

AND GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE LAST FIVE CHAPTERS OF DANIEL A

The fact that Barty saw twisty spots with either eye closed had prepared Agnes for this bleak news. Yet in spite of the defense that foreknowledge provided her, the teeth of sorrow bit deep..Ordinarily, when Celestina was troubled, her art was a perfect sanctuary from all woes. When she was planning, composing, and rendering, time had no meaning for her, and life had no sting..Occasionally, when Junior returned home from a day of gallery hopping or an evening at a restaurant, Industrial Woman-the artist's title-scared away his mellow mood. More than once, he'd cried out in alarm before realizing this was just his prized Poriferan..With Naomi, sex had been glorious, because they were bonded on multiple levels, all deeper than the mere physical. They had been so close, so emotionally and intellectually entwined, that in making love to her, he'd been making love to himself; and he would never experience a greater intimacy than that..Junior tossed garments on the floor and across the bed to create the impression that the detective had packed with haste. After being imprudent enough to blast Victoria Bressler five times with his service revolver-perhaps in a jealous rage, or perhaps because he had gone nuts-Vanadium would have been frantic to flee justice..The past three years had given Wally much to celebrate, as well. After selling his medical practice and taking an eight-month hiatus from the sixty-hour work weeks he had endured for so long, he'd been giving twenty-four hours of free service to a pediatric clinic each week, providing care to the disadvantaged. He'd worked hard all his life, and saved diligently, and now he was able to focus solely on those activities that gave him the greatest gratification..At the mention of her son's name, Agnes stiffened. There were numerous ways for Deed to have learned the baby's name, yet it seemed wrong for him to know it, wrong to use it, the name of this child he had nearly orphaned, had almost killed..She held his face in both hands and kissed each of his beautiful jewel eyes. "You ready?".He needed to keep moving, conduct the search, find the watch, and get the hell out of here, but he couldn't stop staring at the musician. Something about the cadaver made him nervous-aside from the fact that it was dead and disgusting and, if he was caught with it, a one-way ticket to the gas chamber..Chan nodded. "Considering the advanced stage of Bartholomew's malignancies, he should have complained earlier than he did.".He had dragged Ichabod halfway across the threshold when he heard someone say, "No.".His precious wife had fallen from the tower and died only hours before this girl was born. This girl ... this vessel..Angel. A less exotic synonym for her own name. Seraphim's angel. The angel of an angel..She wouldn't answer him, but he was as convinced by her silence as he would have been by a blurted confession--or by a denial, for that matter. Her wild eyes convinced him, too, and her trembling mouth. Naomi had come back to be with him, and it could be argued that Seraphim had returned in a sense, too, for this girl was the flesh of Seraphim's flesh, born out of her death..Neddy's face didn't appear to be as pale as it had been earlier. An undertone of gray, possibly blue, darkened the skin..As he'd proved to himself on his previous two visits-his first night in town and then two nights thereafter-this number was merely part of the pianist's repertoire. Nothing supernatural here..By comparison, the strip club-neon aglow, theater lights twinkling----looked warm, cozy. Welcoming.. "Paul told us the night he first came to the parsonage. About Agnes here ... and what had happened to Barty. And all about his late wife, Perri. I feel like I know Bright Beach already.".Like a spring-loaded novelty snake erupting from a can, Junior exploded up from the chair, nearly knocking it over..Almost thirty years from the seminary--even farther from it if measured by degrees of lost innocence, by miles of rough experience Tom Vanadium set out to kill a man. Given the chance to disarm Cain, given the opportunity to merely wound him, he would nevertheless go for the head shot or the heart shot, play jury and executioner, play God, and leave to God the judgment of his stained soul..Agnes had believed that through this ordeal, she'd largely spared her child from an awareness of the awful depth of her misery. In this, however, as in so many other instances, the boy proved to be more perceptive and more mature than she'd realized. Now she felt that she had failed him, and this failure ached like a wound..When Bartholomew first said "Kay-jub," and held out one hand toward his uncle, Jacob surprised Agnes by crying with happiness..it to the granite-topped secretary, and sat in front of the telephone. Previously,,"July 14, 1960, in Guatemala City, Guatemala, a fire in a mental hospital-two hundred twenty-five dead.".Although he ate more meals in restaurants than not, he hadn't ordered a burger in twenty-two months, since finding the quarter embedded in the half-melted slice of cheddar, in December of '65. Indeed, since then, he'd never risked a sandwich of any kind in a restaurant, limiting his selections to foods that were served open on the plate.. "July 6, 1944, in Hartford, Connecticut, a fire broke out in the great tent of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus at two-forty in the afternoon, while six thousand patrons watched the Wallendas, a world-famous high-wire troupe, ascend to begin their act. By three o'clock, the fire burned out, following the collapse of the flaming tent, leaving one hundred sixty-eight dead. Another five hundred people were badly injured, but one thousand circus animals-including forty lions and forty elephants-were not harmed.".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..Her awful sense of weightlessness became something much better: buoyancy, an exhilarating lightness of spirit. Fear remained with her-fear for Barty, fear of the future and of the strange complexity of Creation that she'd just glimpsed-but wonder and wild hope now tempered it..Snapping the cylinder into place, he rose to his feet. Already he had a new plan, and the cop's revolver was the most important tool that he required to implement it..The window mechanism creaked, the two tall panes began to open outward but too slowly, and the cold white night exhaled a chill plume of breath into the room..Smiling again, speaking in a voice hardly louder than a whisper, he said, "Got a wedding date to keep.".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..Raise high the candlestick. In spite of the masking music, breathe shallowly and through the mouth. Remain poised, ready..The strange barrage of lightning, putting an end to the rain rather than initiating it, had been a clue. The rapid clearing of the sky-indicating a stiff wind at high altitudes, while stillness prevailed at ground level-a sudden plunge in the humidity, and an unseasonable warmth confirmed the coming catastrophe.. "Naomi, are you in there?" Junior whispered again, peering into the windows of the girl's soul..On this momentous day, however, drawing provided no solace. Frequently, her hands shook, and she could not control the pencil..Darkrose and Diamond.He knocked the pepper shaker on its side, and then with a groan put it upright once more..At the bedside, Joshua Nunn, friend and physician, looked up as Paul approached. He rose as though under a yoke of iron..The social worker's office once more. Rain tapping lightly at the window where Dr. Lipscomb had stared intently into the fog as he tried to avoid confronting the life-changing revelation that Phimie, speaking with the special knowledge of the once-dead, had shown him..surreptitiously with Junior. He was accustomed to being an object of desire. This night, however, the only lady he cared about was San Francisco herself, and he wanted to be alone with her..When he judged that he was near the porch steps, he probed with his cane. Two paces later, the tip rapped the lowest step..Three minutes by car, maybe two without stop signs. He could just about run it as fast as drive it. He had a bit of a gut on him. He wasn't the man he used to be. Ironically, however, after the coma and the rehab, he wasn't as heavy as he had been before Cain sunk him in Quarry Lake..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..With great deliberation, Joey shifted gears and followed the drive way to the street, where he peered left and then right with the squint-eyed suspicion of a Marine commando scouting dangerous territory. He turned right..For a while he enjoyed being challenged to figure the number of seconds elapsed since a particular historical event. Given the date, he did the calculations in his head, providing a correct answer in as little as twenty seconds, rarely taking more than a minute..Head lowered, as if his visit to Jacob were a weight that bowed him, his attention was on the ground. Otherwise, he might not have noticed, might not have been halted by, the intricate and beautiful pattern of sunlight and shadow over which he walked..A pianist or saxophonist could go a long way on his talent and self instruction, but a would-be stage magician eventually needed a mentor to reveal the most closely guarded secrets of illusion and to help him master the skills of deception needed for the highest-level prestidigitation. In a craft practiced almost exclusively by white men, a young man.By mid-March, he had exhausted the possibilities of Bartholomew as a surname. By the time that he shot himself in September, he had combed through the first quarter million listings in the directory in search of those whose first names were Bartholomew.. "Seems like," Vanadium agreed. "So a man like Cain obsesses on one thing after another-sex, money, food, power, drugs, alcohol, anything that seems to give meaning to his days, but that requires no real self-discovery or self-sacrifice. Briefly, he feels complete. However, there's no substance to what he's filled himself with, so it soon evaporates, and then he's empty again.. "But she knew. Barty, buoyant as ever, seemed not to be much worried about the problem with his vision. He appeared to expect that it would pass like any sneezing fit or cold.. "Will do. Check out those paintings he collects. People pay real money for them, even people who've never been in a looney bin.. "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..He summoned enough courage to approach the nightstand. His hand trembled. He half expected the quarter to be illusory; to disappear between his pinching fingers, but it was real..What the commodifiers of fantasy count on and exploit is the insuperable imagination of the reader, child or adult, which gives even these dead things life-of a sort, for a while.. "Get this through your head, you shit-for-brains. I lost a daughter, a precious daughter, my Naomi, the light of my life.. "Celestina White was the center of attention, always surrounded by champagne-swilling, canape--gobbling bourgeoisie who would have been shopping for paintings on velvet if they'd had less money..Sometimes, just the thought of getting in the car and venturing into the dangerous world was intolerable. Then he settled into his La-ZBoy and waited for the natural disaster that would soon scrub him off the earth as though he had never existed..Otter was silent a while. Then he said in a low voice, "Clay, and gravel, and under that the rock that bears garnets. All under this part of the city is that rock. I don't know the names.. "Junior felt unspeakably violated. This was outrageous: the inarguably personal, very private contents of his stomach, scooped into a plastic evidence bag, without his permission, without even his knowledge..Turning his attention to Barty, Obadiah broke into a smile, revealing a gold upper tooth. "Something here is sweeter than that lovely pie. What's the child's name? "Through the cacophony of shattering glass, splintering wood, and cracking plaster, Paul heard the hard roar of an engine, the blare of a horn, and suspected what must have happened. Some drunk or reckless driver had crashed at high speed into the parsonage..The night that followed might as well have been a night in Hell, though a hell in which Satan provided an electrolytically balanced beverage..Third, Celestina had a daughter. Not a boy named Bartholomew. Seraphim's baby had been a girl. Named Angel. This confused Junior as much as it stunned him..He knew the sermon, of course. The example of Bartholomew. The theme of chain-reaction in human lives. The observation that a small kindness can inspire greater and ever-greater kindnesses of which we never learn, in lives distant both in time and space..Before Junior had become a physical therapist, he had considered studying to be a dentist. A low tolerance for the stench of halitosis born of gum disease had decided him against dentistry, but he still could appreciate a set of teeth as exceptional as these..Turning around in his seat, watching with amusement as Celestina fumbled nervously with the currency, the cabbie said, "You're not scared,

not you. Sitting back there so silent most all the way, you weren't thinking about being famous. You were thinking about that girl of yours." Barty set one other rule: "Without dying first ... and you have to be sure you can get back." 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..This graciousness didn't free Paul to speak. Instead, he felt his throat thicken, trapping his voice more tightly still..She got up from the chair, went to the window, and raised the venetian blind rather than look out between its slats..Yes, she did, she had one, but not much of one, and compared to the McIntosh in Google's throat, this was just a bitty crab apple, easy to overlook, not excessive for a woman..When at last the caller spoke again, her voice sounded a kingdom away: "Will you tell Bartholomew ... ?". "I want you to adopt the baby." Before they could react, she hurried on: "I won't be twenty-one for four months yet, and even then they might give me trouble about adopting, even though I'm her aunt, because I'm single. But if you adopt her, I'll raise her. I promise I will. I'll take full responsibility. You don't have to worry that I'll regret it or that I'll ever want to drop her in your laps and escape the responsibility. She'll have to be the center of my life from here on. I understand that. I accept it. I embrace it."..When Agnes woke at 1:50 A.M., she was in the grip of a vague apprehension for which she couldn't identify a source..After carefully wiping her fingers on a paper napkin, Maria examined the garments with interest. She carried her living as the seamstress at Bright Beach Dry Cleaners. At the sight of each rent, popped button, and split seam she clucked her tongue..A supply of ammunition lined the bottom of all the dresser and bureau drawers, concealed by underwear and other garments. Junior appropriated a box of 9-mm. cartridges..She leaned forward in her seat, and toward him, so he could see her more directly, and when she put one trembling hand against his cheek, his head dropped forward on neck muscles as limp as rags, his chin..Junior hurried out of the kitchen and along the hallway to the front door. He ran silently, landing on his toes like a dancer. His natural athletic grace was one of the things that drew so many women to him..I got Starkweather, killing all those people with no hope of personal gain. You got maniac cops and this new war in Vietnam..Perplexed by their peculiar behavior, even slightly unnerved, Tom answered Maria's question. "I'm afraid there's nothing else I can do, nothing more of a fantastic nature."..Without the pillow, she wouldn't have been able to lift her head to look toward the back of the ambulance..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..Scamp spent Wednesday ravishing him. It wasn't love, but there was comfort in being familiar with his partner's equipment..She proceeded down the shadowy center aisle, genuflected at the chancel railing, and went to the votive rack..and proceeded to turn it across his knuckles as swiftly and smoothly as he had with his right hand..Nellie found the strength to rise, but having risen, she was unable to speak. Her mouth shaped words, but her voice deserted her..At last, as the sun slowly set, he arrived at the highest of the high redoubts, beyond which the branches were too young and too weak to support him farther. Against a sky red enough to delight the most sullen sailors, he rose and stood in a final crook of limbs, pressing his left hand against a balancing branch, right hand planted cockily on his hip, lord of his domain, having kicked off the trammels of darkness and fashioned from them a ladder..Her lifelong optimism, her buoyancy, which she had miraculously sustained through so many difficult years, would never survive this. She would no longer be a rock of hope for him and Edom. Their future was despair, undiluted and unrelenting.. "Maybe it's not where the heart is," Wally corrected himself. "Maybe it's where the buffalo roam."..For more than twenty-three years, he'd given his big toe little consideration, had taken it for granted, had treated it with shameful neglect. Now this lower digit seemed precious, a comparatively small fixture of flesh, but as important to his image of himself as his nose or either of his eyes..Only now, as the tide of adrenaline began to ebb, Paul wondered who could possibly have wanted to kill a man of peace and God, a man as good as Harrison White.. "Did they rush you straight in here or did you arrange all the insurance matters at reception, Mr. Pinchbeck?"..If this insurance payoff was not mere coincidence, if it was the wealth that had been foretold, then how far behind the fortune did the knave travel? Years? Months? Days?..Devil mountains, sacred islands, sacramental rivers and cities, Jesuits: These spiritual references at every turn made Junior uneasy. This was a haunted night, no doubt about that. He wouldn't have been greatly surprised if he had glanced at his rearview mirror and seen Thomas Vanadium's blue Studebaker Lark Regal closely tailing him, not the real car raised from Quarry Lake, but a ghostly version, with the filthy-scabby-monkey spirit of the cop at the wheel, an ectoplasmic Naomi at his side, Victoria Bressler and Ichabod and Bartholomew Prosser and Neddy Gnathic in the backseat: the Studebaker packed full of spirits like a bozo-stuffed clown car in a circus, though there would be nothing funny about these revenge-minded spooks when the doors flew open and they came tumbling out..Only a few theater goers attended the matinee. No one sat near, so Google and Junior openly swapped packages: a five-by-six manila envelope to Google, a nine-by-twelve to Junior..Junior was not immune to traditional logic, but in this case he recognized the superior wisdom of Zedd's philosophy. His dread of Bartholomew and his gut-level animosity toward a child he'd never met defied all reason and exceeded simple paranoia; therefore, it must be purest, infallible animal instinct..Junior tipped his head back and gazed up toward the section of broken-out railing along the high observation deck..He traveled prairies and mountains and valleys, passed fields rich in every imaginable crop, crossed great forests and wide rivers. He walked in fierce storms when thunder crushed the sky and lightning tore it, walked in wind that skinned the bare earth and sheared green tresses from trees, and walked also in sun-scrubbed days as blue and clean as ever there had been in Eden..Paul shook his head. "Oh, no. People look at our marriage, and they think I gave up so much, but I got back a lot more than I

gave." Again he fired into the lock, squeezed the trigger a second time, and discovered that no rounds remained in the magazine. Extra cartridges were distributed in his pockets. This is, of course, the purpose of art: to disturb you, to leave you uneasy with yourself and wary of the world, to undermine your sense of reality in order to make you reconsider all that you think you know. The finest art should shatter you emotionally, devastate you intellectually, leave you physically ill, and fill you with loathing for those cultural traditions that bind us and weigh us down and drown us in a sea of conformity. Junior had learned this much, already, from his art appreciation course. Obadiah tossed the pack of cards to Edom, startling him. "Son, you'll have to help me. My fingers have no finesse anymore." He found the strength to squeeze her hand tighter than before. "Be safe. Keep Angel safe." "That discord sets up lots of other vibrations, some of which will return to you in ways you might expect-and some in ways you could never see coming. Of the things you couldn't have seen coming, I'm the worst." Because this kind of fictional fact, like maps of imaginary realms, is of real interest to some readers, I include the description after the stories. I also redrew the geographical maps for this book, and while doing so, happily discovered a very old one in the Archives in Havnor. Junior knew that she must be teasing him. Her sense of play was delicious. Such devilry in her scintillant blue eyes, such sauciness. He raised one hand to halt the genteel debate. "The whole reason I stopped here first, before taking you folks on to my place, is so I wouldn't have to bring your suitcases back after Agnes won you over. This is where you'll be happiest, though you're always welcome if she tries to work you to death." "My little girl," she said, and belatedly she realized that this might not be a policeman, after all, but someone trying to determine if she and Angel were alone in the apartment. The Bones of the Earth. "-called himself King Obadiah, Pharaoh of the Fantastic. He traveled all over the country playing nightclubs." Suddenly, even in the heart of a great city, the alleyway seemed as lonely as an English moor, and not a smart place to seek asylum from a vengeful spirit. Casting aside all pretense of self-control, Junior sprinted for the next street, where the sight of multitudes, swarming in winter sunshine, filled him not with paranoia or even uneasiness, anymore, but with an unprecedented feeling of brotherhood. Holding hands, Barty and Angel led the adults into the kitchen, to the back door. This procession had a ceremonial quality that intrigued Tom, and by the time they stepped onto the porch, he was impatient to know why everyone-except he and Wally-was emotionally airborne, one degree of altitude below euphoria. When Agnes and Paul returned from a honeymoon in Carmel, they discovered that Edom had finally cleared out Jacob's apartment. He donated his twin's extensive files and books to a university library that was building a collection to satisfy a growing professorial and student interest in apocalyptic studies and paranoid philosophy. "We don't believe it does, do we, Daddy? We don't believe blood tells. We believe we're born to hope, under a mantle of mercy, don't we?" By nature, she was unable to hold fast to resentment, couldn't nurture a grudge, and was incapable of vengeance. She had forgiven even her father, who had put her through hell for so long, who had blighted the lives of her brothers, and who had killed her mother. Forgiving was not the same as condoning. Forgiving did not mean that you had to exonerate or forget. Two high-quality deadbolt locks. Sufficient protection against the average intruder, but inadequate to keep out a self-improved man with channeled anger. Kathleen and Nolly shifted their attention to Tom's clenched left hand, although the quarter could not possibly have traveled from one fist to the other. face looked familiar, and he sensed that he had seen it before in a disquieting context, although the man's identity eluded him. He stared I out at the congregated ghosts of fog, white multitudes that entirely obscured the bay, as if all the sailors ever lost at sea had gathered here, pressing at the window, eyeless forms that nevertheless saw everything. Matching her fierce attention with a sudden intensity of his own, Joey said, "Bartholomew." Barty approached stair climbing as a mathematical problem, calculating the precise movement of each leg and placement of each foot necessary to successfully negotiate the obstacle. He proceeded less slowly on the next three steps than he had on the first three, and thereafter he ascended with growing confidence, pumping his legs with machinelike precision. The bitch was getting tired, but Junior still didn't like his odds in a hand-to-hand confrontation. Her hair was disarranged. Her eyes flashed with such wildness that he was half convinced he saw elliptical pupils like those of a jungle cat. Her lips were skinned back from her teeth in a snarl. Still relishing her little pretense of rejection, Victoria did not touch the rose. "What kind of woman do you think I am?" THE RAIN THAT HAD threatened to wash out the morning funeral finally rinsed the afternoon, but by nightfall the Oregon sky was clean and dry. From horizon to horizon spread an infinity of icy stars, and at the center of them hung a bright sickle moon as silver as steel. The middle finger on his right hand throbbed under the pair of Band-Aids. He'd sliced it earlier, while using the electric sharpener to prepare his knives, and the wound had been aggravated when he'd had to strangle Neddy Gnathic. He would never have cut himself in the first place if there had been no need to be well-armed and ready for Bartholomew and his guardians. He rode up to the third of five floors in the service elevator, which other tenants were permitted to use only when moving in or moving out, or when taking delivery of large items of furniture. Another elevator, at the front of the building, was too public to suit his purposes. A siren in the city wailed toward St. Mary's. An ambulance. Through streets bustling with hope, always this lament for the dying. Shaking his head, his coffee cup rattling against the saucer, Edom said, "Uh, no, sir, no, I don't think we've ever met till now." But Havnor is also the Great Isle, a broad, rich land; and in the villages inland from the port, the farmlands of the slopes of Mount Onn, nothing ever changes much. There a song worth singing is likely to be sung again. There old men at the tavern talk of Morred as if they had known him when they too were young and heroes. There girls walking out to fetch the cows home tell stories of the women of the Hand, who are forgotten everywhere else in the world, even on Roke, but remembered among those silent, sunlit roads and fields and in the kitchens by the hearths where housewives work and talk. Agnes held a smile as best she could, determined that her son's final glimpse of her face would not leave him with a memory of her despair. FOR JUNIOR CAIN, the Year of the Horse (1966) and the Year of the Sheep (1967) offered many opportunities for

personal growth and self-improvement. Even if by Christmas Eve, '67, Junior would not be able to take a dry walk in the rain, this nevertheless was a period of great achievement and much pleasure for him..NOLLY FELT A little silly, walking the mean streets of North Beach under a white umbrella with red polka dots. It kept him dry, however, and with Nolly, practical considerations always triumphed over matters of image and style..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..Clutching the red rose in his left hand, the brightly wrapped gift box half crushed in his right, Thomas Vanadium lay at Junior's mercy, with no tricks to perform, no quarter to set dancing across his knuckles..Heaven, and his words touched a tenderness in her, overlaying an arc of pain across the curve of her smile..In the main room, on his way toward the front door, Junior saw Celestina White surrounded by adoring fatheads, nattering ninnies, dithering dolts, saps and boneheads, oafs and gawks and simpletons. She was still as gorgeous as her shamelessly beautiful paintings. If the opportunity arose, Junior would have more use for her than for her so called art..Tossing the knave onto the table, Agnes said, "Barty doesn't seem too impressed with this devil."..As the unwanted change pinged against the concrete at his feet, Junior-snap, snap-saw the source of the next two rounds. They spat out of the vertical pay slot on a newspaper-vending machine; one hit his nose, and the other rang off his teeth..Mechanics have reliably steady hands, yet Jacob's hands shook as he discarded two cards and slowly turned over the ninth draw..On a street a half mile from the airport in Eugene, he sat in the parked Dodge long enough to gingerly unwind the bandages and use a tissue to wipe off the pungent but useless salve he'd purchased at a pharmacy. Although he pressed the Kleenex to his face so gently that the pressure might not have broken the surface tension on a pool of water, the agony of the touch was so great that he nearly passed out. The rearview mirror revealed clusters of hideous, large, red knobs with glistening yellow heads, and at the sight of himself, he actually did pass out for a minute or two, just long enough to dream that he was a grotesque but misunderstood creature being pursued through a stormy night by crowds of angry villagers with torches and pitchforks, but then the throbbing agony revived him.. "The piece that's intrigued me," Junior revealed, "is the one that's rather like a c-c-candlestick. It's quite different from the others."..Junior discovered more tears than could have been found in ten thousand onions. His wife and his unborn baby. He had been willing to sacrifice his beloved Naomi, but maybe he would have found the cost too high if he had known that he was also sacrificing his first-conceived child. This was too much. He was bereft.

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