

ECONOMICAL GEOLOGY OF ILLINOIS VOL 2

Agnes had read the last half of Red Planet to Barty just the previous night, but he brought the book with him, to read it again..Far from idiotic, Junior's cause was his survival and salvation, and he committed himself to it with every fiber of his body, with all of his mind and heart..Applying his intelligence now, he employed simple meditation techniques to calm himself and to slow his heartbeat. The cop was trying to rattle him into making a mistake, but calm men did not incriminate themselves..The full nature of the nightmare continued to elude him, but he became convinced that good reason for his fear existed, that the dream had been more than a dream. He had a nemesis named Bartholomew not merely in dreams, but in the real world, and this Bartholomew had something to do with ... babies..Meanwhile, she could offer him only a few pieces of ice, which he was forbidden to chew. "Let them melt in your mouth."His severed toe lay across the room, on the white tile floor. It stuck up stiffly, nail gleaming, as if the floor were snow and the toe were the only exposed extremity of a body buried in a drift..Yet, with no recollection of rising from his chair, he found that he had shouldered his backpack and crossed the room. The three men looked up expectantly..Over many proud generations and at least to the extent of second cousins, no one on either side of Celestina's family had skin of this light color. They were without exception medium to dark mahogany, many shades darker than this infant..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..Daylight had retreated from the windows. Winter night, wound in scarfs of fog, like a leprous mendicant, rattled out a breath as though begging their attention beyond the glass..The detective was driven by this string theory of his, and maybe he also saw visions or even heard voices, like Joan of Arc. Joan of Arc with out beauty or grace, Joan of Arc with a service revolver and the authority to.Solitude, however, was his preference. He found the sympathy of friends unbearable, a constant reminder that Perri was gone..Jacob had spent most of two days baking Barty's favorite pies, cakes, and cookies, and he'd prepared a meal as well. Maria's girls were at her sister's place this evening, so she stayed for dinner. Edom poured wine for everyone but Barty, root beer for the guest of honor, and while this couldn't be called a celebration, Agnes's spirits were lifted by a sense of normality, of hope, of family..Extracting documents from his valise, Vinnie said, "Well, I've no right to talk. Food is my obsession. Look at me, so fat you'd think I'd been raised from birth for sacrifice."..On this occasion, however, he couldn't have focused on a book even if he'd had the strength to hold it. The fierce paroxysms that clenched his guts also destroyed his ability to concentrate..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..WALLY HAD NOT gone home with Death, but they had definitely been at the dance together..In addition to mulling over strategy, Tom had spent a lot of time lately brooding about culpability: his own, not Cain's. By seizing on the name that he heard Cain speak in a dream, by making use of it in this psychological warfare, had he been the architect of the killer's Bartholomew obsession, or if not the architect, then at least an assisting..She told him to stay on the line, stay on no matter what, told him to keep talking to her, and he hung up.."Nevertheless, even if Muffin assaulted you, she's otherwise such a sweet little thing. What would Maria think of you if you told her you'd smashed poor Muffin with a shovel?"..he had sat here with a pencil, making shopping lists. Now, instead of a pencil, there was the Italian-made .22 pistol..Junior blinked and dared not speak, because he didn't know any Bartholomew, and now he was certain the cop was weaving an elaborate web of deceit, setting a trap. Why would he have spoken a name that meant nothing to him?.One, two, three, four-Edom took away all the remaining pies. He pointed at Barty and then at the empty table..Relieved but still wary, he toured the small house again to be sure doors and windows were locked..He used the kitchen phone, at the comer secretary. The blood had been cleaned up long ago, of course, and the minor damage from the ricocheting bullet had been repaired..Averting his eyes from Vanadium's face, Junior moved farther up the stocky body. He folded back the tweed sports jacket to reveal a shoulder holster..She must have sensed his assessment of her and realized that she had little chance of charming him, for she turned at once away and never looked in his direction again.."Cash," Junior said. "I'll pay cash, with whatever amount of deposit is required."..They lived too far from the nearest railroad tracks. He could not rationally expect a derailed train to crash through the garage.."Sure. That's how it works with everything. Everything that can happen does happen, and each different way of happening makes a whole new place."..Smiling, pulling the blanket more tightly around herself, she said, "You look after your old mom, don't you?".."You'll be out of ICU tomorrow, I bet. You'll have a phone, I'll call. And I'll come soon as I can.".."You don't get the heebie-jeebies," Max said. "You give 'em. Tell me what's wrong."..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..draftsman? Having never been nudged in that direction, would Cain have followed a different path that took him far from Celestina and Angel?.Bright though they were at all times, Barty's Tiffany eyes shone brighter now with beams of North Pole magic. "Maybe I do feel it.".."That would be wrong. A diary's private." He supposed that to a detective nothing was sacred, but he was nonetheless a little shocked that Vanadium needed to ask that question..Raising his revolver, Tom squeezed off two shots, but the gun didn't discharge..He arrived at the open door, grinning. No Cheshire-cat grin, hanging disembodied on the air, teeth without tabby. Grin with full Barty.."You might as well beat a cloud for raining," said Otter's mother..When she complimented him on being such a good little soldier, abiding his cold with no complaint, he shrugged. Without looking up from

the coloring book, he said, "It's just here." His mother, gently pushing Tom to the prime view point at the head of the stairs, seemed unconcerned about her child's venture into the storm. Perri had been crippled seventeen years before Jonas Salk's vaccine had spared future generations from the curse of polio. Having shuffled all four stacks of cards, Jacob cut two decks and shuffled the halves together, controlling them exactly as he had controlled them on Friday evening. Then the other two halves. Leavening his tortured voice as best he could with shock and hurt, as though deeply wounded by the need to speak these words, Junior Cain said, "You ... you think I killed her, don't you? That's crazy." Like all ICU waiting rooms, where Death sits patiently, smiling in anticipation, this lounge was clean but drab, and the utilitarian furnishings didn't pamper, as though bright colors and comfort might annoy the ascetic Reaper and motivate him to cut down more patients than otherwise he would have done. THE SUN ROSE above clouds, above fog, and with the gray day came a silver drizzle. The city was lanced by needles of rain, and filth drained from it, swelling the gutters with a poisonous flood. -called himself King Obadiah, Pharaoh of the Fantastic. He traveled all over the country playing nightclubs. 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. Casey and Tutti, her sister Skipper, and dreamboat Ken-and soon the girls had Barty enthusiastically involved in a make-believe world far different from the one in which Heinlein's teenage lead owned an extraordinary alien pet with eight legs, the temperament of a kitten, and an appetite for everything from grizzly bears to Buicks. Continuing to avert his eyes from the battered face and the two tone eyelids, Junior found the keys in an exterior pocket of the sports jacket. The credentials were tucked in an interior pocket: a single-fold leather holder containing the shiny badge and a photo ID. The only light came from a reading lamp. An adjustable brass shade directed the light down onto a chair. Waking from a starry night in the Old West into electric light, gazing up into a blur of faces sans cowboy hats, Agnes felt someone moving a piece of ice in slow circles over her bare abdomen. Shivering as the cold water trickled down her sides, she tried to ask them why they were applying ice when she was already chilled to the bone, but she couldn't find her voice. So much argued against the idea that they could succeed as a couple. In this age when race supposedly didn't matter anymore, it sometimes seemed to matter more year by year. Age mattered, too, and at fifty, he was twenty-six years older than she was, old enough to be her father, as surely her father would quietly but pointedly--and repeatedly!--observe. He was highly educated, with multiple medical degrees, and she had gone to art school. Standing at graveside, Junior was in a foul mood. He was weary of pretending to be deep in grief. 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 Griskin's cast bronzes, but he crossed the sidewalk and went into Galerie Coquin. He sat on the edge of the bed and held her right hand. She had passed away such a short time ago that her skin was still warm. As though stirred by static electricity, the fine hairs on the backs of Tom's hands quivered, and a current of expectation coursed through him. The dying-dove hands fluttered down Junior's arms, plucking feebly at his leather coat, and at last hung limp at Neddy's sides. Too much clatter, drawing attention. No leisure for romance now, no chance for a two-sister score. just kill Celestina, kill Bartholomew, and go, go. Indeed, the tree inspired him. After he shot the girl, he would open the window and toss her body into the oak Let Celestina find her there, randomly pierced by branches in a freestyle crucifixion. He pressed his right ear to the door, held his breath, heard nothing, and addressed the top lock first. Quietly, he slid the thin pick of the lock-release gun into the key channel, under the pin tumblers. There was an otter in our brook. "Well, actually, I owe Phimie. It's what she said between her two deaths on the delivery table that's changed my life." Whether the cop was unhinged or not, Junior had nothing to gain by talking to him, especially in this disorienting darkness. He was exhausted, achy, with a sore throat, and he couldn't trust himself to be as. Grimacing, she said, "I told the police about your disgusting little come--on with the ice spoon." The short walk across the room, to the hero's table, looked more daunting to Paul than the trek he'd just completed. He was nobody, a small-town pharmacist who missed more work each month, who relied increasingly on his worried employees to cover for him, and who would lose his business if he didn't get a grip on himself. He had never done a great deed, never saved a life. He had no right to impose upon this man, and now he knew he hadn't the nerve to do so, either. "He's crafty, you say. Can you use him?" He had taken refuge in meditation, because he'd been frustrated by his continuing failure in the Bartholomew hunt and disturbed by his apparently paranormal experiences with quarters and with phone calls from the dead. More deeply disturbed than he had realized or had been able to admit. She didn't hear gunfire this time, either, but the hard crack of splintering wood attested to the passage of at least two more bullets. "No, I don't see it," Chicane repeated. "There's no benefit to a meditation marathon. Twenty minutes is enough, man. Half an hour at the most. You relied on your internal clock, didn't you?" "You did just fine, Tom, just fine," Agnes said in a consoling tone that she might have used with a boy whose performance, at a piano recital, had been earnest but undistinguished. "We were all quite impressed." He'd never taken too much from any one game. He was a discreet thief, charming his victims with amusing patter. Because he was so ingratiating and seemed only mildly lucky, no one begrudged him his winnings. Soon, he was more flush than he'd ever been as a magician. "Mr. Magusson, you once told me that if Detective Vanadium ever bothered me again, you'd have his choke chain yanked. Well, I think you need to talk to someone about that." Ghosts. Sklent was an atheist, and yet he believed in spirits. Here's how that works: Heaven, Hell, and God do not exist, but human beings are as much energy as flesh, and when the flesh gives out, the energy goes on. "We're the most stubborn, selfish, greedy, grubbing, vicious, psychotic, evil species in the universe," Sklent explained, "and some of us just refuse to die, we're too hardass to die. The spirit is a prickly bur of energy that sometimes clings to places and people that were once important to us, so then you get haunted houses, poor bastards still tormented by their dead wives, and crap like

that. And sometimes, the bur attaches itself to the embryo in some slut who's just been knocked up, so you get reincarnation. You don't need a god for all this. It's just the way things are. Life and the afterlife are the same place, right here, right now, and we're all just a bunch of filthy, scabby monkeys tumbling through an endless damn series of barrels." Instead, trying not to let Barty see the depth of her concern, she told him to get his jacket from the front closet, and she got hers, and leaving the buttermilk-raisin pies unfinished, she drove him to the doctor's office, because he was her reason to breathe, the engine of her heart, her hope and joy, her everlasting bond to her lost husband. Dr. Joshua Nunn was only forty-eight, but he had appeared grandfatherly since Agnes had first gone to him as a patient after the death of her father, more than ten years ago. His hair turned pure white before he was thirty. Every day off, he either worked assiduously on his twenty-foot sportfisher, Hippocratic Boat, which he scraped and painted and polished and repaired with his own hands, or puttered around Bright Bay in it, fishing as though the fate of his soul depended on the size of his catch; consequently, he spent so much time in the salt air and sun that his perpetually tan face was well-wizened at the corners of his eyes and as appealingly creased as that of the best of grandfathers. Joshua applied the same diligence to the preservation of a round belly and a second chin that he brought to the maintenance of his boat, and considering his wire-rimmed eyeglasses and bow tie and suspenders and the elbow patches on his jacket, he seemed to have intentionally sculpted his physical appearance to put his patients at ease, as surely as he had selected his wardrobe for the same purpose.. "And in a lot of somewheres," said Barty, "things are worse for us than here. Some somewheres, you died, too, when I was born, so I never met you, either." The strange barrage of lightning, putting an end to the rain rather than initiating it, had been a clue. The rapid clearing of the sky-indicating a stiff wind at high altitudes, while stillness prevailed at ground level-a sudden plunge in the humidity, and an unseasonable warmth confirmed the coming catastrophe.. Upon arriving at the creche window, he had been in a buoyant mood. As he studied the quiet scene, however, he grew uneasy.. The stumpy ghost departed the sliding stairs at the second floor and walked off into women's sportswear.. 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.. Grace dropped the phone. Harrison let the frosting knife slip out of his fingers.. Having been so wounded by one death, Celestina could not imagine how Lipscomb could have survived the loss of his entire family. Pity knotted her heart and cinched her throat so that she spoke in little more than a whisper: "Was that the American Airlines. . ." For breakfast, he avoided sugar. He ate cold roast beef and drank milk laced with a double shot of brandy.. The moment that the roof of the car vanished beneath the water, Junior hurried away, retracing on foot the route he had driven. He didn't have to go all the way back to Vanadium's place, only to the dark house where he'd left Victoria Bressler. He had a date with a dead woman.. "We'll need to talk about this a lot in the days to come, as we both have more time to think about it." "Everybody needs cheese," Angel said, which apparently meant that Mrs. Ornwail would never lack work. "Mommy, you're wrong.. Thunder less distant now. Around her-the crackle of police radios, the clang of tools being readied, the skirl of a stiffening wind. Dizzying, these sounds. She couldn't shut her ears against them, and when she closed her eyes, she felt as though she were spinning.. Although he didn't believe in destiny, in fate, in anything more than himself and his own ability to shape his future, Junior couldn't deny how extraordinary it was that this woman should cross his path at this precise moment in his life, when he was frustrated to the point of cerebral hemorrhage by his inability to find Bartholomew, confused and nervous about the phantom singer and other apparently supernatural events in his life, and generally in a funk unlike any he had ever known before. Here was a link to Seraphim and, through Seraphim, to Bartholomew.. "With this money, you won't have to cut back on the number of pies you give away--and all of that." Likewise, she wasn't prepared to deal with a monster like the father, if one day he came for Angel. And he would come. She knew. In these events as in all things, Celestina White glimpsed a pattern, complex and mysterious, and to the eye of an artist, the symmetry of the design required that one day the father would come. She wasn't prepared to deal with the creep now, but by the time that he arrived, she would be ready for him.. By the time he got back to Spruce Hills, the early night had fallen. The pearly, waxing moon floated over a town that glimmered mysteriously among its richness of trees, flickering and shimmering as though it were not a real town, but a dreamland where a multitude of Gypsy clans gathered by the lambent amber light of lanterns and campfires.. Dining room. Two place settings at one end of the table. Wineglasses. Two ornate pewter candlesticks, candies not yet lit.. So smoothly did the waiter move, that three martinis on a corklined mahogany tray seemed to float across the room in front of him and then hover beside their table while he served the cocktails to the lady first, the guest second, and the host third.. WHEN DR. JIM PARKHURST made his evening rounds, Junior didn't continue to feign sleep but asked earnest questions to which he knew most of the answers, having eavesdropped on the conversation between the physician and Detective Vanadium.. Startled, the pianist turned to face him-and backed off a step, as though his personal space had been too deeply invaded. "Oh, well, thank you, that's kind. I love my work, you know, it's so much fun it hardly qualifies as work at all. I've been playing the piano since I was six, and I was never one of those children who whined about having to take lessons. I simply couldn't get enough." the stems, thorns sharp against his tongue. And then Agnes. Agnes in the yard, screaming. When Junior tried to lift Victoria, her voluptuousness lost its appeal. As dead weight, she was heavier than he expected.. Hope was the handmaid to Agnes's faith. She always held fast to the belief that the future would be bright, but right now she was hesitant to test that optimism even with a harmless card reading. Yet, as with the fifth place setting, she was reluctant to object.. Although to Paul this was no more than childish chatter, Tom knew at once that the girl referred to his explanation for why he wasn't sad about his damaged face: the salt and pepper shakers representing two Toms, the hit-and-run rhinoceros, the different worlds all in one place. "Yes, Angel. That's something like what I was talking about." Refusing to give the cop the satisfaction of a reply to the news of the unborn baby's paternity, Junior stared unwaveringly into the grave and

said, "Whose funeral were you attending?" Her hands trembled as she attempted to fold her sister's clothes into the small suitcase. What should have been a simple task became a daunting challenge; the fabric seemed to come alive in her hands and slip through her fingers, resisting every attempt to organize it. When eventually she realized there was no reason to be neat, she tossed the garments into the bag without concern for wrinkling them. He couldn't easily refuse the assignment. Later that year, President Lyndon Johnson, with strong backing from both the Democratic and the Republican Parties, was expected to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and currently it was dangerous for clearheaded believers in the primacy of self to express their healthy instincts, which might be mistakenly perceived as racial prejudice. He could be fired..Moving out of the doorway, into the bedroom, he said, "What book would that be?"

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