

TALES OF THE DAMNED:

Episode 4 - "THERE'S NO SUCH THING..."

By  
Duane P. Craig

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Conflict Scripts  
Willy10speed@hotmail.com  
662-781-4939

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"THERE'S NO SUCH THING..."TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. A SMALL TOWN MAGIC SHOP - DAY

A Caucasian old man with thin, white hair, a pleasant smile and dressed in Khaki pants, a button-up shirt and a sweater is standing behind the glass counter in his Magic Shop.

This old man is GRANTHAM POWELL.

Grantham is checking things in his glass counter. He looks through the glass at an array of spaced apart magic tricks that are on display for sale. He seems to be checking them over for some odd reason.

The door to the shop opens, and the JINGLES of little BELLS attached to the inside door handle are sounding, alerting Grantham to the presence of a customer.

In walks a man of nice stature and decent posture dressed in a long overcoat and wearing a fedora. The man walks up to Grantham at the counter and forms an odd smile on his face.

GRANTHAM

A magic connoisseur in your spare time?

The man in the fedora opens his mouth as if about to say something but does not. The man's smile stays throughout. He closes his mouth, and his smile grows almost disturbing.

MAN (MANDRAKE)

No...I love it though.

The MAN has an unusual accent of speaking.

GRANTHAM

You're from overseas aren't you?

MANDRAKE

Many seas...

Mandrake lends out his hand as the usual hand shake greeting offer.

MANDRAKE (CONT'D)

...I get around...quite a bit.

Grantham has a look of disturbance come over him suddenly. He looks at the Man's hand and recognizes his fingernails. They seem to be naturally pointed, and it strikes Grantham as odd. Grantham puts a smile back on his face, quickly shakes the man's hand and then just as quickly puts his hand back to his side.

GRANTHAM

Well, should you see anything you do like, just ask. I am quite the seasoned professional at the trade, so I never mind a demonstration. It keeps me going...the practice.

Mandrake slightly points to Grantham and smiles again.

MANDRAKE

I'll do just that.

Mandrake winks slightly and starts to look around in the shoppe.

A moment passes, and the bells on the door JINGLE again as a YOUNG MAN IN HIS EARLY 20's slowly walks into the shoppe.

Mandrake glances at the young man, but he keeps on looking around.

Grantham looks to the young man and his EYES LIGHT UP with happiness, and a smile comes about his face.

GRANTHAM

Niles, my boy! I didn't expect you so early today.

Niles looks nonchalant and possibly a bit embarrassed. He is dressed in jeans and a T-shirt under a cotton hoodie pullover that's Navy Blue and has the band insignia for MUSE on it.

NILES

(mumbling)

You weren't supposed to expect me at all.

Niles perks up a smile.

NILES (CONT'D)

So, mom told you that I had planned to come by today?

Grantham smiles and peers at Niles. Grantham taps his left index finger to his forehead.

GRANTHAM

Nope...saw it all coming.

Niles smirks and holds back a laugh.

Mandrake is through looking around and is walking towards the door to leave.

NILES

(sarcastic)

You seriously don't expect me to believe that B.S. do you?

Mandrake stops at the door of the shoppe and turns to Grantham. Mandrake raises his left arm as to wave goodbye to Grantham.

MANDRAKE

I believe in you sir...magic is far too old a practice to ignore.....  
You've a lovely shop...it fits you.

Grantham smiles though it looks forced and still reveals a certain uneasiness.

Niles turns to Mandrake and gives him a sarcastic look.

NILES

(annoyed)

There's no such thing as magic, and you're not helping me here, dude.

Mandrake drops his left arm to his side and give Niles a smirk.

MANDRAKE

No such thing as magic? Well,  
here's to hoping you're right then.  
...Cheers.

Mandrake smiles big and leaves the shoppe.

Niles rolls his eyes and turns back to Grantham.

NILES

You see the type of people that come in here, now. This place isn't doing so well anymore.

GRANTHAM

This shop is not for sale. I don't want to hear about your plan to make this a coffee bistro for the yuppie crowds.

NILES

Yuppie crowds would generate ten times what you make a week in just one day.

Grantham looks slightly disgusted as he kneels down behind his counter looking into the display case.

Niles can see that his grandfather is ignoring him out of spite. Niles leans onto the glass counter.

NILES (CONT'D)

Seriously, grandpa. You should think about retiring soon, and how to pay for the things you would do to rest and relax...we could make the money for you to go on a cruise in two weeks, I bet. I just don't see that happening if you're still wasting away selling silly gimmicks and candles. This stuff's boring.

Grantham stands up quickly to address Niles. Grantham has an angered look on his face.

GRANTHAM

(angry)

I will not sell my shop, and that is final! There's noth...

Grantham GROANS, grabs his chest and FALLS limp thus knocking his head hard against the glass counter cracking it. His body falls to the floor.

Niles stands in shock. His eyes are wide and seemingly focused on the few drops of blood on the broken glass counter. He slowly leans over the counter to see his grandpa's limp body in the floor.

NILES

Oh....oh..my God. Grandpa?

Niles snaps out of his shock and rushes to his Grandpa's aid.

MANDRAKE (V.O.)

Damned: at times the very essence  
of its meaning - cursed to an  
unwanted fate, and often...the end  
result of greed.

FADE OUT.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Niles is standing to Grantham's right, bedside. He is looking down solemnly at his Grandpa.

Grantham is hooked to the usual monitors and has an I.V. There is a gauze bandage where he had hit his head on the counter. His eyes slowly open and focus on Niles.

Niles looks pleased to see his Grandpa in a conscious state. A slight smile comes to his face.

Grantham raises his head a little and notices a chair just behind Niles.

GRANTHAM

Sit, Niles. I have much to tell you.

NILES

Grandpa, I'm fine. I've been sitting...sitting and asking myself why no one before me has ever tried to pry you out of that damned magic shop. The burden of it is killing you!

GRANTHAM

(stern)

Sit!

Niles is SHOVED into the seat by an invisible force that KEEPS SHOVING until Niles, in the seat, comes to a stop just before hitting the far wall of the room.

Niles has a WIDE EYED SURPRISE on his face. He slowly looks himself over and then turns to his Grandpa.

Grantham still has his head raised a little. He lets his head fall back onto his pillow, and his face reveals a look of exhaustion.

GRANTHAM (CONT'D)

Do I have your...complete attention, now?

Niles nods his head.

NILES

Definitely.

GRANTHAM

It's all real, Niles. It always has been. Although, I would love to show you more, I am growing quite weak. I'm thinking my time is about over in this world. That means there will be another to take my place.

NILES

What the hell is going on?

GRANTHAM

Niles, how many tricks must I show you?

NILES

You always showed me stupid things any fool can do, but just now...

GRANTHAM

(interrupts)

No, you've only seen Magicians making their way in the world - all just fitting in. There are quite a lot of us...one for every region that needs a balance. Surely you've wondered why there's always a great Magician wherever you go.

NILES

Actually, no, it never peaked my interest until now.

GRANTHAM

Well, that is a good thing too... we're supposed to blend in with society.

NILES

So, all of these guys...even the ones on TV...the guys who dress all in black doing these illusion shows...

GRANTHAM

(interrupts)

Those are the stronger ones with no set paths. They're not confined to homes, so they serve as temporary replacements...until another is ready for the long term.

Niles gets a rather anxious yet cautious look about him.

NILES

They...seem rich...nice clothes and hot chicks.

GRANTHAM

It has its perks...but for the most part...there is a lot of work to be done.

Niles starts to smile some.

Grantham notices Niles smile and what it means.

GRANTHAM (CONT'D)

It's not all fun and games, boy! There is a dark and evil dimension that lies only a thin margin from devouring our world. That is our foremost purpose.

The smile on Niles face turns to a slight frown.

NILES

This is crazy...I'm going crazy...

GRANTHAM

(interrupts)

I need you more than ever, Niles!

Grantham frowns and two cracks open in the wall just beside Niles.

Niles looks scared but stays glued to his seat.

GRANTHAM (CONT'D)

I can feel my body dying. I won't last through the night, and my talisman is not at my side. I need you to get it for me.

NILES

(slightly scared)

Yeah, okay.....what are you talking about?

GRANTHAM

I've stored it under the stairs at home for a while now. It shouldn't be hard to find, but I need you to find it before this night ends.

(MORE)

GRANTHAM (CONT'D)

I need it so I can pass it on to the one who comes in my place. A temporary will be coming soon, but I can't tell when. I need my talisman, now.

NILES

Well...why don't you just give me your house keys...

Grantham raises his left hand, makes a fist and suddenly more cracks form in the wall and beside the door to the room.

GRANTHAM

You won't need them...it's unlocked now.

Niles looks SHOCKED at the occurrence.

GRANTHAM (CONT'D)

PLEASE, GO!!!

Niles springs from his seat and out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY OUTSIDE GRANTHAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Niles sprints down the hallway of the hospital. He bumps into a Nurse, and keeps sprinting to the elevator.

NURSE

Excuse me, son!?

NILES

Sorry! Very sorry! Look...my Grandpa...the room I came from...he might want...some water, maybe!?

Niles shrugs his shoulders, and is furiously pressing the button for the elevator. He is smiling like a child who definitely has something to hide.

The elevator doors open and Niles enters into a handful of people already inside the elevator.

The Nurse is still looking at Niles like he is insane.

NILES (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Hey...don't make him mad either.

The elevator doors close.

CUT TO:

INT. GRANTHAM'S TWO-STORY HOME - EVENING

The front door to Grantham's two-story home opens inward revealing the DARKENING EVENING COLOR outside.

Niles is alone, and he stands in the threshold of the doorway for a moment taking in his Grandpa's home. He stares almost emotionless into the huge den that is the bulk of the downstairs portion before him. There are also stairs inside to the left.

Niles is still dressed the same as earlier only his hair is messy giving him an even more STRESSED OUT look. He finally decides to walk inside and shuts the door behind him.

NILES

Okay...where would Grandpa hide a gold necklace? - A magic, gold necklace.

Niles is scanning the entire huge room that is the den. He then spots a doorway to a closet underneath the stairs that are to his left. He focuses on the closet for a moment.

NILES (CONT'D)

Yeah...that's where I'd hide something.

Niles approaches the closet and opens it. It's dark, but a dangling light bulb chain is visible, so Niles pulls it. The bulb lights the closet revealing its cramped space yet full of shoeboxes, papers, tins and milk crates of magazines.

NILES (CONT'D)

Pack rat! How come he never magically cleaned up this mess?!

Niles starts fumbling through the shoeboxes, shaking them first to get an idea of what may be inside them and tossing aside the ones that do not sound like they contain any jewelry. Finally he finds a box that SOUNDS OF A SMALL METAL CHAIN sliding around inside. Niles quickly opens the box, and before him is a purely golden talisman on a thin, gold chain. In the middle of the talisman rests a circle of every jewel stone imaginable - 12 of them - the birth stones.

NILES (CONT'D)

No wonder the shoppe stayed open for so long...the old man's loaded.

Niles puts the talisman around his neck quite quickly and begins to rummage through the boxes again, this time looking in them all with a look on his face that showed suspended amazement.

A NOISE comes from the darkness of the living room. It GROWLS like a lion.

Niles falls on his ass in the closet - the boxes near him tumble atop his lap. He is looking WIDE EYED into the living room for any signs of movement.

The door to the closet starts to slowly close but then stops just six inches short.

Niles is SHUDDERING quietly - his hands covering his mouth.

A SLIMY, GREEN hand with LONG, SHARP CLAWS slides slowly from the outside of the door and begins to feel about the inside edge of the door.

Niles GULPS, removes his hands from his mouth and starts to feel about in the closet for anything that would offer him protection.

The door OPENS FAST. A HORRIBLE CREATURE only three feet in height GNASHES its teeth, GROWLS and LEAPS at Niles only to be invisibly burnt in its face and sent tumbling backwards.

Niles SCREAMS like a girl from the whole horrid event.

The creature gets to its feet and scampers off and out of the house very quickly.

Niles face immediately shows a sense of revelation. He looks down at the talisman that he had just put around his neck - its jewels were glowing a bit and then faded back to normal.

NILES (CONT'D)

Oh...oh man...My God.

Niles jumps up to his feet. His face is of one that is realizing what must be done immediately. He pulls his car keys from his jeans pocket and cautiously proceeds out of the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRANTHAM'S FRONT YARD TO HIS HOME - CONTINUOUS

Niles is fiddling with his keys to unlock his car door. He hurries himself to try and enter his car.

Suddenly, a man in a tattered looking overcoat, jeans and toboggan appears from behind Niles and places his hand on Niles right shoulder.

Niles SCREAMS. He turns around and now has his back leaned against his car as he is turned to face the man in the robe.

The man in the tattered clothes extends his left hand GRABS the collar of Niles' hoodie and PICKS NILES UP off of the ground. The look in the man's face is one of constant, intense focus.

MAN (ROMAN)

I am Roman...and you are not  
Grantham Powell.

Niles SCREAMS again and again.

Roman raises his right hand and SNAPS his fingers.

Niles freezes in his current position and looks to be paralyzed. His screaming ceases in the same instant. Only his eyes are moving frantically, and he is MOANING a bit as if trying to speak with someone holding his tongue.

ROMAN

Your hysterics are useless. Where  
is Grantham Powell?

Niles moans a couple of times sounding very negative.

Roman's eyes GLEAM though, as he focuses on the talisman around Niles neck. Roman reaches and touches the talisman with the caress of someone thinking their fingers could break what was in their grasp. Roman LOWERS NILES DOWN so that his feet touch the ground again.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

You must be blood kin to wear the  
talisman. It wouldn't have  
accepted you otherwise...Have they  
tried to take it from you yet?

Niles just moans and blinks several times.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

Ahh, yes. Sorry.

Roman snaps his fingers again, and it releases Niles who seems to collapse into himself. Roman also releases his grip on Niles hoodie.

NILES  
 (scared and fast)  
 I really don't like magic. I swear  
 to God this better be the worst  
 dream I've ever had.

Roman takes his free hand and slaps Niles across his cheek.

Niles looks shocked and a bit angry and hurt.

NILES (CONT'D)  
 Ahh...geez.

ROMAN  
 Magic will be the only thing to  
 spare your life this night, young  
 one! Who are you!?

NILES  
 I'm Niles Powell. You apparently  
 want my Grandpa, and he really  
 wants his necklace. He sent me  
 after it...and he said someone like  
 you would be coming...but you're  
 dressed like a bum.

ROMAN  
 Did the goblins attack you for the  
 talisman?

Niles smiles SARCASTICALLY followed by a quick SIGH of a  
 laugh.

NILES  
 Goblins? Oh yeah...goblins indeed!  
 I almost peed myself...but this  
 necklace - this talisman acted like  
 fire or something. It sent one  
 packing.

Roman smiles with a sort of pride.

ROMAN  
 Then its power is not lost with  
 you. You must be of value to its  
 existence, or it wouldn't have  
 protected you.

NILES  
 I seriously don't even care, dude.  
 I've got to get to my Grandpa.

ROMAN

Yes, we must proceed to Grantham Powell, quickly. Though the talisman has already taken to you, we can still use his help.

NILES

No problem. I'm not keen to wearing this thing anyway.

The sounds of GROWLING from all around the two spurs Niles quicker into unlocking and entering his car. He reaches over to unlock the passenger door for Roman, but Roman snaps simply taps on the car door, it unlocks and he enters the car.

CUT TO:

INT. NILES' CAR - CONTINUOUS

Niles is looking at Roman again with shock towards his magical powers.

Roman smirks a bit, but maintains a sense of focused intensity about him.

NILES

How is all of this...?

Roman interrupts by reaching over and touching the steering column which causes the car's ignition to crank right up.

Niles jumps a bit.

ROMAN

We really must hurry.

Suddenly the car backs out of Grantham's driveway very quickly and SCREECHES to a halt in the middle of the street.

Niles immediately grabs the steering wheel.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

You do know which direction and how to drive don't you?

Niles nods, still in shock.

NILES

Yeah. Hell yeah.

Roman peers past Niles through the driver's side window out to the other side of the street.

Niles is still looking at Roman yet backing away slightly.

ROMAN

Good...because I want to get there  
before they do.

INSTANTLY a goblin jumps against Niles' drivers side window  
and it scares him into STOMPING THE GAS PEDAL.

CUT TO:

EXT. NILES' CAR - CONTINUOUS

Niles' car speeds off down the road.

There are a number of shadowy figures running about in  
various directions.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. THE HOSPITAL LOBBY - NIGHT

Niles and Roman run into the hospital lobby and right past a few people seated and the lady at the front desk. They run straight to the elevators.

LADY AT THE DESK

Hey! Hey, what are you two doing!?

The lady keeps her loud questioning to no avail.

Niles and Roman are quickly into an elevator and the doors close.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HOSPITAL - GRANTHAM'S FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Niles and Roman both burst from the elevator onto an eerily dark and barren hospital floor. They are the only ones to be seen.

GROWLS come from various corners of the floor. The darkness hides their owners.

ROMAN

Which way to Grantham?

NILES

Those things are already here.

ROMAN

They wouldn't still be here if they knew where to find him.

NILES

Then why the hell should I show them the way?

ROMAN

Because all he needs to do is touch the talisman one last time to start the end of this.

NILES

Start the end? No poof, and they're gone?

ROMAN

Possibly, but often a few goblins get stuck behind. We'll still have to deal with the ones left here.

NILES

Damn it. I'm not waiting for that chance.

Niles takes off running down the dark hallway that he ran from earlier.

ROMAN

Wait!

Roman takes off after Niles.

Niles runs exactly to where he thinks his Grandpa's room is and BURSTS OPEN the door.

Grantham's room is BRIGHT - ALMOST BLINDING and there is a sound of heavenly bliss that accompanies it.

Roman is now standing just behind Niles. They each have a wondrous look in their eyes. They both enter the room and approach Grantham who looks to be pleasantly awaiting them.

GROWLS are still heard coming from outside the room.

GRANTHAM

Niles...and Roman Dirk. I should have known they'd send you.

Grantham smiles short and pleasant.

Niles is looking about in AWE.

NILES

I brought your necklace.

Niles begins to remove the talisman from around his neck, but Grantham signals not to.

GRANTHAM

No, Niles, come here, boy.

Niles steps to Grantham's side.

GRANTHAM (CONT'D)

There's a tradition to follow.

Roman steps up beside Niles and lays his hand on his shoulder.

ROMAN

I hope you're ready, Niles.

NILES  
Ready for what?

GRANTHAM  
Your new life, that's what.

Grantham touches the talisman around Niles neck and a SUDDEN, HUGE, THUNDEROUS ROAR is heard.

The room instantly turns as dark as the rest of the hospital had been initially.

Niles and Roman fall to their knees in the room. They give each other a glance as to signify each is okay.

Niles hops back up to his feet. His face turns to a look of shock at the realization that his Grandpa is no longer there.

Roman stands also and once again lends a hand to Niles' shoulder.

NILES  
It looks like he was never even here. This is all madness.

ROMAN  
It will be the same for me and for yourself when our times have come.

Niles frowns as if in realization.

NILES  
I don't know if I can do what I think this is all asking me to become. I'm not the right guy.

ROMAN  
You've always been the right guy. Face it. Accept the feeling that you've always had inside of you. I can see that it's there.

NILES  
What about the part of me that doesn't want it!? I don't even liked magic! It's childish, and it's boring! I want a coffee shop and place for rock bands to...

A GROWL is heard from inside the room, and at a lightening fast pace, a shadow races through the room and ATTACKS Roman from behind him.

Niles falls to his rear on the floor and scoots all the way back until he is sitting, back pressed against the wall.

Roman can be heard in the darkness somewhere STRUGGLING and GROANING.

NILES (CONT'D)  
Roman!? Roman!!

Roman lets out a HORRID SCREAM.

BLOOD IS SPLATTERED in Niles' direction across his face and shoulders and all across the wall behind him.

Niles is shocked and immediately recognizes what has just occurred. His eyes are wide and trying desperately to find the goblin that must be in the room.

All of the jewels in the talisman start to glow again as before.

Niles takes notice of the talisman.

A .44 revolver is suddenly slid across the floor from Niles left side and stops when it hits his shoe.

Niles quickly grabs the revolver and then looks to his left. With the talisman now lighting up the room, Niles can see Roman laying on his stomach on the floor, a bloody mess, yet he is trying to speak.

ROMAN  
(short of breath)  
It's...just one...left.

Niles starts looking in all directions. He can not yet see the goblin. He looks back to Roman.

NILES  
Can't I do something magic?

ROMAN  
(shortening breath)  
Alchemy...is magic.

Roman's body gives out. He falls limp, and moves no more.

Niles is freaked. He is starting to look in every direction again.

NILES  
Alchemy? Alchemy? That's nothing  
but chemistry...or physics.

Niles looks to the gun in his hand and a focus begins to come over his face.

NILES (CONT'D)  
Chemistry...basic alchemy. A  
chemical change...like a solid to a  
gas...sometimes change due to fire.

Niles stands up and a no nonsense look comes over his entire demeanor.

The talisman GLOWS BRIGHT, lighting up the entire room and revealing the shadowy figure of a goblin on the wall directly in Niles' line of sight.

NILES (CONT'D)  
In ancient China...alchemy  
produced...

Niles takes a firm aim with the gun.

NILES (CONT'D)  
...gunpowder.

Niles smirks and then FIRES all six rounds from the .44 revolver into the goblin.

The goblin falls limp to the ground and suddenly BURSTS into flames.

The halogen lights in the entire hospital start to flicker back on.

Niles tucks the revolver into his waistband of his jeans and hides the handle with his hoodie. He then turns to look where Roman should be laying, but there is nothing.

The SOUNDS of hospital personnel can be heard in the distance.

Niles puts his hands atop his head.

NILES (CONT'D)  
God, I've gone nuts! I'm losing  
it! I'm a whack job!

Niles closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAGIC SHOP - DAY

Niles opens his eyes to find himself behind the glass counter in his Grandpa's magic shop. Niles also finds himself dressed rather casual and professional in slacks and a nice sweater.

NILES

What.....the hell?

Suddenly the BELLS of the glass door to the shop are JINGLING and Niles sees the same man in the long overcoat and fedora that he had seen just that morning. The man has his arm raised as if waving goodbye.

MANDRAKE

No such thing as magic? Well,  
here's to hoping you're right then.  
...Cheers.

Mandrake walks out of the shop.

Niles looks to be freaking out. He is hurriedly searching for a sign of what is going on. He decides to run outside after the man in the overcoat and fedora.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FRONT OF THE MAGIC SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Niles is standing in front of the magic shop looking everywhere frantically for the man that just left. He can't see him anywhere. Niles steps over to the store immediately next door to the magic shop which happens to sell televisions. The morning news is on every TV station. Niles walks inside.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SHOP SELLING TV'S AND ELECTRONICS - CONTINUOUS

Niles steps to one of the TV's and turns its volume up loud enough for him to hear.

TV ANCHOR

...and first up, last night's freak  
blackout is the talk of the town.  
The county hospital was only  
without power for a matter of  
seconds, but folks out in the  
suburbs are probably just now  
waking up and late for work. The  
Light, Gas and Water crews...

Niles steps back away from the TV in disbelief that no one else had experienced anything that he had. His face expresses himself physically questioning his sanity.

A man in a salesman's attire walks up to Niles.

SALESMAN

Hey Mr. Powell, you were here on time this morning, too. Did I give you one of those Solar Powered Alarm Clocks? I bet I did. I bet some folks come in for one today after last night.

Niles steps in front of the salesman with a very livid look on his face.

NILES

What's going on!? Why am I dressed like this!? Why do you know me!?

The salesman looks a bit shocked and then it turns to a smiling chuckle.

SALESMAN

Oh, Mr. Powell...you still trying to do those mind tricks? You better stick to slight of hand if you want...

Niles tunes out the rest of the salesman's words and looks out the window of the shop. Niles has a look of utter despair and disgust on his face.

NILES

(muttering to himself)  
No.....I don't want this.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE