

Styx - River of Hate

The Rivers of Hades

PART V

by Adrian Şinca

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Prologue

"The Rivers of Hades were born out of necessity; the book is the result of the countless years that I spent in various psychiatric hospitals and clinics, the result of direct observation of the daily life and structure of the hospital, of the patients as well as of the treatment during hospitalization and post-hospitalization. The idea of crossing the rivers of Hades represents the break between the two worlds, the world in which we live and the separate world in which those who are affected by mental illnesses live. Being a book based on reality, it was necessary to make some changes to protect the identity of patients and medical staff." Adrian Şinca

Lead particles in the air

The psychiatric hospital is in the truest sense a separate world, a fact that becomes obvious right from the entrance to its premises. The patients, the working staff, and the visitors without exception, experience the feeling that they have entered another Universe. Regardless of the season, the air inside the buildings maintains a special quality, accentuating the feeling of an independent universe.

Most of the hospital buildings built many decades ago, are made of dark red brick, the color of venous blood. This becomes significant from other points of view as well.

In the pre-war period, as a fire protection measure, buildings were built with asbestos in the walls as a standard, over which a layer of paint was applied, to which a high concentration of lead was added during manufacture to increase resistance.

Over the years, this fact, combined with the chronic lack of funds, leads to peeling paint from the walls and implicit exposure to microscopic asbestos fibers and lead particles in the air. I would also like to mention that the hospitals are not equipped with detection, signaling, and automatic control facilities in case of fires.

Prolonged exposure and inhalation of toxic particles can harm the health of those who spend most of their time in the building, patients, and staff alike. Over time, many patients and workers are affected by coughing fits, which are attributed to the fact that 80% of them smoke.

Without the benefit of empirical data, I put forward the idea that this cough is due to the toxicity of asbestos and lead particles inhaled continuously for decades and not necessarily to tobacco smoke, I am perfectly aware that the Cerberus of society will jump on my head at this statement.

Since 2002, Asbestosis is considered an occupational disease of the respiratory system and occupational cancer caused by the inhalation of asbestos fibrogenic mineral powder.

To protect the health of the population and to prevent, reduce and control environmental pollution with asbestos, since 2007 all activities of sale and use of asbestos and products containing asbestos have been prohibited, but these regulations have not been applied to constructions made before the adoption of the European directive. Most cases of lead poisoning (Saturnism) occur due to occupational exposure to this toxin, which theoretically can affect any system and organ in the human body. Lead has been shown to produce an effect similar to retardation in children as well as short-term memory impairment, decreased ability to concentrate, depression, sexual dysfunction, and infertility.

In support of what I stated, I want to mention here the huge number of lawsuits initiated by law firms against the state, related to the presence of asbestos in buildings damaged by time. Until now, the state pays compensation to the families of those who died as a result of pulmonary complications caused by the inhalation of asbestos particles. And the process will continue...



"There's something about abandoned asylums that excites a morbid curiosity in most people. Whether it's fictionalized accounts like *American Horror Story: Asylum* or the fact that most of these places were rarely seen by anyone who wasn't a patient, physician, or employee, we can't seem to get enough of these haunting locales.

While many would be too nervous to enter the abandoned remains of these mysterious buildings, Matt Van der Velde, a photographer from Canada, spent the last few years exploring nearly 30 former asylums throughout the United States."

Taking these photos wasn't simple. "Asbestos, mold, lead paint, and collapsing floors are something I always exercise the utmost caution around," Van der Velde.

<https://www.popularmechanics.com/adventure/outdoors/g2803/haunting-photos-abandoned-asylums-matt-van-der-velde>

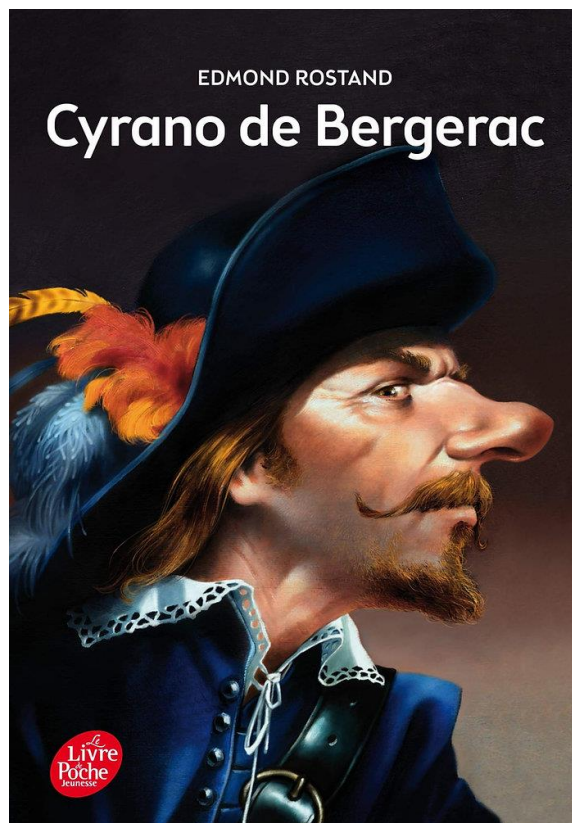
The operation with a romantic name

I'm not honest!

I write about everyone but I don't mention anything about myself. I am a handsome guy; this is the reason for my relative success with women. Indeed, there were two or three situations when men tried to pick me up. I used to say that I'm an ok guy, that's because of the family, that is, the genetic component, but also to a large extent because of some "interventions". Now I will refer to these "interventions". I have a big nose but a relatively acceptable shape. Not

that it was like that from birth. Throughout my life, my nose has been broken countless times for many reasons, due to my behavior.

Now I will bring in a patient, Peon. Peon of Spanish origin, from somewhere in South America. I say this because the guy only speaks Spanish and as such cannot contradict me. One day, I happily enter the salon, without any worries. Suddenly I see Peon approaching me in a hurry as if he had found his childhood friend. Arriving next to me, Peon punches me in the nose, as a sign of appreciation. My nose gives way under the pressure of his fist, and I lie down on the cement and continue to bleed profusely. After which I am sent home to recover, I am administered first aid (others will follow). A few months pass and, accidentally looking in the mirror, I notice that my son has left his original Ford, driving to the left. I admit that I was not particularly concerned with this matter. What filled me with concern was the fact that my nose had gone on strike, attempting to assume the responsibilities for which it adorned my face. I mean, don't let the air enter my tobacco-choked lungs. As such, I go to a doctor who proposes to do an operation on my so-called nose. I accept ecstatically, especially since the operation had an extremely romantic name, it was called: "Rhinoplasty"! How the hell could I resist a name like that? All said and done, this Doctor "Michelangelo" operates on me and sculpts a new nose like Cyrano de Bergerac's. Even to this day, I don't know what made Peon do me such a favor!



Nature versus nurture

Another incident demonstrates how disconnected from reality the hospital management can sometimes be. Each lounge had a terrace with thick metal mesh, precisely to prevent patients from being tempted to fly like Icarus. On this terrace, they were allowed to go out to smoke and drink coffee. The idea was to give them fresh air, without the risk of suicide.

So far so good. Access to the terrace was through three doors, or rather through three large holes in the wall, which allowed the employees to "keep an eye" on the patients.

I remind you that the hospital was for the chronically ill, meaning long-term patients, some of whom had been hospitalized for over ten years.

As I said, the administration decided to "modernize" the salon and plug the hole in the middle that led to the terrace. After the plugging, I saw an interesting fact...Many "old" patients were holding cigarettes and coffee in their hands and waiting lined up, politely in front of the wall that had plugged that hole in the middle; this, even though they could take two steps to the left, or to the right, to access the terrace. That clarified in my mind the polemic related to "nature versus nurture", i.e., nature versus habit.

