

F LIFE THE BUSINESS OF ABOLISHING WORK AND TURNING THIS WORLD BACK

Junior couldn't leave the dead man in the hall and hope to have any quality time with Celestina..when red aces weft followed by disturbing jacks, Agnes had pretended to take her son's card-told fortune lightly, especially the frightful part of it. In fact, a coldness had twisted through her heart..Too much clatter, drawing attention. No leisure for romance now, no chance for a two-sister score. just kill Celestina, kill Bartholomew, and go, go..Lipscomb shifted his gaze from the street below to the source of the rain. "Phimie was not gone long, perhaps a minute-a minute and ten seconds at most-and when she was with us again, it was clear from her condition that the cardiac arrest was most likely secondary to a massive cerebral incident. She was disoriented, paralysis on the right side ... with the distortion of the facial muscles that you saw. Her speech was slurred at first, but then something strange happened. . .Simon Magusson, lacking family, had left his estate to Tom. This came as a surprise. The sum was so considerable that even though Tom was on a dispensation from his vows, which included his vow of property, he was uncomfortable with his fortune. His comfort was quickly restored by contributing the entire inheritance to Pie Lady Services. They had been brought together by two extraordinary children, by the conviction that Barty and Angel were part of some design of enormous consequence. But more often than not, God weaves patterns that become perceptible to us only over long periods of time, if at all. After the past three eventful years, there were now no weekly miracles, no signs in the earth or sky, no revelations from burning bushes or from more mundane forms of communication. Neither Barty nor Angel revealed any new astonishing talents, and in fact they were as ordinary as any two young prodigies can be, except that he was blind and she served as his eyes upon the world..He closed his eyes to know the kitchen as Barty knew it. The fine aromas, the musical clink of spoons, the tinny rattle of pans, the liquid swish of a stirring whisk, the heat from the ovens, the women's voices: Gradually, denying himself sight, he was aware of his other senses sharpening..Maybe his pursuit of the matter sprang from mere curiosity, the desire to discover what a child of his might look like; however, if something else lay behind his interest, the motivation would not be benign. Whatever Cain's intentions, he would prove to be at least an annoyance to Celestina and the little girl-and possibly a danger..Celestina stared at the small, brown face, opening herself to the anger and hatred with which she had regarded this child in the operating room..Reading the dates on the headstone, he saw that the minister's daughter had died on the seventh of January, the day after Naomi had fallen from the fire tower. If ever asked, Junior would have no trouble accounting for his whereabouts on that day..He followed the dead man through the window, into the alley, managing not to step on him..If he had cut himself intentionally for the express purpose of writing the name in blood, then the reservoir of anger was deeper still and pent up behind a formidable dam of obsession..hearts represented either a rival in love or a lover who would betray an enemy who would deeply wound the heart. The knave of diamonds was someone who would cause financial grief. The knave of clubs was someone who would wound with words: one who libeled or slandered, or who assaulted you with mean-spirited and unjust criticism..Paul watched as Barty hopped down from his chair and crossed the busy kitchen in a straight line to the wall phone, without one hesitant move..Mrs. Lombardi had no visitors. She was alone in the world, her two children and her husband having passed away long ago..Rena was cheerful, short, and solid. Her waist measurement must have been two-thirds her height, and she favored floral dresses that emphasized her girth. With a German accent and in a voice that always seemed about to dissolve in a great gale of mirth, she said, "Madchen lieb, you look like a Christmas candle to me."..And as he grew, the boy seemed content with his own company and that of his mother and his uncles. Yet Agnes worried that no children his age lived in their neighborhood. She thought he would be happier if he had a playmate or two..Wild exhilaration burst through him like pyrotechnics blazing in a night sky, reminiscent of the rush of excitement that followed his bold action on the fire tower. Happily, Junior had no emotional connection to Prosser, as he'd had to beloved Naomi; therefore, the purity of his..Junior knew that she must be teasing him. Her sense of play was delicious. Such deviltry in her scintillant blue eyes, such sauciness..Instead of answering the question, meaning to imply that he believed Junior already knew the facts, Thomas Vanadium said, "I was able to get a warrant to search your house." Junior thought this must be a trick. No hard evidence existed to indicate that Naomi had died at the hands of another rather than by accident..SHORTLY BEFORE one o'clock, the Hackachaks descended in a fury, eyes full of bloody intent, teeth bared, voices shrill..Behind his masking hands, the physician let out a thin sound, as though he were trying to pull from his heart an anguish that was embedded like a bur with countless sharp, hooked thorns..His in-laws' chances of receiving compensation for their pain and suffering over Naomi's death were seriously compromised if her husband did not hold the state or county responsible. In this, as in nothing previously, they felt the need to stand united as a family..squint-eyed, sharp-faced night clerk must not have been the owner, because he wasn't the type to have dreamed up cute spellings for the sign out front. Judging by his appearance and attitude, he was a former Nazi death-camp commandant who fled Brazil one step ahead of the Israeli secret service and was now hiding out in Oregon..Finished, Joshua excused himself and went down the hall to his office. He was gone perhaps five minutes, and when he returned, he sent Barty off to the waiting room, where the receptionist kept a jar of lemon- and orange-flavored hard candies. "A few of them have your name on 'em, Bartholomew."..Tom Vanadium was too unnerved by the Cain scare to be interested in the newspaper anymore. The strong black coffee, superb before, tasted bitter now..cocktail lounge to be her personal pickup spot. Naturally, people who worked the lounge knew her, were friendly with her. They would remember any man who accompanied the heiress to her penthouse..In the bedroom once more, before poring through the contents of the nightstand drawers, the dresser drawers, and the closet, he looked in the adjacent bathroom, switched on the light because there was no window-and found Bartholomew on a wall, slashed and punctured, disfigured

by hundreds of wounds. Wally parked the Buick at the curb in front of the house in which he lived, and when Celestina slid across the car seat to the passenger's door, he said, "No, wait here. I'll fetch Angel and drive the two of you home." She woke weeping from the dreams, and she wanted no witnesses. She wasn't embarrassed by her tears. She just didn't want to share them with anyone but Barty. It occurred to her that the knave had come, as foretold by the cards on that night long ago. She had expected the knave to be a man with sharp eyes and a wicked heart, but the curse was cancer and not a man at all. Celestina had no illusions about playing detective. She would never be able to track down the bastard, and she had no stomach for confronting him. Even the Shantung-softened lamplight blazed too bright and did not serve her well, so she switched it off and said, "Scoot over." Dr. Lipscomb inclined his head slightly toward the pianist, in the manner of a stem headmaster about to emphasize a lesson with a sharp twist of the offending boy's ear. "Miss White and the baby will have vacated these premises by the end of the week-unless you insist on bothering them with your chatter. For every minute you harass them, their departure will be extended one day." Somewhere in the world he had a deadly enemy: Bartholomew, who had something to do with babies, a total stranger yet an implacable foe. Animal instinct told Junior that the business with the quarter in the diner and now these quarters in his living room were related to his failure to find Bartholomew, Seraphim White's bastard child. He couldn't logically explain the connection; but as Zedd teaches, animal instinct is the only unalloyed truth we will ever know. Junior jammed on the brakes, slammed the gearshift into park, threw open the door, and plunged from the car. He spun around to face the menace, loose gravel shifting treacherously underfoot. His daughter, his affliction, his millstone, granddaughter of the boil-giving voodoo Baptist ... "Everybody needs cheese," Angel said, which apparently meant that Mrs. Ornwail would never lack work. "Mommy, you're wrong..and proceeded to turn it across his knuckles as swiftly and smoothly as he had with his right hand. Words eluded him again, and he surveyed the coffee shop, as if someone might step forward to speak for him. He realized people were staring, and embarrassment drew a tighter knot in his tongue. Phimie gazed upon the child briefly, then sought her sister's eyes again. Another word. She moved beside him. "For one minute, after her heart stopped the first time, she wasn't here in St. Mary's, was she? Her body, yes, that was still here, but not Phimie." In the sermon that brought him a moment of fame that he'd found more uncomfortable than not, Daddy had used the life of Bartholomew to illustrate his point that every day in every life is of the most profound importance. Bartholomew is arguably the most obscure of the twelve disciples. Some would say Lebbeaus is less known, some might even point to Thomas the doubter. But Bartholomew certainly casts a shadow far shorter than those of Peter, Matthew, James, John, and Philip. Daddy's purpose in proclaiming Bartholomew the most obscure of the twelve was then to imagine in vivid detail how that apostle's actions, seemingly of little consequence at the time, had resonated down through history, through hundreds of millions of lives-and then to assert that the life of each chambermaid listening to this sermon, the life of each car mechanic, each teacher, each truck driver, each waitress, each doctor, each janitor, was as important as the resonant life of Bartholomew, although each dwelt beyond the lamp of fame and labored without the applause of multitudes. He smiled and shrugged. "I used to be a fisher of men. Now I hunt them. One in particular." Celestina indicated to Tom that he should sit at the head of the table, facing Agnes at the foot. As Wally lowered himself into the empty chair to Tom's left, Celestina picked up two items from the sideboard and put them in front of Tom, before sitting to his right. By now he recognized that the man approaching from the other graveside service was neither a Negro nor a stranger. Detective Thomas Vanadium was annoying enough to be an honorary Hackachak. He wanted the most expensive box for Joey; but Joey, a modest and prudent man, would have disapproved. Instead, he selected a handsome but not ornate casket just above the median price. She was four years older than Phimie. They hadn't seen a great deal of each other during the past three years, since Celestina had come to San Francisco. Although distance and time, the press of her studies, and the busyness of daily life had not made her forget that she loved Phimie, she had forgotten the purity and the power of love. Rediscovering it now, she was shaken so badly that she had to pull a chair to the side of the bed and sit down. To be useful, anger must be channeled, as Zedd explains with unusually poetic prose in *The Beauty of Rage: Channel Your Anger and Be a Winner*. Junior's current predicament would only get worse if he had to telephone Roto-Rooter to extract a musician from the plumbing..which was beginning to come into view, was as sharp as pins and needles, sheer torture to her eyes. On the fourth floor, at Dr. Klerkle's suite, the hall door stood ajar. Past office hours, the small waiting room was deserted. By the time he ordered creme 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? "I could have been killed," Junior Cain repeated, suddenly so horrorstruck by this realization that an iciness welled in his gut, and for a while he wasn't able to feel his extremities. Opening his eyes blinking back his tears just as more agonizing contractions knotted his abdomen, he could see ribbons of red in the watery green mess that gushed from him. Bright red. Gastric blood would be dark. This must be pharyngeal blood. Unless an artery had ruptured in his stomach, torn by the incredible violence of these intransigent spasms, in which case he was puking his life away. Maria's hand tamed, the card turned, and another knave of spades revolved into view, snapped against the table. "We want the scary one, 'specially if it has spiders, Pixie Lee said squeakily but defiantly. At the elevators, the orderly suggested that Edom and Jacob take a second cab and meet them on the surgical floor. And the mills of capitalism provide them. Supply meets demand. Fantasy becomes a commodity, an industry. She repeated this ritual eleven more times--"For Andrew, for James, for John"--frequently glancing into the nave behind her, to be sure that she was unobserved. After a minute, he slipped his hand into his pocket. The quarter was still there. Here, now, the dinner guest, entering the kitchen. He carried the wineglass and the rose in his left hand. The Merlot was tucked under his arm. In his right hand was a small, brightly wrapped gift box. Angel. A less exotic synonym for her own name. Seraphim's angel. The angel of an angel. Junior was paying his dinner check and calculating the tip when the pianist launched

into "Someone to Watch over Me." Although he'd expected it all evening, he twitched when he recognized the tune..Agnes dropped to one knee before the boy and held him gently by the shoulders. "Let me look..".The paramedic put aside the needle, having used it, and grabbed the paddles of a."After Elfarran and Morred perished and the Isle of Solea sank beneath the sea, the Council of the Wise governed for the child Serriadh until he took the throne. His reign was bright but brief. The kings who followed him in Enlad were seven, and their realm increased in peace and wealth. Then the dragons came to raid among the western lands, and wizards went out in vain against them. King Akambar moved the court from Berila in Enlad to the City of Havnor, whence he sent out his fleet against invaders from the Kargad Lands and drove them back into the East. But still they sent raiding ships even as far as the Inmost Sea. Of the fourteen Kings of Havnor the last was Maharion, who made peace both with the dragons and the Kargs, but at great cost. And after the Ring of the Runes was broken, and Erreth-Akbe died with the great dragon, and Maharion the Brave was killed by treachery, it seemed that no good thing happened in the Archipelago..When Nolly sighed and frowned, his lumpish face seemed in danger of sliding off his skull, like oatmeal oozing off a spoon. "Mr. Cain, much as I regret it, I'm afraid I'm going to have to return half of the retainer you gave me..".Grace, of course, was a strong woman for whom faith was an armor against far worse than embarrassment. Celestina knew that Mom would suffer immeasurably more heartache by remaining in Oregon than what pain she might experience at her daughter's side, but Phimie was too young, too naive, and too frightened to grasp that in this matter, as in all others, her mother was a pillar, not a reed..Dinner was available in the lounge. Junior enjoyed a superb filet mignon with a split of fine Cabernet Sauvignon..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..Out of Phimie's humiliation, terror, suffering, and death had come Angel, whom Celestina had first and briefly hated, but whom now she loved more than she loved Wally, more than she loved herself or even life itself. Phimie, through Angel, had brought Celestina both to Wally and to a fuller understanding of their father's meaning when he spoke of this momentous day, an understanding that brought power to her painting and so deeply touched the people who saw and bought her art..If he didn't find the Rolex and get back to his car before the reception ended, he'd forfeit his best chance of following Celestina to Bartholomew..Following a month of recuperation and postoperative medical care, Junior was able to return to his twice-a-week classes in art appreciation. He resumed, as well, his almost daily strolls through the city's better galleries and fine museums..For the first time since walking to La Jolla to meet Jonas Salk, Paul planned a journey with a specific purpose..Summary: Explores further the magical world of Earthsea through five tales of events which occur before or after the time of the original novels, as well as an essay on the people, languages, history and magic of the place..No scent of gasoline fouled the air. Apparently, the tank had not burst. Sudden immolation seemed unlikely-but only an hour ago so had Joey's untimely death..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.Later, weak and shaken, as he was packing his suitcase, the urge overcame him again. He was astonished to discover that anything could be left in his intestinal tract..Judging by his great pleasure in learning, Barty didn't feel robbed of anything. To him, the world was an orange of infinite layers, which he peeled and savored with increasing delight..Neddy talked when Celestina paused for breath, talked over her when she didn't pause, heard only his own mellifluous voice and was pleased to conduct both sides of the conversation, wearing her down as surely as-though far more rapidly than-the sand-filled winds of Egypt diminished the pharaohs' pyramids. He talked through the first polite "Excuse me" of the tall man who stepped into the open doorway behind him, through the second and third, and then with an abruptness that was as miraculous as any cure at the shrine of Lourdes, he fell silent when the visitor put a hand on his shoulder, eased him gently aside, and entered the apartment..Now, here, all three on the street and vulnerable at once-the man, Celestina, the bastard boy..".He's an attorney, and this grieving husband comes to him with a big liability case. There's money to be made..".After a while, he dared to crack his eyelids. Pressing against his eyes was a blackness as smooth and as unrelenting as any known by a blind man. Not even a ghost of light haunted the night beyond the window, and the slats of the venetian blind were as hidden from view as the meatless ribs under Death's voluminous black robe..Hisscus, Nork, and Knacker exchanged sharp glances, nonplussed. Finally, one of them said, "We couldn't do that, Mr. Cain. Not until you've consulted an attorney..".Maria Gonzalez brought rice casseroles, homemade tamales, and chile rellenos. Daily, Jacob made cookies and brownies, always a new variety, and in such volume that Maria's plates were heaped with baked goods each time they were returned to her..The presence of the brochure disturbed Vanadium also because he assumed that after being dead-ended by Nolly, Cain had subsequently discovered that Celestina had taken custody of the baby to raise it as her own. For some reason, the nine-toed wonder originally believed the child was a boy, but if he'd tracked down Celestina, he now knew the truth..In retrospect, he realized meditation didn't suit him. It was a passive activity, while by nature he was a man of action, happiest when doing..THOUGH OTHERS MIGHT see magic in the world, Edom was enthralled only by mechanism: the great destructive machine of nature grinding everything to dust. Yet wonder suddenly bloomed in him at the sight of the ace bearing his nephew's name..From a cutlery drawer, Tom withdrew a knife. The largest and sharpest blade in the small collection..Her hands shook, her entire body shook, and in her mind was a hard clatter of fear like the wheels of a roller coaster rattling over poorly seamed tracks..When he heard the snick of the lock being disengaged, he rammed into the men's room..Among those present before the caravan returned were a few who should have known better than to allow this madness. Tom Vanadium, Edom, Maria. They stared up at the boy, tense and solemn, and Agnes could only suppose that they, too, had arrived after the fact, with the boy already beyond easy recall..The spectral singer didn't exhibit her blood-and-bone sisters' reluctance to pursue her man..As one, those around the table raised their eyes to the ceiling and smiled at the

sound of the downpour. Barty, with patches over his empty sockets, also looked up with a smile..Dr. Walter Lipscomb's fingers were longer and more supple than the pianist's, and he had the presence of a great symphony conductor for whom a raised baton was superfluous, who commanded attention by the mere fact of his entry. A tower of authority and self-possession, he said to the becalmed Neddy, "I am this child's physician. She was born underweight and held in hospital to cure an ear infection. You sound as if you have an incipient case of bronchitis that will manifest in twenty-four hours, and I'm sure you wouldn't want to be responsible for this baby being endangered by viral disease." Otter shook his head..Yes, she did, she had one, but not much of one, and compared to the McIntosh in Google's throat, this was just a bitty crab apple, easy to overlook, not excessive for a woman..deodar cedars with layers of drooping branches surrounded the place, and usually they seemed sheltering, but now they loomed, ominous.."I'm glad to hear it," Tom said. His thin smile might have been ironic, though it wasn't easy to interpret the meaning of any subtle expression on his hammered face.."I'll do your share of the housework for a month. If I'm closer to the date, you clean up all my pie-baking and other kitchen messes for a month-the bowls and pans and mixers, everything." Kid's room. Bartholomew's room. Furniture in cheerful primary colors. Pooh posters on the wall..a time, from the carafe on the nightstand. She spooned the ice into Junior's mouth not with the businesslike.He groaned. "That just doesn't cut it, Mom. If I gotta be blind, I think I should get to say peed off." "I ALWAYS EAT CAV-EE-JAR FOR BREAKFAST," said Velveeta Cheese in her stuffed-bear voice..Fortunately, he'd kept neither cash nor his checkbook in the suitcase. With Zedd intact, his losses were tolerable..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..Testing Celestina's nerves as fully as Barty had tested his mother's, Angel pulled-levered -shinnied-swung herself so fast up through the tree, arriving at the boy's side while red streaks still enlivened a sky that was repainting itself purple. She stood in the crook of limbs with him, and her delighted laughter rang down through the cathedral oak. 1975 through 1978: Hare ran from Dragon, Snake fled from Horse, and '78 bounced to the beat, because disco ruled. The reborn Bee Gees dominated the airwaves. John Travolta had the look. Rhodesian rebels, grasping the dangers inherent in any battle between equals, had the manful courage to slaughter unarmed women missionaries and schoolgirls. Spinks won the title from Ali, and Ali won it back from Spinks..Shortly past nine o'clock, an hour after Edom and Jacob had gone, Barty came downstairs, book in hand. "The twisties are back."Thunder less distant now. Around her-the crackle of police radios, the clang of tools being readied, the skirl of a stiffening wind. Dizzying, these sounds. She couldn't shut her ears against them, and when she closed her eyes, she felt as though she were spinning..MONDAY MORNING, far above Joe Lampion's grave, the translucent blue California sky shed a rain of light so pure and clear that the world seemed to have been washed clean of all its stains..In the morning, at breakfast, from this calmer perspective, he looked back at his tantrum in the middle of the night and wondered if he might be in psychological trouble. He decided not. In November and December, Junior studied arcane texts on the supernatural, went through new women at a pace prodigious even for him, found three Bartholomews, and finished ten needlepoint pillows..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..Something was due to happen in this peculiar, extended, almost casual haunting under which he had suffered for more than two years, since finding the quarter in his cheeseburger. While all around him in the streets, people bustled in good cheer, Junior slouched along in a sour mood, temporarily having forgotten to look for the bright side.."Of all the things I might be meant to do with my life," he told Agnes, "I believe nothing will matter more than the small part I've had in bringing together these two children." "You should call San Francisco police, have them put your place under surveillance and nail him if he turns up."He capped the bottle, pocketed it, and then kicked the dead man, kicked him again, and spat on him..And God has four hundred billion billion fingers, and He plays a really hot version of "Hawaiian Holiday..Junior wanted to shoot all of them, but he said, "Take it. Keep it. Get it the hell out of here."A cause now apparent, the fear explained, Agnes held her baby more tightly. So new to the world, he seemed already to be slipping away from her, captured by the whirlpool of a demanding destiny..So keep moving. Don't get hung up on the disgusting aftermath. Keep whistling along like a runaway train. Clean up, clean out, roll on..With a portion of his profits from Tammy Bean's stock picks, Junior had bought a second painting by Sklent. Titled In the Baby's Brain Lies the Parasite of Doom, Version 6, it was so exquisitely repellent that the artist's genius could not be in doubt..Pain again, but not a mere contraction. Such an excruciation, unendurable. The hobnailed wheels ground through her once more, as though she were being broken on a medieval torture device..Suddenly and seriously creaped out, Junior wanted to get away from this nut case. Yet he was frozen by morbid fascination..He tucked his left arm tight against his side and threw himself against the door. The obstructing furniture was heavy, but it moved an inch. If it would give one inch, it would give two, so it wasn't immovable, and he was already as good as in there..More than once, a passing nurse stopped to check on him and to advise him not to exhaust himself.Bellini assured Celestina that they didn't expect Enoch Cain to be so brazen as to follow police vehicles and to renew his assault on her at St. Mary's. Nevertheless, he assigned a uniformed police officer to the hall outside of the waiting room that served friends and family of the patients in the intensive-care unit. And judging by that guard's high level of vigilance, Bellini had not entirely ruled out the possibility that Cain might show up here to finish what he started in Pacific Heights..Perhaps, reluctant to admit to herself that she had yearned for him to do everything that he'd done, she had slowly been inflamed by guilt, until she convinced herself that she had, indeed, been raped. Psychotic little bitch..Eventually, a braless blonde in shiny white plastic boots, a white miniskirt, and a hot-pink T-shirt featuring the silk-screened face of Albert Einstein, said, "Sure, I know her. Had some classes with her. She's nice

enough, but she's kind of nerdy, especially for an Afro-American. I mean, they're never nerdy--am I right?" Jacob had become a card mechanic for one purpose. Not because he'd ever be a gambler. Not to wow friends with card tricks. Not because the challenge intrigued him. He wanted to be able to give Agnes winning cards once in a while, if she was losing too frequently or needed to have her spirits lifted. He didn't feed her winning hands often enough to make her suspicious or to make the games less fun for Edom or Joey. He was judicious. The effort he expended--the thousands of hours of practice--was repaid with interest each time Agnes laughed with delight after being dealt a perfect hand. On the High Marsh. Turning in circles, he tipped his head back, presenting his face to the streaming sky, laughing. A spirit-shredding bleakness clawed at her, but she couldn't permit it to leave her in tatters. If she traded hope for despair, as her brothers had done, Bartholomew would be finished before he'd begun. She owed him optimism, lessons in the joy of life. So quick, this violence, over even as it began. Because he had no interest in aftermath, however, Junior suffered no disappointment at the briefness of the thrill. The past was past, and as he closed the front door and stepped around the body, he focused on the future. 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. He was wrong about this. On the final Friday of every month, in sunshine and in rain, Junior routinely took a walking tour of the six galleries that were his very favorites, browsing leisurely in each and chatting up the galerieurs, with a one-o'clock break for lunch at the St. Francis Hotel. This was a tradition with him, and invariably at the end of each such day, he felt wonderfully cozy. "But what made you choose that life? You must have committed to the seminary awfully young." "I'm gifted to a small extent, and it's an unusual gift," he admitted. "Nothing world-shaking. More than anything, really, it's a special perception I've been given. Angel's gift seems to be different from mine but related. In fifty years, she's the first I've ever met who's somewhat like me. I'm still shaking inside from the shock of finding her. But please, let's save this for Bright Beach and a better evening. You go down there tomorrow with Paul, okay? I'll stay here to look after Wally. When he's able to travel, I'll bring him with me. I know you'll want him to hear what I have to say, too. Is it a deal?" A siren in the city wailed toward St. Mary's. An ambulance. Through streets bustling with hope, always this lament for the dying. The crazy bitch wielded it with such ferocity that the force of the impact with the floor, rebounding upon her, must have numbed her arms. She stumbled backward, dragging the chair, temporarily unable to lift it. 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. Toward the front of the house, along a hallway suddenly as dark as a tunnel, toward a vague light in the seething gloom. And here a window at the end of the hall. In the Suburban with Wally and Grace, as they waited to hit the trail, Celestina said, "He took her to a movie again, Tuesday night." The voice continued, issuing from a device that stood on the desk beside the phone. "Please don't bang up. This is a telephone answering machine. Leave a message after you hear the tone, and I will return your call later." 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. Not yet acknowledged, when our flailing species briefly floats insensate between one desperate swim and another. Traditional logic argued that an infant, no more than two weeks old, could not be a serious threat to a grown man. Usually, he remained still, tense, listening, until enough silence convinced him that the sounds he'd heard had been in the dream, not in the real world. If silence didn't settle him, he went into the living room, only to discover that she was always where he had left her, fork-and-fan-blade face wrenched in a soundless scream. "You didn't at all," Dr. Salk assured him. "I need to talk to you. If you would give me a little of your time..." He hurried the length of the diner, pushing past waitresses, checking out all three of the possibilities, but of course, none of them was the dead detective--or anyone else Junior had ever seen before. He was looking for--what?--a ghost, but vengeful ghosts didn't sit down to a meat-loaf lunch in the middle of a hauntin

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