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"A buzzing noise woke Sam Clay. He woke cautiously, feeling the sun on his face, but he did not open his eyes. From the ache at the base of his skull, his taut throat muscles, the coppery taste in his mouth, the semiparalysis gripping his limbs, he knew the shock of seeing sunlight would kill him. He lay without moving, sweating a little and hoping he could go back to sleep, but the buzzing disturbed him.

"It was, he decided, either a fly or a symptom of his hang-over. The latter would be something new, even to him: a buzzing hang-over. He pictured himself trying to explain it to a doctor and resolved to give up drinking. He seemed to recall blending brandy and champagne at a bar somewhere. He also seemed to recall drinking brandy in a taxi, and on a roller coaster.

"The evening had a mixed-up, dreamlike quality. He remembered a row with a doorman, a hundred-dollar check he'd cashed at the 69 Club, a bottle of brandy he'd bought somewhere else, a pretty

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