

WARRIOR OF WODEN

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. 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. Over the final refrain of "I'll Be Seeing You" came a man's voice from the foyer, raised quizzically, with perhaps a note of surprise: "Victoria..Celestina jammed the shaft of the crank into the casing socket. Wouldn't fit. Her hands were shaking. Steel fins on the shaft of the crank had to be lined up just-so with slots in the socket. She fumbled, fumbled." "Your mind is as fascinating as ever," he said. "Your soul as beautiful. Listen, Per, since we were thirteen, I was never primarily interested in your body. You flatter yourself shamelessly if you think it was all that special even before the polio." 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. After a few racing steps, when the dog realized that Mary hadn't thrown the ball, it whipped around and sprinted back. "There's a fine George and Ira Gershwin song called 'Someone to Watch Over Me.' Surprising himself more than anyone, Edom also presented his collection to the university. Out with tornadoes, hurricanes, tidal waves, earthquakes, and volcanoes; bring in the roses. He lightly renovated his small apartment, painted it in brighter colors, and throughout the autumn, he stocked his bookshelves with volumes on horticulture, excitedly planning a substantial expansion of the rosarium come spring. Gob of mucus in his throat. His face contorted with a misery that he did not have to fake, and he was astonished to feel tears spring to his eyes. Only a few theatergoers attended the matinee. No one sat near, so Google and Junior openly swapped packages: a five-by-six manila envelope to Google, a nine-by-twelve to Junior. In retrospect, coming here wasn't a wise move. Evidently, the detective had been following him. Now, Vanadium would puzzle out a motive for this late-night graveyard tour. Junior knew that he must remain vigilant. Vigilant and focused until January 12 had come and gone. Eight days to go. The night was hushed but for the barking of a dog in the great distance. Hollow, far softer than the ghostly singing that had recently haunted Junior, the rough voice of this hound nevertheless stirred him, spoke to an essential aspect of his heart. Once he had toured the exhibition, managing not to shudder openly, he tried to hang out within hearing distance of Celestina White, but without appearing to be listening with special intensity. 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. He yearned for a new heart mate. He was wise enough to know that no amount of yearning could transform the wrong woman into the right one. Love couldn't be demanded, planned, or manufactured. Love always came as a surprise, snuck up on you when you were least expecting it, like Anthony Perkins in a dress. place settings. He returned with them to the kitchen and put them in the lower oven, as though Victoria were using it as a plate warmer. If the aftermath of his encounter with Vanadium had not been so messy, Junior might have paused for dinner before wrapping up his work here. The walk back from Quarry Lake had taken almost two hours, in part because he had ducked out of sight in the trees and brush each time that he heard traffic approaching. He was famished. Regardless of how well-prepared the food, however, ambience was a significant factor in the enjoyment of any meal, and bloodstained decor was not, in his view, conducive to fine dining. After the latest concerned nurse departed, Sheena leaned close. She cruelly pinched Junior's cheek between thumb and forefinger, as if she might tear off a goblet of flesh and pop it into her mouth. Maria set aside two cards before turning another faceup. This was also an ace of hearts. By the time he arrived at his apartment, Junior could think of no better action to take, so he phoned Simon Magusson, his attorney in Spruce Hills. Junior hoped that he hadn't been betrayed by eyeshine in the fraction of a second before he closed his eyes to slits. Only now, as the tide of adrenaline began to ebb, Paul wondered who could possibly have wanted to kill a man of peace and God, a man as good as Harrison White. Regrettably, at 2:00 A.M., February 28, waking alone in Tammy's bed, Junior sought her out and found her snacking in the kitchen. Forsaking a fork in favor of her fingers, she was eating a. His inner turmoil boiled ever more fiercely, and the external evidence of it grew more obvious. In the cool air of the fading afternoon, he perspired as profusely as a man already being strapped into an electric chair; it streamed, gushed. He shook, shook, and he was half convinced that he could hear his bones rattling together like the shells of hard-boiled eggs in a rolling cook pot. As he stepped out of the street, Don't Walk shortened to Walk, and when he checked for pursuit, he found it. Here came Vanadium, who would have been shivering in want of a topcoat if his flesh had been real. In her arms, little Barty burred contentedly, unaware that his destiny supposedly included epic love, fabulous riches, and violence. These statements sounded so convoluted and so bizarre to Agnes that they nourished her growing fear for Barty's mental stability. During those spells when she was too shaky to draw, she stood at the window, gazing at the storied city. 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. Her brothers' solemnity irritated Agnes. They appeared to be taking this reading seriously, as though it were far more than just a little after-dinner entertainment. At the foot of the bed: a cedar chest. Four feet long, two feet wide, perhaps three high. Brass handles. Among those present before the caravan returned were a few who should have known better than to allow this madness. Tom Vanadium, Edom, Maria. They stared up at the boy, tense and solemn, and Agnes could only suppose that

they, too, had arrived after the fact, with the boy already beyond easy recall. By habit, she shifted her attention to his eyes, because though the scientific types insist that the eyes themselves are incapable of expression, Agnes knew what every poet knows: To see the condition of the hidden heart, you must look first where scientists will not admit to looking at all. Vanadium was surely unaware of any connection between Junior and Seraphim White. And now the girl could never talk. "What aren't you telling us?" her mother pressed, intuiting the existence of a larger story, if not the amazing nature of it. Eventually she discovered within herself all the light that she needed to find her way through the crucial hours immediately ahead. At last she knew what she must do, but she was not certain that she possessed the fortitude to do it. Maybe he would get lucky, and an airliner would fall out of the sky right now, right here, obliterating him in an instant. Wally Lipscomb's face, as long and narrow as ever, seemed not at all like the dour visage of an undertaker, as once it had, but rather like the rubbery mug of one of those circus clowns who can make you laugh as easily by striking an exaggeratedly sad frown as by putting on a goofy grin. She saw a warmth of spirit where once she had seen spiritual indifference, vulnerability where once she had seen an armored heart, great expectations where once she had seen withered hope; she saw kindness and gentleness where they had always been but now in more generous measure than before. She loved this long, narrow, homely, wonderful face, and she loved the man who wore it. Barty grinned mischievously. "One of the places we visited today. Some big kids. They saw this scary movie, said they had to wash their shorts after." Cupping Angel entirely in his big hands, smiling at her, he said, "Oh, no, Mrs. White, this looks like a healthy young lady to me. No medicine required." He was able to play peekaboo in his fifth month instead of his eighth, stand while holding on to something in his sixth instead of eighth. Agnes supposed Jacob trembled in anticipation of the crash of an airliner or at least a light aircraft. Edom might be calculating the odds that this serene place-at this specific hour-would be the impact point for one of those planet-killing asteroids that reputedly wiped most life off the earth every few hundred thousand years or so. "I don't want an attorney." He closed his eyes, lowered his head to the pillow, and sighed. "I just want ... peace." He went upstairs to change out of his dark blue suit and badly scuffed black shoes. Most of these firearms were loaded and ready for use, but five remained in their original boxes, in the back of her bedroom closet. Evidently, considering the original bill of sale taped to each of the five boxed handguns, she must have acquired all the weapons legally. While you're trying to decide, hand me a knife, and I'll cut your jugular you brainless medical-school dropout. Barty whispered: "The North Pole Society of Not Evil Adventurers is now in session." "He's not a real contemporary person, not anyone Cain needs to fear. So how did he develop this obsession with finding someone named Bartholomew?" He met Celestina's eyes, as if she might have answers for him. "Is there a real Bartholomew? And how does this tie in with his assault on you? Or is there any tie-in at all?" Entering the bedroom, Junior had expected to cast aside his pistol and draw a knife. But he was no longer in a mood for close-up work. Fortunately, he'd managed to hold on to the gun. Nolly said, "We've never really had a song of our own, in spite of all the dancing we do. I think this is a good one. But so far, you've only sung it to another man." Kneeling at her side, Junior placed the decorative pillow over her lovely face and pressed down firmly while Frank Sinatra finished "Hello, Young Lovers," and sang perhaps half of "All or Nothing at All." Victoria never regained consciousness, never had a chance to struggle. "Please just call me Tom. I've been forcibly retired from the Oregon State Police, with full disability because of this face, so I'm not officially a detective anymore. Yet until Enoch Cain is behind bars, where he belongs, I'm not ready to be anything but a cop, official or not." One of his favorite gifts for Christmas 1967 was a twelve-hole chromatic harmonica with forty-eight reeds providing a full three-octave range. Even in his little hands, and with the limitations of his small mouth, this more sophisticated instrument enabled him to produce full-bodied versions of any song that appealed to him. Agnes invited everyone to stay for dinner. The pies were no sooner finished than large cook pots, saucepans, colanders, and other heavy artillery were requisitioned from the Lampion culinary arsenal. Sitting on the edge of the bed, taking his hand, she stared at his sweet little bow of a mouth, whereas before she would have met his eyes. "Tell me." The Selective Service physician quickly declared Junior to be maimed and unfit. Quietly but with passion, Junior pleaded for a chance to prove his value to the armed forces, but the examiner was unmoved by patriotism, interested only in keeping the cattle line of other potential draftees moving past him at a steady pace. He doubted the Studebaker would ever be found, but successful men were, without exception, those who paid attention to detail. Perri was often fast asleep by nine-thirty, seldom later than ten o'clock while Paul never turned in earlier than midnight or one in the morning. In the later hours, to the reassuring susurrations of his wife's breathing, he returned to his pulp adventures. These weren't lakes of blood, just smears, so Junior could wipe them up quickly, once he got the corpse out of the hallway, but the sight of them further infuriated him. He was here to bring closure to all the unfinished business of Spruce Hills, to free himself from vengeful spirits, to better his life and plunge henceforth entirely into a bright new future. He wasn't here, damn it, to do building maintenance. 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. 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. Celestina stared curiously at Tom Vanadium. She had witnessed the effect of vanishment, though she hadn't actually seen the coin disappear in midair. Yet she seemed to sense either that something more than sleight of hand had just transpired or that the trick had a meaning she'd missed. Maybes were for babies, but Caesar Zedd had failed to provide a profundity with which Junior could ward off the what-ifs as easily as the maybes. Applying enough pain, he could have gotten cooperation even from Vanadium.

The detective had said he'd heard Junior fearfully repeat Bartholomew in his sleep, which Junior believed to be true, because the name did resonate with him; however, he wasn't sure he believed the cop's claim to be ignorant of the identity of this nemesis. "Do you know him?" Edom asked, gazing longingly now at the open door, from which Jacob had turned away. "Obadiah Sepharad?" "-called himself King Obadiah, Pharaoh of the Fantastic. He traveled all over the country playing nightclubs-". Dropped cartridges gleamed on the carpet. Stoop to snatch them up? No. That was asking for a skull-cracking blow. The boy's silvery giggles rang as merrily as sleigh bells, his Christmas spirit undampened. "Not between, Mommy. Nobody could do that. I just ran where the rain wasn't." The reverend said, "I'm sure you underestimate my parishioners, Celestina. They won't be scandalized. They'll open their hearts." STILL WEARING HIS white pharmacy smock over a white shirt and black slacks, striding purposefully along the streets of Bright Beach, under a malignant-gray twilight sky worthy of a Weird Tales cover, with ominous accompanying rhythm provided by wind-clattered palm fronds overhead, Paul Damascus headed home for the day. If the policeman's gray eyes had earlier been as hard as nailheads, they were now points, and behind them was willpower strong enough to drive spikes through stone. 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. "Fear?" Kathleen asked, more interested in Vanadium's words than in his prestidigitation. "You said you're offering fear to Cain ... as if that was something he would want." Putting one hand on the object to which she referred, Barty said, "Mom and I were listening to a book when you got here. This is a talking book." Junior suspected that no one other than this man's mother called him Tom. He was probably "Detective" to some and "Vanadium" to most who knew him. "September 13, 1928. Lake Okeechobee, Florida. Two thousand people died in a flood." "-and whenever the good Pharaoh was here in San Francisco, a few times each year, he always stopped by St. Anselmo's to entertain the boys--". Junior blinked and dared not speak, because he didn't know any Bartholomew, and now he was certain the cop was weaving an elaborate web of deceit, setting a trap. Why would he have spoken a name that meant nothing to him? "Which is?" His eyes widened, and his voice became husky with pretended fear. "They're always ... evil.. Like all ICU waiting rooms, where Death sits patiently, smiling in anticipation, this lounge was clean but drab, and the utilitarian furnishings didn't pamper, as though bright colors and comfort might annoy the ascetic Reaper and motivate him to cut down more patients than otherwise he would have done. Paul sat by himself, at the far end of the restaurant from them. He ordered orange juice and waffles. Wally's own house was in the same neighborhood, a block and a half away, a three-story Victorian gem that he entirely occupied. "Imagine me thinking you'd be gone," she said to Barty. "Your old mum is losing it. I never made a deal with Rumpelstiltskin, so there's nothing for him to collect." Now came a slight but real risk of being heard inside: He pulled the trigger. The flat steel spring in the lock-release gun caused the pick to jump upward, lodging some of the pins at the shear line. The snap of the hammer against the spring and the click of the pick against the pin tumblers were soft sounds, but anyone near the other side of the door would more likely than not hear them; if she was one room removed, however, the noise would not reach her. On the high marsh-Dragonfly-A description of Earthsea. Confused, Panglo held out his right hand, but Jacob said, "Sorry, no offense, but I don't shake with anyone." Soon he realized this was a mistaken assumption, because when the instructor began trying to unknot him from his lotus position, a defensive numbness deserted Junior, and he became aware of pain. Excruciating. Maria Gonzalez arrived with her daughters, and while it was natural for Angel to be drawn to the company of older girls, she had no interest in anyone but Barty. When Frieda finished retching and passed out in a heap, Junior left her on the floor and immediately set out to explore her rooms. The white padded eye patches rebuffed her, and she realized how profoundly the boy's double enucleation would affect how easily she could read his moods and know his mind. Here was a littler loss until now shadowed by the greater destruction. Denied the evidence of his eyes, she would need to be better at noting and interpreting nuances of his body language-also changed by blindness-and his voice, for there would be no soul revealed by hand-painted, plastic implants. Having booked the suite for three nights, Tom expected that he would spend far fewer late hours in his bed than sitting watch in the shared living room. knew Phimie died in childbirth, not an accident, and Max's instincts told him rape. I explained to your dad why Cain was the man. I wanted whatever information he might have. But I suppose ... sitting there, looking at my face, he decided that Cain is indeed the biggest hornet's nest ever, and he didn't want to put his daughter and granddaughter at greater risk than necessary." "Anyway, something clicked in me on the roller coaster, and I grasped a new angle of approach to the problem. I've figured out that I can walk in the idea of sight, sort of sharing the vision of another me, in another reality, without actually going there." He smiled into her astonishment. "So what do you say about that?" She knew that the front door was locked, too, because Wally had waited to hear the deadbolts clack shut. Nevertheless, she stepped into the hall, where the light wasn't on, walked quickly past Angel's bedroom, came to the entrance to the lamplit living room-and saw a man backing through the open front door, dragging something, dragging a dark and large and heavy rumpled something, dragging a.the hilly streets of the city, ignoring all traffic lights and stop signs, pegging the speedometer needle at its highest mark, as though he might eventually be air-cooled by sufficient speed. He wanted to slam through unwary pedestrians, crack their bones, and send them tumbling. He had considered tracking down Celestina-and the bastard boy--prior to her exhibition. The alumni office of her college might be one route to her. And further inquiries in the city's fine-arts community would no doubt eventually provide him with her address. She was sopping, shivering. Water streamed from her soaked hair, down her face, as she wiped at her beaded eyelashes with one dripping hand. The corroded casement-operating mechanism began to give way, as did the hinges, and the window sagged outward. Abruptly, Junior Cain turned away from the tower, from the

body of his lost love, dropped to his knees, and vomited. Vomited more explosively than he had ever done in the depths of the worst sickness of his life. Bitter, thick, grossly out of proportion to the simple lunch that he had eaten, up came a dreadfully reeking vomitus. He was untroubled by nausea, but his abdominal muscles contracted painfully, so tightly that he thought he would be cinched in two, and up came more, and still more, spasm after spasm, until he spewed a thin gruel green with bile, which surely had to be the last of it, but was not, for here was more bile, so acidic that his gums burned from contact with it--Oh God, please no--still more. His entire body heaving. Choking as he aspirated a piece of something vile. He squeezed his watering eyes shut against the sight of the flood, but he could not block out the stench..Waste of time to check those places. More likely, woman and boy were hiding in the last room.."You're all right, we've got you now." His soft yet reverberant voice was so unearthly that his words seemed to convey an assurance more profound and more comforting than their surface meaning..Thus far, there were only two unexpected developments, the first being his explosive vomiting. He hoped he would never have to endure another such episode..Kathleen expected this would prove to be true. She herself was not frightened by Thomas Vanadium's appearance; but then she had been prepared for it before she first saw him. And she wasn't a murderer, fearful of retribution, to whom this particular face would seem like Judgment personified..If Vanadium appeared among these men, Junior would not only puke out the contents of his stomach, but also would disgorge his internal organs, every last one of them, and spew up his bones, too, until he emptied out everything within his skin.."No, I don't see it," Chicane repeated. "There's no benefit to a meditation marathon. Twenty minutes is enough, man. Half an hour at the most. You relied on your internal clock, didn't you?".Either this chatterbox was at all times a babbling airhead or Junior particularly disconcerted him..Scowling, Joey stared at the floor in puzzlement, shifted his weight from one foot to the other, sighed, turned his attention to the ceiling, and shifted his weight again, for all the world like a trained bear that couldn't quite remember how to perform its next trick.."He's a wonderful boy, so very bright, so very full of life. Blindness will be hard, but it won't be the end. He'll cope without the light. It'll be so difficult at first, but this boy ... eventually he'll thrive.".draftsman? Having never been nudged in that direction, would Cain have followed a different path that took him far from Celestina and Angel?. "I'm not sure which is more unusual--the site of the eruption, the number of boils, or the size of them.".He found nothing especially gratifying, switched off the lights, and moved on to the living room. If Cain was coming home, he could glance up from the street and see lights ablaze here, so Vanadium resorted to a small flashlight, always carefully hooding the lens with one hand.."This is going to be an enormous settlement," the attorney promised. "And there's more good news. County and state authorities have agreed to close the case on Naomi's death. It's now officially an accident.".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?.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..THE SUN ROSE above clouds, above fog, and with the gray day came a silver drizzle. The city was lanced by needles of rain, and filth drained from it, swelling the gutters with a poisonous flood..She was forty-three, so young to have left such a mark upon the world. Yet more than two thousand people attended her funeral service--which was conducted by clergymen of seven denominations--and the subsequent procession to the cemetery was so lengthy that some people had to park a mile away and walk. The mourners streamed across the grassy hills and among the headstones for the longest time, but the presiding minister did not begin the graveside service until all had assembled. None here showed impatience at the delay. Indeed, when the final prayer was said and the casket lowered, the crowd hesitated to depart, lingering in the most unusual way, until Barty realized that like he himself, they half expected a miraculous resurrection and ascension, for among them had so recently walked this one who was without stain..With his refreshed drink, studying Celestina's photograph in the brochure, Junior returned to the living room. She was as stunning as her sister, but unlike her poor sister, she wasn't dead and was, therefore, an appealing prospect for romance. From her, he must learn whatever she knew that might help him in the Bartholomew hunt, without alerting her to his motive. At the same time, there was no reason that they couldn't have a fling, a love affair, even a serious future together..Shaking with a fear that had nothing to do with Junior Cain and flying bullets, or even with memories of Josef Krepp and his vile necklace, Tom Vanadium closed the sketch pad and put it on the window seat. He opened the window, and in rushed the susurrant of breeze-stirred oak leaves..Halted by the unmistakable meaning of the expressions on these women's faces, Paul was grateful that Nellie was briefly stricken mute. He didn't believe he had the strength to receive the news that she had tried to deliver..Over potato soup and an asparagus salad, the dinner conversation got off to a promising start: a discussion of favorite potato dishes, observations on the weather, talk of Mexico at Christmas..Junior could almost feel sorry for this sad, stocky, haunted detective, deranged by years of difficult public service..She shook her head. "No way back." She pointed to the sketch pad on the floor. "I pushed him there.".Otter was reluctant to answer. He had to like Hound, but didn't have to trust him. "Shape-changing," he mumbled at last..He felt so happy, he was improving every day in every way, life just got better--but then something happened that was worse than the shooting. It ruined his day, his week, the rest of his year..In the morning, after Agnes showered and dressed, when she went downstairs, she discovered Barty already at the kitchen table, eating a bowl of cereal while riveted to the book. Finished

with breakfast, he returned to his room, reading as he went..Fragments of the broken wineglass crunched under his shoes as he crossed the small kitchen to the dinette. He opened the bottle of vodka and put it on the table in front of the dead woman..If killing the wrong Bartholomew had broken a dam in Junior and released a lake of tension, whacking the right Bartholomew would set loose an ocean of pent-up stress, and he would feel free as he'd not felt since the fire tower. Freer than he'd been in his entire life.. "So where he threw the quarter," Barty said, as Angel listened intently and nodded her head, "wasn't really into Gunsmoke, 'cause that's not a place, it's just a show. See, maybe he threw it into a place where I'm not blind, or into a place where he doesn't have that messed-up face, or a place where for some reason you never came here today. There's more places than anybody could ever count, even me, and I can count pretty good. That's what you feel, right-all the ways things are?" 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..Raised by a father to whom any form of amusement was blasphemy, Agnes had never seen a magician perform until she was nineteen, when Joey Lampion, then her suitor, had taken her to a stage show. Rabbits plucked out of top hats, doves conjured from sudden plumes of smoke, assistants sawn in half and mended to walk again; every illusion that had been old even in Houdini's time was a jaw-dropping amazement to her that evening. Now she remembered a trick in which the magician had poured a pitcher of milk into a funnel fashioned from a few pages of a newspaper, causing the milk to vanish when the funnel, still dry, was unrolled to reveal ordinary newsprint. The thrill that had quivered through her that evening measured I on the Richter scale compared to the full 10-point sense of wonder quaking through her at the sight of Barty as dry as if he'd spent the afternoon perched fireside..Raising one hand, wiggling the fingers, he said, "Toes, toes, toes, toes, toes." "I'll do your share of the housework for a month. If I'm closer to the date, you clean up all my pie-baking and other kitchen messes for a month-the bowls and pans and mixers, everything." The only light came from a reading lamp. An adjustable brass shade directed the light down onto a chair.

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