the radio more than three years ago..Instruction in Braille wasn't recommended for three-year-olds, but an exception was made in this case. Agnes arranged to have Barty receive a series of lessons, although she suspected that he'd absorb the system and learn to use it in one or two sessions..Agnes ran to the kitchen, where she had been working when the doorbell rang, packing boxes of groceries to be delivered with the honey-raisin pear pies that she and Jacob had baked this morning..A moment ago, he'd slammed into Angel's room, and that was loud, but this boomed louder, thunderous enough to wake people throughout the building..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.."Oh, Wally, I am worried. I'm deeply worried. My mama is going to buy herself a first-class ticket to the fiery pit if she doesn't stop this prevaricatin' ".Without ceremony or prayer, although with much righteous anger, Junior hoisted the dead musician over the lip of the Dumpster. For a dreadful moment, his left arm tangled in the loosely cinched belt of the London Fog raincoat. Straining a shrill bleat of anxiety through his clenched teeth, he desperately shook loose and let go of the body..When Agnes crunched the ice, the nurse said, "No, no. Don't swallow it all at once. Let it melt."..Thursday evening, his third in the hotel, he returned to the lounge for cocktails and another steak. The same tuxedoed pianist provided the entertainment..Using this apartment as a base, Nolly and Kathleen had conducted some of the small skirmishes in the first phase of the war, including the ghost serenades. They left the place tidy. Indeed, the only sign that they had ever been here was a packet of dental floss left behind on the sill of a living-room window..Bartholomew might be a teenager living with his parents or a dependent adult residing with family; if so, he wouldn't be revealed in this search, because the phone would not be listed in his name. Or maybe the guy loathed his first name and never used it except in legal matters, going by his middle name, instead..Her fear, Agnes suddenly realized, arose from her father's often expressed conviction that an attempt to excel at anything was a sin that would one day be grievously punished. All forms of amusement were sinful, by his way of thinking, and all those who sought even the simplest entertainment were lost souls; however, those who desired to amuse others were the worse sinners, because they were overflowing with pride, striving to shine, eager to make themselves into false gods, to be praised and adored as only God should be adored. Actors, musicians, singers, novelists were doomed to hell by the very acts of creation which, in their egomania, they saw as the equal of their Creator's work. Striving to excel at anything, in fact, was a sign of corruption in the soul, whether one wanted to be recognized as a superior carpenter or car mechanic, or a grower of prize roses. Talent, in her father's view, was not a gift from God, but from the devil, meant to

distract us from prayer, penitence, and duty..Her voice grew thinner when she spoke to Angel, but in this new frailty, Barty heard such love that he shook at the power of it. "God's in you, Angel, so strong you shine, and nothing bad at all." Junior said, "I should know your name from the playbill at the lounge, but I'm as bad with names as you are good with faces." Junior suspected that no one other than this man's mother called him Tom. He was probably "Detective" to some and "Vanadium" to most who knew him..As Tom reached Celestina, she said, "Shots." She said, "Gunshots." She held the receiver in one hand and pulled at her hair with the other, as if with the administration of a little pain, she might wake up from this nightmare. She said, "He's in Oregon." Heart racing, Tom produced another quarter from a pants pocket. For the benefit of the adults, he performed the proper preparation-a little patter and the ten-finger flimflam-because in magic as in jewelry, every diamond must have the proper setting if it's to glitter impressively..Barty, at the head of the table, sensed Mary's approach only as she was about to touch him. She put a hand on his arm and said, "Daddy, will you turn your chair away from the table and let me sit on your lap?" This wasn't a new sensation. He had experienced it before. In the night just passed, when he awakened from an unremembered dream and saw the bright quarter dancing across Vanadium's knuckles..Celestina breezed through the open door with Angel. "No vanilla wafers. You'll be up all night with a sugar rush." Everyone from the pie caravan had gathered under the oak. The entire family, in its many names, adults and children, heads tipped back hands shielding their eyes from the late sun, watched Barty's progress in all but complete silence..would allow herself to feel the loss, the misery against which she was now armored. Phimie deserved dignity in this final.This analgesic was among several prescription substances that he had stolen, over time, from the drug locker at the rehab hospital where he once worked. Some he had sold; these he had retained..Jabbing his forefinger at each of the remaining treats, Barty said, "Pie, pie." Too far from Spruce Hills to be a popular make-out spot for teenagers, Quarry Lake was a turnoff for young lovers also because it had a reputation as haunted territory. Over five decades, four quarry workers had died in mining accidents. County lore included stories of ghosts roaming the depths of the excavation before it was flooded-and subsequently the shoreline, after the lake was filled..The Bright Beach Library was open until nine on Friday evening. Arriving an hour before closing, they returned the Heinlein novels that Barty had already read and checked out the three that he wanted. In a spirit of optimism, they borrowed a fourth, Podkayne of Mars..Agnes added this stop to her route at the request of Reverend Tom Collins, the local Baptist minister whose folks unthinkingly gave him the name of a cocktail. She was friendly with all the clergymen in Bright Beach, and her pie deliveries favored no one creed..The blocking dresser, which doubled as a vanity, was surmounted by a mirror. One bullet drilled through the plywood backing, made a spider-web puzzle of the silvered glass, lodged in the wall above the bed-thwack-and kicked out a spray of plaster chips..Behind the dog, Mary walked out of nowhere, ball in hand, and Koko whirled in surprise, and the chase was on again..After a long time the door opened and several men came in. He could do nothing against them as they gagged him and bound his arms behind him. "Now you won't weave charms nor speak spells, young'un," said a broad, strong man with a furrowed face, "but you can nod your head well enough, right? They sent you here as a dowser. If you're a good dowser you'll feed well and sleep easy. Cinnabar, that's what you're to nod for. The King's wizard says it's still here somewhere about these old mines. And he wants it. So it's best for us that we find it. Now I'll walk you out. It's like I'm the water finder and you're my wand, see? You lead on. And if you want to go this way or that way you dip your head, so. And when you know there's ore underfoot, you stamp on the place, so. Now that's the bargain, right? And if you play fair I will." He had come to believe that every well-rounded, self-improved person ought to have a craft at which he excelled, and needlepoint appealed to him more than either pottery-making or decoupage. For pottery, he would require a potter's wheel and a cumbersome kiln; and decoupage was too messy, with all the glue and lacquer. By December, he began his first project: a small pillowcase featuring a geometric border surrounding a quote from Caesar Zedd, "Humility is for losers." Her hands were locked together in her lap, gripped so tightly for so long that the muscles in her forearms ached. "What's wrong?".She leaned forward in her seat, and toward him, so he could see her more directly, and when she put one trembling hand against his cheek, his head dropped forward on neck muscles as limp as rags, his chin."If Phimie wasn't here," Celestina said, "and then she came back, she was somewhere during that minute, wasn't she?".It was the best he could do in protest against the misuse of good work and a good ship. He was pleased with himself. When the ship was launched (and all seemed well with her, for her fault would not show up until she was out on the open sea) he could not keep from his teachers what he had done, the little circle of old men and midwives, the young hunchback who could speak with the dead, the blind girl who knew the names of things. He told them his trick, and the blind girl laughed, but the old people said, "Look out. Take care. Keep hidden." Paul said, "I wanted you ... I don't know ... I just wanted you to see her. I wanted to say ... to say. . .".The girl sucked in deep lungfuls of the weary clouds. "Better hold tight, Mommy, I'm gonna float." "Vomiting. I'm told it was an exceptionally violent emetic episode." "He spewed like a fire hose," Vanadium said matter-of-factly..For forty-eight hours, he pumped himself full of prescription antihistamines, immersed himself in bathtubs brimming with numbingly cold water, and lathered himself with soothing lotions. In misery, gripped by self-pity, he dared not think about the 9-mm pistol that he had stolen from Frieda Bliss..Nearly two weeks ago, in the Spruce Hills hospital, Junior had been drawn by some strange magnetism to the viewing window at the neonatal-care unit. There, transfixed by the newborns, he sank into a slough of fear that threatened to undo him completely. By some sixth sense, he had realized that the mysterious Bartholomew had something to do with babies..He felt for the railing. Grasped at the empty air only briefly. Found the handrail. He climbed to the porch..Far from idiotic, Junior's cause was his survival and salvation, and he committed himself to it with every fiber of his body, with all of his mind and heart..Reminding himself that nature was merely a dumb machine, utterly devoid of mystery, and that the unknown would always prove familiar if you dared to lift

its veil, Junior discovered he could move. Each of his feet seemed to weigh as much as one of Wroth Griskin's cast bronzes, but he crossed the sidewalk and went into Galerie Coquin..She continued: "When we don't allow ourselves to hope, we don't allow ourselves to have purpose. Without purpose, without meaning, life is dark. We've no light within, and we're just living to die."..In the park, rocketing along on the roller coaster, Barty had an experience, a reaction to more than the canted turns and steep plunges. He grew excited in much the way that Agnes had seen him excited when grasping a new and arcane mathematical theory. At the end of the ride, he wanted to get back on immediately, and so they did. There are no long waits for the blind at amusement parks: always to the head of the line. Agnes rode twice again with him, and then Paul twice, and finally Angel accompanied him three times. This roller-coaster obsession wasn't about thrills or even amusement. His exuberance gave way to a thoughtful silence, especially after a seagull flew within inches of his face, feathers thrumming, startling him, on the next-to-last rollick along the tracks. Thereafter, the park held little interest for him, and all he would say was that he'd thought of a new way to feel things-by which he meant all the ways things are-a fresh angle of approach to that mystery.."Even when I was a young boy," Tom continued, "the world felt a lot different to me from the way it looked to other people. I don't mean I was smarter. I've got maybe a little better than average IQ, but nothing I could brag about. Flunked geography twice and history once. No one would ever confuse me and Einstein. It's just, I felt ... such complexity and mystery that other people didn't appreciate, such layered beauty, layers upon layers like phyllo pastry, each new layer more amazing than the last. I can't explain it to you without sounding like a holy fool, but even as a boy, I wanted to serve the God who had created so much wonder, regardless of how strange and perhaps even beyond all understanding He might be."..If he had been any other three-year-old, she would have told a compassionate lie. He was her miracle child, however, her prodigy, and he would know a lie for what it was..Tom stared down into the oceanic depths of the city, through the reefs of buildings, to the lamp-fish cars schooling through the great trenches..Mary had a yellow vinyl ball of the type Koko would happily chase all day and, if allowed, chew all night, keeping the house awake with its squeaking. "Want this?" she asked Koko. Koko wanted it, of course, needed it, absolutely had to have it, and leaped into action as Mary pretended to throw the ball..AS MEANINGFUL AS Jacob's death had been within the small world of his family, Agnes Lampion never lost sight of the fact that there were more resonant deaths in the larger world before 1968 ended and the Year of the Rooster followed. On the fourth of April, James Earl Ray gunned down Martin Luther King on a motel balcony in Memphis, but the assassin's hopes were foiled when, because of this murder, freedom grew more vigorously from the richness of a in martyr's blood. On June 1, Helen Keller died peacefully at eighty-seven. Blind and deaf since early childhood, mute until her adolescence, Miss Keller led a life of astonishing accomplishment; she learned to speak, to ride horses, to waltz; she graduated cum laude from Radcliffe, an inspiration to millions and a testament to the potential in even the most blighted life. On June 5, Senator Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Unknown numbers died when Soviet tanks invaded Czechoslovakia, and hundreds of thousands perished in the final days of the Cultural Revolution in China, many eaten in acts of cannibalism sanctioned by Chairman Mao as acceptable political action. John Steinbeck, novelist, and Tallulah Bankhead, actress, came to the end of their journeys in this world, if not yet in all others. But James Lovell, William Anders, and Frank Borman-the first men to orbit the moon-traveled 250,000 miles into space, and all returned alive..White as a Viking winter, these magnificent choppers, and as straight as the kernel rows in the corn on Odin's high table. Superb occlusal surfaces. Exquisite incisor ledges. Bicuspids of textbook formation nestled in perfect alignment between molars and canines..To the window. The warm room sucked cooling fog out of the night, and she leaned across the sill into the streaming mist..An overflow crowd of mourners had attended the services at St. Thomas's Church, standing shoulder to shoulder at the back of the nave, through the narthex, and across the sidewalk outside, and now everyone appeared to have come to the cemetery, as well.."September 20, 1902, Birmingham, Alabama, church fire--one hundred fifteen dead. March 4, 1908, Collinwood, Ohio, school fire, one hundred seventy-six dead."..NED--"CALL ME NEDDY"--Gnathic was as slim as a flute, with a flute-quantity of holes in his head from which thought could escape before the pressure of it built into an unpleasant music within I his skull. His voice was always soft and harmonious, but frequently he spoke allegro, sometimes even prestissimo, and in spite of his mellow tone, Neddy at maximum tempo was as irritating to the ear as bagpipes bleating out Bolero, if such a thing were possible.."Yes?" the silver-haired eminence replied, wrinkling his nose as though he suspected that this customer would ask if the display pedestal was included in the price..During the ten days since Joey's passing, a great many people had conveyed their condolences to Agnes, but until this man, she'd known all of them.."You did just fine, Tom, just fine," Agnes said in a consoling tone that she might have used with a boy whose performance, at a piano recital, had been earnest but undistinguished. "We were all quite impressed."..For a while, Junior profited enormously from Tammy's investment advice, and the sex was great. As a thank-you for the hefty trading commissions she earned-and not incidentally for all the orgasms-Tammy gave him a Rolex. He didn't mind her four cats, didn't even care when the four grew to six, then to eight..No weekend had ever passed so quickly, and no midnight had ever brought with it such dread..The artist, six feet four and two hundred fifty pounds, looked markedly more dangerous in person than in his scary publicity photo. Still in his twenties, he had white hair that fell limp and straight to his shoulders. Dead-white skin. His deep-set eyes, as silver-gray as rain with an albino-pink undertone, had a predatory glint as chilling as that in the eyes of a panther. Terrible scars slashed his face, and red hash marks covered his big hands, as though he'd frequently defended himself barehanded against men armed with swords..Tom was alone. The place should be silent. Hanna Rey, the housekeeper, wasn't scheduled to arrive until ten o'clock..The girl's appetite was sharp, even though the food was soft and bland. Soon, she slept..Caesar Zedd teaches that every experience in our lives, unto the smallest moment and simplest act, is preserved in

memory, including every witless conversation we've ever endured with the worst dullards we've met. For this reason, he wrote a book about why we must never suffer bores and fools and about how we can be rid of them, offering hundreds of strategies for scouring them from our lives, including homicide, which he claims to favor, though only tongue-in-cheek.. "One of the four legs of the tower is dangerously fractured where it's seated into the underlying foundation caisson-". "You know," Tom said when the second round of drinks arrived, "hard as it is to believe, some places never heard of martinis.". 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. Yet when he put her down in the upstairs hall, she cried out for her husband-- "Harry!" "-and tried to plunge once more into the narrow stairwell.. So smoothly did the waiter move, that three martinis on a corklined mahogany tray seemed to float across the room in front of him and then hover beside their table while he served the cocktails to the lady first, the guest second, and the host third.. When Bartholomew first said "Kay-jub," and held out one hand toward his uncle, Jacob surprised Agnes by crying with happiness.. A dry laugh escaped the detective, but it had none of the warmth of most people's laughter. "You're not bad, Enoch. You're just not as good as you think you are.". Smiling again, speaking in a voice hardly louder than a whisper, he said, "Got a wedding date to keep.". "When you called earlier in the year, to ask for a referral to a private investigator down there, the woman had recently turned up dead and Vanadium was gone, but no one put the two together at first."

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