

Destination X

By Nigel Raven

Other Books By Nigel Raven

Stark - Down But Not Out (Kindle)

Destination X

Scott woke up in a cold sweat once again. His long scraggly black hair was stuck to his forehead, and he wiped his face in the pillow as he turned around to look at the alarm clock which now read 6.11am. Nineteen minutes to go, and then the usual blasting of radio four would rock the room which would force him to get up because the alarm clock was so placed, that from where he laid, he couldn't quite reach it, and Scott hated the music that was played on radio four that time of morning.

As he looked through the smoke stained window the sun could be seen on the horizon just as it began to rise. No doubt it was a beautiful day out there, but the dirtiness of the window made the sky look hazy, and the odd bird that flew past in the distance just looked like a blur to him.

Scott's nightmare's were getting stranger and stranger each night, and even though he knew he had an important and trusted job to do each day, he would sometimes stay up all night reading book after book and playing the old vintage arcade pinball game that he had shoved in the corner of his room.

Living in a single room on the top floor of an old apartment block suited him just fine. He was a bit of a loner, and had everything he could ever want in this one twelve by fifteen foot room. Just a stones throw away there were two chip shop's and a dominos pizza shop, which is where he would often get his dinner from which was evident if you were to look at the floor of his room, which was almost covered in chip wrappings and pizza boxes amongst other things. So much that you couldn't see much of the wall to wall brown carpet. Every now and again he would venture into the shared kitchen and bathroom, but obviously not to use the shower.

Having nineteen minutes left to sleep he turned back around and pulled the covers over his head to shield him from the light. Those nineteen minutes seemed to go by like nineteen seconds, and when the alarm clock did go off, even under the covers he could clearly hear some piano concerto being played at full volume, that signified time to wake up and ready for another challenging day at work.

It was difficult to tell where his nightmare's ended and reality began, because to him, in each nightmare it felt like someone or something was calling him and he had no control in either. But two cups of coffee and forty five minutes later as he left for work he had forgotten everything.

Like any other day Scott was dreading going to work this morning. He was a bus driver for the San Antonio school. His daily route only took him on a six kilometre round trip, but to him it felt more like six hundred kilometre's as he did the fifteen minute trip in the morning and the afternoon each day. In between he would do little else except go back to his room and read his science fiction and horror stories that made him forget about the world around him. It was his getaway which until now, kept him on the right side of sanity.

"Only another twenty five year's to go. Then I can retire." He said as he scooted around the room looking through each pizza box, looking for that one slice of pizza that he didn't finish last night.

He was due to pick his bus up from Frogmore street bus station at 7.30am. Every morning he would be late to clock in, which didn't go unnoticed, and the several final warning letters for his lateness were beginning to mount up on the apartment entrance floor, now kicked into a mounting pile destined never to be opened, by him at least.

This morning he just managed to clock in on time, and now stood on his bus, he walked up and down the aisle a couple of times to check its cleanliness. Not that he liked a clean bus, but because he had several complaints from the children who ridden his bus.

The bus station that morning was busier than ever as it was Friday morning and more bus's had been drafted in to cater for the weekend baseball game that was to be held at the Millennium stadium.

Scott turned the key and surprisingly the bus started first time, which was unusual because he drove one of the older bus's in the fleet and it usually needed a little persuasion to wake up. As he

waited in the queue to leave the station he done his small checks,adjusting mirrors,seat,ect.Sometimes the mechanics played around with his bus and he was sure they altered things just to wind him up.

He made his way to his first stop which was charlietown avenue west,san antonio,and as he pulled up to his first scheduled stop,with the doors firmly closed he looked over to see the eleven to fifteen year old children banging and kicking at the bus doors,just as they did every morning.

Every day he drove was a living nightmare,not too dissimilar to his nightmares.Perhaps that is what was causing them.If scott didn't need this job so bad he would have quit months ago.

Sometimes the noise that they made was almost unbearable as they shouted and argued,having little respect for him or anyone else.He had just about had enough and was close to breaking point.Apart from the children banging at the door,it was quiet as he looked down at his watch.

It was 8.13am,another two minutes and he would have to open the doors and then all hell would break loose.Nothing could prepare him for the abuse he had to take on a daily basis.He sat staring forward and ignored them as best he could.One little rascal even had the nerve to walk around to the front of the bus and make hand gestures that he wouldn't even consider telling anyone else about.Ignoring them like that just made them bang and kick harder.Scotts calm exterior hid the real feelings he was having inside,but it really did make his blood boil not being able to react the way that he wanted to.

He looked down at his watch again,thirty seconds to go,when he heard a voice that seemed to come from out of nowhere.

"Its time," the low husky voice whispered,like it was right by his ear.

And with that,he pulled the handle and the doors opened,then the children pored onto the bus and crashing into the clear perspex bullet proof screen that scott had earlier in the week requested.He'd had one egg too many thrown in his face and it made him feel a little safer.A little bit over the top,but at least all that stopped now.

Even though within all of the chaos now on the bus,scott had quickly forgotten about the mysterious voice that came from nowhere,it was still at the very back of his mind.It was not just the voice that got him wondering,but the action of him physically pulling the handle that opened the door,because,for that split second,he didn't believe that he was in control of himself,and therefore,he didn't think it was him that actually pulled the handle.

He looked in his mirror and could see all the way down the aisle of the bus,and when everybody sat down he shut the doors and drove off.Scott had the shortest run compared to other drivers.The three stop journey wouldn't take too long.But despite it being the shortest,he had drawn the short straw with the other drivers because they all knew how much crap he had to put up with.Surely he could keep his sanity for another fifteen minutes until this afternoon when he would have to do it all over again.

"Its time." the whispering voice could be heard again.

Even over the chaotic noise in the bus,with what seemed like every child shout at the same time,scott still heard the voice as plain as day.He briefly looked in the mirror,and then back at the road whilst narrowly missing a cyclist on the side of the road who quickly gave him an unpleasant hand gesture.

He shook his head and gently rubbed his forehead as a single bead of sweat could be seen run down the side of his face.It had been a long week and this morning he was tired and in no fit state to drive.He shrugged this mysterious voice off and blamed it on a lack of sleep.

Later that day he decided that he would visit his doctor for a check up but when he got there he just prescribed some off the shelf sleeping pills.The rest of the day seemed to just be a blur to him,and when 8pm came,he took two of these sleeping pills as prescribed,and one more for luck as he would say.

That night he had the same nightmare,but they seemed more vivid than ever,as if he was actually living the nightmare's.He was driving his bus,but the bus was full of adults,and he could see their distressed faces and hands as they were pressed up against the windows,and trying desperately to get out,but they couldn't.

He wasn't sure, but the pills that the doc gave him just put him into a deeper sleep that made his nightmares more and more intense, and all so believable. The next morning he woke at 6.11 am again, just as he had been doing for the past week and a half. He sat on the edge of his bed and stretched his legs, and they were stiff, just as if he had been driving all night.

As he drove to work he heard the same voices again, which were clearer than ever this time, and again, sounded like they were almost in his ear. Scott turned on the radio in an effort to drown out the voices, and the radio turned itself off which it had never done before.

He pulled up outside the bus station, and just about to get out of his car, when what started out as a light tingling in his left foot, made its way up through his entire body, and he was briefly paralysed. As he sat there he thought he might be having a stroke.

The tingling sensation had quickly disappeared, but he still had no control over his body and struggled to even raise a single finger to call for help. The only part of his body he could move was his eyes, and as he looked down at the radio, it had turned itself on and the same voice that he had been hearing for the last couple of days came over the radio.

"Its time," the voice whispered, but could now be heard coming from every speaker in the car.

And with that, Scott had no time to think as a grey mist descended over his eyes and he felt a presence enter him. He fought all he could to keep control of his mind as he battled with this unknown entity but felt powerless in every way.

As he had felt like this on so many occasions in his nightmare's, it was now difficult to tell whether he was having another nightmare or if this was actually real. He couldn't even call for help, and could only shout with his inner voice in an effort to force this presence from within him. But all of this effort was wasted as a tear could be seen roll down his face, and Scott was Scott no more. He then looked into the mirror and his eyes glowed up so brightly that it lit up the front of the car.

He got out of the car and walked directly over to his bus, got on and drove away even without doing his daily checks to the vehicle. As he drove along Hagger's Bush Lane he could feel this disturbed presence within him. It was like an angry soul and he felt like this soul wanted to do something bad. There was a tiny part of him that still there, but he could do little about it. He was like a passenger in his own mind.

The bus quickly pulled up at the first stop, Charlietown Avenue West. As he sat there and waited he could see the children kicking and banging at the door, and when the time usually turned 8.15 am he would pull that lever to open the doors, but this time he didn't.

He sat there with his hand firmly grasped on the lever, and just as he was about to pull it, that small part of Scott said no, don't open the door. Even though these same children made Scott's life a living nightmare everyday, he still had a duty for their safety whilst they were on his bus, and at that moment Scott knew that they would not be safe on the bus that morning. The split second that Scott had that thought all existence of Scott had completely vanished.

He took one last look at the children's faces as they would kick for the last time, then he drove off leaving them all there, and he looked in his side mirror to see them chasing him down the avenue, then looked in his mirror and his eyes glowed up brightly once again.

As he drove slowly down the avenue he reached up and changed the sign on the front of the bus to 'Destination - Sigmond Square'. As he headed towards Sigmond Square he slowed down as he passed each stop. He was looking for stops that only had one person waiting.

The bell on the bus rang and he pulled up at the Renford Street stop. The doors opened and a young lady got onto the bus. She was a nurse whose pin badge read Sarah. She swiped her card and then walked to the very back of the bus to sit. The bus then continued steadily on its way, looking for more lone passengers.

She pulled a book from her bag and quietly read to herself. Although she was deeply immersed in her Sherlock Holmes novel, she did look out of her window, only to see the bus pass a bus stop that was full of waiting people. This should have been one of the scheduled stops for the bus that she was on. She then glanced down at the driver, then continued reading and totally oblivious as to what was about to happen to her.

She heard the bell ring and the bus quickly pulled up at 'The Grand', and on got a business executive gentleman who was probably in his early fifties. He sat at the very front of the bus and placed his laptop onto his lap. Sarah looked down at him and felt somewhat more at ease knowing that she wasn't the only person on the bus.

The bus continued along again but this time making a right turn into Jersey Avenue, which shouldn't have been a part of this route and Sarah quickly got up and pressed the bell for the next stop thinking that she had gotten on the wrong bus, but the bell didn't work.

As she walked towards the driver she saw the business man was talking on his phone, and just thought if he wasn't concerned about this bus taking the wrong turning, then she definitely must be on the wrong bus.

"Is this bus going to Sigmund Square," she politely asked, but the driver didn't answer.

So she knocked at the screen and sarcastically said.

"Hello," this time raising her voice, and even the other passenger heard her over the call that he was making.

She said it loud enough that the driver could easily hear her, but you could hear the slight fear in her voice as her bottom lip began to quiver.

That fear had quickly turned into anger as she finally kicked the screen and repeated herself.

"Is this bus going to Sigmund Square."

All this time, the driver continued to stare forward whilst ignoring her. Then he stepped on the gas pedal so hard that she was thrown backward and landed on the floor. The business man put his phone on the seat beside him, helped Sarah up and into a seat opposite him.

"Wait here, I'll go and talk to him," he said.

He also tried being polite but had no luck in gaining the driver's attention. In his posh voice he asked for the driver's number so he could report him once he got off. Little did he know, that they may never be getting off.

"Young man, may I have your driver number."

"Sit down sir, we'll be there soon," the driver said in a calm and polite voice and then the bell rang.

Thinking that he had gotten through to the driver he sat back down in his seat, now next to Sarah. He could feel her shaking as his leg briefly rested against his.

"My name is John," he said to Sarah as he held his phone to his ear expecting his work colleague to be at the other end of the call. They must have hung up their phone, was his first thought.

They could both see that the sign above the front window that read 'Bus Stopping' was now illuminated, and as the bus slowed to stop they both stood up and walked towards the door to get off.

With each step they took, they naturally expected to get closer to the door but they didn't. So they walked faster and faster as they looked at each other, both with shocked looks on their faces. In the end they were actually running for the door yet making no ground. It was such a strange and scary feeling for both of them. The bus stopped and Sarah shouted as loud as she could at the driver, which then turned into a high pitched scream that pierced through John's ears.

"Let us out of here," Sarah shouted.

John ran over to the side window and saw an old lady who was sat waiting on the bus stop seat. As she got up from the seat John banged on the window, but being an old lady he thought that she was probably deaf and couldn't hear him, but no, John could see other people walk right past the bus stop and they too couldn't hear John frantically banging away at the window and waving his hands in an effort to gain anybody's attention.

The doors opened and the driver got out of his seat to help the lady onto the bus. They both shouted at the top of their lungs but the lady still got on the bus, like she heard nothing. How come she could hear nothing, and how come she could walk down the aisle of the bus towards them, yet John and Sarah could not do the opposite.

At first, this little old lady who slowly hobbled down the aisle clenching her walking stick, was totally oblivious to their anguish. She even walked straight past them and nodding at them with her friendly smile. The driver got back into his seat, closed the doors and drove off, but not before

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