

ANIMAL LAW IN A NUTSHELL

Reminding himself that nature was merely a dumb machine, utterly devoid of mystery, and that the unknown would always prove familiar if you dared to lift its veil, Junior discovered he could move. Each of his feet seemed to weigh as much as one of Wroth Grislin's cast bronzes, but he crossed the sidewalk and went into Galerie Coquin..His exceptional sensitivity remained a curse. He had been more profoundly affected by Victoria's and Vanadium's tragic deaths than he had realized. Wrenched, he was..AS THE WULFSTAN PARTY was being seated at a window table, slowly tumbling masses of cottony fog rolled across the black water, as if the bay had awakened and, rising from its bed, had tossed off great mounds of sheets and blankets..In all the many ways things are, across the infinity of worlds and all Creation, Barty believed that no woman existed whose beauty exceeded hers or whose heart was better..He'd once spoken that very sentiment to her. Golden haze, sun in the heart. His words had melted her, tears had sprung into her eyes, and sex been better than ever..With the infant in her arms, the heavysset nurse pressed in beside Celestina, who..Everyone thought the moptops were the coolest thing ever--ever but to Junior, their music was just all right. He wasn't stirred to sing along, and he didn't find their stuff particularly danceable.. "No, no. But being around him so much, inevitably I absorb some details. He's a compelling speaker when the subject interests him."..With a shiver, Kathleen said, "We'd like to know more about why we did the things we did for you. Why the quarters? Why the song?"..His silent tears accomplished what his words could not: Nork, Knacker, and Hisscus retreated, urging him to speak to his attorney, promising to return, once more expressing their deepest condolences, perhaps as abashed as attorneys and political appointees could get, but certainly confused and unsure how to proceed when dealing with a man so untouched by greed, so free of anger, so forgiving as the widower Cain..LEFT HAND ON the banister, right hand with knife tucked close to his side and ready to thrust, Tom Vanadium climbed cautiously but quickly to the upper floor, glancing back twice to be sure that Cain didn't slip in behind him..Tom between curiosity and emotional exhaustion, Celestina held his gaze, thinking, and finally she said, "Deal."..Zedd endorses self-pity, but only if you learn to use it as a springboard to anger, because anger-like hatred--can be a healthy emotion when properly channeled. Anger can motivate you to heights of achievement you otherwise would never know, even just the simple furious determination to prove wrong the bastards who mocked you, to rub their faces in the fact of your success. Anger and hatred have driven all great political leaders, from Hider to Stalin to Mao, who wrote their names indelibly across the face of history, and who were--each, in his own way--eaten with self-pity when young..Since discovering the quarter in his cheeseburger, Junior had been half convinced that the maniac cop survived the bludgeoning. In spite of his grievous wounds, perhaps Vanadium had swum up through a hundred feet of murky water, barely avoiding being drowned..In that instant, she knew the dreadful shape of the future, if not its fine details..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..Panic set in when he began to wonder if these intestinal spasms were going to prevent him from leaving Spruce Hills. In fact, what if they required hospitalization?..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..If killing the wrong Bartholomew had broken a dam in Junior and released a lake of tension, whacking the right Bartholomew would set loose an ocean of pent-up stress, and he would feel free as he'd not felt since the fire tower. Freer than he'd been in his entire life.. "That's exactly how I hoped he would be." Relieved, he followed Agnes to the living room. "Listen, Aggie, you know, I don't have anything against Jacob, but-"..She walked the corridor until she came to a room with empty beds. Without turning on the lights, she entered, put down the suitcase, and sat in a chair by the window..After a day of work, the pencil portrait of Nella Lombardi was finished. The second piece in the series--an extrapolation of her appearance at age sixty--was begun..of Zedd constituted the most thoughtful, most rewarding, most reliable guide to life to be found anywhere. When Junior was Confused or troubled, he turned to Caesar Zedd and never failed to find enlightenment, guidance. When he was happy, he found in Zedd the welcome reassurance that it was all right to be successful and to love oneself.No doubt thinking about the land of the big bugs, into which she had pushed Enoch Cain, which was exactly what Barty had suddenly thought about, Angel said, "Honey, this is amazing, it's wonderful, but you've got to be careful."..Not incidentally, the project served as a vehicle by which some older citizens, in financial crisis, could receive money in a way that spared their dignity, gave them hope, and repaired their damaged self esteem. Agnes asked Obadiah to enrich the project by accepting a one year grant to record the story of his life with the help of the head librarian.. "You figure all this," Jolene asked, "because Mother Nature gives us a nice warm day in January?"..She kicked off her shoes and sat beside him in bed, with her back against the headboard, still holding his hand. Even though this darkness wasn't as deep as Barty's, Agnes found that she was better able to control her emotions when she couldn't see him. "I think you must be sad, kiddo. You hide it well, but you must be."..For the first few bites of crab in a light cornmeal crust, Nolly suspended their conversation. Bliss..As Tom Vanadium studied the stained and ravaged wall again, a cold and quivery uneasiness settled insectivally onto his scalp and down the back of his neck, quickly bored into his blood, and nested in his bones. He had the terrible feeling that he was not dealing with a known quantity anymore, not with the twisted man he'd thought he understood, but with a new and even more monstrous Enoch Cain. Carrying the tote bag full of Angel's dolls and coloring books, Wally crossed the sidewalk ahead of Celestina and climbed the front steps..Initially, when told that his patient was a Negro, Junior had been reluctant to serve as her physical therapist. Her

program of rehab required mostly structured exercise to restore flexibility and to gain strength in the affected limb, but some massage would be involved, as well, which made him uncomfortable..EVERY MOTHER BELIEVES that her baby is breathtakingly beautiful. She will remain unshakably convinced of this even if she lives to be a centenarian and her child has been harrowed by eight hard decades of gravity and experience..In that slow, flat delivery with which Junior was becoming increasingly impatient, Detective Vanadium said, "We all were, Doctor. It was another election year, remember? More than once during that campaign, I could've chugged ipecac. What else would work if I wanted to have a good vomit?".FOR JUNIOR CAIN, the Year of the Horse (1966) and the Year of the Sheep (1967) offered many opportunities for personal growth and self-improvement. Even if by Christmas Eve, '67, Junior would not be able to take a dry walk in the rain, this nevertheless was a period of great achievement and much pleasure for him.."I get peed off, and I miss some things terrible. But I'm not sad. And you've got to not be sad, either, 'cause it spoils everything."No time for horror, disgust. Every second mattered now, and every minute might cost another life..It could only be made better by the presence of her parents. They had planned to fly down to San Francisco this morning, but late yesterday, a parishioner and close friend had died. A minister and his wife sometimes had duties to the flock that superseded all else..Each booth was at a large window, and each window provided a view of the street. Vanadium wasn't out there, watching from the sidewalk, either: no glimpse of his pan-flat face shining in the December sun..Because he kept imagining the stealthy sounds of a dead cop rising in vengeance behind him, Junior switched on the radio. He tuned in a station featuring a Top 40 countdown.."This will stay with you," Mary said. "It's shared sight from all the other yous in all the other places, but you won't have to make any effort to hold on to it. No headaches. No problems ever. Merry Christmas, Daddy."."Yeah," he confirmed, applying a blue crayon to a grinning bunny that was dancing with a squirrel..Yet, uncaught, the quarter would have dropped to the floor. Junior would have heard it ring off the tiles. Which he hadn't..And although Simon would have denied it, would even have joked that a conscience was a liability for an attorney, he possessed a moral compass. When he traveled too far along the wrong trail, that magnetized needle in his soul led him back from the land of the lost..Though she worried that reading would strain his eyes, worsening his condition, she recognized the irrationality of her fear. Muscles don't atrophy from use, nor eyes wear out from too much seeing.."So entertaining, I felt I should have paid for those seats. When the third machine starts whizzing coins at him, he bolts like a kid running a graveyard at midnight on a dare." Nolly laughed, remembering..She thought that she already knew all about humility, about the necessity of it, about the power of it to bring peace of mind and to heal the heart, but in the following few minutes, she learned more about humility than she had ever known before..Startled, Celestina said, "Good grief, you're spooky. How could you know what I'm thinking?"."Will do. Check out those paintings he collects. People pay real money for them, even people who've never been in a looney bin."The sole male guest in whom he took an interest-a big interest was Sklent, the one-name painter whose three canvases were the only art on the walls of Junior's apartment..In the kitchen were a radio, a toaster, a coffeepot, two place settings of cheap flatware, a small mismatched collection of thrift-shop plates and bowls and mugs, and a freezer full of TV dinners and English muffins..Nolly shrugged. "He can't know for sure. And anyway, he didn't get the pushed idea until he'd already taken the case."."Tom, a couple minutes ago," Agnes said, "Celestina mentioned your. . . 'certain awareness.' Which is what exactly?".When Junior tried to lift Victoria, her voluptuousness lost its appeal. As dead weight, she was heavier than he expected..Rena was cheerful, short, and solid. Her waist measurement must have been two-thirds her height, and she favored floral dresses that emphasized her girth. With a German accent and in a voice that always seemed about to dissolve in a great gale of mirth, she said, "Madchen lieb, you look like a Christmas candle to me."Eye to eye with Tom, Celestina herself did some clear-seeing. "You're special, too, in lots of obvious ways. But like Angel, you're special in some secret way ... aren't you?".Across the room, the girl on the window seat showed no awareness of his arrival. She sat sideways to him in the niche, with her back against one wall, knees drawn up, a big sketch pad braced against her thighs, working intently with colored pencils..The investigator's suite-a minuscule waiting room and a small office-lacked a secretary but surely harbored all manner of vermin..Taking no chances, Junior swung the candlestick again, bending down as he did so. The second impact was not as solid as the first, a glancing blow, but effective..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..Barty came out of the house with the library copy of Podkayne Of Mary, which his mother had promised to read to him later, in the hospital. "Are we all going?" he asked.."Worlds," ventured Jacob, "in which that oil-tank truck never stopped on the railroad tracks in Bakersfield, back in '60. So the train never crashed into it and those seventeen people never died."In reality, it had been a homely device, a mere box. In memory, it seemed ominous, charged with the evil portent of a nuclear bomb..Yet had the obstacles been piled twice as high, the time had come to put into words what they felt for each other and to decide what they intended to do about it. Celestina knew that in depth and intensity, as well as in the promise of passion, Wally's love for her equaled hers for him; out of respect for her and perhaps because the sweet man doubted his desirability, he tried to conceal the true power of his feelings and actually thought he succeeded, though in fact he was radiant with love. His once-brotherly kisses on the cheek, his touches, his admiring looks were all still chaste but ever more tender with the passage of time; and when he held her hand-as in the gallery this evening-whether as a show of support or simply to keep her safely beside him in a crosswalk on a busy street, dear Wally was overcome by a wistfulness and a longing that Celestina vividly remembered from Junior high school, when thirteen-year-old boys, their gazes filled with purest adoration, would be struck numb and mute by the conflict between yearning and inexperience. On three occasions recently, he seemed on the brink of revealing his feelings, which he would expect to surprise if not shock her, but the moment had never been quite right..Risking all, he turned his back on her and

fled, and in spite of his expectations to the contrary, she allowed him to escape..Pecan cakes, cinnamon custard pies boxed in insulated coolers, gifts wrapped with bright paper and glittery ribbons. Agnes Lampion made deliveries to those friends who were on her list of the needful, but also to friends who were blessed with plenty. The sight of each beloved face, each embrace, each kiss, each smile, each cheerfully spoken "Merry Christmas" at every stop fortified her heart for the sad task awaiting her when all gifts were given..According to Helen, more than half the paintings had been sold by the close of the reception, a record for the gallery. With the exhibition scheduled to run two fall weeks, she was confident that they would enjoy a sellout or the next thing to it.."Too few," said Maria, "might mean you made an admirably small number of moral mistakes but also that you failed to take reasonable risks and didn't make full use of the gift of life."In his mind, Junior saw a quarter turning knuckle over knuckle, and he heard the maniac cop's droning voice: There's a fine George and Ira Gershwin song called "Someone to Watch over Me. " You ever hear it, Enoch? I'm that someone for you, although not, of course, in a romantic sense..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..He didn't wonder about his sanity, either, as a less self-improved man might have done. No madman strives to enhance his vocabulary or to deepen his appreciation for culture.."I don't like the old crazy doctor," she said, still drawing. "I wish it was about bunnies on vacation-or maybe a toad learns to drive a car and has adventures."When people didn't apply themselves to positive goals, to making better lives for themselves, they spent their energy in wickedness. Then..When she closed the front door and turned away from it, Agnes bumped her swollen belly into Joey. His eyebrows shot up, and he put his hands on her distended abdomen, as if she were more fragile than a robin's egg and more valuable than one by Faberge..In the kitchen again, Junior spread the blanket on the floor, to one side of the blood. He rolled Vanadium onto the blanket, and drew the ends of it together, fashioning a sled with which to drag the detective out of the house..Flanking the wheelchair, Edom and Jacob spent less time watching the graveside service than studying the sky. Both brothers frowned at that cloudless blue, as though seeing thunderheads..Deeply distressed that he was planning the funeral of a man as young as Joe Lampion, whom he had liked and admired, Panglo paused to express his disbelief and to murmur comforting words, more to himself than to Jacob, as each decision was made. With one hand on the chosen casket, he said, "Unbelievable, a traffic accident, and on the very day his son is born. So sad. So terribly sad."..He was able to play peekaboo in his fifth month instead of his eighth, stand while holding on to something in his sixth instead of eighth..As always, curious about how others lived-or, in this case, bad lived-Junior explored the house, poking in drawers and closets. For a widower, Bartholomew Prosser was neat and well-organized..Highly impressed by the spot-on hyena scream with which Frieda had purged herself of the childhood emotional trauma inflicted by an authoritarian grandmother, Junior asked her to go out with him..Polio, largely an affliction of younger children, had stricken her two weeks before her fifteenth birthday. Thirty years ago.."This meeting of the North Pole Society of Not Evil Adventurers is officially closed."..On January 1, 1966, five days before Barty's first birthday, Agnes discovered him, in his playpen, engaged in unusual toe play. He wasn't simply, randomly tickling or tugging on his toes. Between thumb and forefinger, he firmly pinched the little piggy on his left foot, and then one by one pinched his way to the biggest toe. His attention shifted to his right foot, on which he first pinched the big toe before systematically working down to the smallest.."It's just that you never know what anyone's hand has been up to recently," Jacob explained. "That respectable banker down the street might have thirty dismembered women buried in his backyard. The nice church-going lady next door might be sleeping in the same bed with the rotting corpse of a lover who tried to jilt her, and for a hobby she makes jewelry from the finger bones of preschool children she's tortured and murdered."..Angel was adamant: "Nope. I could learn that. Like dressing myself and saying thank-you.".."Get this through your head, you shit-for-brains. I lost a daughter, a precious daughter, my Naomi, the light of my life."..Earlier, he had placed an open fifth of vodka on the table, in front of Victoria. The nurse, no longer in the chair, sprawled on the floor as if she had emptied another bottle before this one.."Both. Brain and heart. But I've thought it through, Daddy. More than anything in my life, I've thought this through."..The only bad moment in the evening came when the pianist played "Someone to Watch over Me."..He stood watching until the car cruised out of sight, and even after it dwindled to a speck and vanished in the distance, he stared at the point in the street where it had last been, stared while a breeze turned playful, tossing eucalyptus leaves around his feet, stared until at last he turned and began the long walk home..Celestina was amazed by her own courage in combat and by the steady calm that served her so well now. She wasn't shaken by the thought of what might have happened to her, and to her daughter, because her mind and her heart were with Wally-and because, having been watered with hope all of her life, she had a deep reservoir on which to draw in a time of drought..Frustrated again, she said simply, "Whenever Edom and Jacob talk about these things, I want you to be sure always to keep in mind that life's about living and being happy, not about dying."..Junior leaned forward and slid the packet of cash across the desk, toward the detective. "There's more where this came from."..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."..In the distance, the clang of a trolley-car bell. Hard and clear in spite of the muffling fog..In a state of wonderment that was laced with dread rather than delight, he looked up from the quarter, seeking an explanation from Vanadium, expecting to see that anaconda smile..In spite of the bravado of the responses in Junior's unspoken half of the conversation, he was increasingly unnerved by Vanadium. The cop was a lunatic, all right, but he was something more than a mere nut case..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..All day, for reasons he couldn't quite put into words, Junior had carried that quarter in a pocket of his bathrobe. From time to time, he had taken it out to examine it..As before, the name tolled through him like the ominous note of the deepest bass bell in a cathedral carillon, struck on a cold midnight..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..Jacob intended to carry the luggage, and Edom announced that he would carry Barty. The boy, however, insisted on making his own way to the house.. "Yes, you did, and it's exactly what experience has no doubt taught you to think. But I'm forty-seven and you're twenty-". In January '65, while Vanadium had been in the first month of what proved to be an eight-month coma, Enoch Cain had sought Nolly's assistance in a search for Seraphim's newborn child. When Vanadium had learned about this from Magusson long after the event, he assumed that Cain had heard Max Bellini's message on his answering machine, made the connection with Seraphim's death in an "accident" in San Francisco, and set out to find the child because it was his. Fatherhood was the only imaginable reason for his interest in the baby..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..IN HIS FORD VAN filled with needlepoint and Sklent and Zedd, Junior Cain-Pinchbeck to the world-left the Bay Area by a back door. He took State Highway 24 to Walnut Creek, which might or might not have walnuts, but which offered a mountain and a state park named for the devil: Mount Diablo. State Highway 4 to Antioch brought him to a crossing of the river delta west of Bethel Island. Bethel, for those who had taken good advanced courses in vocabulary improvement, meant "sacred place."..Junior joined the throngs, although he had no gift list or feeling for the season. He just needed to get out of his apartment, because he was convinced that the phantom singer would soon serenade him again..What didn't come as a surprise to Paul was Agnes's determination that the Whites, during their period of lying low, should stay with her and Barty..TALES FROM.Regrettably, at 2:00 A.M., February 28, waking alone in Tammy's bed, Junior sought her out and found her snacking in the kitchen. Forsaking a fork in favor of her fingers, she was eating a.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."..Between new women and needlepoint pillows, he participated in s?ances, attended lectures given by ghost hunters, visited haunted houses, and read more strange books. He even sat for the camera of a famous medium whose photographs sometimes revealed the auras of benign or malevolent presences hovering in the vicinity of her subject, though in his case she could discern no telltale sign of a spirit..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."..Three doors in the dark hallway: one to the right, ajar, and two to the left, both closed..With a sigh, Obadiah differed: "Not clever. Crude. Before my hands became these great-knuckled lumps, I could have dazzled you."..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..Crouching beside the boy as he rubbed a brighter shine onto the granite, Agnes said, "Barty, honey, why are youshe'd crossed herself during Edom's rant about the Tri-State Tornado of 1925. Then, she'd been warding off bad fortune; now, with a smile and a look of wonder, she was acknowledging the grace of God, which, according to the cards, had been settled generously on Bartholomew..THE MORNING THAT it happened was bright and blue in March, two months after Barty took Angel for a dry walk in wet weather, seven weeks after Celestina married Wally, and five weeks after the happy newlyweds completed their purchase of the Galloway house next door to the Lampion place. Selma Galloway, retired from a professorship years earlier, had subsequently retired further, taking advantage of the equity in her long-owned home to buy a little condo on the beach in nearby Carlsbad..He no longer had any reason to follow an exercise regimen. For twenty-three years, he'd needed to maintain good health in order to meet his responsibilities, but all the responsibilities that mattered to him had been lifted from his shoulders..Too much had happened in those rooms. They were stained dark with family history, and in the night, when either Edom or Jacob slept under that gabled roof, the past came alive again in dreams..The machine, one in a bank of four, wasn't filled with ordinary newspapers, which cost only a dime, but with a raunchy tabloid aimed at heterosexual swingers..The gray pewter appeared to be mottled with a black substance. Perhaps char. As though it had been soiled in a fire..Chase after her on foot. Shoot her in the car. Maybe. He'd have five rounds left if he used one on the man, four on Bartholomew..Astonished and appalled by the cop's insensitivity, Junior said, "You just drop this on me? I lost my wife and my baby. My wife and my baby."..He did not answer Hound's question..Shuddering, rubbing furiously at himself, he stumbled into the bathroom. In the mirror, he confronted a face he hardly recognized: swollen, lumpy peppered with red hives..Agnes added this stop to her route at the request of Reverend Tom Collins, the local Baptist minister whose folks unthinkingly gave him the name of a cocktail. She was friendly with all the clergymen in Bright Beach, and her pie deliveries favored no one creed..After carrying the two pieces of luggage to the car in the garage, he returned to the study. He sat at the desk and examined the contents of the drawers, then turned to the file cabinet..As Junior stood at Seraphim's grave, his breath smoked from him in the still night air, as though he were a dragon..exercise. Although they expected him to be dizzy, he had no difficulty whatsoever with his balance, and in spite of feeling a little drained, he wasn't as weak as they thought he was. He could have toured the hospital unassisted, but he played to their expectations and used the wheeled walker..The white Buick glided through the tides of fog like a ghost ship plying a ghost sea..A half bath downstairs. Two bedrooms and a full bath on the upper floor. All

deserted..The living room no longer doubled as sleeping quarters. Perri's hospital bed had been taken away. Paul's bed had been moved to a room upstairs, where for the past three nights, he had tried to sleep..An outrageously sexy redhead hit on him as he selected from an array of bomb-shaped canapes on a tray held by a waiter dressed as a ragged and soot-smearing blast survivor. Myrtle, the redhead, preferred to be called Scamp, which Junior entirely understood. She wore a DayGlo green miniskirt, a spray-on white sweater, and a green beret..Celestina finally zipped shut the satchel. "You better watch out for the big bad wolf."

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