

THE WESTERN AVERNUS OR TOIL AND TRAVEL IN FURTHER NORTH AMERICA

MONDAY MORNING, January 17, Agnes's lawyer, Vinnie Lincoln, came to the house with Joey's will and other papers requiring attention. Vanadium nodded. "And I'd like to hear about Cain's reactions in more detail. I've read your reports, of course, and they've been thorough, but necessarily condensed. There'll be lots of subtleties that only reveal themselves in conversation. Often, the apparently insignificant details are the most important to me when I'm devising strategy." The gunshot was louder-and the pain initially less-than he expected. Timpani-boom, timpani-boom, the explosion echoed back and forth through the high-ceilinged apartment. When he was baking, the world seemed to be a less dangerous place. Sometimes, making a cake, he forgot to be afraid. At nearly forty years of age, Edom still dreamed of that grim summer afternoon, although not as often as in the past. When it troubled his sleep these days, it was a nightmare that gradually metamorphosed into a dream of tenderness and hope. Until the last few years, he'd always awakened when the roses were being jammed into his mouth or when the thorns flicked through his eyelashes, or when Agnes began to strike their father with the Bible, thus seeming to assure worse punishment. This additional act, this transition from horror to hope before he woke, had been added when Agnes was pregnant with Barty. Edom didn't know why this should be so, and he didn't try to analyze it. He was simply grateful for the change, because he woke now in a state of peace, never with worse than a shudder, no longer with a hoarse cry of anguish..you greater strength and determination than any other motive. But you should know this much.... You need to keep her safe for another reason. She's special. I don't want to explain why she's special or how I know that she is, because this isn't the time or place, not with your dad's death and Wally in the hospital and you still shaky from the attack." Turning away from the window, Celestina grabbed the girl and pushed her toward the bed, whispering, "Down, under." But the other learning he had been given had made Otter touchy in these matters, delicate of conscience. The big galley they were building now would be rowed to war by Losen's slaves and would bring back slaves as cargo. It galled him to think of the good ship in that vicious usage. "Why can't we build fishing boats, the way we used to?" he asked, and his father said, "Because the fishermen can't pay us." Paul's Mediterranean complexion didn't make a blush easy to detect, but Tom thought his face brightened until it was a shade or two closer to the color of his rust-red hair. His eyes, usually so direct, evaded Celestina. "Oh, yes, I recall it now. Polar bears eating tourists in Union Square, wolf packs prowling the Heights." Nothing he could do about it now. Having Naomi's body moved to another grave, in a cemetery without Negroes, would cause a lot of talk. He didn't want to draw more attention to himself. Dr. Salk returned the photos, put a hand on Paul's shoulder, and smiled. "But that's always the way, you see? Heroes always get back more than they give. The act of giving assures the getting back." The problem was Celestina in the Buick, because when she saw what was happening, she might slide behind the steering wheel and speed away. The engine was running, white plumage rising from the tailpipe and feathering away in the fog, so she might escape if she was a quick thinker. She sat at the kitchen table, staring at the glass. After a while she emptied it in the sink without having taken a sip. He had nothing against Negroes. He didn't wish them ill. He wasn't prejudiced. Live and let live. He believed that as long as they stayed with their own kind and abided by the rules of a polite society, like everyone else, they had a right to live in peace. Edom bit his lower lip, shook his head, and stubbornly clung to Barty's left foot. Music played within. An up-tempo number. Possibly swing. He couldn't quite identify the tune. Inevitably, he had to wonder if Naomi had kept her pregnancy secret because, indeed, she suspected that the child wasn't her husband's. Nolly shook his head, setting a cotillion of warts and moles adance on his pendulous cheeks. "Ask any adoptee who, as an adult, has tried to team the names of his real parents. Easier to drag a freight train up a mountain by your teeth." Her hands were slender, long-fingered, graceful. The hands of an artist. They were not powerful hands. "From childhood, I've had this ... awareness, this perception of an infinitely more complex reality than what my five basic senses reveal. A psychic claims to predict the future. I'm not a psychic. Whatever I am ... I'm able to feel a lot of the other possibilities inherent in any situation, to know they exist simultaneously with my reality, side by side, each world as real as mine. In my bones, in my blood." He wanted an explanation, but no one could give him the one that he needed, because nobody but he himself knew the significance and symbolism of the quarter. "And there's more," said Vinnie Lincoln, as round as Santa Claus and cherry-cheeked with pleasure at being able to bear these gifts. "The policy contained a double-indemnity clause in the event of death by accident. The complete tax-free payout is one and a half million." Her voice was flat and a little hard. Another man might have mistaken her tone for disapproval, for impatience, even for quiet anger. 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. He either detected their well-concealed surprise or assumed they would be curious as to why, in spite of extensive surgery, he still wore this Boris Karloff face. Junior considered leaving before Vanadium-still seventy-five yards away-arrived. He was afraid he would appear to be fleeing. "Sometimes these sympathetic vibrations are very apparent, but alot of the time, they're so subtle that you can hear them only if you're unusually perceptive." He was astonished that adoption records would be sealed and so closely guarded when a child was being placed with a member of its immediate family, with its mother's sister. "I'm afraid you're wrong." When Tom opened his left hand, the palm lay as bare as that of a blind beggar in a country of thieves. Meanwhile, his right hand had tightened into a fist again. "This card to mean also is family love, and is love from many friends, not just to be kissy-kissy love," Maria elucidated. Later, after they finished eating but were still sitting at the table over coffee, the conversation turned solemn, although for the moment, the subject wasn't the late Harrison White. How long the two women and the girl must hide out, when and where they would be able to resume lives as normal as might still be possible for them: These

were the issues of the moment..He kept a few paperbacks of Caesar Zedd's work in the bathroom, so that time spent on the john wouldn't be wasted. Some or, his deepest insights into the human condition and his best ideas for self-improvement had come in this place, where Zedd's luminous words seemed to shine a brighter light into his mind upon rereading..Paul withdrew the pistol from the drawer. The weapon didn't feel as good to him as guns always felt in the hands of pulp heroes.."Good day, sir," Lipscomb said, closing the door in Neddy's face, possibly compressing his nose and bruising his boutonniere..Two high-quality deadbolt locks. Sufficient protection against the average intruder, but inadequate to keep out a self-improved man with channeled anger..And so Agnes went alone to her bedroom and there, as on so many nights, sought the solace of the rock who was also her lamp, of the lamp who was also her high fortress, of the fortress who was also her shepherd. She asked for mercy, and if mercy was not to be granted, she asked for the wisdom to understand the purpose of her sweet boy's suffering..On Friday evening, he had arranged for the drawing of the aces, but he had not stacked the subsequent twelve cards to provide for the selection of four identical knaves at three-card intervals. He'd sat in stunned.The two men detached and rolled up the pleated green skirt that hung from the rectangular frame of the graveyard winch on which the casket was suspended. Green, rather than black, because Naomi loved nature: Junior had been thoughtful about the details of the service..Exactly. The shock. The devastating loss. Junior felt it now, anew, and was afraid he might betray himself with tears, although he seemed to be done with vomiting..This consequence of rape, the baby, was less baby to Celestina than cancer, a malignancy excised rather than a life delivered. She had been no more impelled to study the child than she would have been, charmed to examine the glistening gnarls and oozing convolutions of a freshly plucked tumor. Consequently, she could remember nothing of its squinched face..Because they knew the date of the rape, and because that attack had been Phimie's sole sexual experience, the day of impregnation could be fixed, delivery calculated with more precision than usual.."That's obvious to us, but not always to others. Apparently, this would have been some years ago."In the gallery windows, eight of the nine sculptures were so disturbing that many passersby, catching sight of them, blanched and looked away and hurried on. Not everyone can be a connoisseur..Edom had turned away from the box of groceries that he was packing. Frowning at the pies, he said, "You don't think. . .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. . .He was in the kitchen at 11:20, spreading frosting on a large chocolate sheet cake while the reverend expertly frosted a coconut-layer job..She whispered then: "You are my little lampion, Barty. You light the way for me."Hesitantly, the ivory tickler shook hands. "I'm ... uh ... I'm Ned Gnathic. Everyone calls me Neddy"..altogether by taking slow deep breaths, slow deep breaths, and by remembering that each of us has a right to be happy, to be fulfilled, to be free of fear..Ever since he'd searched Vanadium's house, over fourteen months ago, Junior had enjoyed learning about other people by touring their homes in their absence. Because he was unwilling to risk arrest for breaking and entering, these explorations were rare, other than in the homes of women whom he'd dated long enough to justify swapping keys. Happily, in this golden age of trust and easy relationships, as little as a week of hot sex could lead to key-level commitment..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..In the noble ruin of his face, Thomas Vanadium's smoke-gray eyes were striking, filled with a beautiful ... sorrow. Not self-pity. He clearly didn't regard himself as a victim. This, Kathleen felt, was the sorrow of a man who had seen too much of the suffering of others, who knew the evil ways of the world. These were eyes that read you at a glance, that shone with compassion if you deserved it, and that glared with a terrifying judgment if compassion wasn't warranted.."Why do you think he's spending his money for all this tricky stuff?" Kathleen wondered, not for the first time..As Celestina and her mother loaded the last of the pies into the ice chests in the Suburban, Paul and Agnes came back from her station wagon at the head of the caravan.."September 27, 1962. Barcelona, Spain. A flood killed four hundred forty-five people."Sweaty, chilled, trembling, weak-kneed, watery-eyed with self-pity, Junior spread a plastic garbage bag on the driver's seat. He got in the Suburban, twisted the key in the ignition, and groaned as the engine vibrations threatened to undo him..After the service, among those who came to Agnes at graveside, trying to express the inexpressible, was Paul Damascus, the owner of Damascus Pharmacy on Ocean Avenue. Of Mideastern extraction, he had dark olive skin and, incredibly, rust--red hair. With his rust-red eyebrows, lashes, and mustache, his handsome face looked like that of a bronze statue with a curious patina..Turning his patched eyes in the general direction of his mother, Barty said, "Oops."With the dead woman's guest on the way, minutes were precious. Attention to detail was essential, however, regardless of how much time was required to properly stage the little tableau that might disguise murder as a domestic accident..Junior had walked along the big show windows, studying the two White paintings displayed to passersby, appalled by their beauty, when suddenly the door had opened and a gallery employee had invited him to come in. No printed invitation

needed, no cool test to pass, no bouncers keeping the gate. Such easy accessibility served as proof, if you needed it, that this was not real art.. "Last I noticed, his car was out. Let me check." Sparky put down his phone and went to look in the garage. When he returned, he said, "Nope. Still out. When he parties, he usually parties late." "I thought there was a burglar," Junior groaned, but he knew better than to spit out his entire story at once, for then he would appear to be reciting a script.. Junior was aware that all the cops were watching him as he stared down at the body, and he frantically tried to think what an innocent husband would be likely to do or say, but his imagination failed him. His thoughts could not be organized.. In the living room stood a Christmas tree, and under the tree lay prettily wrapped presents. Junior enjoyed opening all of them, but he didn't find anything he wanted to keep.. He had already reviewed twenty-four thousand names, finding no Bartholomew, putting red checks beside entries with the initial B instead of a first name. A slip of yellow paper marked his place.. This was better than taking slow deep breaths. Periodically, on the way to Vanadium's house, Junior spat out a string of insults, punctuated by obscenities.. Their evenings together were comfortable bliss, though usually they just watched television, or he read to her. She enjoyed being read to: mostly historical novels and occasional mysteries.. During Junior's brief stroll, the sidewalk ended, giving way to the graveled shoulder of the road. He saw no one on foot, and no vehicles passed him.. "That's enough?" "Silly man." "Cain looks like a movie star." "Does he have nice teeth?" she asked. "They're good. Not perfect." "So kiss me, Mr. Perfect." Maria fished another chip from the sweating carafe, rejected it, and scooped out a larger piece. She hesitated, staring at it for a moment, and then spooned it between Agnes's lips. "Water can't be broken if it will be first made into ice." Foreword. And there are songs, old lays and ballads from small islands and from the quiet uplands of Havnor, that tell the story of those years.. The pair of sliding doors at the living-room archway stood half open. Beyond, voices drew Paul against his will.. WITH A CRASH as loud as the dire crack of heaven opening on Judgment Day, the Ford pickup broadsided the Pontiac. Agnes couldn't hear the first fraction of her scream, and not much of the rest of it, either, as I. The sound-suppressor didn't render the pistol entirely silent, but the three soft reports, each like a quiet cough muffled by a hand, wouldn't have carried beyond the hallway.. The quiet passion in Vanadium's voice was genuine, expressed with reason but not fervor, not in the least sentimental or unctuous-which made it more disturbing. "Vibrations in one string set up soft, sympathetic vibrations in all the other strings, through the entire body of the instrument." She looked around the room. "He's invisible like the Cheshire cat?" "His whole world is as real as ours, but we can't see it, and people in his world can't see us. There're millions and millions of worlds all here in the same place and invisible to one another, where we keep getting chance after chance to live a good life and do the right thing." In addition to mulling over strategy, Tom had spent a lot of time lately brooding about culpability: his own, not Cain's. By seizing on the name that he heard Cain speak in a dream, by making use of it in this psychological warfare, had he been the architect of the killer's Bartholomew obsession, or if not the architect, then at least an assisting.. The Hackachaks had arrived post-grief, brought to the hospital by the news that Junior had expressed distaste at the prospect of profiting from his wife's tragic fall. They knew he had turned away Knacker, Hisscus and Nork.. Tom had acted with the best intentions-but also with the intelligence and the good judgment that God had given him and that he had spent a lifetime honing. Good intentions alone can be the cobblestones from which the road to Hell is built; however, good intentions formed through much self-doubt and second-guessing, as Tom's always were guided by wisdom acquired from experience, are all that can be asked of us. Unintended consequences that should have been foreseeable are, he knew, the stuff of damnation, but those that we can't foresee, he hoped, are part of some design for which we can't be held responsible.. "Does my dad like Christmas?" Barty asked, sitting on the grave grass in front of the headstone.. The modulated electronic brrrrr was similar to the sound of the telephone in Vanadium's cramped study, on Sunday night. Junior was transported back to that place, that moment in time.. Beveled, crackled, distorted, divided into petals and leaves, Deed's face beyond the lead-ad glass, as he leaned closer to try to peer inside, was the countenance of a dream demon swimming up out of a nightmare lake.. Walking was part of a fitness regimen that he took seriously. He would never be called upon to save the world, like the pulp heroes in the tales he enjoyed; however, he had solemn responsibilities he was determined to meet, and to do so, he must maintain good health.. Overlaying the birthmark were brighter stains. The plain face, less homely now, was less flat, too, pocked and torn into a new and horrendous geography.. He half expected to hear Thomas Vanadium in the distance, softly singing "Someone to Watch over Me." "Bartholomew, huh?" asked Wally as he piloted them through banks of earthbound clouds.. As beautiful as they were, none of these women satisfied him as profoundly as Naomi had satisfied him.. For a while, Junior half convinced himself that the quarter in his cheeseburger, in December '65, was a meaningless coincidence, unrelated to Vanadium. His short tour of the kitchen, in search of the perpetrator, had given him reason to believe the diner's sanitary standards were inadequate. Recalling the greasy men on that culinary death squad, he knew that he'd been fortunate not to discover a dead rodent spread-eagle on the melted cheese, or an old sock.. Reading about child prodigies, Agnes learned that most if not all math whizzes also possessed musical talent. To a lesser but still impressive extent, many young geniuses in the music world were also proficient at math.. The high point of his day was coming home to Perri. They met when they were thirteen, married at twenty-two. In May they would celebrate their twenty-third anniversary.. "I can do this with just a very little Novocain," she said, "so your mouth won't be numb for dinner." "Why should I be afraid of a stumbling blind boy?" asked Junior again. But this time the words issued from him in a different tone of voice, because suddenly he sensed something knowing in this boy's attitude, if not in his manufactured eyes, a quality similar to what the girl exhibited.. His happy expectation thickened into dread when he spotted the ambulance at the curb. And in the driveway stood the Buick that belonged to Joshua Nunn, their family doctor.. 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..The musician's behavior required explanation. After wending through the crowd, Junior located the man in front of a painting so egregiously beautiful that any connoisseur of real art could hardly resist the urge to slash the canvas to ribbons..Yet that evening, when she'd accepted his proposal and asked if he wasn't frightened, he said, "Not anymore."..And speak the tongues of man and drake..Vanadium sat in the chair, watching. With the perfect control of a sleight-of-hand artist, he turned a quarter end-over-end across the knuckles of his right hand, palmed it with his thumb, caused it to reappear at his little finger, and rolled it across his knuckles again, ceaselessly..Apparently, he didn't lean back far enough, because amazingly he landed on his feet in the winter-faded grass. The shock buckled him, and he dropped to his knees. Still cradling Grace, he lowered her to the ground as gently as he'd ever lowered fragile Perri onto her bed-quite as if he had planned it this way..His musical abilities were most likely an offshoot of his more extraordinary talent for math. He said that music was numbers, and what he seemed to mean was that he could all but instantly translate the notes of any song into a personal numerical code, retain it, and repeat the song by repeating the memorized sequence of code. When he read sheet music, he saw arrangements of numbers..Tommy James and the Shondells, good American boys, had a record farther down the charts-"Hanky Panky"-that Junior felt was better than the Beatles' tune. The failure of his countrymen to support homegrown talent aggravated him. The nation seemed eager to surrender its culture to foreigners..Slow deep breathing forgotten, gasping like a drowning swimmer, a sudden sweat dripping from his brow, Junior used one foot to prod the fallen man..On the other hand, one needed to believe in something. Junior didn't clutter his mind with superstitious nonsense or allow himself to be constrained by the views of bourgeois society or by its smug concepts of right and wrong, good and evil. From Zedd, he'd learned that he was the sole master of his universe. Self-realization through self-esteem was his doctrine; total freedom and guiltless pleasure were the rewards of faithful adherence to his principles. What he believed in-the only thing he believed in-was Junior Cain, and in this he was a fiercely passionate believer, devout unto himself Consequently, as Caesar Zedd explained, when any man was clearheaded enough to cast off all the false.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..Koko changed directions with a fantastic pivot turn and bounded after the girl..He opened the solid doors on the bottom of the breakfront, did not find what he was looking for, checked in the sideboard next, and there it was, a small liquor supply. Scotch, gin, vodka. He selected a full bottle of vodka.."Me, I don't like anything old. This White chick's got a weird thing for old people, old buildings, old stuff in general. Like she doesn't realize she's young. You want to grab her, shake her, and say, 'Hey, let's move on,' you know?".Celestina wanted nothing to do with it, was offended by the very sight of it, and she..At the bottom, the killer had pushed the cedar chest aside and clambered to his feet. From out of his raveled Tutankhamen windings, he peered up at Paul and fired one shot without taking aim, almost halfheartedly, before disappearing into the living room..the floor, on a silk-covered pillow filled with goose down. With a sigh " he assumed the lotus position: spine straight, legs crossed, hands at rest with the palms up..In recounting the fortune-telling session, Agnes had not told the magician about the four jacks of spades, only about the aces of diamonds and hearts. She never wore her worries for anyone to see; and though she had made a joke of the appearance of the fourth knave on Friday, Edom knew that it had deeply troubled her..Because the glass wings of the open window didn't lie flat against the exterior wall, they blocked his view. He had to thrust himself farther through the opening, until he seesawed on the sill, before he could see the length of the entire block, in which the gallery stood at approximately the middle..He thought he heard the tick-scrape-rattle-clink of Industrial Woman on the prow. In the living room. Now the hall. Approaching..On the way home, he repeatedly checked the rearview mirror. No vehicle followed him..The customers were in a mood, most of them grumbling about their ailments. Others complained about the dreary weather, the increasing number of kids zooming along sidewalks on these damn new skateboards, the recent tax increases, and the New York Jets paying Joe Namath the kingly sum of \$427,000 a year to play football, which some saw as a sign that the country was money-crazy and going to Hell..Celestina said, "Phimie wasn't a mind reader. That's science fiction, Dr. Lipscomb."..NOLLY SAT BEHIND his desk, suit jacket draped over the back of the chair, porkpie hat still squarely on his head, where it remained at virtually all times except when he was sleeping, showering, dining in a restaurant, or making love..Some listings didn't include first names, only initials. Every time he came across the initial B, he put a red heck mark beside it with a fine point felt-tip pen..As though frightened of the gentle certainty in Celestina's eyes, the doctor turned away from her, and toward the window once more..The forger's crossed eyes glowed with reflected light from the screen. He licked his rubbery lips, and his prominent Adam's apple bobbed: "Like to drain my pipes in that Faye Dunaway, huh?".The patches were held by the same two elastic strips, so Barty flipped up both at the same time..Junior in the fog. Trying oh-so-hard to live in the future, where the winners live. But being relentlessly sucked back into the useless past by memory..He went in a pretense of blindness, gripping Angel's arm, but he missed nothing, and etched every detail in his memory, against the need of them in the coming dark..Although the Rolex was expensive, Junior cared nothing about the monetary loss. He could afford to buy an armful of Rolexes, and wear them from wrist to shoulder..Her mouth was as greedy as it was ripe, and her pliant body radiated volcanic heat, and as Junior slipped his hands under her skirt, his mind teemed with thoughts of sex and wealth and power, until he discovered that the heiress was an heir, with genitalia better suited to boxer shorts than to silk lingerie..Dusk had arrived, strangling the day, and the throttled sky hung low, as blue-black as bruises. The

streetlights had come on. Gouts of red light from pulsing emergency beacons alchemized the rain from teardrops into showers of blood. To the growing pile of ruin, she added one of Joey's cardigan sweaters, after popping loose one bone button and almost completely detaching a sewn-on patch pocket. A pair of knockabout khaki pants: quickly clip open the seat seam; cut the corner of the wallet pocket, then rip it with both hands; snip loose some stitching and half detach the cuff on the left leg. The heavy hand would come down on his shoulder, he would be spun around against his will, and there before him would be those nailhead eyes, the port-wine stain, facial bones crushed by a bludgeon.....so she reached across her body with her left hand, which Celestina gripped tightly. "I'm not. I'm just going to be the conscience that Enoch Cain seems to have been born without." The rich aromas on the air would have thwarted the will of the most devout monks on a fast of penitence. "Wrong about what, sugarpie smoosh--smoosh?" Celestina asked as Wally pulled to the curb again and parked. A floor-to-ceiling bookshelf was crammed with pulp magazines that had been published throughout the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, before paperback books supplanted them. The All-Story, Mammoth Adventure, Nickel Western, The Black Mask, Detective Fiction Weekly, Spicy Mystery, Weird Tales, Amazing Stories, Astounding Stories, The Shadow, Doc Savage, G-8 and His Battle Aces, Mysterious Wu Fang Junior hadn't paid attention to everyone who visited the pianist though surely he'd have noticed a certain stump in a cheap suit. 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. Eventually he found himself alone at the large viewing window of the neonatal-care unit. Seven newborns were in residence. Fixed to the foot of each of the seven bassinets was a placard on which was printed the name of the baby. After a day of work, the pencil portrait of Nella Lombardi was finished. The second piece in the series-an extrapolation of her appearance at age sixty-was begun. Taking her silence for assent, Tom continued: "Your father is gone from here, gone forever, but he still lives in other worlds. This isn't a statement of faith alone. If Albert Einstein were still alive and standing here, he'd tell you that it's true. Your father is with you in many places, and so is Phimie. In many places, she didn't die in childbirth. In some worlds, she was never raped, her life never blighted. But there's an irony in that, isn't there? Because in those worlds, Angel doesn't exist-yet Angel is a miracle and a blessing." He looked up from the city to the woman. "So when you're lying in bed tonight, kept awake by grief, don't think just about what you've lost with your father and Phimie. Think about what you have in this world that you've never known in some others-Angel. Whether God's a Catholic, a Baptist, a Jew, a Muslim, or a quantum mechanic, He gives us compensation for our pain, compensation right here in this world, not just in those parallel to it and not just in some afterlife. Always compensation for the pain ... if we recognize it when we see it." He placed a phone call to Kaitlin Hackachak, his trollish and avaricious sister-in-law, asking her to dispose of Naomi's things, their furniture, and whatever of his own possessions he chose to leave behind. Although she had been awarded a quarter of a million dollars in the family settlement with the state and county, Kaitlin would be at the house by dawn's first light if she thought she might make ten bucks from liquidating its contents. Tom removed the lid. No beer, one head. Simon Magusson's severed head lay faceup on the ice, mouth open as though he were standing in court to object to the prosecution's line of questioning. The pendulous bellies of the rain-swollen clouds were no darker than when he had first come to the cemetery, yet they appeared more ominous now than earlier. Also in the drawer was a pistol that he kept for home defense. He stared at it, trying to decide whether to go downstairs and make a sandwich or kill himself. The instant he flipped the coin, he opened both hands-palms up, fingers spread-with a distracting flourish. At Thanksgiving dinner, again at the three tables set end to end, in the year of the triple zero, Mary Lampion, now fourteen years old, made an interesting announcement over the pumpkin pie. In her travels where none but she could go, after seven fascinating years of exploring a fraction of all the infinite worlds, she said she sensed beyond doubt that, as Barty's mother had told him on her deathbed, there is one special place beyond all the ways things are, one shining place. As Joey opened the driver's door and got in behind the steering wheel, he said, "Okay?"

[The Handy Pocket Dictionary of the English Language Compiled from the Best Authorities](#)

[The London Times Book of the Navy](#)

[Outlines of Natural Philosophy Vol 1 Being the Reads of a Course of Lectures Delivered in Columbia College New-York](#)

[Zeisbergers Indian Dictionary English German Iroquois-The Onondaga And Algonquin-The Delaware](#)

[For the Mikado or a Japanese Middy in Action](#)

[Narrative of Scenes and Events in Italy Vol 2 of 2 From 1847 to 1849 Including the Siege of Venice](#)

[Thoughts and Things Vol 3 A Study of the Development and Meaning of Thought or Genetic Logic Interest and Art Being Real Logic I Genetic Epistemology](#)

[The Journal of the Polynesian Society 1908 Vol 17 Containing the Transactions and Proceedings of the Society](#)

[Several Voyages to Barbary Containing an Historical and Geographical Account of the Country with the Hardships Sufferings and Manner of Redeeming Christian Slaves Together with a Curious Descriptions of Mequinez Oran and Alcazar](#)

[Crofutt's New Overland Tourist and Pacific Coast Guide 1882 Containing a Condensed and Authentic Description of Over One Thousand Three Hundred Cities Towns Villages Stations Government Fort and Camps Mountains Lakes Rivers Sulphur Soda and Ho](#)

[The Song of Lewes](#)

[Essays and Lectures on the Industrial Development of India And Other Indian Subjects \(1880-1906\)](#)
[Synonyms Designed to Give Skill in the Choice and Right Use of Words and to Afford Variety and Facility in Expression](#)
[Physical Background of Juvenile Delinquency](#)
[The First Year of Pace Musings](#)
[The Primer of Hydraulics](#)
[The Scholars Algebra An Introductory Work on Algebra](#)
[John Heywoods Supplementary Manchester Readers an Additional Series for Elementary Schools The Scientific Reader Compiled to Suit the Requirements of Standards V and VI of the New Code](#)
[Papers and Proceedings of the Connecticut Valley Historical Society Vol 2 1882-1903](#)
[Collectanea Critica Epicritica Exegetica Sive Addenda Ad Theodori Kockii Opus Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta](#)
[The History and Antiquities of the Hundred of Bray in the County of Berks](#)
[Toxophilus the Schole or Partitions of Shooting Contayned in II Bookes](#)
[The Border Magazine Vol 13 An Illustrated Monthly](#)
[An Inverness Lawyer and His Sons 1796-1878](#)
[The Elements of Natural Philosophy](#)
[The Home Mission Monthly Vol 26 An Illustrated Magazine November 1911 to October 1912](#)
[Translation of the Sanhita of the Sama Veda](#)
[Pastels Under the Southern Cross](#)
[A Treatise on Bridge Architecture in Which the Superior Advantages of the Flying Pendent Lever Bridge Are Fully Proved With an Historical Account and Description of Different Bridges Erected in Various Parts of the World from an Early Period Down to T](#)
[Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada Vol 2 Publications of the Year 1897](#)
[A Memoir of Charles Mordaunt Earl of Peterborough and Monmouth Vol 2 of 2 With Selections from His Correspondence](#)
[Recollections of Life and Doings in Chicago from the Haymarket Riot to the End of World War I](#)
[The Early History of Elora Ontario and Vicinity](#)
[The Museum Journal 1921 Vol 12](#)
[A Fresh Approach to the Psalms](#)
[A Court Intrigue](#)
[The Reliquary and Illustrated Archaeologist 1902 Vol 8 A Quarterly Journal and Review Devoted to the Study of the Early Pagan and Christian Antiquities of Great Britain Medieval Architecture and Ecclesiology The Development of the Arts and Industrie](#)
[The Fountain of Love](#)
[A Key Into the Language of America or an Help to the Language of the Natives in That Part of America Called New-England Together with Briefe Observations of the Customes Manners and Worships C of the Aforesaid Natives in Peace and Warre in Life](#)
[Mediterranean Cruise of the U S S Chester](#)
[The Water Scandal A Story of Political and Municipal Graft and Corruption](#)
[Civil War Stories Retold from St Nicholas](#)
[A Selection of the Principal Navigation Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation](#)
[Wildlife in North Carolina Vol 30 January 1966](#)
[The Hope Vases A Catalogue and a Discussion of the Hope Collection of Greek Vases with an Introduction on the History of the Collection and on Late Attic and South Italian Vases](#)
[Gododin Y A Poem on the Battle of Cattrath](#)
[Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society 1911 Vol 29](#)
[The Proceedings of the Charaka Club 1916 Vol 4](#)
[Photography and Its Contributions to the Business of Crime Detection](#)
[The Marriage of Barry Wicklow](#)
[The Indian Cookery Book A Practical Handbook to the Kitchen in India Adapted to the Three Presidencies Containing Original and Approved Recipes in Every Department of Indian Cookery Recipes for Summer Beverages and Home-Made Liqueurs Medicinal and OT](#)
[Ein Ruf in Die Hohe Religiöse Reden Aus Der Neuen Welt](#)
[Cymmrodor Vol 5 Y Part I Embodying the Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion of London Etc](#)
[The Canada Medical Record Vol 13](#)
[The Works of M de Voltaire Vol 4](#)

[Souls in Bondage](#)

[Big Game Fishermens Paradise A Complete Treatise \(Fully Illustrated\) on Angling Philosophy Sidelights and Scenes in Florida Salt-Water Fishing Ventures With Descriptions of Prominent Gamefish Species Their Size Build Characteristics Habitats Gam](#)

[Decree of the Watchers Verdict from Another Dimension](#)

[Lethal Love](#)

[Thirteen Tales Horror and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction with a Soup on of Sci-Fi](#)

[Wally the Wiggly Waggly Worm](#)

[Island Bound Mail](#)

[Tiny But Mighty](#)

[How to Attract the Man of Your Dreams A Christian Womans Guide to Success in Love](#)

[Martys Master](#)

[Sweeter Than Chocolate\(r\) Grow Up Moving Past Spiritual Adolescence - A Flexible Inductive Study of Ephesians](#)

[Memorable Moments of a Met Copper - 1967-1997](#)

[A Good Man to Have in Camp](#)

[Pepperland](#)

[How Humans Became Intelligent](#)

[Fall to Rise](#)

[Xaghras Revenge](#)

[Sex Fara Frontiere Moscova Nairobi Praga](#)

[Money Makes Me Cum](#)

[Pirate John-Wolf](#)

[Jomon Potteries in Idojiri Vol6 Color Edition Kyubeione Ruins Dwelling Site #2 31 Kagobata Ruins #7 10](#)

[Trendreport Bildung](#)

[Unser Weg Zur Ewigkeit](#)

[La Canci n de Cazarrabo Tailchasers Song](#)

[To and Fro](#)

[Road Runners Ride](#)

[Condenados Down Pinhole](#)

[With Malice Aforethought](#)

[Molly Fish](#)

[Kinder Der Finsternis](#)

[Cloud Farming in Wales](#)

[Water Baby](#)

[One Cog Turning](#)

[Steampunk Writers Around the World Volume I](#)

[Marchenklang Fur Kleine Ohrenspitzer Und Groe Lauscher](#)

[Diplomatic Baggage The Adventures of a Trailing Spouse](#)

[Travesunde](#)

[The Dragonwitch Tales An Unexpected Beginning](#)

[Crossroads An Anthology](#)

[Train Transform Transition A Strategic Approach to the Life You Deserve](#)

[Money Makes Me Crazy How I Squandered Millions of Dollars Building the Fubu Empire](#)

[Die Geschichte Von Sanft Und Mut](#)

[From Handguns to Paintbrushes](#)

[Think Create Innovate STEM 21st Century Keys to Advancing in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics](#)

[Mi Casa y Mi Refugio Poemas Escogidos](#)