

OBSERVE TO DO FROM RHETORIC TO REAL FAITH

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. OUR LADY OF SORROWS, quiet and welcoming in the Bright Beach night, humble in dimension, without groin vaults and grand columns and cavernous transepts, restrained in ornamentation, was as familiar to Maria Elena Gonzalez--and as comforting--as her own home. God was everywhere in the world, but here in particular. Maria felt happier the instant she stepped through the entrance door into the narthex. Through the door came the sound of running water splashing in a sink. Neddy washing his hands. Rowena loves you, Phimie had told him, briefly repressing the effects of her stroke to speak with clarity. Beezil and Feezil are safe with her Messages from his lost wife and children, where they waited for him beyond this life. He had been walking ever since, two and a half years, with brief respites in Bright Beach. The container-eye-level at the top, battered, rust-streaked, beaded with condensation--was larger than some in the alleyway, with a bifurcated lid. Both halves of the lid were already raised. This night in Weott, with the high solemn silence of the redwood forests out there now and waiting to embrace him in the morning, he slept without dreams. He must be careful in his approach to her. He dared not rush into this. Think it through. Devise a strategy. This valuable opportunity must not be wasted. So runs the water away. The dining table could accommodate six, and Agnes instructed Maria to set two places on each of the long sides, leaving the ends unused. "It'll be cozier if we all sit across from one another." "Soon as Cain is out of sight, we yank up our tricky vending machines, then haul the real ones out of the van and bolt 'em down again. Slick, fast. People are still picking up quarters when we finish. And get this--they want to know where the camera is." Cypresses lined the entry drive to the cemetery. Tall and solemn, the trees kept guard, as though posted to prevent restless spirits from roaming out into the land of the living. Agnes's big brother by six years, Edom had lived in one of the two apartments above the large detached garage, behind the main house, since he was twenty-five, when he'd left the working world. He was now thirty-six. The Bones of the Earth. Aware that his tension was building intolerably, Junior decided that he needed Scamp more than he dreaded her. He spent the remainder of Wednesday, until dawn Thursday, with the indefatigable redhead, whose bedroom contained a vast collection of scented massage oils in sufficient volume to fragrantly lubricate half the rolling stock of every railroad company doing business west of the Mississippi. He was a man of medicine and science, who had been served well by hard logic and by an unwavering commitment to reason. He wasn't prepared easily to accept the notion that logic and reason, while essential tools to anyone hoping to lead a full and happy life, were nevertheless sufficient to describe either the physical world or the human experience. Barty, didn't watch much television. He'd been up late enough to see Red Skelton only a few times, but that comedian always drew gales of laughter from him. When Agnes and Paul returned from a honeymoon in Carmel, they discovered that Edom had finally cleared out Jacob's apartment. He donated his twin's extensive files and books to a university library that was building a collection to satisfy a growing professorial and student interest in apocalyptic studies and paranoid philosophy. 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. The stump was capped at the end of the internal cuneiform, depriving Junior of everything from the metatarsal to the tip of the toe. He was delighted with this result, because successful reattachment would have been a calamity. Instead of opening his left fist, Tom lifted his martini with his right, and on the tablecloth under the glass lay the coin. "I know you, kid. You can handle anything from here on, whether it's a sold-out show or it's not, whether you're going to be famous or just another nobody." "Frozen firing pin," Cain said. His smile was venomous. "I worked on it. I hoped you'd get here in time to see the consequences of your stupid games." Tom pushed his chair back from the table, got to his feet, and moved toward Celestina. Maria Elena Gonzalez--no longer a seamstress in a dry-cleaners, but proprietor of Elena's Fashions, a small dress shop one block off the town square--joined Agnes, Barty, Edom, and Jacob on Christmas. On Thursday, January 4, he used his John Pinchbeck identity to purchase a new Ford van with a cashier's check. He leased a private garage space in the Pinchbeck name, near the Presidio, and stored the van there. Grace, of course, was a strong woman for whom faith was an armor against far worse than embarrassment. Celestina knew that Mom would suffer immeasurably more heartache by remaining in Oregon than what pain she might experience at her daughter's side, but Phimie was too young, too naive, and too frightened to grasp that in this matter, as in all others, her mother was a pillar, not a reed. Junior was pleasantly surprised by his flexibility and by his audacity. He was, indeed, a new man, a daring adventurer, and by the day he grew more formidable. Setting out after dark, Paul had walked south, following the coastal highway. He was accompanied by the windy rush of passing traffic, but later only by the occasional cry of a blue heron, the whisper of a salty breeze in the shore grass, and the murmur of the surf. Without pushing himself too hard, he reached La Jolla by dawn. Room by room, closet by closet, Junior conducted a search for the detective. The cop was not here. "Guilt," said the detective. "If he killed her, wouldn't an overwhelming sense of guilt be as likely as anguish to cause acute nervous emesis?" When Frieda finished retching and passed out in a heap, Junior left her on the floor and immediately set out to explore her rooms. Angel found this hysterical, and Agnes said long-sufferingly, "Thank you for the language lesson, Master Lampion." They had not come to Junior yesterday in their grief, if in fact they had thought to grieve. Scamp had fabulous legs, and her bralessness left no doubts about the lusciousness and authenticity of her chest, but after an hour of conversation about something or other, before suggesting that they leave together, Junior maneuvered her into a reasonably private corner and discreetly put a hand up her skirt, just to confirm that his gender suspicions were correct. Neither Agnes nor Edom knew of Jacob's great skill with cards. He had been discreet about his apprenticeship with Obadiah, and for almost twenty years, he'd resisted the urge to dazzle his siblings with his

expertise..At the elevators, the orderly suggested that Edom and Jacob take a second cab and meet them on the surgical floor..She shook her head. "No way back." She pointed to the sketch pad on the floor. "I pushed him there."..Aftermath was not important. Only movement mattered. Just forget the busload of nuns smashed on the tracks, and stay with the onrushing train. Keep moving, looking forward, always forward..As spectacularly busty as the not-yet-dead Jayne Mansfield, Frieda never wore a bra. In 1966, this free-swinging style was little seen. Initially, Junior didn't realize bralessness was a declaration of Frieda's liberation; he thought it meant she was a slut..As Agnes slipped excess pillows out from behind him and eased him down into the covers, Barty half woke, muttering about how the police were going to kill poor LummoX, who hadn't meant to do all that damage, but he'd been frightened by the gunfire, and when you weighed six tons and had eight legs, you sometimes couldn't get around in tight places without knocking something over..By the time Agnes opened the driver's door and slumped behind the steering wheel, Barty levered himself onto the seat beside her. Grunting, he pulled his door shut with both hands as she jammed the key in the ignition and started the engine..During Junior's brief stroll, the sidewalk ended, giving way to the graveled shoulder of the road. He saw no one on foot, and no vehicles passed him..That was the first-and until now the last-long walk he made with a purpose in mind. He went to see a hero..For a while he thought the fear would end only when he perished from it, but eventually it faded, and in its place poured forth self-pity from a bottomless well. Self-pity, of course, is the ideal fuel for anger; which was why, pursuing the Buick through fog, climbing now toward Pacific Heights, Junior was in a murderous rage. By the time he reached Cain's bedroom, Tom Vanadium recognized that the austere decor of the apartment had probably been inspired by the minimalism that the wife killer had noted in the detective's own house in Spruce Hills. This was an uncanny discovery, troubling for reasons that Vanadium couldn't entirely define, but he remained convinced that his perception was correct..Channeling his beautiful rage, Junior hefted the corpse onto the windowsill, and shoved it headfirst into the alley. The fog received it with what sounded almost like a swallowing noise..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.."I'm paying," Celestina insisted when they were seated. "I'm now a successful artist, with untold numbers of critics just waiting to savage me."..holding hands as they watched John Wayne in *The Searchers*, David Niven in *Around the World in 80 Days*. They were so young then, sure they would live forever, and they were still young now, but for one of them, forever had arrived..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."..Industrial Woman, which he'd purchased for a little more than nine thousand dollars, less than eighteen months ago and at another gallery, would fetch at least thirty thousand in the current market, so rapidly had BavoI Poriferan's reputation risen..While always Agnes held fast to hope, she knew that easy hope was usually false hope, and she didn't allow herself to speculate, even briefly, that his problem had resolved itself. Other symptoms-halos and rainbows-had disappeared for a time, only to return..A forgetful client had left the bumbershoot in the office six months ago. Otherwise, Nolly wouldn't have had any umbrella at all..Dr. Lipscomb inclined his head slightly toward the pianist, in the manner of a stem headmaster about to emphasize a lesson with a sharp twist of the offending boy's ear. "Miss White and the baby will have vacated these premises by the end of the week-unless you insist on bothering them with your chatter. For every minute you harass them, their departure will be extended one day.".."Mommy, did you know, every day on Mars is thirty-seven minutes and twenty-seven seconds longer than ours?"..As the nurse slapped a bar of lye soap in Celestina's right hand, she turned on the water in the sink..A new quarry, operated by the same company, lay a mile farther north. This was the old one, abandoned after decades of cutting..Angel cocked her head and studied his left hand, which he had closed while opening his right. She pointed. "It's there."..Perched on a chair with two plump bed pillows to boost her, Angel extracted one crisp strip from her club sandwich and asked Tom, "Where's bacon come from?"..Hound was sorry for him. "You know, if it was Gelluk questioning you, he'd have everything you know out of you just with a word or two, and your wits with it. I've seen what old Whiteface leaves behind when he asks questions. Listen, can you work with the wind at all?".."And in some of them, maybe I died the night you were born, and you live alone with your dad."..Having settled on the sofa with Agnes and Barty, prepared to serve comfortably in the role of quiet observer, Edom was alarmed to have suddenly become the subject of conversation. He was also alarmed to be called "son," because in his thirty-six years, the only person ever to have addressed him in that fashion had been his father, dead for a decade yet still a terror in Edom's dreams..Tom stared at the girl's drawing-quite a good one for a child her age, rough in style, but with convincing detail-and if skin could be said to crawl, his must have moved all the way around his body two or three times before settling down again where it belonged. "Are these ... ?"..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..In the instant that Junior had shoved Naomi into the rotted railing, he had foreseen this visit from Rudy, Sheena, and Kaitlin. He'd known he could pretend to be offended at the state's offer to put a price on his loss, could feign revulsion, could resist convincingly--until gradually, after grueling days or weeks, he reluctantly allowed the indefatigable..The sight of her sister's blood and the persistence of the flow made Celestina weak with apprehension. She was afraid she had done the wrong thing by delaying hospitalization..Barty's math and reading skills exceeded those of most eighteen year-olds, but regardless of his brilliance, he was a few days shy of his third birthday. Prodigies were not necessarily as emotionally mature as they were intellectually developed, but Barty listened with sober attention, asked questions, and then sat in silence, staring at the book in his hands, with neither tears nor apparent fear..Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Le Guin, Ursula K., 1929-.This was different earthquake weather from that of ten days ago, when he'd made the pie

deliveries alone. Then: blue sky, unseasonable warmth, low humidity. Now: low gray clouds, cool air, high humidity..Champagne, then, and two shopping bags packed full of Armenian takeout. Sou beurek, mujadereh, chicken-and-rice biryani, stuffed grape leaves, artichokes with lamb and rice, orouk, manti, and more. Following a Baptist grace (said by Grace), Wally and the three White women, a fourth present in spirit, sat around the Formica-topped table, feasting, laughing, talking about art and healing and baby care and the past and tomorrow, while up on Nob Hill, Neddy Gnathic sat tuxedoed at a lacquered black piano, sprinkling diamond-bright notes through an elegant room..When he pushed Naomi, profit was the motive. He killed Victoria and Vanadium in self-defense. Those three deaths were necessary..Junior joined the throngs, although he had no gift list or feeling for the season. He just needed to get out of his apartment, because he was convinced that the phantom singer would soon serenade him again..When he noticed a blonde staring at him from a nearby booth, he smiled and winked at her. Although she was not attractive enough to meet his standards, there was no reason to be impolite..He hadn't the slightest doubt that eventually he could romance Renee into marriage, regardless of her wealth and sophistication. He could shape women to his desire as easily as Sklent could paint his brilliant visions on canvas, easier than Wroth Griskin could cast bronze into disturbing works of art..At the open kitchen door, arms laden with a stack of four bakery boxes, her mother said, "Will you get those last four pies for me there on the table? And don't jostle them, dear." "Doesn't look so spooky to me." She turned the knave of spades so the baby could see it. "Does he scare you, Barty?".Eventually, he settled on a mental image of a bowling pin as his "seed." This was a smooth, elegantly shaped object that invited languorous contemplation, but it did not tease his libido..Not once did he look back to see if the fire had grown visible as a glow against the night sky. The events at Victoria's were part of the past. He was finished with all that. Junior was a forward-thinking, future-oriented man..Yet the coin was as real as dead Naomi broken on the stony ridge at the foot of the fire tower..On a street a half mile from the airport in Eugene, he sat in the parked Dodge long enough to gingerly unwind the bandages and use a tissue to wipe off the pungent but useless salve he'd purchased at a pharmacy. Although he pressed the Kleenex to his face so gently that the pressure might not have broken the surface tension on a pool of water, the agony of the touch was so great that he nearly passed out. The rearview mirror revealed clusters of hideous, large, red knobs with glistening yellow heads, and at the sight of himself, he actually did pass out for a minute or two, just long enough to dream that he was a grotesque but misunderstood creature being pursued through a stormy night by crowds of angry villagers with torches and pitchforks, but then the throbbing agony revived him..Darkness, the one source of childhood fear that most adults never quite outgrow, held no terror for Barty. Although for a while his bedroom featured a Mickey Mouse night-light, the miniature lamp was there not to soothe the boy, but to quiet his mother's nerves, because she worried about him waking alone, in blackness.."Yours is a harder job than mine," Lipscomb told Grace, dandling Angel as he spoke. "I have no doubt of that."If Junior was not discreet, and if gossip about the widower Cain and the sexy nurse began to circulate, Vanadium would be on the case again even if it had been closed. The cop was sick, hateful, driven by unknowable inner demons. Although he might for the moment have been reined in by those in higher office, mere gossip of a spicy nature would be excuse enough for him to open the file again, which he'd surely do without informing his superiors..The various flavors of canned soda were always racked in the same order, allowing Barty to select what he wanted without error. He got orange for Angel, root beer for himself, and closed the refrigerator..Neddy's face didn't appear to be as pale as it had been earlier. An undertone of gray, possibly blue, darkened the skin..Before he taught himself to read books, he also taught himself numbers, and then how to read a clock. The significance of time had a more profound impact on him than Agnes could understand, perhaps because acquiring an awareness of the infinite nature of the universe and the finite nature of each human life-and fully understanding the implications of this knowledge-takes most of us till early adulthood if not later, whereas for Barty, the vast glories of the universe and the comparatively humble nature of human existence were recognized, contemplated, and absorbed in a matter of weeks..which was beginning to come into view, was as sharp as pins and needles, sheer torture to her eyes..With Naomi, sex had been glorious, because they were bonded on multiple levels, all deeper than the mere physical. They had been so close, so emotionally and intellectually entwined, that in making love to her, he'd been making love to himself; and he would never experience a greater intimacy than that..Her shaking threatened her composure. She was Barty's mother and father, his only rock, and she must always be strong for him. She clenched her teeth and tensed her body and gradually quieted the tremors by an act of will..Agnes hadn't asked him to keep his strange feat a secret from his uncles. In truth, she had come home in such a curious state of mind that even as she'd worked with Jacob to prepare dinner and even as she'd overseen Edom's setting of the table, she hesitated to tell them what had happened on the run from Joey's grave to the station wagon. She fluctuated between guarded euphoria and fear bordering on panic, and she didn't trust herself to recount the experience until she had taken more time to absorb it..To see his newborn baby girl, Barty shared the sight of other Bartys, and he so adored this little wrinkled Mary that he sustained his vision all day, until a thunderous migraine became too much to bear and a sudden frightening slurring of speech drove him back to the comfort of blindness..Junior in the fog. Trying oh-so-hard to live in the future, where the winners live. But being relentlessly sucked back into the useless past by memory..Rolling onto her side, fumbling in the dark, Celestina White snared the phone on the third ring. Her hello was also a yawn..The Selective Service physician quickly declared Junior to be maimed and unfit. Quietly but with passion, Junior pleaded for a chance to prove his value to the armed forces, but the examiner was unmoved by patriotism, interested only in keeping the cattle line of other potential draftees moving past him at a steady pace..By now, all here assembled knew Celestina well enough that Tom's final example raised an affectionate laugh from the group..He couldn't easily refuse the assignment. Later that year, President Lyndon Johnson, with strong backing from both the Democratic and the Republican Parties, was expected to sign the Civil Rights

Act of 1964, and currently it was dangerous for clearheaded believers in the primacy of self to express their healthy instincts, which might be mistakenly perceived as racial prejudice. He could be fired. Casey and Tutti, her sister Skipper, and dreamboat Ken-and soon the girls had Barty enthusiastically involved in a make-believe world far different from the one in which Heinlein's teenage lead owned an extraordinary alien pet with eight legs, the temperament of a kitten, and an appetite for everything from grizzly bears to Buicks. As the fragrances of wet wool and sodden denim rose from her sweater and jeans, Agnes switched on the heater and angled the vanes of the middle vent toward Barty. "Honey, turn that other vent toward yourself." 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 walled alarm, the employees squeezed aside to let him pass. "Fear?" Kathleen asked, more interested in Vanadium's words than in his prestidigitation. "You said you're offering fear to Cain ... as if that was something he would want." They laughed and held hands. For the first time since Phimie's panicked phone call from Oregon, Celestina felt that everything would eventually be all right again. She woke weeping from the dreams, and she wanted no witnesses. She wasn't embarrassed by her tears. She just didn't want to share them with anyone but Barty. Having ridden from the church to the cemetery with Hanna, his housekeeper, Paul chose to walk home. The distance between Perri's new bed and her old was only three miles, and the afternoon mild. cocktail lounge to be her personal pickup spot. Naturally, people who worked the lounge knew her, were friendly with her. They would remember any man who accompanied the heiress to her penthouse. Rudy Hackachak--Big Rude to his friends--was six feet four, as rough-hewn as a log sculpture carved with a woodsman's ax. In a green polyester suit with sleeves an inch too short, an unfortunate urine yellow shirt, and a tie that might have been the national flag of a third world country famous for nothing but a lack of design sense, he looked like Dr. Frankenstein's beast gussied up for an evening of barhopping in Transylvania. But Havnor is also the Great Isle, a broad, rich land; and in the villages inland from the port, the farmlands of the slopes of Mount Onn, nothing ever changes much. There a song worth singing is likely to be sung again. There old men at the tavern talk of Morred as if they had known him when they too were young and heroes. There girls walking out to fetch the cows home tell stories of the women of the Hand, who are forgotten everywhere else in the world, even on Roke, but remembered among those silent, sunlit roads and fields and in the kitchens by the hearths where housewives work and talk. Opening his eyes, still not daring to meet Victoria's gaze, Junior knew she had registered and properly interpreted his response to her seductive spooning. She had frozen, the utensil in midair, and her breath had caught in her throat. She was thrilled. Now, here, lying on a bed in the emergency room of a Sacramento hospital, on a Saturday afternoon only six weeks before the camellia festival, Junior suffered under the care of a resident physician who was so young as to raise the suspicion that he was merely playing doctor. Desperately trying to collect her wits, Agnes gazed out at the deluged graveyard, where the mournful trees and massed monuments were blurred by purling streams ceaselessly spilling down the windshield. Although Dr. Lipscomb spoke almost as softly as the long-winded pianist, and though the physician's narrow face was homely and devoid of any trace of violent temperament, Neddy Gnathic flinched from him and retreated across the threshold, into the hallway. Too much, far too much to contend with, and so unfair: finding the Bartholomew needle in the haystack, hives, seizures of vomiting and diarrhea, losing a toe, losing a beloved wife, wandering alone through a cold and hostile world without a heart mate, humiliated by transvestites, tormented by vengeful spirits, too intense to enjoy the benefits of meditation, Zedd dead, the prospect of prison always looming for one reason or another, unable to find peace in either needlework or sex. Otter said nothing. The girl sucked in deep lungfuls of the weary clouds. "Better hold tight, Mommy, I'm gonna float." "What's below us?" Hound pointed to the floor, paved with rough slate flags. 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. He supposed Victoria might have a visitor. Perhaps a relative or a girlfriend. Not a man. No. She knew who her man was, and she would have no other while she waited for the chance to surrender to him and to consummate the relationship that had begun with the spoon and the ice in the hospital ten days previously. -nor cruel, nor hateful, nor envious, nor mean," Phimie recited, "for all these are sicknesses of this fallen world." HAVING COMPLETED HER English lesson, Maria Elena Gonzalez went home with a plastic shopping bag full of precisely damaged clothes and a smaller, paper bag containing cherry muffins for her two girls. When Agnes crunched the ice, the nurse said, "No, no. Don't swallow it all at once. Let it melt." "Bullpoop might not be what they say, but it's the worst that we say. And in fact, in this house, bulldoody is preferred." Did she poison herself as well? Was it her intention to kill him and commit suicide? The door was falling shut. With no more sound than the day makes when it turns to night, the detective had gone. Vanadium was dead. Pounded with pewter and sunk in a flooded quarry. Gone forever. the beast would find them one day, but she hadn't spoken of that possibility in perhaps two and a half years. Finished, she gave him a mirror, so he could admire his new bicuspid cap. After five years of dentistry, paced so as not to tax Nolly's tolerance, Kathleen had done well what nature had done poorly, giving him a perfect bite and a supernatural smile. This final cap was the last of the reconstruction. On the counter beside the bathroom sink stood an open box of BandAids in a variety of sizes, a bottle of rubbing alcohol, and a bottle of iodine. Aside from purchasing the T S. Eliot book, which he hadn't found time to read, Junior was only peripherally aware of current events, because they were, after all, current, while he tried always to focus on the future. The news of the day was but a faint background music to him, like a song on a radio in another apartment. Maria said nothing, working busily, but Agnes recognized that special silence in which difficult words were sought and laboriously stitched together. -and whenever

the good Pharaoh was here in San Francisco, a few times each year, he always stopped by St. Anselmo's to entertain the boys--".Nolly shuddered. "The wilds of Oregon. I don't intend ever to go there until it's civilized.".Tom plucked the quarter off the glass, folded it into his right fist, and then at once opened his hand, which was now empty..They had a few days for quiet celebration of this astonishing recovery of his sight, and in that time, she never tired of watching him read to her. He didn't think she even listened closely. It was the fact of him made whole that lifted her spirits so high as they were now, not any writer's words nor any story ever written.Tom said, "Now I'm going to add a human touch and a spiritual spin to all this. When each of us comes to a point where he has to make a significant moral decision affecting the development of his character and the lives of others, and each time he makes the less wise choice, that's where I myself believe a new world splits off. When I make an immoral or just a foolish choice, another world is created in which I did the right thing, and in that world, I am redeemed for a while, given a chance to become a better version of the Tom Vanadium who lives on in the other world of the wrong choice. There are so many worlds with imperfect Tom Vanadiums, but always someplace ... someplace I'm moving steadily toward a state of grace.".Spinning off the stool, the bun cap in one hand and the mustard dispenser clutched in the other, Junior surveyed the long narrow diner. Looking for the maniac cop. The dead maniac cop. He half expected to see Thomas Vanadium: head crusted in blood, face bashed to pulp, caked in quarry silt, and dripping water as though he'd climbed out of his Studebaker coffin just minutes ago..Twice during dinner, he seemed to draw near The Subject, but then he circled around it and flew off, each time to report some news of little relevance or to recount something funny that Angel had said..Charmed by the vulnerability of the young, he'd never slept with an older woman. The prospect intrigued him. She would have tricks in her repertoire that younger women were too inexperienced to know..2000, the Year of the Dragon, gives way without a roar to the Year of the Snake, and after the Snake comes the Horse. Day by day the work is done, in memory of those who have gone before us, and embarked upon work of her own, young Mary is out there among you. For now, only her family knows how very special she is. On one momentous day, that will change..Twice would indicate a dangerous mania. Three times would be indefensible. But once was healthy experimentation. A learning experience..Lipscomb women gladly obey the wishes of Lipscomb men-unless they disagree, of course, or don't disagree but are just feeling mulish.

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