

ILDRICHT NACH DEM CODEX PALATINUS NRO 461 MIT EINER EINLEITUNG ALS I

Looking up at the mirror above the sink, he saw reflected not the self-improved and fully realized man that he'd worked so hard to become, but the pale, round-eyed little boy who had hidden from his mother when she had been in the deepest and darkest end of one of her cocaine-assisted, amphetamine-spiced mood swings, before she traded cold reality for the warm coziness of the asylum. As if some whirlpool of time was spinning him backward into the hateful past, Junior felt his hard-won defenses being stripped away..Opening his eyes blinking back his tears just as more agonizing contractions knotted his abdomen, he could see ribbons of red in the watery green mess that gushed from him. Bright red. Gastric blood would be dark. This must be pharyngeal blood. Unless an artery had ruptured in his stomach, torn by the incredible violence of these intransigent spasms, in which case he was puking his life away.. "Sit down, sit down," Agnes urged. "I can offer coffee now and pie in a little bit." This didn't seem strange to him. Among the many things that no longer mattered were the concepts of distance and time..So the practice of their lore and the teaching of it had become perilous. Those who undertook it were often those already outcast, crippled, deranged, without family, old-women and men who had little to lose. The wise man and wise woman, trusted and held in reverence, gave way to the stock figures of the shuffling, impotent village sorcerer with his trickeries, the hag-witch with her potions used in aid of lust, jealousy, and malice. And a child's gift for magic became a thing to dread and hide..He remembered the collection of Caesar Zedd self-help drivel that had occupied a place of honor in the wife killer's former home in Spruce Hills. Cain owned a hardcover and a paperback of each of Zedd's works. The more expensive editions had been pristine, as though they were handled only with gloves; but the text in the paperbacks had been heavily underlined, and the corners of numerous pages had been bent to mark favorite passages.. "WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE MY BOYFRIEND?" asked Miss Velveeta, who had thus far shown no romantic inclinations..use it. The cop was no threat to the English army, as Joan had been, but as far as Junior was concerned, the creep most definitely deserved to be burned at the stake..Junior hoped that he hadn't been betrayed by eyeshine in the fraction of a second before he closed his eyes to slits..Sobbing desperately, he dropped the telephone handset on the secretary, seized the dishtowel. He wrapped the cloth tightly around the shattered stump, applying pressure to diminish the bleeding..Certain disbelief insulated her against immediate surprise. She shook her head. "That's not possible."..Not understanding, thinking that he was inexplicably asking if she loved him, she said, "Yes, of course, you silly bear, you stupid man, of course, I love you."..The coin stopped turning across his knuckles and, as though with volition of its own, it slipped into the tight curve of his curled forefinger. With a snap of his thumb, he flipped the quarter into the air..He added verisimilitude to his threats by concluding with a few hard punches where they wouldn't show, in her breasts and belly, and then he, went home to Naomi, to whom he'd been married, at that time, less than five months..Her voice as bright as her bed ensemble, spiritual sister to baby chicks everywhere, yellow Angel raised her head from the pillow and said, "Will you have a wedding?"..If the directory proved to be of no help, Junior would proceed next to the registry office at the county courthouse, to review the records of births going back to the turn of the century if necessary. Bartholomew, of course, might not have been born in the county, might have moved here as a child or an adult. If he owned property, he'd show up on the register of deeds. Whether a landowner or not, if he did his civic duty every two years, he would appear on the voter rolls.. "Only for a little while. Then he is joining me at the gallery, and after the show's over, we're having dinner together."..Agnes leaned forward in her chair: knees together, clasped hands resting on her knees, forehead against her hands..After a while, a voice broke the vacuum-perfect silence. Bob Chicane. His instructor..In January 1965, Magusson had sent Cain to Nolly as a client, not sure why the creep needed a private detective. That had turned out to be the business about Seraphim White's baby. Simon's warning to be careful of Enoch Cain had helped to shape Nolly's decision to withhold the information about the child's placement.. "Just that she's aware of all the ways things are," Maria added. "Like you and Barty.".. "Nick," he suggested, as though any reason existed for her to be on a first-name basis with the man who killed her husband. "I wasn't drinking."..Soon he dispensed with picture books and progressed to short novels for more accomplished readers, and then rapidly to books meant for young adults. Tom Swift adventures and Nancy Drew mysteries captivated him through the summer and early autumn..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..She shook her head. "No way back." She pointed to the sketch pad on the floor. "I pushed him there."..Testing Celestina's nerves as fully as Barty had tested his mother's, Angel pulled-levered -shinnied-swung herself so fast up through the tree, arriving at the boy's side while red streaks still enlivened a sky that was repainting itself purple. She stood in the crook of limbs with him, and her delighted laughter rang down through the cathedral oak. 1975 through 1978: Hare ran from Dragon, Snake fled from Horse, and '78 bounced to the beat, because disco ruled. The reborn Bee Gees dominated the airwaves. John Travolta had the look. Rhodesian rebels, grasping the dangers inherent in any battle between equals, had the manful courage to slaughter unarmed women missionaries and schoolgirls. Spinks won the title from Ali, and Ali won it back from Spinks..The wink startled and baffled Edom. Oddly, he thought of the mysterious, disembodied, and eternally unwinking eye in the floating pinnacle of the pyramid that was on the back of any one-dollar bill.. "The mass of these malignancies suggest they will soon spread-or have already spread-out of the eye to the orbit. There is no hope that radiation therapy will work in this instance, and no time to risk trying it even if there were hope. No time at all. No time. Dr. Schurr and I agree, to save Bartholomew's life, we must remove

both eyes immediately." The diminutive mortician spoke a few comforting words instead of commenting on the dental history of the deceased, and when he put a consoling hand on Jacob's shoulder, Jacob cringed from his touch. Two cranks operated the winch. The mortician and his assistant turned the handles in unison, and as the mechanism creaked softly, the casket slowly descended into the hole. More likely than not, Victoria spoke directly to the maniac detective. Even if she reported her sordid fabrications to another officer, it would have gotten back to Vanadium, and the cop would have sought her out at once to hear her filth firsthand, whereupon she would have enhanced her story until it sounded as though Junior had grabbed her knockers and had tried to shove his tongue down her throat. Anyway-and curiously-Industrial Woman increasingly looked to him like Scamp. As various abraded and inflamed mucous membranes constantly reminded him, he'd had more than enough of Scamp for a while. At last the day arrived: Friday, January 12. Maria said, "It is ... the only thing ... I can do for him now, for you. I be nobody, not out of hand." "Well ... yes, I suppose so." Spineless, unethical quack bastard, Junior thought bitterly. This Monday afternoon, he longed for the escape and solace of half-hour pulp adventure. But he decided that he ought to at last compose the letter he'd been meaning to write for at least ten days. Neither hesitantly nor recklessly, the boy set off across the lawn toward the porch steps. He maintained a far straighter line than Agnes would have been able to keep with her eyes closed. When the attorney finally came on the line, he sounded put-upon, as though Junior were the equivalent of a troublesome toe that he would like to shoot off. He'd wanted to give Celestina more help than she would accept. She continued working nights as a waitress for two years, while she completed classes at the Academy of Art College, and she quit her job only when she began to sell her paintings for enough to equal her wages and gratuities. Edom bit his lower lip, shook his head, and stubbornly clung to Barty's left foot. And had Phimie, retrieved from death by the resuscitation procedures of the surgical team, repaid Nella's kindness with her own stunning message to Lipscomb? This wasn't art. This was pandering, mere illustration, more suitable for painting on velvet than on canvas. He missed Naomi. She'd always known exactly the right thing to say or do, improving his mood with a few words or with just her touch, when he was feeling down. With his empty sockets draped by unsupported lids, Barty rode home wearing padded eye patches under sunglasses, his cane propped against the seat at his side, as though he were costumed for a role in a play filled with a Dickensian amount of childhood suffering. "I hope it was all right I let him in, Mr. Cain." Sparky had a capuchin's overbite, too. "He told me it was an emergency." Since the cops believed that Junior accidentally shot himself while searching for a nonexistent burglar, he was already in their book as an idiot. If he tried to explain how Vanadium had tormented him with the quarter, and how a quarter turned up, of all places, in his cheeseburger, they would figure him for a hopeless hysteric. Harrison and Grace had welcomed him in spite of the fact that a friend and parishioner had died on Thursday, leaving them both bereft and with church obligations. Agnes thought crazily of their early dates and the first years of their marriage. They had occasionally gone to the drive-in, sitting close. Alone, Junior sat in the breakfast nook with a pot of coffee and an entire Sara Lee chocolate fudge cake. "Tom, a couple minutes ago," Agnes said, "Celestina mentioned your . . . 'certain awareness.' Which is what exactly?" "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." Nothing remained to be done but to press her shoe in the butter and hammer her head into the corner of the oven door. "Well," Agnes said, "thank the Lord, we don't have tornadoes here in California." Also in the drawer was a pistol that he kept for home defense. He stared at it, trying to decide whether to go downstairs and make a sandwich or kill himself. Yet he didn't fault himself for a lack of sensitivity. He'd met this woman only once before. He wasn't emotionally invested in her as he had been in sweet Naomi. Scamp was a multitalented woman, with smoother skin than a depilated peach, with more delicious roundnesses than Junior could catalog, but she proved not to be the remedy for his tension. Only Bartholomew, found and destroyed, could give him peace. Solitude, however, was his preference. He found the sympathy of friends unbearable, a constant reminder that Perri was gone. Google didn't realize that he was an object of disgust. He wiggled his eyebrows in what he evidently assumed to be an expression of male camaraderie, and he nudged Junior with one elbow. As soon as he was alone, however, Junior yearned for the nurse to return. Alone, he felt vulnerable, threatened. His Country Squire laden with cookies, plum cakes, homemade caramel corn with almonds, and gifts, Edom drove directly home from Obadiah Sepharad's place, which had been their final stop. He roared away as if trying to outrun tornadoes and tidal waves. Ice bags. I almost laughed at his tendency to morbidity and self-dramatization. The living dead had not come to get him: just some rubber ice bags. "Another year," Edom said, "and instead of me, Barty can drive the car for you." When he held fast to his sanity, common sense eventually told him that the coin must have been left much earlier in the night, soon after he had set out for Victoria's house. In fact, in spite of the new locks, Vanadium must have stopped here on his way to see Victoria, unaware that he would meet his death in her kitchen-and at the hands of the very man he was tormenting. "Who else? I think there's romance in the air. The cow-eyed way he looks at her, she could knock his knees out from under him just by giving him a wink." "Because of a certain awareness you've had since childhood," Celestina said, recalling what he'd told her in San Francisco. SHORTLY BEFORE one o'clock, the Hackachaks descended in a fury, eyes full of bloody intent, teeth bared, voices shrill. Instead of opening his left fist, Tom lifted his martini with his right, and on the tablecloth under the glass lay the coin. They agreed that to the outside world, Barty must continue to appear to be a sightless man-or otherwise either be treated like a freak or be subjected, perhaps unwillingly, to experimentation. In the modern world, there was no tolerance for miracles. Only family could be told of this development. PAUL DAMASCUS WAS walking the northern coast of California: Point Reyes Station to Tomales, to Bodega Bay, on to Stewarts Point, Gualala, and Mendocino. Some days he put in as little as ten miles, and other days he traveled more than thirty. The longer they were required to lie low in fear, the more likely Celestina would be to cast caution aside and return to Pacific Heights, Tom knew her well enough to be sure that she was a fighter

rather than a runner. Being in hiding frustrated her. Day by day, hour by hour, with no target date for resuming a normal life, she would quickly lose patience. Rubbed raw, her dignity and sense of justice would compel her to act-perhaps more out of emotion than out of reason..His throat was still so raw from the explosive vomiting, seared by stomach acid, that he sounded like a character from a puppet show for children on Saturday-morning television, hoarse and squeaky at the same time. If not for the pain, he would have felt ridiculous, but the hot and jagged scrape of each word through his throat left him unable to.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.. "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?".But the boy played no tricks against his father. He took his beatings in silence and learned to hide his gift..With a sigh, Obadiah differed: "Not clever. Crude. Before my hands became these great-knuckled lumps, I could have dazzled you.".Junior suspected that no one other than this man's mother called him Tom. He was probably "Detective" to some and "Vanadium" to most who knew him..The three adults exclaimed at the disappearance of the quarter, applauded again, and looked knowingly at Tom's hands, which had closed at the sudden conclusion of all the flourishes..Nolly shrugged. "He can't know for sure. And anyway, he didn't get the pushed idea until he'd already taken the case.".Koko changed directions with a fantastic pivot turn and bounded after the girl..Junior was motivated not by twisted needs, but by rational self interest. Consequently, he opted to load the detective's body into the cramped backseat of the Studebaker with all limbs intact and head attached..Gradually, she perceived that Lipscomb was more troubled than he should have been, considering that his patient had died through no fault of his own..The calls to Bellini in San Francisco and to others in Oregon were made with a prayer for news, but the prayer went unanswered. Cain had not been seen, heard from, smelled, intuited, or located by the pestering clairvoyants who had attached themselves to the sensational case..Tom stared down into the oceanic depths of the city, through the reefs of buildings, to the lamp-fish cars schooling through the great trenches..Finally he switched on the light, and illuminated Neddy at ease, silent in death as never in life: lying on his back, head turned to the right, swollen tongue lolling obscenely..Junior had walked along the big show windows, studying the two White paintings displayed to passersby, appalled by their beauty, when suddenly the door had opened and a gallery employee had invited him to come in. No printed invitation needed, no cool test to pass, no bouncers keeping the gate. Such easy accessibility served as proof, if you needed it, that this was not real art..In the present, long after the execution of Josef Krepp, half a block ahead, lay the Lipscomb house. Beyond it, the Lampton place.. "I believe I'll just wait here until Mr. Cain wakes," Vanadium said. "I've nothing more pressing to do.".Junior considered slipping quietly around the house, peering in windows, to be sure she was alone, before approaching directly. If she saw him, however, his wonderful surprise would be spoiled..The sight of the heavily bandaged face apparently pressed all of the compassion buttons in the reverend, because he broke out of his paralytic shock and started forward-before he registered the weapon..A forgetful client had left the bumbershoot in the office six months ago. Otherwise, Nolly wouldn't have had any umbrella at all..Barty's mathematical genius proved to have a valuable practical application. Even in his blindness, he perceived patterns where those with sight did not. Working with Tom Vanadium, he devised strikingly successful investment strategies based on subtleties of the stock market's historical performance. By the 1980s, the foundation's annual return on its endowment averaged twenty-six percent: excellent in light of the fact that the runaway inflation of the 1970s had been curbed..Standing near the foot of the bed in a shapeless blue suit, Vanadium might have been the work of an eccentric artist who had carved a man out of Spam and dressed the meaty sculpture in thrift-shop threads..He felt remarkably well when he arrived home: calm, proud of his quick thinking and stalwart action, pleasantly tired. He hadn't chosen to kill again; this obligation had been thrust on him by fate. Yet he had proven that the boldness he'd shown on the fire tower, rather than being a transient strength, was a deeply rooted quality..He switched on his flashlight. In the beam, on the blacktop, a silver disc. Like a full moon in a night sky.. "Why do you think he's spending his money for all this tricky stuff?" Kathleen wondered, not for the first time..For more than two weeks, Agnes's heart had been a clangorous place, filled with the rattle and bang of hard emotions, but now a sort of quiet had come upon it, a peace that, if it held, might one day allow joy again.. "As long as the case was open and you were the sole suspect," said the lawyer, "they couldn't negotiate an out-of-court settlement with you. But they were afraid that if eventually they couldn't prove you killed her, then they'd be in an even worse position when a wrongful death suit finally went before a jury.. "Less than a year and a half ago, Hurricane Flora--she killed over six thousand in the Caribbean.. "I'm going to recommend that you be admitted overnight and that we lance these under hospital conditions. We'll use a sterile needle on some of them, but a number are so large they're going to require a surgical knife and possibly the removal of the carbuncle core. This is usually done with a local anesthetic, but in this instance, while I don't think general anesthesia will be required, we'll probably want to sedate you that is, put you in a twilight sleep.. "Since dealing with Victoria and the detective, Junior had taken pride in the fact that he'd kept his equanimity and, more important, his lunch. No acute nervous emesis, as he'd suffered following poor Naomi's death. Indeed, he had an appetite..As Wally got behind the wheel and closed his door, Angel said, "Mommy, where's fog come from? And don't say Hawaii.. "Nonsense," Agnes breezed on, "it's no imposition. You'll be a great help with my baking, the pie deliveries, all the work that I put aside during Barty's surgery and recovery. It'll either be fun, or I'll wear you down to the bone, but either way, you won't be bored. I've got two extra rooms. One for Celie and Angel, and one for Grace. When your Wally arrives, we can move Angel in with Grace, or she can bunk with me.. "The

cop had picked up the .22 pistol, using a pencil through the trigger guard, to prevent the destruction of fingerprints..Vanadium hadn't seen the man who had clubbed him from behind and who had smashed his face with a pewter candlestick, but when~ he spoke the name Enoch Cain, the quality in his eyes was not compassion. No fingerprints had been left, no evidence in the aftermath of the fire at the Bressler house or in the Studebaker hauled from Quarry Lake.

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