

# DESIGN RESEARCH IN EDUCATION A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

Clutching the blanket, she thought of the funerary lap robes that red the legs of the deceased in their caskets, for she felt sometimes cove half dead. Both feet in this world-yet walking beside Joey on a strange road Beyond."It's an uncommon reaction," the physician acknowledged, "but not so uncommon as to be rare."The big trees on Vanadium's property also stood bare, allowing a relatively unobstructed view of the house. The back of the residence as dark, but a soft light warmed two windows at the front..with an encircling and suggestive lick, and then licked his lips, too, when the cold steel slipped free of them.No scent of gasoline fouled the air. Apparently, the tank had not burst. Sudden immolation seemed unlikely-but only an hour ago so had Joey's untimely death..Not limited to a survey of the nursing staff on a single floor of the hospital, Junior used the elevators to roam higher and lower. Checking out the skirts..calm. He tried to imagine what Victoria's breasts would look like, freed from all restraint..In a few instances, when his suspicions were aroused in spite of their denials, Junior tracked down their residences. He observed them in the flesh and made additional-and subtle-inquiries of their neighbors until he was satisfied that his quarry was elsewhere..The paramedic pulled shut the door, leaving Joey outside in the night, in the storm, in the wind between worlds..The reverend said, "I'm sure you underestimate my parishioners, Celestina. They won't be scandalized. They'll open their hearts."On this momentous day, however, drawing provided no solace. Frequently, her hands shook, and she could not control the pencil..Her strength was the strength of stones only in the sense that she felt as immovable as rock, yet she found the resources to raise one arm, to place her left hand over Maria's bead-tangled fingers. "But the baby's dead."The January air was crisp, fragrant with evergreens and with the faint salty scent of the distant sea. A curiously yellow moon glowered like a malevolent eye, studying him from between ragged ravelings of dirty clouds..Because the upper part of the hospital bed was somewhat raised, he didn't have to lift his head from the pillow to study the corner where the phantom waited. He peered beyond the IV rack, past the foot of the.By eleven months, his vocabulary had expanded to nineteen words, by Agnes's count: an age when even a precocious child usually spoke three or four at most..... That discord sets up lots of other vibrations, some of which will return to you in ways you might expect ....Yet that evening, when she'd accepted his proposal and asked if he wasn't frightened, he said, "Not anymore."Agnes had the craziest notion that he was counting them, when at is age, Of course, he would have no concept of numbers.."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?"Phimie's speech had been slurred later, as well, immediately following the birth of the baby, when she had struggled to convey her desire to name her daughter Angel..Nearly two weeks ago, in the Spruce Hills hospital, Junior had been drawn by some strange magnetism to the viewing window at the neonatal-care unit. There, transfixed by the newborns, he sank into a slough of fear that threatened to undo him completely. By some sixth sense, he had realized that the mysterious Bartholomew had something to do with babies..judging by the evidence, the nurse was home alone, but Junior raised his voice above the music and called out, "Hello? Is anyone here?"Leaving Frieda unconscious and reeking, a condition in which her bralessness had no power to arouse him, Junior left.."You feel remorse, though," said Agnes. "I can see you do. And not just because of what happened to your hands."hands as she had seen surgeons do in movies, and she could almost believe that she was still at home, in bed, in the fevered throes of a terrible dream..In his apartment once more, enjoying a cognac and a handful of pistachios as Monday changed to Tuesday, he decided that he should make 'preparations for the possibility that he might one day leave incriminating evidence in spite of his precautions. He ought to convert a portion of his assets into easily portable and anonymous wealth, like gold coins and diamonds. Establishing two or three alternate identities, with documentation, also would be wise..Turning away from the window, Celestina grabbed the girl and pushed her toward the bed, whispering, "Down, under."Not that he failed to perform well. As always, he was a bull, a stallion, an insatiable satyr. None of his lovers complained; none had the energy for complaint when he'd finished with them..Although he was a stranger, arriving unannounced, and something of an eccentric by anyone's definition, Paul was received by Grace and Harrison White with warmth and fellowship. At their doorstep, raising his voice to compete with the wailing weather, he hurriedly blurted out his mission, as if they might reel back from his wild windblown presence if he didn't talk quickly enough: "I've walked here from Bright Beach, California, to tell you about an exceptional woman whose life will echo through the lives of countless others long after she's gone. Her husband died the night their son was born, but not before naming the boy Bartholomew, because he'd been so impressed by "This Momentous Day. And now the boy is blind, and I hope you'll be able and willing to give some comfort to his mother." The Whites failed to reel backward, didn't even flinch from his unfortunately explosive statement of purpose. Instead, they invited him into their home, later invited him to dinner, and later still asked him to stay the night in their guest room.,Three doors in the dark hallway: one to the right, ajar, and two to the left, both closed..Edom marveled at Agnes's ability to rise above the past and to transcend so many years of torment. She was able to see the house as simple shelter, whereas to her brothers, it was-and always would be-the place in which their spirits had been shattered. Even living within sight of it would have been out of the question if they had been employed, with options..Initially, the Pacific could not be seen beyond an opaque lens of fog, Yet later, when the mist retreated, the sea itself became a portent of sightlessness: Spread flat and colorless in the morning light, the glassy water reminded her of the depthless eyes of the blind, of that terrible sad vacancy where vision is denied..guarantee against self-incrimination, a slap in the face of justice, a violation of the rights of man..Music played within. An up-tempo number. Possibly swing. He couldn't quite identify the tune..By now, Junior realized that he had been locked in a meditative trance for at least eighteen hours. He had settled into the lotus position at five o'clock Monday afternoon-and Bob Chicane had shown up or their regular instruction

session at eleven Tuesday morning..When she closed the front door and turned away from it, Agnes bumped her swollen belly into Joey. His eyebrows shot up, and he put his hands on her distended abdomen, as if she were more fragile than a robin's egg and more valuable than one by Faberge..In a stolen black Dodge Charger 440 Magnum, Junior Cain shot out of Spruce Hills on as straight a trajectory to Eugene as the winding roads of southern Oregon would allow, staying off Interstate 5, where the policing was more aggressive..Beyond the window, behind veils of rain and fog, the metropolis appeared to be more enigmatic than Stonehenge, as unknowable as any city in our dreams..In his smooth whiteness, Junior felt a pressure on his eyes, and then came visual hallucinations, disturbing his deep inner peace. He felt someone peel up his eyelids, and Bob Chicane's worried face—with the sharp features of a fox, curly black hair, and a walrus mustache—was inches from his..Late Monday afternoon, September 19, Junior returned wearily to his apartment, from another fruitless investigation of a Bartholomew, this one across the bay in Corte Madera. Exhausted by his unending quest, depressed by lack of success, he sought refuge in meditation..Near midnight, she returned to her apartment. Lights out, in bed, staring at the ceiling, she was unable to sleep..Too rattled to want lunch at the St. Francis Hotel or anywhere else, Junior returned to his apartment..Like all ICU waiting rooms, where Death sits patiently, smiling in anticipation, this lounge was clean but drab, and the utilitarian furnishings didn't pamper, as though bright colors and comfort might annoy the ascetic Reaper and motivate him to cut down more patients than otherwise he would have done..Junior realized that killing Renee this very night would be an unthinkable waste. Instead, he could marry her first, enjoy her for a while, and eventually arrange an accident or suicide that left him with all—or at least a significant portion of her assets.. "This momentous day," Thomas Vanadium said quietly, stiff gazing into the grave, "seems full of terrible endings. But like every day, it's actually full of nothing but beginnings."..Even Barty seemed to be attentive, but Angel happily applied crayons to a coloring book and hummed softly to herself..By ones and twos, the festive crowd eventually deconstructed, but for Celestina, an excitement lingered in the usual gallery hush that rebuilt in their wake..Tom himself had decided to build a new life here, as well, assisting Agnes with her ever-expanding work. He was not yet sure whether this would include the rededication to his vows and a return to the Roman collar, or whether he would spend the rest of his days in civvies. He was delaying that decision until the Cain case was resolved..Agnes's faith told her that the world was infinitely complex and full of mystery, and in a peculiar way, Barty's talk of infinite possibilities supported her belief and gave her the comfort to sleep. Monday morning, New Year's Day, Agnes carried two suitcases out of the back door, set them on the porch, and blinked in surprise at the sight of Edom's yellow-and-white Ford Country Squire parked in the driveway, in front of the garage. He and Jacob were loading their suitcases into the car.. "Yes," she assured him, though her gaze had dropped from his mouth to his hand, so small, which she held in hers..Kid's room. Bartholomew's room. Furniture in cheerful primary colors. Pooh posters on the wall..As a recreational site, Quarry Lake could be judged only a partial success. During the mining operation, trees were cleared well back from the edge of the dig, so that much of the shore would be unshaded on a hot summer day. And along half the strand, signs were posted warning Ungraded Shore: Immediate Deep Water. In places, where lake met land, the bottom lay over a hundred feet below..In the kitchen were a radio, a toaster, a coffeepot, two place settings of cheap flatware, a small mismatched collection of thrift-shop plates and bowls and mugs, and a freezer full of TV dinners and English muffins..No matter. He was a future-focused, focused man. The past is for losers. No, wait, humility is for losers. "The past is the teat that feeds those too weak to face the future." Yes, that was the line from Zedd that Junior had stitched on a needlepoint pillow..He knocked the pepper shaker on its side, and then with a groan put it upright once more..Celestina circled him, half carrying but also half dragging the chair, either because her nerves were still ringing and her arms were weak—or because she was faking weakness in the hope of luring him to a reckless response. Junior circled her while she rounded oil him frantically trying to deal with the pistol without taking his eyes off his adversary.. "Cancer," he said, because that was more tragic and far less suspicious than a fall from a fire tower..When all were gathered on the porch, lined up across the head of the steps and along the railing, in chill damp air that smelled faintly of ozone and less faintly of jasmine, Barty said, "Mr. Vanadium, your quarter trick is really cool. But here's something out of Heinlein.".. "This will stay with you," Mary said. "It's shared sight from all the other yous in all the other places, but you won't have to make any effort to hold on to it. No headaches. No problems ever. Merry Christmas, Daddy.".. "Yes, I was." She didn't tell him that her fear had not been allayed by his assurances or by his second walk in the rain.. "He knew how you felt about having too much life insurance. So he didn't disclose it to you."..Though she was only a week past her third birthday, Angel always selected her own clothes and carefully dressed herself. Usually she preferred monochromatic outfits, sometimes with a single accent color expressed only in a belt or a hat, or a scarf. When she mixed several colors, the initial impression that she gave was of chromatic chaos—but on second look, you began to see that these unlikely combinations were more harmonious than they had first seemed..Not a word of that would come to Paul, but his frustrating speechlessness might have been for the best. From everything he knew about this hero, such effusive praise would embarrass him..before used. Boeotian. A dull, obtuse, stupid person. He felt very Boeotian all of a sudden..He didn't pause to lock the house behind them. Bright Beach, in 1965, was as free of criminals as it was untroubled by lumbering brontosaurus..In the morning, at breakfast, from this calmer perspective, he looked back at his tantrum in the middle of the night and wondered if he might be in psychological trouble. He decided not. In November and December, Junior studied arcane texts on the supernatural, went through new women at a pace prodigious even for him, found three Bartholomews, and finished ten needlepoint pillows..Finally wimping out completely, Parkhurst left the room. The heavy door sighed softly shut, silencing the squeak of rubber-soled shoes, the swish of starched uniforms, and other noises made by the busy nurses in the corridor.. "All under here's worked out long since" Licky said. And Otter had begun to be aware of the strange country under his

feet: empty shafts and rooms of dark air in the dark earth, a vertical labyrinth, the deepest pits filled with unmoving water. "Never was much silver, and the watermetal's long gone. Listen, young'un, do you even know what cinnabar is?" Casey and Tutti, her sister Skipper, and dreamboat Ken--and soon the girls had Barty enthusiastically involved in a make-believe world far different from the one in which Heinlein's teenage lead owned an extraordinary alien pet with eight legs, the temperament of a kitten, and an appetite for everything from grizzly bears to Buicks.. "In the early hours of January seventh," Nolly continued, "Miss White died in childbirth, as you figured." Grinning but with an odd edge of concern in his expression that Celestina could see even through her tears, Wally said, "Does that mean you ... you will?" OUR LADY OF SORROWS, quiet and welcoming in the Bright Beach night, humble in dimension, without groin vaults and grand columns and cavernous transepts, restrained in ornamentation, was as familiar to Maria Elena Gonzalez--and as comforting--as her own home. God was everywhere in the world, but here in particular. Maria felt happier the instant she stepped through the entrance door into the narthex.. He halted, made a quick calculation, turned, and moved toward where the back door ought to be. He found it half open.. The sole male guest in whom he took an interest--a big interest was Sklent, the one-name painter whose three canvases were the only art on the walls of Junior's apartment.. Holding his precious face between her hands, she kissed him. She met his gaze, and furiously she blinked away her tears, for she wanted to be clear-sighted, to be looking into his eyes, to see him, the truest part of him in there beyond his eyes, until that very last moment when she could not have him anymore.. The kiss was lovely, long and easy, full of restrained passion that boded well for nights to come in the marriage bed.. The boy's difference was defined as much by what he didn't do as by what he did. For one thing, he didn't observe the Terrible Twos, the period of toddler rebellion that usually frayed the nerves of the most patient parents. No tantrums for the Pie Lady's son, no bossiness, no crankiness.. According to the newspapers, the police also credited him with the murders of Naomi, Victoria Bressler, and Ned Gnathic (whom they had connected to Celestina). He was wanted, too, for the attempted murder of Dr. Walter Lipscomb (evidently Ichabod), for the attempted murder of Grace White, and for assault with intent to kill Celestina White and her daughter, Angel, and for the assault on Lenora Kickmule (whose foxtail-bedecked Pontiac he had stolen in Eugene, Oregon).. Reluctant to leave Joey's body with the oddly jumpy mortician, Jacob nevertheless crossed the porch of the Victorian style funeral home and left without glancing back. He walked one mile home, alert to passing traffic, especially cautious at intersections.. By the time he got back to Spruce Hills, the early night had fallen. The pearly, waxing moon floated over a town that glimmered mysteriously among its richness of trees, flickering and shimmering as though it were not a real town, but a dreamland where a multitude of Gypsy clans gathered by the lambent amber light of lanterns and campfires.. Even Angel, mere wisp of a cherubim, couldn't squeeze through a seven-inch opening.. lawn before they knew that the prodigy's invisible cloak wouldn't accommodate him as it did the girl. Cool, drenching rain pounded Tom at once, and he scooped Barty off the steps as Grace had gathered up scraps of night that have lingered long after dawn dart agitatedly in and out of the tree, from branch to branch.. Now that efforts were being made to control the preeclampsia, Dr. Daines had scheduled a series of tests for the following day. He expected to recommend a cesarean section as soon as Phimie's e's blood pressure was reduced and stabilized, but he didn't want to risk this surgery before determining what complications might have resulted from her restricted diet and the compression of her abdomen.. Because they were smaller than men and could move more easily in narrow places, or because they were at home with the earth, or most likely because it was the custom, women had always worked the mines of Earthsea. These miners were free women, not slaves like the workers in the roaster tower. Gelluk had made him foreman over the miners, Licky said, but he did no work in the mine; the miners forbade it, earnestly believing it was the worst of bad luck for a man to pick up a shovel or shore a timber. "Suits me," Licky said.. "I've seen them," Tom assured her. "My dear, you've never smelled anything better than a field full of bacon vines." "All right," Celestina conceded, and looked relieved. "Thank you, Paul. You're not only an exceptionally brave man but a gracious one, as well." Later, at home in bed, after Nolly proved the value of oysters, he and Kathleen lay holding hands. Following a companionable silence, he said, "It's a mystery." "No. But I'm sure as can be, the kid is better off undiscovered by the likes of him." No inquiring voice echoed off the passage walls, no accusatory shout. He was alone with the cadaver in this mist-shrouded moment of the metropolitan night--but perhaps not for long.. So many stops, too little time at each, a dazzle of Christmas trees decorated every one to a different taste, offers of butter cookies and hot chocolate or lemon crisps and eggnog, morning chats in bright kitchens steeped in wonderful cooking odors and--in the chillier afternoon good wishes exchanged in front of hearth fires, gifts accepted as well as given, cookies taken in trade for pecan cakes, "Silver Bells" and "Hark How the Bells" and "Jingle-Bell Rock" on the radio: Therewith they arrived at three o'clock in the afternoon, Christmas Eve, their deliveries completed before Santa's had begun.. Out of respect for his mother, Barty struggled to hold fast to his eyeless second sight, living in the idea of a world where he still had vision, until she had been accorded the honors she deserved and had been laid to rest beside his father.. Frowning, Panglo, said, "Terrible, you're right, so many terrible things happen, but I don't see why trains." "If there's a presentation, I assume then I'm the presentee," he said, taming his chair sideways to the table and taking her into his lap. "Just remember, I never wear neckties." "Blood tests should reveal whether the child's yours or not. That also might explain all this." Besides, he didn't want the police in San Francisco to know that he'd been suspected, by at least one of their kind, of having killed his wife in Oregon. What if one of the locals was curious enough to request a copy of the case file on Naomi's death, and what if in that file, Vanadium had made reference to Junior waking from a nightmare, fearfully repeating Bartholomew? And then what if Junior eventually located the right Bartholomew and eliminated the little bastard, and then what if the local cop who'd read the case file connected one Bartholomew to the other and started asking questions? Admittedly, that was a stretch. Nevertheless, he

hoped to fade from the SFPD's awareness as soon as possible and live henceforth beyond their ken..Draped across his midsection, the terrible cold weight had chilled his flesh; but now his bone marrow prickled with ice at the thought of the birthmarked detective sitting silently in the dark, watching. Junior would have preferred dealing with Naomi, dead and risen and seriously pissed, rather than with this dangerously patient man..She sat on the end of the table, where Barty had sat, now at eye level with the standing physician..Speaking of bosoms, everywhere in the loft were braless girls in sweaters and miniskirts, braless girls in T-shirts and miniskirts, braless girls in silk-lined rawhide vests and jeans, braless girls in tie-dyed sash tops, with bared midriffs, and calypso pants. Lots of guys moved through the crowd, too, but Junior barely noticed them..In a swirl of London Fog and righteous indignation, Neddy turned his back on Junior and drifted away through the nibbling, nattering crowd.."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-".She herself had been too nervous to eat anything. She'd held the same glass of untasted champagne throughout the evening, clutching it as though it were a mooring buoy that would prevent her from being swept away in a storm..She lived with her parents then. They had converted the dining room to a bedroom for her..he was prepared to find Vanadium sitting at the pine table, enjoying- a cup of coffee. The kitchen was deserted..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..After Agnes read the final words on the final page, Barty was drunk on speculation, chattering about what-might-have-happened-next to these characters that had become his friends. He talked nonstop while changing into his pajamas, while peeing, while brushing his teeth, and Agnes wondered how she would wind him down to sleep..On that busy night, with Vanadium's corpse in the Studebaker and Victoria's cadaver awaiting a fiery disposal at her house, Junior was too distracted to recognize the pertinence of the message. Now it tormented him from a dark nook in his subconscious..After the service, among those who came to Agnes at graveside, trying to express the inexpressible, was Paul Damascus, the owner of Damascus Pharmacy on Ocean Avenue. Of Mideastern extraction, he had dark olive skin and, incredibly, rust--red hair. With his rust-red eyebrows, lashes, and mustache, his handsome face looked like that of a bronze statue with a curious patina..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." If the policeman's gray eyes had earlier been as hard as nailheads, they were now points, and behind them was willpower strong enough to drive spikes through stone..The magazine covers were colorful, lurid, full of violence and eeriness and the coy sexual suggestiveness of a more innocent time. Most days, he read a story while eating the two pieces of fruit that were his lunch, but sometimes he lost himself in a particularly vivid illustration, daydreaming about far places and great adventures..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..Instruction in Braille wasn't recommended for three-year-olds, but an exception was made in this case. Agnes arranged to have Barty receive a series of lessons, although she suspected that he'd absorb the system and learn to use it in one or two sessions..Sparky Vox-with less training in theology and philosophy than his guest, but with a spiritual insight that any overeducated Jesuit would have to admire, even if grudgingly-had settled Vanadium's uneasy conscience. "The problem with movies and books is they make evil look glamorous, exciting, when it's no such thing. It's boring and it's depressing and it's stupid. Criminals are all after cheap thrills and easy money, and when they get them, all they want is more of the same, over and over. They're shallow, empty, boring people who couldn't give you five minutes of interesting conversation if you had the piss-poor luck to be at a party full of them. Maybe some can be monkey-clever some of the time, but they aren't hardly ever smart. God must surely want us to laugh at these fools, because if we don't laugh at 'em, then one way or another, we give 'em respect. If you don't mock a bastard like Cain, if you fear him too much or even if you just look at him in an all-solemn sort of way, then you're paying him more respect than I ever intend to. Another glass of wine?".Amused, Wally said, "You artists do love to dramatize-or have I forgotten the San Francisco blizzard of '65?".During the walk home: slow and deep, breathing slow and deep, moving not at a brisk clip, but strolling, trying to let the tension slide away, striving to focus on good things like his full exemption from military service and his purchase of the Sklent painting..In either case, printing the name in blood was a ritualistic act, and ritualism of this nature was an unmistakable symptom of a seriously unbalanced mind. Evidently, the wife killer would be easier to crack than expected, because his shell was already badly fractured..He stabbed Prosser, however, merely to relieve his frustration and to enliven the dull routine of a life made dreary by the tedious Bartholomew hunt and by loveless sex. In return for more excitement, he'd assumed greater risk, to mitigate risk, he must have insurance..Gore made him sick. He refused to attend movies that dwelt on the consequences of violence, and he had even less of a stomach for blood in real life..From a distance and through a scattering of trees, Junior wasn't able to discern much about the other funeral, but he was pretty

sure many if not most of that crowd were Negroes. He surmised, therefore, that the person being buried was a Negro, too. "I sure think so. I think she's everything. I tell her she's the moon and stars. I'm probably spoiling her rotten." Scamp had fabulous legs, and her bralessness left no doubts about the lusciousness and authenticity of her chest, but after an hour of conversation about something or other, before suggesting that they leave together, Junior maneuvered her into a reasonably private corner and discreetly put a hand up her skirt, just to confirm that his gender suspicions were correct. After a while, Franklin Chan asked, "Do you want me with you when you tell him?" He moved the shaker across the tablecloth, rocking it back and forth to convey that he was strolling without a care in the world. Simon Magusson, lacking family, had left his estate to Tom. This came as a surprise. The sum was so considerable that even though Tom was on a dispensation from his vows, which included his vow of property, he was uncomfortable with his fortune. His comfort was quickly restored by contributing the entire inheritance to Pie Lady Services. They had been brought together by two extraordinary children, by the conviction that Barty and Angel were part of some design of enormous consequence. But more often than not, God weaves patterns that become perceptible to us only over long periods of time, if at all. After the past three eventful years, there were now no weekly miracles, no signs in the earth or sky, no revelations from burning bushes or from more mundane forms of communication. Neither Barty nor Angel revealed any new astonishing talents, and in fact they were as ordinary as any two young prodigies can be, except that he was blind and she served as his eyes upon the world. Clutching the purse as though determined to resist robbery even in death, the guy dropped, sprawled, shuddered, and lay still. He'd gone down with no shout of alarm, with no cry of mortal pain, with so little noise that Junior wanted to kiss him, except that he didn't kiss men, alive or dead, although a man dressed as a woman had once tricked him, and though a dead pianist had once given him a lick in the dark. Face with one hand, as if pulling off cobwebs. "Did you say you were in my house?" The wedding reception—big, noisy, and joyous—spread across the three properties without fences. His mother's name was so often mentioned, her presence so strongly felt in all the lives that she had touched, that sometimes it seemed that she was actually there with them. Traditional logic argued that an infant, no more than two weeks old, could not be a serious threat to a grown man. Throughout lunch and, indeed, during his hours as an outpatient at the hospital, Barty gave no indication that he understood the gravity of his situation. He remained cheerful, charming the doctors and technicians with his sweet personality and precocious chatter. Unerringly, in the darkness, he found her face with both hands. Smoothed her brow. Traced her eyes with fingertips. Her nose, her lips. Her cheeks. The quarter, silvery. Under the patriot's neck, the date: 1965. Coincidentally, the year that Naomi had been killed. The year that Tom had first met Cain. The year that all this had begun. Champagne, then, and two shopping bags packed full of Armenian takeout. Sou beurek, mujadereh, chicken-and-rice biryani, stuffed grape leaves, artichokes with lamb and rice, orouk, manti, and more. Following a Baptist grace (said by Grace), Wally and the three White women, a fourth present in spirit, sat around the Formica-topped table, feasting, laughing, talking about art and healing and baby care and the past and tomorrow, while up on Nob Hill, Neddy Gnathic sat tuxedoed at a lacquered black piano, sprinkling diamond-bright notes through an elegant room. Using all his powers of concentration, which were formidable, Junior sought to silence the phantom Chicane. At first, the voice steadily faded, but soon it grew louder again, and more insistent. "No. The information I gave you came from the coroner's office, which issued the death certificate. But even if I got into St. Mary's records, there wouldn't be a hint of where Catholic Family Services placed this baby."

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