

## **A COMMENTARY ON THE POETRY OF CHAUCER SPENSER**

Evidently, Jacob had made a quick trip to his apartment over the garage and, with no thought for mice and dust, had not closed the back door. Junior said, "You've caused me a lot of trouble, you know." He'd been building a beautiful rage all night, thinking about what he'd been through because of the girl's temptress mother, whom he saw so clearly in this pint-size bitch. "So much trouble." Heart racing, Tom produced another quarter from a pants pocket. For the benefit of the adults, he performed the proper preparation—a little patter and the ten-finger flimflam—because in magic as in jewelry, every diamond must have the proper setting if it's to glitter impressively. The rain-washed street shimmered greasily under the tires, and the intersection lay halfway up a long hill, so gravity was aligned with fate against them. The driver's side of the Pontiac lifted. Beyond the windshield, the main drag of Bright Beach tilted crazily. The passenger's side slammed against the pavement. Jacob scared people. He was Edom's identical twin, with Edom's boyish and pleasant face, as soft-spoken as Edom, well barbered and neatly groomed. Nevertheless, on the same mission of mercy as Edom, Jacob would leave the pie recipients in a state of deep uneasiness if not outright terror. In his wake, they would bar the doors, load guns if they owned any, and lay sleepless for a night or two. Bressler but no Vanadium. A girl named Angel. Something was wrong here. Something was rotten. Paul set the nightstand down but waited, ready to shove the furniture into the stairwell if the swaddled gunman dared return. "Sure. There's lots of places where he didn't get shot, but there's places where he got shot and died, too." Carrying the candlestick, he raced to the kitchen at the end of the short hall. The door stood open, but he had to enter the room to see Victoria slumped in one of the two chairs at the small dinette. If he was left standing on the porch, the visitor would circle the house, peering in windows where the drapes were not drawn, trying the doors in hope of finding one unlocked. Fearful that Victoria was sick or injured, that perhaps she had slipped on a pat of butter and cracked her head against the corner of an open oven door, he might try to force his way inside, break a window. Certainly he would go to the neighbors to call the police. Recalling how the title of the exhibition had resonated with him when first he'd seen the gallery, brochure, Junior felt certain now that a tape-recorded early draft of this sermon was the kinky "music" that accompanied his evening of passion with Seraphim. He couldn't remember one word of it, let alone any element that would have deeply moved a national radio audience, but this didn't mean that he was shallow or incapable of being touched by philosophical speculations. He'd been so distracted by the erotic perfection of Seraphim's young body and so busy jumping her that he wouldn't have remembered a word, either, if Zedd himself had been sitting on the bed, discussing the human condition with his customary brilliance. While the doctor proceeded with his evening rounds, the nurse remained with Junior until it was clear that the tranquilizer had calmed him and that he was no longer in danger of succumbing to another bout of hemorrhagic vomiting. "Well, certainly, I understand," said Panglo, slowly lowering the offered hand, although he clearly didn't understand at all. First room on the left. Move. Kick the door open. The sense of a larger space beyond, no bathroom this time, and darker. Fan the pistol, gripping with both hands. Two quick shots: muffled cough, muffled cough. He wanted to fling it into the graveyard, send it spinning far into the darkness. Clutching the red rose in his left hand, the brightly wrapped gift box half crushed in his right, Thomas Vanadium lay at Junior's mercy, with no tricks to perform, no quarter to set dancing across his knuckles. At Tom Vanadium's request, the taxi dropped him one block from his new—and temporary—home shortly before ten o'clock in the evening. Using a three-step folding stool, he was able to get near enough to one of the vent plates in the living room to determine whether it might be the source of the song. Just then the singing stopped. At the mention of her son's name, Agnes stiffened. There were numerous ways for Deed to have learned the baby's name, yet it seemed wrong for him to know it, wrong to use it, the name of this child he had nearly orphaned, had almost killed. Wally drove slowly, carefully, with all the responsibility that you would expect from an obstetrician, pediatrician, and spanking-new fiancé. The trip home to Pacific Heights took twice as long as it would have taken in clear weather on a night without a pledge of troth. 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. Turning away from the window, Celestina grabbed the girl and pushed her toward the bed, whispering, "Down, under." 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. Junior stalked her, but she eluded him. Always, the song seemed to arise from the next room, but when he passed through the doorway into that space, the voice then sounded as if it came from the room that he'd just left. One nurse and one nun brought Celestina into the creche behind the viewing window. This ended any hope of romance, and he was disappointed. A less self-controlled man might have seized a nearby bronze vase—fashioned to resemble dinosaur stool—and stuffed her into it or vice versa. A glance was what it appeared to be at first. Eight people were gathered around the dining-room table, which stood utterly bare. No food, no drinks, no centerpiece. They all exhibited that shiny-faced look of people nervously awaiting the revelations of a spirit medium: part trepidation, part soaring hope. Her special son, walking where the rain wasn't, had made all things seem possible. "But you wouldn't be willing to use that skill in the King's service?" sky grew sullen in

the early twilight, and the city once more arrayed itself in the red gesso and gold leaf that had indirectly illuminated Celestina's apartment ceiling the previous night..Ten months later, he finally wore her down. She accepted his proposal, and they set a date for the wedding..Even in this soft light, Nolly could see that she was blushing like a young girl. She glanced around at the nearby tables..Although this was perhaps the happiest evening of Celestina's life, it wasn't without a note of melancholy. She couldn't avoid thinking about Phimie..Knacker, Hisscus, and Nork, all talking at once, then failing silent as if they were a single organism, then talking in rotation but interrupting one another, tried to advance their agenda..This rosarium was Edom's only relationship with nature that did not inspire terror in him. Agnes believed that Joey's enthusiasm for the restoration of the garden was, in part, the reason why Edom had not tamed as far inward as Jacob and why he'd remained better able than his twin to function beyond the walls of his apartment..Her awful sense of weightlessness became something much better: buoyancy, an exhilarating lightness of spirit. Fear remained with her-fear for Barty, fear of the future and of the strange complexity of Creation that she'd just glimpsed-but wonder and wild hope now tempered it..He didn't pause to lock the house behind them. Bright Beach, in 1965, was as free of criminals as it was untroubled by lumbering brontosaurus..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..Later in the month, from Sparky Vox, Junior learned the building had a four-pipe, fan-coil heating system serving discrete ductwork for each apartment. Voices couldn't carry from residence to residence in the heating-cooling system, because no apartments shared ducting. Throughout the spring, summer, and autumn of 1967, Junior met new women, bedded a few, and had no doubt that each of his conquests experienced with him something she had never known before. Yet he still suffered from an emptiness in the heart..The Worry Bear carries worries in his pockets. Under his Panama hat and in two gold locket. Carries worries on his back and under his arms. Nevertheless, dear old Worry Bear has his charms..By November 1967, the Father Brown detective stories, written for mystery-loving adults by G. K. Chesterton, thrilled Barty. This series of books would retain a special place in his heart for the rest of his life-as would Robert Heinlein's *The Star Beast*, which was among his Christmas gifts that year..Darker than water, another stain spread across the lap and down the legs of the pants. It was the color of port wine when filtered through the gray fabric of the jogging suit, but even in her semi-delirious state, she knew that she was not the vessel for a miracle birth, was not bringing forth a baby in a flush of wine, but in a gush of blood..Agnes meant to stop Maria from turning the eleventh card, but her curiosity was equal to her apprehension..Hisscus, Nork, and Knacker exchanged sharp glances, nonplussed. Finally, one of them said, "We couldn't do that, Mr. Cain. Not until you've consulted an attorney."..AS THE WULFSTAN PARTY was being seated at a window table, slowly tumbling masses of cottony fog rolled across the black water, as if the bay had awakened and, rising from its bed, had tossed off great mounds of sheets and blankets..Bad news. Having been identified by another guest put Junior at risk of later being tied to the killing; having been recognized by a close personal friend of Celestina White's was even worse. It had become imperative now that he know why the pianist had been watching him from across the room with such intensity.."If I had a wife, she wouldn't feel too lucky. I'm not of the persuasion that wants a wife, dear."..Junior wasn't concerned that the shots would attract unwanted attention. These large rural properties and a plenitude of muffling trees made it unlikely that the nearest neighbor would hear anything..In his mind's eye, he saw the answering machine with uncanny clarity. That curious gadget. Sitting atop the scarred pine desk..Because the upper part of the hospital bed was somewhat raised, he didn't have to lift his head from the pillow to study the corner where the phantom waited. He peered beyond the IV rack, past the foot of the..Livor mortis had already set in, blood draining to the lowest points of her body, leaving the fronts of her bare legs, one side of each bare arm, and her face ghastly pale..slow breaths, and then she pointed at the windshield. "The hospital's that way."..Caesar Zedd teaches that every experience in our lives, unto the smallest moment and simplest act, is preserved in memory, including every witless conversation we've ever endured with the worst dullards we've met. For this reason, he wrote a book about why we must never suffer bores and fools and about how we can be rid of them, offering hundreds of strategies for scouring them from our lives, including homicide, which he claims to favor, though only tongue-in-cheek..A nurse in surgical greens appeared. "Pull up the sleeves of your scrub nearly to your elbows. Scrub hard. I'll tell you when to stop."..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..No one had actually been here. And he still didn't believe in ghosts, so he didn't think that a spirit had been wandering his home in his absence..The paper towels were spotted with butter. He crumpled them and threw them in the trash..Edom did as asked. Then he cut the deck into two approximately equal stacks when requested to do so.."Even in an infinite number of worlds," Wally objected, "there's no place I was that stupid."..Sometimes Celestina marveled at how intimately and inextricably the tendrils of tragedy and joy were intertwined in the vine of life. Sorrow was often the root of future joy, and joy could be the seed of sorrow yet to come. The layered patterns in the vine were so complex, so enrapturing in their lush detail and so fearsome in their wild inevitability, that she could fill uncountable canvases, through many lifetimes as an artist, striving to capture the enigmatic nature of existence, in all its beauty dark and bright, and in the end merely suggest the palest shadow of its mystery..Or perhaps the sorrow was less sadness than yearning. He had to move on, but he was loath to begin this strange journey without her..She slammed it shut before he could stop her, whether he had intended to stop her or not, and she engaged the deadbolt lock.."Tom, a couple minutes ago," Agnes said, "Celestina mentioned your. . . 'certain awareness.' Which is what exactly?"..Junior discovered more tears than could have been found in ten thousand onions. His wife and his unborn baby. He had been willing to sacrifice his beloved Naomi, but maybe he would have found the cost too high if he had known that he was also sacrificing his first-conceived child. This was too much. He was bereft..Dressed entirely in a shade of pink that darkened to rouge when

wet, Angel squealed and deserted Barty. Spotted-streaked-splashed, with false tears on her cheeks, with a darkly glimmering crown of rain jewels in her hair, she raced up the steps as though she were a princess abandoned by her coachman, and allowed herself to be scooped into her grandmother's arms..SERAPHIM AETHIONEMA WHITE was nothing whatsoever like her name, except that she had as kind a heart and as good a soul as any among the hosts in Heaven. She did not have wings, as did the angels after which she had been named, and she couldn't sing as sweetly as the seraphim, either, for she had been blessed with a throaty voice and far too much humility to be a performer. Aethionema were delicate flowers, either pale-or rose-pink, and while this girl, just sixteen, was beautiful by any standard, she was not a delicate soul but a strong one, not likely to be shaken apart in even the highest wind..Regardless of her other successes or failures as a parent, Agnes intended to make certain that Barty never lacked hope, that meaning and purpose flowed through the boy as constantly as blood..do further testing, of course, but not until he's been stabilized at least twelve hours. Personally, I don't think we'll find any physical cause. Most likely, this was psychological-acute nervous emesis, caused by severe anxiety, the shock of losing his wife, seeing her die.'.She figured that she could stay home, devoting herself to Barty, for perhaps three years before she would be wise to find work..By the time this operation concluded and the sulphurous Mr. Cain was brought to some form of justice, Simon might have spent twenty or twenty-five percent of the fee that he'd collected from the liability settlement in the matter of Naomi Cain's death. The attorney put a substantial price on his dignity and reputation..Even though he now knew what a hateful person the nurse was, he remained strongly attracted to her. He was not the kind of man, however, who would take advantage of an unconscious woman..So that my mind could move about among the years and centuries without getting things all out of order, and to keep contradictions and discrepancies at a minimum while I was writing these stories, I became (somewhat) more systematic and methodical, and put my knowledge of the peoples and their history together into "A Description of Earthsea." Its function is like that of the first big map I drew of all the Archipelago and the Reaches, when I began to work on A Wizard of Earthsea over thirty years ago: I needed to know where things are, and how to get from here to there-in time as well as in space...A quick tug on each pants cuff revealed no ankle holster, which was how many cops would choose to carry an off-duty piece..He returned to the house and extinguished the three blown-glass oil lamps on the living-room coffee table. Out, as well, the silk-shade lamp..If he hadn't been such a rational, stable, no-nonsense person all of his life, Junior might have thought he was losing his mind..Unable to run, he raised his arms defensively, crossing them in front of his face, though the impact of the coins wasn't painful. Volleys flicked off his fingers, palms, and wrists..Maria, after a single sip of Chardonnay, fled to the kitchen, ostensibly to check on the apricot flan that she'd brought, but in reality to press a cool and slightly damp dishtowel against her eyes..Saturday morning, Paul made himself useful by assisting Grace with food preparation and by setting out the plates, flatware, and glasses on the dining-room sideboard..Thrilled by the music but unable to understand a word of the play, he arranged German lessons with a private tutor.. "You'll be out of ICU tomorrow, I bet. You'll have a phone, I'll call. And I'll come soon as I can." "Frequently, symptoms appear early enough that radiation therapy in one or both eyes has a chance to succeed. Sometimes strabismus-in which one eye diverges from the other, either inward toward the nose or outward toward the temple-can be an early sign, though more often we're alerted when the patient reports problems with vision." "You figure all this," Jolene asked, "because Mother Nature gives us a nice warm day in January?"..Copyright (c) 1999 by Ursula K. Le Guin. "Dragonfly" first appeared in Legends..A delay of a few hours, before getting her under a physician's care, might still be risky. But so was forcing her into a local hospital to endure the mortification she desperately wanted to avoid.. "I didn't know it myself till I realized I was right in your neighborhood. I assumed your mother and Angel would be here, and I hoped you might be. If I'm intruding-". In the chilly darkness, his breath plumed visibly, frosted by moonlight. The rapidity and raggedness of his radiant exhalations would have marked him as a guilty man if witnesses had been present..Junior descended the escalator two steps at a time, not content to let it carry him along at its own pace. When he reached the second floor, however, he found that Vanadium's ghost had done what ghosts do best: faded away. Abandoning his search for the perfect tie chain but determined to remain calm, Junior decided to have lunch at the St. Francis Hotel..The reception was from six o'clock to eight-thirty. If she were to arrive on time, guardian angels would have to be perched on all the traffic lights along the way..They agreed that to the outside world, Barty must continue to appear to be a sightless man-or otherwise either be treated like a freak or be subjected, perhaps unwillingly, to experimentation. In the modern world, there was no tolerance for miracles. Only family could be told of this development..Drawn one after the other, two knaves of spades didn't signify two deadly enemies, but meant that the enemy already predicted by the first would be unusually powerful, exceptionally dangerous..face looked familiar, and he sensed that he had seen it before in a disquieting context, although the man's identity eluded him.. "Well," Tom said, "those people who think it's just a trick generally react bigger than you folks, and you know it's real." "I'm afraid you're wrong." When Tom opened his left hand, the palm lay as bare as that of a blind beggar in a country of thieves. Meanwhile, his right hand had tightened into a fist again..At Thanksgiving dinner, again at the three tables set end to end, in the year of the triple zero, Mary Lampion, now fourteen years old, made an interesting announcement over the pumpkin pie. In her travels where none but she could go, after seven fascinating years of exploring a fraction of all the infinite worlds, she said she sensed beyond doubt that, as Barty's mother had told him on her deathbed, there is one special place beyond all the ways things are, one shining place..As he headed toward the door, the detective said, "Don't forget your apple juice. Got to build some strength for the trial." "I've got hundreds of files on cases like that," said Jacob, "and much worse. If you're interested, I'll get you copies of some." In spite of his dumpy appearance-and especially in the dark, where appearances didn't count-Vanadium had the aura of a mystic. Although Junior didn't believe in mystics or in the various unearthly powers they claimed to possess, he

knew that mystics who believed in themselves were exceptionally dangerous people..As hard of head as she was hard of heart, Victoria had not sustained serious brain damage, only a concussion..For a long time, she sat alone in the dark living room, in the armchair that had been Joey's favorite, thinking about many things but returning often to the memory of Barty's dry walk in wet weather..Finally he began: Greetings on this momentous day. I'm writing to you about an exceptional woman, Agnes Lampion, whose life you have touched without knowing, and whose story may interest you..In a pew in Old St. Mary's Church, in Chinatown, Junior took delivery of the lock-release gun and the untraceable 9-mm pistol with the custom-machined silencer, as previously arranged. The church was deserted at ten o'clock in the morning. The shadowy interior and the menacing religious figures gave him the creeps..No one was surprised by his proposal, her acceptance, and the wedding. Barty and Angel were both eighteen when they were married in June of 1983..Their apartment was in a four-story Victorian house that dripped gingerbread, in the exclusive Pacific Heights district. It had been converted to apartments with deep respect for the architecture, years before Wally bought it..And now Cain was aware of her, interested in her. Informed of this development, Harrison would no doubt rethink his position.. "It was. But maybe that's not the whole story. Anyway, we know the usual poses these guys strike, the attitudes they think are deceptive and clever. Most of them are so obvious, they might as well just stick their willy in a light socket and save us a lot of trouble. This, however, is a new approach. Tends to make you want to believe in the poor guy." "Our little girl's going to walk backward her whole life if you drive in reverse all the way to the hospital."..thickened with the odors of antiseptics and blood, until breathing required an effort..WHEN AT LAST Paul Damascus reached the parsonage late Friday afternoon, January 12, he arrived on foot, as he arrived everywhere these days.. "That was five years ago. After more surgeries than I care to remember, I was left with these." He raised his goblin hands again. "There's pain in humid weather, less when it's dry. I can take care of myself, but I'll never be a card mechanic again ... or a magician."..Paul was a dear man, different from Joey in appearance but so like him at heart. She shocked him by insisting they go at once to his house, to his bedroom. Red-faced as no pulp hero ever had been, Paul stammered out that he wasn't expecting intimacy of her so soon, and she assured him that he wasn't going to get it so soon, either.. "I get peed off, and I miss some things terrible. But I'm not sad. And you've got to not be sad, either, 'cause it spoils everything."..Earlier, the dirty-sheet clouds had been wrung dry. Now, the trees that overhung the house had finally stopped dripping on the cedar shingled roof The night was so still that Agnes could hear the sea softly breaking upon the shore more than half a mile away..The detective shrugged. "The girl might've had her baby at a third rate hospital, one with poor control of patients' records and a less professional staff. Or the kid might have been placed for adoption through some baby brokerage in it strictly for the money. Then there would've been opportunities to learn something. But as soon as I discovered it was St. Mary's, I knew we were screwed."..In the execution, he was likewise scrupulous, for he didn't want the grownups to see what Angel saw; he preferred they believe it was sleight of hand-or magic. After the usual moves, he briefly closed his right hand around the coin, then with a snap of his wrist, flung it at Angel, simultaneously distracting with flourishes aplenty..So many stops, too little time at each, a dazzle of Christmas trees decorated every one to a different taste, offers of butter cookies and hot chocolate or lemon crisps and eggnog, morning chats in bright kitchens steeped in wonderful cooking odors and-in the chillier afternoon good wishes exchanged in front of hearth fires, gifts accepted as well as given, cookies taken in trade for pecan cakes, "Silver Bells" and "Hark How the Bells" and "Jingle-Bell Rock" on the radio: Therewith they arrived at three o'clock in the afternoon, Christmas Eve, their deliveries completed before Santa's had begun..The little hands, so weak now but someday strong: Would they eventually be capable of savagery, as were the father's hands? Misbegotten offspring. This seed of a demonic man whom Phimie herself had called sick and evil. However innocent-looking now, what pain might she eventually in-- on others? What outrages might she commit in years to come? Although Celestina searched intently, she could not glimpse the father's evil in the child..Dishes dried and put away, Jacob retired to the living room and settled contentedly into an armchair, where he would probably become so enthralled with his new book of dam disasters that he would forget to make luncheon sandwiches until Barty and Angel rescued him from the flooded streets of some dismally unfortunate town..As the nurse gave Junior the injection, Parkhurst said, "You're an exceptionally sensitive man, Enoch. That's a quality to be much admired in an often unfeeling world. But in your current condition, your sensitivity is your worst enemy."..Matching his mother's whisper, taking obvious delight in their conspiracy, he said, "Our own secret society."..The round table seated six, but they required only three chairs, because the two brainless friends were a pair of Angel's dolls..Kathleen savored her martini. "Mmmm ... as cold as a hit man's heart and as crisp as a hundred-dollar bill from the devil's wallet."..She protested that her ruined body had neither any comforts to offer a man nor the strength to be a bride..Symptoms of food poisoning usually appear within two hours of dining. The hideous intestinal spasms had rocked him at least six hours after he'd eaten. Besides, if the culprit were food poisoning, he would have vomited; but he hadn't felt any urge to spew..In the Fairmont coffee shop, Junior ordered french fries, a cheeseburger, and cole slaw. He requested that the burger be served cooked but unassembled: the halves of the bun turned face up, the meat pattie positioned separately on the plate, one slice each of tomato and onion arranged beside the pattie, and the slice of unmelted cheese on a separate dish..Barty had awakened able to read. On the page, lines of type no longer twisted under his gaze..Although the girl was unable to articulate why she preferred not to have her mother at her side, they all understood the tumult in her heart. She couldn't bear to subject her gentle and proper mother to the shame and embarrassment that she herself felt so keenly and that she imagined would grow intolerably worse in the hours or days ahead, until and even after the birth..Likewise, she wasn't prepared to deal with a monster like the father, if one day he came for Angel. And he would come. She knew. In these events as in all things, Celestina White glimpsed a pattern, complex and mysterious, and to the eye of an artist,

the symmetry of the design required that one day the father would come. She wasn't prepared to deal with the creep now, but by the time that he arrived, she would be ready for him..From the floor, Junior snatched up the bottle of wine that had twice failed to shatter. His lucky Merlot.. "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." For just one hour, which was not too taxing, he walked in the idea of a world where he had healthy eyes, and shared the vision of other Barty's in other places, so he would be able to see his bride as she walked down the aisle and as, beside him, she took their vows with him, and as she held out her hand to receive the ring..Junior's breath smoked from him as if he contained a seething fire of his own. He felt a sheen of condensation arise on his face, cold and invigorating..There were effective actions and ineffective actions, socially acceptable and unacceptable behavior, wise and stupid decisions that could be made. But if you wanted to achieve maximum self-realization, you had to understand that any choice you made in life was entirely value neutral. Morality was a primitive concept, useful in earlier stages of societal evolution, perhaps, but without relevance in the modern age..Admittedly, she had allowed herself to be disturbed by the fall of the cards, too. According them any credibility at all opened the door to full belief.. 'She didn't reach into your thoughts and pluck out the name Rowena. Or Beezil or Feezil.' This surprised him. Of course, Oregon was not the Deep South. It was a progressive state. Nevertheless, he was surprised. Oregon wasn't home to many Negroes, either, a handful compared to those in other states, and yet until now Junior supposed that they had their own cemeteries..This device, which could automatically pick any lock with just a few pulls of its trigger, was sold strictly to police departments, and its distribution was tightly controlled. On the black market it commanded such a high price that Junior could have bought the better part of a small Sklent painting for the same bucks..The phone rang at 3:20 in the afternoon, just after he switched off the radio in disgust. Sitting in the breakfast nook, the Oakland telephone directory open in front of him, he almost said, Find the father, kill the son, instead of, "Hello." Perhaps, reluctant to admit to herself that she had yearned for him to do everything that he'd done, she had slowly been inflamed by guilt, until she convinced herself that she had, indeed, been raped. Psychotic little bitch..The detective was driven by this string theory of his, and maybe he also saw visions or even heard voices, like Joan of Arc. Joan of Arc with out beauty or grace, Joan of Arc with a service revolver and the authority to..Leaning forward from his armchair, white hair as radiant as the wings of cherubim, Obadiah waved one misshapen hand over the deck, never closer than ten inches to the cards. "Now please spread them out in a fan on the table, facedown." Leavening his tortured voice as best he could with shock and hurt, as though deeply wounded by the need to speak these words, Junior Cain said, "You ... you think I killed her, don't you? That's crazy."

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