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9/26/14

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The Sandiel Estate

The clouds were heavy as Steven Daniels drove down a winding road that seemed to last forever. He was going to visit his former college roommate, Ray, for a couple of days. Ray had recently hit it big when he sold his software developing company for $100 million. Now he had invited Steven to come and see his secluded estate, located in the forests of Portland, Oregon. A storm was forming fast as Steven pulled into Ray’s driveway, he wondered if it would pose any threat.

 Ray’s estate was stunning; trees surrounded the land, seemingly cutting it off from the world. As Steven pulled up the driveway he observed a cemetery with many finely crafted tombstones on his left and on his right, a guest house which is where he assumed would stay. Straight ahead of him the driveway encircled a fountain which gave way to a mansion that seemed to have been built in the 1800s. Steven started to feel uncomfortable; the storm clouds portrayed the house in a manner that would send a chill down anybody’s spine.

 A butler was waiting for Steven when he pulled up.

“Welcome. Mister Ray is waiting for you in the living room sir; it is the room directly to your left when you enter the house. I shall take your bags to your quarters,” the butler said cordially.

“Thank you,” responded Steven.

The entrance was grand, with doors at least 20 feet tall. However Steven couldn’t help but feel like something was not right with this place. Nonetheless, he proceeded to the living room where he saw Ray for the first time in 10 years.

“How you been buddy?!” exclaimed Ray as he saw his old friend.

“I’ve been pretty good, not nearly as good as you though!” Steven said with a grin on his face as he went to hug his old friend.

“My standard of living has gone up a bit since college, but you don’t seem to have aged a day since I last saw you,” Ray chuckled, “so how do you like the house? Pretty cool right?”

“Definitely! It is a little creepy though, don’t you think?” Steven inquired hesitantly.

“That’s why I bought it! I love horror stories and things of that nature and this is the perfect place for that sort of hobby. This estate was the location of the Sandiel murders back in the late 1800s. The original owner of this estate was Charles Sandiel; he was a big shot banker in his early twenties who built this place after his wife divorced him. He lived here for two years before he had a dream in which Satan came to him and told him that if he killed his staff he would be granted eternal youth. So he waited for a big storm to flood the streets and then proceeded to murder the groundskeeper, the butler, and the chef. Legend has it that he decapitated each body and hid the heads in a duffel bag along with his journal and a picture of him somewhere on this very estate. Then he just vanished, neither him nor the heads have ever been found. After that night Charles never cropped up again, there are no known records or pictures of him, not from before that night or after. Some people think he is still out there in the world somewhere. ”

“Holy crap man, why would you want to live here?”

“Because this estate is living history. It has it own story to tell the world. Why, are you scared? Do you want to go home?” Ray teased.

Steven, feeling like his manhood was in jeopardy, told Ray that he wasn’t scared and that this weekend would be great. However in actuality he was terrified.

 After catching up for a few minutes, Ray and Steven went to the kitchen to eat dinner. The kitchen located in the middle of the house, it had no windows and bare concrete walls. As Steven crossed the threshold into the kitchen he shivered, he thought of the cook that used to walk on these very floors and about the blood that must have flown when Charles murdered him.

As Steven and Ray ate, Steven asked about the storm, “Do you think we will be flooded in?”

“It’s possible, but only if it’s a big storm,” Ray replied casually.

 Steven then proceeded to check his phone for the weather forecast.

“Your phone is useless out here, bud. No cell reception or internet,” Ray explained to Steven.

“You’re kidding right? You live in a mansion that was the site of brutal murders and the only connection is a road that gets flooded when it rains?” Steven asked in disbelief.

“Yep, just me and my staff out here, and I wouldn’t change it for anything. Why? Are you scared that Charles will come back?”

“Of course not.”

“Good because this is where the chef was killed. They found most of his body parts in the fridge and oven. They found the rest baked into the leftovers of the casserole. Charles had chopped the chef up with a meat cleaver, and it was only the start of his rampage.”

“Jesus”

 All of a sudden Steven felt faint, he felt himself losing consciousness. Then everything went black. Images were flashing against the blackness of Steven’s eyelids. He saw a bloodied chef’s jacket draped over the back of a man with an obscured face who seemed to be eating what looked like a red casserole. Steven wanted to scream but he was mute. He saw bloodied bits of arm and leg in the fridge, seemingly ready to be used in the next recipe. Finally, he saw a flash the chef’s severed head; the look of shock in the chef’s eyes was petrifying. Then just as fast as they appeared, the images were gone and Steven was lying on the ground looking up at Ray.

“What the hell just happened? Are you okay?” asked Ray. He regarded Steven with a worried expression.

Steven, not wanting to seem like a wimp, brushed it off as the long drive up that caused his episode. He didn’t dare tell Ray about the images.

“Well if you’re ok I want to show you where the butler was murdered. Unless you’re scared, don’t want you to faint again.” Ray teased.

“Yeah yeah very funny, let’s go. I still don’t see why you like this place so much, it’s creepy,” Steven responded.

As they walked out of the kitchen and headed toward the upstairs bedrooms Ray answered Steven’s question, “Like I told you it’s the history, I enjoy knowing that something historical happened here.”

“I understand that part but why a place this creepy; why not a house with some happier history?”

“Because happy history is boring history, everything exciting in history was bad.”

“I guess I see your point, I just wouldn’t follow you steps in purchasing houses.”

 They soon reached a small bedroom with a single twin bed, a nightstand that had a Bible laid on top of it, and a window that overlooked the cemetery. It had started to rain, it wasn’t pouring but it was coming down pretty hard.

“So what’s the story here?” Steven asked, trying to sound disinterested but fearing what he might hear next.

“Well after Charles killed the chef he made his way up the stairs into this room. The butler was fast asleep when Charles entered but soon awoke to a knife slicing against his throat. All he could do was gasp for breath and claw at his throat, however this did nothing to help his condition. The last thing he saw were Charles’s fingers as they were forced down through his eyes into his skull. He died drowning in his own blood. Charles then decapitated him and left his body hanging out of the window.”

Steven felt the onset of another blackout, but not wanting to be made fun of again by Ray he asked for a glass of water and once Ray left he sat down on the bed and collapsed. He awoke lying on the bed, at first he thought he had had no vision and was about to go find Ray when a body crept into view. The unknown man still had the Chef’s jacket draped over his back; however Steven could not see the man’s face as it was obscured by the shadows that were cast by the moon. Then he felt his neck open up, he couldn’t breath, he looked down and saw blood shooting like a geyser out of his neck, he tried to scream but all the came out was a pathetic gurgling noise. Then he saw the man’s hand coming down toward his face with great force, two fingers outstretched. There was blackness as he felt the man’s fingers pierce his eyes and penetrate the depths of his skull.

Steven awoke with in a cold sweat; he sat up quickly and mopped his sweat off with his shirt. Moments later Ray walked in with a glass of water; Steven downed it in two gulps.

“So do you want to see the cemetery or are you ready to call it a night?” Ray queried.

“Well I am tired but something tells me that I won’t be sleeping much tonight anyway so I might as well hear how the groundskeeper died.”

“Follow me.”

 As they walked out into the yard there was a large crack of lighting. Steven was anxious about the next story, he feared having to witness another murder. They arrived at the largest tombstone in the graveyard; it was topped with a statue of a soldier holding a sword above his head. Steven could only imagine what he was about to hear.

“Shortly after hanging the butler out of the window Charles made his way out here to this grave where the groundskeeper was trying to unclog that drain over there,” Ray said as he pointed to a drain a couple feet away, “He was so enveloped in his work that he hadn’t noticed the butler swaying in the breeze not even 300 yards away. Charles crept up behind the groundskeeper and knocked him out with a shovel. Charles then proceeded to decapitate the groundskeeper and gore his body on the sword of that very statue,” Ray said with a smirk on his face.

Steven felt himself falling, although he didn’t stop at the ground, he fell straight through to the coffin below the grave. He could see and hear everything above him; it was as if he was buried under glass. Ray had disappeared and had been replaced by a young African-American gentleman. Steven saw a man drenched in blood creeping towards the worker with a shovel, just as the past two times the man’s face was obscured but this time by the shadow of a top hat that he must have grabbed from the butler’s room. He was still wearing the blood-drenched jacket. Steven wanted to alert the young man but the young man couldn’t hear Steven screaming at him. He saw the man in the hat bring the shovel back, Steven blinked, now the man was on a ladder placing the young man’s decapitated body on the sword. Then his world went black.

Steven awoke drenched and cold with Ray looking at him.

“Again?” Ray asked almost unhappily.

“Sorry, I should probably go get some sleep,” Steven said apologetically.

 Steven made his way to the guesthouse as Ray headed back to the mansion. The rain was coming down hard now; there was no doubt that the roads were flooded by now. Steven was furiously reviewing the night’s events in his head. *What is happening to me? Why do I keep blacking out? Why is this place so familiar?* Then Steven wondered if he was in any danger, Ray seemed obsessed with these murders; he had all of the same staff that Charles did except the groundskeeper, was Steven intended to be the groundskeeper? Steven finally reached the guesthouse after what seemed like an eternity. As soon as he entered the house he felt drawn in, he couldn’t stop himself, he began to walk towards the back left corner of the room. *WHAT IS HAPPENING?* Steven was petrified as he involuntarily moved through the room. When he reached the corner his arms extended to pull up a board from the floor. There was a duffel bag; Steven slowly brought it to the bed. He unzipped the bag and pulled open the bag, inside were three perfectly preserved heads, a journal with Charles Sandiel monogramed in gold letters on the cover. Then he saw the photo, he gasped, staring back at him was a picture of himself. All of a sudden the man’s face from the dreams became clear it was Steven Daniels face. The letters on the journal rearranged themselves before his eyes, Sandiel became Daniels. Then Steven heard someone enter. Ray stood at the door smiling.

“Ray I have to tell you something awful!” cried Steven.

“I know everything Charles,” responded Ray coolly, “I have been studying you since before college, I picked you as a roommate knowing who you were, I bought this house with you in mind, and I invited you here during a storm to remind you of the wonderful events of that night. I idolize you.”

“How did you know all of this?” Steven asked in horror.

“As a kid my parents brought me here on a tour, I ditched the tour to explore on my own when I found your duffel bag. From that day on I was hell bent on finding you. You were not an easy man to find, but once you enrolled in college it was easy.”

“How come I couldn’t remember any of this?”

“Well after living with the murders on your mind for such a long time you couldn’t take it. So you created an alter ego, a college student with a regular life. Tell me, can you remember anything before college?”

“No,” Steven answered in disbelief.

“Have you ever aged?”

“No.”

“Exactly, and now that you’re here you can fulfill my dream.”

“Ray, what is you dream?” Steven inquired with a shaky voice.

“I want you to kill me,” Ray responded with a dreamy voice.

“Why?”

“What better way to die than to be killed by your hero?”

“NO, I won’t do it!”

“DO IT!” Ray shouted pulling out a gun.

“NO!”

 Ray fired a round right into the center of Steven’s left eye. The bullet stayed lodged in Steven’s skull for a moment before being pushed back out of the entry wound and falling to the floor. Steven was left unharmed. Everything was silent for a minute.

 Steven’s trembling voice asked, “Why am I not dead?”

“Because your f\*\*\*ing immortal! If you won’t kill me I’ll have to do it myself!” Ray shouted, and then he turned the gun around and fired it into his stomach.

 Steven fell to his knees and cried, he cried until he couldn’t cry anymore. Then he got up, grabbed a lighter from his pocket, lit the journal and photo on fire and started to walk; he walked into the night, never to be seen again.