

HYGIENE OF INSTRUCTION A STUDY OF THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE SCHOOL CHILD

"Sometimes these sympathetic vibrations are very apparent, but alot of the time, they're so subtle that you can hear them only if you're unusually perceptive." She proceeded down the shadowy center aisle, genuflected at the chancel railing, and went to the votive rack. His waitress was a cutie. She flirted with him, and he knew he could have her if he wanted. They wore out a lot of cards and kept a generous supply of all types of decks on hand. "By law, adoption records are sealed and so closely guarded that you'd have an easier time acquiring a complete roster of the CIA's deep cover agents worldwide than finding this one baby." "Oh, that's me, all right. I'm on the FBI's most-wanted list for criminal pie jostling." Here, four days past Christmas, after two days of torment, Agnes knew the worst, that her treasured son must go eyeless or die, must choose between blindness or cancer of the brain. When the nurse was gone, alone with his mother as they waited for the orderly to bring a gurney, Barty said, "Come close." And when she finally looked directly at him, blinked at him, her lashes flicking off a spray of fine droplets, Agnes saw that Barty was dry. Not a single jewel of rain glimmered in his thick dark hair or on the baby-smooth planes of his face. His shirt and sweater were as dry as if they had just been taken off a hanger and from a dresser drawer. A few drops darkened the legs of the boy's khaki pants--but Agnes realized this was water that had dripped from her arm as she'd reached across him to adjust the vent. From the chair in the corner, where Agnes sat, it seemed that Joshua took an inordinately long time on what was usually a quick examination. Worry so weighed on her that the physician's customary thoroughness seemed, this time, to be filled with dire meaning. She damaged more of Joey's things than her own solely because he was such a big, dear giant, which made it easier to believe that he was constantly bursting out of his clothes. Of course, he had the Pinchbeck and Gammoner identities waiting, two escape hatches. But he didn't want to use them. He liked his life on Russian Hill, and he was loath to leave it..out of hand. "Well ... yes, I suppose so." Spineless, unethical quack bastard, Junior thought bitterly. The blocking dresser, which doubled as a vanity, was surmounted by a mirror. One bullet drilled through the plywood backing, made a spider-web puzzle of the silvered glass, lodged in the wall above the bed-thwack-and kicked out a spray of plaster chips. He briefly closed his hand around the three coins, then with a snap of his wrist, flung them at Nolly, who flinched. But either the coins were never flung or they vanished in midair-and his hand was empty. "Well, Uncle Jacob doesn't understand kids. Anyway, this is pretty good stuff." Greed. So easy, taking money from the rubes. Soon, instead of peeling off a little from each game, he sought bigger kills. SHORTLY BEFORE one o'clock, the Hackachaks descended in a fury, eyes full of bloody intent, teeth bared, voices shrill. If not for Celestina's slutty little sister, Bartholomew would not exist. No threat. Junior's life would be different, better. His right side, however, had come to rest against an object harder than bagged paper, an angular mass. As the skull-rattling gong faded, allowing more clarity of thought, he realized that an unpleasant, vaguely warm, damp something was pressed against his right cheek. Indeed, as Celestina and the kid reached the foot of the steps to this second house, Bartholomew pointed, and the woman turned to look back. She appeared to stare straight at the Mercedes, though the fog made it impossible for Junior to be sure. "Last time I looked, Miss Galloway lived to the south of us. Retired. Never married. No children." The doors slid open, and they rolled Barty corridor to corridor, past the scrub sinks, to a waiting surgical nurse in green cap, mask, and gown. She alone effected his transfer into the positive pressure of the surgery. THE DEAD DETECTIVE, grinning in the moonlight, a pair of silvery quarters gleaming in the sockets once occupied by his eyes. Tom was alone. The place should be silent. Hanna Rey, the housekeeper, wasn't scheduled to arrive until ten o'clock. As kids-living in a house that was run like a prison, stifled by the oppressive rule of a morose father who believed that any form of entertainment was an offense against God-they conducted secret card games as their primary act of rebellion. A deck of cards was small enough to hide quickly and to keep hidden successfully even during one of their father's painstakingly thorough room searches. Requit. Restitutional apology, which must have been learned in a law school where English was the second language. Even atonement. "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." Along Junior's hairline, on his cheeks, his chin, and his upper lip, a double score of hard little knots had risen, angry red and hot to the touch. Having previously experienced a particularly vicious case of the hives, Junior realized this was something new-and worse. To the pilot, he replied, "Allergic reaction." Backing off, trying to feel his way to the foyer and front door, afraid that if he stumbled over a chair, she'd descend upon him like a screaming hawk upon a mouse, Junior denied her accusation. "You're crazy. How could I know? Look at you! How could I possibly know?" And speak the tongues of man and drake. When he woke in- the morning, he raised his head from the pillow to look at the alarm clock-and saw the twenty-five cents on his nightstand. Two dimes and a nickel. Walking rather than riding was now nothing more than a matter of habit. And by walking, he could delay his arrival at a house that had grown strange to him, a house in which every noise he made, since Monday, seemed to echo as if through vast caverns. Turning away from the window, Celestina grabbed the girl and pushed her toward the bed, whispering, "Down, under." Celestina jammed the shaft of the crank into the casing socket. Wouldn't fit. Her hands were shaking. Steel fins on the shaft of the crank had to be lined up just-so with slots in the socket. She fumbled, fumbled. She bit her lower lip, held her breath, repressed the sob that sought release, and said, "I know." 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. Junior realized that thick drool oozed out of the right corner of his mouth. Shakily, he raised one hand to wipe his face. "And there's more," said Vinnie Lincoln, as round as Santa Claus and cherry-cheeked with pleasure at being able to bear these gifts. "The policy contained a double-indemnity

clause in the event of death by accident. The complete tax-free payout is one and a half million." 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.. "They've gone to bed. They're tired," Wally told her as he put the car in gear and released the hand brake. "Aren't you?" They were in the rain, the solid-glassy-pounding-roaring rain, every bit as much as Gene Kelly had been when he danced and sang and capered along a storm-soaked city street in that movie, but whereas the actor had been saturated by the end of the number, these two children remained dry. Tom's eyes strained to resolve this paradox, even though he knew that all miracles defied resolution..Unable to speak, the girl kissed her and then gently placed her head against Agnes's breast, capturing forever in memory the pure sound of her heart..Dining room. Two place settings at one end of the table. Wineglasses. Two ornate pewter candlesticks, candies not yet lit..Agnes knew now why this prognostication had dismayed rather charmed her: If you dared to believe in the good fortune predicted he cards, then you were obliged to believe in the bad, as well..Paul shook his head. He presented a second picture of Perri, this one taken on Christmas Day, 1964, less than a month before she died. She lay in her bed in the living room, her body shrunken, but her face so beautiful and alive..He swept the immediate area with the flashlight, and shadows spun with shadows, waltzing spirits in the ballroom of the night..Done with dolls for now, Barty and Angel went upstairs to his room, where the book that talked waited patiently in silence. With her colored pencils and a large pad of drawing paper, she clambered onto the cushioned window seat. Barty sat up in bed and switched on the tape player that stood on the nightstand..This saving spirit retreated, and in his place came a young paramedic in a black-and-yellow rain slicker over hospital whites. "Just want to be sure there's no spinal injury before we move you. Can you squeeze my hands?" In spite of the thousands of hours that Paul was afoot, he seldom thought about why he walked. He met people along the way who asked, and he had answers for them, but he never knew if any answer might be the truth..As they rolled along the coast, Agnes began to read to Barty from Podkayne of Mars: "All my life I've wanted to go to Earth. Not to live, of course-just to see it. As everybody knows, Terra is a wonderful place to visit but not to live. Not truly suited to human habitation."..By now, all here assembled knew Celestina well enough that Tom's final example raised an affectionate laugh from the group..He was having difficulty focusing his attention on the problem at hand. Through his mind, odd and disconnected thoughts rolled like slow, greasy, eye-of-the-hurricane waves on an ominous sea..Avoiding the graveled driveway, on which he was more likely to scuff his freshly polished loafers, he approached the house across the lawn, beneath the moon-sifting branches of a great pine that made itself useless for Christmas by spreading as majestically as an oak..Angel followed him at two steps, and when she stood beside his chair, watching him open the soft drink, Barty said, "Why were you following me?" For each of them, Agnes put one scoop of vanilla ice cream in a tall glass of root beer, and after changing quickly into their pajamas, they sat together in Barty's bed, enjoying their treats, while she read aloud the last sixty pages of Starman Jones..Wednesday morning, January 10, he wired one and a half million dollars from the Gammoner account to Pinchbeck in Switzerland. Then he closed out the account in the Grand Cayman bank..Their story would be that Cain's gun had jammed just as Tom had entered Barty's bedroom. Too cowardly for hand-to-hand combat, the Shamefaced Slayer had fled through the open window. He was loose once more in an unsuspecting world..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..As if a door had briefly opened between this windless day and another world, a single gust rattled rain against the windows.. "I'll teach her," Wally said, moving past them to the apartment door, fishing a ring of keys out of his coat pocket..Paul recalled the letter he had written to Reverend Harrison White a couple weeks after the death of Joey Lampion. He'd carried it home from the pharmacy on the day that Perri died, to ask for her opinion of it. The letter had never been mailed..He was a man with a plan, focused, committed, ready to act and then think, as soon as he was able to act. A spasm of pain weakened his hand. Cartridges slipped through his fingers, fell to the floor..Jacob cooked corn bread, cheese-and-parsley omelettes, and crisp home fries with a dash of onion salt..As instructed earlier by phone, Junior purchased a large box of Raisinettes and a box of Milk Duds at the refreshment stand, and then he sat in one of the last three rows in the center section, eating the Milk Duds, grimacing at the sticky noises his shoes made when he moved them on the tacky floor, and waiting for Google to find him..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 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..The air was spicy with incense and with the fragrance of the lemon oil polish used on the wooden pews.. "But the breed is nervous, dear. With a nervous breed, you just never know, do you?..-nor cruel, nor hateful, nor envious, nor mean," Phimie recited, "for all these are sicknesses of this fallen world-". Yet his heart slammed hard and heavy against his confining ribs, and fear stippled the nape of his neck..Angel followed him and observed as he climbed a stepstool and unhooked the telephone handset. He dialed with little pause between digits, and spoke with each of his uncles.. "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." "You could also dream of bananas," Celestina suggested as she turned down the bedclothes..He told her that he loved her, and she slipped away upon his words. As she went, the haggard look of the terminal leukemic patient passed from her, and before the gray mask of death replaced it, he saw the beauty he had preserved in memory when he was three, before they took his eyes, saw it so briefly, as if

something transforming welled out of her, a perfect light, her essence... "Don't worry," Celestina told him, "after what we've seen this past week, we're still with you." Professing befuddlement, the galerieur led the way through three rooms to the front windows, gliding across the polished maple floors as though he were on wheels. Cupping Angel entirely in his big hands, smiling at her, he said, "Oh, no, Mrs. White, this looks like a healthy young lady to me. No medicine required." Closing her eyes, Agnes whispered, "Bartholomew," in a reverent voice full of wonder, full of awe. Off the hard surfaces of cabinets, refrigerator, and ovens, the twin reports crashed and rattled. The windowpanes briefly thrummed. She was so hot that the ice melted quickly. A thin trickle slid down her throat, but not enough to take the Sahara out of her voice when she said, "More." Maria gathered up the four jacks and tore them in thirds. She put the twelve pieces in the breast pocket of her blouse. "I buy to you new cards, but no more ever can you to be having these." Retracing his path across the kitchen, he caught a faint whiff of jasmine from the backyard. Funny, jasmine here inside. Two paces later, he felt a draft. Finally Vanadium said, "According to the lab report, the baby she was carrying was almost certainly yours." At Thanksgiving dinner, again at the three tables set end to end, in the year of the triple zero, Mary Lampion, now fourteen years old, made an interesting announcement over the pumpkin pie. In her travels where none but she could go, after seven fascinating years of exploring a fraction of all the infinite worlds, she said she sensed beyond doubt that, as Barty's mother had told him on her deathbed, there is one special place beyond all the ways things are, one shining place. At home, after phoning her folks, Celestina made a ham sandwich. She ate a quarter of it. Then two bites of a chocolate croissant. One spoonful of butter pecan ice cream. Everything was without taste, more bland than Phimie's hospital food, and it cloyed in her throat. No sign of Vanadium. Some of the taller monuments offered hiding places on both sides of the cemetery road, as did the thicker trunks of the larger trees. She searched the child's unfocused eyes for some sign of the hateful father's wickedness. Sometimes, in his mind, Tom wasn't running along the residential streets of Bright Beach, but along the corridor of the dormitory wing over which he had served as prefect. He was cast back in time, to that dreadful night. A sound wakes him. A fragile cry. Thinking it a voice from his dream, he nevertheless gets out of bed, takes up a flashlight, and checks on his charges, his boys. Low-wattage emergency lamps barely relieve the gloom in the corridor. The rooms are dark, doors ajar according to the rules, to guard against the danger of stubborn locks in the event of fire. He listens. Nothing. Then into the first room--and into a Hell on earth. Two small boys per room, easily and silently overcome by a grown man with the strength of madness. In the sweep of the flashlight beam: the dead eyes, the wrenched faces, the blood. Another room, the flashlight jittering, jumping, and the carnage worse. Then in the hall again, movement in the shadows. Josef Krepp captured by the flashlight. Josef Krepp, the quiet custodian, meek by all appearances, employed at St. Anselmo's for the past six months with nary a problem, with only good employee reviews attached to his record. Josef Krepp, here in the corridor of the past, grinning and capering in the flashlight, wearing a dripping necklace of souvenirs. Junior said nothing. He was still upset with Naomi for hiding the pregnancy from him, but he was delighted that the baby would have been his. Now Vanadium couldn't claim that Naomi's infidelity and the resultant bastard had been the motive for murder. The wedding reception--big, noisy, and joyous--spread across the three properties without fences. His mother's name was so often mentioned, her presence so strongly felt in all the lives that she had touched, that sometimes it seemed that she was actually there with them. After checking her carotid artery and detecting no pulse, Junior returned to the sofa in the living room. He fluffed the little pillow and left it precisely as he had found it. The Hackachaks were present, of course. Junior had not yet agreed to join them in their pursuit of blood money. They would give him little privacy or rest until they had what they wanted. The quarter, surely. The one that had not been in his robe pocket where it should have been, the previous Friday. Junior's attorney--Simon Magusson--insisted upon full disclosure of maintenance records and advisories relating to the fire tower and to other forest-service structures for which the state and the county had sole or joint custodial responsibility. If a wrongful--death suit was filed, this information would have to be divulged anyway during normal disclosure procedures prior to trial, and since maintenance logs and advisories were of public record, Hisscus and Knacker and Nork agreed to provide what was requested. "Miss White," he continued, still facing the window, "not long before you arrived in surgery this morning, your sister died on the table. We hadn't delivered the baby yet, and perhaps couldn't have done so, by cesarean, in time to prevent brain damage, so for both the sake of the mother and child, heroic efforts were made to bring Phimie back and ensure continued circulation to the fetus until we could extract it." Through nine months of quiet panic, however, Phimie grew less rational week by week, resorting to reckless measures that endangered. As long as Junior continued to fake sleep, the cop couldn't be absolutely sure that any deception was taking place. "It's easy to see you as a cop," Kathleen said. All the whacks, pops, and worm buckets just trip off your tongue, so to speak. But it takes some effort to remember you're a priest, too." pistol that he'd purchased in late June. The city operated a program to melt confiscated and donated weapons and to remake them into plowshares or xylophones, or into the metal fittings of hookah pipes.

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