

## **Y AN INQUIRY INTO THE CLAIMS OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION AND THE SUPERNAT**

Kennedy, whose portraits hung side by side, the girl revealed to their mom and dad what had been done to her and also what, in her despair. Hope was the handmaid to Agnes's faith. She always held fast to the belief that the future would be bright, but right now she was hesitant to test that optimism even with a harmless card reading. Yet, as with the fifth place setting, she was reluctant to object. Nolly finally disturbed the quiet: "Well, sir ... you're quite a psychologist." "Really, Angel," Barty said with genuine concern, "it might be scary. I got another one we could listen to, if you want." She said, "Honey, what I'm wondering is ... could you walk where you don't have bad eyes, like you walked where the rain wasn't ... and leave the tumors in that other place? Could you walk where you have good eyes and come back with them?" Besides, he wasn't on the Greenbaum Gallery customer list and didn't have an invitation. When her hand went limp in Celestina's, her body sagged, too, and her eyes were no longer either focused or rolling wildly. They shimmered into stillness, darkled with death, as the cardiac monitor sang the one long note that signified flatline. Only madmen were capable of such butchery. Hopeless lunatics like Ed Gein, out there in Wisconsin, arrested just seven years ago, when Junior had been sixteen. Ed, the inspiration for Psycho, had constructed mobiles out of human noses and lips. He used human skin to make lampshades and to upholster furniture. His soup bowls had once been human skulls. He ate the hearts and selected other organs of his victims, wore a belt fashioned from nipples, and occasionally danced under the moon while masked by the scalp and face of a woman he had murdered. With only a faint twinge of sentimental longing, he drove away from the house that had been his and Naomi's love nest for fourteen blissful months. They wanted to go up to Barty's room, but she refused them, because there was nothing more they could do for the boy than they had done for her. "He wants to finish reading Starman Jones, and I'm not letting anything interfere with that. We're leaving for Newport Beach at seven in the morning, and you can see him then." He found himself looking over his shoulder more than once. By the time he returned to his room, he felt half crushed by anxiety. "He came through the surgery well. He'll be in post-op for a while, then brought here to the ICU. His condition's critical, but there are degrees of critical, and I believe we'll be able to upgrade him to serious long before this day is over. He's going to make it." That night her sleep was deeper than it had been in a long time, deep as she had expected sleep would never be again, and she was not plagued by any dreams at all, not a dream of children suffering, nor of tumbling in a car along a rain-washed street, nor of thousands of windblown dead leaves rattling-hissing along a deserted street and every leaf in fact a jack of spades. "Well, you see, that's the funny thing about all the important choices we make. If we make a really big wrong choice, if we do the really awful wrong thing, we're given another chance to continue on the right path. So the very moment I stupidly stepped off the curb without looking, I created another world where I did look both ways and saw the rhinoceros coming. And so-". More walls than not, in both rooms, were lined with bookshelves and file cabinets. Here he kept numerous case studies of accidents, man-made disasters, serial killers, spree killers: proof undeniable that humanity was a fallen species engaged in both the unintentional and calculated destruction of itself. So they had cooked up this project, math and mayhem, geometry of limbs and branches, arboreal science and childish stunt, a test of strategy and strength and skill-and of the scary limits of nine-year-old bravado. Somewhere in the world he had a deadly enemy: Bartholomew, who had something to do with babies, a total stranger yet an implacable foe. Maria's mother, visiting from Mexico, was babysitting, so Maria came without her children, as a guest, joining Agnes and the laugh-a-minute Isaacson twins, chroniclers of destruction. They ate in the dining room, rather than at the kitchen dinette, with a lace-trimmed tablecloth, the good china, crystal wineglasses, and fresh flowers. Relieved but still wary, he toured the small house again to be sure doors and windows were locked. Sometimes he thought he walked for Perri, using the steps she had stored up and never taken, giving expression to her unfulfilled yearning to travel. At other times, he thought he walked for the solitude that allowed him to remember their life in fine detail-or to forget. To find peace--or seek adventure. To gain understanding through contemplation---or to scrub all thought from his mind. To see the world or to be rid of it. Perhaps he hoped that coyotes would stalk him through a bleak twilight or a mountain lion set upon him on a hungry dawn, or a drunk driver run him down..with an encircling and suggestive lick, and then licked his lips, too, when the cold steel slipped free of them. Airborne, Phimie complained of ringing in her ears, which might have been related to the flight. She also suffered an episode of double vision and, in the airport after landing, a nosebleed, which appeared to be related to her previous symptoms. 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. "Wait," said Deed, holding out one hand either beseechingly or to block the door. "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." "Oh!" She blotted her eyes on the heels of her hands. "Wait! Give me a second chance. I can do it better, I'm sure I can." a deeply troubled John Wayne while the delightful David Niven floated along overhead in a basket suspended from a huge, colorful hot-air balloon. WALTER PANGLO, the only mortician in Bright Beach, was a sweet tempered wisp of a man who enjoyed puttering in his garden when he wasn't planting dead people. He grew prize roses and gave them away in great bouquets to the sick, to young people in love, to the school librarian on her birthday, to clerks who had been polite to him. In his blindness, Barty listened to her reports and, through her, saw more than he could have seen if never he had lost his eyes. "Better hold on tight to her," Wally warned Celestina, braking to a halt at the intersection. "She'll float up and away, then we'll have to call the fire department to get her down." Through the big window

beyond her, the charry branches of the massive oak tree formed a black cat's cradle against the sky, leaves quivering slightly, as though nature herself trembled in trepidation of what Junior Cain might do. "Sure they do," said Wally as he unlocked the two deadbolts. "But you gotta be twenty-one years old to get a license for one." Angel. A less exotic synonym for her own name. Seraphim's angel. The angel of an angel. "I see. Sometimes. Just quick. For like a blink. Like when you stand between two mirrors. You know?" So runs the water away, away. Requests for permission to make copies of any part of the work should be mailed to the following address: "I'm no hero," Paul insisted. "I just got your mom out of there in the process of saving myself." Rico, her own husband—a drunkard and a gambler—had run off with another woman, abandoning Maria and their two small daughters. No doubt, he had departed in a spotlessly clean, sharply pressed, perfectly mended ensemble. Halos and rainbows loomed in her memory, ominous as they had never been before. The nurse was in was gone, but Maria remained in attendance. She the vinyl-and-stainless-steel armchair, busy at. Clenching his right hand around the quarter, waving left hand over right, he intoned, "Jingle-jangle, mingle-jingle." Opening his right hand, he revealed that the coin had vanished. In his mind, Junior saw a quarter turning knuckle over knuckle, and he heard the maniac cop's droning voice: There's a fine George and Ira Gershwin song called "Someone to Watch over Me." "You ever hear it, Enoch? I'm that someone for you, although not, of course, in a romantic sense." "There's a valuable lesson in that," Agnes said. "Others can learn from it if you care to share. But if you want to record your life only up to the card cheating, that's okay, too. Even that far, it's a fascinating journey, a story that shouldn't be lost with you when you pass on. Libraries are packed with biographies of movie stars and politicians' most of them not capable of as much meaningful self-analysis as you'd get from a toad. We don't need to know more about celebrities' lives, Obadiah. What might help us, what might even save us, is knowing more about the lives of real people who've never made it even medium but who know where they came from and why." Once he had toured the exhibition, managing not to shudder openly, he tried to hang out within hearing distance of Celestina White, but without appearing to be listening with special intensity. "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?" This trick, however, was far more difficult than walking where the rain wasn't. Sustaining vision took both a mental and physical toll from him. This Monday afternoon, he longed for the escape and solace of half-hour pulp adventure. But he decided that he ought to at last compose the letter he'd been meaning to write for at least ten days. "I'm not going anywhere," she pledged. She had realized that his voice was growing heavy with sleep. "But it's time for you to go to dreamland." "No. Lampion. Somewhere in your father's French background, there must have been lamp makers. A lampion is a small lamp, an oil lamp with a tinted-glass chimney. Among other things, in those long ago days, they used them on carriages." "Blood tests should reveal whether the child's yours or not. That also might explain all this." After mentally reviewing what he must say, after working up a nervous edge, he dialed the SFPD emergency number. As they dropped toward the surgical floor, the solemn sister said, "Another hypertensive crisis. Smiling, pulling the blanket more tightly around herself, she said, "You look after your old mom, don't you?" playing cards, Agnes fixated on Deed's blond bangs, which curled across his broad brow. 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. After a bit Otter nodded left, away from the grey stone tower. They walked on towards a long, treeless valley, past grass-grown dumps and tailings. Briefly, Junior felt humiliated. He wanted to drag the detective out of the car and stomp on his smug, dead face. "Yours is a harder job than mine," Lipscomb told Grace, dandling Angel as he spoke. "I have no doubt of that." With a nervous twitch of his avian head and a wary frown, the watcher broke eye contact and slipped into the chattering crowd, lost as quickly as a slender sandpiper skittering among a herd of plump seagulls. "Paul," she said, "you've got a lovely house, but Celestina and Grace are doers. They need to keep occupied. They'll go stir-crazy if they don't stay busy. Am I right, ladies?" "Some places, it has to be like that." some places it has to be that your eyes are okay?" After the amusement park, no hospital for the Pie Lady. With Wally near, she had a doctor all her own, capable of giving her the anticancer drugs and transfusions that she required. While radiation therapy is prescribed for acute lymphoblastic leukemia, it is much less useful to treat myeloblastic cases, and in this instance, it wasn't deemed helpful, which made treatment at home even easier. "That would be John George Haigh," Agnes said, checking Barty's diaper before nestling him tenderly in the crook of her arm. Later, at home, he gargled until he had drained half a bottle of mint-flavored mouthwash, took the longest shower of his life, and then used the other half of the mouthwash. Tom Vanadium merely arched one eyebrow, as if to say that more than a single answer ought to be obvious. In the foyer, Hanna Rey and Nellie Oatis sat side by side on the stairs. Hanna, the housekeeper, was gray-haired and plump. Nellie, was Perri's daytime-companion, could have passed for Hanna's sister. With that thought, he made himself laugh. Unfortunately, his laughter was high-pitched and shaky, and it scared the hell out of him. Grace and Celestina fell at once into the rhythms of kitchen work, not only brewing the coffee, but also helping Agnes with the pies. Celestina stared out for a moment, and then turned her head to look at Tom, with both the shade of the night and the sparkle of the metropolis still captured in her eyes. "What was that all about?" Reading the dates on the headstone, he saw that the minister's daughter had died on the seventh of January, the day after Naomi had fallen from the fire tower. If ever asked, Junior would have no trouble accounting for his whereabouts on that day. Mrs. Lombardi had no visitors. She was alone in the world, her two children and her husband having passed away long ago. Yet his curious attraction to these newborns kept him at the window, and he began to believe that unconsciously he had intended to come here from the moment he guided his walker out of his room. He'd been compelled to come. Drawn by some mysterious magnetism. Odder yet, the pianist had studied him with a keen interest that was inexplicable, since they were essentially strangers. When caught staring, he'd appeared rattled, turning away quickly, eager to

avoid further contact..Knacker or Hisscus, or Nork, was talking about an offering, as though Naomi were a goddess to whom they wished to present a penance of gold and jewels..The bow business had started a few months ago. Angel said she wanted to look pretty in her sleep, in case she met a handsome prince in her dreams..Tom pointed to the nearly finished martini that stood on the table before him. Balanced on the thin rim of the glass: impossibly, precariously--the coin.."It was in your heart, too, and anything that's in your heart is there for anyone to see. Will your father marry us?"..In the kitchen, a delicious aroma wafted from the oven. On the stove stood a large pot over a low flame, and nearby was pasta to be added to the water when it came to a boil..Instead, trying not to let Barty see the depth of her concern, she told him to get his jacket from the front closet, and she got hers, and leaving the buttermilk-raisin pies unfinished, she drove him to the doctor's office, because he was her reason to breathe, the engine of her heart, her hope and joy, her everlasting bond to her lost husband. Dr. Joshua Nunn was only forty-eight, but he had appeared grandfatherly since Agnes had first gone to him as a patient after the death of her father, more than ten years ago. His hair turned pure white before he was thirty. Every day off, he either worked assiduously on his twenty-foot sportfisher, Hippocratic Boat, which he scraped and painted and polished and repaired with his own hands, or pattered around Bright Bay in it, fishing as though the fate of his soul depended on the size of his catch; consequently, he spent so much time in the salt air and sun that his perpetually tan face was well-wizened at the corners of his eyes and as appealingly creased as that of the best of grandfathers. Joshua applied the same diligence to the preservation of a round belly and a second chin that he brought to the maintenance of his boat, and considering his wire-rimmed eyeglasses and bow tie and suspenders and the elbow patches on his jacket, he seemed to have intentionally sculpted his physical appearance to put his patients at ease, as surely as he had selected his wardrobe for the same purpose..PUDDLED ON THE pan-flat face, the port-wine birthmark. In the center of the stain, the closed eye, concealed by a purple lid, as smooth and round as a grape..Babies of unwed mothers-especially of dead unwed mothers, and especially of dead unwed mothers whose fathers were ministers unable to endure public mortification-were routinely put up for adoption. Since Seraphim had given birth here, the baby would be-no doubt already had been-adopted by a San Francisco-area family..ONWARD THROUGH THIS Monday, January 17, this momentous day, when the ending of one thing is the beginning of another..Although only half the stools at the counter were occupied, and none of those close to Junior, customers were seated in most of the booths. Some had their backs to him, and three were about Vanadium's size..Celestina was amazed by her own courage in combat and by the steady calm that served her so well now. She wasn't shaken by the thought of what might have happened to her, and to her daughter, because her mind and her heart were with Wally-and because, having been watered with hope all of her life, she had a deep reservoir on which to draw in a time of drought..Under other circumstances, Agnes might have blushed, but now her apparently irrational fear of too much life insurance had been vindicated..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.."Sitters. Friends, relatives of friends. People I can trust. I can afford sitters if I'm getting only dinner tips."..He found the strength to squeeze her hand tighter than before. "Be safe. Keep Angel safe."..Agnes was not fully aware of how she was lifted from the car, but she remembered looking back and seeing Joey's body huddled in the tangled shadows of the wreckage, remembered reaching toward him, desperate for the anchorage that he had always given her, and then she was on the gurney and moving..That was all right, for she had done the same for Otter's elder sister, and so his parents sent him to her in the evenings. But she taught Otter more than the song of the Creation. She knew his gift. She and some men and women like her, people of no fame and some of questionable reputation, had all in some degree that gift; and they shared, in secret, what lore and craft they had. "A gift untaught is a ship unguided," they said to Otter, and they taught him all they knew. It wasn't much, but there were some beginnings of the great arts in it; and though he felt uneasy at deceiving his parents, he couldn't resist this knowledge, and the kindness and praise of his poor teachers. "It will do you no harm if you never use it for harm," they told him, and that was easy for him to promise them..Junior had walked along the big show windows, studying the two White paintings displayed to passersby, appalled by their beauty, when suddenly the door had opened and a gallery employee had invited him to come in. No printed invitation needed, no cool test to pass, no bouncers keeping the gate. Such easy accessibility served as proof, if you needed it, that this was not real art..Junior could neither speak nor even mewl in agony. All the saliva had been draining forward, out of his open mouth, for so long that his throat was parched and raw. He felt as though he had munched on a snack of salted razor blades that were now stuck in his pharynx. His rattling wheeze sounded like scuttling scarabs..She couldn't explain her anxiety to him, because he believed in the supremacy of laws, in the justice that might be delivered in this life, in a comparatively simple reality, and he would not comprehend the gloriously, frighteningly, reassuringly, strangely, and deeply complex reality Agnes occasionally perceived-usually peripherally, sometimes intellectually, but often with her heart. This was a world in which effect could come before cause, in which what seemed to be coincidence was, in fact, merely the visible part of a far larger pattern that couldn't be seen whole..Clearly, the musician recognized him, which seemed unlikely, even extraordinary, considering that they'd never spoken to each other, and considering that Junior must be only one of thousands of customers who had passed through that lounge in the past three years..He was still her boy. As always, her boy. Bartholomew. Barty. Her sweetie. Her kiddo..The round table seated six, but they required only three chairs, because the two brainless friends were a pair of Angel's dolls..Although Junior had not answered, Vanadium said, "Yes, I thought you heard it."..Aftermath had a way of being discovered,

often at the worst of all possible moments, which he had learned from movies and from crime stories in the media and even from personal experience. Discovery always brought the police at high speed, sounding their sirens and full of enthusiasm, because those bastards were the most past-focused losers on the face of the earth, utterly consumed by their interest in aftermath.. "You might as well beat a cloud for raining," said Otter's mother..Through the remainder of his dinner, he was entirely future focused, the past put safely out of mind. Until ....Heart racing, but reminding himself that strength and wisdom arose from a calm mind, Junior stood in the center of the small kitchen, slowly turning to study every angle of the room..Increasingly, he used meditation to relieve stress. He was so skilled at concentrative meditation without seed-blanking his mind-that half an hour of it was as refreshing as a night's sleep.. "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."..According to the brief biographic note with the picture, Celestina White was a graduate of San Francisco's Academy of Art College. She had been born and raised in Spruce Hills, Oregon, the daughter of a minister..efficiency of a nurse, but as a courtesan might perform the task: smiling enticingly, a flirtatious glimmer in.A sofa and one armchair provided the seating in the living room. No coffee table. A small table beside the chair. A wall unit held a fine stereo system and a few hundred record albums..Worse, the people who adopted Seraphim's baby might be anywhere in the nine-county Bay Area. Millions of phone listings to scan..She was sopping, shivering. Water streamed from her soaked hair, down her face, as she wiped at her beaded eyelashes with one dripping hand..At many houses, strings of Christmas lights painted patterns of color at the eaves, around the window frames, and along the porch railings-all so blurred by fog that Junior seemed to be moving through a dreamscape with Japanese lanterns..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..If the state police did get involved, and even if they found evidence that the accident was staged, they would most likely point the finger of blame at the man for whom Victoria had been preparing dinner..The paramedic pulled shut the door, leaving Joey outside in the night, in the storm, in the wind between worlds..He smiled ruefully. "Might be ready for a wedding by then, but not a honeymoon."..Regrettably, his radiant smile only emphasized, by contrast, the dire shortcomings of the face from which it beamed. Lumpish, pocked, wart-stippled, darkened by a permanent beard shadow with a bluish cast, this countenance was beyond the powers of redemption possessed by the best plastic surgeons in the world, which was no doubt why Nolly applied his resources strictly to dental work..Thereafter, he was repelled at the prospect of kissing her, and their relationship fell apart..This unflinching consistency of packaging enables card mechanics, professional gamblers, sleight-of-hand magicians-to manipulate a new deck with confidence that they know, starting, where every card can be found in the stack. An expert mechanic with practiced and dexterous hands can appear to shuffle so thoroughly that even the most suspicious observer will be satisfied-yet he will still know exactly where every card is located in the deck. With masterly manipulation, he can place the cards in the order that he wishes, to achieve whatever effect he desires..Junior must have shouted shut up more than he realized, because the neighbors began to pound on the wall to silence him..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..Avoiding the graveled driveway, on which he was more likely to scuff his freshly polished loafers, he approached the house across the lawn, beneath the moon-sifting branches of a great pine that made itself useless for Christmas by spreading as majestically as an oak..Tom didn't understand Edom's comment or the smiles that it drew, but otherwise, he was impressed by the ease with which these people absorbed what he had said and by the imagination with which they began to expand upon his speculation. It was almost as though they had long known the shape of what he'd told them and that he was only filling in a few confirming details..On Joey's side, there was no family to provide help. His mother had died of leukemia when he was four. His dad, fond of beer and brawling--like father not like son-was killed in a bar fight five years later. Without close relatives willing to take him in, Joey went to an orphanage. At nine he wasn't prime adoption material-babies were what was wanted-and he'd been raised in the institution..The expectation with which Tom had been greeted on his arrival was as thin as the air at Himalayan heights compared to the rich stew of anticipation now aboil..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..Celestina met them at the front door and flung her arms around Wally. He let go of his cane-Tom caught it-and returned her embrace with such ardor, kissed her so hard, that evidently residual weakness was no longer a problem..As outgoing as his twin uncles were introverted, Barty didn't withdraw from the festivities. Agnes never needed to remind him that family and guests took precedence over even the most fascinating characters in fiction, and the boy's delight in the company of others pleased his mother and made her proud..His breath was warm against her throat: "And I want to go back home to see some faces."..Too much clatter, drawing attention. No leisure for romance now, no chance for a two-sister score. just kill Celestina, kill Bartholomew, and go, go..A shock-haired, bright-eyed woman with a candle bound to her forehead set down her pick to show Otter a little cinnabar in a bucket, brownish red clots and crumbs. Shadows leapt across the earth face at which the miners worked. Old timbers creaked, dirt sifted down. Though the air ran cool through the darkness, the drifts and levels were so low and narrow the miners had to stoop and squeeze their way. In places the ceilings had collapsed. Ladders were shaky. The mine was a terrifying place; yet Otter felt a sense of shelter in it. He was half sorry to go back

up into the burning day..Wally's help, not just with the apartment, but with his time and love, had made an incalculable difference..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..Junior descended the escalator two steps at a time, not content to let it carry him along at its own pace. When he reached the second floor, however, he found that Vanadium's ghost had done what ghosts do best: faded away. Abandoning his search for the perfect tie chain but determined to remain calm, Junior decided to have lunch at the St. Francis Hotel..He hadn't lied to his mother. She assumed that by some quantum magic, he had regained his sight permanently, and that this came with no cost. He merely allowed her to go to her rest with the comforting misapprehension that her son had been freed from darkness..Jacob's mentor had been a man named Obadiah Sepharad. They had met when Jacob was eighteen, during a period when he'd been committed to a psychiatric ward for a short time, his eccentricity having been briefly mistaken for something worse..and humble. They managed to worry up tuition for art school, but Celestina worked as a waitress to pay for her studio apartment and other needs..Naomi's beautiful countenance rose in his mind, and she looked beautiful for a moment, but then he thought he saw a certain slyness in her angelic smile, a disturbing glint of calculation in her once loving eyes..scraps of night that have lingered long after dawn dart agitatedly in and out of the tree, from branch to branch..His words echoed back to her from July: My cold's just here, not every place I am..Houses made settling noises all the time. That was one reason why he couldn't rely much on sound to guide him through the darkness. A noise he thought had been made by the weight of his tread might as easily have been produced by the house itself as it adjusted to the..The syphilitic-monkey comparison struck Tom Vanadium as bizarre, but it turned out to be a sober judgment based on experience. In his fifties, Sparky had worked as the chief of maintenance at a medical-research laboratory, where-among other projects-monkeys had been intentionally infected with syphilis and then observed over their life span. In the terminal stages, some of the primates engaged in such out? behavior that they had prepared Sparky for his eventual encounter with Enoch Cain..Cold, wind-driven rain slashed through the missing windows, and voices rose in the street as people ran toward the Pontiac-thunder in the distance-and on the air was the ozone scent of the storm and the more subtle and more terrible odor of blood, but none of these hard details could make the moment seem real to Agnes, who, in her deepest nightmares, had never felt more like a dreamer than she felt now..Junior had almost fumbled his fork when he recognized the tune. His heart raced. His hands were suddenly clammy..Tom caused less of a stir in the restaurant than Kathleen had expected. Other diners noticed him, of course, but after one or two looks of shock or pity, they appeared indifferent, though this was undoubtedly the thinnest pretense of indifference. The same quality in him that elicited deferential regard from the waiter apparently ensured that others would be courteous enough to respect his privacy..While Junior had been hospitalized, Vanadium had searched his lace, with or without a warrant. Turnabout was satisfying..For Junior, 1968-the Chinese Year of the Monkey--would be the Year of the Plastic Surgeon. He would require extensive dermabrasion to restore the smoothness and tone to his skin, to be as irresistibly kissable as he had been before. While at it, he would need surgery to make subtle changes in his features. Tricky. He didn't want to trade perfection for anonymity. He must take care to ensure that his postsurgery look, when he let his hair grow in and perhaps dyed it, would be as devastating to women as his previous appearance.. "I get frustrated," he admitted. "Trying to learn how to do things in the dark ... I get pee'd off, as they say." The word need, instead of want, moved Paul to follow the doctor across the coffee shop.. "I'm sure you would be, yes, but I'm afraid I don't have the patience to teach, I'm a performer, not an instructor. I suppose I could give you the name of a good teacher."

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