

## THE AMERICAN DIARY OF A JAPANESE GIRL

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..For a moment, Junior was mystified. Vanadium's movements had the quality of ritual, vaguely reminiscent of a priest raising high the Eucharist..At home again, in the safety of the family, Barty collapsed in exhaustion from the sustained effort to see with eyes that he didn't possess. Abed for ten days, feverish, afflicted with vertigo and migraine headaches, nauseated, he lost eight pounds before his recovery was complete.."Honey," she said, crouching to peer at him through the vertical slats of the playpen, "what're you doing?". "Cash," Junior said. "I'll pay cash, with whatever amount of deposit is required.".The can struck Junior hard in the face, breaking his nose, before he could duck..Most likely, Reverend White's ramblings were as greasy with sentiment and oily with irrational optimism as were his daughter's paintings, so Junior was in no hurry to learn the name of the radio program or to write for a transcript of the sermon..Junior discovered more tears than could have been found in ten thousand onions. His wife and his unborn baby. He had been willing to sacrifice his beloved Naomi, but maybe he would have found the cost too high if he had known that he was also sacrificing his first-conceived child. This was too much. He was bereft..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..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.".Celestina stared curiously at Tom Vanadium. She had witnessed the effect of vanishment, though she hadn't actually seen the coin disappear in midair. Yet she seemed to sense either that something more than sleight of hand had just transpired or that the trick had a meaning she'd missed..When she went upstairs at 2:10 in the morning, she found the boy fast asleep in the soft lamplight, Tunnel in the Sky at his side..Paul said, "I wanted you ... I don't know ... I just wanted you to see her. I wanted to say ... to say. . .".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.."I'm saying, for all I know." She took her hand off his thigh. "What's all this about Celestina, anyway?". "But nothing equals a quake for killing. Big one in Shaanxi, China, killed eight hundred thirty thousand.". "The doctors," he continued, "needed to repair damage to the left frontal sinus, the sphenoidal sinus, and the sinus cavernous, which had all been partially crushed by that pewter candlestick. Frontal, malar, ethmoid, maxillary, sphenoid, and palatine bones had to be rebuilt to properly contain my right eye, because it sort of ... well, it dangled. That was just for starters, and there was considerable essential dental work, as well. I elected not to have any cosmetic surgery.". "For the love of God," Junior pleaded, "can't you please give me something for the pain?".Unobtrusively, Junior followed the musician across the large front room, but by an indirect arc, using the babbling bourgeoisie for cover..By the time this operation concluded and the sulphurous Mr. Cain was brought to some form of justice, Simon might have spent twenty or twenty-five percent of the fee that he'd collected from the liability settlement in the matter of Naomi Cain's death. The attorney put a substantial price on his dignity and reputation..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.."When you cut Naomi's string, you put an end to the effects that I her music would have on the lives of others and on the shape of the future. YOU struck a discord that can be heard, however faintly, all the way to the farthest end of the universe.".Scowling, Joey stared at the floor in puzzlement, shifted his weight from one foot to the other, sighed, turned his attention to the ceiling, and shifted his weight again, for all the world like a trained bear that couldn't quite remember how to perform its next trick..The sleeves of the pajama top were pushed up, revealing more of the disease's vicious work. The muscles of her useless left arm had atrophied; the once graceful hand curled in upon itself, as though holding an invisible object, perhaps the hope she never abandoned..Their struggle to put their sorrow into words moved Agnes not because they cared so deeply, but because in the end they were unable to express themselves adequately. Without the relief provided by expression, their anguish grew corrosive. Their lifelong introversion left them without the social skills to unburden themselves or to provide solace to others. Worse, their obsessions with death, in all its many means and mechanisms, had prepared them to expect Barty's cancer, which left them neither shocked nor capable of consolation, but merely resigned. Ultimately, in great frustration, each twin was reduced to fragmented sentences, crippled gestures, quiet tears-and Agnes became the only consoler..When the waiter had gone, -Tom said, "Don't worry about abetting a crime. If I had to pop Cain to prevent him from hurting someone, I wouldn't hesitate. But I'd never act as judge and jury otherwise.".Celestina turned in her seat to look back at Wally and Angel, who were waving. "I guess I am.".Dr. Daines spoke with Celestina in the corridor, outside the door to 724. Some of the passing nurses were nuns in wimples and full-length habits, drifting like spirits along the hallway..Tom knew only three of the eight. Grace White, Angel, and Paul Damascus. The others were introduced quickly by Celestina. Agnes Lampion, their hostess. Edom and Jacob Isaacson, brothers to Agnes. Maria Gonzalez, best friend to Agnes. And Barty.."I suppose anyone could fill some empty gelatin capsules with the syrup," said Parkhurst. "But-" "Roll your own, so to speak. Then he could palm a few of them, swallow

'em without water, and the reaction would be delayed maybe. Flush with the promise of their engagement, still excited by the success at the gallery, with Angel exuberant in spite of the hour and Oreo energized, he was amazed that they had made the transfer of the little red whirlwind from house to Buick to house with nothing else forgotten other than one purse. Celie called it ballet, but Wally thought that it was merely momentary order in chaos, the challenging-joyous-frustrating-delightful-exhilarating chaos of a life full of hope and love and children, which he wouldn't have traded for calm or kingdoms..Not many men wore hats these days. Since his teenage years, Nolly had favored a porkpie model. San Francisco was often chilly, and he began losing his hair when still young..To Agnes, Jacob said, "Likely to be a sunnier fortune if the cards are bright and fresh, don't you think?". That evening, he was filled with a greater sense of adventure than he'd felt since arriving in the city from Oregon. Consequently, he treated himself to three glasses of a superb Bordeaux and a filet mignon in the same elegant hotel lounge where he had dined on his first night in San Francisco, almost three years earlier..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..She didn't have experience with guns, but having seen him trying to press cartridges into the magazine, she knew how to load. She inserted one round. Then a second. Enough..Now, without realizing when it had happened, he had been lowered from his knees to his right side. Head elevated and tilted by one of the paramedics. So he could expel the bile, the blood, rather than choke on it..He rolled his head back and forth on the pillow. "Nope. It's still just something you gotta feel.".She had lighted one candle for each of eleven apostles, none for the twelfth, Judas, the betrayer. Consequently, after burning a fragment of the cards in each votive glass, she was left with one piece.. "I find you more than adequate in all ways that count. Besides, Joey was a generous and good lover. What he taught me, I can share." She smiled. "You'll find that I'm a darn good teacher, and I sense in you a star pupil.".By dawn, when the intestinal paroxysms finally passed, this bold new man of adventure felt as flat and limp as road kill..She wouldn't answer him, but he was as convinced by her silence as he would have been by a blurted confession--or by a denial, for that matter. Her wild eyes convinced him, too, and her trembling mouth. Naomi had come back to be with him, and it could be argued that Seraphim had returned in a sense, too, for this girl was the flesh of Seraphim's flesh, born out of her death..During the walk home: slow and deep, breathing slow and deep, moving not at a brisk clip, but strolling, trying to let the tension slide away, striving to focus on good things like his full exemption from military service and his purchase of the Sklent painting..But first, March 23: the bad date with Frieda Bliss, and what he discovered in his apartment when he came home that night..Hard experience had taught him, however, that killing someone he knew, while occasionally necessary, didn't release stress. Or if it did briefly release stress, then unforeseen consequences always contributed to even worse future stress..Somehow, Agnes knew that in his younger days, Obadiah had been a stage magician. Artlessly, she drew him out on the subject..Raise high the candlestick. In spite of the masking music, breathe shallowly and through the mouth. Remain poised, ready..He feared that suicide was a ticket to Hell, and he knew that sinless Perri was not waiting for him in those lower realms..Captivated by catastrophe, so lost in his book that he might as well have stepped magically inside of it and closed the covers after himself, Uncle Jacob didn't answer..Even the Shantung-softened lamplight blazed too bright and did not serve her well, so she switched it off and said, "Scoot over.".Nevertheless, Thomas Vanadium's hostile ghost, that terrible prickly bur of stubborn energy, wasn't done with Junior yet. Until Bartholomew was dead, the cop's filthy-scabby-monkey spirit would keep coming back and coming back, and it would surely grow more violent..After the stupid bastards read a newspaper or smoked a few cigarettes, they finally broke down the door. Satisfyingly dramatic: the crack of splintering wood, the crash..The wink startled and baffled Edom. Oddly, he thought of the mysterious, disembodied, and eternally unwinking eye in the floating pinnacle of the pyramid that was on the back of any one-dollar bill..From serviceway to alley to serviceway to street, into the city and the fog and the night, Junior ran from the Cain past into the Pinchbeck future..For reasons of mice and dust, doors at the Lampion house were never left ajar, let alone open this wide..Not all of the pins were knocked to the shear line with a single pull of the trigger. Three pulls were the minimum required, sometimes as many as six, depending on the lock.. "You sounded as though you were in a lot of distress. You were frightened of this Bartholomew.".Barty read aloud as Agnes drove, because she'd enjoyed the novel only from page 104. He wanted to share with her the exploits of Jim and Frank and their Martian companion, Willis..Nevertheless, when the points of soreness in his brow and cheeks gradually grew worse, he stopped at a service station near Courtland, bought a bottle of Pepsi from a vending machine, and washed down yet another capsule of antihistamines. He also took another antiemetic, four aspirin, and-although he felt no trembling in his bowels-one more dose of paregoric..must either change her mind or commit herself to a more difficult and challenging life than any she had envisioned only this morning.. "New York City, March 25, 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire-one hundred forty-six dead.".Snap, snap, snap! Three more quarters ricocheted off the left side of his face-temple, cheek, jaw..He returned to the house and extinguished the three blown-glass oil lamps on the living-room coffee table. Out, as well, the silk-shade lamp..The family didn't exist in anticipation of developments with Barty and Angel, didn't put the pair at the center of their world. Instead, they did the good work, shared the satisfactions that came daily with being part of Pie Lady Services, and got on with life..He was uncharacteristically restive. His stoic nature, his long learned Jesuit philosophy regarding the acceptance of events as they unfold, and the acquired patience of a homicide detective were insufficient to prevent frustration from taking root in him. In the more than two months since Enoch Cain vanished, following the murder of Reverend White, no trace of the killer had been found. Week by week, the slender sapling of frustration had grown into a tree and then into a forest, until Tom began every morning by looking out through the tightly woven branches of impatience.. "No, I didn't see him,"

Junior reminded the attorney. "I just assumed, when this harassment started here-". "That's obvious to us, but not always to others. Apparently, this would have been some years ago." When people didn't apply themselves to positive goals, to making better lives for themselves, they spent their energy in wickedness. Then Junior shuddered. Vanadium hadn't invented the name. It had genuine if inexplicable resonance with Junior that had nothing to do with the detective. "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." Thus far, there were only two unexpected developments, the first being his explosive vomiting. He hoped he would never have to endure another such episode. As soon as he was alone, however, Junior yearned for the nurse to return. Alone, he felt vulnerable, threatened. Dr. Chan's manner remained professional, providing the strength that Agnes required, but his pain was evident when his gentle voice softened further: "These tumors are so advanced, we won't know until surgery if the malignancy has spread. We may already be too late. And if we aren't too late, we'll have only a small window of opportunity. A small window. Eight days would entail too much risk." During the cleaning, installation of new carpet, and painting that had followed the removal of the diarrhetic pig set loose by one of Cain's disgruntled girlfriends, the wife killer had spent a few nights in a hotel. Nolly took advantage of the opportunity to bring his associate James Hunnicolt--Jimmy Gadget--onto the premises to provide a customized, undetectable, exterior window-latch release. 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. "Sit down, sit down," Agnes urged. "I can offer coffee now and pie in a little bit." 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. The girl smiled, as stunningly beautiful as he remembered her, but she was no longer fifteen, as she had been when last he'd seen her. Since her death in childbirth nearly three years ago, she'd matured and grown lovelier than ever. Although this was perhaps the happiest evening of Celestina's life, it wasn't without a note of melancholy. She couldn't avoid thinking about Phimie. He was about to lift the body out of the chair when he heard the car in the driveway. He might not have caught the sound of the engine so distinctly and so early if the stereo had not been in the process of changing albums. For more than twenty-three years, he'd given his big toe little consideration, had taken it for granted, had treated it with shameful neglect. Now this lower digit seemed precious, a comparatively small fixture of flesh, but as important to his image of himself as his nose or either of his eyes. Slow deep breathing forgotten, gasping like a drowning swimmer, a sudden sweat dripping from his brow, Junior used one foot to prod the fallen man. He had nothing against Negroes. He didn't wish them ill. He wasn't prejudiced. Live and let live. He believed that as long as they stayed with their own kind and abided by the rules of a polite society, like everyone else, they had a right to live in peace. Someone she had known. Someone Celestina, too, might know. He lived in or around Spruce Hills, because Phimie had considered him still to be a threat. The sign promised topless dancers. Although Junior had been in San Francisco for over a week, he had not yet sampled this avant-garde art form. Shaking his head, his coffee cup rattling against the saucer, Edom said, "Uh, no, sir, no, I don't think we've ever met till now." This guy was spooky. Junior was beginning to think that the detective's unorthodox behavior wasn't a carefully crafted strategy, as it had first seemed, but that Vanadium was a little wacky. 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. Junior picked up his pace, pushing through the crowd, repeatedly glancing back, and although he caught only quick squints of the dead cop's face, he could tell that something was terribly wrong with it. Never a candidate for matinee-idol status, Vanadium looked markedly worse than before. The port-wine birthmark still pooled around his right eye. His features were not merely pan-flat and plain, as they had been before, but were ... distorted. Nolly shook his head, setting a cotillion of warts and moles adance on his pendulous cheeks. "Ask any adoptee who, as an adult, has tried to team the names of his real parents. Easier to drag a freight train up a mountain by your teeth." With his empty sockets draped by unsupported lids, Barty rode home wearing padded eye patches under sunglasses, his cane propped against the seat at his side, as though he were costumed for a role in a play filled with a Dickensian amount of childhood suffering. The police. The stupid police. Ringing the bell when they knew he'd been shot. Ringing the damn doorbell when he lay here helpless, the Industrial Woman lurching toward him, his toe on the other side of the kitchen, ringing the doorbell when he was losing enough blood to give transfusions to an entire ward of wounded hemophiliacs. The stupid bastards were probably expecting him to serve tea and a plate of butter cookies, little paper doilies between each cup and saucer. Neither hesitantly nor recklessly, the boy set off across the lawn toward the porch steps. He maintained a far straighter line than Agnes would have been able to keep with her eyes closed. After examining Phimie, who was nauseous, Daines prescribed an anticonvulsant, an antiemetic, and a sedative, all intravenously. The announcement poster seemed enormous, huge, far bigger than she remembered it, crazily-recklessly large. By its very size, it challenged critics to be cruel, dared the fates to celebrate her triumph by shaking the city to ruin right now, in the quake of the century. She wished Helen Greenbaum had opted, instead, for a few lines of type on an index card, taped to the glass. Ichabod passed Bartholomew through the open door to Celestina in the passenger's seat, went

around the Buick, put the tote bag in the back, and climbed behind the wheel once more..Part of him knew this sound was his heartbeat, not the footfalls of an otherworldly pursuer, but that part of him wasn't dominant at the moment. He moved faster, not exactly running, but hurrying like a man late for an appointment..Although faint and somewhat hollow, the woman's crooning was pure and so on-note that this a cappella rendition fell as pleasantly on the ear as any voice sweetened by an orchestra. Yet the song had a disturbing quality, as well, an eerie note of yearning, longing, a piercing sadness. For want of a better word, her voice was haunting..The vending machines were designed to accept quarters, not to eject them. They didn't make change. Mechanically, this barrage wasn't possible..This surprised him. Of course, Oregon was not the Deep South. It was a progressive state. Nevertheless, he was surprised. Oregon wasn't home to many Negroes, either, a handful compared to those in other states, and yet until now Junior supposed that they had their own cemeteries..One moment, girl and yellow vinyl ball. The next moment, gone as if they'd never been..Vanadium was no ordinary cop, as he himself had said. In his obsession, convinced that Junior had murdered Naomi and impatient with the need to find evidence to prove it, what was to stop the detective if he decided to deal out justice himself? What was to prevent him from walking up to the Suburban right now and shooting his suspect pointblank?.On Friday evening, he had arranged for the drawing of the aces, but he had not stacked the subsequent twelve cards to provide for the selection of four identical knaves at three-card intervals. He'd sat in stunned."Both. Brain and heart. But I've thought it through, Daddy. More than anything in my life, I've thought this through."Agnes was grateful for the speed with which these arrangements were made, but she was also disturbed. Chan's expeditious management of Barty's case resulted in part from his friendship with Joshua, but an urgency arose, as well, during his examination of the boy, from a suspicion that he remained reluctant to put into words. Dr. Morley Schurr, the oncologist, who had offices in a building near Hoag Hospital, proved to be tall and portly, although otherwise much like Franklin Chan: kind, calm, and confident..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..He moved the shaker across the tablecloth, rocking it back and forth to convey that he was strolling without a care in the world..Having survived the night, Edom and Jacob were waiting in the hall. Each kissed his nephew, but neither could speak..That happened ten years ago, the first and last time anyone shot at Nolly. The real work of a private eye had nothing in common with the glamorous stuff depicted on television and in books. This was a low-risk profession full of dull routine, as long as you chose your cases wisely--which meant staying away from clients like Enoch Cain..She was so hot that the ice melted quickly. A thin trickle slid down her throat, but not enough to take the Sahara out of her voice when she said, "More."As quick as a snake strikes, Vanadium was much closer to the bed than he had been when he tossed the coin, at Junior's side now, leaning over the railing. "Naomi was six weeks pregnant."Junior gave the Raisinets to him, and Google left the theater with his candy and his cash..Although to Paul this was no more than childish chatter, Tom knew at once that the girl referred to his explanation for why he wasn't sad about his damaged face: the salt and pepper shakers representing two Toms, the hit-and-run rhinoceros, the different worlds all in one place. "Yes, Angel. That's something like what I was talking about."Almost as an afterthought, as he was leaving, he tucked the brochure for "This Momentous Day" into a jacket pocket. There would be amusement value in hearing a group of cutting-edge young artists analyze Celestina's greeting-card images. Besides, as the Academy of Art College was the premier school of its type on the West Coast, a few of the partygoers might actually know her and be able to give him some valuable background. The party raged in a cavernous loft on the third-and top-floor of a converted industrial building, the communal residence and studio of a group of artists who believed that art, sex, and politics were the three hammers of violent revolution, or something like that..That night her sleep was deeper than it had been in a long time, deep as she had expected sleep would never be again, and she was not plagued by any dreams at all, not a dream of children suffering, nor of tumbling in a car along a rain-washed street, nor of thousands of windblown dead leaves rattling-hissing along a deserted street and every leaf in fact a jack of spades..He was having difficulty focusing his attention on the problem at hand. Through his mind, odd and disconnected thoughts rolled like slow, greasy, eye-of-the-hurricane waves on an ominous sea..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..Although she was aware that these extraordinary events would shape the rest of her life, beginning with her actions in the hours immediately ahead of her, she could not clearly see what she ought to do next. At the core of her confusion was a conflict of mind and heart, reason and faith, but also a battle between desire and duty. Until she was.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!"The glittering room appeared unchanged. Even the piano player seemed to be the man who'd been at the keyboard back then, though his yellow-rose boutonniere and probably his tuxedo, as well, were new..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..Ursula K. Le Guin.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.."I get frustrated," he admitted. "Trying to learn how to do things in the dark ... I get peed off, as they say."Already another contraction racked her, so intense that the pain was not limited to her lower back and abdomen, but seared the length of her sphic, like an electric current leaping vertebra to vertebra. Her breath pinched in her chest as though her lungs had collapsed..First, he searched immediately around the dead

man, figuring that the watch might still be snared on the coat belt or on one of the sleeve straps. No luck..The adoption records on Seraphim White's baby weren't sealed by law, because custody of the child was being retained by family..In fact, although weak and aching, Junior felt mentally refreshed and wonderfully alert..Maria said nothing, working busily, but Agnes recognized that special silence in which difficult words were sought and laboriously stitched together..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~.Edom, eager to learn precisely when a tidal wave or falling asteroid would bring his doom, fetched a pack of cards from a cabinet in the parlor. When Maria explained that only every third card was read and that a full look at the future required four decks, Edom returned to the parlor to scare up three more.. "But before you leave St. Mary's," the physician said, "I'd like a few minutes of your time. It's very important to me. Personally..". Thrilled to have inspired this awe in her, he closed the book. "Remember what we talked about a long time ago? You asked me how come, if I could walk where the rain wasn't. . .". Junior didn't care which explanation was correct. Only one thing mattered: The Bartholomew hunt was at last nearing an end. On Wednesday, December 27, Junior met Google, the document forger, in a theater, during a matinee of Bonnie and Clyde..Never before had she put faith in any form of prognostication. In the whispery falling of those twelve cards, however, she heard the faint voice of truth, not quite a coherent truth, not as clear a message as she might have wished, but a murmur that she couldn't ignore.

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