

A CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER

ROAD TO NINEVEH

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Road to Nineveh (Short Excerpt)

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Chapter 73

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The Austins' lighthouse home, Reef Bay, Washington, August 5, 2040

He stood in the lantern room surrounded by thick glass windows. The space at the top of the tower was mostly filled with the decommissioned lantern assembly bolted firmly to the center of the steel floor. Just enough space existed, about three feet between the circular wall and lantern, to permit access to the equipment. This space provided an area to stand or sit on the cold metal floor.

From this vantage point, Charley took a moment to look to the south, to the narrow, buoy-marked entrance of the Reef Bay harbor that lay between two twin cliffs rising seventy-five feet from the churning waves. To the north, the lawn he had just mowed yesterday spread out like a green carpet to the windswept trees that bordered the property. Beyond lay the rugged coastline. To the west was nothing but ocean, a vast gray canvas with splashes of white where the blustering wind blew the wave tops into white foam.

He turned from the spectacular view. He wasn't up here to sightsee. Sitting down on the floor, Charley retrieved a pen from his shirt pocket. Seventeen months ago he sat here with Jerry Levine and wrote the lyrics to a hit Christian song. Here he was again, paper pad and pen in hand, prepared to write other lyrics that would become the song that would launch him, once again, onto the world stage.

With eyes closed, he stilled his mind, preparing it for a rush of creative inspiration. Outside the tower, the whistling wind seemed to be urging him on. *Hurrrrry. Hurrrrry.*

Time passed. The only words that came to mind, were “Go to Nineveh.”

He scribbled the words on the pad in his lap and studied them. “Go to Nineveh.” What on earth did that mean? He vaguely remembered that in Biblical times, Nineveh had been a city on the Tigris River. That’s all he could remember.

Where was he going with this, a single sentence, three words? He closed his eyes again, waiting for the next line to rush into his brain, but it didn’t. “Go to Nineveh” was stuck in his head, like brain constipation.

Wind buffeted the tower, making the eerie sound again. *Hurrrrry. Hurrrrry.*

Maybe he was going about this all wrong. Rather than wait for lyrics to roll through his head as they used to, he should first think about his objective. What did he want the song to say to the world? He’d already decided against writing music with Christian themes, so the door was wide open. He was free to write about anything. He could cut loose. Let it all hang out.

He recalled the night on tour when he ripped open his shirt on stage and played the remaining set bare-chested. Fans told him later that they loved the act, that it symbolized a passionate submission to God, a willingness to strip off worldly things to present himself humbly before Jesus.

Actually, the motivation, what the fans believed to be an expression of submission and surrender, was nothing more than a jealousy-fueled gesture aimed at stirring up the crowd and drawing attention to himself, away from the stately Jerry Levine, the band’s frontman and leader.

The adrenaline rush he had felt when the audience roared in response was incredible.

There was the answer. The purpose of his new music would be to encourage unbridled physical expression. His music would celebrate life free from the norms that society and religion imposes on people.

He was beginning to get excited now. The purpose of this song, the big vision for his band, was coming into focus.

Hurrrrry. Hurrrrry, the wind sounded.

He scratched a line through the words on his pad: “Go to Nineveh.” He was ready to seize other phrases and sentences now, to tame and shape them to deliver powerful sensual experiences. He would become, through his music, a guru of pleasure—a leader of physical expression and experimentation.

Visions of what his stage performances could be excited him. As a trademark, should he tear off his shirt every night? A name for the band popped into his head and he scribbled it on the pad: “Ripped Open.” It was missing something. He wrote on another line, “Charley Austin and the Ripped Open Band.”

He smiled. He was on a roll. Now, with a vision established, he could settle down to write the first hit song. Charley closed his eyes and waited.

Random thoughts and images flew through his head like a fireworks display, but it was all mental noise, nothing even close to a lyric. He just needed to be patient. He settled with his back against the lantern and waited.

Thirty minutes passed; the paper pad was empty except for the band name ideas and the words he had struck through: “Go to Nineveh.”

What was going on? Lyrics had always come to him easily. He could write lyrics for a complete song in half an hour. His skill had amazed Jerry and the other members of DelivRus. So, why wasn’t it happening now? Could his song writing have been a fluke, a one-time thing?

He closed his eyes again to concentrate. Time passed.

It was no use. The creative juices weren't flowing. Panic twisted his gut. What if he couldn't write anymore? That would be the end of the dream. No more rock star.

Depressed and frustrated, he stood. Ignoring the rain now pelting the thick glass windows, he lowered himself down the ladder to the platform below. From there he gazed into the darkness below and began his long, winding descent.