THE PHANTOM ARMY BEING THE STORY OF A MAN AND A MYSTERY

In the dark dumpster, tormented by ceaseless torrents of what-ifs, convinced that the spirit of Vanadium was going to slam the lid and lock him in with a revivified corpse, Junior had for a while been reduced to the condition of a helpless child. Paralyzed by fear, withdrawn to the corner of the dumpster farthest from the putrefying pianist, squatting in trash, he had shaken with such violence that his castanet teeth had chattered in a frenzied flamenco rhythm to which his bones seemed to knock, knock, like boot heels on a dance floor. He had heard himself whimpering but couldn't stop, had felt tears of shame burning down his cheeks but couldn't halt the flow, had felt his bladder ready to burst from the needle prick of terror but had with heroic effort managed to refrain from wetting his pants. Opening his eyes, still not daring to meet Victoria's gaze, Junior knew she had registered and properly interpreted his response to her seductive spooning. She had frozen, the utensil in midair, and her breath had caught in her throat. She was thrilled. "Fifty died in London, in '57, when two trains crashed. And a hundred twelve were crushed, torn, mangled, in '52, also England." If he killed Bartholomew and got away clean, as he expected that he would, then he could subsequently return everything in the van to the apartment. He was just being prudent by planning for his future, because the future was, after all, the only place he lived."All right. Well ... Jesuits are encouraged to pursue education in any subject that interests them, not theology alone. I was deeply interested in physics." After following the blacktop fifty feet, Junior headed downhill through the close-cropped grass, between the tombstones. He switched on his flashlight and trod cautiously, for the ground sloped unevenly and, in places, remained soggy and slippery from the rain. Flush with the promise of their engagement, still excited by the success at the gallery, with Angel exuberant in spite of the hour and Oreo energized, he was amazed that they had made the transfer of the little red whirlwind from house to Buick to house with nothing else forgotten other than one purse. Celie called it ballet, but Wally thought that it was merely a momentary order of chaos, the challenging-joyous-frustrating-delightful-exhilarating chaos of a life full of hope and love and children, which he wouldn't have traded for calm or kingdoms. Sometimes he thought he walked for Perri, using the steps she had stored up and never taken, giving expression to her unfulfilled yearning to travel. At other times, he thought he walked for the solitude that allowed him to remember their life in fine detail or to forget. To find peace—or seek adventure. To gain understanding through contemplation—"or to scrub all thought from his mind. To see the world or to be rid of it. Perhaps he hoped that coyotes would stalk him through a bleak twilight or a mountain lion set upon him on a bloody dawn, or a drunk driver run him down. He prepared his knives and guns. Blades and bullets. Fortune favors the bold, the self-improved, the self-evolved, the focused. Drawn by voices on the second floor, Tom took the stairs two at a time. A man and a boy. Barty and Cain. To the left in the hallway, and then to a room on the right. With a shiver, Kathleen said, "We'd like to know more about ... why we did the things we did for you. Why the quarters? Why the song?". Turning to face his four trailing escorts, all of whom were hunch shouldered and stiff-necked with tension, Barty said, "What's for dinner?". When Junior walked the cracked-linoleum corridor and descended the six flights of stairs to the street, he discovered that a thin drizzle was falling. The afternoon grew darker even as he turned his face to the sky, and the cold, dripping city, which swaddled Bartholomew somewhere in its concrete folds, appeared not to be a beacon of culture and sophistication anymore, but a forbidding and dangerous empire, as it had never seemed to him before. In August, he developed an interest in meditation. He began with concentrative meditation—the form called meditation "with seed"—in which you must close your eyes, mentally focus on a visualized object, and clear your mind of all else. He'd wanted to give Celestina more help than she would accept. She continued working nights as a waitress for two years, while she completed classes at the Academy of Art College, and she quit her job only when she began to sell her paintings for enough to equal her wages and gratuities. He had never associated Enoch Cain's dreaded Bartholomew with the disciple Bartholomew in Harrison White's sermon, which had been broadcast once in December '64, the month prior to Naomi's murder and again in January '65. Even now, with blood-scrawled-and-stabbed Bartholomew on the wall and with This Momentous Day before him in the brochure, Tom Vanadium couldn't quite make the connection. He strove to pull together the broken lengths in this chain of evidence, but they remained separated by one missing link. Simon Magussen, 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. "Everyone knows about Vanadium. He's a crusader, self-appointed champion of truth, justice, and the American way. A holy fool, if you will. With the case closed, he has no authority to harass you." A mutual interest in ballroom dancing had resulted in their introduction when each needed a new partner for a fox-trot and swing competition. Nolly had started taking lessons five years before he had met Kathleen. Instead, he sat in the breakfast nook with his phone books and resumed the grueling search for Bartholomew. The bitch was getting tired, but Junior still didn't like his odds in a hand-to-hand confrontation. Her hair was disarranged. Her eyes flashed with such wildness that he was half convinced he saw elliptical pupils like those of a jungle cat. Her lips were skinned back from her teeth in a snarl. When she still didn't meet his stare, he seized her by the chin and tipped...
her head back. Before he searched the bedroom, Vanadium walked quickly back through the rooms that he had already inspected, suddenly remembering the three bizarre paintings of which Nolly, Kathleen, and Sparky had spoken, and wondering how he could have overlooked them. They were not here. He was able to locate, however, the places on the walls where the art works had hung, because the nails still bristled from the pocket plaster, and picture hooks dangled from the nails. Years earlier, a stream had been diverted to fill the vast excavation. Stock fish were added, mostly trout and bass. Such quiet filled the house that Agnes couldn't hear even the murmuring miseries of the past. He had taken refuge in meditation, because he'd been frustrated by his continuing failure in the Bartholomew hunt and disturbed by his apparently paranormal experiences with quarters and with phone calls from the dead. More deeply disturbed than he had realized or had been able to admit...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. 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. "Forget Barty's tree for a second and imagine that all these many worlds are like stacked slices of Swiss cheese. Through some holes, you can see only the next slice. Through others, you see through two or three or five slices before holes stop overlapping. There are little holes between stacked worlds, too, but they're constantly shifting, changing, second by second. And I can't see them, really, but I have an uncanny feel for them. Watch closely." Grace, of course, was a strong woman for whom faith was an armor against far worse than embarrassment. Celestina knew that Mom would suffer immeasurably more heartache by remaining in Oregon than what pain she might experience at her daughter's side, but Phimie was too young, too naive, and too frightened to grasp that in this matter, as in all others, her mother was a pillar, not a reed. 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, and still more, as he was unable to move a second time. After a few moments, he muffled his head between his knees, and vomited until he felt exhausted. Vanadium's wounds were too grievous to pass for accidental injuries. Even if there were some way to disguise them through clever staging, no one would believe that Victoria had died in a freak fall and that Vanadium, rushing to her side, had slipped and tumbled and sustained mortal head injuries, as well. Such a strong whiff of slapstick would put even the Spruce Hills police on the scent of murder. 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 name 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. Dinner arrived, and Tom persuaded Celestina and Grace to come to the table for Angel's sake. Nothing brought a sense of order and normality to a disordered and distressing day more surely than the gathering of family and friends around a dinner table. For so much chaos and confusion, the child needed stability and routine wherever they could be provided. Nothing but an extremely ill-tempered dinner table. For all the complications that the Beatles had caused, Junior returned to Hilltop after dinner, soaping his hands, and thinking about the conversation with his mother.}

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"Celestina, you're quite beautiful, and I'm sure you've learned to be wary of men, but I swear that my intentions are entirely honorable." NED--"CALL ME NEDDY"--Gnathic was as slim as a flute, with a flute-quantity of holes in his head from which thought could escape before the pressure of it built into an unpleasant music within I his skull. His voice was always soft and harmonious, but frequently he spoke allegro, sometimes even prestissimo, and in spite of his mellow tone, Neddy at maximum tempo was as irritating to the ear as bagpipes bleating out Bolero, if such a thing were possible. From time to time, he halted, leaning against the walker as if in need of rest. He took care occasionally to grimace-convincingly, not too theatrically— and to breathe harder than necessary. "I haven't disturbed him," said the visitor, taking his cue from the doctor and keeping his voice low. An emergency kit in the trunk of his car contained a flashlight. He fetched it and sweetened the bribe to the valet. Paul pulled her back. He gently but firmly thrust her through the open door of the guest room in which he'd spent the night. "Stay here, wait." The word diarrhea was inadequate to describe this affliction. In spite of the books he'd read to improve his vocabulary, Junior could not think of any word sufficiently descriptive and powerful enough to convey his misery and the hideousness of his ordeal. Tom between curiosity and emotional exhaustion, Celestina held his gaze, thinking, and finally she said, "Deal." As they moved toward the surgical floor, the solemn sister said, "Another hypertensive crisis. Tuesday morning, while he showered with a swimming cockroach that was as exuberant as a golden retriever in the motel's lukewarm water, an acute event never to kill again. Except in self-defense. His inner turmoil boiled over 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 early as this evening, here at her son's bedside, Agnes began dimly to sense that certain of these amusing conversations with Barty might not be as fanciful as they seemed, that he was expressing in a childlike way some truth that she had assumed was fantasy. In the sermon that brought him a moment of fame that he'd found more uncomfortable than not, Daddy had used the life of Bartholomew to illustrate his point that every day in every life is of the most profound importance. Bartholomew is arguably the most obscure of the twelve disciples. Some would say Lebbaeus is less known, some might even point to Thomas the doubter. But Bartholomew certainly casts a shadow far shorter than those of Peter, Matthew, James, John, and Philip. Daddy's purpose in proclaiming Bartholomew the most obscure of the twelve was then to imagine in vivid detail how that apostle's actions, seemingly of little consequence at the time, had resonated down through history, through hundreds of millions of lives— then to assert that the life of each chambermaid listening to this sermon, the life of each car mechanic, each teacher, each truck driver, each waitress, each doctor, each janitor, was as important as the resonant life of Bartholomew, although each dwelt beyond the lamp of fame and labored without the applause of multitudes. He considered calling her, but he didn't know what he would say if she answered. Holding on to the jamb with one hand, Barty leaned across the threshold, listening to the day. Birds. Softly rustling leaves. Nobody on the porch. Even trying hard to be quiet, people always made some little noise. AS MEANINGFUL AS Jacob's death had been within the small world of his family, Agnes Lampion never lost sight of the fact that there were more resonant deaths in the larger world before 1968 ended and the Year of the Rooster followed. On the fourth of April, James Earl Ray gunned down Martin Luther King on a motel balcony in Memphis, but the assassin's hopes were foiled when, because of this murder, freedom grew more vigorously from the richness of a martyr's blood. On June 1, Helen Keller died peacefully at eighty-seven. Blind and deaf since early childhood, mute until her adolescence, Miss Keller led a life of astonishing accomplishment; she learned to speak, to ride horses, to waltz; she graduated cum laude from Radcliffe, an inspiration to millions and a testament to the potential in even the most blighted life. On June 5, Senator Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Unknown numbers died when Soviet tanks invaded Czechoslovakia, and hundreds of thousands perished in the final days of the Cultural Revolution in China, many eaten in acts of cannibalism sanctioned by Chairman Mao as acceptable political action. John Steinbeck, novelist, and Tallulah Bankhead, actress, came to the end of their journeys in this world, if not yet in all others. But James Lovell, William Anders, and Frank Borman—the first men to orbit the moon—traveled 250,000 miles into space, and all returned alive. He half expected to hear Thomas Vanadium in the distance, softly singing "Someone to Watch over Me." Yet his curious attraction to these newborns kept him at the window, and he began to believe that unconsciously he had intended to come here from the moment he guided his walker out of his room. He'd been compelled to come. Drawn by some mysterious magnetism. I Junior didn't believe in ghosts, anyway. He believed in flesh and bone, stone and mortar, money and power, himself and the future. Although he was a stranger, arriving unannounced, and something of an eccentric by anyone's definition, Paul was received by Grace and Harrison White with warmth and fellowship. At their doorstep, raising his voice to compete with the wailing weather, he hurriedly blurted out his mission, as if they might reel back from his wild windblown presence if he didn't talk quickly enough: "I've walked here from Bright Beach, California, to tell you about an exceptional woman whose life will echo through the lives of countless others long after she's gone. Her husband died the night their son was born, but not before naming the boy Bartholomew, because he'd been so impressed by This Momentous Day. And now the boy is blind, and I hope you'll be able and willing to give some comfort to his mother." The Whites failed to reel backward, didn't even flinch from his unfortunately explosive statement of purpose. Instead, they invited him into their home, later invited him to dinner, and later still asked him to stay the night in their guest room. "Some Baptists are opposed to drink, Doctor, but we're the wicked variety. Though all we have is a warm bottle of Chardonnay." An overflow crowd of mourners had attended the services at St. Thomas's Church, standing shoulder to shoulder at the back of the nave, through the narthex, and across the sidewalk outside, and now everyone appeared to have come to the
cemetery, as well...A great boom. Concussion rocked the floor and shuddered the walls and made the roof timbers squeal as though unsuspected colonies of bats had taken flight by the thousands all in the same instant...Outside, flames churned to the left and right of the opening. The front of the house was afire...Of course, Seraphim's child would not have a telephone. He was just a baby, dangerous to Junior in a way that was not clear, but a baby nonetheless...Rescuers encouraged her to move safely away from the passenger's door, as far as possible, to avoid being inadvertently injured as they tried to break in to her. She could go nowhere but to her dead husband...Under other circumstances, Agnes might have blushed, but now her apparently irrational fear of too much life insurance had been vindicated...During Barty's hospitalization, they had graduated from the young adult novels by Robert Heinlein to some of the same author's science fiction for general audiences. Now, pajamaed and in bed, with his sunglasses on the nightstand but his padded eye patches still in place, Barty listened, rapt, to the beginning of Double Star...Occasionally, when Junior returned home from a day of gallery hopping or an evening at a restaurant, Industrial Woman-the artist's title-scared away his mellow mood. More than once, he'd cried out in alarm before realizing this was just his prized Poriferan...find reason to celebrate every development in life, including the cruelest catastrophe, by discovering the bright side to even the darkest hour...Mocked by the silvery ping-ting-jingle of the maniac detective emptying his ghostly pockets, Junior ran...On the lawn, Koko, their four-year-old golden retriever, was lying on her back, all paws in the air, presenting the great gift of her furry belly for the rubbing pleasure of young Mistress Mary..."If you ranted at him about earthquakes, tornadoes, erupting volcanoes, and all that stuff, how could he mistake you for me?". Maria Elena Gonzalez--such an imposing figure in spite of her diminutive stature that even three names seemed insufficient to identify her--was still present. Although the crisis had passed, she wasn't ready to trust that nurses and doctors, by themselves, could provide Agnes with adequate care...Allowing one month for the job might be optimistic. On the other hand, he'd had a long time to perfect a strategy...The coin stopped turning across his knuckles and, as though with volition of its own, it slipped into the tight curve of his curled forefinger. With a snap of his thumb, he flipped the quarter into the air...She looked down at her clutched hands. Made for work, these hands, and always ready to take on any task. Strong, nimble, reliable hands, but useless to her now, unable to perform the one miracle she needed. "Barty's birthday is in eight days. I was hoping..."Clearly, she had learned nothing from her reading. No sincere and thoughtful student of Zedd would be as sorely lacking in self-control as Frieda Bliss...The subcontractor who built the quarter-spitting coin boxes was James Hunnicolt, but everyone called him Jimmy Gadget. He specialized in electronic eavesdropping, building cameras and recorders into the most unlikely objects, but he could do just about anything requiring inventive mechanical design and construction...Vanadium flipped the quarter straight into the air and at once spread his arms, palms turned up to show that his hands were empty...For a finder's fee, Junior was put in touch with a papermaker named Google...This was not his real name, but with his crossed eyes, large rubbery lips, and massively prominent Adam's apple, he was as perfect a Google as ever there had been...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..."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..."Any reasonable person would agree that the line between legitimate and harassment was hair-thin...In addition to these scavengers, another presence was here, unseen but not unfelt. The chill of this invisible entity pierced Junior to the marrow: the stubborn, vicious, psychotic, prickly-bur spirit of Thomas Vanadium, maniac cop, not satisfied to haunt the house in which he'd died, not ready yet to seek reincarnation, but instead pursuing his beleaguered suspect even after death, capering--to paraphrase Sklent like an invisible, filthy, scabby monkey here on this city street, in bright daylight...In the three years since Perri's death, he had walked thousands of miles. He hadn't kept a record of the cumulative distance, because he wasn't trying to get into Guinness or to prove anything...To become a physical therapist, Junior had taken more than massage classes, so he knew what hematemesis meant. Hematemesis: vomiting of blood...As one of the two paramedics hurried to the ambulance van and scrambled into the driver's seat, Agnes suffered another contraction so severe that for a tremulous moment, at the peak of the agony, she almost lost consciousness...Celestina's question had been about Phimie, but they had told her about the baby, and she was alarmed by their evasion..."...then how come you couldn't walk where your eyes were healthy and leave the tumors there," she remembered...Currently, Jacob was far removed from the embalming chamber and intended never to set foot there, alive. With Walter Panglo as his guide, he toured the casket selection in the funeral-planning room...Tom was an Oregon State Police detective, as far as Celestina knew, and she didn't understand what he was doing here...Three doors in the dark hallway: one to the right, ajar, and two to the left, both closed...As the heavyset nurse retreated with the baby, Phimie's grip on her sister's hand relaxed, but then grew firm once more as her gaze also became more intense. "Love... you."..."The girl's baby," said Nolly, "was placed with Catholic Family Services for adoption..."The minister had finished. The service was over. No one came to Junior with condolences, because they would see him again shortly, at the Ford dealership buffet...After wiping her floury hands, Agnes took the book from him and, examining it, could find nothing wrong. She flipped back a few pages, then a few forward, but the lines of type were crisp and clear. "Show me where, honey." His request felt like an assault. 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everything. Everything that can happen does happen, and each different way of happening makes a whole new place.". When he reported for a physical and a reassessment of his draft classification, on Wednesday, December 15, he left the insert in his hitching shoe; however, he limped like old Walter Brennan, the actor, hitching around the ranch in The Real McCoy's...Because of his blindness and his intellectual gifts, Barty was home schooled; besides, no teacher was a match for his autodidactic skills, nor could anyone possibly inspire in him a greater thirst for knowledge than the one with which he had been born. Angel went to this same informal classroom, and her sole fellow student was also her teacher. They aced the periodic equivalency tests that the law required. Their constant companionship seemed to be all play, yet was filled with constant learning, too...Nor could she begin to imagine the nature of the disaster that had befallen him, leaving his face looking blasted and loose at all its hinges. She had last seen him at Phimie's funeral. A few minutes ago at her doorstep, she'd recognized him only because of his port-wine birthmark...Into her fevered mind came an image of a milk-glass infant, as translucent as Joey at the back door of the ambulance. Fearing that this vision meant her child would be stillborn, she said, My baby, but no sound escaped her...Maria said nothing, working busily, but Agnes recognized that special silence in which difficult words were sought and laboriously stitched together...Among Junior's many gifts, his ability to focus might have been the most important. Bob Chicane, his former instructor in matters meditative, had called him intense and even obsessive, following the painful incident involving meditation without seed, but intensity and obsession were false words...Junior was simply focused...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..."September 20, 1902, Birmingham, Alabama, church fire—one hundred fifteen dead. March 4, 1908, Collinwood, Ohio, school fire, one hundred seventy-six dead..."The wink startled and baffled Edom. Oddly, he thought of the mysterious, disembodied, and eternally unwinking eye in the floating pinnacle of the pyramid that was on the back of any one-dollar bill..."There must be something important I'm supposed to do here that I don't need to do everywhere I am, something I'll do better if I'm blind."...But she knew. Barty, buoyant as ever, seemed not to be much worried about the problem with his vision. He appeared to expect that it would pass like any sneezing fit or cold...Vanadium, lending an aura of normalcy to the house. Now he wanted silence, so he would immediately hear another car in the driveway if one arrived...Agnes wasn't able to interpret his expression, not because he was in the least difficult to read, but because her perceptions were skewed by sudden fear and a flood of adrenaline. Her heart seemed to spin like a flywheel in her breast..."I'm glad to hear it," Tom said. His thin smile might have been ironic, though it wasn't easy to interpret the meaning of any subtle expression on his hammered face...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..."Be quiet, sugarpie," she said, crossing the bedroom to the door, which stood only slightly ajar...A half bath downstairs. Two bedrooms and a full bath on the upper floor. All deserted...Harrison and Grace had welcomed him in spite of the fact that a friend and parishioner had died on Thursday, leaving them both bereft and with church obligations..."Well, the blood wasn't dark and acidic, so it didn't come from his stomach. It was bright and alkaline. It could have arisen in the esophagus, but most likely it's pharyngeal in origin...".Victoria lay faceup on the floor. The nurse was no longer as lovely as she had been, and perhaps because of early rigor mortis, her grace, which had initially been evident even in death, had now deserted her...During the first months, the journeys were eight or ten miles: along the shoreline north and south of Bright Beach, and inland to the desert beyond the hills. He left home and returned the same day...And when she finally looked directly at him, blinked at him, her lashes flicking off a spray of fine droplets, Agnes saw that Barty was dry. Not a single jewel of rain glimmered in his thick dark hair or on the baby-smooth planes of his face. His shirt and sweater were as dry as if they had just been taken off a hanger and from a dresser drawer. A few drops darkened the legs of the boy's khaki pants—...but Agnes realized this was water that had dripped from her arm as she'd reached across him to adjust the vent..."All under here's worked out long since" Licky said. And Otter had begun to be aware of the strange country under his feet: empty shafts and rooms of dark air in the dark earth, a vertical labyrinth, the deepest pits filled with unmoving water..."Never was much sugar, and the watermelon's long gone. Listen, young'un, do you even know what cinnabar is?"...If Cain had been attracted to one woman by her looks, surely he would be attracted to the other. And perhaps the sisters shared a quality other than beauty that drew Cain with even greater power. Innocence, perhaps, or goodness: both foods for a demon...Sheena Hackachak, at forty-four, was more beautiful than any current movie star. She looked twenty years younger than her true age, and she so resembled her late daughter that Junior felt a rush of erotic nostalgia at the sight of her...Now, on his kitchenette table, two nights after Maria's reading, Jacob finished integrating the four decks as he had done Friday in the dining room of the main house. His work completed, he sat for a while, staring at the stack of cards, hesitant to proceed...Barty approached stair climbing as a mathematical problem, calculating the precise movement of each leg and placement of each foot necessary to successfully negotiate the obstacle. He proceeded less slowly on the next three steps than he had on the first three, and thereafter he ascended with growing confidence, pumping his legs with machinelike precision...The striking resemblance between this artist and Seraphim, as well as the facts in the biographical sketch under the photo, argued that the two were sisters...Lowering his surgical mask, Dr. Lipscomb approached Celestina, where she stood with her back pressed to the wall...She also sought forgiveness for the hardness with which she had treated Nicholas Deed...Stepping forward, Agnes said, "When Barty holds my hand and walks me through the rain, I get wet even while he stays dry. The same for all the rest of us here ... except Angel."...Captivated by catastrophe, so lost in his book that he might as well have stepped magically inside of it and closed the covers after himself, Uncle Jacob didn't answer...JUNIOR CAIN WANDERED among the Philistines, in the gray land of conformity, seeking one-just one-refreshingly repellent canvas, finding only images that welcomed and even charmed, yearning for real art and the vicious
emotional whirlpool of despair and disgust that it evoked, finding instead only themes of uplift and images of hope, surrounded by people who
seemed to like everything from the paintings to the canapes to the cold January night, people who probably hadn't spent even one day of their lives
brooding about the inevitability of nuclear annihilation before the end of this decade, people who smiled too much to be genuine intellectuals, and
he felt more alone and threatened than eyeless Samson chained in Gaza..Besides, Junior was reluctant to kill Vanadium, for real this time, and risk
discovering- that the detective's filthy-scabby-monkey spirit would in fact prove to be a relentless haunting presence that gave him no
peace..Drawing from a well of inspiration deeper than instinct, Junior knew that if ever he crossed paths with a man named Bartholomew, he must
be prepared to deal with him as aggressively as he had dealt with Naomi. And without delay.Finally he switched on the light, and illuminated
Neddy at ease, silent in death as never in life: lying on his back, head turned to the right, swollen tongue lolling obscenely.

Ross Macdonald Four Later Novels Black Money The Instant Enemy The Goodbye Look The Underground Man
Global Genres Local Films The Transnational Dimension of Spanish Cinema
Likutey Moharan The Poems
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