

## ENGLISH WATER COLOUR WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN COLOUR AND THIRTY SIX OTH

Later, at home, after Agnes sent Edom back to his apartment, she opened a bottle of vodka that she had bought on the way back from Maria's. She mixed it with orange juice in a waterglass..Without excellence, of course, there would be no civilization, no progress, no joy; and Agnes was surprised that this sharp bur of her father's philosophy had stuck deep in her subconscious, prickling and worrying her unnecessarily. She'd thought that she was entirely clean of his influence..When at last the caller spoke again, her voice sounded a kingdom away: "Will you tell Bartholomew ... ?".Junior tossed garments on the floor and across the bed to create the impression that the detective had packed with haste. After being imprudent enough to blast Victoria Bressler five times with his service revolver-perhaps in a jealous rage, or perhaps because he had gone nuts-Vanadium would have been frantic to flee justice..Not that she ever gave any indication that her brothers were other than a source of pride for her. She treated them always with respect, tenderness, and love-as if unaware of their shortcomings..The wine tasted bitter, but Celestina knew that it was sweet. The bitterness was in her, not in the legacy of the grape..Agnes thought crazily of their early dates and the first years of their marriage. They had occasionally gone to the drive-in, sitting close..The hum, the buzz, the rattle, the grinding of machinery, power tools. Sheet steel and tougher structural steel snarling against the teeth of a metal-cutting saw..He no longer had any reason to follow an exercise regimen. For twenty-three years, he'd needed to maintain good health in order to meet his responsibilities, but all the responsibilities that mattered to him had been lifted from his shoulders..The doors were unlocked on a pickup parked next to the Pontiac. Junior lifted the granny onto the front seat of the truck. She was so light, so unpleasantly angular, and she rustled so much that she might have been a new species of giant mutant insect that mimicked human appearance. He was glad, after all, that he hadn't killed her: Granny's prickly--bur spirit might have proved to be as difficult to eradicate as a cockroach infestation. With a shudder, he tossed her purse on top of her, and slammed the truck door..The boy-wonder physician turned to Junior again and assumed an expression of compassion so inauthentic that if he'd been playing a doctor on even the cheesiest daytime soap opera, he'd have been stripped of his actor's-union card, fired, and possibly horsewhipped on a live television special. "We'll be doing the procedure this afternoon, so I wouldn't want to give you anything much for the pain just prior to anesthesia and sedation. But don't you worry, Mr. Pinchbeck. Once we've lanced these boils, when you wake up, ninety percent of the pain will be gone."..He was glad that he'd taken the double dose of antiemetics. In spite of this provocation, his stomach felt as solid and secure as a bank vault..Nor could she begin to imagine the nature of the disaster that had befallen him, leaving his face looking blasted and loose at all its hinges. She had last seen him at Phimie's funeral. A few minutes ago at her doorstep, she'd recognized him only because of his port-wine birthmark..Even Barty seemed to be attentive, but Angel happily applied crayons to a coloring book and hummed softly to herself..He intended to mash the sole of Victoria's right shoe in the pat of butter and leave a long smear on the floor, as though she slipped on it and fell toward the ovens..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.. "You're heaven-sent," Grace assured Paul at breakfast Saturday morning. "With all your stories, you lifted our hearts when we most needed to be lifted."..Paul checked the back of the Suburban, since he fancied himself the wagonmaster. He wanted to be sure that the goods were loaded in such a way that they were unlikely to slide or be damaged. "Packed tight. Looks just fine," he declared, and closed the tailgate door..More walls than not, in both rooms, were lined with bookshelves and file cabinets. Here he kept numerous case studies of accidents, man-made disasters, serial killers, spree killers: proof undeniable that humanity was a fallen species engaged in both the unintentional and calculated destruction of itself..During the drive, he alternated between great gales of delighted laughter and racking sobs wrought by pain and self-pity. The voodoo Baptist was dead, the curse broken with the death of he who had cast it. Yet Junior must endure this final devastating plague..Indeed, the tree inspired him. After he shot the girl, he would open the window and toss her body into the oak Let Celestina find her there, randomly pierced by branches in a freestyle crucifixion.. "Some Baptists are opposed to drink, Doctor, but we're the wicked variety. Though all we have is a warm bottle of Chardonnay.".. "Take care you don't beat evil into him," said his aunt..To see his newborn baby girl, Barty shared the sight of other Bartys, and he so adored this little wrinkled Mary that he sustained his vision all day, until a thunderous migraine became too much to bear and a sudden frightening slurring of speech drove him back to the comfort of blindness..About ten feet from the trunk of the oak, Barty departed his straight route and began to circle the tree.. "That won't do it."..Sliding Victoria's chair away from the table, he turned her to face him. He adjusted her body so that her head was tipped back and her arms were hanging slack at her sides..deodar cedars with layers of drooping branches surrounded the place, and usually they seemed sheltering, but now they loomed, ominous..Feroocious pirates, ruthless secret agents, brain-eating aliens from distant galaxies, super criminals hell-bent on ruling the world, bloodthirsty vampires, face-gnawing werewolves, savage Gestapo thugs, mad scientists, satanic cultists, insane carnival freaks, hate-crazed Ku Klux Klansmen, knife-worshiping thrill killers, and emotionless robot soldiers from other planets had slashed, stabbed, burned, shot, gouged, torn, clubbed, crushed, stomped, hanged, bitten, eviscerated, beheaded, poisoned, drowned, radiated, blown up, mangled, mutilated, and tortured uncounted victims in the pulp magazines that Paul had been reading since childhood. Yet not one scene in those hundreds upon hundreds of issues of colorful tales withered a corner of his soul as did a glimpse of Barty's empty sockets. The sight wasn't in the least gory, nor even gruesome. Paul cringed and looked away only because this evidence of the boy's loss too pointedly made him think about

the terrible vulnerability of the innocent in the freight-train path of nature, and threatened to tear off the fragile scab on the anguish that he still felt over Perri's death. He was a man of medicine and science, who had been served well by hard logic and by an unwavering commitment to reason. He wasn't prepared easily to accept the notion that logic and reason, while essential tools to anyone hoping to lead a full and happy life, were nevertheless sufficient to describe either the physical world or the human experience. In a cabinet above the bench, Junior found a pair of clean, cotton gardening gloves. He tried them on, and they fit well enough. The cop had picked up the .22 pistol, using a pencil through the trigger guard, to prevent the destruction of fingerprints. 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." Indeed, he would get through the rest of 1965 without resorting to another homicide. The nonfatal shooting in September would be regrettable, quite messy, painful-but necessary, and calculated to do as little damage as possible. Dear Lord, how she loved her sugarpie, her little M&M. Three years had passed in what seemed like a month, and although there had been stress and struggle, too few hours in every day, less time for her art than she would have liked, and little or no time for herself, she wouldn't have traded being blindsided by motherhood for any amount of wealth, not for anything in the world ... except to have Phimie back. Angel was the moon, the sun, the stars, and all the comets streaking through infinite galaxies: an ever-shining light. By Friday morning, September 10, little more than forty-eight hours after the shooting, he felt good and was in fine spirits. The unmatched suite of bedroom furniture, cheap and scarred, might have been purchased at a thrift shop. A double bed and one nightstand. A small dresser. "I'm a less philosophical sort than Kathleen," Nolly said, "so what I've been wondering is where you learned the tricks with the quarter. How is it you're priest, cop-and amateur magician?" 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. "Sure. Or why don't I pull a Rumpelstiltskin and demand one of her children for payment' ". But she knew. Barty, buoyant as ever, seemed not to be much worried about the problem with his vision. He appeared to expect that it would pass like any sneezing fit or cold. Finally sleeping, he had anxiety dreams of being in a public rest room, overcome by urgent need, only to find that every stall was occupied by someone he had killed, all of them vengefully determined to deny him a chance for dignified relief. After carefully wiping her fingers on a paper napkin, Maria examined the garments with interest. She carried her living as the seamstress at Bright Beach Dry Cleaners. At the sight of each rent, popped button, and split seam she clucked her tongue. This was not the time to ponder the nature of the relationship between the treacherous Miss Bressler and Vanadium. Junior had a bloody trail to cover, and precious time was ticking away. 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. ... 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. "Our little girl's going to walk backward her whole life if you drive in reverse all the way to the hospital." In Oregon, standing at Junior Cain's bedside, turning a quarter across the knuckles of his left hand, Thomas Vanadium asks about the name that his suspect had spoken in the grip of a nightmare. Then from San Francisco International, through the fog-shrouded streets of the night city, to St. Mary's, to Room 724. And to the discovery that Phimie's blood pressure was so high-210 over 126-that she was in a hypertensive crisis, at risk of a stroke, renal failure, and other life-threatening complications. "Oh? Do they rent their house out to pirates with little pirate children, clowns with little clown children?" "Ah, evidently you can read my mind. Scarier than heart reading any day. Maybe there's a thin line between minister's daughter and witch." "Don't worry," Celestina told him, "after what we've seen this past week, we're still with you." After examining Phimie, who was nauseous, Daines prescribed an anticonvulsant, an antiemetic, and a sedative, all intravenously. The night of Barty's birth, when Joey actually lay dead in the pickup-bashed Pontiac, as a paramedic had rolled Agnes's gurney to the back door of the ambulance, she had seen her husband standing there, untouched by that rain as her son was untouched by this. But Joey-dry-in-the-storm had been a ghost or an illusion fostered by shock and loss of blood. His profession was cocktail piano, though he didn't have to earn a living at it. He had inherited a fine four-story house in a good neighborhood of San Francisco and also a sufficient income from a trust fund to meet his needs if he avoided extravagance. Nevertheless, he worked five evenings a week in an elegant lounge in one of the grand old hotels on Nob Hill, playing highly refined drinking songs for tourists, businessmen from out of town, affluent gay men who stubbornly continued to believe in romance in an age that valued flash over substance, and unmarried heterosexual couples who were working up a buzz to ensure that their rigorously planned adulteries would seem glamorous. If the directory proved to be of no help, Junior would proceed next to the registry office at the county courthouse, to review the records of births going back to the turn of the century if necessary. Bartholomew, of course, might not have been born in the county, might have moved here as a child or an adult. If he owned property, he'd show up on the register of deeds. Whether a landowner or not, if he did his civic duty every two years, he would appear on the voter rolls. After arranging to have the gallery deliver his acquisition, Junior stopped in a nearby diner for lunch. The place

specialized in superb heartland food: meat loaf, fried chicken, macaroni and cheese..She switched off the hall light and stood at the half-open door, listening, waiting..Sitting up in bed, he passed a little time reading favorite, marked passages in Zedd's *You Are the World*. The book presented a brilliant argument that selfishness was the most misunderstood, moral, rational, and courageous of all human motivations..She searched the child's unfocused eyes for some sign of the hateful father's wickedness..Kitchen to dining room, dining room to hallway, keeping his back to the wall, easing quickly along, then into the foyer. Wait here, listening.."-and when I get up off the street, my clothes are a mess, and I've got this face."..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..just as Sinatra broke into song again, Junior thought he heard a footstep on the wood floor of the hallway, and the creak of a board. The music masked the sounds of the visitor's approach if, indeed, he was approaching..Nothing in his reading offered a satisfactory explanation for what had been happening to him. None of the women filled the hole in his heart, and all of the Bartholomews were harmless. Only the needlepoint offered any satisfaction, but though Junior was proud of his craftsmanship, he knew that a grown man couldn't find fulfillment in stitchery alone.."Honey," she said, crouching to peer at him through the vertical slats of the playpen, "what're you doing?"..Enigmatic as ever on this subject, he continued: "I'm probably not blind more places than I am. Yeah, sure, I'd rather be me in one of the other places where my eyes are good, but this is the me I am. And you know what?".."If you ranted at him about earthquakes, tornadoes, erupting volcanoes, and all that stuff, how could he mistake you for me?"..Routinely she dreamed of Joey. Not nightmares. No blood, no reliving of the horror. In her dreams, she was on a picnic with Joey or at a carnival with him. Walking a beach. Watching a movie. A warmth pervaded these scenes, an aura of companionship, love. Except eventually she always glanced away from Joey, and when she looked again, he was gone, and she knew that he was gone forever.."Quick, very quick," he warned, helping Grace through the fire framed window and onto the roof of the porch..The operator attempted to calm him, but he remained hysterical. Between gasps and sharp squeals of pretended pain, he shakily rattled off his name, address, and phone number..body on the flight out of San Francisco. When finally her obligations were met, she..Now he had to focus on being ready for the evening of January 12: the reception for Celestina White's art show. She had adopted her sister's baby. Little Bartholomew was in her care; and soon, the kid would be within Junior's reach..Over the following hour, as Walter Panglo guided Jacob through the planning of the funeral, Jacob recounted the gruesome details of numerous airliner--crashes, shipwrecks, train collisions, coal-mine disasters, darn collapses, hotel fires, nightclub fires, pipeline and oil-well explosions, munitions--plant explosions.....At the mention of her son's name, Agnes stiffened. There were numerous ways for Deed to have learned the baby's name, yet it seemed wrong for him to know it, wrong to use it, the name of this child he had nearly orphaned, had almost killed..Barty had awakened able to read. On the page, lines of type no longer twisted under his gaze..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."..Unobtrusively, Junior followed the musician across the large front room, but by an indirect arc, using the babbling bourgeoisie for cover..Tom didn't attribute supernatural powers to this killer. Enoch Cain was mortal, not all-seeing and all-knowing. Evil and stupidity often go together, however, and arrogance is the offspring of their marriage, as Tom had earlier told Celestina. An arrogant man, not half as smart as he thinks, with no sense of right and wrong, with no capacity for remorse, can sometimes be so breathtakingly reckless that, ironically, his recklessness becomes his greatest strength. Because he is capable of anything, of taking risks that mere madmen wouldn't consider, his adversaries can never predict his actions, and surprise serves him well. If he also possesses animal cunning, a kind of deep intuitional shrewdness, he can react quickly to the negative consequences of his recklessness and can indeed appear to be more than human..Otter was silent a while. Then he said in a low voice, "Clay, and gravel, and under that the rock that bears garnets. All under this part of the city is that rock. I don't know the names."..It's been a joy to me to go back to Earthsea and find it still there, entirely familiar, and yet changed and still changing. What I thought was going to happen isn't what's happening, people aren't who--or what--I thought they were, and I lose my way on islands I thought I knew by heart..The gas oven might blow up in his face, at last bringing him peace, but if it didn't, he would at least have cookies for Agnes..Perhaps she was afflicted with only expressive aphasia, but she must be confused to some degree. The baby, which would be placed for adoption, was not hers to name..As they savored the icy martinis, she asked about the client, and Nolly said, "He bought the story. I won't be seeing him again."..Head lowered, as if his visit to Jacob were a weight that bowed him, his attention was on the ground. Otherwise, he might not have noticed, might not have been halted by, the intricate and beautiful pattern of sunlight and shadow over which he walked..Then by ambulance to the hospital, whisked into surgery, and for a while, blessed unconsciousness..If this insurance payoff was not mere coincidence, if it was the wealth that had been foretold, then how far behind the fortune did the knave travel? Years? Months? Days?..At eight o'clock in the evening, Junior parked two blocks past the target house. He walked back to the Prosser residence, gloved hands in the pockets of his raincoat, collar turned up..The hospital room was softly lighted, and shadows roosted on all sides like a flock of slumbering birds..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..After a little silence Otter said, "Thanks." And he looked up at Hound, one brief, questioning, judging glance..If Cain had been attracted to one woman by her looks, surely he would be attracted to the other. And perhaps the sisters shared a quality other than beauty that drew Cain with even greater power. Innocence, perhaps, or goodness: both foods for a demon..At first

all had gone well. Agnes, Maria, and Edom were rightly amazed. A thrill of wonder and big smiles all around the table. They were enthralled by the astoundingly favorable fall of cards, a breathtaking mathematical improbability..Lowering his surgical mask, Dr. Lipscomb approached Celestina, where she stood with her back pressed to the wall..Although the girl was unable to articulate why she preferred not to have her mother at her side, they all understood the tumult in her heart. She couldn't bear to subject her gentle and proper mother to the shame and embarrassment that she herself felt so keenly and that she imagined would grow intolerably worse in the hours or days ahead, until and even after the birth..His attention, as morbid as a circling vulture, settled upon the pianist's right hand. The left was open, palm down. But the right was crumpled shut, palm up..The reverend said, "I'm sure you underestimate my parishioners, Celestina. They won't be scandalized. They'll open their hearts." This room didn't face the street by which Cain would approach the building, so Vanadium switched on the lights. He spent fifteen minutes examining the mundane contents of the cupboards, searching for nothing in particular, merely getting an idea of how the suspect lived-and, admittedly, hoping for an item as helpful to a conviction as a severed head in the refrigerator or at least a plastic-wrapped kilo of marijuana in the freezer..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..With the great tree ninety degrees to his left, he was able to locate the back-porch steps at forty-five degrees. He pointed with the cane, which otherwise he had not used. "The porch? ".At the front door of the funeral home, as Panglo was showing him out, Jacob leaned close. "Joe Lampion didn't have any gold teeth."..which was tied a gift tag bearing a hand-printed message: With our compliments. Thanks for your business..pride, his one great shining moment but also his sinful pride. Clubbed with the trophy first, fists later. And now, here..When the old man died and Agnes inherited the property, the three of them played cards in the backyard for the first time on the day of his funeral, played openly rather than in secret, almost giddy with freedom. Eventually, when Agnes fell in love and married, Joey Lampion joined their card games, and thereafter, Jacob and Edom enjoyed a greater sense of family than they had ever known before..A energy fighting over jurisdiction. We cooperate. The sheriff can de not to put a lot of his limited resources into this, and no one will blame him. He can call it an accident and close the case, and he won't..Paul shook his head. "Oh, no. People look at our marriage, and they think I gave up so much, but I got back a lot more than I gave."..She proceeded down the shadowy center aisle, genuflected at the chancel railing, and went to the votive rack..In the present, long after the execution of Josef Krepp, half a block ahead, lay the Lipscomb house. Beyond it, the Lampion place..A sense of mystery overcame Agnes, unnerving but not entirely or even primarily unpleasant..The missing paintings. The missing collection of Zedd's books. You didn't take these things with you for a weekend in Reno. You took them if you thought you might never be coming back..At the midpoint of the table, directly under the chandelier, the flashing silvery disc turned through the air, turned, turned, turned out of this world into another.."Sure they do," said Wally as he unlocked the two deadbolts. "But you gotta be twenty-one years old to get a license for one."..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..In a minute or two, one of the cops returned, crouching close as the medics worked. "There's no intruder."..More than twice, worried nurses-and even a resident internist braved the tumult to check on Junior's condition. They asked if he really felt up to entertaining visitors, these visitors..For her, the suspense that grew throughout dinner didn't have much to do with whether or not Wally would pop the question, because if he didn't broach the subject this time, she intended to take the initiative. Instead, Celestina was more tense about whether or not Wally expected that a heartfelt expression of commitment should be sufficient to induce her to sleep with him..She traded silence for silence. Then: "Kiddo, I'm still totally confused by this stuff."..Later, in early '66, out of his coma and recovering sufficiently to have visitors, Vanadium spent a most difficult hour with his old friend Harrison White. Out of respect for the memory of his lost daughter, and not at all out of concern for his image as a minister, the reverend had refused to acknowledge either that Seraphim had been pregnant or that she'd been raped-although Max Bellini had already confirmed the pregnancy and believed, based on cop's instinct, that it had been the consequence of rape. Harrison's attitude seemed to be that Phimie was gone, that nothing could be gained by opening this wound, and that even if there was a villain involved, the Christian thing was to forgive, if not forget, and to trust in divine justice.."Yes, Barty," Tom said. "I feel a depth to life, layers beyond layers. Sometimes it's ... scary. Mostly it inspires me. I can't see these other worlds, can't move between them. But with this quarter, I can prove that what I feel isn't my imagination." He extracted a quarter from a jacket pocket, holding it between thumb and forefinger for all but Barty to see. "Angel? ".More likely than not, this was a lie, and the detective was, setting him up. Suddenly Junior wished that he had denied dreaming.."One of the things I was searching for in your house was a life insurance policy on your wife. I didn't find one. Didn't find any canceled checks for the premium, either."..Maria's mother, visiting from Mexico, was babysitting, so Maria came without her children, as a guest, joining Agnes and the laugh-a-minute Isaacson twins, chroniclers of destruction. They ate in the dining room, rather than at the kitchen dinette, with a lace-trimmed tablecloth, the good china, crystal wineglasses, and fresh flowers..His exceptional sensitivity remained a curse. He had been more profoundly affected by Victoria's and Vanadium's tragic deaths than he had realized. Wrenched, he was..He had dragged Ichabod halfway across the threshold when he heard someone say, "No.".. "You know where it comes from," her mother said with a yawn that betrayed her exhaustion after a night with no sleep and too much drama..Vanadium's smile, in that tragically fractured face, might have alarmed most people, but Kathleen found it appealing because of the indestructible spirit it revealed..Tom between curiosity and emotional exhaustion, Celestina held his gaze, thinking, and

finally she said, "Deal." 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. He had recently learned about the demigods of classic mythology in one of the selections from the Book-of-the-Month Club. In the afternoon, Dr. Schurr came to the hospital to review test results and to reexamine Barty. When the early-winter twilight gave way to night, he sent them back to Dr. Chan, and Agnes didn't press Schurr for an opinion. All day she'd been impatient for a diagnosis, but suddenly she was loath to have the facts put before her. Junior had left the front door locked, because if unlocked, it would look as though he had wanted to facilitate their entry, and it would make them suspicious of the whole scenario. He wanted to say: The vain, power-mad politicians who milk cheers from ignorant crowds, the sports stars and preening actors who hear themselves called heroes and never object, they should all wither with shame at the mention of your name. Your vision, your struggle, the years of grueling work, your enduring faith when others doubted, the risk you took with career and reputation--it's one of the great stories of science, and I'd be honored if I could shake your hand. Tom Vanadium rose to his feet and, with one hand on Barty's shoulder, he surveyed the faces of those gathered on the porch. Most of these people were such new acquaintances that they were all but strangers to him. Nevertheless, for the first time since his early days in St. Anselmo's Orphanage, he'd found a place where he belonged. This felt like home. She wasn't listening closely to him. Numb. She felt as though she were half anesthetized. She was looking past him, at nothing, and his Voice seemed to be coming to her through several layers of surgical masks, though he now wore none at all. He tried to lean back as he dropped, with the hope that he would fall under her, providing cushion if they met with sidewalk instead of lawn. Professional magic was not a field in which many Negroes could find their way to success. Obadiah was one of a rare brotherhood. He felt some guilt at this--but only a little. His sister had done much for him; but jobless, ruled by his obsessions, hobbled by too much of his father's dour nature, there wasn't a lot that he could do for her. Just this benign deceit with the cards. 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." "A ship without an anchor can never be at rest," he answered. "It's at the mercy of the sea." If Junior was patient, he could slip in there, find Bartholomew, kill the boy in bed, whack Ichabod second, and still have a chance to make love to Celestina. Being uniquely sensitive, he had mourned Naomi with his entire body, with violent emesis and pharyngeal bleeding and incontinence. His grief had been so racking that it might have killed him. Enough was enough.

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