

The Terminal's Redemption

Pages: 299

Publisher: Lulu Publishing Services (October 18, 2013)

Format: pdf, epub

Language: English

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Redemption

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Edited by Scott Meltzer

First Edition

ISBN: 978-1-4834-0183-6 (sc)

ISBN: 978-1-4834-0185-0 (hc)

ISBN: 978-1-4834-0184-3 (e)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013914563

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Lulu Publishing Services rev. date: 9/30/2013

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I dedicate this book to my beautiful muse, which, without your siren song beckoning, would not have been possible.

[Foreword](#)

Watching the news on TV, browsing the Internet, or scanning the tabloid headlines in the supermarket checkout aisle provide ample fodder for works of fiction.

The use of real situations, people, or places to add credibility or relevance to a plot is frequently desired, occasionally unavoidable. There are several such elements mentioned in the following pages, however, the events contained within are purely fictional.

Remember, reality is often stranger than fiction.

Distant Shore

Alone I gaze from a distant shore.

But will I stand alone no more?

Another shore, waits ghostly silent for me;
white capped waters, and bristling trees.

Wind swept surf, beckons my soul;
for unfilled love, my heart does toll.

Will I find myself, on far flung misty sand;
no angst of heart, with intact pride of man?

Will the silvery mist, yet unfold;
reveal new hopes, not yet told?

Recurring dreams, no nightmares have I,
of not reaching that shore; heavily, I sigh.

These horrific nightmares that I share;
of rock tossed visions, my heart does tear.

I feel the aberrations, coming true,
my spirit becoming darkly blue.

With ravaged mind, and body aches;
the journey there, so long can take.

Uncertainty, doubt, my mind does race;
that never again will I caress her face.

And wicked time, it doesn't creep;
engulfing souls, in forever sleep.

But 'til then my mind's eye will soar;
to be upon, that distant shore.

Prologue

"Halloran and Associates."

"Michael Halloran, please."

"May I tell him who's calling?"

"Samuel Tagaki from UCLA. It's urgent."

"One moment please."

"Hi, Boss. Sorry to bother you, but a Samuel Tagaki from UCLA is on the line. Says it's urgent."

Michael was reviewing the scale model of the museum's new annex—getting it ready for the opening ceremony that evening and didn't want to be interrupted. This had better be urgent. He didn't have time for any distractions.

"Thank you, I'll take it."

Michael knew about Sammy, and was curious to know why Keith's friend was calling. He pressed the line button.

“Michael Halloran here. What can I do for you Mr. Tagaki? Keith told me quite a lot about you.”

Sammy responded formally, in kind.

“Mr. Halloran. Keith shared a lot about you as well. He told me all about his plan with you, Rita, and the ring. Which is why I’m calling. I promised Keith I would make sure the ring was given to Rita. Keith told me you already had it in your possession. Is that true?”

“Actually, it’s at my jewelers being modified. I thought the ring by itself was too...conspicuous. Someone somewhere might recognize it, and then our whole charade would be exposed. So, I decided to have it disassembled, by a professional of course, and the components designed as parts of an ensemble, then give it to her a piece at a time. I’m not poor, but I could never afford to purchase the whole ensemble at once. Rita would pick up some weird vibe. I know she would. Keith agreed.”

“That’s a good plan...but I’ve got bad news.”

“What bad news?”

“The reason I’m calling is I received a call from the Spanish government. It seems that they’re going to exhibit the contents of the treasure chest we found on that sunken Spanish galleon. They told me that during their inventory of the chest’s contents, the Queen’s ring, the piece of jewelry currently in your possession, turned up missing. They concluded that the ring must have been stolen. They were all in a tither but I explained to them that the ring was the one item we, S and K Enterprises, decided to maintain possession of. We explicitly stated this in our press release all those years ago. They didn’t like that response. They’re actually pretty pissed off despite the fact that we had graciously returned the bulk of the treasure to Spain as a gesture of goodwill. Even though legally they don’t have a say in the matter, they’ve already reported it as stolen to their insurance company, and now they need verify its existence. Some sort of bureaucratic snafu”

“That is bad news. Any idea how soon they need to see it?”

“They’ll be here in California next week.”

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[The Beginning of the End](#)

His perception of reality was still somewhat blurred. The visions rendered his perception of reality into a disjointed blur. He blamed this on the combination of chemotherapy treatments and painkillers. The effects of all those chemicals had caused his life to become ethereal—out-of-body—a twisted separation of physical certainty and the irrational juxtapositions in his head. Throughout the day, he had the sensation he was on the outside looking in, as if he was watching a movie, with him and everyone around him as the characters.

“Shakespeare got it right,” he mused. “‘All the world’s a stage’.”

At night, dreams straight from a Bosch painting clouded his visions, fitfully creating a state of horrific ether—somewhere in the micro-fine gap connecting lucidity and fantasy.

The scars on his face were wretched testament to his surgeon’s knife. While quite adept with state-of-the-art technologies, his surgeon simply could not repair his countenance without it

looking ghastly—cartoonish. To rid him of the scourge devouring his body, his cheeks were deformed into a horrible grimace. His new look: Black Dahlia. His surgeon was naturally reluctant to perform these procedures on him—the results were disturbing, humiliating, and permanent. He concluded that additional surgeries would be feckless gesture.

After formal greetings and a motion for him to sit in a huge, overstuffed, maroon, leather, wingback chair, Ezekiel, 'Zeke', Tarkanian, Keith's psychiatrist, spoke gently, calmly, and with measure. "I've read your file Dr. Vintner, and if you don't mind me cutting to the chase...bad choice of words....getting to the point...damn. What I mean to say is that I want to find out what's going on inside that head of yours. Your physicians are taking care of the remedial aspects of your condition. My job is to help your psyche. If I'm going to help you...and I do want to help...you need to help me."

Zeke had read the file on his newest patient, Dr. Keith Anthony Vintner, twice: entrepreneur, treasure hunter, engineering visionary, intellectual eco-geek with a meteoric career. Dr. Vintner had led an incredibly full life that was now unexpectedly being cut short.

Zeke was very concerned about Keith's mental health. Aware of his patient's initial reluctance to seek psychiatric assistance as he struggled—physically and emotionally—to survive.

"Start from anywhere," Zeke suggested. "Recent events, your childhood, anytime...but Keith, we need to start peeling back the layers."

Zeke paused and then continued. "You're a smart guy. You know why I'm asking you what makes you tick."

Keith indeed knew the score—why he was there. He had experienced a severe psychological breakdown after enduring the vigorous chemotherapy treatments—heavy doses of the latest clinically trialed drugs. He had had a severe reaction with one of the known possible side effects—his doctor's called it an 'oops' reaction. 'Cracking up' is what Keith called it—a feeble attempt at humor to make the situation less traumatic than it was. According to his doctors, the cocktail of miracle drugs that he violently reacted to was his last hope for survival.

As part of Keith's recovery process, his doctors insisted he regularly see a psychiatrist to monitor his mental state, while he tried to cope with the side effects of his chemically induced mental malaise. And the fact that he would soon be dead.

Keith finally agreed to his physicians' demands. Even though he was strong, he realized he couldn't get through this ordeal without professional assistance.

So there he sat. His aching legs gingerly draped over one of the large wings of the leather chair, resting his weary frame, dreading this act of disclosure, even to someone who was ethically bound to silence and came as highly regarded as Dr. Tarkanian.

A background check on Dr. Tarkanian wasn't necessary, since one of Keith's good friends, as well as one of his physicians, made a recommendation.

Keith noticed the decor of Zeke's elegant office. A hodgepodge of international figurines, masks, books, and paraphernalia—representing all seven continents—lined the mahogany shelves. They were clearly not some knock-offs purchased from the local import boutique. Keith had seen enough of the real artifacts during his own travels to know the difference.

"Nice office. Although the wall festooned with diplomas is a bit much," Keith thought. Keith guessed it must be comforting for some of the doctor's patients to see that he was well schooled and well traveled. And this was Malibu, so he concluded that it made perfect sense. *

Dr. Keith Vintner has more money than he could ever spend, and a lavish lifestyle anyone would be a little jealous of.

Rita Haley, enduring some of life's speed bumps, was finally on the path to happiness. Or so she thought.

Michael Halloran was engrossed in his work, not taking to the dating scene since his wife's death, until he gets talked into signing up with a match-making service.

Follow this trio as their lives get thrown into a tangled web of deception, and redemption.

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