

SIMPLIFIED SPELLING BULLETIN 1909 VOL 1

"Fourteen. It's usually the family that's behind an expression of the calling at such a young age, but in my case, I had to argue my folks into it." Holding his precious face between her hands, she kissed him. She met his gaze, and furiously she blinked away her tears, for she wanted to be clear-sighted, to be looking into his eyes, to see him, the truest part of him in there beyond his eyes, until that very last moment when she could not have him anymore.. "Paul," she said, "you've got a lovely house, but Celestina and Grace are doers. They need to keep occupied. They'll go stir-crazy if they don't stay busy. Am I right, ladies?". All right, yes, it had tiny hands and tiny feet, rather than hooked talons and cloven. Two high-quality deadbolt locks. Sufficient protection against the average intruder, but inadequate to keep out a self-improved man with channeled anger.. To prove himself, he read a little of Dickens when she requested it, a passage from Great Expectations. Then a passage from Twain.. The announcement poster seemed enormous, huge, far bigger than she remembered it, crazily-recklessly large. By its very size, it challenged critics to be cruel, dared the fates to celebrate her triumph by shaking the city to ruin right now, in the quake of the century. She wished Helen Greenbaum had opted, instead, for a few lines of type on an index card, taped to the glass.. Olive complexion, no less smooth than the skin of a calamata. Eyes as lustrous as pools shimmering with a reflection of eternity and stars.. Thrusting the red rose at her again, insistently pressing it against her hand to distract her, Junior swung the Merlot, and just as Sinatra sang the word sugar with a bounce, the bottle smacked Victoria in the center of her forehead.. "You did just fine, Tom, just fine," Agnes said in a consoling tone that she might have used with a boy whose performance, at a piano recital, had been earnest but undistinguished. "We were all quite impressed.".. The friendship, the work, and not least of all the sense of home and belonging that everyone felt within minutes of crossing Agnes's threshold-these things appealed to Celestina and Grace. But they didn't want Paul to feel that his hospitality was unappreciated.. Eventually Junior crossed the room to stand before Industrial Woman in all her scrap-metal glory. Her soup-pot breasts reminded him of Frieda's equally abundant bosom, and unfortunately her mouth, open wide in a silent shriek, reminded him of Frieda retching.. "You'll do better away from the ships, all the fighting and raiding. The King working the old mines at Samory, round the mountain. There you'd be out of his way. Work for him you must, if you want to stay alive. I'll see that you're sent there. If you'll go.".. Sometimes, in his mind, Tom wasn't running along the residential streets of Bright Beach, but along the corridor of the dormitory wing over which he had served as prefect. He was cast back in time, to that dreadful night. A sound wakes him. A fragile cry. Thinking it a voice from his dream, he nevertheless gets out of bed, takes up a flashlight, and checks on his charges, his boys. Low-wattage emergency lamps barely relieve the gloom in the corridor. The rooms are dark, doors ajar according to the rules, to guard against the danger of stubborn locks in the event of fire. He listens. Nothing. Then into the first room-and into a Hell on earth. Two small boys per room, easily and silently overcome by a grown man with the strength of madness. In the sweep of the flashlight beam: the dead eyes, the wrenched faces, the blood. Another room, the flashlight jittering, jumping, and the carnage worse. Then in the hall again, movement in the shadows. Josef Krepp captured by the flashlight. Josef Krepp, the quiet custodian, meek by all appearances, employed at St. Anselmo's for the past six months with nary a problem, with only good employee reviews attached to his record. Josef Krepp, here in the corridor of the past, grinning and capering in the flashlight, wearing a dripping necklace of souvenirs.. He found it difficult to make a painful personal revelation sound sincere when delivered in a shout, but he managed well enough to bring a shine of tears to her eyes: "Part of my left foot was shot off in this upcountry sweep we did.".. Vanadium's smile, in that tragically fractured face, might have alarmed most people, but Kathleen found it appealing because of the indestructible spirit it revealed.. For a long time, she sat alone in the dark living room, in the armchair that had been Joey's favorite, thinking about many things but returning often to the memory of Barty's dry walk in wet weather.. After she flushed, Angel stood on a stepstool and washed her hands at the sink.. Perri had been crippled seventeen years before Jonas Salk's vaccine had spared future generations from the curse of polio.. "so she's married," Junior said, figuring that maybe Celestina wasn't his heart mate, after all.. Lientery's work met the criteria of great art, about which Junior had learned in art-appreciation courses. It undermined his sense of reality, left him wary, filled him with angst and with loathing for the human condition, and made him wish he hadn't just eaten dinner.. Celestina indicated to Tom that he should sit at the head of the table, facing Agnes at the foot. As Wally lowered himself into the empty chair to Tom's left, Celestina picked up two items from the sideboard and put them in front of Tom, before sitting to his right.. The vending machines were designed to accept quarters, not to eject them. They didn't make change. Mechanically, this barrage wasn't possible.. Antihypertensive drugs were administered intravenously, and Phimie was confined to bed, attached to a heart monitor.. "Salt water would be too cumbersome anyway. He'd have to drink a lot of it shortly before he heaved, but he was surrounded by cops with good reason to keep an eye on him. Does ipecac come in capsule form?". The problem was Celestina in the Buick, because when she saw what was happening, she might slide behind the steering wheel and speed away. The engine was running, white plumage rising from the tailpipe and feathering away in the fog, so she might escape if she was a quick thinker.. He pointed at his feet. "Toes, toes, toes, toes, toes, toes, toes, toes, toes, toes.".. Alone, Junior sat in the breakfast nook with a pot of coffee and an entire Sara Lee chocolate fudge cake.. Artificial eyes were on order. He would soon return to Newport Beach for a third fitting before implant. They weren't glass, as commonly believed, but thin plastic shells that fit neatly behind the eyelids in the cavities left after surgery. On the inner surface of the transparent artificial cornea, the artificial iris would be skillfully hand-painted, and movement of the ocular prosthesis could be achieved by attaching the eye-moving muscles to the conjunctiva.. Tammy--the stock analyst, broker, and

cat-food-eating feline fetishist-whom he had dated from Christmas of '65 through February of '66, had given him the timepiece in return for all the trading commissions and perfect sex that he had given her."I believe I'll just wait here until Mr. Cain wakes," Vanadium said. "I've nothing more pressing to do."Simon's a good man. Now that he pretty much knows Cain pushed the wife, he doesn't feel better about representing him just because the payoff was big. And in the current case, he's not Cain's lawyer, so there's no conflict of interest, no ethics problem, so he's got a chance to set things right a little."During those spells when she was too shaky to draw, she stood at the window, gazing at the storied city..body on the flight out of San Francisco. When finally her obligations were met, she..Although not quite as young as Baval Poriferan, this artist was equally adored by critics and widely regarded as a genius. He went by a single and mysterious name, Sklent, and in the publicity photo of him that was posted in the gallery, he looked dangerous..The sill was about four and a half feet off the lavatory floor. With both hands, Junior levered himself onto it..It was hard for him to lie. He thought he was awkward at it because he had no practice. Hound knew better. He knew that magic itself resists untruth. Conjuring, sleight of hand, and false commerce with the dead are counterfeits of magic, glass to the diamond, brass to the gold. They are fraud, and lies flourish in that soil. But the art of magic, though it may be used for false ends, deals with what is real, and the words it works with are the true words. So true wizards find it hard to lie about their art. In their heart they know that their lie, spoken, may change the world..Although Celestina felt a little paranoid, being so security-minded in this safe neighborhood, nevertheless she searched, out the master control button and engaged the power locks..To buy as much time as possible while Enoch Cain's assault was still fresh in Celestina's mind, Tom proposed that they remain hidden away for another two weeks, unless the killer was apprehended sooner. "Then if you go to Wally's house from here, you'll want to install the best alarm system you can get, and you should lead a restricted life for quite a while, even hire security if you can afford it. The smartest thing would be to move out of San Francisco as soon as Wally's recovered. He retired young, right? And a painter can paint anywhere. Sell the properties here, start over somewhere else, and make the move in such a way that you can't be easily traced. I can help you work that out."During the first year of her illness, she had been slowly weaned off an iron lung. Until she was seventeen, she required the chest respirator, but gradually gained the strength to breathe unassisted..The second and third rooms proved to be deserted, as well, and as muffled as the cushioned spaces of a funeral home, but an office was tucked discreetly at the back of the final chamber. As Junior crossed the third room, apparently monitored by closed-circuit security cameras, a man glided out of the office to greet him.."Sitters. Friends, relatives of friends. People I can trust. I can afford sitters if I'm getting only dinner tips."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..It wasn't as if this was Junior's first encounter with a dead body. In the past few years, he'd become as comfortable with the deceased as any mortician might be. They were as unremarkable to him as cupcakes were to a baker..We have inhabited both the actual and the imaginary realms for a long time. But we don't live in either place the way our parents or ancestors did. Enchantment alters with age, and with the age..Saturday morning, Paul made himself useful by assisting Grace with food preparation and by setting out the plates, flatware, and glasses on the dining-room sideboard..Snap, snap, snap! Three more quarters ricocheted off the left side of his face-temple, cheek, jaw.."There's a fine George and Ira Gershwin song called 'Someone to Watch Over Me.'Celestina screamed-"Here! In here!"--as she slapped the magazine into the butt of the pistol..The poster announced an upcoming show, titled "This Momentous Day," by the young artist calling herself Celestina White. Dates for the exhibition were Friday, January 12, through Saturday, January 27.."You know," Tom said when the second round of drinks arrived, "hard as it is to believe, some places never heard of martinis."If she'd connected with his left side, as she intended, she might have broken his arm or cracked a few ribs. But lie saw the chair coming, and as agile as a base runner dodging a shortstop's tag, he turned away from her, taking the blow across his back.."Chateau Le Bucks, 1886. We can have a bottle of that or you could buy a new car, and personally I believe thirst comes before transportation."That was all right, for she had done the same for Otter's elder sister, and so his parents sent him to her in the evenings. But she taught Otter more than the song of the Creation. She knew his gift. She and some men and women like her, people of no fame and some of questionable reputation, had all in some degree that gift; and they shared, in secret, what lore and craft they had. "A gift untaught is a ship unguided," they said to Otter, and they taught him all they knew. It wasn't much, but there were some beginnings of the great arts in it; and though he felt uneasy at deceiving his parents, he couldn't resist this knowledge, and the kindness and praise of his poor teachers. "It will do you no harm if you never use it for harm," they told him, and that was easy for him to promise them..Sheena Hackachak, at forty-four, was more beautiful than any current movie star. She looked twenty years younger than her true age, and she so resembled her late daughter that Junior felt a rush of erotic nostalgia at the sight of her.."You're heaven-sent," Grace assured Paul at breakfast Saturday morning. "With all your stories, you lifted our hearts when we most needed to be lifted."Agnes's suspicion that Barty would be a child prodigy had grown from seed to full fruit on the morning of the boy's first birthday, when he'd sat in his highchair, counting green-grape-and-apple pies. Through the following two years, ample proof of high intelligence and wondrous talents ripened Agnes's suspicion into conviction..Wally Lipscomb parked in his garage, switched off the engine, and started to get out of the Buick before he saw that Celestina had left her purse in the car..He was, admittedly, surprised that Nurse Bressler was strongly compelled to come on to him even though she had read his patient file and knew that he'd recently been a veritable geyser of noxious spew, that during the violent seizure in the ambulance, he had also lost control of bladder and bowels, and that he might at any moment suffer an explosive relapse. This was a remarkable

testament to the animal lust he inspired even without trying, to the powerful male magnetism that was as much a part of him as his thick blond hair..slow breaths, and then she pointed at the windshield. "The hospital's that way."..Already, he was up two hours past his bedtime. In recent months, he'd exhibited the more erratic sleeping habits of older children. Some nights, he seemed to possess the circadian rhythms of owls and bats; after being sluggish all day, he suddenly became alert and energetic at dusk wanting to read long past midnight..His apartment, over the large garage, was reached by a set of exterior stairs. The space was divided into two rooms. The first was a combination living room and kitchenette, with a corner dining table seating two. Beyond was a small bedroom with adjoining bath..Later, after they finished eating but were still sitting at the table over coffee, the conversation turned solemn, although for the moment, the subject wasn't the late Harrison White. How long the two women and the girl must hide out, when and where they would be able to resume lives as normal as might still be possible for them: These were the issues of the moment..Sapphires and emeralds, dazzling gems set in clearest white, ebony pupils at the center. Beautiful mysteries, these eyes, but no different now than they had ever been, as far as she could tell..Angel didn't join the grieving women, but sat on the floor in front of the television, switching back and forth between Gunsmoke and The Monkees. Too young to be genuinely involved in either show, nevertheless she occasionally made gunfire sounds when Marshal Dillon went into battle or invented her own lyrics to sing along with the Monkees..Some acts were distasteful, too, such as searching the lunatic lawman for his car keys and his badge..Babies of unwed mothers-especially of dead unwed mothers, and especially of dead unwed mothers whose fathers were ministers unable to endure public mortification-were routinely put up for adoption. Since Seraphim had given birth here, the baby would be-no doubt already had been-adopted by a San Francisco-area family..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..Soon he realized this was a mistaken assumption, because when the instructor began trying to unknot him from his lotus position, a defensive numbness deserted Junior, and he became aware of pain. Excruciating..These kids were the same age, yet listening to them was akin to hearing Angel do her charming shtick with an adult who had a lot of patience, a sense of humor, and an awareness of generational ironies..For a while, Celestina had worried that the girl was slower to walk than other children, slower to talk, and slower to develop her vocabulary, even though Celestina read aloud to her from storybooks every day. Then, during the past six months, Angel had caught up in a rush though she traveled a road somewhat different from what the childrearing books described. Her first word was mama, which was fairly standard, but her second was blue, which for a while came out "boo." At three, an average child would be doing exceptionally well to identify four colors; Angel could name eleven, including black and white, because she was able routinely to differentiate pink from red, and purple from blue..Tom opened his empty hands and then filled one of them with his water glass. The rattling ice belied his calm face..According to the newspapers, the police also credited him with the murders of Naomi, Victoria Bressler, and Ned Gnathic (whom they had connected to Celestina). He was wanted, too, for the attempted murder of Dr. Walter Lipscomb (evidently Ichabod), for the attempted murder of Grace White, and for assault with intent to kill Celestina White and her daughter, Angel, and for the assault on Lenora Kickmule (whose foxtail-bedecked Pontiac he had stolen in Eugene, Oregon)..Maria, however, lived comfortably with both the Catholicism and the occultism in which she had been raised. In Hermosillo, Mexico, the latter had been nearly as important to the spiritual life of her family as had been the former..The moonlight had faded and the gentle waves had ebbed out of his mind's eye. He concentrated, trying to force the phantom sea to flow back into view, but this was one of those rare occasions when a Zedd technique failed him".He clenched the steering wheel tightly with both hands, clenched his teeth so fiercely that his jaw muscles bulged and twitched, and clenched his mind around a stubborn determination to get control of himself. Slow deep breaths. Positive thoughts..Already the fortune foretold, which she had strived to dismiss as a game with no consequences, was coming true..Edom and Jacob arrived, dinner was served, and while the food was wonderful, the conversation was better-even though the twins occasionally shared their vast knowledge of train wrecks and deadly volcanic eruptions. Paul didn't contribute much to the talk, because he preferred to bask in it. If he hadn't known any of these people, if he had walked into the room while they were in the middle of dinner, he would have thought they were family, because the warmth and the intimacy-and in the twins' case, the eccentricity-of the conversation were not what he expected of such newly made friends. There was no pretense, no falsity, and no avoidance of any awkward subject, which meant there were sometimes tears, because the death of Reverend White was such a fresh wound in the hearts of those who loved him. But in the healing ways of women that remained mysterious to Paul even as he watched them do.Yet his curious attraction to these newborns kept him at the window, and he began to believe that unconsciously he had intended to come here from the moment he guided his walker out of his room. He'd been compelled to come. Drawn by some mysterious magnetism..No one seemed to realize that predicting the future might not be a suitable entertainment in this house, at this time, considering that Agnes had so recently and horribly been blindsided by fate..Finally Vanadium said, "According to the lab report, the baby she was carrying was almost certainly yours."..In the motel office, Junior paid for another night in advance. His preference in lodgings didn't run to greasy carpeting, cigarette-scarred furniture, and the whispery scuttling of cockroaches in the dark, but though feeling better, he was too tired and shaky to drive..Neddy, dressed for work but overdressed for his own funeral, slumped against the wall, head bowed, chin on his chest. His pale hands were splayed at his sides, as though he were trying to strike chords from the floor tiles..The pendulous bellies of the rain-swollen clouds were no darker than when he had first come to the cemetery, yet they appeared more ominous now than earlier..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 exquisite kind," he replied, glad that he had read so many

books on the art of seduction and therefore knew precisely the right thing to say..Angel brightened at the sight of the coin turning end-over-end across his knuckles. "I could learn to do that," she asserted..against the operating table. The lights had grown painfully bright, and the air had..She asked him how many fingers she was holding up, and he said four, and four it was. Then two fingers. Then seven. Her hands so pale, the palms both bruised..Not a word of that would come to Paul, but his frustrating speechlessness might have been for the best. From everything he knew about this hero, such effusive praise would embarrass him..Golden lamplight gilded the front windows downstairs. He would sit with Victoria on the living-room sofa, sipping wine as they got to know each other. She might tell him to call her Vicky, and maybe he'd ask her to call him Eenie, the affectionate name Naomi had given him when he wouldn't tolerate Enoch. Soon, they would be necking like two crazy kids. Junior would disrobe her on the sofa, caressing her smooth pliant body, her skin buttery in the lamplight, and then he would carry her, naked, to the dark bedroom upstairs..Agnes knew now why this prognostication had dismayed rather charmed her: If you dared to believe in the good fortune predicted he cards, then you were obliged to believe in the bad, as well.. "Money's no object. I can afford whatever you'd like to charge. And I'd be a diligent student.. "See this?" He placed the pepper shaker in front of her on the room-service table and held the salt shaker concealed in his hand..Frowning, Angel studied the tasty strip of meat pinched between her fingers, reevaluating everything she thought she knew about the source of bacon.. "With this money, you won't have to cut back on the number of pies you give away--and all of that.. "From the bathroom, Junior gathered an electric razor and toiletries. He added these to the suitcases.. "If you're a dowser, better dowse," said Licky, coming up alongside him and looking sidelong into his face. "And if you're not, you'd better dowse all the same. That way you'll stay above ground longer.. "He raised one hand to halt the genteel debate. "The whole reason I stopped here first, before taking you folks on to my place, is so I wouldn't have to bring your suitcases back after Agnes won you over. This is where you'll be happiest, though you're always welcome if she tries to work you to death.. "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..He slid his chair sideways to the secretary and leaned forward with the gun in both hands..He had bribed a parking attendant to keep his Mercedes at the curb in a valet zone, in front of a nearby restaurant, so it would be instantly available when needed. He could also leave the car and follow Celestina on foot if she chose to stroll home from here..Barty read aloud as Agnes drove, because she'd enjoyed the novel only from page 104. He wanted to share with her the exploits of Jim and Frank and their Martian companion, Willis..Simon Magusson, lacking family, had left his estate to Tom. This came as a surprise. The sum was so considerable that even though Tom was on a dispensation from his vows, which included his vow of property, he was uncomfortable with his fortune. His comfort was quickly restored by contributing the entire inheritance to Pie Lady Services. They had been brought together by two extraordinary children, by the conviction that Barty and Angel were part of some design of enormous consequence. But more often than not, God weaves patterns that become perceptible to us only over long periods of time, if at all. After the past three eventful years, there were now no weekly miracles, no signs in the earth or sky, no revelations from burning bushes or from more mundane forms of communication. Neither Barty nor Angel revealed any new astonishing talents, and in fact they were as ordinary as any two young prodigies can be, except that he was blind and she served as his eyes upon the world.. "I see. Sometimes. Just quick. For like a blink. Like when you stand between two mirrors. You know?" "Where did it go?" Grace asked her granddaughter, making as much effort as she could to lighten the mood for the girl's sake.. "Too few," said Maria, "might mean you made an admirably small number of moral mistakes but also that you failed to take reasonable risks and didn't make full use of the gift of life.. "Trying to ignore his phantom toe, which itched furiously, he searched the apartment. He proceeded carefully, determined not to shoot himself in the foot accidentally this time..No time for horror, disgust. Every second mattered now, and every minute might cost another life..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.. "Most of these firearms were loaded and ready for use, but five remained in their original boxes, in the back of her bedroom closet. Evidently, considering the original bill of sale taped to each of the five boxed handguns, she must have acquired all the weapons legally..The receptionist, Rebecca, had stayed late, just to keep company with Barty in the waiting room. As she settled into a chair beside the boy, he asked her if she knew what gravity was on Mars, and when she confessed ignorance, he said, "Only thirty-seven percent what it is here. You can really jump on Mars.. "He reached the end of the alleyway, stumbled into the stream of pedestrians, nearly knocked over an elderly Chinese man, turned, and discovered ... no Vanadium..He nodded. "You do. Yes. But you don't need to know right now. Later, when you're calmer, when you're clearer. It's too important to rush you through it now.. "Coughing, spitting saliva that was bitter with toxic chemicals, Paul followed her, slapping frantically at his clothes when fire singed his shirt..murdered would be discounted. And if every death was suspicious to him, then he would quickly lose interest in Junior and move on to a new enthusiasm, harassing some other poor devil.. "You'll catch pneumonia," she warned, reaching across the boy to flip the passenger's-side vent toward him.. "Because He didn't want you to be a dog.. "She finished tying a bow in the drawstrings. "There. You look just like an M&M.. "She switched off the hall light and stood at the half-open door, listening, waiting..Carrying him to the window, gazing up at the stars, the moon, she said, "I'll always read to you, Barty.. "He knew that he needed to get a grip on himself. But he could not keep his breathing slow and deep, couldn't remember any of Zedd's other foolproof methods of self-control, couldn't recall a single useful meditative technique..The

purpose of life was self--fulfillment, per Zedd, and Junior was so rapidly realizing his extraordinary potential that surely he would have pleased his guru..Bressler but no Vanadium. A girl named Angel. Something was wrong here. Something was rotten..Tom proceeded, "is that an infinite number of realities exist, other worlds parallel to ours, which we can't see. For example ... worlds in which, because of the specific decisions and actions of certain people on both sides, Germany won the last great war. And other worlds in which the Union lost the Civil War. And worlds in which a nuclear war has already been fought between the U.S. and Soviets."The short walk across the room, to the hero's table, looked more daunting to Paul than the trek he'd just completed. He was nobody, a small-town pharmacist who missed more work each month, who relied increasingly on his worried employees to cover for him, and who would lose his business if he didn't get a grip on himself. He had never done a great deed, never saved a life. He had no right to impose upon this man, and now he knew he hadn't the nerve to do so, either..By mid-March, he had exhausted the possibilities of Bartholomew as a surname. By the time that he shot himself in September, he had combed through the first quarter million listings in the directory in search of those whose first names were Bartholomew..When he was baking, the world seemed to be a less dangerous place. Sometimes, making a cake, he forgot to be afraid..and proceeded to turn it across his knuckles as swiftly and smoothly as he had with his right hand..Throughout this procedure, Barty appeared solemn and thoughtful. When he had squeezed the tenth toe, he stared at it, brow furrowed.."I'll always know your face," he promised. "Even if you have to go away and you're gone a hundred years, I'll remember what you looked like, how you felt."When the convulsive seizure passed, as he collapsed back on the spattered pillow, shuddering at the stench rising from his hideously fouled clothes, Junior was suddenly struck by an idea that was either..Incredibly, the thief left behind the most valuable items: the collection of hardcover first editions of Caesar Zedd's complete body of work. The box stood open, its contents having been explored in haste, but not a single volume was missing..Otter shook his head..Two more uniformed officers had entered the kitchen, fresh from their search of the apartment. They were amused..The window mechanism creaked, the two tall panes began to open outward but too slowly, and the cold white night exhaled a chill plume of breath into the room.

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