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Will Allred
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Diary of Night

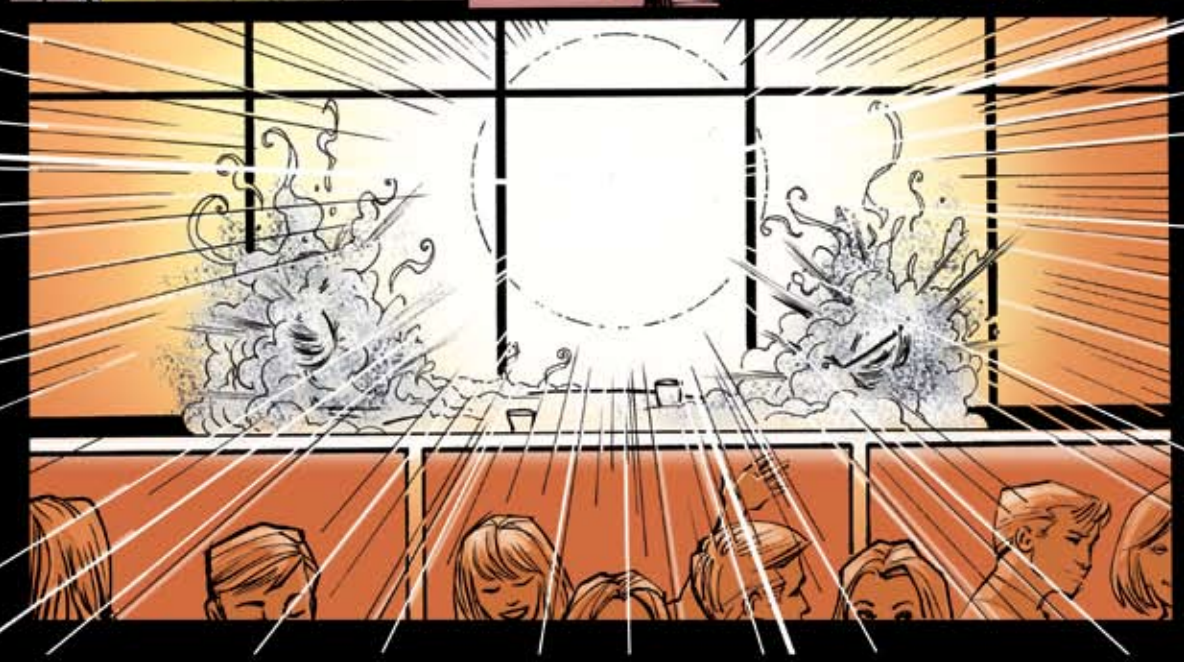


Distant Thunder *part one*

Gene Gonzales
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August 30, 2005





What is our life but a succession of preludes to that unknown song whose first solemn note is sounded by death? — Alphonse de Lamartine

September 18, 2005.

Fran and I had our weekly chat, but, as has been the case recently, the conversation turned back to my... "problem."

YOU'RE AVOIDING IT, YOU KNOW.

THAT'S THE THIRD TIME YOU'VE ASKED ABOUT DAVID AND THE KIDS.

THE NIGHTMARES ARE GETTING WORSE, AREN'T THEY?

COME ON, YOU KNOW YOU CAN TALK TO ME.

NO FOOLIN' YOU, HUH.

YES...THEY ARE GETTING WORSE. IT'S BEEN A YEAR NOW, AND EARLY ON, THEY WERE PRETTY INFREQUENT. BUT NOW, EVERY TIME I CLOSE MY EYES—

Night Games

- Will Allred •
WRITER
- Gene Gonzales •
ARTIST
- Rus Wooton •
LETTERER
& LOGO DESIGN

--I SEE HIM. EVERYTHING ABOUT MY DEATH COMES BACK.

LET'S GO OVER THE DREAM AGAIN. WHAT DO YOU SEE?

IT'S NOT SO MUCH WHAT I SEE. IT'S MORE LIKE I'M BEING OVERWHELMED WITH THESE HORRIFIC IMAGES.

I THOUGHT YOU PUT THAT BEHIND YOU CENTURIES AGO.





I DID TOO,
BUT... SOUNDS
LIKE YOUR 1 A.M.
"LUNCH" IS NEARLY
OVER.

beep
beep

SOUNDS
THAT WAY. I CAN
STAY AND TALK
IF YOU NEED
TO.

NO,
THAT'S ALL
RIGHT.



YOU CALL ME IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, OK. SAME TIME NEXT WEEK?

DEAL.



Afterward, I went for a walk in the park to clear my head and ended up doing a good deed.



YOUR MONEY, BITCH!



YAH, MAYBE WE LET YOU LIVE AFTER WE PARTY.



BOYS, BOYS—



--MAYBE I'LL LET YOU LIVE.



WHAT THE HELL-IZ!



Noooooo!!



BOO.

AAAAAGHHHH!!!





That's when he showed up.

LEAVE.

Nathan and I've been friends for centuries, but he can really annoy me at times. This time, he had bad news.



OH... IT'S YOU.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL HIM. I MADE SURE THAT NEITHER OF THEM WOULD HURT ANYONE AGAIN.

MY DEAREST CATHERINE, I COULDN'T CARE LESS IF HE HURT ANYONE. I'M SIMPLY FAMISHED.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE SUCH PLEASURE IN IT.



PLEASE, I'M NOT IN THE MOOD. BESIDES, THAT'S NOT WHY I'M HERE. TIMOTHY IS MISSING AGAIN.



TIM... HOW LONG?



3 OR 4 DAYS, TOPS.



WELL, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? LET'S GO FIND HIM.

WAIT. LET'S GO BACK TO THE PENTHOUSE FIRST AND TRY TO RETRACE HIS STEPS.





A FULL MEETING, HUH?



YOU KNOW I CAN'T STAND MOST OF THEM. THEY ONLY TOLERATE ME BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO.

OR YOU WOULD DESTROY THEM, IS MORE LIKE IT.



IT'S NOT ONLY TIM'S DISAPPEARANCE, OTHER THINGS... **STRANGE** THINGS ARE HAPPENING.

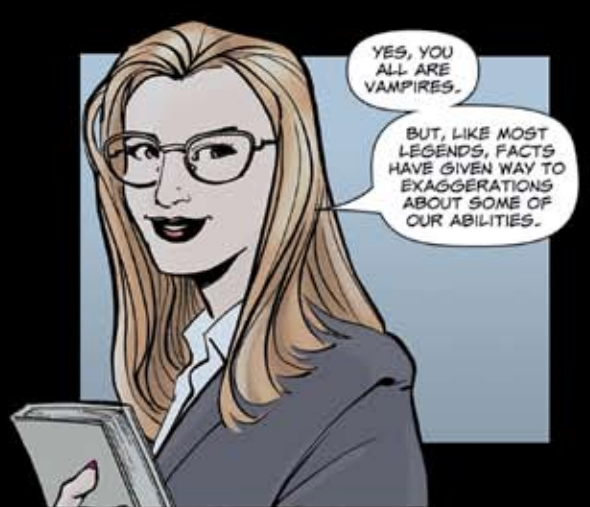
WE... WE NEED YOUR **HELP**.



LOOK, JUST COME IN AND LISTEN, OKAY?



OKAY, NATE. I'LL LISTEN, BUT I'M NOT PROMISING ANYTHING.





WHAT ABOUT SUNLIGHT?

GOOD QUESTION. LIGHT, NOT JUST SUNLIGHT, CAUSES US PAIN. OUR BODIES ARE NOW EXTREMELY, AND LET ME STRESS EXTREMELY, SENSITIVE TO LIGHT. THE PAIN CAUSED BY EXPOSURE KILLS US.

THAT'S ABOUT IT FOR TONIGHT. NEXT TIME WE'LL TALK ABOUT OUR ENHANCED STRENGTH AND THE FEW OTHER WAYS THAT WE CAN DIE. GOOD NIGHT.

AH, NATHAN. GOOD TO SEE YOU.

KAREN, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE CATHERINE MORRISON. CATHERINE... KAREN BRIDGES, OUR HEAD COUNSELOR.

OF COURSE. OUR MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR. NICE TO MEET YOU.

NICE TO MEET YOU, TOO.

YOUR BACKING OF THIS PLACE HAS REALLY HELPED QUITE A FEW PEOPLE, MYSELF INCLUDED. IN FACT, I WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO BE HELPED.

REALLY? THANK YOU. I ONLY PROVIDE THE MONEY, THOUGH. YOU AND YOUR STAFF DO THE REAL WORK.

I HATE TO INTERRUPT, BUT WE REALLY MUST DISCUSS THE RECENT DISTURBING EVENTS.

WON'T YOU JOIN US?

...AND THEY DESTROYED EACH OTHER.

BUT, JASON AND DAVID HAD BEEN FRIENDS SINCE THE RENAISSANCE. WHY?

NOBODY KNOWS. THE OTHERS DISAPPEARING WITHIN THE LAST YEAR, AND NOW THIS. IT'S STARTING TO FEEL LIKE WE'RE UNDER SIEGE.

I excused myself and arrived home just before dawn. Karen seems to be doing good work. Note: Increase monthly check to the Phoenix Foundation.



Something that she said really struck in my mind, though. Under siege... I've felt like that since the nightmares began.



I feel as if I'm losing a fight that I didn't even know I was in. Then there's Tim.



That boy is going to have to face the truth. He can't return to his old life. None of them can. These "suicides" of his are getting old... I guess I am, too. Old and tired.



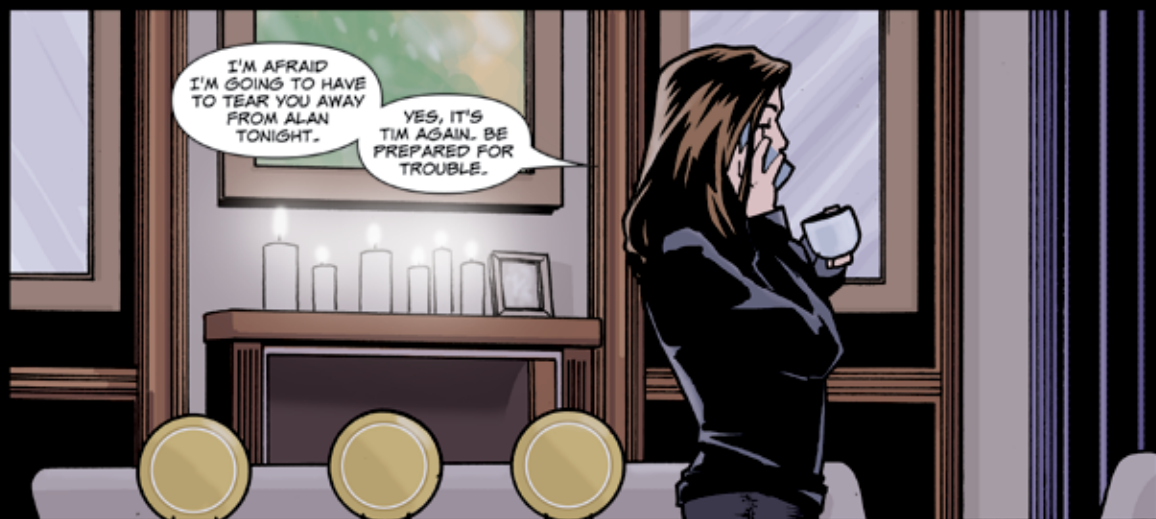




Maybe it was the nightmares, or the lack of sleep, but something had me on edge. I called Anne for a little help in tracking down Tim.

ANNE, IT'S ME.





I'M AFRAID I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TEAR YOU AWAY FROM ALAN TONIGHT.

YES, IT'S TIM AGAIN. BE PREPARED FOR TROUBLE.



I MIGHT BE WORRYING TOO MUCH, BUT SOMETHING'S JUST NOT RIGHT.

PICK ME UP IN AN HOUR. BYE.



WHO WAS THAT?

IT WAS HER, WASN'T IT.

YES, I'M SORRY, HON.









WE'RE CLEAR HERE.

THERE HASN'T BEEN ANYONE HERE IN DAYS.

YOU'RE RIGHT. LET'S CHECK THE OTHER SAFE HOUSES.

THIS ROOM'S CLEAN.



We didn't have much luck with the couple of houses downtown or the other two on the west side.



That left the "cellar."



The cellar is a converted mausoleum that I had built a couple hundred years ago as an emergency shelter.

A barely perceptible awareness of Tim proved that it had been used a bit more recently than I had been led to believe.





But something wasn't right.

*I was so worried about Tim,
I didn't sense the danger--*



TRAP.



--until it was too late.



To Be Continued...

- May 5, 1887 -

All of London is simply electrified with the arrival of Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and even though I'm hardly what I'd consider fashionable, descriptions of the show and its performers piqued my interest enough that I orchestrated an invite as part of Prince Edward's retinue for a private performance and I am so pleased that I did.

The show was simply breathtaking. The stage coach chase complete with Indians was very popular with the rest of our party, but the trick shooting of Ms. Annie Oakley was nothing short of spectacular. With her rifle, I saw her hit the edge of a playing card and put six additional holes in the card before it fluttered to the ground. Magnificent! After a display of skill such as that, I simply had to meet her.

We hit it off (as the Americans say) immediately. I think Annie could sense that there was something different about me. Regardless, I think each of us sensed a kindred spirit. It was wonderful to finally meet a woman not bound by the crushing traditions and customs of Europe. She was wearing breeches, like a man, but there was nothing mannish about her. I was almost embarrassed dressed as I was in the expected skirt, petticoat, bodice, and gloves.

Annie is quite inspiring and possessed of a singular wit. I nearly had a laughing fit when a few moments later, she eschewed all etiquette and shook the hand of Prince Edward and then described him as "a wonderful little girl". The Prince took it all in stride, his sense of humor almost legendary across England and the Continent. But, for a woman to be treated as an equal and given the same freedoms as a man, this America certainly bears investigating, perhaps in a decade or so.

Our conversation was cut short with the delivery of a note. I noticed her grow visibly angry as she read it. Apparently some of the lesser intelligent of London's criminal population had decided to kidnap a member of the show and had somehow managed to capture Annie's husband Frank Butler. I offered to cover the ransom and assist in whatever way I could requiring only one boon of her...a change of clothes.

H
C
N
AFTER
R



“Catherine” _____ by Harry Candelario