

## **FITTED FINITE ELEMENT METHODS AND APPLICATIONS PROCEEDINGS OF THE U**

By the time he put his suitcase and three boxes of books--the collected works of Zedd and selections from the Book-of-the-Month Club-in the Suburban, Junior had rushed twice more to the bathroom. His legs were shaky, and he felt hollow, frail, as if he'd lost more than was apparent, as if the essential substance of himself was gone..On the third of June, he found another useless Bartholomew, and on Saturday, the twenty-fifth, two deeply disturbing events occurred. He switched on his kitchen radio only to discover that "Paperback Writer," yet another Beatles song, had climbed to the top of the charts, and he received a call from a ea woman..Undiminished antiperistaltic waves coursed through his duodenum, stomach, and esophagus, and now he gasped desperately for air between each expulsion, without much success..Vanadium understood the depth of his old friend's pain, and he knew that the anguish over the loss of a child could make the best of men act out of emotion rather than good judgment, and so he accepted Harrison's preference to let the matter rest. When enough time passed for reflection, what Vanadium ultimately decided was that of the two of them, Harrison was much the stronger in his faith, and that he himself, perhaps for the rest of his life, would be more comfortable behind a badge than behind a Roman collar..St. Mary's social workers did not arrive with dawn, so Celestina was given the privacy of one of their offices, where the wet face of the morning pressed blurrily at the windows, and where she phoned her parents with the terrible news. From here, too, she arranged with a mortician to collect Phimie's body from the cold-storage locker in the hospital morgue, embalm it, and have it flown home to Oregon..From Joey's closet, she extracted an old blue blazer that he seldom wore anymore. The lining was sagging, worn, Agnes delighted in their conversations. Barty was far ahead of the language learning curve for his age, but he was still a child, and his observations were filled with innocence and charm. "You mean your cold is like in your nose but not in your feet?".He hadn't seen Thomas Vanadium since Monday, at the cemetery, and Vanadium hadn't pulled any tricks since leaving twenty-five cents at his bedside that same night. Almost four days undisturbed by the hectoring detective. In matters Vanadium, however, Junior had learned to be wary, prudent..In the noble ruin of his face, Thomas Vanadium's smoke-gray eyes were striking, filled with a beautiful ... sorrow. Not self-pity. He clearly didn't regard himself as a victim. This, Kathleen felt, was the sorrow of a man who had seen too much of the suffering of others, who knew the evil ways of the world. These were eyes that read you at a glance, that shone with compassion if you deserved it, and that glared with a terrifying judgment if compassion wasn't warranted.. "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."..On other nights, she had overheard this and been touched. On this Christmas Eve, however, it filled her with wonder and wondering, for she recalled their conversation earlier, at Joey's grave: The subtle distortions in his vision, which caused lines of type to twist, didn't appear to trouble Barty much otherwise. He moved as quickly and as surely as ever, with his special grace..He stood at a window, staring down into the street, his profile to her, and in his silence he searched for the words to describe the "something extraordinary" that he had mentioned earlier.. "We have reason to believe that the man who raped your sister is stalking you."..The odds against drawing a jack of spades four times in a row out of four combined and randomly shuffled decks were forbidding. Jacob didn't have the knowledge necessary to calculate those odds, but he knew they were astronomical..Three equally modest rooms opened off this lounge. Two housed complete dental units, and the third provided cramped office space shared by the receptionist and the doctor..Maria gathered up the four jacks and tore them in thirds. She put the twelve pieces in the breast pocket of her blouse. "I buy to you new cards, but no more ever can you to be having these.".. "Anyway, something clicked in me on the roller coaster, and I grasped a new angle of approach to the problem. I've figured out that I can walk in the idea of sight, sort of sharing the vision of another me, in another reality, without actually going there." He smiled into her astonishment. "So what do you say about that?".In his voice, he heard a tremor that had nothing to do with the hideous deaths in Effingham more than sixteen years previous..From his motel room, he telephoned Hanna Rey in Bright Beach. She still looked after his house on a part-time basis, paid the bills from a special account while he traveled, and kept him informed about events in his hometown. From Hanna, he learned that Barty Lampion's eyes had been lost to cancer..The roses filling the countersunk vases in the comers of Joey's gravestone were not Edom-grown, but they were Edom-bought. He had visited the florist himself, personally selecting each bloom from the inventory in the cooler; but he didn't have the courage to accompany Agnes and Barty to the grave..He would never allow himself to be bankrupted and made poor again. Never. His fortune had been won at enormous risk, with great fortitude and determination. He must defend it at any cost..As Barty climbed to the porch without benefit of the railing and held out his right hand, Paul Damascus said, "Tom, we're wondering if Barty can extend to you the protection he gives to Angel in the rain. Maybe he can ... since the three of you share this ... this awareness, this insight, or whatever you want to call it. But he won't know until he tries."..On a shelf above one of the clothes rods stood a single piece of Mark Cross luggage, an elegant and expensive two-suitier. The rest of the high shelf was empty-enough space for as many as three more bags..Junior was aware that all the cops were watching him as he stared down at the body, and he frantically tried to think what an innocent husband would be likely to do or say, but his imagination failed him. His thoughts could not be organized..The paramedic pulled shut the door, leaving Joey outside in the night, in the storm, in the wind between worlds..Over potato soup and an asparagus salad, the dinner conversation got off to a promising start: a discussion of favorite potato dishes, observations on the weather, talk of Mexico at Christmas..Neither of them needed to confirm their mutual attraction with even so much as an additional nod or a smile. Victoria

knew, as he did, that their time would come, when all this current unpleasantness was I behind them, when Vanadium had been thwarted, when all suspicion had been forever laid to rest..This wasn't art. This was pandering, mere illustration, more suitable for painting on velvet than on canvas.."My dad's already armored me," Celestina assured her. "He says art lasts, but critics are the buzzing insects of a single summer day."..Still looming over her, he snatched the pad out of her hands and examined the sketch. "Where would you have seen this?"..On mechanic, he again glanced meaningfully at Edom, who felt a response was expected. When he opened his mouth, he could think of nothing to say, except that at Sanriku, Japan, on June 15, 1896, a 110 foot-high wave, triggered by an undersea quake, killed 27,100 people, most while they were in prayer at a Shinto festival. Even to Edom, this seemed to be an inappropriate comment, so he said nothing. ".It's been a joy to me to go back to Earthsea and find it still there, entirely familiar, and yet changed and still changing. What I thought was going to happen isn't what's happening, people aren't who-or what-I thought they were, and I lose my way on islands I thought I knew by heart.."He knew how you felt about having too much life insurance. So he didn't disclose it to you."..Edom, eager to learn precisely when a tidal wave or falling asteroid would bring his doom, fetched a pack of cards from a cabinet in the parlor. When Maria explained that only every third card was read and that a full look at the future required four decks, Edom returned to the parlor to scare up three more..One of the coin seekers knocked against Junior, jarring him loose of his paralysis, but when he stumbled out of the line of fire of the second vending machine, a third machine shot quarters at him..Either this chatterbox was at all times a babbling airhead or Junior particularly disconcerted him..On he went, up he went, trunk to limb, limb to branch, branch to limb, to limb, to trunk. Hand over hand up the vertical parts, gripping with his knees, then standing and walking like a tightrope artist along limbs horizontal to the ground, swinging over empty air and stepping from one woody walkway to another, ever upward toward the highest bower, dwindling as though he were growing younger during the ascent, becoming a smaller and smaller boy. Forty feet, fifty feet, already far higher than the house, striving toward the green citadel at the summit..She started toward the door, stopped, and turned to him in the dark. "Kid of mine?".."Nevertheless, even if Muffin assaulted you, she's otherwise such a sweet little thing. What would Maria think of you if you told her you'd smashed poor Muffin with a shovel?"..WHEN A GLASS OF chilled apple juice at dawn stayed on his stomach, Junior Cain was allowed a second glass, though he was admonished He was also given three saltines..She walked the corridor until she came to a room with empty beds. Without turning on the lights, she entered, put down the suitcase, and sat in a chair by the window..He held forth the single red rose. "For you. Not that it compares. No flower could.".."With this money, you won't have to cut back on the number of pies you give away--and all of that."..Paul shook his head. "Oh, no. People look at our marriage, and they think I gave up so much, but I got back a lot more than I gave."..The tone sounded, as promised, and a man's voice spoke from the box: "It's Max. You're psychic. I found the hospital here. Poor kid had a cerebral hemorrhage, arising from a hypertensive crisis caused by ... eclampsia, I think it is. Baby survived. Call me, huh?"..She searched the child's unfocused eyes for some sign of the hateful father's wickedness..The thorns had not been stripped from the long stem of the white rose. Vanadium clutched it so tightly that the sharp points punctured his meaty palm. He seemed to be unaware of his wounds..Without a word, Joshua Nunn and the paramedic retreated to the foyer. The parlor doors slid shut..Angel followed him at two steps, and when she stood beside his chair, watching him open the soft drink, Barty said, "Why were you following me?"..During the past three years, he'd suffered much because of these sisters, including most recently the humiliation in the Dumpster with the dead musician, Celestina's pencil-necked friend with a propensity for postmortem licking. The memory of that horror flared so vividly--every grotesque detail condensed into one intense and devastating flash of recollection--that Junior's bladder suddenly felt swollen and full, although he had taken a long satisfying leak in an alleyway across the street from the restaurant at which the postcard-painting poseur had enjoyed a leisurely dinner with Ichabod..Then the old man taught it to him. But it wasn't much use, Otter thought, since he had to hide it.."Tom, Wally, I'm sorry for the brusque introductions," Agnes Lampion apologized. "We'll have plenty of getting-to-know-each other time over dinner. But the people in this room have been waiting an entire week to hear from you, Tom. We can't wait a moment longer."..In either case, printing the name in blood was a ritualistic act, and ritualism of this nature was an unmistakable symptom of a seriously unbalanced mind. Evidently, the wife killer would be easier to crack than expected, because his shell was already badly fractured..Her metal hands were still crossed defensively over her breasts. The artist had welded large hexagonal nuts to her rake-tine fingers to suggest knuckles, and balanced on one nut was a fourth quarter..The hall was deserted. Then a woman came out of one of the offices and walked toward the gallery, without glancing at him..When she went upstairs at 2:10 in the morning, she found the boy fast asleep in the soft lamplight, Tunnel in the Sky at his side..The Benediction service had concluded, and the worshipers had departed. Gone, too, were the priest and the altar boys..Junior felt a little lightheaded. He felt strange. He hoped he wasn't coming down with the flu..Letting go of Maria, lowering her hand to her heart, Agnes said, "I want to see him." After making the sign of the cross, Maria said, "They must to have kepted him in the eggubator until he is not dangerous. When the nurse comes, I will make her to tell me when the baby is to be safe. But I can't be leave you. I watch. I watch over."..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..Junior hadn't paid attention to everyone who visited the pianist though surely he'd have noticed a certain stump in a cheap suit..Tom Vanadium merely arched one eyebrow, as if to say that more than a single answer ought to be obvious..Fourth and last, he was surprised that Kickmule was a legitimate surname. This information wasn't of immediate importance to him, but if ever his Gammoner and Pinchbeck identities were compromised and he required false ID in a new name, he would call himself Eric Kickmule. Or possibly Wolfgang Kickmule. That sounded really tough. No one would mess

with a man named Kickmule..This show was hopeless, disastrous, stupid, foolish, painful, lovely, wonderful, glorious, sweet..An overflow crowd of mourners had attended the services at St. Thomas's Church, standing shoulder to shoulder at the back of the nave, through the narthex, and across the sidewalk outside, and now everyone appeared to have come to the cemetery, as well..Renee Vivi spoke with a silken southern accent. Vivacious without being cloyingly coquettish, well-educated and well-read but never pretentious, direct in her conversation without seeming either bold or opinionated, she was charming company..The window didn't face the street. It overlooked a five-foot-wide passageway between this house and the next. The police might not spot him leaving..Junior realized that killing Renee this very night would be an unthinkable waste. Instead, he could marry her first, enjoy her for a while, and eventually arrange an accident or suicide that left him with all-or at least a significant portion of her assets..As best he could, he examined his clothes. They were better pressed than he expected, and not noticeably soiled..He'd been a godsend to Celestina, because his love of children and a new sense of fun that he'd discovered in himself were showered on Angel. He was Uncle Wally. Waddling Wally, Wobbly Wally, Wally Walrus, Wally Werewolf. Wally Wit Duh Funny Accents. Wiggle Eared Wally. Whistling Wally. Wrangler Wally. He was Good Golly Wally the Friend of All Polliwogs. Angel adored him, adored him, and he could have loved her no more if she had been one of the sons that he had lost. Overwhelmed by her classes, her waitressing job, her painting, Celestina could always count on Wally to step in to share the child rearing. He wasn't merely Angel's honorary uncle, but her father in all senses except the legal and biological; he wasn't just her doctor, but a guardian angel who fretted over her mildest fever and worried about all the ways the world could wound a child..Many police agencies required an officer to carry a firearm even when off duty. If the Oregon State Police had no such rule, Vanadium most likely carried one anyway, because in his crazy-as-a-snake mind..He paid cash to the locksmith, and included in the payment were the two dimes and the nickel Vanadium had left on his nightstand..If Agnes knew that Jacob had been helping her game, she might never play cards with him again. She would not approve of what he had done. Consequently, his great skill as a card mechanic must be forever his secret..Hope became easier to sustain when late 1966 and 1967 brought the biggest advance in women's fashions since the invention of the sewing needle: the miniskirt, and then the micromini. Already, Mary Quant-of all things, a British designer-had conquered England and Europe with her splendid creation; now she brought America out of the dark ages of psychopathic modesty..Aware of the dangers of dehydration, he drank a bottle of water and put two half-gallon containers of Gatorade in the Suburban..Junior leaned forward and slid the packet of cash across the desk, toward the detective. "There's more where this came from"..Google didn't realize that he was an object of disgust. He wiggled his eyebrows in what he evidently assumed to be an expression of male camaraderie, and he nudged Junior with one elbow.."After the quake," Edom said, "forty thousand people took refuge in a two-hundred-acre open area, a military depot. A quake-related fire swept through so fast they were killed standing up, so tightly packed together they died as a solid mass of bodies"..Fed up with them and with this exhibition, Junior half wished that he would again be stricken by violent nervous emesis. Even in his suffering, he would enjoy spraying these insistently appealing canvases with the reeking ejecta of his gut: criticism of the most pungent nature.."Well, Uncle Jacob doesn't understand kids. Anyway, this is pretty good stuff"..She was shaking and so afraid, not thinking clearly, and for a moment she didn't understand what he meant, what he wanted, and then she saw that the window on his side of the car was shattered, too, and that the door beyond him was badly torqued, twisted in its frame. Worse, the side of the Pontiac had burst inward when the pickup plowed into them. With a steel snarl and sheet-metal teeth, it had bitten into Joey, bitten deep, a mechanical shark swimming out of the wet day, shattering ribs, seeking his warm heart..The reception still roared in both showrooms of the gallery. Legions of the uncultured, taste-challenged in every regard except in their appreciation for hors d'oeuvres, yammered about art and chased their cloddish opinions with mediocre champagne..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..Barty wanted to hug her. He did hug her. He hugged Angel, too. He hugged Tom Vanadium..With his sister's financial backing, Edom purchased a flower shop in '71, after ascertaining that the strip mall in which it was located had been even more soundly constructed than the earthquake code required, that it didn't stand on slide-prone land, that it did not lie in a flood plain, and that in fact its altitude above sea level ensured that it would survive all but a tidal wave of such towering enormity that nothing less than an asteroid impact in the Pacific could be the cause. In '73, he married Maria Elena (that boy-girl thing, after all), whereupon she became Agnes's sister-in-law in addition to having long been a full sister in her heart. They bought the house on the other side of the original Lampion homestead, and another fence was torn down..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..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..Around the dinner table, the adults applauded, but the tougher audience squinted at the ceiling, toward which she believed the coin had arced, then at the table, where it ought to have fallen among the water glasses or in her creamed corn. At last she looked at Tom and said, "Not magic"..He closed his eyes again and seemed asleep, but then as she clicked off the lamp, he murmured, "You have your halo again"..What the commodifiers of fantasy count on and exploit is the insuperable imagination of the reader, child or adult, which gives even these dead things life-of a sort, for a while..The police. The stupid police. Ringing the bell when they knew he'd been shot. Ringing the damn doorbell when he lay here helpless, the Industrial Woman lurching toward him, his toe on the other side of the kitchen,

ringing the doorbell when he was losing enough blood to give transfusions to an entire ward of wounded hemophiliacs. The stupid bastards were probably expecting him to serve tea and a plate of butter cookies, little paper doilies between each cup and saucer..After the service, among those who came to Agnes at graveside, trying to express the inexpressible, was Paul Damascus, the owner of Damascus Pharmacy on Ocean Avenue. Of Mideastern extraction, he had dark olive skin and, incredibly, rust--red hair. With his rust-red eyebrows, lashes, and mustache, his handsome face looked like that of a bronze statue with a curious patina.."The quarter in the sandwich," Nolly said, because that was the first stunt that Simon Magusson had paid him to perform.."Well," Agnes said, "thank the Lord, we don't have tornadoes here in California."..During the cleaning, installation of new carpet, and painting that had followed the removal of the diarrhetic pig set loose by one of Cain's disgruntled girlfriends, the wife killer had spent a few nights in a hotel. Nolly took advantage of the opportunity to bring his associate James Hunnicolt--Jimmy Gadget-onto the premises to provide a customized, undetectable, exterior window-latch release..Writing came with reading, and in a notebook, he began to make entries about points of interest in the stories that he enjoyed. His *Diary of a Book Reader*, as he titled it, fascinated Agnes, who read it with his permission; these notes to himself were enthusiastic, earnest, and charming-but literally month by month, Agnes noticed that they grew less naive, more complex, more contemplative.."Good heavens, Vinnie, I know that," she assured him as she lifted Barty-hardly bigger than a bag of sugar-from the bassinets. She settled with the baby into a rocking chair..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..By the time he arrived at his apartment, Junior could think of no better action to take, so he phoned Simon Magusson, his attorney in Spruce Hills..Startled, Celestina said, "Good grief, you're spooky. How could you know what I'm thinking?" "So I drew attention to myself. Raised suspicions. One night, in St. Louis, this rube recognized me from my performing days, even though I'd changed my looks. It was a high-stakes game, but the players weren't high-class. They ganged up on me, beat me, and then smashed my hands, one finger at a time, with a tire iron." "Consider what I told you," Dr. Salk urged. "Your Perri would want you to think about it."..Just as the man turned away, Junior got a glimpse of what he wore under a London Fog raincoat. Between the lapels of the coat: a white shirt with a wing collar, a black bow tie, the suggestion of black-satin lapels like those on a tuxedo jacket..Phimie's speech had been slurred later, as well, immediately following the birth of the baby, when she had struggled to convey her desire to name her daughter Angel..Junior didn't find anything to explain her paranoia-though, to his surprise, he discovered six books by Caesar Zedd in her small library. The pages were dog-eared; the text was heavily underlined.."Me, me," Celestina said. "In fact, fianc?es should come first."..They wanted to go up to Barty's room, but she refused them, because there was nothing more they could do for the boy than they had done for her. "He wants to finish reading *Starman Jones*, and I'm not letting anything interfere with that. We're leaving for Newport Beach at seven in the morning, and you can see him then."..Junior was less surprised by his sudden assault on Victoria than by the failure of the bottle to break. He was, after all, a new man since his decision on the fire tower, a man of action, who did what was necessary. But the bottle was glass, and he swung forcefully, hard enough that it smacked her forehead with a sound like a mallet cracking against a croquet ball, hard enough to put her out in an instant, maybe even hard enough to kill her, yet the Merlot remained ready to drink.."Blood tests should reveal whether the child's yours or not. That also might explain all this."..In his mind's eye, Junior saw the coin in transit of the blunt fingers, moving more swiftly than previously because its passage was lubricated by blood..Missing windshield. Considering that the space was pinched by the crumpled roof, however, and in light of Agnes's pregnancy and imminent second-stage labor, the severe contortions involved in this extraction would be too dangerous.."I hope it will," the physician said, but his emphasis was too solidly on the word hope..The hospital room was softly lighted, and shadows roosted on all sides like a flock of slumbering birds..He said this as though confident Agnes would understand what he meant, with a smile and with a glint in his eyes that almost became a wink, as if they were members of a secret society in which these three repeated words were code, embodying a complex meaning other than what was apparent to the uninitiated..If they were suspicious of him, they showed no obvious alarm. The three went inside in no particular rush, and judging by their demeanor, Junior decided that they hadn't spotted him, after all..The young man raised his voice to be heard above the gobbling of the art turkeys. "No, sir. He just asked where the men's room was."..and half rotten. She tore it. With the small scissors, she opened the shoulder seam from the inside..At home again, in the safety of the family, Barty collapsed in exhaustion from the sustained effort to see with eyes that he didn't possess. Abed for ten days, feverish, afflicted with vertigo and migraine headaches, nauseated, he lost eight pounds before his recovery was complete..By ones and twos, the festive crowd eventually deconstructed, but for Celestina, an excitement lingered in the usual gallery hush that rebuilt in their wake..Another stiff might have required dragging; but Neddy weighed hardly more than a five-foot-ten breadstick. Junior hauled the body off the ground and slung it over one shoulder in a fireman's carry..Obadiah tossed the pack of cards to EDOM, startling him. "Son, you'll have to help me. My fingers have no finesse anymore." " . . . then how come you couldn't walk where your eyes were healthy and leave the tumors there," she remembered..She was lost in his eyes: She wanted to pass through his eyes as Alice had passed through the looking glass, follow the beautiful radiance that was fading now, go with him through the door that had been opened for him and accompany him out of this rain-swept day into grace..She slipped into her shoes and stood for a moment watching his lips move as he gave thanks for his blessings and as he asked that blessings be given to others who needed them..Like a

spring-loaded novelty snake erupting from a can, Junior exploded up from the chair, nearly knocking it over. They laughed and held hands. For the first time since Phimie's panicked phone call from Oregon, Celestina felt that everything would eventually be all right again. "He's an attorney, and this grieving husband comes to him with a big liability case. There's money to be made." of Zedd constituted the most thoughtful, most rewarding, most reliable guide to life to be found anywhere. When Junior was Confused or troubled, he turned to Caesar Zedd and never failed to find enlightenment, guidance. When he was happy, he found in Zedd the welcome reassurance that it was all right to be successful and to love oneself. The revolving beacons dwindled, casting off blue-and-red pulses of light that shimmered-swooped through the diffusing fog, as if they were disembodied spirits seeking someone to possess. The two women stared at each other, and at last Celestina said, "Good Lord, what's happening here?" Agnes could not bear to watch Maria sewing. The light no longer stung, but her new future, Shifting the Suburban out of park, Wally said, "I didn't know Baptists indulged in wagering." If he didn't find the Rolex and get back to his car before the reception ended, he'd forfeit his best chance of following Celestina to Bartholomew. To see his newborn baby girl, Barty shared the sight of other Bartys, and he so adored this little wrinkled Mary that he sustained his vision all day, until a thunderous migraine became too much to bear and a sudden frightening slurring of speech drove him back to the comfort of blindness. He said, "There's a whiteness in Barty's right pupil ... which I think indicates a growth. The distortions in his vision are still there, though somewhat different, when he closes his right eye, so that indicates a problem in the left, as well, even though I'm not able to see anything there. Dr. Chan has a full schedule tomorrow, but as a favor to me, he's going to see you before his usual office hours, first thing in the morning. You'll have to start out early." Not many men wore hats these days. Since his teenage years, Nolly had favored a porkpie model. San Francisco was often chilly, and he began losing his hair when still young. WHILE THE SLATS of ash-gray light slowly lost their meager luster, and sable shadows metastasized in sinister profusion, the sentinel silence remained unbroken between Junior Cain and the birthmarked man. Junior didn't care which explanation was correct. Only one thing mattered: The Bartholomew hunt was at last nearing an end. On Wednesday, December 27, Junior met Google, the document forger, in a theater, during a matinee of Bonnie and Clyde. 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. Nothing he could do about it now. Having Naomi's body moved to another grave, in a cemetery without Negroes, would cause a lot of talk. He didn't want to draw more attention to himself. "Forget Barty's tree for a second and imagine that all these many worlds are like stacked slices of Swiss cheese. Through some holes, you can see only the next slice. Through others, you see through two or three or five slices before holes stop overlapping. There are little holes between stacked worlds, too, but they're constantly shifting, changing, second by second. And I can't see them, really, but I have an uncanny feel for them. Watch closely." AT THE END OF THE fourth book of Earthsea, Tehanu, the story had arrived at what I felt to be now. And, just as in the now of the so-called real world, I didn't know what would happen next. I could guess, foretell, fear, hope, but I didn't know. Another thought: The young gallery employee would remember that Junior had asked after Neddy and had followed him toward the men's room. He would provide a description, and because he was an art connoisseur, therefore visually oriented, he'd most likely provide a good description, and what the police artist drew wouldn't be some cubist vision in the Picasso mode or a blurry impressionistic sketch, but a portrait filled with vivid and realistic detail, like a Norman Rockwell painting, ensuring apprehension. A sedan had come to a stop in the graveled driveway, over to the right of the house, almost out of view. As Junior watched, the headlights were doused. The engine shut off. The driver's door opened. A man got out of the car, a shadowy figure in the fearsome yellow moonlight. The dinner guest. Shaking with a fear that had nothing to do with Junior Cain and flying bullets, or even with memories of Josef Krepp and his vile necklace, Tom Vanadium closed the sketch pad and put it on the window seat. He opened the window, and in rushed the susurrant of breeze-stirred oak leaves. Certain disbelief insulated her against immediate surprise. She shook her head. "That's not possible." Two soft-boiled eggs, one slice of bread neither toasted nor buttered, a glass of apple juice, and a dish of orange. She was sopping, shivering. Water streamed from her soaked hair, down her face, as she wiped at her beaded eyelashes with one dripping hand.

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