

OVE OF BEAUTY ART HISTORY AND THE MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF AESTHETIC J

"-though this Tom now has a rhinoceros-smacked face, this other Tom, in his own world, has an ordinary face. Poor him, so ordinary." At one point late in the afternoon, as all three Hackachaks were hurling scorn and invective at Junior, he noticed Vanadium standing in the doorway, observing. Perfect. He pretended not to see the cop, and when next he sneaked a look, he discovered that Vanadium had vanished like a wraith. A thick slab of a wraith..The porch light wasn't on. No landscape lighting brightened the backyard. Barty was a gray shadow moving through darkness and through the darkling drizzle..They were in the eastern hills, a mile from Jolene and Bill Klefton's place, where ten days ago, Edom had delivered blueberry pie along with the grisly details of the Tokyo-Yokohama quake of 1923..For a moment, none of them spoke. The silence was as flawless as the preternatural hush reputed to precede the biggest quakes..During the cleaning, installation of new carpet, and painting that had followed the removal of the diarrhetic pig set loose by one of Cain's disgruntled girlfriends, the wife killer had spent a few nights in a hotel. Nolly took advantage of the opportunity to bring his associate James Hunnicolt--Jimmy Gadget-onto the premises to provide a customized, undetectable, exterior window-latch release..Agnes remained mystified by this talk, but a week before, in the rain-swept cemetery, she had learned there was substance to it..Looking down at Barty, Agnes saw the ghost of Joey in the baby's face, and although she half believed that her husband would be alive now if he had never tempted fate by putting such a high price on his wife, she couldn't find any anger in her heart for him. She must accept this final generosity with grace-if also without enthusiasm..She shook her head. "No way back." She pointed to the sketch pad on the floor. "I pushed him there." He smiled ruefully. "Might be ready for a wedding by then, but not a honeymoon." "Maybe," said Angel. "Or maybe to The Monkees ... or maybe to where you didn't get run down by the rhinosharush." He already had the pistol he had taken from Frieda Bliss's collection, but it didn't come with a sound-suppressor. He was preparing for all contingencies. Focus..In the closet, a limited wardrobe did not fully occupy available rod space. On the floor, shoes were neatly arranged toe-to-heel..The two bereaved women huddled at one end of the living room, tearful, touching, talking quietly, wondering together if there was any way that each could help the other to fill this sudden, deep, and terrible hole in their lives..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..This was his door, however, not hers. She did not possess a ticket to ride the train that had come for him. He boarded, and the train was gone, and with it the light in his eyes. She lowered her mouth to his, kissing him one last time, and taste of his blood was not bitter, but sacred.. . . then how come you couldn't walk where your eyes were healthy and leave the tumors there," she remembered."As long as the case was open and you were the sole suspect," said the lawyer, "they couldn't negotiate an out-of-court settlement with you. But they were afraid that if eventually they couldn't prove you killed her, then they'd be in an even worse position when a wrongful death suit finally went before a jury." He did not look at the battered face. Dare to meet those shuttered eyes, and they might spring open, full of blood and fix him with a crucifying stare..Agnes dropped to one knee before the boy and held him gently by the shoulders. "Let me look." Agnes invited everyone to stay for dinner. The pies were no sooner finished than large cook pots, saucepans, colanders, and other heavy artillery were requisitioned from the Lampion culinary arsenal..After taking a preliminary statement from Celestina, Bellini left to romance a judge out of bed and obtain a search warrant for Enoch Cain's residence, having already ordered a stakeout of the Russian Hill apartment. Celestina's description of her assailant was a perfect match for Cain. Furthermore, the suspect's Mercedes had been abandoned at her place. Bellini sounded confident that they would find and arrest the man soon..he had sat here with a pencil, making shopping lists. Now, instead of a pencil, there was the Italian-made .22 pistol..No turning back. In the fuming blackness, they would become disoriented in seconds, fall, and suffocate as surely as they would burn. Besides, the open window, providing draft, would draw the fire rapidly down the hallway at their backs..Later, weak and shaken, as he was packing his suitcase, the urge overcame him again. He was astonished to discover that anything could be left in his intestinal tract..Yet when he put her down in the upstairs hall, she cried out for her husband--"Harry!" "-and tried to plunge once more into the narrow stairwell..From late morning until dinner, people arrived and departed, raised toasts to a merry Christmas and to peace on earth, to health and to happiness, reminisced about Christmases past, marveled about the first heart transplant performed this very month in South Africa, and prayed that the soldiers in Vietnam would come home soon and that Bright Beach would lose no precious sons in those far jungles..Celestina was unable to talk reason to him, and even her mother, Grace, who was living here for the interim and who was always oil on the stormiest of waters, couldn't bring a moment's calm to the velvet squall that was Neddy Gnathic in full blow. He had learned about the baby five days ago, and he had been building force ever since, like a tropical depression aspiring to hurricane status..By November 1967, the Father Brown detective stories, written for mystery-loving adults by G. K. Chesterton, thrilled Barty. This series of books would retain a special place in his heart for the rest of his life-as would Robert Heinlein's The Star Beast, which was among his Christmas gifts that year..He hurried into the bedroom and switched on the nightstand lamp, without concern for whether the light might be seen from the street..Although to Paul this was no more than childish chatter, Tom knew at once that the girl referred to his explanation for why he wasn't sad about his damaged face: the salt and pepper shakers representing two Toms, the hit-and-run rhinoceros, the different worlds all in one place. "Yes, Angel. That's something like what I was talking about." "What's below us?" Hound pointed to the floor, paved with rough slate flags..Finally he switched on the light, and illuminated Neddy at ease, silent in death as never in life: lying on his back, head turned to the right, swollen tongue lolling obscenely..He'd listened to the message and thought it incomprehensible, of no import. Suddenly, tardy intuition told him that it could not have been any more important to him if

it had been dead Naomi calling from beyond the grave to leave testimony for the detective.. "I'll do your share of the housework for a month. If I'm closer to the date, you clean up all my pie-baking and other kitchen messes for a month-the bowls and pans and mixers, everything." During the past week, he had ferreted out what he could about the nurse. She was thirty, divorced, without kids, and lived alone.. For forty-eight hours, he pumped himself full of prescription antihistamines, immersed himself in bathtubs brimming with numbingly cold water, and lathered himself with soothing lotions. In misery, gripped by self-pity, he dared not think about the 9-mm pistol that he had stolen from Frieda Bliss.. As she commented on each masterpiece, Frieda grew steadily less coherent. She had drunk a few cocktails, the better part of a bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon, and two after-dinner brandies.. Murmuring on the edge of sleep, Barty spoke to his father in all the places where Joey still lived: "Good-night, Daddy." When he killed the Bartholomew, this haunting would finally end, too. In Junior's mind, Vanadium and Bartholomew were inextricably linked, because it was the maniac cop who first heard Junior calling out Bartholomew in his sleep. Did that make sense? Well, it made more sense at some times than at others, but it always made a lot more sense than anything else. To be rid of the dead-but-persistent detective, he must eliminate Bartholomew.. Downstairs again, as Agnes reached the foot of the stairs, she began to worry that she had done too thorough a job on the khakis and that the extent of the damage would raise suspicions.. Into her fevered mind came an image of a milk-glass infant, as translucent as Joey at the back door of the ambulance. Fearing that this vision meant her child would be stillborn, she said, My baby, but no sound escaped her.. As though giving voice to her worst fear had made it come true, Agnes was seized by a contraction so painful that she cried out and clutched the paramedic's hands tightly enough to make him wince. She felt a peculiar swelling within, then an awful looseness, pressure followed at once by release.. Stepping into her digs was like passing through a time machine into another century, traveling in space, as well, to the Europe of Louis XIV. The expansive, high-ceilinged rooms overwhelmed the eye with the rich somber colors and the heavy forms of Baroque art and furniture. Shells, acanthus leaves, volutes, garlands, and scrolls-often gilded decorated the museum-quality antique Bombay chests, chairs, tables, massive mirrors, cabinets, and etageres.. He briefly closed his hand around the three coins, then with a snap of his wrist, flung them at Nolly, who flinched. But either the coins were never flung or they vanished in midair-and his hand was empty.. The night of Barty's birth, when Joey actually lay dead in the pickup-bashed Pontiac, as a paramedic had rolled Agnes's gurney to the back door of the ambulance, she had seen her husband standing there, untouched by that rain as her son was untouched by this. But Joey-dry-in-the-storm had been a ghost or an illusion fostered by shock and loss of blood.. Indeed, the tree inspired him. After he shot the girl, he would open the window and toss her body into the oak Let Celestina find her there, randomly pierced by branches in a freestyle crucifixion.. "Sure. Or why don't I pull a Rumpelstiltskin and demand one of her children for payment' ". Junior spoke the three words aloud and felt a strange resonance between them and his dim memories of Reverend White's voice on that long-ago night. Yet the link, if any actually existed, remained elusive.. The detective shrugged. "The girl might've had her baby at a third rate hospital, one with poor control of patients' records and a less professional staff. Or the kid might have been placed for adoption through some baby brokerage in it strictly for the money. Then there would've been opportunities to learn something. But as soon as I discovered it was St. Mary's, I knew we were screwed." Everyone confronted Agnes with expressions of puzzlement and expectation, and she looked from one to another. Paul. Maria. Francesca. Bonita. Grace. Edom. Jacob. Finally Celestina.. Pain again, but not a mere contraction. Such an excruciation, unendurable. The hobnailed wheels ground through her once more, as though she were being broken on a medieval torture device.. "Hasn't the sheriff's department already reached a determination of accidental death?" Parkhurst asked. "They're good men, good cops, every last one of them," said Vanadium, "and if they've got more pity in them than I do, that's a virtue, not a shortcoming. What could Mr. Cain have taken to make himself vomit?" Junior found no answers before the owner of the diner blocked him from proceeding out of the kitchen into the storeroom and the service alley beyond. Simultaneously sweating and chilled, Junior cursed him, and the confrontation became ugly.. "There is no king in Earthsea," the young man said, stern and righteous, "In my master's service, then," Hound amended, patient.. "Well, the blood wasn't dark and acidic, so it didn't come from his stomach. It was bright and alkaline. It could have arisen in the esophagus, but most likely it's pharyngeal in origin." Wally switched off the engine and killed the headlights. "Home, where the heart is." I got Starkweather, killing all those people with no hope of personal gain. You got maniac cops and this new war in Vietnam.. Junior and Naomi had taken their dried apricots from the same bag. Reached in the bag without looking. Shook them out into the palms of their hands. She could not have controlled which pieces of fruit he received and which she ate.. Her special son, walking where the rain wasn't, had made all things seem possible.. Room by room, closet by closet, Junior conducted a search for the detective. The cop was not here.. She proceeded down the shadowy center aisle, genuflected at the chancel railing, and went to the votive rack.. "Ouch," said Edom, and this earned him loving smiles from Maria, Agnes, and Barty.. Returning from his tests, he'd gotten into bed without stripping off the thin, hospital-issue robe. He was still wearing it over his pajamas.. So that my mind could move about among the years and centuries without getting things all out of order, and to keep contradictions and discrepancies at a minimum while I was writing these stories, I became (somewhat) more systematic and methodical, and put my knowledge of the peoples and their history together into "A Description of Earthsea." Its function is like that of the first big map I drew of all the Archipelago and the Reaches, when I began to work on A Wizard of Earthsea over thirty years ago: I needed to know where things are, and how to get from here to there-in time as well as in space.. "I'm gifted to a small extent, and it's an unusual gift," he admitted. "Nothing world-shaking. More than anything, really, it's a special perception I've been given. Angel's gift seems to be different from mine but related. In fifty years, she's the first I've ever met who's somewhat like me. I'm still shaking inside from the shock of finding her. But please, let's

save this for Bright Beach and a better evening. You go down there tomorrow with Paul, okay? I'll stay here to look after Wally. When he's able to travel, I'll bring him with me. I know you'll want him to hear what I have to say, too. Is it a deal?". As to the distressing matter of Seraphim's daughter, Junior at first decided to return to San Francisco to torture the truth out of Nolly Wulfstan. Then he realized that he'd been referred to Wulfstan by the same man who had told him that Thomas Vanadium was missing and was believed to be Victoria Bressler's killer..He had visited the library primarily to confirm that Harrison White was unquestionably dead. He'd shot the man four times. Two bullets 'in the gas tank of the stolen Pontiac destroyed the parsonage and should have incinerated the reverend. When you were dealing with black magic, however, you could never be too cautious..Before they set out for the amusement park, Agnes pulled him aside, held him close, and said, "Listen, kid of mine, I'm not giving up. Don't think I ever would. Let's have fun today. This evening, you and I and Angel will convene a meeting of the North Pole Society of Not Evil Adventurers"-the girl had become the third member years ago" and all truths will be told and secrets known. ".Frowning, Angel studied the tasty strip of meat pinched between her fingers, reevaluating everything she thought she knew about the source of bacon..Nevertheless, his sense of violation grew as he paced these now songless rooms, mystified and frustrated. On April 19, the unmanned Surveyor 3, after landing on the lunar surface, began transmitting photos to Earth, and when Junior stepped out of his morning shower, he again heard the eerie singing, which seemed to arise from a place more distant, more alien, than the moon..She switched on the windshield wipers. Repeatedly, in the arc of cleared glass, the graveyard was revealed in sharp detail, and yet the place remained less than fully familiar to her. Her whole world had been changed by Barty's dry walk in wet weather..During the rest of that first year, he walked to Palm Springs and back, a round trip of more than two hundred miles, and north to Santa Barbara..As though Amelia Earhart, the long-lost aviatrix, had reached out of her twilight zone and snared the two bits, no tumbling coin glinted in the air above the desk..Shortly before three o'clock, Thursday afternoon, in a state of agitation, Barty raced into the kitchen, where Agnes was baking buttermilk-raisin pies. Holding Red Planet open to pages 104 and 105, he complained urgently that the library copy was defective. "There's twisty spots in the print, twisty-funny letters, so you can't just exactly read all the words. Can we buy our own copy, go out and buy one right now?". His body ached, too, especially his back, from the battering that he had taken. He remembered hitting the floor with his chin, and he supposed that he might have gotten knocked about the face more than he realized or remembered. If so, there would be bruises soon, but bruises would fade with time; in the interim, they might make him even more attractive to women, who would want to console him and kiss away the pain-especially when they discovered that he had sustained his injuries in a brutal fight, while rescuing a neighbor from a would-be rapist.."It's not a specific brand you can't have, it's the whole idea of a candy bar.".He smiled and shrugged. "I used to be a fisher of men. Now I hunt them. One in particular.".After much oily commiseration, sanctimonious babble about Naomi having gone to a better place, and insincere talk of the government's desire always to ensure the public safety and to treat every citizen with compassion, Knacker or Hisscus, or Nork, finally got around to the issue of compensation.."Where did it go?" Grace asked her granddaughter, making as much effort as she could to lighten the mood for the girl's sake..Done with dolls for now, Barty and Angel went upstairs to his room, where the book that talked waited patiently in silence. With her colored pencils and a large pad of drawing paper, she clambered onto the cushioned window seat. Barty sat up in bed and switched on the tape player that stood on the nightstand..Furrowing her brow and narrowing her eyes as though prepared to scold him, she slowly lowered her face to his, until their noses were touching, and she whispered, "Because it's more fun if it's secret.". "But in 'This Momentous Day,' Bartholomew is just the disciple, the historical figure, and he's also a metaphor for the unforeseen consequences of even our most ordinary actions.".self-controlled as he would need to be in any interrogation conducted by this brush-cut, thick-necked toad..Wally had disposed of his properties in San Francisco under Tom's careful supervision. Any attempt to trace him from the city to Bright Beach would fail. His vehicles were purchased through a corporation, and his new house had been bought through a trust named after his late wife..Celestina didn't hear gunfire, but she couldn't mistake the bullets for anything else when they cracked through the door..When Angel came in search of Barty, breathless with excitement, he was chatting with Tom Vanadium in the foundation's office above the garages. Years ago, the two apartments had been combined and expanded when the garages under them were doubled in size, providing better living quarters for Tom and working space, as well..He turned over the two most recent discards. Neither was a jack of spades, and both were what he expected them to be..Clinging to the desperate hope of an ultimate reunion, he put the gun away, went to the kitchen, and made a grilled-cheese sandwich: cheddar, with dill pickles on the side..Paul realized that the kitchen had fallen silent, that the women had turned to the two children and now stood as motionless as figures in a waxworks tableau..The 9-mm pistol and the ammunition were on the foyer table. With trembling hands, Junior tore open the boxes and loaded the gun..Thanks to his intelligence and his personality, Barty's presence was so great for his age that Agnes tended to think of him as being physically larger and stronger than he actually was. As the scent of grass grew more complex and even more appealing, she saw her son more clearly than she'd seen him in a while: quite small, fatherless yet brave, burdened with a gift that was a blessing but that also made a normal boyhood impossible, forced to grow up at a up faster pace than any child should be required to endure. Barty was achingly delicate, so vulnerable that when Agnes looked at him, she felt a little of the awful sense of helplessness that burdened Edom and Jacob..The air was cool but not yet cold. A faint breeze smelled of the sea beyond the hill..Maria was hand-repairing some of Joey's clothes, which Agnes had meticulously damaged earlier in the day..His instructor, Bob Chicane-who visited twice a week for an hour-advised him to imagine a perfect fruit as the object of his meditation. An apple, a grape, an orange, whatever.."They've gone to bed. They're tired," Wally told her as he put the car in gear and released the hand brake. "Aren't you?".The gas oven might blow up in his face, at

last bringing him peace, but if it didn't, he would at least have cookies for Agnes. In spite of the gloom, the boy's miraculous accomplishment was evident: his clothes and hair were dry as though he'd worn a coat and hood. Dr. Chan's manner remained professional, providing the strength that Agnes required, but his pain was evident when his gentle voice softened further: "These tumors are so advanced, we won't know until surgery if the malignancy has spread. We may already be too late. And if we aren't too late, we'll have only a small window of opportunity. A small window. Eight days would entail too much risk." 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. "Who?" she shouted, though they were perched side by side on a black-leather love seat. "That's the roaster tower," said Licky. "Where they cook the cinnabar to get the metal from it. Roasters die in a year or two. Where to, dowsers?" To believe that any man with such a hard gut slung over his belt, with a bull neck. The longer he crouched, head cocked, breathing silently through his open mouth, the more convinced Junior became that he had heard a man approaching. Indeed, the terrible conviction grew that someone was standing immediately in front of the dumpster, head cocked, also breathing through his open mouth, listening for Junior even as Junior listened for him. In answer, Wally came running with his heavy medical bag, as he was vow doctor to some people on the pie route. "The weather's a lot better than I expected, so I went back to change into lighter clothes." Hunched over his desk, leaning forward conspiratorially, his piggy eyes glittering like those of an ogre discussing his favorite recipe for cooking children, Nolly said, "I've been able to confirm your suspicions. It to the granite-topped secretary, and sat in front of the telephone. Previously, Edom felt uneasy in this kingdom of a strange god. The god that his brother feared was humanity, its dark compulsions, its arrogance. Edom, on the other hand, trembled before Nature, whose wrath was so great that one day she would destroy all things, when the universe collapsed into a super dense nugget of matter the size of a pea. The grass, silent because he is barely conscious, too badly beaten to protest or to plead for mercy, but also. Although a believer, Agnes was not at the moment able to spread the flowers and ferns of faith over the hard, ugly reality of death. Cowled and skeletal, Death was here, all right, scattering his seeds among all her gathered friends, one day to reap them. 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. His artificial eyes were almost a month old. He'd been through surgery to have the eye-moving muscles attached to the conjunctiva, and everybody told him that the look and movement were absolutely real. In fact, they had told him this so often, in the first week or two, that he became suspicious and figured that his new eyes were totally out of control and spinning like pinwheels. Evidently, Jacob had made a quick trip to his apartment over the garage and, with no thought for mice and dust, had not closed the back door. Junior said, "You've caused me a lot of trouble, you know." He'd been building a beautiful rage all night, thinking about what he'd been through because of the girl's temptress mother, whom he saw so clearly in this pint-size bitch. "So much trouble." 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. Dr. Salk returned the photos, put a hand on Paul's shoulder, and smiled. "But that's always the way, you see? Heroes always get back more than they give. The act of giving assures the getting back." Junior said, "I should know your name from the playbill at the lounge, but I'm as bad with names as you are good with faces." 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. Grace White was petite, and Paul wasn't. Otherwise he might not have been able to halt her determined rush toward her husband, might not have been able to scoop her off her feet and, carrying her in his arms, spirit her to safety. Dining room. Two place settings at one end of the table. Wineglasses. Two ornate pewter candlesticks, candies not yet lit. Flanking the wheelchair, Edom and Jacob spent less time watching the graveside service than studying the sky. Both brothers frowned at that cloudless blue, as though seeing thunderheads. "That's right," Celestina told Wally. "This isn't wagering. What's wrong with you?" He desperately needed closure in the matter of Naomi's death. That was what these past three years and these supernatural events were all about. On the drive home, Junior dropped the knife down a storm drain in Larkspur. He tossed the gloves in a Dumpster in Corte Madera. "You sounded as though you were in a lot of distress. You were frightened of this Bartholomew." WITH BRIGHT BEACH under assault by one miserable flu and by an uncountable variety of common colds, business was brisk this Monday at Damascus Pharmacy. A man with beautiful celadon eyes, his face beaded with jewels of rain, reached through the cut-away door and removed the blanket from Agnes. The man's voice echoed hollowly in Junior's ears, as if coming from the far end of a tunnel. Or from the terminus of a death-row hallway, on the long walk between the last meal and the execution chamber. The sensual memories of his torrid evening with Seraphim had left Junior aroused. Unfortunately, the only female nearby was Industrial Woman, and he wasn't that desperate. "For one thing, jurors might conclude that the authorities never really suspected you and tried to frame you for murder to conceal their culpability in the poor maintenance of the tower. By far, most of the cops think you're innocent anyway." Her voice as bright as her bed ensemble, spiritual sister to baby chicks everywhere, yellow Angel raised her head from the pillow and said, "Will you have a wedding?" The stumpy ghost departed the sliding stairs at the second floor and walked off into women's sportswear. Tom believed that the girl had an intuitive understanding of the true complexity of the world, but she was only three, after all, and neither ready nor able to absorb the scientific theory that supported her

intuition..altogether by taking slow deep breaths, slow deep breaths, and by remembering that each of us has a right to be happy, to be fulfilled, to be free of fear.. "I'd give anything if it hadn't happened," he said earnestly. And now a tortured note wrung wet emotion from his voice "I only wish it had been me who died." He was too sensitive a soul to be able to take either a handsaw or a power saw to a corpse.. Nevertheless, he stepped away from the wall, and with his hands extended to full arm's length, he turned, feeling the lightless world around him. Nothing. No one.. In reaction to a terrible sense of weightlessness, Agnes's two-fisted grip on the steering wheel grew so tight her hands ached. She held on with all her strength, as if at real risk of floating out of the car and up toward the source of the raveling skeins of rain.. Antihypertensive drugs were administered intravenously, and Phimie was confined to bed, attached to a heart monitor.. Vanadium flipped the quarter straight into the air and at once spread his arms, palms turned up to show that his hands were empty.. As beautiful as they were, none of these women satisfied him as profoundly as Naomi had satisfied him.. The pair of sliding doors at the living-room archway stood half open. Beyond, voices drew Paul against his will.. One of the coin seekers knocked against Junior, jarring him loose of his paralysis, but when he stumbled out of the line of fire of the second vending machine, a third machine shot quarters at him.. Her case of polio had been so severe that braces and crutches were never an option. Muscle rehabilitation had been ineffective.. Edom, eager to learn precisely when a tidal wave or falling asteroid would bring his doom, fetched a pack of cards from a cabinet in the parlor. When Maria explained that only every third card was read and that a full look at the future required four decks, Edom returned to the parlor to scare up three more.. The shakes returned, became more violent than previously--and then once more passed.. On the short return trip to the ophthalmologist, Agnes crazily considered driving past Chan's office building, cruising onward--ever onward--into the sparkling December night, not just back to Bright Beach, where the bad news would simply come by phone, but to places so far away that the diagnosis could never catch up to them, where the disease would remain unnamed and therefore would have no power over Barty.. She sat on the end of the table, where Barty had sat, now at eye level with the standing physician.. Junior couldn't see the lights of the nearest other houses. Either those structures were screened by trees or the neighbors weren't home.

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