

SIMPLEST UNIVERSE THEORY II

Busily, earnestly, with great satisfaction, Junior redirected his anger at Celestina and at the man with her. These two were, after all, guardians of the true Bartholomew, and therefore Junior's enemies..His severed toe lay across the room, on the white tile floor. It stuck up stiffly, nail gleaming, as if the floor were snow and the toe were the only exposed extremity of a body buried in a drift..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."..When the sound-suppressor was properly attached to the pistol, Junior Cain leaned closer to the girl, peered into her eyes, and whispered, "Naomi, are you in there?" Near the top of the stairs, Barty thought he heard voices in his bedroom. Soft and indistinct. When he stopped to listen, the voices fell silent, or maybe he only imagined them..Junior strove to appear properly mortified. "Thought I heard something. Searched the apartment."..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 third-floor apartment directly over Enoch Cain's unit had been leased by Simon Magusson, through his corporation, ever since it became available in March of '66, twenty-two months ago..We have inhabited both the actual and the imaginary realms for a long time. But we don't live in either place the way our parents or ancestors did. Enchantment alters with age, and with the age.."I only told you about that," said Grace, "because it was a very handsome shirt, and I thought you might want to get one for Wally."..Behind her, he said, "And is that my gray cardigan? What did you do to my cardigan?"..At this extreme end of town, no streetlamps lit the pavement. With only moonlight to reveal him, he wasn't likely to be recognized if anyone happened to glance out a window..Nothing remained to be done but to press her shoe in the butter and hammer her head into the corner of the oven door..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..He pushed on the door, but still it resisted, and he surprised himself by letting out a bellow of frustration that expressed quite the opposite of self-control, though no one listening could have the slightest doubt about his determination to commit and command..When Junior complained of severe thirst, Victoria explained that he was to have nothing by mouth until morning. He would be put on a liquid diet for breakfast and lunch. Soft foods might be allowable by dinnertime tomorrow..Meanwhile, she could offer him only a few pieces of ice, which he was forbidden to chew. "Let them melt in your mouth."..He didn't wonder about his sanity, either, as a less self-improved man might have done. No madman strives to enhance his vocabulary or to deepen his appreciation for culture..The following April, when he proposed to her, she wouldn't have him. "You're sweet, Paul, but I can't let you throw your life away on me. You're this ... this beautiful ship that will sail a long way, to fascinating places, and I'd only be your anchor."..Between Isleton and Locke, Junior first became aware of several points of soreness on his face. He could feel no swelling, no cuts or scrapes, and the rearview mirror revealed only the fine features that had caused more women's hearts to race than all the amphetamines ever manufactured..A sofa and one armchair provided the seating in the living room. No coffee table. A small table beside the chair. A wall unit held a fine stereo system and a few hundred record albums..The poor girl's blood pressure soared in spite of the medication. She suffered a violent seizure..The street in front of the gallery was as flooded by a sea of fog as the alleyway at the back. The headlights of passing traffic probed the gloom like beams from deep-salvage submersibles at work on the ocean floor..Grace knew it, too, because she went limp with misery in his arms, ceased struggling against him..This was a California live oak, green even in winter, although its leaves were fewer now than they would be in warmer seasons. The elaborate branch structure, reflected around him, was an exquisite and harmonious maze overlaying a mosaic of sunlight green on grass, and something in its patterns suddenly touched him, moved him, seized his imagination. He felt as if he were balanced on the brink of an astonishing insight..He nodded. "The effect not only comes before a cause in this case, but completely without a cause. The effect is staying dry in the rain, but the cause-supposedly walking in a dryer world-never occurs. Only the idea of it."..Lined up on the kitchen table were green-grape-and-apple pies. The thick domed crusts, with their deeply fluted edges, were the coppery gold of precious coins..Snap, snap, snap! Three more quarters ricocheted off the left side of his face-temple, cheek, jaw..The night seemed to be longer than a Martian month. Agnes dozed, fitfully, waking more than once, sweaty and shaking, from a dream in which her son was taken from her in pieces: first his eyes, then his hands, then his ears, his legs.....I'll put you in a twilight sleep, you babbling cretin. Where'd you earn your medical degree, you nattering nitwit? Botswana? The Kingdom of Tonga?..Mrs. Lampion, in a case like this, I've found that the greatest mercy is directness. Your son has retinoblastoma. A malignancy of the retina."..Do you know about the earthquake that destroyed seventy percent of Tokyo and all of Yokohama on September 1, 1923?" he asked..The muffling fog quieted the city as much as obscured it, and the alley was surprisingly still. Many of the businesses were closed for the night, and as far as Junior could discern, no delivery trucks or other vehicles were parked the length of the block..As he edged closer, to better hear the conversation, he became aware of someone staring at him. He looked up into anthracite eyes, into a gaze as sharp as that of any bird, set in the lean face of a thirty something man thinner than a winter-starved crow.."Simon's a good man. Now that he pretty much knows Cain pushed the wife, he doesn't feel better about representing him just because the payoff was big. And in the current case, he's not Cain's lawyer, so there's no conflict of interest, no

ethics problem, so he's got a chance to set things right a little." He got in the Suburban, pulled the door shut, but didn't at once start the engine..Barty paced off the downstairs hallway to the kitchen, thinking about Dr. Jekyll and the hideous Mr. Hyde..At one point late in the afternoon, as all three Hackachaks were hurling scorn and invective at Junior, he noticed Vanadium standing in the doorway, observing. Perfect. He pretended not to see the cop, and when next he sneaked a look, he discovered that Vanadium had vanished like a wraith. A thick slab of a wraith..He followed an alleyway to the building's service entrance, for which he possessed a key that wasn't provided to other tenants. He unlocked the steel door and stepped into a small, dimly lighted receiving room with gray walls and a speckled blue linoleum floor..A pathologically suspicious cop, aware of Junior's acute.; emesis following Naomi's death, might imagine a connection between this epic bout of diarrhea and Victoria's murder, and Vanadium's disappearance Here was an avenue of speculation that he did not want to encourage..EDOM AND THE PIES, into the blue morning following the storm, had a schedule to keep and the hungry to satisfy..Hope, on many wings, hovered all around the physician, but he was afraid to let it roost..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..The window gave way an instant before Celestina squeezed off the shot. The man dropped out of sight. She didn't know if she had scored a hit.."-though this Tom now has a rhinoceros-smacked face, this other Tom, in his own world, has an ordinary face. Poor him, so ordinary."..After examining Barty, Dr. Schurr sent them to the hospital for further tests. There they spent the rest of the day, except for an hour break during which they ate lunch in a burger joint..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..That was all right, for she had done the same for Otter's elder sister, and so his parents sent him to her in the evenings. But she taught Otter more than the song of the Creation. She knew his gift. She and some men and women like her, people of no fame and some of questionable reputation, had all in some degree that gift; and they shared, in secret, what lore and craft they had. "A gift untaught is a ship unguided," they said to Otter, and they taught him all they knew. It wasn't much, but there were some beginnings of the great arts in it; and though he felt uneasy at deceiving his parents, he couldn't resist this knowledge, and the kindness and praise of his poor teachers. "It will do you no harm if you never use it for harm," they told him, and that was easy for him to promise them..In his seventies but vigorous and full of fun, Sparky liked to take an occasional jaunt to Reno, to pump the slot machines and try a few hands of blackjack. The off-the-record, tax-free monthly checks from Simon were gratefully received, ensuring the old man's cooperation with the conspiracy..Maria was hand-repairing some of Joey's clothes, which Agnes had meticulously damaged earlier in the day.. "I've already told them," Joey said, wheeling away from her and yanking open the door of the foyer closet with such force that she thought he would tear it off its hinges..Requital. Restitutional apology, which must have been learned in a law school where English was the second language. Even atonement..Junior, putting himself in the detective's place, could think of a few reasons for this visit to Seraphim's grave. Unfortunately, not one of them supported his contention that he was an innocent man..Dining room. Two place settings at one end of the table. Wineglasses. Two ornate pewter candlesticks, candies not yet lit..Two of her largest and best paintings were in the show windows, dramatically lighted. They were dazzling. They were dreadful. They were beautiful. They were hideous..Wally-Dr. Walter Lipscomb, who delivered Angel and who became her godfather-never worried when the girl seemed to be developing too slowly, counseling that every child was an individual, with his or her particular learning pace. Wally's double specialty--obstetrics and pediatrics-gave him credibility, of course, but Celestina had worried, anyway..The rain was colder than it had been earlier, almost as icy as sleet. Or perhaps she was far hotter than before and felt the chill more keenly on her fevered skin. Each droplet seemed to hiss against her face, to sizzle against her hands, with which she tightly gripped her swollen abdomen as if she could deny Death the baby that it had come to collect.. "Sure. That's how it works with everything. Everything that can happen does happen, and each different way of happening makes a whole new place."..A cast-bronze figure, fixed to lacquered walnut in want of raw dogwood, suffered above the bed. This crucifix, contrasting starkly with the white walls, reinforced the impression of monastic economy.. "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.." "Well, it's true," he said, finally turning the key in the proper direction and firing up the engine..Shopping for fashion accessories relaxed Junior. He spent a few hours browsing for tie chains, silk pocket squares, and unusual belts. Riding the up escalator in a department store, between the second and..Celebration of course, would lead to incarceration and perhaps to electrocution. With Vanadium, the maniac cop, likely to be found lurking under the bed or masquerading as a nurse to catch him in an unguarded moment, Junior had to recover at a pace that his physician would not find miraculous. Dr. Parkhurst expected to discharge him no sooner than the following morning..As his drying tears became stiff on his cheeks, Junior decided that he would most likely have to kill Vanadium to be rid of him and fully safe. No problem. And in spite of his exquisite

sensitivity, he was convinced that wasting the detective would not trigger in him another bout of vomiting. If anything, he might pee his pants in sheer delight. The tone sounded, as promised, and a man's voice spoke from the box: "It's Max. You're psychic. I found the hospital here. Poor kid had a cerebral hemorrhage, arising from a hypertensive crisis caused by ... eclampsia, I think it is. Baby survived. Call me, huh?". Paul told us the night he first came to the parsonage. About Agnes here ... and what had happened to Barty. And all about his late wife, Perri. I feel like I know Bright Beach already." After Agnes read the final words on the final page, Barty was drunk on speculation, chattering about what-might-have-happened-next to these characters that had become his friends. He talked nonstop while changing into his pajamas, while peeing, while brushing his teeth, and Agnes wondered how she would wind him down to sleep. 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. Widening his eyes in calculated surprise, Junior said, "Are you a police officer?". On the short return trip to the ophthalmologist, Agnes crazily considered driving past Chan's office building, cruising onward--ever onward--into the sparkling December night, not just back to Bright Beach, where the bad news would simply come by phone, but to places so far away that the diagnosis could never catch up to them, where the disease would remain unnamed and therefore would have no power over Barty. "Apple juice, lime Jell-O, and four soda crackers," said the detective. "If you don't have enough of a conscience to make you confess, Truly, the time spent helping Agnes had given her uncountable new subjects for paintings and had begun to bring to her work a new depth that excited her. "When you pour out your pockets into the pockets of others," Agnes had once said, "you just wind up richer in the morning than you were the night before." A plate-size piece of the door had been blasted away. Because of the light shining through from the room beyond, Junior could see that no part of the lock remained intact. In fact, he peered through the hole in the door to the back of a piece of furniture that was jammed against it, whereupon the nature of the problem became clear to him..where everyone spoke a single language and had all the blueberry pies they needed. Recalling how the title of the exhibition had resonated with him when first he'd seen the gallery, brochure, Junior felt certain now that a tape-recorded early draft of this sermon was the kinky "music" that accompanied his evening of passion with Seraphim. He couldn't remember one word of it, let alone any element that would have deeply moved a national radio audience, but this didn't mean that he was shallow or incapable of being touched by philosophical speculations. He'd been so distracted by the erotic perfection of Seraphim's young body and so busy jumping her that he wouldn't have remembered a word, either, if Zedd himself had been sitting on the bed, discussing the human condition with his customary brilliance. To the foot of the bed slouched the third and final Hackachak: twenty-four-year-old Kaitlin, Naomi's big sister. Kaitlin was the unfortunate sister, having inherited her looks from her father and her personality equally from both parents. A peculiar coppery cast enlivened her brown eyes, and in a certain slant of light, her angry glare could flash as red as blood. Gazing into the mirror, which ought to have been clouded with self-pity as though with steam, Junior Cain searched for his anger and found it. This was a black and bitter anger, as poisonous as rattlesnake venom; with little difficulty, his heart was distilling it into purest rage..by the ferocity of the beating and by years of fear and humiliation. So he opens his mouth, just to end it, just to be. "I can't." From out of the fog and darkness came the slap of running feet on bricks. He was sprinting toward the back of the house. The floor of the spacious bathroom featured beige marble tiles with diamond-shaped inlays of black granite. The countertop and the shower stall were fabricated from matching marble, and the same marble was employed in the wainscoting. Back in January, when he received the disappointing report from Nolly Wulfstan, Junior was not convinced that the private detective had exercised due diligence in his investigation. He suspected that Wulfstan's ugliness was matched by his laziness. "We were about to order dinner from room service," Tom said, handing a menu to Paul. 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!" Outside, flames churned to the left and right of the opening. The front of the house was afire. By November 1967, the Father Brown detective stories, written for mystery-loving adults by G. K. Chesterton, thrilled Barty. This series of books would retain a special place in his heart for the rest of his life--as would Robert Heinlein's *The Star Beast*, which was among his Christmas gifts that year. Heart jumping like the heart of a fox-stalked rabbit, she ran from the driveway into the yard. She would have cried out if her throat hadn't seized up with terror at the sight of her boy at neck-breaking height. By the time she could speak, she realized that a shout, or even the unexpected sound of her plaintive voice, might unnerve him, cause him to misstep, and bring him caroming down, limb to limb, in a bone snapping plunge. After his conversation with Magusson, however, Junior realized this fear was irrational. If the detective had miraculously escaped the cold waters of the lake, he would have been in need of emergency medical treatment. He would have staggered or crawled to the county highway in search of help, unaware that Junior had framed him for Victoria's murder, too badly wounded to care about anything but getting medical attention. "Well, anyway," she said, as though Muffins uncharacteristic viciousness had been adequately explained, "this mending ought to cover ten more lessons." Evidently, Jacob had made a quick trip to his apartment over the garage and, with no thought for mice and dust, had not closed the back door. Junior said, "You've caused me a lot of trouble, you know." He'd been building a beautiful rage all night, thinking about what he'd been through because of the girl's temptress mother, whom he saw so clearly in this pint-size bitch. "So much trouble." Here, now, came the anaconda smile. "Did you argue about the baby, Enoch? Maybe she wanted it, and you didn't. Guy like you--a baby would cramp your style. Too much responsibility." More good American music. The Supremes were Negroes, sure, but Junior was not a bigot. Indeed, he had once made passionate love to a Negro girl... "Don't worry," Celestina told him, "after what we've seen this past week, we're still with you." As Wally got behind the wheel and closed his door, Angel said, "Mommy,

where's fog come from? And don't say Hawaii." 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." Outside, he turned to look at the display windows. He expected to see the candlestick, supernaturally apparent only from this side of the glass, but it wasn't there. Throughout the autumn, Junior read book after book about ghosts, poltergeists, haunted houses, ghost ships, séances, spirit rapping, spirit manifestation, spirit writing, spirit recording, trance speaking, conjuration, exorcism, astral projection, Ouija-board revelation, and needlepoint. Running footsteps, heading toward the ambulance. Apparently Kenny. The second paramedic. The purpose of life was self-fulfillment, per Zedd, and Junior was so rapidly realizing his extraordinary potential that surely he would have pleased his guru. Chicane wasn't alone. Sparky Vox, the building superintendent, approached behind him and hovered. Seventy-two yet as spry as a monkey, Sparky didn't walk so much as scamper like a capuchin. The Book of the Dark, written late in the time it tells of, is a compilation of self-contradictory histories, partial biographies, and garbled legends. But it's the best of the records that survived the dark years. Wanting praise, not history, the warlords burnt the books in which the poor and powerless might learn what power is. Rescuers appeared with hydraulic pry bars and metal cutting saws. Civilians were shepherded back to the sidewalks. His first overnight journey, in June of '65, was to La Jolla, north of San Diego. He carried too large a backpack and wore khaki pants when he should have worn shorts in the summer heat. "Really, Angel," Barty said with genuine concern, "it might be scary. I got another one we could listen to, if you want." Having gotten the new roof for them at cost, Agnes subsequently put together donations from a dozen individuals and one church group to cover all but two hundred dollars of the outlay. Fourth and last, he was surprised that Kickmule was a legitimate surname. This information wasn't of immediate importance to him, but if ever his Gammoner and Pinchbeck identities were compromised and he required false ID in a new name, he would call himself Eric Kickmule. Or possibly Wolfgang Kickmule. That sounded really tough. No one would mess with a man named Kickmule. This wasn't a new sensation. He had experienced it before. In the night just passed, when he awakened from an unremembered dream and saw the bright quarter dancing across Vanadium's knuckles. A music tradition was deeply rooted in the Negro community. No similar tradition in magic existed. Celestina looked up from the scarred top of the desk toward the fog-white sky beyond the window, from reality to the promise. The glimmering bay and the shimmering amber candlelight provided the perfect atmosphere for the song that arose now from the piano in the bar. He had been thankful that during the long trance, he hadn't wet himself. Now he would gladly have accepted any amount of humiliation rather than suffer these vicious cramps. On the High Marsh. This was one of many things about Agnes that amazed EDOM. If he had dared to make a list of all the qualities that he admired in her, he would have sunk into despair at the consideration of how much better she had coped with adversity than either he or Jacob. Luck favored Paul: The hero was here, having breakfast. He and two other men were deep in conversation at a corner table. Junior stalked her, but she eluded him. Always, the song seemed to arise from the next room, but when he passed through the doorway into that space, the voice then sounded as if it came from the room that he'd just left. "As long as the case was open and you were the sole suspect," said the lawyer, "they couldn't negotiate an out-of-court settlement with you. But they were afraid that if eventually they couldn't prove you killed her, then they'd be in an even worse position when a wrongful death suit finally went before a jury." Though she worried that reading would strain his eyes, worsening his condition, she recognized the irrationality of her fear. Muscles don't atrophy from use, nor eyes wear out from too much seeing. She stepped on a broken-off chair leg, lost her balance, and fell backward into the side of the bed. Initially, the Pacific could not be seen beyond an opaque lens of fog. Yet later, when the mist retreated, the sea itself became a portent of sightlessness: Spread flat and colorless in the morning light, the glassy water reminded her of the depthless eyes of the blind, of that terrible sad vacancy where vision is denied. The Beatles began singing the number-one song, "I Feel Fine," as Junior turned off the county highway and followed the lake road northeast around the oil-black water. They had two titles in the American top five. In disgust, he switched off the radio. Celestina stared out for a moment, and then turned her head to look at Tom, with both the shade of the night and the sparkle of the metropolis still captured in her eyes. "What was that all about?" Reverend White's murder received significant coverage throughout the nation, especially in West Coast papers, because of its perceived racial motivation and because it involved the burning of a parsonage. Although she already knew that the answer could not be cheerily optimistic, Celestina wondered, "Is the baby likely to be . . . normal?" Barty had awakened able to read. On the page, lines of type no longer twisted under his gaze. "Blood tests should reveal whether the child's yours or not. That also might explain all this." Struggling to keep a grip on consciousness, Junior told himself to focus on the future, to live in the future, free of the useless past and the difficult present, but he could not get into the future far enough to be in a time when the pain was no longer with him. As though stirred by static electricity, the fine hairs on the backs of Tom's hands quivered, and a current of expectation coursed through him. When the convulsive seizure passed, as he collapsed back on the spattered pillow, shuddering at the stench rising from his hideously fouled clothes, Junior was suddenly struck by an idea that was either Mrs. Cain's little boy felt small, weak, sorry for himself, and terribly alone. The detective was still here, but his presence only aggravated Junior's sense of isolation. Or as her father often said, happily mocking his own rhetorical eloquence: "Brighten the corner where you are, and you will light the world." The diminutive mortician spoke a few comforting words instead of commenting on the dental history of the deceased, and when he put a consoling hand on Jacob's shoulder, Jacob cringed from his touch. In the six weeks since conception, she must have missed at least one menstrual period. She hadn't complained of morning sickness, but surely she'd experienced it. It was highly unlikely that she'd been unaware of her condition. 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..At the beginning of his third month, instead of at the end of his fifth, he was combining vowels and consonants: "ba-ba-ba, ga-ga-ga, la-la-la, ca-ca-ca."..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..But with the silencer attached, the pistol was useful only for close-up work. After passing through a sound-suppressor, the bullet would exit the muzzle at a lower than usual velocity, perhaps with an added wobble, and accuracy would drop drastically at a distance..Although he had made no effort to summon them, tears spilled from Junior's closed eyes. They weren't drawn from him by thoughts of poor Naomi. These next few days-perhaps weeks-were going to be tedious, until he could have Nurse Victoria Bressler. Under the circumstances, he had good reason to feel sorry for himself..Assuming that the boy had closed his eyes and was talking to himself, somewhere between his self-told bedtime story and a dream, Agnes retreated from the room, pulling the door only half shut behind her..IN NEED OF OIL, the hand crank squeaked, but the tall halves of the casement window parted and opened outward into the alleyway..Paul shook his head. He presented a second picture of Perri, this one taken on Christmas Day, 1964, less than a month before she died. She lay in her bed in the living room, her body shrunken, but her face so beautiful and alive..To the alleyway again. Not through the clodhopper-cluttered gallery this time. Around the block at a brisk walk..When her hand went limp in Celestina's, her body sagged, too, and her eyes were no longer either focused or rolling wildly. They shimmered into stillness, darkled with death, as the cardiac monitor sang the one long note that signified flatline..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.."I wish my Rico could have met your Harrison, too," Maria told Grace, referring to the husband who had abandoned her. "Maybe the reverend could've done with words what I couldn't do with my foot in Rico's trasero."..He couldn't see into the next aisle through the gaps between rows of books, because the shelves had solid backs..She asked him how many fingers she was holding up, and he said four, and four it was. Then two fingers. Then seven. Her hands so pale, the palms both bruised..ROCKING AS IF AFLOAT on troubled waters, abused by an unearthly and tormented sound, Junior Cain imagined a gondola on a black river, a carved dragon rising high at the bow as he had seen on a.Lifting his martini, theatrically gesturing to the tablecloth where the glass had stood, as though the lack of coins proved that he, too, had sorcerous power, Nolly said, "Another round of this magical concoction? ".She always had a generous heart. After disease whittled Perri's flesh, leaving her so frail, her great heart, undiminished by her suffering, seemed bigger than the body that contained it..The poster announced an upcoming show, titled "This Momentous Day," by the young artist calling herself Celestina White. Dates for the exhibition were Friday, January 12, through Saturday, January 27.

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