

FRAMLINGHAM A NARRATIVE OF THE CASTLE IN FOUR CANTOS

Being uniquely sensitive, he had mourned Naomi with his entire body, with violent emesis and pharyngeal bleeding and incontinence. His grief had been so racking that it might have killed him. Enough was enough..He could recall clearly when he had known that he would marry her: during his first year of college, when he'd returned home for the Christmas break. Away at school, he had missed her every day, and the moment that he saw her again, an abiding tension left him, and he felt at peace for the first time in months..Happy weekend. His attitude amazed her, and his strength in the face of darkness gave her courage.."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."But nothing equals a quake for killing. Big one in Shaanxi, China, killed eight hundred thirty thousand."Too late for interrogation now, with Vanadium bludgeoned into eternal sleep and resting under many fathoms of cold bedding..So smoothly did the waiter move, that three martinis on a corklined mahogany tray seemed to float across the room in front of him and then hover beside their table while he served the cocktails to the lady first, the guest second, and the host third..He kept the house, for it was a shrine to his life with Perri. He returned to it from time to time, to refresh his spirit..Junior had thought the news was the lab report, which had found no ipecac in his spew. All that had been distraction..Copyright (c) 2001 by Ursula K. Le Guin All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher..Junior was at critical depth. The psychological pressure was at least five thousand pounds per square inch and growing by the second. Implosion imminent..Throughout the day, he tried not to think about the four knaves. But he was an obsessive, of course, so in spite of all his trying, he did not succeed..excited, shrieking. Branch to branch, the flapping of wings is leathery, demonic. The only other sounds are the thud.He felt lightheaded again. But this time he knew why. Not an oncoming case of the flu. He was straining against the cocoon of his life to date, straining to be born in a new and better form. He had been a pupa, encased in a chrysalis of fear and confusion, but now he was an imago, a fully evolved butterfly, because he had used the power of his beautiful rage to improve himself. When Bartholomew was dead, Junior Cain would at last spread his wings and fly..Instead, he encountered an elderly woman getting out of a red Pontiac with a fox tail tied to the radio antenna. A quick glance around confirmed that they were unobserved, so he clubbed her on the back of the head with the butt of his 9-mm pistol..The blonde was coming on to him, just as a score of other women had done since his arrival, so Junior tried to balance seduction with information gathering. Putting his hand over the hand with which she was gently massaging his thigh, he said, "I knew her brother in Nam. Then I got wounded, shipped out, lost touch. Like to find him."Kaitlin had the piercing voice and talent for vituperation that marked her as a member of the Hackachak tribe, but for now she was content to leave the vocal assault to her parents. The stare with which she drilled Junior, however, if brought to bear on a promising geological formation, would core the earth and strike oil in minutes..pride, his one great shining moment but also his sinful pride. Clubbed with the trophy first, fists later. And now, here,.Easter still lay a few weeks away, but already Celestina had begun decorating more than a hundred baskets, so that nothing would need to be done at the last minute except add the candy. Her living room was a warren of baskets, ribbons, bows, beads, bangles, shredded cellophane in green and purple and yellow and pink, and decorative little plush-toy bunnies and baby chicks..Bill wasn't impressed. "They build houses out of mud in China. No wonder everything falls down."Tom Vanadium checked the small wastebasket next to the sink and discovered a wad of bloody Kleenex. The crumpled wrappers from two Band-Aids..THE RAIN THAT HAD threatened to wash out the morning funeral finally rinsed the afternoon, but by nightfall the Oregon sky was clean and dry. From horizon to horizon spread an infinity of icy stars, and at the center of them hung a bright sickle moon as silver as steel.."Hasn't the sheriff's department already reached a determination of accidental death?" Parkhurst asked. "They're good men, good cops, every last one of them," said Vanadiuin, "and if they've got more pity in them than I do, that's a virtue, not a shortcoming. What could Mr. Cain have taken to make himself vomit?"He was wrong about this. On the final Friday of every month, in sunshine and in rain, Junior routinely took a walking tour of the six galleries that were his very favorites, browsing leisurely in each and chatting up the galeries, with a one-o'clock break for lunch at the St. Francis Hotel. This was a tradition with him, and invariably at the end of each such day, he felt wonderfully cozy..After staring at the coins for a long moment, Kathleen said, "I don't think any mystery writer has ever done a series of novels about a priest detective who's also a magician."."What was it like, Enoch? Did you look into her eyes when you pushed her?" Vanadium's uninflected monologue was like the voice of a conscience that preferred to torture by droning rather than by nagging. "Or doesn't a woman-killing coward like you have the guts for that? ".Agnes, who inherited the property, would have welcomed her brothers in the main house. Although both were willing to visit her for an occasional dinner or to sit in rocking chairs on the porch, on a summer night, neither could abide living in that ominous place..Through nine months of quiet panic, however, Phimie grew less rational week by week, resorting to reckless measures

that endangered. She could see now what she hadn't seen when running with him through the cemetery, because she was looking directly at him. Yet even seeing did not make it easy to believe. Although only half the stools at the counter were occupied, and none of those close to Junior, customers were seated in most of the booths. Some had their backs to him, and three were about Vanadium's size. During the preparation of the cards, Barty had fallen asleep in his mother's arms, but with the revelation of his name on the ace, he had awakened again, perhaps because with his head resting on her bosom, he was alarmed by the sudden acceleration of her heartbeat. But the other learning he had been given had made Otter touchy in these matters, delicate of conscience. The big galley they were building now would be rowed to war by Losen's slaves and would bring back slaves as cargo. It galled him to think of the good ship in that vicious usage. "Why can't we build fishing boats, the way we used to?" he asked, and his father said, "Because the fishermen can't pay us." A sofa and one armchair provided the seating in the living room. No coffee table. A small table beside the chair. A wall unit held a fine stereo system and a few hundred record albums. "Better hold on tight to her," Wally warned Celestina, braking to a halt at the intersection. "She'll float up and away, then we'll have to call the fire department to get her down." Edom carried the honey-raisin pear pie, and Agnes toted Barty across the neatly cropped yard, to the front door. The bell push triggered chimes that played the first ten notes of "That Old Black Magic," which they heard distinctly through the glass in the door. Wickedly sharp silver scimitar suspended by a filament more fragile than a human hair. He paused, not sure how to proceed. He was not accustomed to writing letters to total strangers. Edom, who had never made it big, medium, or little, watched his sister blur before him. He strove to contain the shimmering hotness in his eyes. His love was not for magic, and his pride was not in any skill he possessed, for he possessed none worth noting. His love was for his good sister; she was his pride, too, and he felt that his small life had precious meaning as long as he was able to drive her on days like this, carry her pies, and occasionally make her smile. "It isn't that, Daddy. You remember, when we were all together the day before yesterday, how afraid Phimie was of this man. Not just for herself ... for the baby." Sunday evening, here he was, cracking open four new decks, as if fresh cards might enable the magic to repeat. In spite of its dazzle and power and comfort, however, the car was not able to lift his spirits as he cruised the hills of the city. Somewhere along these darkly glistening streets, in these houses and high-rises clinging to steep slopes awaiting seismic sundering, the boy was sheltered: half Negro, half white, full doom to Junior Cain. An SFPD patrol car swept past, its siren silent, the rack of emergency beacons flashing on its roof. "Do you know him?" Edom asked, gazing longingly now at the open door, from which Jacob had turned away. "Obadiah Sepharad?" Freed for the moment from the need to be strong for her sleeping Angel or for Wally, Celestina turned to Tom Vanadium, saw in his gray eyes both the sorrow of the world and a hope to match her own, saw in his ruined face the promise of triumph over evil, leaned against him for support, and finally dared to cry. 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. "That's right," Celestina told Wally. "This isn't wagering. What's wrong with you?" "Last I noticed, his car was out. Let me check." Sparky put down his phone and went to look in the garage. When he returned, he said, "Nope. Still out. When he parties, he usually parties late." being careful to place the point of impact precisely where the bottle had struck her. The calls to Bellini in San Francisco and to others in Oregon were made with a prayer for news, but the prayer went unanswered. Cain had not been seen, heard from, smelled, intuited, or located by the pestering clairvoyants who had attached themselves to the sensational case. His patience exhausted, the pianist wrenched his hand out of Junior's grip. He glanced around nervously, certain that they must be the center of attention, but of course the reception guests were lost in their witless conversations, or they were gaga over the maudlin paintings, and no one was aware of this quiet little drama. When Junior walked the cracked-linoleum corridor and descended the six flights of stairs to the street, he discovered that a thin drizzle was falling. The afternoon grew darker even as he turned his face to the sky, and the cold, dripping city, which swaddled Bartholomew somewhere in its concrete folds, appeared not to be a beacon of culture and sophistication anymore, but a forbidding and dangerous empire, as it had never seemed to him before. "64 just a little bit ago," the girl said. "I was sitting on the porch, having a Popsicle, and I just figured it out." Havnor Great Port is the city at the heart of the world, white-towered above its bay; on the tallest tower the sword of Erreth-Akbe catches the first and last of daylight. Through that city passes all the trade and commerce and learning and craft of Earthsea, a wealth not hoarded. There the King sits, having returned after the healing of the Ring, in sign of healing. And in that city, in these latter days, men and women of the islands speak with dragons, in sign of change. Undeterred, the girl said, "Not magic. But maybe I can't learn to do that one, ever." "Maria is coming by with Francesca and Bonita," Agnes said. "We might as well put all the extensions in the table. Barty, call Uncle Jacob and Uncle Edom and invite them for dinner." Otter hesitated and said, "Yes." No mystery here. No reason to leap to the ceiling and cling upside down like a frightened cartoon cat. Before setting out from home, Joey had buckled his lap belt, but because of Agnes's condition, she hadn't engaged her own. She rammed against the door, pain shot through her right shoulder, and she thought, Oh, Lord, the baby! Sliding Victoria's chair away from the table, he turned her to face him. He adjusted her body so that her head was tipped back and her arms were hanging slack at her sides. 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. 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. His breath was warm against her throat: "And I want to go back home to see some faces." Anyway, the thing that scared her was not the monstrous father of this child. The fearsome thing was the decision that she had made a few minutes ago, in the unused hospital room on the seventh floor. "I don't know." He was silent a moment. "That's what's going to be interesting." Outside, he realized he hadn't paid for his juice and waffles. When he turned back to

the coffee shop, he saw, through one of the windows, an associate of Salk's picking up the check from his table..Although Thomas Vanadium was unconscious, perhaps even dead, and though both nailhead-gray eyes were closed, Junior knew those eyes were watching him, watching through the lids..Unable to continue Tehanu's story (because it hadn't happened yet) and foolishly assuming that the story of Ged and Tenar had reached its happily-ever-after, I gave the book a subtitle: "The Last Book of Earthsea.".Glancing at his wristwatch with alarm, Edom bolted up from his chair. "Look at the time! Agnes gave me a lot to do, and here I am rattling on about earthquakes and cyclones.".He shouldered past two counter waitresses, past the short-order cook who was working eggs and burgers and bacon on the open griddle and grill. Whatever expression wrenched Junior's face, it must have been intimidating, for without protest but with walleyed alarm, the employees squeezed aside to let him pass.. "Holding fast to the boy's right foot, Jacob observed that one elevator might descend safely but that if they took two, one or the other was certain..to crash to the bottom of the shaft, considering the unreliability of all machinery made by man..Junior flung back the covers and came to his feet, but his knees proved weak, and he sat at once on the edge of the bed..The funeral was at two o'clock, after which family and friends of the deceased would gather here in the parsonage for a social, to break bread together and to share their memories of the loved one lost.. "Ah, evidently you can read my mind. Scarier than heart reading any day. Maybe there's a thin line between minister's daughter and witch.. ".As if he'd been presented with many previous photos under these circumstances, Jonas Salk accepted the picture. "Your daughter?".The traffic light turned green. Now onward home. Rolex recovered and bright upon his wrist, Junior Cain drove his Mercedes with a restraint that required more self-control than he had realized he could tap, even with the guidance of Zedd.. "I can't.. ".From the devil to the sacred and then beyond, Junior drove north on State Highway 160, which was proudly marked as a scenic route, although in these predawn hours, all lay bleak and black. Following the serpentine course of the Sacramento River, Highway 160 wove past a handful of small, widely separated towns..He paid cash to the locksmith, and included in the payment were the two dimes and the nickel Vanadium had left on his nightstand..Under a sullen afternoon sky, in the winter-drab hills, the yellow-and-white station wagon was a bright arrow, drawn and fired not from a hunter's quiver but from that of a Samaritan..As nimble as a geriatric cat, crying out with pain, Junior nevertheless sprang onto the deep windowsill and shoved against the twin panes of the window. They were already partly open-but they were also stuck. Crouched on the deep sill, pushing against the parted casement panes of the tall French window, using not just muscle but the entire weight of his body, leaning into them, the maniac tried to force his way out of the bedroom..Now, trouble. Different from what he'd experienced before but just as powerful and terrifying. He didn't need to regurgitate, but he desperately needed to evacuate..The enormous canopy of the oak didn't shelter the lawn beneath it. The leaves spooned the rain from the air, measuring it by the ounce, releasing it in thick drizzles instead of drop by drop..Even as this news pleased Junior, it also saddened him. He was not merely interring a lovely wife, but also his first child. He was burying his family..He hurt too much to recover quickly and take advantage of the woman's brief vulnerability. Clambering to his feet, he backed away from her and fumbled in a pocket for spare cartridges.. "Yes. Sodium chloride will work, too. Common salt. Mix enough of it with water, and it's generally effective.. ".In his mind's eye, he saw the answering machine with uncanny clarity. That curious gadget. Sitting atop the scarred pine desk..Earlier, after sprinting down the fire road, he had been breathing hard when he reached his Chevy, and by the time that he'd raced to Spruce Hills, the nearest town, he had spiraled down into this strange condition. His driving became so erratic that a black-and-white had tried to pull him over, but by then he was a block from a hospital, and he didn't stop until he got there, taking the entry drive too sharply, jolting across the curb, nearly slamming into a parked car, sliding to a stop in a no-parking zone at the emergency entrance, lurching like a drunkard as he got out of the Chevy, screaming at the cop to get an ambulance..Bartholomew's genius might have been intimidating, even off-putting, if he'd not been as much child as child genius. Likewise, he would have been wearisome if impressed by his own gifts..After moving all of a hundred feet, Celestina and Wally-with Grace fretting that someone would be hurt-had torn down the high stave fence between properties, for theirs had become one family with many names: Lampion, White, Lipscomb, Isaacson. When backyards were joined and a connecting walkway poured, Barty's travels from house to house were greatly simplified, and regular visits by the Gonzalez, Damascus, and Vanadium branches of the clan were also facilitated..Either Obadiah intuited Agnes's fear or he was motivated by her kindness to reveal his method, after all. "I'm embarrassed to say what you saw wasn't real magician's work. Crude deception. I chose the ace of diamonds exactly because it represents wealth in fortune-telling, so it's a positive card that people respond well to. The ace with your boy's name was prepared beforehand, inserted face up toward the bottom of the deck, so a middle cut wouldn't reveal it.. ".their work, tears were followed by reminiscences that brought a smile and soothed, and hope was always found to be the flower that bloomed from every seed of hopelessness..With only a faint twinge of sentimental longing, he drove away from the house that had been his and Naomi's love nest for fourteen blissful months.. "Thank you, Nurse Bressler," he said most solemnly, matching her tone, barely able to control the urge to glance at her, smile, and give her another preview of his quick, pink tongue..A SEVERE THIRST INDICATED to Agnes that she wasn't dead. There would be no thirst in paradise.. "That would be wrong. A diary's private.. ".He supposed that to a detective nothing was sacred, but he was nonetheless a little shocked that Vanadium needed to ask that question..Still seeking some missing fact, some insight that would help him understand the maniac's Bartholomew obsession, Tom asked more questions until Celestina suddenly realized and revealed what might be the information that he sought: Cain's perverse insistence on playing the reverend's taped rough draft of "This Momentous Day" throughout his long assault on her sister..Yet, with no recollection of rising from his chair, he found that he had shouldered his backpack and crossed the room. The three men looked up expectantly..Outside, Celestina took Angel's hand as they descended the front steps to the street..The

reverend made the first toast, speaking so softly that his tremulous words seemed to bloom in Celestina's mind and heart rather than to fall upon her ears. "To gentle Phimie, who is with God." 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..Holding on to the jamb with one hand, Barty leaned across the threshold, listening to the day. Birds. Softly rustling leaves. Nobody on the porch. Even trying hard to be quiet, people always made some little noise..Short and slender, Dr. Chan was as self-effacing as a Buddhist monk, as confident and as gracious as a mandarin emperor. His manner was serene, and his effect was tranquility..Having arrived at this same astonishing but nonetheless obvious conclusion, Harrison said, "Someone has to've been hurt." He hurried out of the kitchen, through the dining room, with Paul close behind him.."Wait," said Deed, holding out one hand either beseechingly or to block the door..Raised by a father to whom any form of amusement was blasphemy, Agnes had never seen a magician perform until she was nineteen, when Joey Champion, then her suitor, had taken her to a stage show. Rabbits plucked out of top hats, doves conjured from sudden plumes of smoke, assistants sawn in half and mended to walk again; every illusion that had been old even in Houdini's time was a jaw-dropping amazement to her that evening. Now she remembered a trick in which the magician had poured a pitcher of milk into a funnel fashioned from a few pages of a newspaper, causing the milk to vanish when the funnel, still dry, was unrolled to reveal ordinary newsprint. The thrill that had quivered through her that evening measured I on the Richter scale compared to the full 10-point sense of wonder quaking through her at the sight of Barty as dry as if he'd spent the afternoon perched fireside..Initially, the Pacific could not be seen beyond an opaque lens of fog, Yet later, when the mist retreated, the sea itself became a portent of sightlessness: Spread flat and colorless in the morning light, the glassy water reminded her of the depthless eyes of the blind, of that terrible sad vacancy where vision is denied..Hope was the handmaid to Agnes's faith. She always held fast to the belief that the future would be bright, but right now she was hesitant to test that optimism even with a harmless card reading. Yet, as with the fifth place setting, she was reluctant to object..Suddenly remembering the doctor's assurance to Neddy that they would be out of this building by week's end, Celestina said, "But we've nowhere to go.."proud," she said, smiling as she quoted one of their father's most familiar sermons, "nor powerful-".He hesitated, because until the limited explanations he'd made to Celestina in San Francisco, he had never discussed his special perception with anyone except two priest counselors in the seminary. At first he felt uneasy, talking of these matters to strangers-as if he were making a confession to laity who held no authority to provide absolution but as he spoke to this hushed and intense gathering, his doubts fell away, and revelation seemed as natural as talk of the weather..Agnes supposed Jacob trembled in anticipation of the crash of an airliner or at least a light aircraft. Edom might be calculating the odds that this serene place-at this specific hour-would be the impact point for one of those planet-killing asteroids that reputedly wiped most life off the earth every few hundred thousand years or so..All right, yes, it had tiny hands and tiny feet, rather than hooked talons and cloven."I'm not. I'm just going to be the conscience that Enoch Cain seems to have been born without."Occasionally he woke in the night and heard himself murmuring the mantra aloud, which apparently he had been repeating ceaselessly in his sleep. "Find the father, kill the son." In April, Junior discovered three Bartholomews. Investigating these targets, prepared to commit homicide, he learned that none had a son named Bartholomew or had ever adopted a child..As though he were home to a species of termites that preferred the taste of men to that of wood, Vanadium felt a squirming in his marrow..Because he kept imagining the stealthy sounds of a dead cop rising in vengeance behind him, Junior switched on the radio. He tuned in a station featuring a Top 40 countdown.."That's enough?" "Silly man." "Cain looks like a movie star." "Does he have nice teeth?" she asked. "They're good. Not perfect." "So kiss me, Mr. Perfect."His profession was cocktail piano, though he didn't have to earn a living at it. He had inherited a fine four-story house in a good neighborhood of San Francisco and also a sufficient income from a trust fund to meet his needs if he avoided extravagance. Nevertheless, he worked five evenings a week in an elegant lounge in one of the grand old hotels on Nob Hill, playing highly refined drinking songs for tourists, businessmen from out of town, affluent gay men who stubbornly continued to believe in romance in an age that valued flash over substance, and unmarried heterosexual couples who were working up a buzz to ensure that their rigorously planned adulteries would seem glamorous..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..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..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..In his apartment once more, enjoying a cognac and a handful of pistachios as Monday changed to Tuesday, he decided that he should make 'preparations for the possibility that he might one day leave incriminating evidence in spite of his precautions. He ought to convert a portion of his assets into easily portable and anonymous wealth, like gold coins and diamonds. Establishing two or three alternate identities, with documentation, also would be wise..He was about to lift the body out of the chair when he heard the car in the driveway. He might not have caught the sound of the engine so distinctly and so early if the stereo had not been in the process of changing albums..Junior actually raised his trembling left hand to his ear, expecting to find the quarter tugged in the auditory canal, held between the tragus and the antitragus, waiting to be plucked with a flourish..Not one day in anyone's life, so her father taught, is an uneventful day, no day without profound meaning, no matter how dull and boring it might seem, no

matter whether you are a seamstress or a queen, a shoeshine boy or a movie star, a renowned philosopher or a Downs syndrome child. Because in every day of your life, there are opportunities to perform little kindnesses for others, both by conscious acts of will and unconscious example. Each smallest act of kindness-even just words of hope when they are needed, the remembrance of a birthday, a compliment that engenders a smile-reverberates across great distances and spans of time, affecting lives unknown to the one whose generous spirit was the source of this good echo, because kindness is passed on and grows each time it's passed, until a simple courtesy becomes an act of selfless courage years later and far away. Likewise, each small meanness, each thoughtless expression of hatred, each envious and bitter act, regardless of how petty, can inspire others, and is therefore the seed that ultimately produces evil fruit, poisoning people whom you have never met and never will. All human lives are so profoundly and intricately entwined-those dead, those living, those generations yet to come-that the fate of all is the fate of each, and the hope of humanity rests in every heart and in every pair of hands. Therefore, after every failure, we are obliged to strive again for success, and when faced with the end of one thing, we must build something new and better in the ashes, just as from pain and grief, we must weave hope, for each of us is a thread critical to the strength-to the very survival-of the human tapestry. Every hour in every life contains such often-unrecognized potential to affect the world that the great days for which we, in our dissatisfaction, so often yearn are already with us; all great days and thrilling possibilities are combined always in this momentous day..Barty rounded the tree and returned to the porch. He climbed the steps and stood before Tom..the hilly streets of the city, ignoring all traffic lights and stop signs, pegging the speedometer needle at its highest mark, as though he might eventually be air-cooled by sufficient speed. He wanted to slam through unwary pedestrians, crack their bones, and send them tumbling..As yet, he hadn't taken either an antiemetic or antihistamine to ward off vomiting and hives, because he wanted to medicate -against those conditions as shortly before the violence as was practical, to ensure maximum protection. He'd intended to dose himself only after he followed Celestina home from the gallery and could be reasonably certain that he had located the lair of Bartholomew..Then he curled up in one of the big armchairs in the living room and began the book again. This was the first time he had ever reread a novel-and he finished it at midnight..Thanksgiving dinner was a fine affair, and Christmas was even better. On New Year's Eve, Wally downed one drink too many and more than once offered to perform surgery on any member of the family, free of charge "right here, right now," as long as the procedure was within his area of expertise..She protested that her ruined body had neither any comforts to offer a man nor the strength to be a bride..Celestina stared at the small, brown face, opening herself to the anger and hatred with which she had regarded this child in the operating room.. "Yes. In syrup form. It's a good item for your home medicine chest, in case your child ever swallows poison and you need to purge it from him quickly..". "That's obvious to us, but not always to others. Apparently, this would have been some years ago..". "Yes. More about that later, just let me make it clear that an interest in physics doesn't make me a physicist. Even if I were, I couldn't explain quantum mechanics in an hour or a year. Some say quantum theory is so weird that no one can fully understand all its implications. Some things proven in quantum experiments seem to defy common sense, and I'll lay out a few for you, just to give you the flavor. First, on the subatomic level, effect sometimes comes before cause. In other words, an event can happen before the reason for it ever occurs. Equally odd ... in an experiment with a human observer, subatomic particles behave differently from the way they behave when the experiment is unobserved while in progress and the results are examined only after the fact-which might suggest that human will, even subconsciously expressed, shapes reality."

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