

Eighth Word!

The solution to the puzzle is usually the tiny, disappearingly small part, a fourth or eighth or mere sixteenth; a rare, less than semi-annual sighting. A blue moon, rather than an equinox. A whisper of intonation, not even a word in its entirety. If you swallow the party line, you lose. A betting man gives sixty-twenty odds, and on a whim you quickly telegraph your poor, sensitive friends, dreaming of Park Avenue on beans and a crust of bread, on a proverbial shoestring: the friends who spent April in Paris decades ago, who are the first to understand a nuance. Who brush aside irrelevancies. There aren't many left: just you and seven others, secret siblings in a shrinking group in a cold world. Death threats are just the last straw, and you huddle together this evening. Only Jerome is in the mood for games and jokes, but when he begins joking at your mother's expense, you remember a prior seven-thirty appointment. Everything goes black. You feel something sharp . . .