



The Tether None Good

By Nick Davis

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To Jean, my kids and my Parents.
Just have a little faith.
And you will see a miracle everyday.

Trust me

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Do Angels exist Daddy?
Yes, I think Angels exist...
What do they do Daddy?
They watch for us.
Who are they watching for Daddy?
They say they watch for evil.

Chapter One

A Clever Answer

Realize There Is None Good - Romans 3:10

as it is neither, there is none righteous, no, not one

Tick tock, tick, tock...

The clock ticked ponderously through the seconds on the classroom wall of St Bernadette's Prep & Boarding School for Girls. The autumn light played against the classroom windows, shining lazily in as Ms.Divens droned through the last of the religious studies text on the black board. The class of girls all sat bored waiting for the lesson and with it the school day to come to an end.

The chalk scrapped across the board as Ms.Divens finished writing the quote onto the board and punctuated it with heavy dot at the end, failing utterly to raise any life from her class.

"Can anyone tell me what this means?" said Ms.Divens, as she shook the chalk dust off her hands to avoid getting any on her dark pants.

The Teacher turned to address the class, "Anyone?"

Ms.Divens tutted under her breath, it was hard to teach religious studies to any student, but to a class of seniors Ms.Divens felt she might as well be talking to a wall.

"Anyone?" said Ms.Divens hopefully.

The Teacher scanned the class for an answer, the sullen mass of students suddenly aware that they were expected to participate in the lesson tried not to meet her gaze. Their only real interest was escaping into the warm autumn day playing just beyond their reach against the windows.

Ms.Divens tried not to look too perplexed as she looked around the room for someone to answer her question.

"How about you Sarah?" said Ms.Divens.

At the back of the class next to the windows, sat Sarah, both hands on her chin she stared aimlessly out into the school grounds totally oblivious to Ms.Divens question, "Well, Sarah?"

At the second mention of her name, Sarah looked up sweeping her dark hair away from her blue eyes. She met the Teachers steely green eyed gaze, and searched for clues for the question she was being asked.

Shaking her head Sarah said, “I’m sorry Ms.Divens, how can I help you?”

The class let a small humorous snort out from Sarah’s irreverent response. Ms.Divens just sighed, leaned against the desk, brushed an errant strand of red hair back behind her ear and took off her glasses. Straightening up, the Teacher pointed back towards the board and at the quote written upon it.

“Realize there is none good, what do you think it means Sarah?” said Ms.Divens.

Sarah looked at the scribbled quote on the board and then blankly back at the teacher. To Sarah just like the rest of this class it didn’t actually mean anything.

“Why me?” thought Sarah.

Sarah knew though she wasn’t going to avoid Ms.Divens attention now it was on her.

“That none are good?” Sarah said smirking; she was rewarded with another amused low toned laugh from the rest of the class, happy that the attention wasn’t on any of them.

“Well,” thought Sarah, “At least I have the class on my side.”

Ms.Divens just looked at her for a moment and sighed again, reached for the Bible on her desk and opened it to the correct passage.

“Thank you for that insight Sarah,” said Ms.Divens.

“The quote is from Romans 3:10 it appears in two forms depending on the version of the bible you have. None good is sometimes swapped out with None Righteous.”

“Any ideas now, Sarah?” asked Ms.Divens.

Sarah continued to look back at the Teacher, and then a thought struck her, if anything it might get the Teacher off her back.

“We are born capable of being good or bad, it’s our choice right?” said Sarah.

Ms.Divens smiled, “Very good Sarah. The quote is very

powerful in its meaning and interpretation of it, but I think you've grasped some understanding of it."

"Why thank you Ms.Divens," said Sarah pertly.

Turning her attention back to the class Ms.Divens said, "Class, I want you all to consider the quote and write a two thousand word essay on what you feel the meaning of it is."

"And," Ms.Divens said quickly, "I am aware of what Wikipedia has to say on the subject so no copying ad nauseam, okay?"

The class groaned just as the bell rang interrupting any further possibility for Ms.Divens to assign them more homework. They got up to leave, after all the entire outside world was calling and that was much more influential than a dusty old quote from the Bible.

"Sarah, can I have a word," called out Ms.Divens.

Rolling her eyes, Sarah walked towards the Teacher's desk as the rest of the class filed out. She caught the cheeky grin of her best friend Charlene just as her blonde head disappeared out of the door.

"Yes, Ms.Divens," said Sarah.

"I was very impressed with your answer Sarah it looks like you were paying attention after all," said Ms.Divens.

"Thank you Ms.Divens, but I have to go or I will be late for library detail again," said Sarah.

The Teacher smiled warmly at her, "Oh Sarah, if only you used half the smarts in class that you use when dodging out of school you would be on the honor roll by now..."

"Yes, Ms.Divens," replied Sarah blankly.

"Now get out of here. If Mrs Berks' gives you a hard time about being late, tell her to see me."

"Thank you Ms.Divens," said Sarah as she dived for the door and the corridor beyond.

Sarah walked down the heavily varnished dark wood hallway; now stuffed with girls and headed towards her locker. She had to admit to herself, although Ms.Divens constantly picked on her in class, she did like the Teacher. She was young, well younger than most of the Teachers at St

Bernadette's, and seemed to understand her. No one could figure out why Ms. Divens would choose such an old fashioned school to teach in. Sarah, after all, was boarded here and had no choice. This was her last chance to make good. According to her father, if she screwed up here he was washing his hands of her and disinherit her. Sarah personally thought her father went out of his way to find the stuffiest and oldest school on the East coast to hide her away. It was a far cry from the trendier prep schools she attended in Manhattan. Although they all collectively refused to take her after a series of what her father liked to call 'incidents' that occurred after her mother's death in a car accident. These 'incidents' ranged from straightforward truancy, to getting involved in stealing cars and school property. The expensive psychologist hired by her father's lawyer to defend her actions in court, linked the behavior to the trauma of her mother death and so she got away with just probation.

Sarah figured it out without the help of the expensive psychologist what her behavior was genuinely about. After her mother's death, Sarah's father had thrown himself into his work and had grown even more distant than he was previously. Just when Sarah needed him the most, he was at his most closed off. The 'incidents' were her way of getting him to notice her. Instead, his answer to the problem was to simply remove Sarah from her New York temptations and bury her in first boarding school that would take her. She was convinced that St Bernadette's only took her because of her father's money and not based on her academic record. Now she found herself in a school so old that it was said that Baltimore was actually built around it. Even though this was her 'last chance', as her father had plainly said to her through his Lawyer. It still didn't stop her from sneaking out of the dorms after curfew. After all no matter what they say, they never come around and check the dorms after lights out. She knew this because she watched for the Dorm Matrons to make their rounds and they never left their office after 9pm lights out. Sarah did however do her best to stay out of any real

trouble. The school's location limited her social options to hanging around the old Senator cinema, the book store and coffee shop across the road. Sometimes when time allowed she would catch the bus and go to the Towson Town Mall. Not quite big time excitement but she was trying to stay under the radar, just in case her father made good on the threat of disinheriting her.

It was on her most recent adventure with Charlene that she got caught. She was halfway up the old stone wall surrounding the school sneaking back onto the grounds around midnight when one of the security guards caught her. This would normal not have been a problem since, most of the guards don't care as long as you have your school id card on you. This time though she was caught by the Night Porter Mr. Strickland. He was doing a circuit of the grounds at the time. As the name suggests he played exactly to the school rules and seemed to be delighted in catching the schools infamous 'bad girl' that he failed to notice Charlene hiding in the bushes behind him. The next day Sarah summoned to the Principals office and found herself staring at ten hours of school related punishment detail. Though could have been worse, the Principal could have contacted her fathers lawyer and Sarah had a clear idea where that would have led too.

Sarah finally came to her slate gray locker to find a short blond girl with even shorter bunches standing by it. The girl was called Charlene smiled as Sarah approached.

“Hi Charlie,” Sarah said smiling.

“Okay, what happened? Did you catch a double assignment?” said Charlie as she twirled her blonde bunches.

Sarah looked at her and laughed, “No... Ms.Divens just wanted to talk to me about my answer.”

“Ohh... Bad,” said Charlie screwing up her pert nose.

“Ohh... Good,” said Sarah smiling, “She liked it.”

“You got lucky again Sarah,” replied Charlie, “Too bad that religious studies doesn't count towards any credits for graduation.”

“Yeah, I know, but why do we still have to pass the

course to graduate?” said Sarah.

“Oh... Like the test is not totally easy my sister passed it last year and she didn't even study.”

Said Charlie, “I mean, it’s not like Ms.Divens honestly expect us to learn anything.”

“Yeah,” replied Sarah, “It feels like she just pushes it at us.”

“Been the same since eighth grade Sarah, but you weren't here then,” said Charlie twirling around.

“Okay, I gotta get home and out of these clothes they are so stiff!” said Charlie indicating her school uniform.

“Oh, are we going somewhere Charlie?” asked Sarah.

“You betcha, into civvies, and out to the Senator... Matt will be there...” teased Charlie sticking her tongue out and smiling.

Sarah shared Charlie's grin as she pictured the statuesque Matt in her head.

“Yeah, I'll be there right after I finish off my Library detail, if there is enough free time left before curfew,” said Sarah.

Charlie smiled and teased, “Wow, you have so much Library detail assigned to you. You will be there totally after graduation.”

“Thanks Charlie just remember you owe me for not taking you with me this time,” Sarah replied, putting her books in locker.

Charlie smiled, and danced off, “I like totally owe you.”

“Yes and I totally own you, until you pay it back,” called out Sarah after her.

She put her school folder away, pulled her backpack onto her shoulder, and headed off towards the direction of the Library.

The Library at St Bernadette's was a sprawling single storey structure built separate from the main school building. It reminded Sarah of a block house that someone haphazardly stuck what was considered Gothic decorations on to and hoped for a classical effect. It wasn't the dirty gray of St Bernadette's main building, but instead had a lighter almost white tint to the

stone work. Inside it was the same dark wood finish as the rest of the school, except this wood seemed to consume the light despite there being a large glass ceiling in the center of the main Library lobby.

Sarah made her way to the Librarians' office at the far end of the building. The large glass panes slightly stained yellow with age that surrounded the office allowed for maximum visibility. Mrs Berks the Head Librarian still made you knock and wait.

"Ah, Miss Taylor, I am so glad you could make it," said Mrs Berks looking over the top of her horn rimmed glasses.

"I'm sorry Mrs Berks, my last class dragged on longer than I thought," said Sarah.

"It is more likely you dragged it out hoping it would cut into your assigned library detail Miss Taylor," said Mrs Berks.

"You can ask Ms.Divens. She kept me behind to talk to me," said Sarah.

"More trouble Sarah?" said Mrs Berks shaking her head.

"No Mrs Berks, you can call her if you want," said Sarah.

"That I will young lady and you will still do you full hour of detail here tonight. You can continue with the cataloging of the year books in the archive room," said Mrs Berks.

"But... Mrs Berks, that place stinks, and everything is covered in dust and mold," said Sarah pouting.

"I don't want to hear any arguments Sarah, or you will find another hour tacked on the last two you have remaining," said Mrs Berks testily.

"Yes Mrs Berks," said Sarah resigned to another hour of dust and mold. "Could I please have the key?"

"Here you go Sarah," said Mrs Berks handing her a large iron key, "Your hour starts now, and don't forget to report to me when you are done."

"Thank you Mrs Berks," Sarah smiled cutely taking the key from the Librarian.

"Of all the duties I could have gotten here I got the smelliest," thought Sarah as she crossed the entire length of the Library, towards the wall on the far left side of the building

from the Librarians office. The door to the archive room was a small solid piece of oak set into the wall. It took both hands to turn the key in the rusty lock, and Sarah still strained to open the very reluctant door. Reaching in she flicked the light switch and the series of individual bulb lights flickered on to light the passageway, and the crowded room just beyond. She noted that the only footsteps in the inch thick dust on the floor where her own.

“I see this place hasn't lost its pleasant smell,” she said to the musty bookish air as it hit her nostrils. Slowly Sarah stepped across the threshold and into the archive room itself. The desk she was using to catalog the year books were still undisturbed with one of the large older school year books laid out across it. She sighed as she sat down on the wooden chair and looked around at the rooms’ dank shelves. When she volunteered for the library detail as her punishment, it seemed the cushiest one to get. Had she known what a hard nut Mrs Berks was and how time seemed to drag in this building Sarah would have chosen anything including garbage duty.

“Thank god, I've only got two more hours of this dump,” Sarah said.

She put her book bag down by the table, pulled out her iPod pulled up a play list and set about making the hour go as fast as she could.

Chapter Two

Easy Now

“She's here,” muttered a lanky figure as it scuttled down a dark passageway, “She's finally here.”

The figure capered around a corner and into a small room lit by intermittent light streaming through the floor boards above.

“Soon be time Master, the Pretty one is here,” said the man to the darkness around him.

A crooked grin played across his grimy face, and he licked his cracked lips. A series of poorly stacked boxes stood in front of him. Pausing to take in the sounds of the room above him, he then clambered to the top of them, pressing his bloodshot eye against the knot hole in the floor boards. His eye took in the view just on the edge of his vision he could make out the thigh high socks of a girl sitting at a desk.

“Oh yes, she is here,” said the man almost sliding off the boxes in excitement, “Have to be clever and quick, Master wants and needs her fear in one piece.”

He sat on the floor and pulled out a small rusty knife and added a fresh cut to the lines already scored down his arm. He took a moment to savor the pain and then licked the blade clean.

“No, must not use the knife, not yet, must use the needle as the Master instructed,” said the dark figure.

He scrambled back to the ground and gathered himself together, brushing his long damp hair out of his face and readjusted his dank trench coat. He took the moment to remember what his Master had said about trapping the girl, and calmed his breathing.

“First I've got to shut the Library door, and then get into the room,” He said to the dark in the room, with one last look up at the ceiling, he turned and scuttled off.

Sarah worked her way down the record book, bopping her head in time with the music and pulling the year books in order from the shelves around her. When she first started this punishment, she found the archives fascinating seeing pictures



About the Author

Nick Davis is an Englishman currently living on the East Coast of the USA not too far removed from Charm City (aka Baltimore). He is a former White Dwarf feature writer, now freelance content creator and fully employed Web Designer.

He is married to a very patient Irish American Lady and has four children. When Nick is not working, running errands, playing with his kids or burrowing through an ever growing list of ongoing house 'projects'. He can be found plodding away on a keyboard exploring the worlds of his imagination that takes our reality and twists it around just a couple of degrees. To learn more about the author please visit his website at <http://www.alt-world.com>