

2019 PIGGY YEAR THE PLANNER

Junior hadn't paid attention to everyone who visited the pianist though surely he'd have noticed a certain stump in a cheap suit..Meanwhile, before they needed to plan the wedding, there was time for an orange soda and a root beer, and more of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde..Applying his intelligence now, he employed simple meditation techniques to calm himself and to slow his heartbeat. The cop was trying to rattle him into making a mistake, but calm men did not incriminate themselves.. "If you don't, your feeling gland isn't working. Want me to read you to sleep?" A deep-set casement window. Two latches on the right side, one high, one low. Detachable hand crank lying on the foot-deep sill. Mechanism socket in the base casing..He fiddled with the cylinder until it swung open. Five chambers, a gleaming cartridge in each..Although, to her eyes, the natural world had an ominous cast this morning, she was also aware of its great beauty. She wanted Barty to store up every magnificent vista, every exquisite detail.. "Each life," Barty Lampion said, "is like our oak tree in the backyard but lots bigger. One trunk to start with, and then all the branches, millions of branches, and every branch is the same life going in a new direction." Yes, she did, she had one, but not much of one, and compared to the McIntosh in Google's throat, this was just a bitty crab apple, easy to overlook, not excessive for a woman.. "No pie!" Agnes agreed. She parenthesized his head with her hands and punctuated his sweet face with kisses..Concerned that Junior's crying jag would trigger spasms of the abdominal muscles and ultimately another attack of hemorrhagic vomiting, the nurse had with her a tranquilizer. She wanted him to use the apple juice to wash down the pill..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.. "Sure. There's lots of places where he didn't get shot, but there's places where he got shot and died, too." His artificial eyes were almost a month old. He'd been through surgery to have the eye-moving muscles attached to the conjunctiva, and everybody told him that the look and movement were absolutely real. In fact, they had told him this so often, in the first week or two, that he became suspicious and figured that his new eyes were totally out of control and spinning like pinwheels.. "Honey," Angel said to her daughter, "show us that game you were just playing with Koko. Show us, honey. Come on. Show us. Show us." "Yours is a harder job than mine," Lipscomb told Grace, dandling Angel as he spoke. "I have no doubt of that." LEFT HAND ON the banister, right hand with knife tucked close to his side and ready to thrust, Tom Vanadium climbed cautiously but quickly to the upper floor, glancing back twice to be sure that Cain didn't slip in behind him..By the time they reached the seventh painting, alcohol and rich French cuisine and Jack Lientery's powerful art combined to devastate Frieda. She shuddered, leaned with one hand on a canvas, hung her head, and committed an act of bad PR..Munching an Almond Joy, Junior returned to the phone book, with no choice but to find Bartholomew the hard way..Even above the piston-knock of her heart and the bellows-wheeze of her breath, Celestina heard wood crack, a small pane of glass explode, and metal torque with a squeal. The creep was going to get away..Junior wanted to kill her. Kill him. Whatever. But he sensed that Renee knew more than a little about dirty fighting and that the outcome of a violent confrontation would not be easy to predict..In his voice, he heard a tremor that had nothing to do with the hideous deaths in Effingham more than sixteen years previous..Junior suspected that no one other than this man's mother called him Tom. He was probably "Detective" to some and "Vanadium" to most who knew him.. "I'm not sure which is more unusual-the site of the eruption, the number of boils, or the size of them." A cheer went up from family and friends, and Agnes could only imagine what it must feel like to be Barty, both blind and blessed, his heart as rich in courage as in kindness..Maybes were for babies, but Caesar Zedd had failed to provide a profundity with which Junior could ward off the what-ifs as easily as the maybes..His severed toe lay across the room, on the white tile floor. It stuck up stiffly, nail gleaming, as if the floor were snow and the toe were the only exposed extremity of a body buried in a drift..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..They were married in September of that year, much later than even Grace White's wager date. As Grace's guess had been closer than her daughter's, however, Celestina paid with a month of kitchen duty..The two men introduced themselves. The physician was Dr. Jim Parkhurst. His manner was easy and affable, and his soothing voice, either by nature or by calculation, was as healing as balm.. "It's partly that," she agreed. "But originally, Daddy wanted Phimie to tell, so the man could be charged and prosecuted. Though he's a good Baptist, Daddy isn't without a thirst for vengeance." He would have liked to take Industrial Woman, as well, but she weighed a quarter ton. He couldn't manage her alone, and he dared not hire a day worker, not even an illegal alien, to assist him, and thereby compromise the Pinchbeck van and identity..On Joey's side, there was no family to provide help. His mother had died of leukemia when he was four. His dad, fond of beer and brawling--like father not like son--was killed in a bar fight five years later. Without close relatives willing to take him in, Joey went to an orphanage. At nine he wasn't prime adoption material--babies were what was wanted--and he'd been raised in the institution..She knew that the front door was locked, too, because Wally had waited to hear the deadbolts clack shut. Nevertheless, she stepped into the hall, where the light wasn't on, walked quickly past Angel's bedroom, came to the entrance to the lamplit living room--and saw a man backing through the open front door, dragging something, dragging a dark and large and heavy rumpled something, dragging a..On the afternoon of November ninth, when Paul and Barty were with her, reminiscing, and Angel was in the kitchen, getting drinks for them, his mother gasped and stiffened. Breathless, she paled past chalk, and when she could breathe and speak again, she said, "Get Angel now. No time to bring the others." The physician saw the look and understood it. A blush pinked his long, pale face.

"Celestina, you're quite beautiful, and I'm sure you've learned to be wary of men, but I swear that my intentions are entirely honorable." If the aftermath of his encounter with Vanadium had not been so messy, Junior might have paused for dinner before wrapping up his work here. The walk back from Quarry Lake had taken almost two hours, in part because he had ducked out of sight in the trees and brush each time that he heard traffic approaching. He was famished. Regardless of how well-prepared the food, however, ambience was a significant factor in the enjoyment of any meal, and bloodstained decor was not, in his view, conducive to fine dining. Junior had made a mistake when he smashed the pewter stick into Vanadium's face after the cop was already unconscious. He should have bound the bastard and attempted to revive him for interrogation. "Retinoblastoma is usually unilateral," Dr. Chan continued, "occurring in one eye. Bartholomew has tumors in both." The way one does research into nonexistent history is to tell the story and find out what happened. I believe this isn't very different from what historians of the so-called real world do. Even if we are present at some historic event, do we comprehend it-can we even remember it-until we can tell it as a story? And for events in times or places outside our own experience, we have nothing to go on but the stories other people tell us. Past events exist, after all, only in memory, which is a form of imagination. The event is real now, but once it's then, its continuing reality is entirely up to us, dependent on our energy and honesty. If we let it drop from memory, only imagination can restore the least glimmer of it. If we lie about the past, forcing it to tell a story we want it to tell, to mean what we want it to mean, it loses its reality, becomes a fake. To bring the past along with us through time in the hold-alls of myth and history is a heavy undertaking; but as Lao Tzu says, wise people march along with the baggage wagons. Perhaps a lot of suspects were rattled and ultimately unnerved by this behavior. Junior wouldn't be easily trapped. He was smart. When people didn't apply themselves to positive goals, to making better lives for themselves, they spent their energy in wickedness. Then, either operating on first-aid knowledge of his own or responding to an instruction from the medic, the cop slipped a foam pillow under Agnes's head. "Just now." Although Angel tried to sound nonchalant, she was trembling. "I'm not sure I can do it again." PERRI'S POLIO-WHITTLED body did not test the strength of her pallbearers. The minister prayed for her soul, her friends mourned her loss, and the earth received her. His previous plan to create a tableau-butter on the floor, open oven door-to portray Victoria's death as an accident was no longer adequate. A new strategy was required. Indeed, Junior suspected that they might be here at Vanadium's urging. The cop would be interested in determining how avaricious the mourning husband would prove to be when presented with the opportunity to turn his wife's cold flesh into cash. "Does my dad like Christmas?" Barty asked, sitting on the grave grass in front of the headstone. A cause now apparent, the fear explained, Agnes held her baby more tightly. So new to the world, he seemed already to be slipping away from her, captured by the whirlpool of a demanding destiny. Almost thirty years from the seminary--even farther from it if measured by degrees of lost innocence, by miles of rough experience Tom Vanadium set out to kill a man. Given the chance to disarm Cain, given the opportunity to merely wound him, he would nevertheless go for the head shot or the heart shot, play jury and executioner, play God, and leave to God the judgment of his stained soul. At last he said, "And there he is, hands in front of his face, quarters bouncing off him, these kids and this old lady scrambling around him to snare some change." In July, she went for a walk on the shore with Paul Damascus, expecting to do a little beachcombing, to watch the comical scurrying crabs. Somewhere between the seashells and the crustaceans, however, he asked her if she could ever love him. Wednesday, with a swiftness that confirmed its eagerness to make a deal, the state supplied records on the fire tower. For five years, a significant portion of the maintenance funds had been diverted by bureaucrats to other uses. And for three years, the responsible maintenance supervisor filed an annual report on this specific tower, requesting immediate funds for fundamental reconstruction; the third of these documents, submitted eleven months prior to Naomi's fall, was composed in crisis language and stamped urgent. Victoria Bressler lay on the floor of the small foyer, left arm extended past her head, palm revealed, as though she were waving at the ceiling, right arm across her body in such a way that her hand cupped her left breast. One leg was extended straight, the other knee drawn up almost demurely. If she had been nude, lying against a backdrop of rumpled sheets or autumn leaves, or meadow grass, she would have had the perfect posture for a Playboy centerfold. Meanwhile, she could offer him only a few pieces of ice, which he was forbidden to chew. "Let them melt in your mouth." nonetheless. The rapist's curse. Healthy, but healthy at the expense of Phimie. "You look very, very handsome this morning, Mr. Barty," squeaked Pixie Lee, who was something of a flirt. "You look like a big movie star." "Most tornadoes stay on the ground twenty miles or less," Edom explained, "but this one kept its funnel to the earth for two hundred nineteen miles! And it was one mile wide. Everything in its path--torn, smashed to bits. Houses, factories, churches, schools--all pulverized. Murphysboro, Illinois, was wiped off the map, erased, hundreds killed in that one town." Agnes was grateful for the speed with which these arrangements were made, but she was also disturbed. Chan's expeditious management of Barty's case resulted in part from his friendship with Joshua, but an urgency arose, as well, during his examination of the boy, from a suspicion that he remained reluctant to put into words. Dr. Morley Schurr, the oncologist, who had offices in a building near Hoag Hospital, proved to be tall and portly, although otherwise much like Franklin Chan: kind, calm, and confident. 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." Quick introductions were made in the process of moving from the porch to the foyer, and Agnes said, "Come on back to the kitchen, I'm baking pies." AFTER THE ENCOUNTER with the quarter-spitting vending machines, Junior wanted to kill another Bartholomew, any Bartholomew, even if he had to drive to some far suburb like Terra Linda to do it, even if he had to drive farther and stay overnight in a Holiday ay Inn an eat steam-table food off a buffet crawling with

other diners' cold germs and garnished with their loose hairs..The family didn't exist in anticipation of developments with Barty and Angel, didn't put the pair at the center of their world. Instead, they did the good work, shared the satisfactions that came daily with being part of Pie Lady Services, and got on with life..The following day, Wednesday, December 27, his mother drove him to the library, where he checked out two Heinlein titles recommended by the librarian: Red Planet and The Rolling Stones. Judging by his excitement, on the way home in the car, his response to previous mystery-novel series had been a pleasant courtship, whereas this was desperate, undying love..With her brothers, she adjourned to the waiting room, where the three of them sat drinking vending-machine coffee, black, from paper cups..He rolled his head back and forth on the pillow. "Nope. It's still just something you gotta feel."..All the way back to the ridge, sitting up front beside a county deputy in a police cruiser, with an ambulance and other patrol cars racing close behind them, Junior had shaken uncontrollably. When he tried to respond to the officer's questions, his uncharacteristically thin voice cracked more often than not, and he was able to croak only, "Jesus, dear Jesus," over and over..that he could not entirely analyze. Any amateur magician-indeed, anyone willing to practice enough hours, magician or not-could master this trick. It was mere skill, not sorcery. "What was your motive, Enoch?".Only Angel spoke, with nary a catch or quiver, fully confident in her Barty. "Anything he can teach me, I can learn, and anything I can see, he can know. Anything, Aunt Aggie."..She asked Edom to stay in the main house, so Barty wouldn't be alone while she visited Maria Gonzalez for an hour or two. He was pleased to oblige, settling down to watch a television documentary about volcanoes, which promised to include stories about the 1902 eruption of Mont Pelee, on Martinique, which killed 28,000 people within minutes, and other disasters of colossal proportions..From her reading, she knew that amniotic fluid should be clear. A few traces of blood in it should not necessarily be alarming, but here were more than traces. Here were thick red-black streams..Piano music drifted into the restaurant from the adjacent bar, so soft and yet sprightly that it made the clink of silverware seem like music, too..Filled with the songs of swallows that evidently preferred these precincts to the more famous address of San Juan Capistrano, this mild March morning was perfect for pie deliveries. Agnes and Grace had produced a bakery's worth of glorious vanilla-almond pies and coffee toffee pies..Walking was part of a fitness regimen that he took seriously. He would never be called upon to save the world, like the pulp heroes in the tales he enjoyed; however, he had solemn responsibilities he was determined to meet, and to do so, he must maintain good health..In the sermon that brought him a moment of fame that he'd found more uncomfortable than not, Daddy had used the life of Bartholomew to illustrate his point that every day in every life is of the most profound importance. Bartholomew is arguably the most obscure of the twelve disciples. Some would say Lebbeaus is less known, some might even point to Thomas the doubter. But Bartholomew certainly casts a shadow far shorter than those of Peter, Matthew, James, John, and Philip. Daddy's purpose in proclaiming Bartholomew the most obscure of the twelve was then to imagine in vivid detail how that apostle's actions, seemingly of little consequence at the time, had resonated down through history, through hundreds of millions of lives-and then to assert that the life of each chambermaid listening to this sermon, the life of each car mechanic, each teacher, each truck driver, each waitress, each doctor, each janitor, was as important as the resonant life of Bartholomew, although each dwelt beyond the lamp of fame and labored without the applause of multitudes..Junior must have shouted shut up more than he realized, because the neighbors began to pound on the wall to silence him..MONEY FOR THE DEAD. The decomposing flesh of a beloved wife and an unborn baby transmuted into a fortune was an achievement that put to shame the alchemists' dreams of turning lead to gold.."As she comes closer to full term," said Dairies, "she's at great risk of preeclampsia developing into full eclampsia."..From his first birthday to his third, Barty made worthless all the child-care and child-development books that a first-time mother relied on to know what to expect of her offspring, and when. Barty grew and coped and learned according to his own clock..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..He's an attorney, and this grieving husband comes to him with a big liability case. There's money to be made."..On Christmas Eve, 1996, the family gathered in the middle of the three houses for dinner. The living-room furniture had been moved aside to the walls, and three tables had been set end to end, the length of the room, to accommodate everyone..He traveled prairies and mountains and valleys, passed fields rich in every imaginable crop, crossed great forests and wide rivers. He walked in fierce storms when thunder crushed the sky and lightning tore it, walked in wind that skinned the bare earth and sheared green tresses from trees, and walked also in sun-scrubbed days as blue and clean as ever there had been in Eden..could not be a person of the best intentions. Doctors and nurses wouldn't monitor their patients with the lights off..The second time, armed with the previously calculated fact that each regular year contains 3,153,600 seconds, and that a leap year contains an additional 86,400, she vetted Barty's answer in only four minutes. Thereafter, she accepted his numbers without verification..Throughout the evening, Barty and Angel-sitting side by side and across the table from Paul-listened to the adults at times and occasionally joined in the larger conversation, but primarily they talked between themselves. When the kids' heads weren't together conspiratorially, Paul could hear their chatter, and depending on what else was being discussed around the table, he sometimes tuned in to it. He picked up on the word rhinoceros, tuned in, tuned out, but a couple minutes later, he dialed back in when he realized that Celestina, sitting two places farther along the table from him, had risen from her chair and was staring in amazement at the kids..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." Behind the dog, Mary walked out of nowhere, ball in hand, and Koko whirled in surprise, and the chase was on again. The kitchen door stood open and full of light, but he missed it by two feet. He felt along the back wall of the house, discovered the door casing and then the opening, probed with the cane for the threshold, and stepped into the doorway. "The princess is correct," he acknowledged, revealing that this hand was still empty. Then he reached to the girl and plucked the quarter from her ear. "Sometimes it's sad here, Mommy. But it's not sad every place you are. Lots of places, Daddy's with you and me, and we're happier, and everything's okay." She realized she hadn't turned on the radio. Before she could reach for the switch, she was asleep. The barren white walls, the stark furniture starkly arranged, the rigorous exclusion of bric-a-brac and mementos: this resulted in the closest thing to a true monastic cell to be found outside of a monastery. The only quality of the apartment that identified it as a secular residence was its comfortable size, and if Industrial Woman had been replaced with a crucifix, even size might have been insufficient to rule out residence by some fortunate friar. In the Fairmont coffee shop, Junior ordered french fries, a cheeseburger, and cole slaw. He requested that the burger be served cooked but unassembled: the halves of the bun turned face up, the meat pattie positioned separately on the plate, one slice each of tomato and onion arranged beside the pattie, and the slice of unmelted cheese on a separate dish. She. Heretofore, Celestina hadn't given a thought to the gender of the baby, because, to her, it had been less a person than a thing. He managed to hold the towel around his foot, but it grew dark red and disgustingly mushy. Celebration of course, would lead to incarceration and perhaps to electrocution. With Vanadium, the maniac cop, likely to be found lurking under the bed or masquerading as a nurse to catch him in an unguarded moment, Junior had to recover at a pace that his physician would not find miraculous. Dr. Parkhurst expected to discharge him no sooner than the following morning. On a morning in July, Junior was visiting the public library, poring through the stacks in search of exotic volumes on the occult, when the phantom voice rose nearby. Here, the singing sounded softer than in his apartment, little more than a murmur, and also threadier. 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. She got a can of soda, returned to the table, and sat down as if finished with her explorations. "You're okay, Barty." If magic explained the jacks on Friday evening, maybe it was the dark variety of magic. Maybe he shouldn't be endeavoring to summon, once more, whatever spirit was responsible for the four knives. "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?" As always, curious about how others lived-or, in this case, bad lived-Junior explored the house, poking in drawers and closets. For a widower, Bartholomew Prosser was neat and well-organized. Amused, Wally said, "You artists do love to dramatize-or have I forgotten the San Francisco blizzard of '65?" pending storm gathered as if called forth by a curse cooked up from eye of newt, toe of frog, wool of bat, and tongue of dog. From Joey's closet, she extracted an old blue blazer that he seldom wore anymore. The lining was sagging, worn. Dusk had arrived, strangling the day, and the throttled sky hung low, as blue-black as bruises. The streetlights had come on. Gouts of red light from pulsing emergency beacons alchemized the rain from teardrops into showers of blood. Agnes invited everyone to stay for dinner. The pies were no sooner finished than large cook pots, saucepans, colanders, and other heavy artillery were requisitioned from the Lampion culinary arsenal. This venerable old building, as solidly constructed as a castle, was well-insulated; noises in other apartments rarely penetrated to Junior's. Never before had he heard a neighbor's voice distinctly enough to comprehend the words spoken-or, in this case, sung. 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." "Well," Tom said, "those people who think it's just a trick generally react bigger than you folks, and you know it's real." From out of the fog and darkness came the slap of running feet on bricks. He was sprinting toward the back of the house. A quick review of these book spines revealed that the treasured Zedd collection wasn't here. Angel, on the window seat, wore nothing but white. White sneakers and socks. White pants. White T-shirt. Two white bows in her hair. Chastened by these recent events, he vowed to stop meditating, to void all passive responses to the challenges of life. He must explore the unknown rather than flinch from it in fear. Besides, through his explorations, he would prove that the unknown was all just tapioca or applesauce, or whatever. In the Suburban with Wally and Grace, as they waited to hit the trail, Celestina said, "He took her to a movie again, Tuesday night." Rico, her own husband-a drunkard and a gambler-had run off with another woman, abandoning Maria and their two small daughters. No doubt, he had departed in a spotlessly clean, sharply pressed, perfectly mended ensemble. Laying the gun on the newspaper, he dropped into the chair. He picked up his coffee. The search of the house had been conducted with such urgency that the java was still pleasantly hot. Inexplicably, each repetition of Bartholomew heightened Junior's anxiety. The name resonated not just in his ear, but in his blood and bones, in body and mind, as if he were a great bronze bell and Bartholomew the clapper. 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. She didn't have an appetite, anyway. Joey was too much on her mind. The safe birth of a healthy child was a blessing, but it wasn't compensation for her loss. Although by nature resistant to depression, she now had a darkness in her heart that would not relent before a thousand dawns or ten thousand. If a mere nurse had insisted that she eat, Agnes would not have been persuaded, but she couldn't hold out against the insistent importuning of one special

seamstress..The rain was colder than it had been earlier, almost as icy as sleet. Or perhaps she was far hotter than before and felt the chill more keenly on her fevered skin. Each droplet seemed to hiss against her face, to sizzle against her hands, with which she tightly gripped her swollen abdomen as if she could deny Death the baby that it had come to collect..Beseechingly, with no intention of intimacy, he took Celestina's hands in his. "For years, as an obstetrician, I brought life into the world, but I didn't know what life was, didn't grasp the meaning of it, that it even had meaning. Before Rowena, Harry, and Danny went down in that airplane, I was already ... empty. After losing them, I was worse than empty. Celestina, I was dead inside. Phimie gave me hope. I can't repay her, but I can do something for her daughter and for you, if you'll let me."..She was four years older than Phimie. They hadn't i;.mn a great deal of each other during the past three years, since Celestina had come to San Francisco. Although distance and time, the press of her studies, and the busyness of daily life had not made her forget that she loved Phimie, she had forgotten the purity and the power of love. Rediscovering it now, she was shaken so badly that she had to pull a chair to the side of the bed and sit down..Requital. Restitutional apology, which must have been learned in a law school where English was the second language. Even atonement... Heart jumping like the heart of a fox-stalked rabbit, she ran from the driveway into the yard. She would have cried out if her throat hadn't seized up with terror at the sight of her boy at neck-breaking height. By the time she could speak, she realized that a shout, or even the unexpected sound of her plaintive voice, might unnerve him, cause him to misstep, and bring him caroming down, limb to limb, in a bone snapping plunge..Harrison and Grace had welcomed him in spite of the fact that a friend and parishioner had died on Thursday, leaving them both bereft and with church obligations..Although their apartments were above the garage, back to back, each was served by a separate exterior staircase. As often as either man entered the other's domain, they might as well have lived hundreds of miles apart.

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