

HERALDIC HISTORY OF THE EXTINCT AND DORMANT BARONETCIES OF ENGLAND

"Let's roll 'em. out," Paul said, and he returned to the station wagon to ride shotgun beside Agnes. He would have done it, too, and risked establishing a pattern that police might notice; but the still, small voice of Zedd guided him now, as so often before, and counseled calm, counseled focus. 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. "In addition to that policy," said Vinnie, "there's another. . . --he filled his lungs, hesitated, then exhaled the air and the sum with a tremor--'seven hundred fifty thousand. Three-quarters of a million dollars." With his bent thumb against the crook of his forefinger, he flipped the quarter. Even as the coin snapped off the thumbnail and began to stir the air, Tom flung up both hands, fingers spread to show them empty and to distract. Yet on a second look, the coin was not airborne as it had seemed to be, no longer spinning-wink, wink-before their dazzled eyes. It had vanished as though into the payment slot of an ethereal vending machine that dispensed mystery in return. "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." He found it difficult to make a painful personal revelation sound sincere when delivered in a shout, but he managed well enough to bring a shine of tears to her eyes: "Part of my left foot was shot off in this upcountry sweep we did." He visited the bank in which he maintained a safe-deposit box under the John Pinchbeck identity. He withdrew the twenty thousand in cash and retrieved all the forged documents from the box. Now, however, he was thinking not about what Agnes's story might mean to Reverend White, but about what the minister might be able to do to provide at least a small degree of comfort to Agnes, who spent her life comforting others. "Now you don't have to worry," Angel said, "about what happens to him if ever you're gone, Aunt Aggie. If he can do this, he can do anything, and you can rest easy." 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. The port-wine birthmark appeared to be darker than before and differently mottled than he remembered it. Another thought: The young gallery employee would remember that Junior had asked after Neddy and had followed him toward the men's room. He would provide a description, and because he was an art connoisseur, therefore visually oriented, he'd most likely provide a good description, and what the police artist drew wouldn't be some cubist vision in the Picasso mode or a blurry impressionistic sketch, but a portrait filled with vivid and realistic detail, like a Norman Rockwell painting, ensuring apprehension. "You better wise up, you tree-humping nitwit," Rudy advised Junior, grabbing the bed railing as if he might tear it off and use it to club his son-in-law senseless. Nolly said, "We've never really had a song of our own, in spite of all the dancing we do. I think this is a good one. But so far, you've only sung it to another man." 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. 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. Inevitably, man of the arts that he was, his slouching brought him to several galleries. In the window of the fourth, not one of his favorite establishments, he saw an eight-by-ten photograph of Seraphim White. Leashed like a dog, he walked along, sullen and shivering with sickness and rage. He stared around him, seeing the stone tower, stacks of wood by its wide doorway, rusty wheels and machines by a pit, great heaps of gravel and clay. Turning his sore head made him dizzy. "Don't you say that. The society isn't silly, especially not now. It's us, it's what we were and how we are, and I do so much love everything that's us." In spite of her nature, Agnes could not find forgiveness in her heart this time. Words of absolution clotted in her throat. Her bitterness dismayed her, but she could not deny it. The fully evolved man never has to rely on the gods of fortune, Zedd tells us, because he makes his luck with such reliability that he can spit in the faces of the gods with impunity. Convinced that the house was playing tricks on him, Barty went downstairs, step by measured step, to the foyer and the ground-floor hall. Lipscomb women gladly obey the wishes of Lipscomb men-unless they disagree, of course, or don't disagree but are just feeling mulish. just as the smile curved to completion, however, an awful thing happened. The humiliation began with a loud gurgle in his gut. Spinning off the stool, he had also spun out of control. Second by second, twin storms of anger and fear whirled stronger within him..and half rotten. She tore it. With the small scissors, she opened the shoulder seam from the inside. Her father respected and admired Tom, so she was thankful for his presence. And anyone who could survive whatever catastrophe had left him with this cubistic face was a man she wanted on her team in a crisis. "It's chilly and foggy and late, and there might be villains afoot at this hour," he intoned with mock gravity. "The two of you are Lipscomb women now, or soon will be, and Lipscomb women never go unescorted through the dangerous urban night." He pushed on the door, but still it resisted, and he surprised himself by letting out a bellow of frustration that expressed quite the opposite of self-control, though no one listening could have the slightest doubt about his determination to commit and command. The detective shrugged. "The girl might've had her baby at a third rate hospital, one with poor control of patients' records and a less professional staff. Or the kid might have been placed for adoption through some baby brokerage in it strictly for the money. Then there would've been opportunities to learn something. But as soon as I discovered it was St. Mary's, I knew we were screwed." Maria arrived early, expecting to assist with final details in the kitchen. Though honored to be a guest, she

wasn't able to stand by with a glass of wine while preparations remained to be made..He had noted all seven names on the bassinets, but he read them again. He sensed in their names-or in one of their names-the explanation for his seemingly mad perception of a looming threat.. "I doubted myself more than God, though Him, too. I had those boys' blood on my hands. They were mine to protect, and I failed."..Although he considered tearing up the letter and throwing it away he knew that his perceptions were clouded by grief and that what he'd written might seem fine if he reviewed it in a less dark state of mind. He returned the letter to the envelope and put it in the drawer of his nightstand..During the following ten days, he withdrew money from several accounts. He converted selected paper assets into cash, as well..Shortly past nine o'clock, an hour after Edom and Jacob had gone, Barty came downstairs, book in hand. "The twisties are back."..Edom had noticed them earlier. Now he saw they were in worse condition than he'd thought. Enlarged knuckles, fingers not entirely at natural angles to one another. Perhaps Obadiah had rheumatoid arthritis, like Bill Kleifton, though a less crippling case..In the execution, he was likewise scrupulous, for he didn't want the grownups to see what Angel saw; he preferred they believe it was sleight of hand-or magic. After the usual moves, he briefly closed his right hand around the coin, then with a snap of his wrist, flung it at Angel, simultaneously distracting with flourishes aplenty..He was able to search five pages at a sitting before his head began to ache. He'd been putting in two sessions each day, starting this past Tuesday. Four thousand names a day. Sixteen thousand total when he finished the fifth of this evening's pages..One of the coin seekers knocked against Junior, jarring him loose of his paralysis, but when he stumbled out of the line of fire of the second vending machine, a third machine shot quarters at him..At the stream Serrenen, where it runs within the north wall of the city, the midwife gave Otter his true name, by which he is remembered in islands far from Havnor.. "Will I love you tomorrow, you mean, and the day after tomorrow, and on forever? Of course, forever, Wally, always.".. "This is going to be an enormous settlement," the attorney promised. "And there's more good news. County and state authorities have agreed to close the case on Naomi's death. It's now officially an accident."..Hound had taken him, had stood and seen his people beaten senseless, had not stopped the beating. Yet he spoke as a friend. Why? said Otter's look. Hound answered it..He couldn't remember on what principle he'd considered firing Magusson. In spite of his faults, the attorney was highly competent..The report on the tower forced Junior to consider his mortality; fear, hurt, and self-pity roiled in him. His voice trembled with offense: "You do know, Mr. Magusson, what happened to my Naomi was an.".. "Besides, I still live by my vows as much as possible, though I've had the longest continuing dispensation on record." A smile on that cracked countenance could be touching, but an ironic look now worked less well; it gave Kathleen a chill. "Vanity is a sin I've more easily been able to avoid than some others."..face with one hand, as if pulling off cobwebs. "Did you say you were in my house?"..Recognizing the danger of saying the wrong thing, the potential for self-incrimination, Junior clenched his jaws and waited..Sunday evening, here he was, cracking open four new decks, as if fresh cards might enable the magic to repeat..The time had come for him to think more seriously about his situation and his future. Self-improvement remained a laudable goal, but his efforts needed to be more focused..Reaching between the slats, Agnes tickled the pink piggies on his left foot. "Toes."..While waiting for inspiration to present him with a better strategy, Junior returned to the telephone book in search of the right Bartholomew. Not the directory for Spruce Hills and the surrounding county, but the one for San Francisco..Barty, she explained, would be rich in many ways. Financially rich, but also rich in talent, in spirit, intellect. Rich in courage, honor. With a wealth of common sense, good judgment, and luck..The hardest was being in this room at the very moment when Phimie had moved on. Celestina knew beyond doubt that this was the worst thing she would have to endure in all her life, worse than her own death when it came..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..By his twelfth month, he was toilet-trained, and every time that he had the need to use his colorful little bathroom chair, he proudly and repeatedly announced to everyone, "Barty potty."..Everyone was silent. The day was morgue-still. The crows had fled the sky, but a single hawk gilded soundlessly, like justice with its prey in sight, high above the tower..She removed a temporary cap from the second bicuspid on the lower left side and replaced it with the porcelain cap that had been delivered by the lab that morning.. "Then you have a big advantage, and you'll have to tell us all about yourselves," Agnes said. "I'll get the coffee brewing ... unless you'd like to help.".. "That's the Oreo. After I ate it up, the cookie went smooosh--smooosh into my finger.".. "Maybe." In truth, Tom didn't believe that any of this could be learned even by one adept taking instruction from another adept. They were born with the same special perception, but with different and strictly limited abilities to interact with the multiplicity of worlds that they could detect. He wasn't able to explain even to himself how he could send a coin or other small object Elsewhere; it was something he just felt, and each time that the coin vanished, the authenticity of the feeling was proved. He suspected that when Barty walked where the rain wasn't, the boy employed no conscious techniques; he simply decided to walk in a dry world while otherwise remaining in this wet one-and then he did. Woefully incomplete wizards, sorcerers with just a trick or two each, they had no secret tome of enchantments and spells to teach to an apprentice..Holding a shaker in each hand, Tom walked them forward, causing them to diverge slightly at first, but then moving them along exactly parallel to each other..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..In spite of its dazzle, the detective's smile was nonetheless melancholy, proof that he was sincere when he said that Seraphim's baby was beyond their reach..In his blindness, Barty listened to her reports and, through her, saw more than he could have seen if never he had lost his eyes..The guesswork of a wizard is close to knowledge, though he may not know what it is he knows. The first sign of Otter's gift, when he was two or three years old, was his ability to go straight to anything lost, a dropped nail, a mislaid tool, as soon as

he understood the word for it. And as a boy one of his dearest pleasures had been to go alone out into the countryside and wander along the lanes or over the hills, feeling through the soles of his bare feet and throughout his body the veins of water underground, the lodes and knots of ore, the lay and interfolding of the kinds of rock and earth. It was as if he walked in a great building, seeing its passages and rooms, the descents to airy caverns, the glimmer of branched silver in the walls; and as he went on, it was as if his body became the body of earth, and he knew its arteries and organs and muscles as his own. This power had been a delight to him as a boy. He had never sought any use for it. It had been his secret..Junior held the silencer-fitted 9-mm pistol under his left arm, clamped against his side, freeing both hands to use the automatic pick..The quiet passion in Vanadium's voice was genuine, expressed with reason but not fervor, not in the least sentimental or unctuous-which made it more disturbing. "Vibrations in one string set up soft, sympathetic vibrations in all the other strings, through the entire body of the instrument."..With his mother, his uncles, and Maria hovering just two steps behind, Barty followed the driveway, not bothering with the cane, keeping his right foot on the concrete, his left foot on the grass, until he came to a jog in the pavement, which apparently he'd been seeking. He stopped, facing due north, considered for a moment, and then pointed due west: "The oak tree's over there."..He slapped her hands, knocking the sharpener and the pencil out of her grasp. They clattered against the window, fell onto the window-seat cushions..Junior said, "I should know your name from the playbill at the lounge, but I'm as bad with names as you are good with faces.".."It's not a specific brand you can't have, it's the whole idea of a candy bar."..The disease hadn't corrupted her heart, and it had left her face untouched, as well. Lovely, she was, as she had always been..Crossing Spruce Hills with John, Paul, George, Ringo, and dead Thomas, Junior headed back toward Victoria's place, where Sinatra was no longer singing.. "I'm a healer, not a prosecutor. I'm not in the habit of making accusations, especially not against my own patients."..The musician's bird-sharp gaze grew dull. His pink tongue protruded from his mouth, like a half-eaten worm.. "Maybe it's not where the heart is," Wally corrected himself. "Maybe it's where the buffalo roam."..Strapped to the bracing board, semi-immobilized to prevent the accidental dislodgement of the intravenous feed, Junior's right arm felt half numb, stiff from disuse..he was prepared to find Vanadium sitting at the pine table, enjoying- a cup of coffee. The kitchen was deserted..The old man assumed the solemn and knowing expression of one guarding mysteries, a sphinx without headdress and mane. "If I told you, dear lady, it wouldn't be magic anymore. Merely a trick.".."That's not what they say," the boy replied with a giggle, for his extensive reading had introduced him to words that he and she agreed were not his to use..Junior had learned implode from a self-help book about how to improve your vocabulary and be well-spoken. At the time, he had thought that this word-among others in the lists he memorized-was one he would never use. Now it was the perfect description of how he felt: as if he were going to implode.. "This is for Zelda," Junior said, ramming forward across the threshold with the knife..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..From out of the fog and darkness came the slap of running feet on bricks. He was sprinting toward the back of the house..Kathleen savored her martini. "Mmmm ... as cold as a hit man's heart and as crisp as a hundred-dollar bill from the devil's wallet."..Every distorted shape, every smear of color, every swath of light and shudder of shadows resisted her attempts to relate them to the world she knew, as if shimmering before her were the landscape of a dream..The maniac detective was still on the floor where he had died. The red rose and the gift box occupied his hands.. "He's not a real contemporary person, not anyone Cain needs to fear. So how did he develop this obsession with finding someone named Bartholomew?" He met Celestina's eyes, as if she might have answers for him. "Is there a real Bartholomew? And how does this tie in with his assault on you? Or is there any tie-in at all?"..Suddenly and seriously crept out, Junior wanted to get away from this nut case. Yet he was frozen by morbid fascination..In his room, he settled on the bed with his constipating snacks and the county telephone book. Because he had packed the directory with the Zedd collection, the thief hadn't gotten it..During the walk home: slow and deep, breathing slow and deep, moving not at a brisk clip, but strolling, trying to let the tension slide away, striving to focus on good things like his full exemption from military service and his purchase of the Sklent painting..One manly woman. Several womanly men. But no blocky figure that could have been the crazed cop even in disguise..Grace White was petite, and Paul wasn't. Otherwise he might not have been able to halt her determined rush toward her husband, might not have been able to scoop her off her feet and, carrying her in his arms, spirit her to safety..Antihypertensive drugs were administered intravenously, and Phimie was confined to bed, attached to a heart monitor..Adding new growth to his forest of frustration, Tom got up from the study desk, fetched the newspaper from the front doorstep, and went to the kitchen to make his morning coffee. He boiled up a pot of strong brew and sat down at the knotty-pine table with a steaming mug full of black and sugarless solace..If that was the bright side, however, it was a piss-poor bright side (no pun intended), because he was still stuck in this men's room with a corpse, and he couldn't stay here for the rest of his life, surviving on tap water and paper-towel sandwiches but he couldn't leave the body to be found, either, because the police would be all over the gallery before the reception ended, before he had a chance to follow Celestina home.. "He's a wonderful boy, so very bright, so very full of life. Blindness will be hard, but it won't be the end. He'll cope without the light. It'll be so difficult at first, but this boy ... eventually he'll thrive.".."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."..He didn't know what he was looking for. He simply felt empowered to

be the one conducting the surveillance for a change.

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