

# ALACCA INDO CHINA AND CHINA OR TEN YEARS TRAVELS ADVENTURES AND RESIDENCE ABROAD

Nothing he had learned about the supernatural had led him closer to a belief in ghosts and in all that ghosts implied. His faith still reposed entirely in Enoch Cain Jr., and he refused to make room on his altar for anyone or anything other than himself. Now Junior threw back the covers and sprang out of bed. In double briefs, he restlessly roamed the hotel room. "Last I noticed, his car was out. Let me check." Sparky put down his phone and went to look in the garage. When he returned, he said, "Nope. Still out. When he parties, he usually parties late." They agreed that to the outside world, Barty must continue to appear to be a sightless man or otherwise either be treated like a freak or be subjected, perhaps unwillingly, to experimentation. In the modern world, there was no tolerance for miracles. Only family could be told of this development. "What's this?" the man asked her, as Sinatra swooped through "Come Fly with Me." "Consider what I told you," Dr. Salk urged. "Your Perri would want you to think about it." Agnes held a smile as best she could, determined that her son's final glimpse of her face would not leave him with a memory of her despair. "Six hundred ninety-five people were killed in three states. Winds so powerful that some of the bodies were thrown a mile and a half from where they were snatched off the ground." Paul in the guest room again. Sweeping a bedside lamp to the floor, lifting the nightstand. Ten months later, Simon called again, also regarding Cain, but this time the attorney was the client, and Cain was the target. What Simon wanted Nolly to do was strange, to say the least, and it could be construed as harassment, but none of it was exactly illegal. And for two years, beginning with the quarter in the cheeseburger, ending with the coin-spitting machines, all of it had been great fun. "It was... the only dream that mattered," Joey said. "You ... loving me. It was a good life because of you." He hadn't paid close attention to those patrons seated at the bar behind him. Now, he turned in his chair to study them. Returning the newborn to the nun, Celestina asked for the use of a phone, and for privacy. When the police operator answered, Junior shrieked, "I've been shot! Jesus! Shot! Help me, an ambulance, oooohhhh shit! Hurry!" And there are songs, old lays and ballads from small islands and from the quiet uplands of Havnor, that tell the story of those years. Junior found the acclaim gratifying, but the widespread use of his photograph was a high price to pay even for the recognition of his contribution to art. Fortunately, with his bald head and pocked face, he no longer resembled the Enoch Cain for whom the authorities were searching. And they believed that the bandages on his face, at the church, had been merely an exotic disguise. One psychologist even speculated that the bandages had been an expression of the guilt and shame he felt on a subconscious level. Yeah, right. She loosened her hair and brushed it out, and Nolly took her to dinner at their favorite place, which had the decor of a classy saloon and a bay view suitable for God's table. They came here often enough that the maitre d' greeted them by name, as did their waiter. Never would he pause to reload at this desperate penultimate moment, when success or failure might be decided in mere seconds. That would be the choice of a man who thought first and acted later, the behavior of a born loser. Maria Elena Gonzalez, where no one lived with fear like her brothers Edom and Jacob. Granted that he was only three going on four, nevertheless Barty had never met anyone with as much cheerful imagination as Angel. He intended to marry her in, oh, maybe twenty years. They were as gracious as any people he had ever met, but they also seemed genuinely interested in his story. He wasn't surprised that WITH A CRASH as loud as the dire crack of heaven opening on Judgment Day, the Ford pickup broadsided the Pontiac. Agnes couldn't hear the first fraction of her scream, and not much of the rest of it, either, as I. In Maria's kitchen, still just four days past Christmas, Agnes let dissolve her stoic mask, and wept at last. As he'd been instructed, Vanadium felt along the return edge of the carved limestone casing to the right of the window until he located a quarter-inch-diameter steel pin that protruded an inch. The pin was grooved to facilitate a grip. An insistent, steady pull was required, but as promised, the thumb-turn latch on the inside disengaged. Agnes discovered, from her research, that among child prodigies, Barty was not a wonder of wonders. Some math whizzes were absorbed by algebra and even by geometry before their third birthdays. Jascha Heifetz, became an accomplished violinist at three, and by six, he played the concertos of Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky; Ida Haendel performed them when she was five. Glimmered along the barrel of a hypodermic syringe in the hand of the paramedic. He did not answer Hound's question. "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?" As a matter of principle, Junior considered firing the slit-mouthed troll on the spot, but then Magusson said, "You shouldn't be bothered any further by Detective Vanadium." Currently, Jacob was far removed from the embalming chamber and intended never to set foot there, alive. With Walter Panglo as his guide, he toured the casket selection in the funeral-planning room. 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. "Ah, evidently you can read my mind. Scarier than heart reading any day. Maybe there's a thin line between minister's daughter and witch." Shaking the ravaged khakis at him, she said, "Then what made such a mess of these? In January '65, while Vanadium had been in the first month of what proved to be an eight-month coma, Enoch Cain had sought Nolly's assistance in a search for Seraphim's newborn child. When Vanadium had learned about this from Magusson long after the event, he assumed that Cain had heard Max Bellini's message on his answering machine, made the connection with Seraphim's death in an "accident" in San Francisco, and set out to find the child because it was his. Fatherhood was the only imaginable reason for his interest in the baby. "I'm not saying there's anything wrong with it, you understand," Neddy whispered with a sort of fierce conciliation, "but I'm not gay, and I'm not interested in teaching you the piano or anything else. Besides, after the stories Renee told about you, I can't imagine why you think any friend of his ... hers would get near you. You need help. Renee is what she is, but she's not a bad person, she's generous and she's sweet. She doesn't

deserve to be beaten, abused, and ... and all those horrible things you did. Excuse me." The upper end of the bed was elevated. Otherwise, Agnes would not have been able to see the room, for she was too weak to raise her head from the pillows. He missed Naomi. She'd always known exactly the right thing to say or do, improving his mood with a few words or with just her touch, when he was feeling down. "Could you undo the spell you put on her?" Even above the piston-knock of her heart and the bellows-whoosh 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. In time, his hand tightened feebly on hers. And a while after that hopeful sign, his eyelids fluttered, opened. Since discovering the quarter in his cheeseburger, Junior had been half convinced that the maniac cop survived the bludgeoning. In spite of his grievous wounds, perhaps Vanadium had swum up through a hundred feet of murky water, barely avoiding being drowned. She leaned against the apartment door for a long moment, holding on to the doorknob and to the thumb-turn of the second deadbolt, as though she were convinced that if she let go, she would float off the floor like a cloud-stuffed child. For half an hour he studied Barty's eyes with various devices and instruments. Thereafter, he arranged an immediate appointment with an oncologist, as Joshua Nunn had predicted. Then Junior saw the blood on the right cuff of Vanadium's shirt. Blood dripping from his hand, too. "Where's your mother this morning?" he asked, for he'd expected to have to shoot his way through a lot more than one adult to reach both children. The Lipscomb house had proved empty, however, and fortune had given him the boy and girl together, with one guardian. 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." Through the remainder of his dinner, he was entirely future focused, the past put safely out of mind. Until .... As if he'd been presented with many previous photos under these circumstances, Jonas Salk accepted the picture. "Your daughter?" Turning to face his four trailing escorts, all of whom were hunch shouldered and stiff-necked with tension, Barty said, "What's for dinner?" One nurse and one nun brought Celestina into the creche behind the viewing window. Junior thought he was alone, but just when he felt capable of summoning the energy to shift to a more comfortable position, he heard a man clear his throat. The phlegmy sound had come from beyond the. What good was she to anybody, what good could she ever hope to be, if she couldn't even save her little sister? Kneeling at her side, Junior placed the decorative pillow over her lovely face and pressed down firmly while Frank Sinatra finished "Hello, Young Lovers," and sang perhaps half of "All or Nothing at All." Victoria never regained consciousness, never had a chance to struggle. Heaven, and his words touched a tenderness in her, overlaying an arc of pain across the curve of her smile. Lifting his martini, theatrically gesturing to the tablecloth where the glass had stood, as though the lack of coins proved that he, too, had sorcerous power, Nolly said, "Another round of this magical concoction?" STILL WEARING HIS white pharmacy smock over a white shirt and black slacks, striding purposefully along the streets of Bright Beach, under a malignant-gray twilight sky worthy of a *Weird Tales* cover, with ominous accompanying rhythm provided by wind-clattered palm fronds overhead, Paul Damascus headed home for the day. After a silent moment of surprise, Nork or Knacker, or Hisscus, said, "Your sentiment is understandable, Mr. Cain, but it's customary in these matters--". Serving a formal dinner was Agnes's way of declaring-to herself more than to anyone else in attendance-that the time had come for her to get on with life for Bartholomew's sake, but also for her own. Footsteps in the hall drew their attention to the open door, where the surgeon appeared in his loose cotton greens. Backing off, trying to feel his way to the foyer and front door, afraid that if he stumbled over a chair, she'd descend upon him like a screaming hawk upon a mouse, Junior denied her accusation. "You're crazy. How could I know? Look at you! How could I possibly know?" When the highway passed through a sunless ravine, he had broken into a sour sweat at the sight of the bloody pulsing reflections of the revolving rooftop beacons on the bracketing cut-shale walls. Now and then, the siren shrieked to clear traffic ahead, and he felt the urge to scream with it, to let loose a wail of terror and anguish and confusion and loss. Unable to run, he raised his arms defensively, crossing them in front of his face, though the impact of the coins wasn't painful. Volleys flicked off his fingers, palms, and wrists. What he learned working with his father and uncle in the shipyard he could use, at least; and he was becoming a good craftsman, even his father would admit that. "Better hurry," Wally advised, gracing Celestina's other cheek with a dryer kiss. His first word after mama was papa, which she taught him while showing him pictures of Joey. His third word: pie. He fiddled with the cylinder until it swung open. Five chambers, a gleaming cartridge in each. Junior had almost fumbled his fork when he recognized the tune. His heart raced. His hands were suddenly clammy. "That's obvious to us, but not always to others. Apparently, this would have been some years ago." So burning with anger was he that his car, by direct thermal transmission from his hands upon the wheel, should have been glowing cherry red in the January night, should have been scorching tunnels of clear dry air through the cold fog. Rancor, virulence, acrimony, vehemence: All words learned for the purpose of self-improvement were useless to him now, because none adequately conveyed the merest minimum of his anger, which swelled as vast and molten as the sun, far more formidable than his assiduously enhanced vocabulary. Because of the events regarding Barty and Angel back in January, Celestina, Grace, and Wally were no longer displaced persons waiting to return to San Francisco. They had begun anew here in Bright Beach; and judging by all indications, they were going to be as happy and as occupied with useful work as it was possible to be on this troubled side of the grave. "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." Although her hands were shaking and her knees felt as though they might buckle, Agnes lifted two pies off the table. Otter said nothing. This was tedious work and might not bear fruit. He needed to begin somewhere, however, and the telephone directory was the most logical starting point. The 9-mm

pistol and the ammunition were on the foyer table. With trembling hands, Junior tore open the boxes and loaded the gun..And God has four hundred billion billion fingers, and He plays a really hot version of "Hawaiian Holiday..Junior didn't want an apology. The offer of a free lunch-or an entire week of lunches-didn't charm a smile from him. He had no interest in taking home a free apple pie..At the end of his fourth month, instead of in his seventh, he said "Mama," and clearly knew what it meant. He repeated it when he wanted to get her attention..In the front wall of the living room, where once had been a fine bay window, the parsonage lay open to the sunny day. Tom shrubbery, carried in from outside, marked the path of destruction. In the very middle of the room, plowed against a toppled sofa and a thick drift of broken furniture, a battered red Pontiac sagged to the left on broken springs and blown tires. A portion of the crazed windshield quivered and collapsed inward, while plumes of steam hissed from under the buckled hood.."As she comes closer to full term," said Dairies, "she's at great risk of preeclampsia developing into full eclampsia."..Her first year at college, she had hoped only to be able one day to earn a living as an illustrator for magazines or on the staff of an advertising agency. A career in the fine arts, of course, was every painter's fantasy, the full freedom to explore her talent; but she would have been grateful for the realization of a much humbler dream. Now, she was just twenty-three, and the world hung before her like a ripe plum, and she seemed able to reach high enough to pluck it off the branch..And now she didn't need him anymore. He gazed at her face, held her cooling hand; his anchor was slipping away from him, leaving him adrift..Since dealing with Victoria and the detective, Junior had taken pride in the fact that he'd kept his equanimity and, more important, his lunch. No acute nervous emesis, as he'd suffered following poor Naomi's death. Indeed, he had an appetite..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?".Agnes, who inherited the property, would have welcomed her brothers in the main house. Although both were willing to visit her for an occasional dinner or to sit in rocking chairs on the porch, on a summer night, neither could abide living in that ominous place..Havnor Great Port is the city at the heart of the world, white-towered above its bay; on the tallest tower the sword of Erreth-Akbe catches the first and last of daylight. Through that city passes all the trade and commerce and learning and craft of Earthsea, a wealth not hoarded. There the King sits, having returned after the healing of the Ring, in sign of healing. And in that city, in these latter days, men and women of the islands speak with dragons, in sign of change.."You're better at concentrative meditation without seed than anyone I've ever known, better than me. That's why you, especially, should never undertake a long session unsupervised," Chicane scolded. "At the very least, the very least, you should use your electronic meditation timer. I don't see it here, do I?".After wiping her floury hands, Agnes took the book from him and, examining it, could find nothing wrong. She flipped back a few pages, then a few forward, but the lines of type were crisp and clear. "Show me where, honey."..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."..No one in Junior's circles seemed to care about the crisis in American music. He supposed he had a greater awareness of injustice than did most people..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..Too late. The parsonage was fully engulfed. With luck, they would save the church..Junior couldn't imagine why some Negro stranger would want to intrude. He hoped there wouldn't be trouble..Sitting in Simon Magusson's mahogany-paneled office, reading the contents of this file, Junior was aghast. "I could have been killed."..He smiled. "Those of us who were priests first--yeah, we're all a broody bunch. Of the others--not many, but probably more than you think.".."Tom, Wally, I'm sorry for the brusque introductions," Agnes Lampion apologized. "We'll have plenty of getting-to-know-each other time over dinner. But the people in this room have been waiting an entire week to hear from you, Tom. We can't wait a moment longer."..Suitcases seemed to be missing. Some clothes, as well. Could mean a weekend vacation..When she still didn't meet his stare, he seized her by the chin and tipped her head back..He pressed his right ear to the door, held his breath, heard nothing, and addressed the top lock first. Quietly, he slid the thin pick of the lock-release gun into the key channel, under the pin tumblers..Junior picked up his pace, pushing through the crowd, repeatedly glancing back, and although he caught only quick squints of the dead cop's face, he could tell that something was terribly wrong with it. Never a candidate for matinee-idol status, Vanadium looked markedly worse than before. The port-wine birthmark still pooled around his right eye. His features were not merely pan-flat and plain, as they had been before, but were ... distorted..So runs the water away..Among themselves, the authorities spoke more often than not in murmurs. Or perhaps Junior was too distracted to hear them clearly..Tom received a fierce hug, too, and a sisterly kiss, and he was grateful for them. He had been a loner for too long, as a hunter of men pretty much had to be when on a long hard road of recuperation and then on a mission of vengeance, even if he called it a mission of justice. During the few days he'd spent guarding Celestina and Grace and Angel in the city, and subsequently during the week with Wally, Tom had felt that he was part of a family, even if it was just a family of friends, and he had been surprised to realize how much he needed that feeling..A few minutes after dawn, in excellent weather, they flew out of Sacramento, bound for Eugene. Junior would have enjoyed the scenery if his face hadn't felt as if it were gripped by a score of white-hot pliers in the hands of the same evil trolls that had peopled all the fairy tales that his mother had ever told him when he was little..He continued until four aces of hearts and four aces of diamonds were on the table in front of him. These eight draws he had prepared, and this effect was his intention.."No member of the society ever violates a secret confidence," Agnes assured him..She struggled, wept, pretended disgust, faked shame, swore to bring

the police down on him. Another man, not as highly skilled at reading men as Junior, might have thought the girl's resistance was genuine, but charges of rape were sincere. Any other man might have backed off, but Junior was neither fooled nor confused. Needles of rain knitted the air and quickly embroidered silvery patterns on the blacktop. This is a tale of those times. Some of it is taken from the Book of the Dark, and some comes from Havnor, from the upland farms of Onn and the woodlands of Faliern. A story may be pieced together from such scraps and fragments, and though it will be an airy quilt, half made of hearsay and half of guesswork, yet it may be true enough. It's a tale of the Founding of Roke, and if the Masters of Roke say it didn't happen so, let them tell us how it happened otherwise. For a cloud hangs over the time when Roke first became the Isle of the Wise, and it may be that the wise men put it there. If he killed Bartholomew and got away clean, as he expected that he would, then he could subsequently return everything in the van to the apartment. He was just being prudent by planning for his future, because the future was, after all, the only place he lived. Tom Vanadium was too unnerved by the Cain scare to be interested in the newspaper anymore. The strong black coffee, superb before, tasted bitter now. She traded silence for silence. Then: "Kiddo, I'm still totally confused by this stuff." Paul Damascus had gotten numerous invitations to dinner. No one thought that he should be alone on this difficult night. He almost laughed at himself, but he recalled the disconcerting laugh that earlier had trilled from him in the men's room, when he'd thought about stuffing Neddy Gnathic into the toilet. Now he pinched his tongue between his teeth almost hard enough to draw blood, hoping to prevent that brittle and mirthless sound from escaping him again. A deep storm of silence, anti-thunder, the house fully drenched in a muffling rain of soundlessness. Then it would stop. The torment would stop. Surely. His sense of drift, of sliding aimlessly through the days, would lift from him, and he would find purpose once more in determined self-improvement. He would definitely learn French and German. He would take cooking classes and become a culinary master. Karate, too. He wasn't wholly without feeling, of course. A poignant current of sadness eddied in his heart, a sadness at the thought of the love and the happiness that he and the nurse might have known together. But it was her choice, after all, to play the tease and to deal with him so cruelly. The grass, silent because he is barely conscious, too badly beaten to protest or to plead for mercy, but also. As always, curious about how others lived-or, in this case, had lived-Junior explored the house, poking in drawers and closets. For a widower, Bartholomew Prosser was neat and well-organized. Worse, the people who adopted Seraphim's baby might be anywhere in the nine-county Bay Area. Millions of phone listings to scan. First room on the left. Move. Kick the door open. The sense of a larger space beyond, no bathroom this time, and darker. Fan the pistol, gripping with both hands. Two quick shots: muffled cough, muffled cough. "Cash," Junior said. "I'll pay cash, with whatever amount of deposit is required." In Junior's estimation, this was not the way that a normal person lived. This was the home of a deranged loner, a dangerously obsessive man. More likely than not, he would cross Bartholomew's path when he least expected, not as a consequence of his searching, but in the normal course of a lay. If that happened, he must be prepared to eliminate the threat immediately, by any means available to him. At Thanksgiving dinner, again at the three tables set end to end, in the year of the triple zero, Mary Lampion, now fourteen years old, made an interesting announcement over the pumpkin pie. In her travels where none but she could go, after seven fascinating years of exploring a fraction of all the infinite worlds, she said she sensed beyond doubt that, as Barty's mother had told him on her deathbed, there is one special place beyond all the ways things are, one shining place. Agnes wanted to tell them that all their efforts would be to no avail, that they should cease and desist, be kind and let her go. She had no reason to stay here anymore. She was moving on to be with her dead husband and her dead baby, moving on to a place where there was no pain, where no one was as poor as. dent? You do believe that? Because I don't see ... I don't know how could work with someone who thought I was capable of . . . ". In Cain's bedroom, Tom Vanadium's hooded flashlight revealed a six-foot-high bookcase that held approximately a hundred volumes. The top shelf was empty, as was most of the second. Soon paramedics followed the police, who spread out through the apartment, and Junior relinquished his grip on the dishtowel. Having survived the night, Edom and Jacob were waiting in the hall. Each kissed his nephew, but neither could speak. Snapping the cylinder into place, he rose to his feet. Already he had a new plan, and the cop's revolver was the most important tool that he required to implement it. As punctilious as you might expect any good accountant to be, Bartholomew Prosser didn't delay long enough to make it necessary for Junior to ring the bell twice. The porch light came on. Scamp spent Wednesday ravishing him. It wasn't love, but there was comfort in being familiar with his partner's equipment. The mound of earth beside the grave had been disguised by piles of flowers and cut ferns. The suspended casket was skirted with black material to conceal the yawning grave beneath it. 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. Worrying is what mothers do best. Celestina was her mother, as far as Angel was concerned, and the child was not yet of an age to be told, and to understand, that she had been blessed with two mothers: the one who gave birth to her, and the one who raised her. He doubted that the singer had been Victoria Bressler, dead nurse, but he believed this was the same voice he'd heard on the telephone, back on the twenty-fifth of June, when someone purporting to be Victoria had called with an urgent warning for Bartholomew. Naked, dripping, he roamed the apartment. As on the night of December 13, the voice seemed to arise from thin air: ahead of him, then behind him, to the right, but now to the left. From the devil to the sacred and then beyond, Junior drove north on State Highway 160, which was proudly marked as a scenic route, although in these predawn hours, all lay bleak and black. Following the serpentine course of the Sacramento River, Highway 160 wove past a handful of small, widely separated towns. "God bless us, every one," Agnes repeated with all her extended family, and after a sip of the wine, she made an excuse to check on something in the kitchen, where she pressed hot tears into a cool, slightly damp dishtowel to prevent the telltale swelling of her eyes. The sound-suppressor didn't render the pistol entirely silent, but the three soft reports, each

like a quiet cough muffled by a hand, wouldn't have carried beyond the hallway..While the horse and then the sheep grazed twelve months each, an H-bomb accidentally fell from a B-52 and was lost in the ocean, off Spain, for two months before being located. Mao Tse-tung launched his Cultural Revolution, killing thirty million people to improve Chinese society. James Meredith, civil rights activist, was wounded by gunfire during a march in Mississippi. In Chicago, Richard Speck murdered eight nurses in a row-house dormitory, and a month later, Charles Whitman limbed a tower at the University of Texas, from which he shot and killed twelve people. Arthritis forced Sandy Koufax, star pitcher for the Dodgers, to retire. Astronauts Grissom, White, and Chaffee died earthbound, in a flash fire that swept their Apollo spacecraft during a full-scale launch simulation. Among the noted who traded fame for eternity were Walt Disney, Spencer Tracy, saxophonist John Coltrane, writer Carson McCullers, Vivien Leigh, and Jayne Mansfield. Junior bought McCullers's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, and though he didn't doubt that she was a fine writer, her work proved to be too weird for his taste. During these years, the world was rattled by earthquakes, swept by hurricanes and typhoons, plagued by floods and droughts and politicians, ravaged by disease. And in Vietnam, hostilities were still underway..He was astonished that adoption records would be sealed and so closely guarded when a child was being placed with a member of its immediate family, with its mother's sister..Kitchen staff. All men. Some looked up in surprise; others were oblivious of him. He stalked the cramped work aisles, eyes watering from the fragrant steam and the heat, seeking Vanadium, an answer..This was a California live oak, green even in winter, although its leaves were fewer now than they would be in warmer seasons. The elaborate branch structure, reflected around him, was an exquisite and harmonious maze overlaying a mosaic of sunlight green on grass, and something in its patterns suddenly touched him, moved him, seized his imagination. He felt as if he were balanced on the brink of an astonishing insight.

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