

The Prophecy and the Inheritance

By

Wesley Tallant

a short story by
Wesley Tallant

wtallant@1starnet.com

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MIDAFTERNOON - DARK CLOUDY SKY

A van drives along a tree lined winding country lane with its lights on. The sky is dark with clouds.

The van is driven by Derek Parnell (20 yrs). Beside him is Vanessa Baker (19 yrs), with William Darwin (20 yrs) and Andrea Oakes (19 yrs) in the back seat.

In the distance can be seen the silhouette of an old two story Victorian style house.

As the van pulls to a stop in front of the house, it can be seen that many of the windows are broken and the paint has mostly faded and pealed off.

DEREK

(looking up at the old house)
Straight out of a "B" movie.

VANESSA

I hope Uncle Walter knew what he was doing when he left it to me.

They exit the van, each carrying a flashlight. They slowly start to walk towards the front porch of the house.

A wolf howls in the distance. The four turn to listen to the far off howl.

WILLIAM DARWIN

Nice touch.

FADE OUT TO A MONTH EARLIER

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - MORNING

Vanessa and William are sitting in arm chairs opposite of a middle aged attorney, Frank Atwood (45 yrs), who sits behind a big oaken desk.

FRANK

Vanessa, what with you being the only heir to your Uncle Walter's estate, it all goes to you. But, there is a prerequisite to you getting the estate. Walter has put in his will that you must stay in the old house for the night of...

(he opens a folder and looks at it)

May the thirteenth.

(CONTINUED)

Vanessa looks at William and he looks back at her. Vanessa returns her attention to the attorney.

VANESSA

But why May the thirteenth?

FRANK

(looking through the folder)
Fifteen years ago, when I helped your Uncle draw up this will, I asked him the same question.

(he places the folder on his desk)

He simply looked at me and said that question will be answered on that night.

VANESSA

Isn't that a little strange for such a request to be placed in a will?

FRANK

I thought so, too. But, Walter was of sound mind when he dictated it to me. In fact, he was adamant that that addendum be put in there.

William stands and looks at a calender hanging on the wall. He points to May the thirteenth.

WILLIAM DARWIN

That's on a Friday.

FRANK

(looking at William)

I know. And I don't have to tell you how superstitious Walter was about those dates.

VANESSA

Everybody knows how he dreaded those days.

FRANK

Now, ten years ago, when he sold the lumber mill, he had a large portion of it converted to cash. The rest was in stocks and bonds. All I can tell you is that he hid it somewhere in that house.

(CONTINUED)

VANESSA

He didn't trust banks.

FRANK

He didn't have that much faith in lawyers, either. Now to prove that you spent the night there, you'll need to have witnesses. Someone to see you go in and someone to see you come back out the next morning. Preferably someone who will even spend the night there with you.

WILLIAM DARWIN

I'll do it.

VANESSA

You don't have to, William.

WILLIAM DARWIN

No, I insist. It sounds like it might be fun. We can get Derek and Andrea to join us.

VANESSA

Is that OK with you, Mr. Atwood?

FRANK

The more witnesses the better. Then it's settled. Stop by here on the Thirteenth and I'll see you on the fourteenth.

WILLIAM DARWIN

We hope.

FADE BACK TO PRESENT

EXT. OLD HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MID AFTERNOON

The four characters stand by the front door, looking at each other to see who will be the one to open the door.

WILLIAM DARWIN

This is crazy. It's just an old house.

William reaches down and grabs the door knob and twists. The door creaks open and the four step inside.

INT. OLD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MIDAFTERNOON

Using their flashlights, the four look around. Cobwebs and dust cover everything. Tattered sheets cover the furniture.

They see a picture hanging on the wall by the entryway. It's a picture of a dog. On the bottom of the picture is a plaque. It reads, "'Old Blue' Faithful to the end."

VANESSA

I remember that dog. He died when I was very little.

Vanessa wipes away some of the cobwebs from the picture.

They walk further into the living room. Suddenly a loud crash startles William and the girls. They turn around to see Derek on the floor. An old Umbrella stand and tattered umbrellas laying beside him.

DEREK

Sorry, I tripped.

The three exhale and begin to relax. They continue to explore the house.

VANESSA

Look. Uncle Walter's family bible is on the coffee table.

(she picks it up and wipes the dust off of it)

I remember Momma reading from it before...

She pauses as tears comes to her eyes.

VANESSA

I was only eight years old when they died.

ANDREA

Your Mom and Dad. I'm sorry.

Andrea hugs Vanessa.

Vanessa gently breaks the hug, wipes away the tears, and places the bible back on the table.

VANESSA

When Uncle Walter was asked about having the bible brought to him, he would just yell, "Leave it be."

Derek looks through a side door to the living room.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK
Here's the kitchen.

WILLIAM DARWIN
You've always got food on you mind.

DEREK
(shrugging his shoulders)
Why not? You can't live without it.

William follows Derek into the kitchen, leaving the girls in the living room.

INT. OLD HOUSE - KITCHEN - MIDAFTERNOON

Cabinet doors hang from broken hinges, china dishes are still stacked in them. A butcher block fills most of the middle of the room. Pots and pans hang over the old wood burning stove. An old ice box sits in the corner. Derek opens the door.

DEREK
(shining his flashlight in the
icebox)
Empty.

WILLIAM DARWIN
(looking at the old stove)
Well I wouldn't want to eat
anything that was left in there
anyway.

The two move on to the next room.

INT. OLD HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MIDAFTERNOON

The dining room is huge. much bigger than the living room. A large oak table dominates the center of the room.

Old pictures hang on the walls. Plaques on the bottom of each picture tell who is in it. William finds the picture that reads, "Edward, Kathrine, and Vanessa."

WILLIAM DARWIN
Here's a picture of Vanessa's
mother. They could be twins.

DEREK
(stepping up beside William)
Wow. Her mother is beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM DARWIN

Vanessa looks to be what, seven years old in that picture? Her parents died in a plane crash when she was young. A spinster Aunt raised her after that.

DEREK

And look at the age difference between them. He's what, twenty years older than her mother.

The two boys are startled by the screams of the two girls coming from the living room. They turn and rush back to where they left them.

INT. OLD HOUSE - INSIDE LIVING ROOM - MIDAFTERNOON

William and Derek run into the room from the kitchen to see Vanessa and Andrea holding each other and staring at a box on the floor. William tries to comfort the two girls while Derek picks up the box.

Derek looks in the box and a look of terror comes over his face. William takes the box and looks in it.

He sees the head of a woman. Her skin is shriveled up like leather. Her eye sockets are empty and her hair is jet black.

WILLIAM DARWIN

(reading a name plate inside the box)

"My Darling Loletha. I love you too much to let you go."

DEREK

Who's Loletha?

VANESSA

(sobbing and sniffing)

She was Uncle Walter's wife. She was supposed to have drowned in the lake behind the house forty years ago. Her body was never found.

DEREK

Wasn't she supposed to be into witchcraft and devil worship?

(CONTINUED)

VANESSA

(still sobbing)

Aunt Mae used to get into arguments with Uncle Walter about her. He never believed those stories about her. Aunt Mae said that he would go to church by himself and she would go into the woods and chant to the devil. She said it was fact because my father had followed Loletha into the woods on time and saw her doing it.

WILLIAM DARWIN

Well, we need to tell the police about this. But it's getting late and starting to rain. We'll report it in the morning.

(William closes the box and latches the clasp on it)

I'll put this in the kitchen. Out of sight, out of mind, I hope.

William leaves the living room and soon returns.

WILLIAM DARWIN

Well, I guess this is home for the night. We might as well get our gear out of the van.

ANDREA

Don't you two dare leave us in this house alone.

WILLIAM DARWIN

Derek, stay here. I'll get the gear.

INT. OLD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

A camping lantern provides light and sits on the fireplace mantle. Four sleeping bags have been arranged on the floor with an ice chest for food.

The four characters are sitting and talking about the old house.

VANESSA

(sitting and flipping pages in the bible)

The oldest entry on the descendant's page is from 1763.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VANESSA (cont'd)
Mildred Amanda Collins. She was
born in Charleston, South Carolina.

Vanessa continues to flip through pages of the bible.

VANESSA
Here's my name.
(flipping back a page)
But Loletha's name has been
partially erased.

WILLIAM DARWIN
(leaning over to look for
himself)
That's odd. What's left of her name
seems to be burnt into the paper.

ANDREA
You don't suppose that Uncle Walter
finally believed those stories
about her and tried to remove her
from the bible, do you?

VANESSA
It sure looks that way.

DEREK
This is getting creepy.

Vanessa turns a few more pages and finds a folded piece of
paper. She opens it up.

VANESSA
Hey listen to this. It's a poem
written by Uncle Walter about Blue.

When Old Blue howls,
Under the north wind chimes.
Four holy one,
Will find their times.

Evil will come,
To do them harm.
But back away,
From the purest one's charm.

The four holy ones,
Will stand their ground.
Not giving an inch,
To the vilest of sounds.

The evil will be chased,
From the world above.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VANESSA (cont'd)

Led by the one,
That once was loved.

Back to the depths,
From whence it came.
Never to rise,
And come again.

ANDREA

(crossing her arms and
shivering)
Ooh, that gives me the willies.

WILLIAM DARWIN

Four Holy ones, that leaves out
Derek. He hasn't been in a church
since he was a kid.

DEREK

(snickering)
Ha ha. Look who's talking.

The four chuckle. Vanessa carefully folds the paper up and replaces it in the bible.

DEREK

(reaching into the ice chest)
Let's eat, I'm starved.

WILLIAM DARWIN

Again with the food, Derek?

Laughter as Derek, William, and Andrea dig into the chest and retrieve sandwiches and drinks. Vanessa sit and stares at the kitchen door. Worry and concern showing on her face.

A dialog in the background of a close-up of Vanessa...

DEREK

Where do you suppose Uncle Walter
hid the money?

ANDREA

You hush. That's Vanessa's money.

The dialog fades away.

INT. OLD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The camp light is turned down low. Three of the four are asleep. the wind is blowing hard outside and wind chimes can be heard. William is laying on his back awake. His watch beeps eleven PM. He looks at it.

WILLIAM DARWIN
 (mumbling to himself as he
 gets out of his sleeping bag)
 I hate wind chimes.

William gets his flashlight and walks to the front door. He slowly opens it and steps out side.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

William looks for and locates the wind chimes on the front porch and takes them down. He goes to the side of the house and removes the wind chimes he find there.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

William sees the wind chimes in the back hanging from a tree limb. As he walks towards them, he pauses.

The wind blowing through the tree sounds like a dog howl.

He looks and sees a grave stone under the wind chimes. It reads, "Here lies Old Blue. Man's best friend, tried and true."

He looks up at the chimes and fear comes over his face as his eyes open up wide. He turns and runs back to the front of the house.

INT. OLD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

William runs in and grabs the bible from the coffee table and flips through the pages until he finds the poem.

He drops the bible and opens up the poem and reads aloud.

WILLIAM DARWIN
 When Old Blue Howls,
 Under the north wind chime...

VANESSA
 (wiping sleep from her eyes)
 William, what are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM DARWIN
(mumbling to himself)
North wind chimes...

DEREK
(stirring in his sleeping bag)
What's going on?

WILLIAM DARWIN
(still mumbling)
The house faces the South. Those
wind chimes are on the North
side...

VANESSA
(her voice showing
frustration)
What are you babbling about?

William turns to face the other three. They are all three
sitting up and looking at him.

WILLIAM DARWIN
The, the poem. When Old Blue howls
under the north wind chimes...
Listen...do you hear it?

The three listen.

DEREK
Hear what? The wind blowing?

WILLIAM DARWIN
No, no. Old Blue howling. His grave
is under the wind chimes that are
on the North side of the house.

DEREK
That's just the wind blowing
through the trees.
(laying back down)
Go back to sleep.

ANDREA
No, I hear it.

VANESSA
(great fear on her face)
Oh my god. Loletha.

William goes and starts looking through the books on the
book shelf.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREA

What are you looking for?

WILLIAM DARWIN

(frantically searching the books)

I don't know. But I'll know when I find it.

He removes a book with an upside down star on it. As he flips through the pages, a picture falls out. He picks it up. It is a picture of a lovely young woman. He turns it over. Loletha is written on the back.

The picture feels warm in his hand and he drops it. It bursts into flames. Vanessa and Andrea scream. Derek jumps up.

DEREK

What, what, what?

The picture is now a pile of ashes on the floor as William flips through the pages of the book.

WILLIAM DARWIN

There's a page torn out here.

VANESSA

(stepping up beside William)

It's a book of witch craft.

Strange noises begin to fill the house coming from all directions. The kitchen door opens and the box comes flying in and lands open on the floor. Loletha's head is missing.

Vanessa runs and grabs the bible from the coffee table and cradles it in her arms.

Vanessa flips through the pages of the bible and begins reading passages from it.

VANESSA

(repeats)

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil for thou art with me.

Derek's watch beeps midnight.

William flips through more pages of the book of witch craft. Vanessa reads aloud more passages from the bible.

(CONTINUED)

VANESSA

Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

WILLIAM DARWIN

Look, look. The page before the missing page is how to call up demons.

ANDREA

(looking over William's shoulder)

Then the page missing must tell of how to send demons back.

Andrea turns and screams as a specter of Loletha comes floating through the kitchen door. Loletha is chanting in an unknown language. Other voices join in her chant.

William sees Loletha hold up a piece of paper and realizes that it is the missing page from the book. Loletha grins as the page bursts into flames.

Loletha floats toward William with her hand out, curling her fingers toward her. William feels the book begin to pull away from him.

William resists and holds firm to the book. He begins to slide across the floor toward Loletha. Andrea grabs William around the waste and helps him.

Derek's eye are wide and he is frozen in fear, unable to move.

Vanessa finds a passage in the bible that had been underlined. She read it out loud, yelling.

VANESSA

Revelation nineteen, verses two and three. "For true and righteous are his judgments. For he has judged thee a great whore, which did corrupt the Earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And they said alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

Vanessa finishes reading the passage and closes the bible and throws it at Loletha. It hits her and the other voices grow silent.

(CONTINUED)

Loletha screams in pain as the flesh melts from her face. She bursts into flame and disappears. Her eerie glow fades from the kitchen doorway and her screams fade with it.

The four characters are standing facing the kitchen. Derek faints flat on his back. The other three jump and scream.

INT. OLD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Derek has recovered and the four sit around the camp lantern. A creak and a scratch can be heard for the rest of the night and they jump with each noise.

INT. OLD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Sometime in the night they had drifted off to sleep. William is the first to rouse.

WILLIAM DARWIN
(shaking Vanessa awake)
Vanessa, Vanessa. We did it. It's morning. We spent the night in the house.

VANESSA
(wiping her eyes)
We did! We did do it. Andrea, wake up.

Andrea and Derek stir awake.

William picks up the book of spells.

WILLIAM DARWIN
If Loletha found her way back for this once, she may be able to do it again.

ANDREA
What do you want to do with it?

DEREK
I say we burn it.

WILLIAM DARWIN
There's wood in the fire place.

VANESSA
No. if it had been that easy, Uncle Walter would have done it years ago.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREA

Then what do we do with it?

VANESSA

I don't know.

DEREK

We can try, can't we?

William begins flipping through the pages.

WILLIAM DARWIN

I don't see anything in here about
how to get rid of it.

Vanessa looks at the bible where it landed on the floor. She crawls over and retrieves it. She notices the spine has been torn and a piece of paper is sticking out.

Vanessa unfolds the paper and reads it.

VANESSA

Hey guys, listen to this.

My dear Vanessa,

At the time I am writing this, you are only six years old. But there's a certain charm about you that is destined to come out later. That's why I am taking such interest in your growing up.

Since you are reading this I can only assume that you have fulfilled your destiny.

I knew of Loletha's evil long ago and knew what she was going to try to do. I tried to stop her by killing her, but soon realized that I had only succeeded in delaying her evil plans. I knew that one day she would return and it would be up to you to stop her.

The book of spells must not be destroyed. It must be guarded at all times. It is up to you to guard it as I have done all these years. Keep it safe next to the Bible. It must never be opened again.

Loletha fears the wind chimes. They must remain hanging.

Since this is the morning after, that means that the house and all it's belongings are yours. So now I can tell you where the money is.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VANESSA (cont'd)

Go to the picture of Old Blue. On the back you will find a key. Take it out to the slab over Blue's grave. It slides to the West. In there you'll find a steel box. The box is big, so take your friends with you. Inside is your inheritance. Love
Uncle Walter

Vanessa goes to the picture and removes it from the wall. Behind it, she finds the key.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - BACKYARD - MORNING

All four of them are standing by the grave. William and Derek push the cement slab aside and reach down and remove the box. They place it on the ground beside the grave.

Vanessa uses the key on the lock holding the box and lifts the lid. She sees the box is full of bank notes, stock certificates, and money.

DEREK

Holy shhh...Have you ever seen so much money?

The others stand in silence. After a few minutes, Vanessa reaches down and closes the box and puts the lock back on it.

VANESSA

William, Derek, close it back up.

DEREK

But the money. Aren't you at least going to count it?

VANESSA

That will be Mister Atwood's job. Old Blue has kept it safe for this long. I don't think he'll mind watching it for another day or so.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - MORNING

Vanessa and William are sitting in front of Frank's desk.

FRANK

The total of the bonds and bank notes come to roughly two point three million dollars. The cash amount is four hundred and fifty three thousand dollars. It has been locked up for you in the bank vault for safe keeping, waiting for you to decide what to do with it next. In the mean time, here is a receipt from the bank for the total amount. If you'll just sign here and here, it'll all be yours.

VANESSA

(Signing the paper)

I want the old house fixed up. Mister Atwood, can you handle that for me?

FRANK

Yes, maam, I can.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MID AFTERNOON

William and Andrea are putting the finishing touches on the paint for the banister that goes up to the porch by the steps. Vanessa comes out the front door with a pitcher of lemonade and glasses. Derek is sitting in a chair by the door.

ANDREA

I still can't believe it's been a year since that night.

DEREK

And six months since you two got married.

WILLIAM DARWIN

Yea, it seems like it was only yesterday.

Vanessa sets the tray and glasses on the top step and sits beside it. She looks at the new wind chimes hanging all around the house. William sits beside her and puts his arm around her shoulders. A gust of wind causes the wind chimes to ring.

(CONTINUED)

VANESSA

They do make a lovely sound.

INT. OLD HOUSE - INSIDE LIVING ROOM - MID AFTERNOON

THE CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON THE BOOK SHELF. THE BOOK OF SPELLS IS PLACED NEXT TO THE FAMILY BIBLE. THE BOOK OF SPELLS STARTS TO SHAKE.

THE END