

## **ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ANTI MUSLIM SENTIMENT PICTURING THE ENEMY**

To the waiter, Nolly was Nolly, Kathleen was Mrs. Wulfstan, and Tom Vanadium was sir--though not the usual perfunctorily polite sir, but sir with deferential emphasis. Tom was unknown to the waiter, but his shattered face gave him gravitas; besides, he possessed a quality, quite separate from carriage and demeanor and attitude, an ineffable something, that inspired respect and even trust..During the rest of that first year, he walked to Palm Springs and back, a round trip of more than two hundred miles, and north to Santa Barbara..Junior worried, however, that they had noticed him after he pulled to the curb twice behind them, that they were keeping an eye on him, ready to bolt if he got out of the car, in which case they might all make it inside before he could cut them down..Needlepoint, meditation, and even sex had not recently provided him with significant relief of tension. The paintings of Sklent and the works of Zedd were packed in the van, where he couldn't at the moment take solace from them..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..Uncle Jacob, cook and baby-sitter and connoisseur of watery death, cleaned off the table and washed the dishes while Barty patiently endured a rambling postbreakfast conversation with Pixie Lee and with Miss Velveeta Cheese, whose name wasn't an honorary tide earned by winning a beauty contest sponsored by Kraft Foods, as he had first thought, but who, according to Angel, was the "good" sister to the rotten lying cheese man in the television commercials..He must be careful in his approach to her. He dared not rush into this. Think it through. Devise a strategy. This valuable opportunity must not be wasted..Reverend White's polished, somewhat theatrical, yet sincere voice rose out of the past to issue this threat in Junior's memory as he had issued it that night, from a tape recorder, while Junior had been dancing a sweaty horizontal boogie with Seraphim in her parsonage bedroom..She whispered then: "You are my little lampion, Barty. You light the way for me."..Recently, Wally administered to Angel a set of apperception tests for three-year-olds, and the results indicated that she might not ever be a math whiz or a verbal gymnast, but that she might be highly talented in other ways. Her appreciation of color, her innate understanding of the derivation of secondary hues from the primary colors, her sense of spatial relationships, and her recognition of basic geometric forms regardless of the angle at which they were presented were all far beyond what was exhibited by other kids her age. Wally said she was visually, rather than verbally, gifted, that she would undoubtedly exhibit increasing precociousness in matters artistic, that she might follow Celestina's career path, and that she might even prove to be a prodigy.."Oh, dear God," she whispered, and although she had always been a strong woman who stood on a rock of faith, who drew hope as well as air with every breath, she was as weak now as the unborn child in her womb, sick with fear..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..She lay beside her boy in the darkness, gazing at the covered window, where the faint glow of the moon pressed through the blind, suggesting another world thriving with strange life just beyond a thin membrane of light.."It's just that you never know what anyone's hand has been up to recently," Jacob explained. "That respectable banker down the street might have thirty dismembered women buried in his backyard. The nice church-going lady next door might be sleeping in the same bed with the rotting corpse of a lover who tried to jilt her, and for a hobby she makes jewelry from the finger bones of preschool children she's tortured and murdered.".."If you're a dowser, better dowse," said Licky, coming up alongside him and looking sidelong into his face. "And if you're not, you'd better dowse all the same. That way you'll stay above ground longer."..2000, the Year of the Dragon, gives way without a roar to the Year of the Snake, and after the Snake comes the Horse. Day by day the work is done, in memory of those who have gone before us, and embarked upon work of her own, young Mary is out there among you. For now, only her family knows how very special she is. On one momentous day, that will change..White as a Viking winter, these magnificent choppers, and as straight as the kernel rows in the corn on Odin's high table. Superb occlusal surfaces. Exquisite incisor ledges. Bicuspids of textbook formation nestled in perfect alignment between molars and canines.."We do look somewhat alike," Edom said, shifting his attention to Jacob's left ear..Scamp was a multitalented woman, with smoother skin than a depilated peach, with more delicious roundnesses than Junior could catalog, but she proved not to be the remedy for his tension. Only Bartholomew, found and destroyed, could give him peace..Junior considered leaving before Vanadium-still seventy-five yards away-arrived. He was afraid he would appear to be fleeing..At the bed, he spread the garment across his pillow. Lying down, he pressed his face into the sweater. The sweet subtle scent of Naomi was as effective as a lullaby, and soon he dozed off..Yet his heart slammed hard and heavy against his confining ribs, and fear stippled the nape of his neck.."It's even worse," Junior rasped, convinced that he was losing some indefinable advantage if the cop left without playing out this moment as it would usually unfold in an intellectual television crime drama like Perry Mason or Peter Gunn..Clearly touched and intrigued, the magician nevertheless circled the offer in search of reasons to decline, before at last shaking his head sadly. "I doubt that I'm the caliber of person you're looking for, Mrs. Lampion. I wouldn't be entirely a credit to your project."..1969 through 1973: the Year of the Rooster, chased by the Year of the Dog, followed fast by the Pig, faster by the Rat, with the Ox passing in a stampede pace. Eisenhower dead. Armstrong, Collins, Aldrin on the moon: one giant step on soil untouched by war. Hot pants, plane hijackings, psychedelic art. Sharon Tate and friends murdered by Manson's girls seven days before Woodstock,

the Age of Aquarius stillborn, but the death unrecognized for years. McCartney split, Beatles dissolved. Earthquake in Los Angeles, Truman dead, Vietnam sliding into chaos, riots in Ireland, a new war in the Middle East, Watergate..He prepared his knives and guns. Blades and bullets. Fortune favors the bold, the self-improved, the self-evolved, the focused..The previous April, the lads from Liverpool had claimed all five of the top five. Real Americans, like the Beach Boys and the Four Seasons, were forced to settle for lower numbers. It made you wonder who had really won the Revolutionary War..After nudging the door shut with his shoulder, Barty carried the sodas out of the kitchen and forward along the hall. Pausing at the livingroom archway, he said, "Uncle Jacob?". "That's obvious to us, but not always to others. Apparently, this would have been some years ago.".Neddy's face didn't appear to be as pale as it had been earlier. An undertone of gray, possibly blue, darkened the skin.. "Couldn't carry these three ladies," he said. "Svelte as they are, they still weigh more than a backpack.".When he heard the snick of the lock being disengaged, he rammed into the men's room..His silent tears accomplished what his words could not: Nork, Knacker, and Hisscus retreated, urging him to speak to his attorney, promising to return, once more expressing their deepest condolences, perhaps as abashed as attorneys and political appointees could get, but certainly confused and unsure how to proceed when dealing with a man so untouched by greed, so free of anger, so forgiving as the widower Cain..Returning the newborn to the nun, Celestina asked for the use of a phone, and for privacy..What didn't come as a surprise to Paul was Agnes's determination that the Whites, during their period of lying low, should stay with her and Barty..A spirit-shredding bleakness clawed at her, but she couldn't permit it to leave her in tatters. If she traded hope for despair, as her brothers had done, Bartholomew would be finished before he'd begun. She owed him optimism, lessons in the joy of life..As she commented on each masterpiece, Frieda grew steadily less coherent. She had drunk a few cocktails, the better part of a bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon, and two after-dinner brandies..Neddy possessed all the musical talent, but Junior had the muscle. Pinned against the wall, his throat in the vise of Junior's hands, Neddy needed a miracle if he were ever again to sweep another glissando from a keyboard..Waking from a bad dream, he sometimes thought he heard the ratcheting of gear-wheel feet. The scrape and creak of rusted iron joints. The clink of rake-tine fingers rattling against one another..A sense of fellowship in extraordinary times drew everyone closer, to hug, to touch, to share the wonder. For a long moment, even in the symphony of the storm, in spite of all the plink-tink-hiss-plop-rattle that arose from every rain-beaten work of man and nature, they seemed to stand here in a hush as deep as Tom had ever heard..Oblivious that she and Barty had become the center of attention, Angel said, "Does he ever get the quarters back?".Although Junior was free of the superstitions that Naomi, in her innocence and sentimentality, had embraced, he wept without pretense..Barty set one other rule: "Without dying first ... and you have to be sure you can get back.".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..For all his brilliance, however, he was still a boy who loved to run and jump and tumble. Who swung from the backyard oak tree in a rope-and-tire swing. Who was thrilled when given a tricycle. Who giggled in delight while watching his uncle Jacob roll a shiny quarter end over-end across his knuckles and perform other simple coin tricks..In the car again, a block from home, Barty said, "Maybe you could just not tell Uncle Edom and Uncle Jacob until Sunday night. They won't handle it real well. You know?".THE SANDMAN WAS powerless to cast a spell of sleep while Junior spent the night flushing away enough water to drain a reservoir..Blue fire flashed across the top of the range and followed drips down the baked-enamel front to the floor. Blue flared to yellow, and the yellow darkened when the blaze found the cadaver..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..This guy was spooky. Junior was beginning to think that the detective's unorthodox behavior wasn't a carefully crafted strategy, as it had first seemed, but that Vanadium was a little wacky..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..After a while, he dared to crack his eyelids. Pressing against his eyes was a blackness as smooth and as unrelenting as any known by a blind man. Not even a ghost of light haunted the night beyond the window, and the slats of the venetian blind were as hidden from view as the meatless ribs under Death's voluminous black robe..He missed Naomi. She'd always known exactly the right thing to say or do, improving his mood with a few words or with just her touch, when he was feeling down..Sweaty, chilled, trembling, weak-kneed, watery-eyed with self-pity, Junior spread a plastic garbage bag on the driver's seat. He got in the Suburban, twisted the key in the ignition, and groaned as the engine vibrations threatened to undo him..Celestina told them about Nella Lombardi and about the message Phimie delivered to Dr. Lipscomb after being resuscitated. "Phimie was, . . . so special. There's something special about her baby, too.". "After Elfarran and Morred perished and the Isle of Solea sank beneath the sea, the Council of the Wise governed for the child Serriadh until he took the throne. His reign was bright but brief. The kings who followed him in Enlad were seven, and their realm increased in peace and wealth. Then the dragons came to raid among the western lands, and wizards went out in vain against them. King Akambar moved the court from Berila in Enlad to the City of Havnor, whence he sent out his fleet against invaders from the Kargad Lands and drove them back into the East. But still they sent raiding ships even as far as the Inmost Sea. Of the fourteen Kings of Havnor the last was Maharion, who made peace both with the dragons and the Kargs, but at great cost. And after the Ring of the Runes was broken, and Erreth-Akbe died with the great dragon, and Maharion the Brave was killed by treachery, it seemed that no good thing happened in the Archipelago..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..Later, at home in bed, after Nolly proved the value

of oysters, he and Kathleen lay holding hands. Following a companionable silence, he said, "It's a mystery." He might not have this future-living thing down perfectly, but he was absolutely terrific at anger. Kathleen watched him with obvious amusement, aware that he was savoring her suspense as much as he was the appetizer. Worried that tears would frighten Barty, that indulging in a few would result in a ruinous flood, Agnes held back the salt tides. A mother's duty proved to be the stuff from which dams were built. The opening paragraph still lingered in his memory, because he had crafted it with great care: 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. "Honey," she said, crouching to peer at him through the vertical slats of the playpen, "what're you doing?" Frowning at him, she said, "You don't mind them around, do you, Joey? They're eccentric, but I love them very much. AT ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, where Wally had brought Angel into this world three years ago, he was now fighting for his life, for a chance to see the girl grow and to be the father she needed. He'd been taken to surgery already when Celestina and Angel arrived a few minutes behind the ambulance. Now, Obadiah produced a pack of playing cards as though from a secret pocket in an invisible coat. "Like to see a little something?" With his empty sockets draped by unsupported lids, Barty rode home wearing padded eye patches under sunglasses, his cane propped against the seat at his side, as though he were costumed for a role in a play filled with a Dickensian amount of childhood suffering. Precisely what type of prodigy Barty might be was initially not easy to deduce. He revealed many talents rather than just one. In a cabinet above the bench, Junior found a pair of clean, cotton gardening gloves. He tried them on, and they fit well enough. She fussed over him, took his temperature, and spooned two chips of ice into his parched mouth. Leaving, she gave Celestina a meaningful look and tapped her wristwatch. Seraphim's child had been alive as long as Naomi had been dead, almost fifteen months. In fifteen months, Junior should have located the little bastard and eliminated him. The previous day, Jacob and Edom had driven back to Bright Beach, to prepare for Barty's arrival. Now they hurried down the back porch steps and across the lawn, as Maria followed the driveway past the house and parked near the detached garage at the rear of the deep property. "It's not scary," said Mary. "I just step into another place for a little, and then back. It's just like going from one room to the next. I can't get stuck over there or anything." She looked at Barty. "You know how it is, Dad." A dumpster and a dead musician had humbled him as thoroughly as he had ever been humbled before, as completely as violent nervous emesis and volcanic diarrhea had humbled him, and he had no tolerance for being humbled. Humility is for losers. He backed toward the hall door, watching as the fire spread. After lingering until certain that the house would soon be a seething pyre, he finally sprinted along the hall to the front door. The sudden change of subject, from the airliner crash to Phimie, confused Celestina. Or as her father often said, happily mocking his own rhetorical eloquence: "Brighten the corner where you are, and you will light the world." The glittering room appeared unchanged. Even the piano player seemed to be the man who'd been at the keyboard back then, though his yellow-rose boutonniere and probably his tuxedo, as well, were new. The station wagon rolled out, the Volkswagen bus followed it, and Wally brought up the rear. "Wagons, ho!" he announced. The morning that it happened, Barty ate breakfast in the Lampion kitchen with Angel, Uncle Jacob, and two brainless friends. Edom observed, amazed, as Agnes chatted up their host, going from Mr. Sepharad to Obadiah, from the doorstep to the living room, the pie delivered and accepted, coffee offered and served, the two of them pleased and easy with each other, all in the time that it would have taken Edom himself to get up the nerve to cross the threshold and to think of something interesting to say about the Galveston hurricane of 1900, in which six thousand had died. The night was in flight, however, and he had a lot to do before it swooped straight into morning. A man came out of the stone tower. He passed them, walking hurriedly with a queer shambling gait, staring straight ahead. His chin shone and his chest was wet with spittle leaking from his lips. Both the red and the white wines were too cheap for Junior's taste so he drank Dos Equis beer and got two kinds of high by inhaling enough secondhand pot smoke to cure the state of Virginia's entire annual production of hams. Among the two or three hundred partyers, some were tripping on some exhibited the particular excitability and talkativeness typical of cokeheads, but Junior succumbed to none of these temptations. Self-improvement and self control mattered to him; he didn't approve of this degree of self indulgence. 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. Paul was nearest to that corner when he halted Grace in her rush toward certain death. Before he quite realized what he was doing, he found that he'd flung open the door and climbed half the single long flight of steps, as surefooted as Doc Savage or the Saint, or the Whistler, or any of the other pulp-fiction heroes whose exploits had for so long been his adventures by proxy. Even at this post midnight hour, the lounge would sometimes be as crowded with worried loved ones as at any other time of the day. This morning, however, the only life under the threat of the scythe appeared to be Wally's; the sole vigil being kept was for him. At the next corner, instead of continuing south, Junior angled aggressively in front of oncoming pedestrians, stepped off the curb, and headed east, traversing the intersection against the advice of a Don't Walk sign. Horns blared, a city bus nearly flattened him, but he made. He was in a mood to shoot her, but this weapon was not fitted with a sound-suppressor. He'd left that gun in Celestina's bedroom. This was the pistol that he had taken from Frieda Bliss's collection, and it was as full of sound as Frieda had been full of spew... So he calls it the King. If you find him his King, he'll treat you well. He's often here. Come on, I'll show you. Dog can't track till he's had the scent." Agnes met them, pulling Grace and Angel to her side. Her eyes were bright with excitement. "Tom, you're a man of faith, even if you've sometimes been troubled in it. Tell me what you make of all this." 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..When Victoria finally calmed her racing heart, she returned the spoon to the tray on the nightstand, stoppered the carafe, and said, "That's enough for now, Mr. Cain. In your condition, even too much I melted ice might trigger renewed vomiting."..So it became dangerous to practice sorcery, except under the protection of a strong warlord; and even then, if a wizard met up with one whose powers were greater than his own, he might be destroyed. And if a wizard let down his guard among the common folk, they too might destroy him if they could, seeing him as the source of the worst evils they suffered, a malign being. In those years, in the minds of most people, all magic was black..Once, she left the TV and came to Tom, where he sat talking with Paul. "It's like Gunsmoke and The Monkees are next to each other on the TV, both at the same time. But the Monkees, they can't see the cowboys-and the cowboys, they can't see the Monkees.".."I can't sleep half the time," Deed said, twisting the baseball cap in his hands. "I've lost weight, and I'm so nervous, jumpy."..The January air was crisp, fragrant with evergreens and with the faint salty scent of the distant sea. A curiously yellow moon glowered like a malevolent eye, studying him from between ragged ravelings of dirty clouds..Besides, he wasn't on the Greenbaum Gallery customer list and didn't have an invitation..In the park, rocketing along on the roller coaster, Barty had an experience, a reaction to more than the canted turns and steep plunges. He grew excited in much the way that Agnes had seen him excited when grasping a new and arcane mathematical theory. At the end of the ride, he wanted to get back on immediately, and so they did. There are no long waits for the blind at amusement parks: always to the head of the line. Agnes rode twice again with him, and then Paul twice, and finally Angel accompanied him three times. This roller-coaster obsession wasn't about thrills or even amusement. His exuberance gave way to a thoughtful silence, especially after a seagull flew within inches of his face, feathers thrumming, startling him, on the next-to-last rollick along the tracks. Thereafter, the park held little interest for him, and all he would say was that he'd thought of a new way to feel things-by which he meant all the ways things are-a fresh angle of approach to that mystery.."I don't know." He was silent a moment. "That's what's going to be interesting."..As the heavysset 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."..When all were gathered on the porch, lined up across the head of the steps and along the railing, in chill damp air that smelled faintly of ozone and less faintly of jasmine, Barty said, "Mr. Vanadium, your quarter trick is really cool. But here's something out of Heinlein."..Rising, Celestina said to Tom, "Last Tuesday night, we had to switch on the lawn sprinklers. This will be much better.".."Are you all right?" he asked as he opened the passenger's door and helped her into the car..Using the brochure as an ice-breaker, Junior circulated through the throng, seeking anyone who'd attended the..Junior Cain definitely was not a crazed sex-killer, not driven to homicide by weird lusts beyond his control. A single night of sex and death-an indulgence never to be repeated-wouldn't require serious self-examination or a reconsideration of his self-image..They lived too far from the nearest railroad tracks. He could not rationally expect a derailed train to crash through the garage..Yet the coin was as real as dead Naomi broken on the stony ridge at the foot of the fire tower..Considering his formidable size, his clothes ought to have served an image of virile masculinity: boots, jeans, red flannel shirt. His ducked head, slumped posture, and shuffling feet were reminders, however, that many young boys, too, dressed this way..Because the tower stood on a ridgeline that marked the divide between county and state property, most of the attending constabulary were county deputies, but two state troopers were present, as well..She cupped his face in both of her hands and was barely able to lift his head, for fear of what she would see..With no job to return to, he dawdled over lunch. He was actually tumescent with a growing sense of freedom that was as thrilling as sex..Because this kind of fictional fact, like maps of imaginary realms, is of real interest to some readers, I include the description after the stories. I also redrew the geographical maps for this book, and while doing so, happily discovered a very old one in the Archives in Havnor..He surprised himself by sitting up in bed and shouting, "Shut up, shut up, shut up!"..Celestina, surprised by Lipscomb's arrival, was still mentally numb from Neddy's harangue. "Doctor, I didn't know you were coming."..Taking no chances, Junior swung the candlestick again, bending down as he did so. The second impact was not as solid as the first, a glancing blow, but effective..Carrying him to the window, gazing up at the stars, the moon, she said, "I'll always read to you, Barty."..The nurse was in was gone, but Maria remained in attendance. She the vinyl-and-stainless-steel armchair, busy at..Junior realized he was on the verge of babbling, and with an effort, he silenced himself..Initially, when told that his patient was a Negro, Junior had been reluctant to serve as her physical therapist. Her program of rehab required mostly structured exercise to restore flexibility and to gain strength in the affected limb, but some massage would be involved, as well, which made him uncomfortable..When he came to himself, sick and weak from the poison and with an aching skull, he was in a room with brick walls and bricked-up windows. The door had no bars and no visible lock. But when he tried to get to his feet he felt bonds of sorcery holding his body and mind, resilient, clinging, tightening as he moved. He could stand, but could not take a step towards the door. He could not even reach his hand out. It was a horrible sensation, as if his muscles were not his own. He sat down again and tried to hold still. The spellbonds around his chest kept him from breathing deeply, and his mind felt stifled too, as if his thoughts were crowded into a space too small for them..Although the Rolex was expensive, Junior cared nothing about the monetary loss. He could afford to buy an armful of Rolexes, and wear them from wrist to shoulder..excited, shrieking. Branch to branch, the flapping of wings is leathery, demonic. The only other sounds are the thud..Soon he dispensed with picture books and progressed to short novels for more accomplished readers, and then rapidly to books meant for young adults. Tom Swift adventures and Nancy Drew mysteries captivated him through the summer and early autumn..Raising one hand, wiggling the fingers, he said, "Toes, toes, toes, toes, toes.".."That's kind of you," Panglo stammered, "but I have little time for reading, very little time."..After

following his uncle's movements, Barty looked at the table again. "Pie, pie, pie, pie, pie, pie." Wally Lipscomb's face, as long and narrow as ever, seemed not at all like the dour visage of an undertaker, as once it had, but rather like the rubbery mug of one of those circus clowns who can make you laugh as easily by striking an exaggeratedly sad frown as by putting on a goofy grin. She saw a warmth of spirit where once she had seen spiritual indifference, vulnerability where once she had seen an armored heart, great expectations where once she had seen withered hope; she saw kindness and gentleness where they had always been but now in more generous measure than before. She loved this long, narrow, homely, wonderful face, and she loved the man who wore it. Thus far, none of these women of mercy was as lovely as Victoria Bressler, the ice-serving nurse who was hot for him. Nevertheless, he kept looking and remained hopeful. mother's understanding of the world and of her own existence. Unlike most other toddlers, Barty was entirely comfortable with change. From bottle to drinking glass, from crib to open bed, from favorite foods to untried flavors, he delighted in the new. Although Agnes usually remained near at hand, Barty was as pleased to be put temporarily in the care of Maria Gonzalez as in the care of Edom, and he smiled as brightly for his dour uncle Jacob as for anyone. Gradually, Agnes realized that this was not a prayer for the soul of a deceased infant but for the survival of one still alive. 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. Finally Angel dropped and slithered, vanishing under the overhanging bedclothes with a final flurry of yellow socks. "But I've never seen a case like this. Usually, boils appear on the back of the neck. And in moist areas like the armpits and the groin. Not so often on the face. And never in a quantity like this. Really, I've never seen anything like it." And suddenly Celestina believed that Bellini was a cop, not because his voice contained such authority, but because her heart told her that the time had come, that the long-anticipated danger had at last materialized: the dark advent that Phimie had warned her about three years ago. His Country Squire laden with cookies, plum cakes, homemade caramel corn with almonds, and gifts, Edom drove directly home from Obadiah Sepharad's place, which had been their final stop. He roared away as if trying to outrun tornadoes and tidal waves. "I thought there was a burglar," Junior groaned, but he knew better than to spit out his entire story at once, for then he would appear to be reciting a script. At the stream Serrenen, where it runs within the north wall of the city, the midwife gave Otter his true name, by which he is remembered in islands far from Havnor. He planned, as soon as they took him out of his cell, to use the old Changers spell of self-transformation and so escape. Surely his life was in danger, and it would be all right to use the spell? Only he couldn't decide what to turn himself into—a bird, or a wisp of smoke, what would be safest? But while he was thinking about it, Losen's men, used to wizard's tricks, drugged his food and he ceased to think of anything at all. They dumped him into a mule-cart like a sack of oats. When he showed signs of reviving during the journey, one of them bashed him on the head, remarking that he wanted to make sure he got his rest. Chase after her on foot. Shoot her in the car. Maybe. He'd have five rounds left if he used one on the man, four on Bartholomew.

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