

JUST DEBT THEOLOGY ETHICS AND NEOLIBERALISM

Edom and Jacob flanked the gurney, each gripping one of Barty's feet through the sheet that covered them, escorting him with the same stony determination that you saw on the faces of the Secret Service agents who bracketed the President of the United States. 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. 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. She owned a public-relations firm specializing in artists, and over dinner she rhapsodized about the work of Jack Lientery. His current series of paintings--emaciated babies against backdrops of ripe fruit and other symbols of plenty--had critics swooning. The moment that the roof of the car vanished beneath the water, Junior hurried away, retracing on foot the route he had driven. He didn't have to go all the way back to Vanadium's place, only to the dark house where he'd left Victoria Bressler. He had a date with a dead woman. He planned, as soon as they took him out of his cell, to use the old Changers spell of self-transformation and so escape. Surely his life was in danger, and it would be all right to use the spell? Only he couldn't decide what to turn himself into--a bird, or a wisp of smoke, what would be safest? But while he was thinking about it, Losen's men, used to wizard's tricks, drugged his food and he ceased to think of anything at all. They dumped him into a mule-cart like a sack of oats. When he showed signs of reviving during the journey, one of them bashed him on the head, remarking that he wanted to make sure he got his rest. 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. As the nurse gave Junior the injection, Parkhurst said, "You're an exceptionally sensitive man, Enoch. That's a quality to be much admired in an often unfeeling world. But in your current condition, your sensitivity is your worst enemy." For a long time, she sat alone in the dark living room, in the armchair that had been Joey's favorite, thinking about many things but returning often to the memory of Barty's dry walk in wet weather. 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. Just as the smile curved to completion, however, an awful thing happened. The humiliation began with a loud gurgle in his gut. He was glad that he'd taken the double dose of antiemetics. In spite of this provocation, his stomach felt as solid and secure as a bank vault. Setting out after dark, Paul had walked south, following the coastal highway. He was accompanied by the windy rush of passing traffic, but later only by the occasional cry of a blue heron, the whisper of a salty breeze in the shore grass, and the murmur of the surf. Without pushing himself too hard, he reached La Jolla by dawn. Lying on his side in bed, clothed and shod, knees drawn up, arms folded across his chest, hands pressed under his chin, like a precocious fetus dressed and waiting for birth, Junior tried to recall the chain of logic that had led to this long and difficult pursuit of Bartholomew. That chain led three years into the past, however, which to Junior was an eternity, and not all the links were still in place. The beetle-green Pontiac waited in the driveway, with a shine that tempted nature to throw around some bad weather. Joey always kept a spotless car, and he probably wouldn't have had time to earn a living if he had resided in some shine-spoiling climate rather than in southern California. Wait here in the car. Give them time to settle down. At this hour, they would put the kid to bed first. Then Ichabod and Celestina would go to their room, undress for the night. Finally he began: Greetings on this momentous day. I'm writing to you about an exceptional woman, Agnes Lampion, whose life you have touched without knowing, and whose story may interest you. Dr. Daines spoke with Celestina in the corridor, outside the door to 724. Some of the passing nurses were nuns in wimples and full-length habits, drifting like spirits along the hallway. A smoldering cigarette, usually dangling aslant from one corner of a hard mouth set in a cynical sneer, was standard issue for tough-guy gumshoes, but Nolly didn't smoke. His failure to develop this bad habit resulted in a less satisfyingly murky atmosphere than the clients of a private dick might expect. Junior closed his weary eyes and gratefully submitted as the paramedic wiped his greasy face and his crusted lips with a cool, damp cloth. "At home," Otter said. It wasn't a lie. He did have a pouch at home. He kept his fine-work tools and his bubble level in it. And he wasn't altogether lying about the wind. Several times he had managed to bring a bit of magewind into the sail of a boat, though he had no idea how to combat or control a storm, as a ship's weatherworker must do. But he thought he'd rather drown in a gale than be murdered in this hole. As a young man, he had performed first in nightclubs catering to Negroes and in theaters like Harlem's Apollo. During World War II, he'd been part of a USO troupe entertaining soldiers throughout the Pacific, later in North Africa, and following D-Day, in Europe. "Oh, yes, I recall it now. Polar bears eating tourists in Union Square, wolf packs prowling the Heights." His waitress was a cutie. She flirted with him, and he knew he could have her if he wanted. Applying enough pain, he could have gotten cooperation even from Vanadium. The detective had said he'd heard Junior fearfully repeat Bartholomew in his sleep, which Junior believed to be true, because the name did resonate with him; however, he wasn't sure he believed the cop's claim to be ignorant of the identity of this nemesis. Alone again with Wally, Celestina said, "They told me that once you regained consciousness, I can only visit ten minutes at a time, and not that often, either." With Angel at breakfast, instead of just Uncle Jacob, at least Barty had someone to talk to, even if she did insist on speaking more often through her dolls than directly. Apparently, the dolls were on the table, propped up with bowls. The first, Miss Pixie Lee, had a high-pitched, squeaky voice. The second, Miss Velveeta Cheese, spoke in a three-year-old's idea of what a throaty-voiced, sophisticated woman sounded like, although to Barty's ear, this was more suitable to a stuffed bear. He

was uncharacteristically restive. His stoic nature, his long learned Jesuit philosophy regarding the acceptance of events as they unfold, and the acquired patience of a homicide detective were insufficient to prevent frustration from taking root in him. In the more than two months since Enoch Cain vanished, following the murder of Reverend White, no trace of the killer had been found. Week by week, the slender sapling of frustration had grown into a tree and then into a forest, until Tom began every morning by looking out through the tightly woven branches of impatience. These kids were the same age, yet listening to them was akin to hearing Angel do her charming shtick with an adult who had a lot of patience, a sense of humor, and an awareness of generational ironies. As early as this evening, here at her son's bedside, Agnes began dimly to sense that certain of these amusing conversations with Barty might not be as fanciful as they seemed, that he was expressing in a childlike way some truth that she had assumed was fantasy. "August, 1931. Along the Huang He River in China. Three million seven hundred thousand people died in a great flood," Edom said. As mentally demanding and stressful as it was to maintain this borrowed sight, the harder thing was looking once more upon her face, after all these years of blindness, only to see her gaunt, so pale. The vital, lovely woman whose image he had guarded so vigilantly in memory would be nudged aside hereafter by this withered version. They laughed and held hands. For the first time since Phimie's panicked phone call from Oregon, Celestina felt that everything would eventually be all right again. Jacob trusted no one but Agnes and Edom. He'd trusted Joey Lampion, too, after years of wary observance. Now Joey was dead, and his corpse was in the embalming chamber of the Panglo Funeral Home. Barty stood in the rain, surrounded by the rain, pummeled by the rain, with the rain. Saturated grass squished under his sneakers. The droplets, in their millions, didn't bend-slip-twist magically around his form, didn't hiss into steam a millimeter from his skin. Yet he remained as dry as baby Moses floating on the river in a mother-made ark of bulrushes. Grace, Celestina, and Paul expressed amusement and amazement at Angel's critical judgment. Junior needed something in his life, a missing element without which he could never be complete, something more than a heart mate, more than German or French, or karate, and for as long as he could remember, he'd been searching for this mysterious substance, this enigmatic object, this skill, this thingumajigger, this dowhacky, this flumadiddle, this force or person, this insight, but the problem was that he didn't know what he was searching for, and so often when he seemed to have found it, he hadn't found it after all, therefore he worried that if ever he did find it, then he might throw it away, because he would not realize that it was, in fact, the very jigger or gigamaree that he'd been in search of since childhood. This was different earthquake weather from that of ten days ago, when he'd made the pie deliveries alone. Then: blue sky, unseasonable warmth, low humidity. Now: low gray clouds, cool air, high humidity. "Money's no object. I can afford whatever you'd like to charge. And I'd be a diligent student." of the deceased. This memorial was modest, neither large nor complicated in design. Nevertheless, often the carvers in this line of business followed days after the morticians, because the stones to which they applied their craft demanded more labor and less urgency than the cold bodies that rested under them. His daughter, his affliction, his millstone, granddaughter of the boil-giving voodoo Baptist When the two vertical panes of the casement window were still less than seven inches apart, they stuttered. The mechanism produced a dismal grinding rasp that sounded like a guttural pronunciation of the problem itself, c-c-c-corrosion, and seized up. Suddenly Junior intuited the identity of the man in the chair. Beyond question, this was the plainclothes police officer with the birthmark. Barty, at the head of the table, sensed Mary's approach only as she was about to touch him. She put a hand on his arm and said, "Daddy, will you turn your chair away from the table and let me sit on your lap?" On Tuesday, January 2, Junior met with the drug dealer who had introduced him to Google, the document forger, and he arranged to purchase a 9-mm handgun with custom-machined silencer. When he heard the snick of the lock being disengaged, he rammmed into the men's room. An affecting but difficult-to-define note in Dr. Lipscomb's voice brought Celestina slowly out of the office chair, to her feet. Perhaps it was wonder. Or fear. Or reverence. Perhaps all three. Nolly shuddered. "The wilds of Oregon. I don't intend ever to go there until it's civilized." Neither Agnes nor Edom knew of Jacob's great skill with cards. He had been discreet about his apprenticeship with Obadiah, and for almost twenty years, he'd resisted the urge to dazzle his siblings with his expertise. Finished, she gave him a mirror, so he could admire his new bicuspid cap. After five years of dentistry, paced so as not to tax Nolly's tolerance, Kathleen had done well what nature had done poorly, giving him a perfect bite and a supernatural smile. This final cap was the last of the reconstruction. The moon shimmered, and the stars blurred-but only briefly, for her devotion to this boy was a fiery furnace that tempered the steel of her spine and brought a drying heat to her eyes. Without Franklin Chan's full approval but with his complete understanding, Agnes took Barty home. On Monday, they would return to Hoag Hospital, where Barty would receive surgery on Tuesday. Heedless of the rules of standard police procedure, Tom raced to the doorway, crossed the threshold, and saw Barty throw a can of soda at the shaved head and pocked face of a transformed Enoch Cain. Calcimine moonlight cast an arctic illusion over the boneyard. The grass was as eerily silver as snow at night, and gravestones tilted like pressure ridges of ice in a fractured wasteland. MONDAY MORNING, January 17, Agnes's lawyer, Vinnie Lincoln, came to the house with Joey's will and other papers requiring attention. A lamp with a fringed silk shade spread small feathery wings of golden light over one corner of the living room. On the coffee table were three decorative blown-glass oil lamps, ashimmer. In adversity lies great opportunity, as Caesar Zedd teaches, and always, of course, there is a bright side even when you aren't able immediately to see it. "Frozen firing pin," Cain said. His smile was venomous. "I worked on it. I hoped you'd get here in time to see the consequences of your stupid games." "Now this. But even if your dad had cooperated with me, nothing would have changed. Since Phimie never revealed his name, I wouldn't have been able to go after Cain any differently or more effectively." Agnes's big brother by six years, Edom had lived in one of the two apartments above the large detached garage, behind the main house, since he was twenty-five, when he'd left the working world.

He was now thirty-six.. "I'm interested in one of the smaller Griskins," said Junior, managing to appear calm, although his mouth was dry with fear and his mind spun with crazy images of the maniac cop, dead and rotting but nevertheless lurching around San Francisco..She was four years older than Phimie. They hadn't i;mn a great deal of each other during the past three years, since Celestina had come to San Francisco. Although distance and time, the press of her studies, and the busyness of daily life had not made her forget that she loved Phimie, she had forgotten the purity and the power of love. Rediscovering it now, she was shaken so badly that she had to pull a chair to the side of the bed and sit down..Losen, a sea-pirate who called himself King of the Inmost Sea, was then the chief warlord in the city and all the east and south of Havnor. Exacting tribute from that rich domain, he spent it to increase his soldiery and the fleets he sent out to take slaves and plunder from other lands. As Otters uncle said, he kept the shipwrights busy. They were grateful to have work in a time when men seeking work found only beggary, and rats ran in the courts of Maharion. They did an honest job, Otter's father said, and what the work was used for was none of their concern..Eventually he put the quarter on the nightstand, switched off the lamp, and slipped into bed..She thought of herself as a creative person, a capable and efficient and committed person, but she did not think of herself as a strong person. Yet she would need great strength for what lay ahead..The gurney, one wheel rattling. The young orderly behind it, dressed all in white. And the nurse again..Nellie found the strength to rise, but having risen, she was unable to speak. Her mouth shaped words, but her voice deserted her..In spite of major earthquakes pending, explosions of dynamite hauling trucks on the highway, tornadoes somewhere churning, the grim likelihood of a great dam bursting along the route, freak ice storms stored up in the unpredictable heavens, crashing planes and runaway trains converging on the coastal highway, and the possibility of a sudden violent shift in the earth's axis that would wipe out human civilization, they risked crossing the boundaries of Bright Beach and traveled north into the great unknown of territories strange and perilous..The telephone rang, putting an end to their chat, but Agnes would remember the substance of it later that year, on the day before Christmas, when Barty took a walk in the rain and changed forever his. "Apple juice, lime Jell-O, and four soda crackers," said the detective. "If you don't have enough of a conscience to make you confess,.Confused, Panglo held out his right hand, but Jacob said, "Sorry, no offense, but I don't shake with anyone.".Gradually, Agnes realized that this was not a prayer for the soul of a deceased infant but for the survival of one still alive.. "She. Was eating. Dried apricots." Junior spoke almost in a whisper yet the ridge was so quiet that he had no doubt each of these uniformed but unofficial jurors heard him clearly. "Walking. Around the deck. Paused. The view. She. She. She leaned. Gone..".On Tuesday evening, September 7, after half an hour in the lotus position, thinking about nothing whatsoever but a white pin with two black bands at its neck and the number I painted on its head, Junior went to bed at eleven o'clock and set his alarm for three in the morning, when he intended to shoot himself..or the barber. Never was he afraid to fall asleep, and having fallen asleep, he appeared to have only pleasant dreams..As the nurse slapped a bar of lye soap in Celestina's right hand, she turned on the water in the sink..After too many years investigating homicides, after too much experience of human evil, perhaps he had grown both misanthropic and paranoid..The house was hers, free and clear of mortgages. There were two savings accounts to which Joey had diligently made deposits weekly through nine years of marriage..One apartment to the right, one to the left. Junior went to the right, to Apartment 1, where he'd seen the lights come on behind the curtained windows..At dawn, he and his mother went down to the sea, to watch the rolling waves filigreed with foam and gilded with the molten gold of morning sun, to see the kiting gulls and to scatter bread that brought the winged multitudes to earth..Recently, Wally administered to Angel a set of apperception tests for three-year-olds, and the results indicated that she might not ever be a math whiz or a verbal gymnast, but that she might be highly talented in other ways. Her appreciation of color, her innate understanding of the derivation of secondary hues from the primary colors, her sense of spatial relationships, and her recognition of basic geometric forms regardless of the angle at which they were presented were all far beyond what was exhibited by other kids her age. Wally said she was visually, rather than verbally, gifted, that she would undoubtedly exhibit increasing precociousness in matters artistic, that she might follow Celestina's career path, and that she might even prove to be a prodigy..To Nolly, Kathleen said, "This is why I married you. To be around talk like this..".Without using his flashlight, depending only on the moon, he ascended through the cemetery to the service road..Aware that his tension was building intolerably, Junior decided that he needed Scamp more than he dreaded her. He spent the remainder of Wednesday, until dawn Thursday, with the indefatigable redhead, whose bedroom contained a vast collection of scented massage oils in sufficient volume to fragrantly lubricate half the rolling stock of every railroad company doing business west of the Mississippi..Before he taught himself to read books, he also taught himself numbers, and then how to read a clock. The significance of time had a more profound impact on him than Agnes could understand, perhaps because acquiring an awareness of the infinite nature of the universe and the finite nature of each human life-and fully understanding the implications of this knowledge-takes most of us till early adulthood if not later, whereas for Barty, the vast glories of the universe and the comparatively humble nature of human existence were recognized, contemplated, and absorbed in a matter of weeks.. "Your mother's wise," Paul said. "More than all the owls in the world," the boy agreed.. "I never spoke with God--Nor visited in Heaven--Yet certain am I of the spot--As if the Checks were given..".In his masterpiece *The Beauty of Rage: Channel Your Anger and Be a Winner*, Zedd explains that every fully evolved man is able to take anger at one person or thing and instantly redirect it to any new person or thing, using it to achieve dominance, control, or any goal he seeks. Anger should not be an emotion that gradually arises again at each new justifiable cause, but should be held in the heart and nurtured, under control but sustained, so that the full white-hot power of it can be instantly tapped as needed, whether or not there has been provocation..He and the homicide detective had been friends for almost thirty years, since Max had been a uniformed rookie on the SFPD and Vanadium had been a young

priest freshly assigned to St. Anselmo's Orphanage here in the city. Before choosing police work, Max had contemplated the priesthood, and perhaps back then he had sensed the cop-to-be in Tom Vanadium..Room to room through the upstairs. Checking closets. Behind furniture. Bathrooms. In Paul's private spaces. No Cain.. "Six hundred ninety-five people were killed in three states. Winds so powerful that some of the bodies were thrown a mile and a half from where they were snatched off the ground." Captivated by catastrophe, so lost in his book that he might as well have stepped magically inside of it and closed the covers after himself, Uncle Jacob didn't answer.. "Yes, Barty," Tom said. "I feel a depth to life, layers beyond layers. Sometimes it's ... scary. Mostly it inspires me. I can't see these other worlds, can't move between them. But with this quarter, I can prove that what I feel isn't my imagination." He extracted a quarter from a jacket pocket, holding it between thumb and forefinger for all but Barty to see. "Angel?".She struggled, wept, pretended disgust, faked shame, swore to bring the police down on him. Another man, not as highly skilled at reading men as Junior, might have thought the girl's resistance was genuine, Sat her charges of rape were sincere. Any other man might have backed off, but Junior was neither fooled nor confused..After the latest concerned nurse departed, Sheena leaned close. She cruelly pinched Junior's cheek between thumb and forefinger, as if she' might tear off a goblet of flesh and pop it into her mouth..The reverend couldn't easily escape church obligations on such short notice, but Grace wanted to be with her daughters. Phimie, however, pleaded that only Celestina accompany her..Junior was flattered, he really was. Women couldn't get enough of him. The story of his life. They never let go gracefully. He was wanted, needed, adored, worshiped. Women kept calling after they should have taken the hint and gone away, insisted on sending him notes and gifts even after he told them it was over. Junior wasn't surprised that women would return from the dead for him, nor was he surprised that women he'd killed would try to find a route back to him from Beyond, without malice, without vengeance in their hearts, merely yearning to be with him again, to hold him and to fulfill his needs. As gratified as he was by this tribute to his desirability, he simply didn't have any romantic feelings left for Naomi and Seraphim. They were the past, and he loathed the past, and if they wouldn't let him alone, he would never be able to live in the future..Through miles of worry, natural beauty, imagined omens, and the iron-red sands of Mars, they drove at last to Franklin Chan's offices in Newport Beach..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."..Then Agnes said, "Well, it's clear to me that you won't be able to talk out your life in just one year. Should be a two-year grant."..When he got no response, he wedged the toe of his right loafer under the guy's chest and, with some effort, rolled him onto his back..The nurse was in was gone, but Maria remained in attendance. She the vinyl-and-stainless-steel armchair, busy at cocktail lounge to be her personal pickup spot. Naturally, people who worked the lounge knew her, were friendly with her. They would remember any man who accompanied the heiress to her penthouse..By lunch, he had turned the final page, and he was so full of the tale that he seemed to have no room for food. While his mother kept reminding him to eat, he regaled her with the details of John Thomas Stuart's great adventures with LummoX, as though every word that Heinlein had written were not science fiction, but truth.. "If her blood pressure stabilizes through the night," Dr. Daines continued, "I want her to undergo a cesarean at seven in the morning. The danger of eclampsia passes entirely after birth. I'd like to refer Phimie to Dr. Aaron Kaltenbach. He's a superb obstetrician.".. "All right," Agnes said, and as she voiced her acceptance, she was shivered by a sudden fear for which she couldn't at once identify a cause..When the ophthalmologist saw her misery, his kind face softened further, and his pity became palpable..Nothing in his reading offered a satisfactory explanation for what had been happening to him. None of the women filled the hole in his heart, and all of the Bartholomews were harmless. Only the needlepoint offered any satisfaction, but though Junior was proud of his craftsmanship, he knew that a grown man couldn't find fulfillment in stitchery alone..This wasn't the same Enoch Cain whom Vanadium had known three years ago in Spruce Hills. That man had been utterly ruthless but not a wild, raging animal, coldly determined but never obsessive. That Cain had been too calculating and too self-controlled to have been swept into the emotional frenzy required to produce this blood graffiti and to act out the symbolic mutilation of Bartholomew with a knife..Agnes knew now why this prognostication had dismayed rather charmed her: If you dared to believe in the good fortune predicted he cards, then you were obliged to believe in the bad, as well..room, heavier and colder than the ice bags that were draped across Junior's midsection..He pressed the muzzle of the weapon against the girl's forehead and said, "Naomi, Seraphim, you were exquisite lovers, but you've got to be realistic. There's no way we can have a life together."..He ardently wished that he hadn't killed her with such merciful swiftness. If he'd tortured her first, he would now have the memory of her suffering from which to take consolation..The black service road seemed to come out of nowhere, then to vanish into a void, and Junior suddenly felt dangerously isolated, alone as he had never been, and vulnerable..On the third of June, he found another useless Bartholomew, and on Saturday, the twenty-fifth, two deeply disturbing events occurred. He switched on his kitchen radio only to discover that "Paperback Writer," yet another Beatles song, had climbed to the top of the charts, and he received a call from a woman..The old woman crumpled with a papery rustle, as though she were an elaborately folded piece of origami. She would be unconscious for a while, and after she came around, she probably wouldn't remember who she was, let alone what make of car she'd been driving, until Junior was well out of Eugene.. "You look very, very handsome this morning, Mr. Barty, " squeaked Pixie Lee, who was something of a flirt. "You look like a big movie star..Either Obadiah intuited Agnes's fear or he was motivated by her kindness to reveal his method, after all. "I'm embarrassed to say what you saw wasn't real magician's work. Crude deception. I chose the ace of diamonds exactly because it represents wealth in fortune-telling, so it's a positive card that people respond well to. The ace with your boy's name was prepared beforehand, inserted face up toward the bottom of the

deck, so a middle cut wouldn't reveal it." Wally switched off the engine and killed the headlights. "Home, where the heart is." Vanadium's wounds were too grievous to pass for accidental injuries. Even if there were some way to disguise them through clever staging, no one would believe that Victoria had died in a freak fall and that Vanadium, rushing to her side, had slipped and tumbled and sustained mortal head injuries, as well. Such a strong whiff of slapstick would put even the Spruce Hills police on to the scent of murder. Celestina checked her wristwatch and saw that she was running late. With Angel's short legs and layers of red, there was no point in trying to hurry. Whereas Paul had been confounded in his desire to express his admiration for Salk, he was able to speak about Perri at length and with ease. Her wit, her heart, her wisdom, her kindness, her beauty, her goodness, her courage were the threads in a narrative tapestry that Pad could have continued weaving for all the rest of his days. Since her death, he hadn't been able to talk about her with anyone he knew, because his friends tended to focus on him, on his suffering, when he wanted them only to understand Perri better, to realize what an exceptional person she had been. He wanted her to be remembered, after he was gone, wanted her grace and her fortitude to be recalled and respected. She was too fine a woman to leave without a ripple in her wake, and the thought that her memory might pass away with Paul himself was anguishing. Tom had acted with the best intentions-but also with the intelligence and the good judgment that God had given him and that he had spent a lifetime honing. Good intentions alone can be the cobblestones from which the road to Hell is built; however, good intentions formed through much self-doubt and second-guessing, as Tom's always were guided by wisdom acquired from experience, are all that can be asked of us. Unintended consequences that should have been foreseeable are, he knew, the stuff of damnation, but those that we can't foresee, he hoped, are part of some design for which we can't be held responsible. For guidance, Agnes couldn't rely entirely on any of the child rearing books in her library. Barty's unique gifts presented her with special parenting problems. Now, when he asked if he could stay up even later, to read about John Thomas Stuart and Lummo, John's pet from another world, she granted him permission.

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