

## INIZIAZIONE ALLA NUMEROLOGIA

OUR LADY OF SORROWS, quiet and welcoming in the Bright Beach night, humble in dimension, without groin vaults and grand columns and cavernous transepts, restrained in ornamentation, was as familiar to Maria Elena Gonzalez--and as comforting--as her own home. God was everywhere in the world, but here in particular. Maria felt happier the instant she stepped through the entrance door into the narthex..In Maria's kitchen, still just four days past Christmas, Agnes let dissolve her stoic mask, and wept at last..Kathleen Klerkle, Mrs. Wulfstan, sitting on the edge of Nolly's desk, looked diagonally across it at the visitor in the client's chair. Actually, Nolly had two chairs for clients. Kathleen could have sat in the second; however, this seemed to be a more appropriate pose for a hawkshaw's dame. Not that she was trying to look cheap; she was thinking Myrna Loy as Nora Charles in *The Thin Man*--worldly but elegant, tough but amused..Here, now, came the anaconda smile. "Did you argue about the baby, Enoch? Maybe she wanted it, and you didn't. Guy like you--a baby would cramp your style. Too much responsibility..". "They've gone to bed. They're tired," Wally told her as he put the car in gear and released the hand brake. "Aren't you?". Paul recalled the letter he had written to Reverend Harrison White a couple weeks after the death of Joey Lampion. He'd carried it home from the pharmacy on the day that Perri died, to ask for her opinion of it. The letter had never been mailed..Agnes knew now why this prognostication had dismayed rather charmed her: If you dared to believe in the good fortune predicted he cards, then you were obliged to believe in the bad, as well..Having settled on the sofa with Agnes and Barty, prepared to serve comfortably in the role of quiet observer, Edom was alarmed to have suddenly become the subject of conversation. He was also alarmed to be called "son," because in his thirty-six years, the only person ever to have addressed him in that fashion had been his father, dead for a decade yet still a terror in Edom's dreams..At a point where deep water met the shoreline, Junior drove off the road and onto the strand. He parked twenty feet from the water, facing the lake, and switched off the headlights and the engine.. "No. Rowena dropped those names after the twins' first year. She and I were the only ones who ever used them. Our private little joke. Even the boys wouldn't have remembered..". She protested that her ruined body had neither any comforts to offer a man nor the strength to be a bride.. "You look very, very handsome this morning, Mr. Barty," squeaked Pixie Lee, who was something of a flirt. "You look like a big movie star." "Thank you, Nurse Bressler," he said most solemnly, matching her tone, barely able to control the urge to glance at her, smile, and give her another preview of his quick, pink tongue..With the second shot, the dead woman tumbled out of her chair, and the chair clattered onto its side.. "Quitting medicine?" Celestina asked, baffled by his announcement and his upbeat attitude..able to reconcile these opposed forces, she was all but paralyzed by indecision..Although he found Magusson's face sufficiently disturbing that he avoided looking at it more than necessary, and though Magusson's bulging eyes were so moist with bitterness and with need that they inspired nightmares, Junior shifted his gaze from his half-numb hands to his attorney. "Luck? I lost my wife. And my unborn baby..". As Sklent so insightfully put it: Some of us live on after death, survive in spirit, because we are just too stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, and evil to accept our demise. None of those qualities described sweet Naomi, who had been far too kind and loving and meek to live on in spirit, after her lovely flesh failed. Now at one with the earth, Naomi was no threat to Junior, and the state had paid for its negligence in her death, and the whole matter should have been brought to closure. There were only two barriers to full and final resolution: first, the stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, evil spirit of Thomas Vanadium; and second, Seraphim's bastard baby--little Bartholomew..He slept outdoors rarely and otherwise stayed in inexpensive motels, boardinghouses, and YMCAs..Rhythmic breathing. Slow and deep. Slow and deep. Per Zedd, the route to tranquility is through the lungs..Outside, he discovered that some worthless criminal wretch had broken into his Suburban during the night. The suitcase and Book-of-the-Month selections were gone. The creep even swiped the Kleenex, the chewing gum, and the breath mints from the glove, compartment..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..Frequently, these days, she found herself explaining aspects of life to Barty that she hadn't expected to discuss for years to come. She wondered how she could make him understand this: Life can be so sweet, so full, that sometimes happiness is nearly as intense as anguish, and the pressure of it in the heart swells close to pain..Two things about him were remarkable, beginning with his face. His head was wrapped with white gauze bandages, so he looked like Claude Rains in *The Invisible Man* or like Humphrey Bogart in that movie about the escaped convict who has plastic surgery to foil the police and to start a new life with Lauren Bacall. Blond hair sprouted from the top of the elaborate wrappings. Otherwise, only his eyes, his nostrils, and his lips were uncovered..In the top drawer, in addition to the expected items, Tom Vanadium found a gallery brochure for an art exhibition. In the hooded flashlight beam, the name Celestina White seemed to flare off the glossy paper as though printed in reflective ink.. "Longer to wait between Christmases," she said. "And between birthdays. I'd save a bunch of money on gifts..". quiet pool, sweet with the fragrance of jasmine. Under the huge spreading oak. Grass oiled to a glossy green by the..When Nolly sighed and frowned, his lumpish face seemed in danger of sliding off his skull, like oatmeal oozing off a spoon. "Mr. Cain, much as I regret it, I'm afraid I'm going to have to return half of the retainer you gave me..". "Blood tests should reveal whether the child's yours or not. That also might explain all this..". Maybes are for babies, Zedd tells us in *Act Now, Think Later. Learning to Trust Your Instincts..* She struggled, wept, pretended disgust, faked shame, swore to bring the police down on him. Another man, not as highly skilled at reading men as Junior, might have thought the girl's resistance was genuine, Sat her charges of rape were sincere. Any other man might have backed off, but Junior was neither fooled nor confused.. "In the early hours of January seventh," Nolly continued, "Miss White died in childbirth, as you figured..". The minister's threat had been

forgotten, repressed. At the time, only half--heard, merely kinky background to lovemaking, these words had amused Junior, and he'd given no serious thought to their meaning, to the message of retribution contained in them. Now, in this moment of extreme danger, the inflamed boil of repressed memory burst under pressure, and Junior was shocked, stunned, to realize that the minister had put a curse on him!.He swallowed one capsule and washed it down with water. He returned the pharmacy bottle to the nightstand..Needlepoint provided no sanctuary. Junior's hands trembled just badly enough to make accurate stitchery impossible..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.,In spite of its dazzle, the detective's smile was nonetheless melancholy, proof that he was sincere when he said that Seraphim's baby was beyond their reach..Junior had no idea who the driver of the Buick might be, but he hated the tall lanky son of a bitch because he figured the guy was humping Celestina, who would never have humped anyone but Junior if she had met him first, because like her sister, like all women, she would find him irresistible. He felt that he had a prior claim on her because of his relationship to the family; he was the father of her sister's bastard boy, after all, which made him their blood by shared--progeny..After the amusement park, no hospital for the Pie Lady. With Wally near, she had a doctor all her own, capable of giving her the anticancer drugs and transfusions that she required. While radiation therapy is prescribed for acute lymphoblastic leukemia, it is much less useful to treat myeloblastic cases, and in this instance, it wasn't deemed helpful, which made treatment at home even easier..Tom would have edged to his right, away from Edom, if Jacob hadn't flanked him. He remembered the odd comment that the more dour of the twins had made about the Bakersfield train wreck..Evidently, the hero was accustomed to encounters of this nature. He rose, pulled out the unused fourth chair. "Please sit with us." Junior phoned a twenty-four-hour-a-day locksmith and paid premium post midnight rates to have the double deadbolts re-keyed..On this occasion, however, he couldn't have focused on a book even if he'd had the strength to hold it. The fierce paroxysms that clenched his guts also destroyed his ability to concentrate..Between his surgeries and for many months thereafter, Vanadium had devoted his energies to speech therapy, physical rehabilitation, and the concoction of periodic torments for Enoch Cain, which Simon Magusson was able to implement, every few months, through Nolly and Kathleen. The idea wasn't to bring Cain to justice by torturing his conscience, since he'd allowed his conscience to atrophy a long time ago, but to keep him unsettled and thereby magnify the impact of his first face-to-face encounter with the resurrected Vanadium..The short walk across the room, to the hero's table, looked more daunting to Paul than the trek he'd just completed. He was nobody, a small-town pharmacist who missed more work each month, who relied increasingly on his worried employees to cover for him, and who would lose his business if he didn't get a grip on himself. He had never done a great deed, never saved a life. He had no right to impose upon this man, and now he knew he hadn't the nerve to do so, either..That same day, he dared to visit two galleries. Neither of them had a pewter candlestick on display..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.."You mean it's like with you in the kitchen, but not if you go into the living room? Your cold has a mind of its own?".Without ceremony or prayer, although with much righteous anger, Junior hoisted the dead musician over the lip of the Dumpster. For a dreadful moment, his left arm tangled in the loosely cinched belt of the London Fog raincoat. Straining a shrill bleat of anxiety through his clenched teeth, he desperately shook loose and let go of the body..break and conversation among the customers fell into a lull. When the bar phone rang, though it was muted, he heard it at his table..Undiminished antiperistaltic waves coursed through his duodenum, stomach, and esophagus, and now he gasped desperately for air between each expulsion, without much success..Fortunately, he recognized his vulnerability. Until the evening reception for Celestina White, he must spend every hour of the day in calming activities, soothing himself in order to ensure that he would be cool and effective when the time came to act.."Do you know him? " Edom asked, gazing longingly now at the open door, from which Jacob had turned away. "Obadiah Sepharad? ".Clenching his right hand around the quarter, waving left hand over right, he intoned, "Jingle-jangle, mingle-jingle." Opening his right hand, he revealed that the coin had vanished..He never passed through a phase during which he grew resistant to hugging or kissing. He was a hand-holding, cuddling boy to whom displays of affection came easily..Even Rudy, as huge as Big Foot and as amoral as a skink, was afraid of this woman..A mere silhouette against the fluorescent glare, Vanadium stepped it the hall. The bright light seemed to enfold him. The detective shimmered and vanished the way that a mirage of a man, on a fiercely hot desert highway, will appear to walk out of this dimension into another, slipping between the tremulous curtains of heat as though they hang between realities..Choking fumes, blinding soot. A licking heat told him that slithering fire had followed the smoke up the stairs and now coiled perilously close in the murk..Traditional logic argued that an infant, no more than two weeks old, could not be a serious threat to a grown man..Whereas Edom feared the wrath of nature, Jacob knew that the true hand of doom was the hand of humankind..On the serving tables, the canap? trays held only stained paper doilies, crumbs, and empty plastic champagne glasses..The bandaged man stormed up

from the ruin of the living room, gauze fluttering around his lips as his hard exhalations seemed to prove that he wasn't a long-dead pharaoh reanimated to punish some heedless archaeologist who had ignored all warnings and violated his tomb. So this wasn't a *Weird Tales* moment..Standing at graveside, Junior was in a foul mood. He was weary of pretending to be deep in grief..At the elevators, the orderly suggested that Edom and Jacob take a second cab and meet them on the surgical floor..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..THIS IS THE FIRST PAGE of the *Book of the Dark*, written some six hundred years ago in Berila, on Enlad:..Minutes later, once more in a corridor conference with Dr. Daines, she was forced to temper her new optimism.."And you're saying fear can fill his emptiness as well as sex or booze?" Kathleen wondered..Her voice as bright as her bed ensemble, spiritual sister to baby chicks everywhere, yellow Angel raised her head from the pillow and said, "Will you have a wedding?".Robert Heinlein saved her. Over hot dogs and chips, she read to Barty from *Red Planet*, beginning at the top of page 104. He had previously shared enough of the story with Agnes so that she felt connected to the narrative, and soon she was sufficiently involved with the tale that she was better able to conceal her anguish..Neither of them was aware that their personal drama, in all its clumsiness and glory, had focused the attention of everyone in the restaurant. The cheer that went up at Celestina's acceptance of his proposal caused her to start, knocking the ring from Wally's hand as he attempted to slip it on her finger. The ring bounced across the table, they both grabbed for it, Wally made the catch, and this time she was properly betrothed, to wild applause and laughter..Eventually Junior crossed the room to stand before Industrial Woman in all her scrap-metal glory. Her soup-pot breasts reminded him of Frieda's equally abundant bosom, and unfortunately her mouth, open wide in a silent shriek, reminded him of Frieda retching..Alarm contacts gleamed in the header, but the system wasn't currently activated.."Me too." He closed the ring box. Took a deep breath. Opened the box again. "Celestina, when I met you, my heart was beating but it was dead. It was cold inside me. I thought it would never be warm again, but because of you, it is. You have given my life back to me, and I want now to give my life to you. Will you marry me?".And the irony of ironies: With her talent deepening to a degree that she had never dared hope it would, with collectors responding to her vision to an extent she had never imagined possible, with her goals already exceeded, and with great vistas of possibility opening before her, she would throw it all away with some regret but with no bitterness if required to choose between art and Angel, for the child had proved to be the greater blessing. Phimie was gone, but Phimie's spirit fed and watered her sister's life, bringing forth a great abundance..The decision had already been made that Grace would move in with Celestina and then-following the wedding-with Celestina and Wally. In Spruce Hills, she had dear friends whom she would miss, but there was nothing else in Oregon to draw her back, other than the narrow plot beside Harrison, where she expected eventually to be buried. The parsonage fire had destroyed all her personal effects and every family treasure from Celestina's grade-school spelling-bee medals to the last precious photograph. She wanted only to be close to her one remaining daughter and her granddaughter, to be part of the new life that they would build with Wally Lipscomb..For a while he thought the fear would end only when he perished from it, but eventually it faded, and in its place poured forth self-pity from a bottomless well. Self-pity, of course, is the ideal fuel for anger; which was why, pursuing the Buick through fog, climbing now toward Pacific Heights, Junior was in a murderous rage. By the time he reached Cain's bedroom, Tom Vanadium recognized that the austere decor of the apartment had probably been inspired by the minimalism that the wife killer had noted in the detective's own house in Spruce Hills. This was an uncanny discovery, troubling for reasons that Vanadium couldn't entirely define, but he remained convinced that his perception was correct..Tom Vanadium rose to his feet and, with one hand on Barty's shoulder, he surveyed the faces of those gathered on the porch. Most of these people were such new acquaintances that they were all but strangers to him. Nevertheless, for the first time since his early days in St. Anselmo's Orphanage, he'd found a place where he belonged. This felt like home..He got in the Suburban, pulled the door shut, but didn't at once start the engine..He had experienced considerable self-revelation during the past eighteen hours, but of all the new qualities he had discovered in himself, Junior was most proud of the realization that he was such a profoundly sensitive person. This was an admirable character trait, but it would also be a useful screen behind which to commit whatever ruthless acts were required in this dangerous new life he'd chosen..No time for horror, disgust. Every second mattered now, and every minute might cost another life..The telephone rang, putting an end to their chat, but Agnes would remember the substance of it later that year, on the day before Christmas, when Barty took a walk in the rain and changed forever his.As best he could, he examined his clothes. They were better pressed than he expected, and not noticeably soiled..What he saw next in the brochure wasn't the link that he sought, but it alarmed him so much that the three-fold pamphlet rattled in his hands. The reception for Celestina's show had been this evening, had ended more than three hours ago..He stared I out at the congregated ghosts of fog, white multitudes that entirely obscured the bay, as if all the sailors ever lost at sea had gathered here, pressing at the window, eyeless forms that nevertheless saw everything.."And, listen, if you leave too soon behind me, I've got a guy watching, and he'll put a hollow-point thirty-eight in your ass." He produced her coat as if by legerdemain. Magically, she found her arms in the sleeves and the collar around her neck, though given her size lately, putting on anything other than a hat usually required strategy and persistence..This trick, however, was far more difficult than walking where the rain wasn't. Sustaining vision took both a mental and physical toll from him..On the High Marsh."Good heavens, Vinnie, I know that," she assured him as she lifted Barty-hardly bigger than a bag of sugar-from the bassinet. She settled with the baby into a rocking chair..If the wife killer had cut himself accidentally, his writing on the wall indicated a hair-trigger temper and a deep reservoir of long-nurtured anger..For the first few bites of crab in a light cornmeal crust, Nolly suspended their conversation. Bliss..Slowly rotating his raised hands before his eyes, as if he saw them young

and supple-fingered, the magician described the amazing manipulations that a master card mechanic could perform. Though he spoke without flash or filigree, he made these feats of skill sound more sorcerous than hares from hats, doves from scarves, and blondes bisected by buzz saws.. "Please try not to be alarmed, Miss White, but I have a patrol car on the way to your address." With the stocky detective looming, Junior wasn't able to stroke his imagination into an erotic mood. In his mind's eye, Victoria's ample bosom remained concealed behind a starched white uniform.. 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.. During the past week, Junior had undertaken quiet background research on the prestidigitator with a badge. The cop was unmarried. He lived alone, so this bold visit entailed no risk.. He knew that the only movement in those staring, sightless eyes was the restless reflection of the flashlight beam as he probed the trash with it. He knew he was being irrational, but nevertheless he was reluctant to turn his back on the corpse. Repeatedly in the midst of searching, he snapped his head up, whipping his attention to Neddy, certain that from the corner of his eye, he had seen the dead gaze following him.. One hand on the railing, he ascended the first three steps slowly. Pausing on each, he slid his foot forward and back on the carpet, runner to judge the depth of the tread relative to his small foot. He ran the toe of his right shoe up and down the riser between each tread, gauging the height.. For a spirit, the maniac lawman appeared disturbingly solid. He wore a tweed sports jacket and slacks that, as far as Junior could tell, were the same clothes he'd worn on the night he died. Apparently, even the ghosts of Sklent's atheistic spiritual world were stuck for eternity in the clothes in which they had perished.. She kissed his cheek, and he pulled his arms out from under the covers to hug her. Such small arms, but such a fierce hug.. Junior tipped his head back and gazed up toward the section of broken-out railing along the high observation deck.. Celestina White was the center of attention, always surrounded by champagne-swilling, canape--gobbling bourgeoisie who would have been shopping for paintings on velvet if they'd had less money.. The social worker's office once more. Rain tapping lightly at the window where Dr. Lipscomb had stared intently into the fog as he tried to avoid confronting the life-changing revelation that Phimie, speaking with the special knowledge of the once-dead, had shown him.. "The quarter in the sandwich," Nolly said, because that was the first stunt that Simon Magusson had paid him to perform.. Softened by a Shantung shade, the lamplight was golden on his small smooth face, but sapphire and emerald in his eyes.. 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.. Fortunately, at least the desk was cigarette-scarred, because it came with the office. It had been the property of a skip-tracer named Otto Zelm, who'd made a good living at the kind of work Nolly avoided out of boredom: tracking down deadbeats and repossessing their vehicles. On a stakeout, Zelm fell asleep in his car, while smoking, thereby triggering the payoff of both life- and casualty-insurance policies, and freeing the lease on this furnished space.. A sense of mystery overcame Agnes, unnerving but not entirely or even primarily unpleasant.. She poured cold milk and drank it quickly. As she was rinsing the empty glass, she felt as if she might throw up, but she didn't.. Two more uniformed officers had entered the kitchen, fresh from their search of the apartment. They were amused.. "They're all the family I have," Junior said with what he hoped sounded like sorrow and long-suffering love.. Instead, as he settled into the offered chair, he withdrew a picture of Perri from his wallet. It was an old black-and-white school photograph, slightly yellow with age, taken in 1933, the year he'd begun to fall in love with her, when they were both thirteen.. The mummified moon had unwound itself from its rags of embalming clouds. Its pocked face glowered in full brightness on the spreading branches of the pine, on the yard, and on the graveled driveway.. In spite of the urgency of his desire, he followed a circuitous route to Victoria's, doubling back on himself twice, watching for surveillance as he drove. If he were being followed, his tail was an invisible man in a ghost car.. In the dark woods of the dream, still the presence: faceless and silent, radiating a merciless intent.. He had noted all seven names on the bassinets, but he read them again. He sensed in their names- or in one of their names- the explanation for his seemingly mad perception of a looming threat.. Nolly was, as usual, "Nolly" to everyone, but here Kathleen was "Mrs. Wulfstan." He could have killed Vanadium while the cop slept; however, that would be far less satisfying than engaging in a little psychological warfare and leaving the devious bastard alive to suffer remorse when two more children died under his watch.. She always had a generous heart. After disease whittled Perri's flesh, leaving her so frail, her great heart, undiminished by her suffering, seemed bigger than the body that contained it.. In his blindness, Barty listened to her reports and, through her, saw more than he could have seen if never he had lost his eyes.. Glancing at his wristwatch with alarm, Edom bolted up from his chair. "Look at the time! Agnes gave me a lot to do, and here I am rattling on about earthquakes and cyclones." Before the pianist could cry out, Junior drove him between the toilet and the sink, slamming him against the wall hard enough to knock loose his breath and to cause the water to slosh audibly in the nearby toilet tank.. Before he taught himself to read books, he also taught himself numbers, and then how to read a clock. The significance of time had a more profound impact on him than Agnes could understand, perhaps because acquiring an awareness of the infinite nature of the universe and the finite nature of each human life- and fully understanding the implications of this knowledge- takes most of us till early adulthood if not later, whereas for Barty, the vast glories of the universe and the comparatively humble nature of human existence were recognized, contemplated, and absorbed in a matter of weeks.. A plate-size piece of the door had been blasted away. Because of the light shining through from the room beyond, Junior could see that no part of the lock remained intact. In fact, he peered through the hole in the door to the back of a piece of furniture that was jammed against it, whereupon the nature

of the problem became clear to him..Those spike-sharp eyes, - tenpenny gray, nailed Junior to the bed, pinning him for scrutiny..Miss White," he continued, still facing the window, "not long before you arrived in surgery this morning, your sister died on the table. We hadn't delivered the baby yet, and perhaps couldn't have done so, by cesarean, in time to prevent brain damage, so for both the sake of the mother and child, heroic efforts were made to bring Phimie back and ensure continued circulation to the fetus until we could extract it.".All the way to the nightstand, he expected to discover that the revolver had been taken from the drawer. Yet here it was. Loaded..Wish I could describe his face. Frosty the Snowman was never that white. The surveillance van is parked right there, two spaces south of the vending machines--".Maybe he could if he was able to lift it, but I couldn't throw a pig or an Oreo or anything else into any other place. It's just not something I know how to do.".He knew for a fact that Seraphim had died in childbirth. He had seen the gathering of Negroes at her funeral in the cemetery, the day of Naomi's burial. He had heard Max Bellini's message on the maniac cop's Ansaphone..Yes. In syrup form. It's a good item for your home medicine chest, in case your child ever swallows poison and you need to purge it from him quickly.".By the time all the details of mortuary and cemetery services were settled, Walter Panglo had a nervous tic in his left cheek. His eyes were open wide, as if he'd been so startled that his lids froze in a position of ascension, locked by a spasm of surprise. His hands must have grown clammy; he blotted them repeatedly on his suit..Her elegance was appealing. A pink Chanel suit with knee-length skirt, a strand of pearls. Her figure was spectacular, but she didn't flaunt it. She was even wearing a bra. In this age of bold erotic fashion, her more demure style was enormously seductive..As they rolled along the coast, Agnes began to read to Barty from Podkayne of Mars: " 'All my life I've wanted to go to Earth. Not to live, of course-just to see it. As everybody knows, Terra is a wonderful place to visit but not to live. Not truly suited to human habitation.'".Junior found the acclaim gratifying, but the widespread use of his photograph was a high price to pay even for the recognition of his contribution to art. Fortunately, with his bald head and pocked face, he no longer resembled the Enoch Cain for whom the authorities were searching. And they believed that the bandages on his face, at the church, had been merely an exotic disguise. One psychologist even speculated that the bandages had been an expression of the guilt and shame he felt on a subconscious level. Yeah, right..He would come. She knew. She had always known, but had half forgotten. There was something special about Angel, and because of that specialness, she lived under a threat as surely as the newborns of Bethlehem under King Herod's death decree. Long ago, Celestina glimpsed a complex and mysterious pattern in this, and to the eye of the artist, the symmetry of the design required that the father would sooner or later come.

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