Artex SemiCondensed

About Artex

Bringing the neo-grotesque program into the realm of variable fonts, Artex is an innovative typeface. With its simplified forms tempering strict geometry, Artex proposes a distinctive graphic language in which modern efficiency meets contemporary technology.

Eager to design a typographic tool that would equally perform as static text blocks and motion graphics, Brustaux researched thoughtful, rational shapes that could optimize the quality of transitions between the extreme widths and weights of the program. Within its overarching modern architecture, Artex incorporates modular and symmetrical forms. These specific attributes improve sharpness in static uses and streamlines transitions as a dynamic font. Consequently, Artex develops a distinctive aesthetic that effortlessly attracts attention and makes for easy retention.

An extensible program—masterfully engineered in a variable format and 72 static fonts—Artex offers a full expansion of widths, from compressed to extended, and weights, from Hairline to Black. Each style includes 29 alternate glyphs, which provide a versatility in visual vocabulary and add dimension to any project.

 \rightarrow Released in 2022

Designed by Valentin Brustaux

Valentin Brustaux lives and works in Zürich, Switzerland. He studied typography at the University of Reading, United Kingdom, successfully earning a master's degree in typeface design in 2007. Brustaux has worked for many type companies, including Adobe, Monotype, Optimo, and Tiro Typeworks, and for various western and non-Latin typographic projects (Cyrillic, Greek, Kannada and Telugu). From 2014 to 2021, he taught graphic and type design at the École romande d'arts et communication (Eracom) in Lausanne. One of his most notable projects is the typeface Tiina, which was released by the late foundry Ourtype and received the Type Directors Club Certificate of Excellence in Type Design in 2008, as well as the Swiss Federal Design Award in 2010. Brustaux has regularly collaborated with Optimo since 2012 and now manages client accounts and licenses.

Artex SemiCondensed Regular 246 pt		
Artex SemiCondensed Hairline/Italic 105 pt	AD	Aa
Artex SemiCondensed Light/Italic 105 pt	Aa	Aa
Artex SemiCondensed Regular/Italic 105 pt	Aa	Aa
Artex SemiCondensed Medium/Italic 105 pt	Aa	Aa
Artex SemiCondensed Bold/Italic 105 pt	Aa	Aa
Artex SemiCondensed Black/Italic 105 pt	Aa	Aa

Artex SemiCondensed Regular 242 pt

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Artex SemiCondensed Family 12 Styles

Artex SemiCondensed Hairline Artex SemiCondensed Hairline Italic Artex SemiCondensed Light Artex SemiCondensed Light Italic Artex SemiCondensed Regular Artex SemiCondensed Italic Artex SemiCondensed Medium Artex SemiCondensed Bold Artex SemiCondensed Bold Artex SemiCondensed Black Artex SemiCondensed Black

Artex Variable SemiCondensed

Artex Var SemiCondensed

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niCondensed	Character Map
Uppercase	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefqhijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
Lowercase	
Standard Punctuation	.:,;—_()[]{}i!;¿?'''"",,,''';\«»/\ ¦•·@
Symbols	&%‰©®®™°§¶*†‡#Nº
Standard Ligatures	fi ffi fl ffl ff
Discretionary Ligatures	ru ri ff rt rv rw ry
Proportional Lining Figures	0123456789
Slashed Zero	0
Mathematical Symbols	+−±×÷=≠≈<>≤≥¬∞~^µ∫Ωπ∂Δ∏∑√◊
Currencies	\$¢£¥€f¤
Fractions	1/4 1/2 3/4 1/8 3/8 5/8 7/8 12345/67890
Numerators	H0123456789abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz()[].,=-+
Denominators	H0123456789abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz()[].,=-+
Superscript/Superiors	H ^{0123456789abcdefghijkImnopqrstuvwxyz()[].,=-+}
Subscript/Inferiors	H _{0123456789abcdefghijkImnopqrstuvwxyz()[].,=-+}
Ordinals	Hao
Arrows	$\leftarrow \rightarrow \uparrow \downarrow \land \nearrow \lor \checkmark \checkmark$
Accented Uppercases	ÀÁÂÃÄĀĂÅÅĄÆÆĆĈČĊÇĎĐÈÉÊĚËĒĖĘ
	ĜĞĠĢĤĦÌĺĺĨĨĨĬĬĮIJĴĶĹĽĻŁĿŃŇÑŅŊÒÓÔÕÖŌ
	ŎŐØØŒÞŔŘŖßŜŠŞŞŤŢŢŦÙÚÛŨÜŪŬŮŰŲ
	ŴŴŴŴŶŶŶŸŹŹŻ
Accented Lowercases	àáâãäāāååąææćĉčċçďdeéêěëēĕeġğġģ
	ĥħìíîĩïīĭįıjjjķĺľļłŀlńňñņòóôõöööŏőøøœŕřŗßśŝš
	şşťţţŧùúûũüūŭůűųẁŵŵŵỳýŷÿźžżŋðþ
Stylistic Alternates	aaagbdhmnpqruBDEFGGMNPQR145@&

Language Support

Afrikaans, Albanian, Asu, Basque, Bemba, Bena, Breton, Bosnian, Catalan, Chiga, Colognian, Cornish, Croatian [Latin], Czech, Danish, Dutch, Embu, English, Esperanto, Estonian, Faroese, Filipino, Fijian, Finnish, Flemish, French, Friulian, Frisian, Galician, Ganda, German, Gusii, Greenlandic, Hawaiian, Hungarian, Icelandic, Inari Sami, Indonesian, Irish, Italian, Jola-Fonyi, Kabuverdianu, Kalaallisut, Kalenjin,

Kamba, Kikuyu, Kinyardawanda, Latin, Latvian, Lithuanian, Lower Sorbian, Luo, Luxembourgish, Luyia, Machame, Makhuwa-Meetto, Makonde, Malagasy, Malay, Maltese, Manx, Maori, Meru, Morisyen, Moldavian, North Ndebele, Nothern Sami, Norwegian Bokmål, Norwegian Nynorsk, Nyankole, Oromo, Portuguese, Polish, Quechua, Provençal, Rhaeto-Romanic, Romanian, Romansh, Romany, Rombo, Rundi, Rwa, Samburu, Sango, Sangu, Sámi [Inari], Sámi [Luli], Sámi [Northern], Sámi [Southern], Samoan, Scottish Gaelic, Sena, Serbian [Latin], Spanish, Shambala, Shona, Slovak, Slovenian, Soga, Somali, Swahili, Swedish, Swiss German, Taita, Teso, Tagalog, Turkish, Upper Sorbian, Uzbek, Volapük, Vunjo, Walser, Wallon, Welsh, Western Frisian, Wolof, Zulu

Optimo Latin Extended Character Set

Adobe · Adobe Latin-1

- Apple Macintosh
- MacOS Roman (Standard Latin) · MacOS Central European Latin
- · MacOS Croatian
- · MacOS Iceland
- · MacOS Romanian
- · MacOS Turkish

ISO 8859

- · 8859-1 Latin-1 Western European 8859-2 Latin-2 Central European 8859-3 Latin-3 South European 8859-4 Latin-4 North European 8859-9 Latin-5 Turkish 8859-13 Latin-7 Baltic Rim 8859-15 Latin-9
- 8859-16 Latin-10 South-Eastern European

Microsoft Windows

· MS Windows 1250 Central European Latin MS Windows 1252 Western (Standard Latin) MS Windows 1254 Turkish Latin • MS Windows 1257 Baltic Latin

Encoded Glyphs

- Basic Latin
- Latin-1 Supplement Latin Extended-A
- · Latin Extended-B
- · Latin Extended Additional

OpenType Features	OFF	ON
All Caps [cpsp]	All Capital	ALL CAPITAL
Case Sensitive Forms [case]		
This function formats the text in upper- case and adjusts spacing between all capital letters. It also applies the 'Case Sensitive Forms' feature which replaces certain characters with alternates that are better suited for all capital text, espe-	(278) «Optimo» hi@xyz.ch	(278) «OPTIMO» HI@XYZ.CH
cially related to punctuation.	H@ ¦()[]{]¿j‹›«»	H@ ¦()[]{}¿i‹›«»—·
12 Tabular Lining Figures [tnum-lnum]	H0123456789	H0123456789
Proportional Lining Figures [pnum–Inum]	H0123456789	H0123456789
Tabular Oldstyle Figures	H0123456789	H0123456789
13 [tnum-Inum] 13 Proportional Oldstyle Figures [pnum-Inum]	H0123456789	H0123456789
This typeface includes lining and small figures available in tabular or propor- tional spacing formats. Lining figures have an invariable height and aligned to the capitals height, comparatively to small figures who are slightly smaller. For contexts in which numbers need to line up such as columns or tables, the tabular setting is perfectly adapted as all numerals width is uniformized. Proportional setting generates numerals suitable for text; each number has an appropriate width based on its shape.		
Contextual Alternates [calt]	A-B-C-D 1-2	A-B-C-D1-2
This feature adapts the position of a glyph after its surrounding context. For instance, a dash placed between two uppercase letters or numbers will be replaced by an uppercase ver- sion of the dash, slightly higher. This feature is usually active by default in Adobe applications.		
Standard Ligatures [liga]	ff ffi ffl fi fl	ff ffi ffl fi fl
Standard ligatures replaces a sequence of characters with a single ligature glyph, they are designed to improve kerning and readability of certain letter pairs.		
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Artex	OFF	ON	6
Fractions [frac]	1/21/32/31/4	$\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{2}{3}$ $\frac{1}{4}$	
With this feature, any numbers separated by a slash will automatically turn into a fraction. To fit in fraction configuration, numerals have been designed smaller and their weights have been adjusted to suit the typeface.	3/4 3/8 5/8 7/8	3/4 3/8 5/8 7/8	
Ordinals [ordn] This feature replaces any letter follow- ing a numeral with its matching superior letters. French language uses the ordi- nal indicators such as 'er' for 1er premier, while Spanish, Portuguese and Italian require the feminine and masculine ordi- nals 'a,' 'o' for 1°, 1°. Ordinals are designed to match the weight of the typeface.	2a 2o 1er	2ª 2º 1 ^{er}	
Slashed Zero [zero]	0 0	00	
Originally created to avoid the confu- sion between the '0' and the 'O', this feature substitutes all zeros in a selected text by a slashed form of the zero.			
H2 Numerators [numr]	H0123456789-+=	H0123456789-+=	
This feature substitutes glyphs with their matching smaller alternates. The numer- ators are the same glyphs that are used to create fractions, their vertical position remains within the capital letters height. These glyphs are reduced in size and designed slightly heavier to keep them consistent with the rest of the font.	Habcdefghijklmno Hpqrstuvwxyz()[].,	Habcdefghijklmno Hpqrstuvwxyz()[].,	
Denominators [dnom]	H0123456789-+=	H0123456789-+=	
This feature substitutes glyphs with their matching smaller alternates and low	Habcdefghijklmno	HabcdefghijkImno	
position glyphs. The denominators are the same glyphs that are used to create fractions, their vertical position remains within the base line. These glyphs are reduced in size and designed slightly heavier to keep them consistent with the rest of the font.	Hpqrstuvwxyz()[].,	Hpqrstuvwxyz()[].,	
Superscript/Superiors [sups]	H0123456789-+=	H ⁰¹²³⁴⁵⁶⁷⁸⁹⁻⁺⁼	
This feature substitutes glyphs with their matching smaller alternates which are	Habcdefghijklmno	H ^{abcdefghijkImno}	
set slightly above the height of the capi- tal letters. These glyphs are reduced in size and designed slightly heavier to keep them consistent with the rest of the font.	Hpqrstuvwxyz()[].,	H ^{pqrstuvwxyz()[].,}	
Subscript/Inferiors [subs]	H0123456789-+=	H ₀₁₂₃₄₅₆₇₈₉₋₊₌	
This feature substitutes glyphs with their matching smaller alternates which are	Habcdefghijklmno	HabcdefghijkImno	
set slightly below the baseline. These glyphs are reduced in size and designed slightly heavier to keep them consistent with the rest of the font.	Hpqrstuvwxyz()[].,	H _{pqrstuvwxyz()[].,}	

OFF

ON

7

Stylistic Set 1 [ss01] Standard letters and figures This feature replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).	abdghmnpqru145 BDEFGMNPQR&@ abdghmnpqru145	abdghmnpqru145 BDEFGMNPQR&@ abdghmnpqru145
	ĎĐÈÉÊĚËĒĔĖĘĜĞĠĢ ŃŇÑŅŊŔŘŖàáâãäāā åắąææddgggggĥńňñ ŋŋŕřŗùúûũüūŭůűųþ	ĎĐÈÉÊĚËĒĔĖĘĜĞĠĢ ŃŇÑŅŊŔŘŖàáâãäāä åắąææďđĝğġģĥńňñ ņŋŕřŗùúûũüūŭůűųþ
Stylistic Set 1 [ss01] and Stylistic Set 2 [ss02] Serif a The activation of both features replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).	a àáâãäāāååąææ	a àáâãäāāååąææ
Stylistic Set 1 [ss01] and Stylistic Set 3 [ss03] Single-storey aThe activation of both features replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).	a àáâãäāāååąææ	a àáâãäāăååąææ
Stylistic Set 4 [ss04] Standard g b d p q This feature replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).	gbdpq ĝğġġďďþ	gbdpq ĝğġģďđþ
Stylistic Set 5 [ss05] Standard h m n r u This feature replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).	hmnru ĥńňñņŋŕřŗù úûũüūŭůűų	hmnru ĥńňñņŋŕřŗù úûũüūŭůűų
Stylistic Set 7 [ss07] Standard capitals This feature replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).	BDEFGMNPQR ĎĐÈÉÊĚËĒĔĖĘĜĞ ĠĢŃŇÑŅŊŔŘŖ	BDEFGMNPQR ĎĐÈÉÊĚËĒĔĖĘĜĞ ĠĢŃŇÑŅŊŔŘŖ
Stylistic Set 8 [ss08] Standard figures This feature replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).	145145145	145145 ¹⁴⁵
Stylistic Set 9 [ss09] Standard G This feature replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).	G ĜĞĠĢ	G ĜĞĠĢ
Stylistic Set 10 [ss10] Alternate G This feature replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).	G ĜĞĠĢ	G ĜĞĠĢ
Stylistic Set 11 [ss11] Standard Q This feature replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).	Q	Q

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Stylistic Set 18 [ss18] Small symbols ©®®	C R P	© ® Ø
This feature replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).		
Stylistic Set 19 [ss19] Small arrows	←→↑↓↖↗↘⇙	←→↑↓┖汹лг
This feature replaces glyph(s) with stylistic alternate(s).		
Stylistic Set 6 [ss06] Lowercase math symbols	4–7×8	4–7×8
This feature activates alternate lowercase positioning of mathematical symbols.	up+down	up+down
	H+±×÷−=≈≠≤≥¬∞	H+±×÷−=≈≠≤≥¬∞
Stylistic Set 20 [ss20] Multiply sign	32x50 cm	32×50 cm
This feature substitutes the letter "x" into the multiplication sign.		
Discretionary Ligatures [dlig]	-> <-	$\rightarrow \leftarrow$
This feature activates discretionary ligatures which are specific to the typeface. It applies all other designed ligatures that are not classified as standard ligatures.	ru ri rf rt rv rw ry rrf rı rí rî rï rì rī rị rť rț rú rû rü cù cũ cu củ cŵ cŵ cý	ת ה ה ת א א א http:// ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה
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Artex SemiCondensed Hairline 60 pt

Artex SemiCondensed Hairline 36 pt

Artex SemiCondensed Hairline 24 pt

Artex SemiCondensed Hairline 14 pt

Ford Sedan, white The car was a boxy late model Ford sedan, white over black, innocuous bordering on invisible, and very fast. It

The car was a

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had been a sheriff's vehicle

The car was a boxy late model Ford sedan, white over black, innocuous bordering on invisible, and very fast. It had been a sheriff's vehicle originally bought at an auction in Tennessee, and further modified for speed. Perry and I listened to the big engine idle, checked the dual scoops on the hood. I had

The car was a boxy late model Ford sedan, white over black, innocuous bordering on invisible, and very fast. It had been a sheriff's vehicle originally bought at an auction in Tennessee, and further modified for speed. Perry and I listened to the big engine idle, checked the dual scoops on the hood. I had not seen one of those on the road since high school. "You like the car?" Perry asked. "It's all right," I said, my eyes ahead. "I've never been much of a Ford man." Perry shifted in his bucket, "You know something about cars? For city cruising, it'll do." I spent my childhood in Riverdale, New Jersey, thirty miles north from long, narrow Manhattan Island, which sits in the bay, among other islands, outcroppings, flatlands, like a silhouette of a right whale navigating a rocky passage; on the area map, among blank-faced formations, all like itself colored yellow for density of

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Artex @ Sernic Ondensed		10
Artex SemiCondensed Hairline 12 pt	The car was a boxy late model Ford sedan, whi ible, and very fast. It had been a sheriff's vehicl and further modified for speed. Perry and I liste scoops on the hood. I had not seen one of thos the car?" Perry asked. "It's all right," I said, my e man." Perry shifted in his bucket, "You know so I spent my childhood in Riverdale, New Jersey, t Island, which sits in the bay, among other island a right whale navigating a rocky passage; on the like itself colored yellow for density of population Riverdale was a lumbering town. No one who liv the mill by the lake. Then one year there were n	e originally bought at an auction in Tennessee, ened to the big engine idle, checked the dual se on the road since high school. "You like eyes ahead. "I've never been much of a Ford mething about cars? For city cruising, it'll do." hirty miles north from long, narrow Manhattan ds, outcroppings, flatlands, like a silhouette of ne area map, among blank-faced formations, all on, it lies like a smelt in a pan. In the old days, yed in it was out of sound of the big saws in
Artex SemiCondensed Hairline 10 pt	The car was a boxy late model Ford sedan, white over b had been a sheriff's vehicle originally bought at an auction and I listened to the big engine idle, checked the dual so road since high school. "You like the car?" Perry asked. " much of a Ford man." Perry shifted in his bucket, "You kn spent my childhood in Riverdale, New Jersey, thirty miles in the bay, among other islands, outcroppings, flatlands, passage; on the area map, among blank-faced formation tion, it lies like a smelt in a pan. In the old days, Riverdale of sound of the big saws in the mill by the lake. Then one may never have heard of Riverdale. Nothing happened re come back to me in a dream. Rising up through the trance New York, the reverie left in its wake a delicious sense of	on in Tennessee, and further modified for speed. Perry coops on the hood. I had not seen one of those on the It's all right," I said, my eyes ahead. "I've never been now something about cars? For city cruising, it'll do." I is north from long, narrow Manhattan Island, which sits like a silhouette of a right whale navigating a rocky ns, all like itself colored yellow for density of popula- was a lumbering town. No one who lived in it was out e year there were no more logs to make lumber. But you eally there. It was a small and ugly town. The city had quil sleep of a warm May evening in the noisy and busy
Artex SemiCondensed Hairline 8 pt	The car was a boxy late model Ford sedan, white over black, innocuous originally bought at an auction in Tennessee, and further modified for s scoops on the hood. I had not seen one of those on the road since hig ahead. "I've never been much of a Ford man." Perry shifted in his bucker my childhood in Riverdale, New Jersey, thirty miles north from long, narri outcroppings, flatlands, like a silhouette of a right whale navigating a rout itself colored yellow for density of population, it lies like a smelt in a pa in it was out of sound of the big saws in the mill by the lake. Then one y heard of Riverdale. Nothing happened really there. It was a small and up the tranquil sleep of a warm May evening in the noisy and busy New Yor begin as a point of activity, usually a harbor, and settlement concentric is unique in its shape and circumstances and in its growth, which reser weather would come in one day when the fall was over and would stay pray when Emily died. God would make an exception. He would let her i up outside our house. I was sitting on the front step rereading a comic, his face a ghostly look. "Cement," he said. It's not that I was being shy.	peed. Perry and I listened to the big engine idle, checked the dual th school. "You like the car?" Perry asked. "It's all right," I said, my eyes et, "You know something about cars? For city cruising, it'll do." I spent row Manhattan Island, which sits in the bay, among other islands, ocky passage; on the area map, among blank-faced formations, all like in. In the old days, Riverdale was a lumbering town. No one who lived year there were no more logs to make lumber. But you may never have gly town. The city had come back to me in a dream. Rising up through ork, the reverie left in its wake a delicious sense of peace. All cities cally grows around this point in increasingly wider rings. Manhattan mbled a thermometer. Riverdale had no center, just Main Street. Bad y for the six following months. I prayed for my dead dog, but I didn't into Heaven. In the early summer of my fourteenth year a lorry pulled . The driver came toward me, covered in a fine, pale dust, which gave
Artex SemiCondensed Hairline 6 pt	The car was a boxy late model Ford sedan, white over black, innocuous bordering on invisible, and very fast. It had been a sheriff's vehicle originally bought at an auction in Tennessee, and further modified for speed. Perry and I listened to the big engine idle, checked the dual scoops on the hood. I had not seen one of those on the road since high school. "You like the car?" Perry asked. "It's all right," I said, my eyes ahead. "I've never been much of a Ford man." Perry shifted in his bucket, "You know something about cars? For city cruising, it'l do." I spent my childhood in Riverdale, New Jersey, thirty miles north from long, narrow Manhattan Island, which sits in the bay, among other islands, outcop- pings, flatlands, like a silhouette of a right whale navigating a rocky passage; on the area map, among blank-faced formations, all like itself colored yellow for density of popula- tion, it lies like a smell in a pan. In the old days, Riverdale was a lumbering town. No one who lived in it was out of sound of the big saws in the mill by the lake. Then one year there were no more logs to make lumber. But you may never have heard of Riverdale. Nothing happened really there. It was a smell and ugly town. The city had come back to me in a dream. Rising up through the tranqui laeep of a warm May evening in the noisy and busy New York, the reverie left in its wake a delicious sense of peace. All cities begin as a point of activity, usually a harbor, and settlement concentrically grows around this point in increasingly wider rings. Manhattan is unique in its shape and circumstances and in its growth, which resembled a thermometer. Riverdale had no center, just Main Street.	following months. I prayed for my dead dog, but I didn't pray when Emily died. God would make an exception. He would let her into Heaven. In the early summer of my fourteenth year a lorry pulled up outside our house. I was sitting on the front step rereading a comic. The driver came toward me, covered in a fine, pale dust, which gave his face a ghostly look. "Cement," he said. It's not that I was being shy It was just that—well, for one, I don't even remember the event, It's a blank: a white slate, a black hole. I was able to date the occasion with complete certainty because that afternoon I had been sledding with my lifelong friend and enemy. Perry Boy, and we had quarreled, because his new Christmas sled would not go as fast as my old one. Snow was never heavy in our part of the world, but this Christmas it had been plentiful enough almost to cover the tallest spears of dried grass in Mountain Side Pair. The following day, my dog was dying. I brought her water and food and placed them near her, stood watching intently—but she didn't move. The car was a boxy late model Ford sedan, white over black, innocuous bordering on invisible, and very fast. It had been a sheriff's vehicle originally bought at an auction in Tennessee, and further modified for speed. Perry and I listened to the big engine idle, checked the dual scoops on the hood. I had not seen one of those on the road since high school "You like the car?" Perry asked. "It's all right," I said, my eyes shead. "I've never been much of a Ford mar," Perry shifted in his bucket, "You know something about cars? For city cruising, it'll dor' listened to Rivey, thirty miles north from fone, narrow

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Artex SemiCondensed Hairline Italic 12 pt	and further modified for speed. Perry and I list scoops on the hood. I had not seen one of the the car?" Perry asked. "It's all right," I said, my man." Perry shifted in his bucket, "You know so I spent my childhood in Riverdale, New Jersey, Island, which sits in the bay, among other islan	cle originally bought at an auction in Tennessee, ened to the big engine idle, checked the dual ose on the road since high school. "You like eyes ahead. "I've never been much of a Ford omething about cars? For city cruising, it'll do." thirty miles north from long, narrow Manhattan ods, outcroppings, flatlands, like a silhouette of he area map, among blank-faced formations, all tion, it lies like a smelt in a pan. In the old days, ived in it was out of sound of the big saws in
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14

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8 pt

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wider rings. Manhattan is unique in its shape and circumstances and in its growth, which resembled a thermometer. Riverdale had no center, just Main Street. Bad weather would come in one day when the fall was over and would stay for the six following months. I prayed for my dead dog, but I didn't pray when Emily died. God would make an exception. He would let her into Heaven. In the early summer of my fourteenth year a lorry pulled up outside our house. I was sitting on the front step rereading a comic. The driver came toward me, covered in a fine, pale dust, which gave his face a ghostly look. "Cement," he said. It's not that I was being shy. It was just that—well, for one, I don't even remember the event. It's a blank: a white slate, a black hole. I was able to date the occasion with complete certainty because that afternoon I had been sledding with my lifelong friend and enemy, Perry Boy, and we had quarreled, because his new Christmas sled would not go as fast as my old one. Snow was never heavy in our part of the world, but this Christmas it had been plentiful enough almost to cover the tallest spears of dried grass in Mountain Side Park. The following day, my dog was dying. I brought her water and food and placed them near her, stood watching intently-but she didn't move. The car was a boxy late model Ford sedan, white over black, innocuous bordering on invisible, and very fast. It had been a sheriff's vehicle originally bought at an auction in Tennessee, and further modified for speed.