

THIS LITTLE HELL

A Novel by Mitchell T. Palmer

Chapter 9 - August 27 - Current year

JOURNAL ENTRY

I had to replace a tape quickly as the boy seemed bent on beginning his new tale without hesitation. The general gist of what was missed in the recording follows:

"Mr. Noyes-Goode, are you listening to me or just fumbling with that fucking tape recorder?" The boy's eyes shone dully as he stared at me with hatred.

"Just trying to get another tape going, give me just a few more seconds please."

"Wayne? Wayne?" I heard the voice but his lips weren't moving. Who was repeating me name over and over again? No, it was he or perhaps I hadn't slept enough the night before.

His lips parted widely as he shouted, "Mr. Noyes-Goode! I have not got the patience for this, Wayne!"

"Yes, yes the tape is recording now, sorry. Could you please back up just a bit?" He sighed with disdain and began speaking again without any further indication of emotion.

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Two years earlier

The small figure approached the house slowly, watching for any sign of life. The hour was late but after all, this was not an ordinary home or family. Brad had been inside for fifteen to twenty minutes now and Monica's parent's had no idea he was there. This was their usual process. Wait until Mr. and Mrs. Bishop had retired for the night or at least until they thought Monica had done so, then she'd tiptoe to the kitchen door, open it a crack and look out into the darkness for his figure.

Tonight it had appeared as it had done so many times before. If her parents knew they would be appalled. Though Monica was the product of pre-marital relations herself, they weren't the same people now as they had been when they were passionately in love all those years ago. Or was it lust? Somewhere in her subconscious she believed she knew the answer but for god's sake these are her parents, she didn't wish to think about them writhing together, naked on some sofa or carpeted basement floor to the dim light of the television.

Still the small figure approached, slowly. It was the silhouette of a young child, a boy. This shadow stopped every few feet of his progress toward the small bedroom window to see that no one was observing his approach. Suddenly the telltale blue light of appeared in the basement window he knew it was safe to make his way finally to the windowsill and peer in carefully. What he saw he had seen many times before, neither of them was completely naked but in his usual way Brad Skolnik had nearly completely undressed his girlfriend. Makes sense, men (or in this case) boys are vastly more visually stimulated than women (or in Monica's case) girls are. How could she let him stroke her body, touch her breasts and put his mouth on her, everywhere?

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"So I lay near the window. It was opened you know. Opened full owing to the heat of the summer weather, that and due to Mr. Bishop being too cheap to run the refrigerated air conditioner. I loathe him for that, because I had to hear every sound that emanated through that basement window. Every moan of pleasure, every groan and all the hard, heavy breathing the two of them were doing."

Wayne scribbled notes as quickly as he could though his recorder was picking up the whole tale. His notes weren't necessarily a complete, shorthand copy of the story the boy was relating to him, truth be told most of what he scribbled were notes about the observations he made regarding the boy's expressions, body language. How his voice became quieter or louder as the emotional attachment he felt to the tale manifested itself. But that wasn't all; Wayne was beginning to feel warm. He began sketching the visual picture of what the boy described. A young woman lying on her back and a young man's head, faced buried somewhere between her neck and left breast. Wayne began to draw

the image of the girl's exposed right breast thinking of a time in his recent past when such an occasion had offered itself to him...

"She was a child then Wayne!" The boy chided as though he knew what appeared on the sheets of paper in front of the therapist. "A child. How could you?"

"What do you mean?" Wayne replied straining to control his breathing.

"Obviously you are becoming intoxicated by my tale. Perhaps I should not continue." The boy's top lip curled up only at one corner, having the effect of appearing as part sinister smirk and part snarl. "She was mine Wayne. I will thank you not to imagine her in the way you are now."

"I wasn't..." Wayne stuttered aloud. "I mean, I wouldn't. She, she's, she was only a child."

"May we continue Noyes-Goode?" The boy asked, sneering now for certain.

"Of course, of course." Wayne flipped closed the notepad he'd been using and replaced his ballpoint pen in his shirt pocket.

"As I was saying, I could not stand the thought of his hands, among others of his body parts touching her. Thrusting, probing against and finally into her body. I was there you know?" He stopped narrating, his voice trailing off into nothing.

"Okay, you were there. I understand." Wayne replied.

"No! No you do not understand because I have not said it yet Wayne. You see, you cannot understand until I have made you understand what I meant when I told you I was there. How could you understand unless I have said the words? And yet I cannot say them aloud."

For the first time since Wayne Noyes-Goode and this boy had met he believed he saw a teary-eyed child sitting there before him. Perhaps due to the restraints, perhaps this and nothing more betrayed the boy's emotions for he could not reach to his own face to swipe at it with the back of his hand. In this moment Wayne realized the pain that had been simmering under the

surface. A single tear from each, a tiny droplet of liquid blinked away from the now glistening pools of life that had stared at him with anger, hostility, disdain and even malice now betrayed that this was a human child.

"You're hurting I can tell. Listen that's why we're here. Just take your time and tell me what has brought this to the surface."

Now a sniffle and a vain effort to wipe away the mucous draining from that little nose. Tilting his head toward his shoulder the boy sniffled once more and another tear came from his left eye and dropped to the cold, tiled floor.

"It's okay you know? To be human I mean." Wayne felt a lump in his own throat. "Just take your time and know that I'm here to listen."

"Shut up!" The boy now leaned forward, struggling against his restraints, wishing for the opportunity to put his hands on the man sitting opposite him now, and that quickly, all the rage mixed up in that child's body returned, banishing the emotion that had temporarily brought down what Wayne still believed was a façade of hatred to mask the true feelings somewhere inside. "Never speak to me again like some wretched infant who needs to cry to share a piece of his being human. So help me I shall kill you one day Wayne Noyes-Goode." He still strained against his bonds as though he believed if he kept constant, steady pressure against the leather straps and chains he could eventually break them and lay hands on his ultimate prize.

"You were there. What did you mean by that?" Wayne opened his notebook again but only momentarily. Once his eyes beheld the sketches he'd been making shame returned to him and he slapped the book closed sharply. "I assumed you meant by that that you were there to see the Skolnik boy violate her in a way you didn't approve of. By your reaction now I believe there's something more to it than that. You'd seen this before with them yes, correct? Why did this occasion mean anything more? Anything different?"

The boy only sat forward on his hospital bed, restraints taugth, muscles flexed and working in vain. The same sneer still in place on the boy's face. Wayne took the opportunity to fish a cigarette out of his pack, place it between his lips and begin

hunting for a lighter in his pants pocket and feeling shame when he touched the dampness he found there. Jerking his hand back out of his pocket he removed the cigarette from his mouth with the other and clumsily broke it in half in the process. As he moved to rise to his feet and walk to the trash can to throw it away his eyes locked with those of the boy, bright blue and now without a single hint of tears, Wayne's eyes were transfixed and he couldn't pull his gaze away now. As he looked into the rage directed at him he suddenly understood and at the moment of understanding the boy's sneer disappeared, subsiding slowly to the usual, emotionless straight line so often present on this boy's face. Two lips, neither parted nor pressed tightly together, relaxed and yet not loose.

Wayne began slowly, "My god, you believe this was the night that Monica's own child was conceived? Literally? But how could you know that was the exact moment? You've already told me you watched them nearly every night for weeks on end."

"I know and that is the only thing with which you need to concern yourself." The boy reclined in his bed again. Somewhat defeated for the knowledge transferred to a man he deemed a lesser intelligence. "You need not write this down, Wayne. I know and have no way of explaining to you why I know it for a certainty. No way to explain it of course, except as I have explained many things to you in the past. They told me so. That is all I shall say about the subject. Do you wish to hear the rest of this story?"

Only now was Wayne able to break eye contact with the child. "Yes, of course." Was all he could say.

"At the moment of conception, Wayne, at that very moment I knew and gasped aloud. They heard me or at least that Skolnik prick heard me and quick as a bunny he got off her, still erect and pants around his angle as he stumbled and finally fell to the floor. At this comical scene I laughed out loud. My second mistake for it enraged him. He collected his trousers and pulled them up, buttoning the top button only, not bothering with the zipper or his belt and ran toward the window where I had, in vain, laid myself flat upon the ground to avoid being seen. As he arrived at the window I heard him uttering vulgarities and saying my name in combination with several epithets questioning the marital status of my mother at the time of my birth and too late I decided I must flee or be beaten

severely. Too late I tell you because in one movement he put his hand through the screen and latched upon the collar of my shirt."

Wayne sat transfixed to his chair as though reliving the circumstances himself.

"I was pulled through the opening and thrown onto the floor all in the same motion. To tell you this was a painful experience would be to understate it indeed, Wayne. The only element of this experience that was not excruciating was the fact that Monica, still naked save it be for her ankle-length socks and a pair of panties still looped around her right leg, had come to my defense landing blow after blow upon his head as she pleaded with him to show me mercy. At this moment I knew she loved me, Wayne. Me!" The boy's volume of voice had increased but not the emotion attached to his story. He was simply telling something to another individual as though it was a movie he'd once seen.

With no difficulty he continued. "Swiftly Skolnik turned his rage upon her, swatting her away with the back of a closed fist, no trouble considering how petite she was. I cannot abide someone who utilizes his physical superiority over a smaller person just because he can."

Now, as if flipping a switch he continued through tightly clenched teeth.

"Having dispatched her with ease he returned to me, beating me savagely as I tried to escape by any way possible. What finally rescued me? How did I get away from him? Not through any means for which I may have hoped, driving an ice pick or some similar item through his spine at the base of his skull for instance, no, nothing so just and forthright. You see Monica's father and mother came downstairs to discover the cause of the commotion and Mr. Bishop restrained Brad while uttering a bevy of questions concerning the odd scene he beheld. Well, needless to say I wasted not time. Given this opportunity I scurried out the window and ran home to nurse my wounds."

He finished his story by telling the therapist how Monica Bishop shared very little of what happened afterward though they did speak of it briefly; she with her blackened eye and the child

asking questions through a desperately swollen face and aches all over his torso.

"But I would endure it all again Noyes-Goode. For it told me all I needed to know. Monica Bishop loved me."

Chapter 10 - Nine Months Earlier

"What a beautiful baby. How old is she?"

Mrs. Evans was pretending to be interested in the fashion of the proper and socially functional human being. She did not really care, nor did she want to have this conversation with the young girl who also happened to be a mother. The girl was obviously too young to be a mother already and that indicated premarital sexual promiscuity. She wondered why she should have to mask her contempt for such improper behavior. What could this young girl's parents be like to allow it?

Mrs. Evans was new in the neighborhood and this welcoming party was in her honor.

Monica Skolnik, the young mother of the child replied emphatically, "HE is twenty-one months."

"You've got to be kidding me. This big boy isn't even two years old?" Again feigning interest Mrs. Evans picked up the round toddler and strained under the weight of the enormous child. He was much heavier than she'd expected. Politely hiding the stress of holding the child she turned to Monica's mother and continued, "What are you feeding the child?"

"Well," replied Mrs. Bishop, "you know how some children are, no matter how much you feed them they never seem to fill up. We have upped his food by double since the time he turned eighteen months and I think that soon I'll start pulling my hand back to find that fingers are missing if we don't increase it again soon."

Monica could sense the discomfort and wanted to retrieve her child and leave. The contempt that Mrs. Evans had exuded was

all too familiar and the way that she turned to Monica's mother to ask about HER child's diet infuriated her.

Again, she had heard a familiar sentiment as someone mistook her boy for a girl. He was a particularly beautiful baby. He seemed to grow more beautiful every day. Mind you, this was not merely beauty in the sense that had no marks on him, was seemingly perfect in proportion, nor was it due to his striking features. This child had an acutely feminine quality that neither she nor anyone else could deny. She could not help but resent it when she heard it so often.

She wanted her boy to be masculine and her husband was particularly sensitive about it. Brad Skolnik, the father became rather violent about the subject every time. When someone commented on his baby's beauty in his presence he would fly into a rage. When she had to endure it alone it was enough but when he heard it, it meant that he would take out his frustrations on her that night.

She knew from experiencing this before that she and her beautiful boy would be here for hours yet. She would have to endure these old farts and their nasty, bitchy wives for the majority of the afternoon. They all thought themselves better than her and she knew it. Now, with Mrs. Evans she couldn't decide if it was the fact that she was a young teenage mother, maybe Mrs. Evans has money or perhaps no one is ever good enough for her simply because she's a snob. Either way, she was glad of one thing, that Mrs. Evans was not her mother. Her own was bad enough.

How many times had she vowed never to come to one of these afternoon parties again? How many times had her mother insisted? She came and brought little Nathan because she knew that her mother, Saundra Bishop loved to show off her new grandson. At least during these hours Monica wouldn't have to hear her lecture about the mistakes Monica had made in her young life. During these hours she could be assured sanctuary from that.

She was convinced that her mother had never made any mistakes of her own. At least she was convinced that her mother believed that anyway. It made her laugh to think of the extreme measures that her mother took to maintain that wholesome, god-fearing,

and religious-type appearance for her uptight friends. Nevertheless, she knew her mother was much different at home.

In some ways, she felt very sorry for her mother. Her mother would spend her life with her nose so far up these people's Asses and yet none of them would ever care about her or her family. Didn't she realize that? She'd follow Ms. Putnam around and fall over herself to agree with everything that Anne would say. To some Ms. Putnam might appear the sorriest excuse for a woman that ever lived. After all, she is forty-seven years old and still there is no man in sight for her.

What these older women refused to realize is that Anne Putnam lived with a female lover and had done for years. Ms. Putnam was a schoolteacher with a doctorate degree in psychology. She had written several self-help, make you feel better about yourself, life is grand go out and live it kind of books. She was therefore the community's claim to fame and only brush with greatness. Because of this everyone in the community wanted to be around her. The women, because Anne was strong. The men, because Anne was incredibly beautiful. The fact that Anne was famous was enough to keep the entire community jumping.

As for Monica, she had always loved Ms. Putnam. So had her father. Although her father's interest in Anne ended when he awoke to another wet dream that, he would inevitably blame on prostrate trouble and sleep apnea.

I have mentioned that even at forty-seven Anne was a beautiful woman. She kept her haircut very short; boyishly short was how Monica had always described it. Whenever she made this comment around her mother, it would lead to the inevitable argument about judging people by how they look. What about judging people by how many books they've written?

My point is that Anne Putnam embodied everything that Mrs. Bishop and her gaggle of women friends despised. They also feared these things yet, for some reason she was accepted. I don't believe that I have to explain why. Now, as if I need another reason, this illustrates another as to why I find it hard to believe that these religious types actually believe in their ways. They are so lost, so lonely and so sad.

Anne Putnam kept herself in top condition, or haven't I told you that she was attractive? She also reminded me of someone that

has grown older but never grew up. She had a much better body than Monica ever would. Ms. Putnam had thrilled Monica when she told her how much larger her breasts would get once she had the baby. She also mentioned that while Monica was still underage, the fact that she would soon be married meant that Anne did not' legally have to keep her hands off.

"If that husband of yours ever neglects you, you always have a place to stay with little old Anne. Now you remember that darlin'."

She explained that either Vivian would understand or she would throw that hag out any old day for a chance at Sandra Bishop's baby daughter.

Vivian Marsh was the woman who lived with Anne. I say that she lived with her because she doesn't anymore. But then, I'm getting ahead of my story. You'll soon understand why that happened. I don't believe that anyone knows what Anne saw in Vivian. Did she really love her or did Vivian simply fit the role of the subservient too well? I personally believe the latter.

Monica loved Ms. Putnam for the same reasons that I loved Monica. She always made her feel important by the things she would say to her. Ms. Putnam once told Monica that she could call her Anne from now on. She told her this in front of the entire class. She explained that Monica was now a mother and that meant she was an adult. Monica still never called her anything but Ms. Putnam in class, out of respect.

As I said before, Monica always treated me as though I was important too. She would always say hi to me when I would see her around the neighborhood. Once when a group of older boys were tormenting Isaac and me, she stuck up for us. She told them they ought to grow up and leave us alone. We all got beat black and blue that day. She was also abused in another way that the boys were not interested in with us.

Monica was a beautiful girl and never hid her naked body from me when I would spy on her at night from outside her bedroom window. She never seemed to get annoyed by my being there. I got bolder sometimes and she never seemed to get upset then either.