

Soap Opera Inspired Story Collection
Presents

Thomas Nix

**A Serialized Novel by
Wesley Adams and Daphne McGee**

Series Created by Gary Brin

Episodes 1-5

A picturesque village near Boston Massachusetts is visited by an enigmatic stranger out of place in a world he no longer remembers, while a group of local teenagers encounter a nightmare and make a daring pact to destroy an ancient evil before everyone they know falls under its terrifying spell and darkness engulfs their beloved town forever.

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Standish Press

The serialized story in this novel is fiction. Real persons, geographical locations, books, television shows, films, music, and specific events mentioned or which appears as part of the multi-character ensemble in this story were dramatized for entertainment purposes only and have no actual connection to fictional characters and created storylines in this book or reflects upon actual reality of things that may have happened previously or of which seems somewhat similar to real-life situations.

Names of real people mentioned in this book are in bold letters.

Select comments by fictional characters in this novel about historical figures, true crime cases, and, or pop culture icons are based on fact and additional information can be found online in reputable sites as well as numerous published books.

Characters from *Glass Owl* and *Desperate Lives* appear in this story. *Glass Owl* and *Desperate Lives* are original publications from Standish Press and part of the Soap Opera Inspired Story Collection Series.

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To all great stories written throughout the course of world history—both published and unpublished—originality cannot be duplicated—at least not successfully anyway.

Hopefully books never become obsolete.

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Intro

Thomas Nix was inspired in various ways by the classic novels *Vampyre* (1819) by John William Polidori, *Carmilla* (1872) by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker, and *Salem's Lot* (1975) by Stephen King. As well as the TV series *Dark Shadows* (1991 version) created by Dan Curtis and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1996-2003 TV version) created by Joss Whedon. Special shout out also for the popular moody atmosphere monster-of-the-week TV series *Grimm* (2011-2017) created by David Greenwalt, Jim Kouf, and Stephen Carpenter based upon stories by the Brothers Grimm. And of course, last but not least, the 1979 above-average two-part miniseries based upon the previously-mentioned Stephen King novel, considered by many to be the best vampire movie adaption ever filmed. Thanks.

Thomas Nix was written in a serialized way in order to continue similarly formatted themes from classic prime-time soaps of the 1980s—but with present-day mature adult storylines added. It was written with the intention that it's playing to a visual audience and therefore will emulate a scripted format (without camera angle directions) rather than the usual storytelling methods displayed in popular full-length novels such

as the 1975 novel *Salem's Lot* by Stephen King or the 1982 novel *Seventh Child* by Brooks Stanwood. It should also be noted that each episode of this series were written in a brief span of 6-12 days or less and therefore shouldn't be confused with being great literature. The goal of this series is to mimic episodes of popular modern-day soap operas or filmed YouTube web series dramas from enterprising filmmakers—by creating visual entertainment on a printed page—and not to create a literary masterpiece.

The storyline in *Thomas Nix* takes place about the same time the events in *Desperate Lives* occurred on an island in the Caribbean Sea. Characters from *Glass Owl* and *Desperate Lives* are featured in this novel as part of the present ongoing story.

Gary Brin
Series Creator

In an effort to have an accurate portrayal of the dialogue used for the *Soap Opera Inspired Story Collection Series* people were anonymously observed in shopping malls, schools, places of employment, and on public streets in order to capture a definitive portrayal of how people of various ages and cultures interacted and talked to each other when they thought no one was listening. While some select dialogue was exaggerated for dramatic purposes when needed—the manner and tone of which people were observed speaking to each other in casual and private conversations is accurate. Exact wording was not copied verbatim for the most part, but the way certain types of topics and conversations are addressed by characters in this serialized series is based on actual situations that were observed over a period of several dozen years.

Prologue

1

Castle Beach, Massachusetts
Late 1790

A young man walks back and forth after he gets out of a carriage. He stares at his father with a dazed look. Seconds later he collapses in a heap just inches away from the older man who seems confused by what is happening. The man looks up at his stern father with a pleading look and cries out in anguish.

"Father, I'm not well. Please call a doctor."

The older man looks at his son with harsh caution.

"Did you disobey me and venture into a tavern before you boarded your carriage in Boston for the trip back home?"

The young man shakes his head.

"No father, I gave you my word I wouldn't go."

The cold look of the older man makes it clear he doesn't believe what he's hearing. They look at each other for a few seconds as the young man begins to shake uncontrollably.

"Please father. Help me."

The carriage footman comes forward and shrugs.

"Should we call a doctor for Master Nix?"

The footman and the stern-looking older man glare at each other for a few seconds. Finally the older man nods and turns to look toward the cobblestone-lined street ahead.

“Doctor Sherwood lives two blocks away.”

The footman nods and leaves. The young man seems to be staring up at the sky but seeing nothing as his father still retains the rigid look from earlier. He throws up his hands clearly upset at what he perceives is his son’s betrayal. He sighs.

2

“I know not what is wrong with young Mr. Nix.”

The doctor looks at the angry glare on the older man’s face. He turns to look at the bedridden man before him and shakes his head. He watches the faces of the other people in the room as he quickly scrawls a few words on a piece of paper.

“This will help his pain.”

He hands the piece of paper to the older man and sighs.

“I fear he will probably expire by nightfall.”

One of the people in the room is an older woman. She slowly dabs her eyes with her handkerchief a few times.

“But what could have afflicted him so?”

Doctor Sherwood shakes his head again.

3

“Mother, please help me from this darkness.”

The woman looks down at the man lying before her as her daughter wipes her brother’s forehead with a cloth rag. He seems to become more delirious as his audience ignores his pleas.

“But I told you what I saw.”

He tries to sit up in bed and winces.

“I saw eyes that glowed bright yellow.”

He waves his hand frantically in the air like a ragdoll.

“Eyes and teeth I saw. Sharp teeth like a dog.”

Both women turn to look at Doctor Sherwood nervously.

“Could he be afflicted by a witch’s spell like so happened last year with Mistress Robinson and two of her children?”

Eyes fall upon the doctor.

“Mistress Robinson and her children did not die because of witchcraft. They froze while attempting to cross Pall River.”

The two women look at each other oddly.

“But Mistress Brewster said?”

Doctor Sherwood looks at the young man again and realizes he’s dead. He reaches out to close the young man’s eyes as the others in the room react. Loud wails can be heard.

4

A small group of people follow a coffin as it is carried through the doors of a mausoleum. Rain begins to fall lightly and then a little bit harder. Inside the mausoleum the coffin is carried inside a large room-like crypt and blessed repeatedly as several members of the mourning party repeat prayers. One of the mourners steps forth and places a crucifix on top of the coffin as it is laid into position in the middle of the room. A few minutes later after everyone says their goodbyes, the door to the crypt is put into place and sealed as a prayer is read aloud throughout. Nightfall is fast approaching as creeping shadows begin to dance joyfully about the inky blackness with deliberate swiftness.

A Brief Look at the First Episode

A peaceful New England village finds itself facing a nightmare as a mysterious stranger comes to town intent on exacting revenge for a punishment given to him several centuries previously.

Episode 1

Night Song

1

Castle Beach, Massachusetts
Present Day

"I thought I told you already I'm not ready."

David Sherwood slowly leans over to kiss his girlfriend and then attempts to unbutton her blouse. He seems annoyed.

"You can't stall anymore Susan. Time's up. I want to have sex with you in the backseat of my car. My rep is at stake."

David tries again to unbutton Susan's blouse.

"It's no big deal OK? You know my rep. I've been with a lot of girls. So what? Besides a guy without a rep is a total loser."

He laughs as he kisses Susan Lancaster again.

"We've been together one month already."

Susan seems uneasy.

"I just don't want to end up another one of many."

David gestures with his hand.

"Losing your virginity to me is expected—besides, better me than some stuck up rich geeky jerk from Pinecrest Prep."

Susan looks at David oddly.

"You know about Chandler Penney?"

David nods.

"Everyone knows. That loser is the talk of Castle Beach."

Susan sighs loudly.

"Chandler is a nice guy."

David rolls his eyes knowingly.

"Uh-huh—except for what he did."

Susan looks at David curiously.

"What are you talking about?"

David tries to kiss Susan once more.

"Old man Pendergraft."

"What about him?"

David leans over to whisper in Susan's ear. She seems shocked at what she's hearing. They look at each other.

"He wouldn't."

"He did."

David leans back on the park bench.

"Plowed into him like garbage—didn't stop either."

Susan takes a deep breath.

"How come I never heard that story?"

David waves his hand.

"Chandler's dad paid off Orville Pendergraft."

Susan takes another deep breath.

"How do you know?"

David grins broadly and winks.

"Working part time at the DMV has its perks."

He laughs slyly.

"Still think Chandler Penney is a nice guy?"

Susan turns away from David.

"He just drove away?"

"Uh-huh."

David pulls Susan toward him.

"I really like you."

He kisses her lightly on the lips again and smirks.

"Let's just have sex already. I'm really horny."

He slides his fingers across her breasts and grins slyly.

"I promise I'll be gentle."

He kisses her again. Susan aggressively pushes him away and gives him a harsh stare as David sighs loudly in protest.

2

Two teenage boys slowly walk toward a thick overgrowth of thorny shrubs partially hidden among a tangle of vines and dead trees. They seem to be looking for something and stop every few minutes. Overhead clouds seem to be forming.

3

"Oh my God he's slick."

Kyle Webster grins as he turns to look at his best friend Preston Sago. He makes a lewd gesture with his finger.

"He's gonna get Susan soon from the way he's playing her. She'll be just another number when they finish fucking in the backseat of his car. I wish I could score as easily as he does."

Preston jabs Kyle.

"Ever wonder why you strike out so often?"

Kyle turns to face Preston.

"No—but do tell."

Preston glances at David and Susan kissing and turn to look at Kyle. He adjusts the mirror inside his car and laughs.

"Girls don't date guys that dress dorky."

Kyle shrugs.

"I don't dress dorky."

Preston laughs.

"Keep telling yourself that."

Kyle looks at David and Susan again.

"I've had girlfriends."

Preston rolls his eyes and laughs.

"Uh-huh—for like a day or two. Then they score with one of the jocks and you're left out in the cold—rejected."

Kyle nervously glances at himself in the rearview mirror.

"I've been told I have a pleasant personality."
Preston rolls his eyes and smirks.

4

A car pulls up outside a small building and seconds later a man steps out. He heads toward the front door. Above the front door a plain-printed sign reads in bold letters DAILY SPILL.

5

"Why don't you sign up?"

"You really think I have a chance?"

Jessica Sago turns around to look at her teacher Milton Donovan. He pulls out a pen and gives it to her. She sighs.

"But what if I'm no good?"

Milton glances at the bulletin board in front of him.

"You won't know unless you try."

Jessica looks at the pen in her hand and then at Milton.

"I've never published anything before?"

Milton looks at Jessica curiously and smiles.

"But you've written plenty."

He glances at the bulletin board again.

"Your essays are the best in my class. Better than most I've seen in ten years. Take a chance already. Dare to try."

They look at each other for a few seconds.

6

Megan Bowers fumbles with the keys to her car as she looks back at the house in front of her. She seems upset.

"Cheating bastard—wish I had a gun."

She unlocks the door and as she's about to get into the car a man comes running out of the house clad only in black boxer briefs. Malcolm Kingsbury stops suddenly and yells loudly.

"She means nothing to me."

Megan looks at Malcolm for a few seconds and then slams the door to her car shut. Tears stream down her cheeks.

"It's over."

Malcolm watches as she starts the engine to the car.

"Can't we discuss this? I love you."

Megan rolls her eyes.

"You have a funny way of showing it."

Malcolm looks down at his stiff erection straining against the confines of his underwear. He grins slyly and laughs.

"It just happened. One thing led to another."

Megan notices a movement at the front door.

"I'll just bet."

Malcolm turns around to see Lisa Morgan standing in the doorway with her hands on her hips. She's wearing a robe.

"Forget about her already."

She watches as Megan drives away.

"She's a frigid bitch—always has been—even back in high school. You're better off without her. I'm what you need."

She glances at his erection.

"How about we pick up where we left off earlier before we were so rudely interrupted by my half-sister and her lecture."

Malcolm glances at Megan's car as it turns the corner and disappears from view. He faces Lisa. She pulls open her robe.

"Do what you do best."

He grins broadly and follows her into the house.

7

As the front door opens Greg Petrie looks up to see Maxwell Pendergraft closing the door behind him. He grins.

"Never thought I'd see you here again?"

Maxwell smirks and waves his hand.

"Your words not mine."

He walks toward where Greg is sitting at his desk.

"Pop had to be moved from Clearview."

Greg shakes his head.

"Sorry about your dad. Still can't believe that spoiled brat got off easy. But then again *his* kind always skirts the law."

Maxwell sits at the edge of the desk.

"Not this time."

Greg looks at Maxwell curiously.

"Got a plan in motion?"

Maxwell shrugs.

"Just got a new lawyer out of Boston last week—he seems to think we can still bring charges against the Penney family."

Greg rolls his eyes.

"So many have tried to bring them down?"

Maxwell pulls out a piece of paper from the back pocket of his Levi's and hands it to Greg. They look at each other.

"Seems young Mr. Penney has been flirting with the law in all sorts of sneaky ways. Unfortunately for him I found out."

He laughs.

"I intend to work that angle."

Greg leans back in his chair and laughs.

"I want first dibs on the story."

Maxwell grins.

"I'll think about it."

Greg sits up.

"Hey?"

Maxwell laughs.

"Of course the story is yours. Relax already."

He leans across the desk.

"I'm taking Pop to Whispering Hills in about an hour or so if they work fast enough—waiting for the paperwork to clear."

"That place is pricey."

Maxwell stands up and grins broadly.

"Uh-huh—but Penney is paying for it. Choked every dollar I could get out of Carson Penney and his terrible brood."

He sighs loudly.

"Pop deserved better than he got."

Greg nods in agreement.

8
Boston

Carson Penney looks at the folder in his hand and then back at Jeremy Winterfield. He seems in shock and sighs.

"This is an outrage."

Jeremy leans back in his chair and grins.

"Nevertheless your son is going to face what he did."

Carson tosses the folder on top of the desk.

"I'll destroy you."

Jeremy rolls his eyes.

"Who do you think you're playing with here—some rookie amateur dealing with his first case? Your son is going to pay for what he did. There's no way out. The time when you and others like you could pay off people to look the other way is over."

Jeremy leans forward.

"I've never lost a case. Not ever."

He laughs.

"Know why Penney?"

He grins slyly.

"I play dirty. No reason to pretend. If you fuck with me I fuck back one hundred times harder. I don't stop until I win. And I'll do anything I have to in order to win—plain and simple."

Carson clenches his fists.

"I'll crush you."

Jeremy stands up.

"Bad move to threaten me Penney."

He walks over to where Carson is standing.

"Like I said I play dirty."

He leans over and whispers in Carson's ear.

"If you so much as try to play one of your games and send your goons after me or anyone I know—I'll fight back hard."

He laughs loudly.

"Think before you act Penney. It'll be a really bad scene if some accident befalls your children. I mean, let's face it—your precious daughter could have all sorts of things happening

around her or *to* her. Would be a shame if she was abducted or worse if she was raped on some lonely stretch of road just outside of that quaint little town you call home. And your youngest boy, oh, such a terrible thing without a doubt if he were kidnapped and held for ransom by someone who had a penchant for young boys, and oh, it would be so sad indeed if your family had to deal with such tragedy on top of your eldest facing charges for what he did weeks ago. Yep, I'd really think about what I just said."

Carson seems aghast.

"You'll never get away with it."

Jeremy snaps his fingers gleefully.

"How about we test that theory shall we?"

Jeremy looks back at his desk.

"From here on out you and your family are on borrowed time. I've got lots of connections, more than you do. And I'm not afraid to play them. Your family means nothing to me. Their lives are worthless as far as I'm concerned. If you cross me I'll make sure you pay dearly. Not one member of your loved ones will get out of this mess unscathed—not even your dead wife."

Carson seems confused. Jeremy grins slyly.

"Crypts are vandalized every day. Coffins are opened. Stuff happens—something else for you to think about in addition to what I said about your precious family. I'll do whatever I have to do to beat you. Be prepared. I don't make idle threats."

They look at each other.

"Oh, I almost forgot. That little business deal with the Russians you think no one knows about—won't be secret much longer. It would be a shame if the government found out."

Jeremy picks up the folder from on top of the desk.

"Take this home with you and think about it."

He shoves it in Carson's hand.

"And for the record I wouldn't try to play anyone against me because I'll find out rather quickly. And once I do, the first part of my plan goes into motion. Have a nice day Penney."

Carson seems in shock as he walks to the door. He turns around once to look at Jeremy angrily. Jeremy grins broadly.

Susan pushes David away as he begins to unbutton her blouse. He seems confused by her cold behavior and sighs.

"This is as good a day as any."

"I need more time to think about it."

David seems impatient.

"I'm the only guy for you."

He laughs.

"Everyone you know will applaud you once they find out you finally gave it up to me. Seriously, you're one of the few sad sack holdouts left that think we're still living back in 1955."

Susan pushes David away.

"You knew the kind of girl I was before we started hanging out together. I wasn't like Natalie or Isabel. I'm better."

David seems upset.

"Is this your way of telling me you're never going to give it up to me? I think I have a right to know if that's the case."

Susan buttons her blouse once more.

"I never said I wouldn't."

David leers at Susan. She sighs loudly.

"But I never said I would either."

David seems upset as Susan turns away.

Greg and Maxwell shake hands briefly as Greg looks up at the DAILY SPILL sign. He and Maxwell look at each other.

"When my dad retired last year he made me promise I wouldn't run his newspaper into the ground. Sometimes I think he loved the paper more than he did me or my mother."

"It's quite a tough act to follow if I do say so myself."

Greg shrugs knowingly.

"Tell me about it."

They shake hands again.

"It's just another hundred feet or so."

Chris Gibson turns around to look at his cousin as they reach a clearing amid a tangle of shrubs and prickly vines.

"I saw it when we went ballooning last fall. There's a graveyard somewhere in these woods—plenty of headstones."

Parker Ross peers into the expanse of thick vines.

"Place probably has lots of booby traps."

Chris laughs loudly.

"It's a cemetery—not a frigging bunker Parker."

"No one has been out here in years."

Chris rolls his eyes.

"Duh—that's why it's so exciting."

He takes a step forward.

"Think of what we could find."

Parker sighs loudly.

"Uh-huh—that's what I'm afraid of. Skeletons aren't my thing, OK. Dead people, ugh. Hate cemeteries with a passion."

Chris grabs Parker.

"I didn't come this far to turn back now."

He forcibly pushes Parker through the shrubbery.

"Who knows we might find lost treasure or something?"

Parker stops and looks at Chris.

"Lost treasure in a cemetery? I think not."

They come to another clearing.

"I heard some old folks in town talking about it."

Chris stops and looks around.

"They said there was a sailor who visited Castle Beach back in the 1800s and he buried some of his loot in the woods by the cemetery—said he hid a map inside the mausoleum at the entrance to the boneyard—then went back to sea and never came back. No one ever found his loot—at least not yet."

Parker looks at Chris suspiciously.

"I'm not breaking into a mausoleum."

Chris aggressively jabs Parker.

"Oh yeah you are."

Parker looks at the thick woods ahead.

"No way—I draw the line at breaking into some broken down burial vault. There's probably bones scattered inside."

Chris laughs.

"Don't be a puss OK—there are no bones just lying around on the floor. They're all inside vaults—out of sight and mind."

Parker sighs loudly.

"Let's just go back—let's forget this whole breaking into a creepy old mausoleum deal to find some stupid map left behind by some long-dead sailor from way back in ancient times."

Chris grabs Parker and shoves him.

"We're not turning back."

He clenches his hand into a fist.

"I'll bust you if I have to."

Parker looks at the angry scowl on his cousin's face.

"I hate you."

Chris laughs.

"Tell it to someone who cares."

He laughs loudly and pushes Parker.

12

Boston

Carson leans against his car and sighs loudly as he looks at the folder in his hand. He seems worried and sighs again.

"What the hell am I going to do?"

He looks at his watch.

"Winterfield knows he wouldn't get away with what he threatened to do if I call his bluff. He knows I'm a force to be reckoned with in New England. Knows I can cause serious havoc in his life if he dares to come up against me. But what if he makes good on his threat? Things could really get out of hand."

He pulls out his cell phone.

Megan wipes a tear from her eye as she slowly pulls into a parking lot. She begins to cry—then stops suddenly and blinks.

“I won’t let him turn my life into a reality show.”

She wipes away more tears.

“He and Lisa deserve each other.”

She sighs.

“Lisa has always been a slut—gave it up for every boy in high school that pretended to like her—but Malcolm—he?”

She turns to look at herself in the rearview mirror and wipes away a few more tears. She rubs her cheeks briefly.

“He said he loved me.”

She glances at her cell phone.

“I’ll make them both pay for what they did to me.”

She smiles slyly.

“Uh-huh—and I know just the person to ask.”

She picks up her cell phone.

“I still think this is a mistake.”

Shirley Brewster looks at the computer screen again.

“Isn’t there another way?”

On the computer screen through a live link Matt Brewster shakes his head. He holds up a sheet of paper in his hand.

“There’s no way out of it Shirley. Numbers don’t lie. This is your cousin speaking—it’s time to pull the plug—do it.”

“But I worked so hard.”

Matt shakes his head several times.

“I’m sorry but you asked me for my opinion.”

Shirley sighs loudly.

“OK—OK—it’s just so hard.”

They look at each other.

“How do I tell Clyde?”

Matt grimaces.

“Better sooner than later.”

He holds up additional paperwork.

“Clyde will understand.”

Shirley shakes her head and turns away.

“He trusted me.”

She looks at a picture of an older man holding up a string of fish looking out at the open ocean behind him. She sighs.

“Take the offer from McKay Enterprises.”

Matt holds up another piece of paper to the screen as Shirley nods. He waves his hand in the air and smiles.

“Clyde Walker might surprise you.”

Shirley nods again.

15

“Yes. That’s right.”

Megan sighs loudly as she wipes away another tear.

“I want you to wipe out his bank account.”

She rolls her eyes.

“Of course I know it’s my money. Malcolm has never worked a day in his life. Everything he has belongs to me.”

She smiles broadly.

“Tomorrow is perfect. He’ll hate it.”

She laughs.

“Uh-huh—leave a smiley face when you’re done.”

She wipes away another tear.

“I know. I know.”

She nods a few times.

“Without a doubt I want that cheating boyfriend of mine to know I’m behind this deal. Ugh, check that—ex-boyfriend.”

She looks at the cell phone.

“Oh yeah, I almost forgot—last year he had a party at his apartment and got so zonked he kissed the pizza delivery guy.”

Megan smirks.

“French kissed him actually.”

She licks her lips.

"I'll send you the video. Load it up to YouTube with the caption "Malcolm Kingsbury and his boyfriend" and include a few comments just for good measure. That'll teach Lisa a lesson."

She licks her lips again.

"Appreciate it."

She shuts off her cell phone and grins.

"He's not sorry yet but he will be."

She looks around.

"They both will be when I'm finished with them."

She steps out of her car.

16

Chris and Parker come toward another clearing and stop suddenly. A few yards away amid the tangle of dead trees and vines they look in awe as a cemetery comes into view. Chris takes a step forward as Parker grabs his arm and sighs loudly.

"Let's go back."

Chris rolls his eyes.

"Like hell."

He grins broadly as he jerks free of Parker's grip.

"There's loot buried around here somewhere and I'm going to find it. I'll be so rich I'll be able to buy that mansion out by Rocky Point—heard it was priced at four million smackers."

Parker seems uneasy as he looks around.

"I have a bad feeling about this. Like really bad."

Chris ignores Parker and takes another step.

"You're a fucking embarrassment to our entire family. I swear you must be adopted. Total wimp you are. Ugh."

He stops and turns around to face his cousin. He raises his fist again. Parker looks at him curiously for a few seconds.

"I'm through being nice."

Chris shakes his fist.

"Keep up your whining and I'll be forced to work out my frustrations on your face—make you even less attractive than you already are. You make the call cousin—but beware my fist."

Parker looks at Chris with cold stare and then reluctantly follows his cousin through the broken gate of the cemetery.

17

"You're just lucky I'm a nice guy."

David runs his hands through his hair as Susan ignores his comment. He seems upset as they walk toward a parking lot.

"Chandler Penney I'm not."

Susan stops and faces David.

"I still can't believe he did what you said."

David shrugs.

"Got no reason to talk trash about dear Chandler—he's a creep—thinks he can do whatever he wants when he chooses."

David grabs Susan's arm.

"He's also no charmer with the ladies either."

He sighs loudly.

"I have it on a good source he drugged Lily Blackwell at his house last year—and then he took her to his bedroom."

Susan seems shocked.

"She said nothing happened."

David rolls his eyes.

"That's what he told her. But he told his friends he scored big time. Bragged about how easy it was—said she was totally out of it as he did his thing—lied to her when she woke up."

David looks toward the highway nearby.

"But if you don't believe me why don't you take a chance with Chandler? See how long it'll take for him to play you?"

David makes a lewd gesture with his finger.

18

Boston

"What do you mean you'll pass on my offer?"

Carson angrily slams his fist down on a coffee table.

"I'll pay you triple."

Cole Franklin leans back on the sofa.

"Doesn't matter—not interested in any deal when it comes to Jeremy Winterfield. That dude is not to be messed with—all sorts of stories floating about town concerning his methods of dealing with anyone stupid enough to cross him for whatever reasons. Besides, I just got back from the United States Virgin Islands dealing with a job that didn't pay off. I need a few weeks to collect myself. But thanks again for thinking of me."

Carson glances at Cole curiously.

"Exactly what does Winterfield have on you?"

Cole sits up.

"Do yourself a favor and tell your son he's going to spend some time in the pen. Better him than you if truth be known."

Carson clenches his fists.

"How about I pay ten times your usual deal?"

Cole laughs.

"Not interested for any amount."

He sighs loudly.

"Show yourself out."

Carson looks at Cole oddly and leaves. As the door slams shut Cole shrugs and looks at the cell phone on top of his desk.

"Some people never learn."

He picks up his cell phone and begins dialing.

"Uh-huh—just like you said—but I told him I couldn't take him up on his offer. He was really pissed—threatened me."

Cole nods a few times and grins slyly.

"Thank you."

He slowly shuts off the cell phone and smiles broadly.

"So glad I'm not Penney."

He begins to laugh.

19

Chris takes a step toward the mausoleum entrance as Parker hangs back a few feet. The metal door is badly rusted, as is the lock hanging ominously on its hinges. Chris grins broadly.

"Looks just like the tacky Penney mausoleum at Rolling Meadows Memorial. Give or take the nice manicured lawns."

He looks up at the faded name NIX carved in bold lettering right above the entrance of the water-stained stone building.

"Nix—there's no one in town with that name?"

Chris seems confused and faces Parker.

"I think the last Nix died in Boston back in the 1980s."

Parker watches as Chris takes a step forward.

"Doesn't matter anyways—don't need permission from a bunch of dried-up bones. This lock poses no challenge to me."

He reaches out to grab the rusted lock and as he touches the top—it falls away. He looks back at Parker and laughs.

"Oops—lock—what lock?"

He pushes the door inward. A loud creaking sound is heard as the metal hinges squeak loudly. Chris peers inside the abandoned vault and grins broadly. Inside the single room, vaults line the walls. Years of neglect have stained the white marble with black-colored grime throughout. Off to one corner Chris notices a single crypt. On the door in faded gold-colored letters, the name THOMAS NIX is spelled out. Chris slowly enters as cobwebs stick to his clothing. He brushes them away and slowly walks across the marble floor. His footsteps echo loudly as he slowly approaches the door with the faded name printed on it.

"Give me your pocket flashlight Parker."

Chris turns around and realizes he's alone. Parker is nowhere to be found. He calls out but there's no answer.

"Goddamn prick."

He looks at his watch.

"I can't believe he bailed on me."

He wipes sweat from his brow and shrugs.

"Fuck him."

He looks around nervously.

"Still got time left to look around."

He notices the huge crucifix on the door for the first time amid the stains from years of neglect. He seems confused.

"Was this dude a religious nut?"

He glances at the other crypts lining the walls nearby and then faces the door again. He reads the dates under the name.

"BORN 1768—FOUND PEACE 1790."

He looks at the crucifix again and shrugs.

"Found peace? What the hell is that supposed to mean? Why couldn't they just say he died? Twenty-two years old. Oh man, wouldn't that be the worse deal—to die so young."

He examines the door to the large crypt more closely.

"I bet the map is hidden somewhere in there."

He looks at his watch once more.

"But where the fuck is the doorknob?"

He turns to look at the door again.

"There must be some sort of a trick panel to open it."

He notices the afternoon sun beginning to fade.

20

"What's going on Shirley?"

Clyde Walker looks at Shirley curiously as she tries to smile but does a bad job at it. She reaches out to pat his hand.

"I have some bad news."

She glances at the folder in her hand.

"I should've listened to you."

Clyde looks at the folder in Shirley's hand and seems to realize the truth. He takes a deep breath and rubs his eyes.

"I hope this isn't what I think it is?"

Shirley seems to be seconds away from crying.

21

"Hey, watch where you're going."

Parker looks up to see someone giving him their middle finger as they zip by. He recognizes Chandler Penney and flips him a finger in return. As he walks toward Castle Beach he turns every few seconds to look back to see if Chris is following him but there's no one there. He sighs loudly and continues walking.

22
Boston

“Uh-huh—that’s right, the cemetery is just a ways up from the highway. You’ll see the sign leading to Rolling Meadows Memorial with a huge arrow pointing toward the entrance right afterwards. Wait until the caretaker and his crew leave for the night. Jump the wall at the entrance and smash every one of the stained glass windows in the Penney mausoleum and then spray paint the name I gave you on the outside. Penney will get the message soon enough that I’m not to be trifled with. Bet you anything that piece of trash buckles to my will. His son is going to take a fall one way or the other—better sooner than later.”

Jeremy laughs.

“What? Are you actually asking me such questions?”

He puts his feet on top of his desk and grins.

“Don’t care about such things.”

He rolls his eyes.

“Penney will bow to my will or else.”

He begins laughing loudly.

23

Susan blinks several times as she glances at a huge movie poster just outside a small multi-screen movie theater.

“Susan?”

She turns around to see Claire Cassell looking at her with a mixture of pity and obvious amusement. She smiles weakly.

“I really don’t want to go to work.”

Claire begins to laugh.

“I don’t blame you one bit. I hate this job as much as you do but at the moment we’re both stuck working here.”

They walk toward the entrance.

“Think Marlisa will be in a good mood today?”

Claire shrugs and seems annoyed.

“Doubtful.”

They both glance knowingly at each other.

“If there was an award for being a lousy manager—she’d win hands down. I swear she seems to excel at being a bitch.”

Susan nods and sighs loudly.

“Don’t say that in public.”

Claire makes a lewd gesture with her finger.

24

“Who the fuck designed this thing?”

Chris sighs as he searches the smooth marble door for an opening. He stops every few seconds to look at his hands and reacts to the grime that seems to get thicker each time he touches the faded marble surface. He shrugs and begins to slide his fingers over the visible cracks along the edge of the door.

“Damn it—why the fuck is there no opening?”

He takes a deep breath.

“Fuck.”

He continues to slide his fingers along the crack and a few seconds later he hears a noise and realizes the heavy marble door is slightly ajar. He grins broadly and tries to peer inside.

“Pitch black.”

He glances at the window.

“Poor guy—he’s been laying in total darkness for over two hundred years—probably never got laid while he was alive.”

He begins to laugh as he shakes his head.

“What the fuck am I doing feeling sorry for some dead guy from a rich family? Probably was a selfish toady bastard.”

He forces the door to open further. As he does this, the huge stone crucifix on the door of the crypt falls to the floor and shatters into tiny pieces. Chris turns around and looks at the scattered pieces. He shrugs and turns toward the open door.

“This has to be where that old sailor hid his treasure map before he left town—and left all that loot for me to find.”

He pushes the door further and peers into the crypt.

25

Parker stops in front of a movie theater and sees Susan and Claire behind the concession stand unpacking candy.

"Maybe I can score a free movie?"

He walks toward the entrance and stops. Out in the lobby he sees Marlisa Turner berating one of her employees.

"Doesn't she ever take a day off from work?"

He turns and begins walking down the street as he passes several teenagers who point at him and begin laughing.

26

"I'm so sorry."

Clyde looks at Shirley in shock.

"How could something like this happen?"

Shirley shakes her head.

"Business just totally dried up last December right before Christmas and I couldn't get it back on track. I'm so sorry."

Clyde looks at the paperwork in front of him.

27

Chandler seems irritated as he looks at his girlfriend Ivy Patterson. He reaches out to touch her again. She slaps him.

"I thought I just said I'm not in the mood."

Chandler grabs Ivy and pulls her toward him. He grins broadly as he kisses her. She pulls away and slaps him again.

"You disgust me."

Chandler gives Ivy an odd look.

"You're my girlfriend—act like it already."

Ivy wipes a tear from her eye.

"What about you and Susan Lancaster?"

Chandler reacts to the comment with a sneer.

"What about her?"

“You tried to score a date with her.”

Chandler laughs.

“I did no such thing.”

Ivy pulls out her cell phone.

“Heather Stamos says differently.”

Chandler slowly runs his fingers through his hair.

“Heather is a lying busybody.”

Ivy presses a few buttons on her cell phone.

“Is she really?”

Instantly a video plays across the screen of her cell phone as Chandler watches in shock knowing he’s busted. He grins.

“So what—that proves nothing.”

Ivy shuts off her cell phone.

“You said you’d never cheat on me again after what happened last month between you and Natalie Cassell. You said I was all you needed—said we had something really special.”

Chandler rolls his eyes.

“We do—that video is bogus. Someone paid a model to pretend to be me. I was framed, OK—that guy isn’t me.”

Ivy looks at Chandler curiously.

“Do you actually think I’m that stupid?”

Chandler clenches his fist.

“How dare you accuse me of lying?”

Chandler seems to become enraged and grabs Ivy again as he forces himself on top of her. He pushes her down in the backseat of his car and rips her skirt as he tries to yank off her underwear. She screams loudly as he hits her again and again.

“From now on I call the shots.”

He slaps her hard across her face. She continues to scream as he aggressively penetrates her. Her loud screams are drowned out by his laughter as he plows into her repeatedly, slapping her over and over until she finally becomes silent. Minutes later he pulls out and looks at Ivy with a look of joy and pity. He sighs.

“I call the shots until I say differently.”

Ivy begins to cry. Chandler seems irritated.

“Shut up you stupid bitch.”

He raises his hand and gives her a sharp look.
"Not another word out of you."
Ivy glances at her torn skirt as Chandler seems bored.
"Don't push me Ivy."
He flexes his muscular arms.

28

Malcolm looks over at Lisa lying next to him on the bed as the laughter from his cell phone echoes. He seems confused.

"Why would you think I'm gay?"

He looks at the cell phone confused.

"I never kissed a guy."

He reaches out to grab his laptop lying on the table next to the bed. He flips it open and seconds later he becomes enraged as he looks at footage of himself kissing a pizza delivery man. He clenches his fists as the laughter on the other end of the line appears to get louder. He watches Lisa's reaction and then shuts off the cell phone. He throws the laptop against the wall in a rage and seems about to explode over Megan's revenge.

"Goddamn Megan."

He looks at the shattered laptop lying on the floor.

"She's going to pay for this."

He turns to look at Lisa.

"Do you have any idea where that bitch sister of yours could be at this moment? I'm going to break her fucking neck."

Lisa shakes her head.

"Did you really kiss the pizza delivery guy?"

Malcolm turns to look at Lisa.

"Fuck you bitch."

Without warning he angrily grabs her by the neck.

"I don't do guys."

He twists her neck backwards.

"Goddamn stupid whore."

He jumps up and stomps out of the room.

Chris silently walks into the windowless room and as his eyes adjust to the pitch blackness he sees a coffin in the center on a raised step-like structure. He slowly approaches the coffin and notices a crucifix lying on top. He glances at the interior and seems impressed by the sheer expanse of the massive crypt.

"Thomas Nix must have been a really rich guy."

He walks closer to the coffin and casually reaches out to remove the crucifix. Chris looks at the dust-covered crucifix briefly and then lays it down on a ledge nearby. He looks at the coffin again and grins broadly as he runs his fingers along the top of the lid. He reaches out and pulls lightly. He sighs.

"I might as well see what the stiff looks like now."

His voice echoes throughout the crypt.

"This Nix dude is probably just a pile of dried-up bones. Like it's been two hundred plus years since he took a dirt nap."

He begins to whistle as he pulls the lid open. Chris seems annoyed as it appears unwilling to budge, squeaking loudly.

"Damn it—sounds like a horror movie."

He slowly pulls on the lid once again and finally it lifts.

"This is quite a moment without a doubt."

Chris looks in shock as the body in the coffin comes into view. He gasps as he stares at the perfectly-preserved body.

"What the fuck."

Chris continues staring at the corpse totally fascinated by what he's seeing. He pulls his eyes away for a few seconds.

"Wait till I tell Parker about this place."

He slowly turns to look around at the interior of the large crypt and sighs, then faces the open coffin once more and is shocked at what he sees before him. The coffin is empty.

"Where's the stiff?"

Chris hears a noise behind him and as he spins around he's grabbed by the neck. He reacts to seeing Thomas Nix staring at him with glowing eyes. His eyes are a bright hue of yellow surrounded by a dark red rim. Chris seems unable to move.

"You can't be real."

Chris tries to push Thomas away.

"Like what the fuck are you?"

Chris struggles to free himself as Thomas pulls him closer.

"You can't be."

Thomas grins broadly as Chris screams.

"Let go of me this instant."

Seconds later it's all over for Chris as Thomas hungrily satisfies his thirst. As he drinks, he begins to hum a tune of a long ago forgotten song while shadows of the night spring to life outside seeming to welcome the rebirth of their dark leader.

30

Dark gloom hangs everywhere as a lone black-clad figure silently walks through the woods. He stops and looks out at a small picturesque town in the distance. His eyes glow as his rage seems to overwhelm him while his quest for revenge grows.

TO BE CONTINUED



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