

**ZOINKS!**  
**Chapter 7. The Break-Out**

**NOLAN**

Zoinks! contains mature language and themes of addiction and neglect, and is intended for adults who lost all their food fording the river, whose had to bury Dougie who died of dysentery, who shot 2000 pounds of meat but could only carry 100 - because you're never too young to learn life is seldom fair and never easy.

(Inside a coffin.)

(Panicked breathing.)

**NOLAN**

I'm not here. I'm not here. I'm not here.

**CASPER**

Then where are you?

**NOLAN**

[thinking:] I'm ... staring at the fuselage of a wrecked and long-forgotten airplane. It's resting, high up, in the crook of a large tree. It looks like an old Douglas DC-3, maybe, it's silver exterior glinting in the sunlight, filtering thru the jungle canopy. It's lashed tight to the tree by a tangle of vines, climbing out of windows, wrapping around what remains of the engines.

I'm as far away from the town of Mars Majestic as a body can get: staying with friends in a lovely little island bungalow, days spent laying out on hot sand or exploring nearby reefs. At night, listening to stories around a bonfire: the fabled tale of the lost cargo. And then hearing screams coming from the jungle and learning of rumors of phantoms, that have recently been terrorizing the island residents.

Of course it wasn't phantoms, just treasure seekers trying to keep people out of the jungle, so that they could search undisturbed..

But Casper and I found the crash site first.

(CASPER whines.)

Oh, come on pal - I've climbed hundreds of trees. I take a step forward -

(NOLAN hits a patch of quicksand and slowly starts sinking.)

Quicksand!

**NOLAN (cont.)**

I freeze, don't fight it, feeling myself slowly sinking.

Casper, help!

Casper runs and grabs one of the hanging vines and begins tugging, bringing it towards me.

I'm up to my waist in quicksand now. Good boy, Casper, just a little further.

(The old DC-3 engines bark once or twice before roaring back to life.)

I look up into the tree. The phantom is there, sitting in the co-pilot's seat. The propeller is slowly turning, winding the vine back in.

No!

Casper tugs and tugs, but he's no match for the DC-3's engine. And now I can feel wet, sloppy, sand brushing up against my jawline.

Casper!

(NOLAN is swallowed whole by the quicksand.)

(She back in the coffin.)

And now I'm back. Underground. Earth all around me.

(Panicked breathing.)

I'm not here. I'm not here.

**CASPER**

Then where are you?

**NOLAN**

I'm ... walking the long hall of the old high school, late at night.

There's been sightings lately of the school mascot, Gary the Gopher, come to life, attacking students. The big dance is happening tonight in the gym, against the better judgment of the principal and it's my job to ensure the creature doesn't make a surprise appearance.

There's a single door open, stairs leading down to the boiler room.

The room is lit in a sinister green light. But at the end I see a warm, orange glow.

**NOLAN (cont.)**

It's a string of exposed bulbs lining a man made tunnel, roughly cut and running a far distance.

Of course! The high school was directly across the street from the old Savings and Loan. Hadn't the local paper been making a big deal all week about the giant emerald that was being held in the bank's vault, awaiting tomorrow morning's auction across town?

And now it all makes sense: Gary the Gopher had been attacking students in the hopes of canceling this very dance - so that there would be no one around for the big heist.

Casper and I are running now. Maybe there's still time to catch the jewel thieves in the act -

(The lights in the tunnel cut out.)

When the lights are doused in the tunnel.

(searching thru her satchel:)

I can't find my flashlight.

Casper?

But he's gone too, and now I can hear:

(GARY the GOPHER screams, echoing off tunnel walls.)

The screams of the gopher.

(Back in the coffin.)

And I'm back. In the dark.

(Panicked breathing.)

I'm not here. I'm not here. I'm not here.

**CASPER**

Then where are you?

**NOLAN**

I'm ... standing in the ornate lobby of the old, shuttered concert hall. It's slated for demolition but everytime the wrecking ball shows up, music emanates from the building, as if an undead orchestra still has one concert left to play.

**NOLAN (cont.)**

I pass thru a set of double doors and enter the auditorium. I can see a baton, floating above a music stand, keeping time. And I hear -

(Music plays.)

A symphony, slowly building towards a climax.

And now I can see them. Corpses in tuxedos, licking their cracked and busted lips before pressing them against their instruments.

Some of them are missing fingers, or have an eye socket infested with maggots. But none of them seem to notice. They're just fixated on their sheet music, counting along, awaiting their time to contribute to the only life still in this room. Melodies and countermelodies chase one another around the hall, building harmonies.

The musicians don't accept that their time has come and gone. They defy the waiting demolition crew. They might look like rotting corpses but they know the truth: they still have life left in them.

(A loud, beeping reverberates in the concert hall. A Countdown has started.)

But the demolition has started now and an implosion is imminent.

I run, back into the lobby, towards the main doors.

(Doors fling open. They're covered over in wood. NOLAN bangs on them.)

But the doors are covered over in wooden slats, like the lid of a coffin.

(NOLAN bangs on the lid.)

Help! Someone! Wait! I'm still in here!

(Back in the coffin. NOLAN bangs and bangs.)

My brain is screaming: get out of this. But I can't move my thoughts past "You're fucked."

I know. That I have to slow my breathing. But panic has a hold on me and its foot is fully on the accelerator.

**CASPER**

Nolan Blackwell put her hands over her face and took in a deep breath, holding it, counting slowly, forcing herself to slow down and think.

**CASPER (cont.)**

She had been buried alive. She was deep underground. There was nothing she could do in this moment to change that.

But that didn't mean there was nothing to solve.

(THEME SONG.)

**NOLAN**

This is Zoinks!, a word of encouragement quickly scrawled on the outside of a brown paper lunch sack for teen detectives and their dogs

(The pound. CASPER sits alone in a cage. It's noisy.)

(The sound of a harmonica and then, howling.)

**CASPER**

First night in the clink and already... I think I've gone a little stir crazy.

I can see the other inmates – a pair of fellow mutts, a dachshund and a toy poodle... gross.

They're all waiting for their owners to come, pay the fine and pick 'em up.

But I haven't got time to wait. I have to get back to that house. I have to get back to her.

The most effective jail breaks... they aren't flashy, they aren't elaborate. They rely on simplicity.

(CASPER starts whimpering.)

I exaggerate the limp and turn in circles like something's wrong. Dudley peeks in, shakes his head and moves on.

And I've got him right where I want him.

(Muttley Laugh.)

(The coffin.)

Nolan Blackwell was going over the events of the night. She had her body, her mind, her breath under control for the time being, and was using her time to work things out.

She replayed her conversation with the window, starting with ... had she really been talking to a window? Nolan Blackwell didn't think she believed in the supernatural.

**CASPER (cont.)**

Of course, she'd never had to really consider it before. Haunted Houses, Monsters, Ghosts, they made for good stories, but in the end they were always some two-bit crook with a scheme.

Nancy Drew didn't believe in spectres and, by extension, neither did Nolan. But the window had spoken to her, hadn't it?

**NOLAN**

It had conjured up Grandma Julie's ring, had somehow known it was at the pawn shop and had brought it to me.

No. There are two explanations for everything.

Someone else, maybe the gravedigger, could have known about the ring. He had seen Grandma Julie and I outside the pawn shop earlier today - God, had that happened today? How easy would it have been for him to go in and inquire.

No.

The window had also shown me the missing page from 'We Were Majestic.' And nobody could have known I was interested in finding that.

Ok. For now ... there is a magical, talking window.

Next clue.

**CASPER**

She thought back to the window's bargain.

**NOLAN**

"One year for a ring." One year of what? Life? My life?

**CASPER**

She thought about the Widow Stratemeyer's story: exchanging the lives of husbands for great wealth.

She thought about the box marked "Christmas Ornaments," a box full to the brim with pill bottles. She thought about Cousin Craig and Bethany Davis and the hidden economy built around prescription pills - pills that could be worth so much more than just cash.

**NOLAN**

And now I'm playing out the widow's story, with just a little bit of substitution:

The Gravedigger, a man with a scheme, slowly growing richer.

**NOLAN (cont.)**

If a man would give his life to bring greater happiness to the woman he loved - what would an addict give for one more pill.

Ok. A little grim, but a working theory.

Next clue.

**CASPER**

And now, Nolan was replaying that final moment before the hit had come.

Standing before the window, clutching a wooden stake. And then pressing the stake against the glass, making contact.

An eruption of brilliant orange light and flashes of images. An entire lifetime compressed into one, charged instant.

(MUSIC.)

**NOLAN**

I see a large window, it pulses bright orange, spider-webbed and bowing in.

It's a windshield, and beyond it, the blinking orange hazard lights of another car.

I feel pain. In my arm and leg. Broken bones, torn skin. But I'm not focused on the pain. I'm staring into a rear-view mirror, terrified by the complete and unnatural quiet.

I turn around in my seat, my body screaming at me and I'm reaching towards -

A car seat. Crooked and silent.

Find another clue. Piece it together.

I see a coffin. Comically small, completely engulfed by the flower arrangements that surround it. I'm standing over it, propped up by a crutch, my arm and leg in a cast.

And now -

I'm crying. Alone in a small bedroom. A daybed against one wall, a lamp with a short in it. Next to me on the bedside table is an open bottle of pain pills. If they're bringing any relief, I haven't noticed it yet. And then, someone else enters, a long, gray woman.

"Go and visit the house," she says. "Go and ask the window."

**NOLAN (cont.)**

Asking the window. Making arrangements. Settling terms.

“It’s only ten years. What a bargain. It could have asked for a hundred.”

And then... It’s suddenly ten years later. And I have a daughter I don’t recognize. The only thing that’s familiar is the pain.

All of it, individual flashes, shown to me by the window, arranged until a familiar life emerges. It fits the clues. A grieving mother. A bargain too perfect: a quick fix, a sure thing, a long shot. And at the end, a mother gets her daughter back. A new life.

Only, I don’t believe in words like “new.” New is a word that other kids get. A new backpack every Fall, new clothes at Christmas.

Me? I get “Good as new.”

A promise to replace stolen birthday card money. Donated items to make a guest bedroom feel welcoming. Delayed plans to move back home.

(NOLAN drifts back, returning to the coffin.)

A life, good as new, but still in a coffin.

Mystery solved. Now what?

(The Pound. CASPER moans and whines.)

**CASPER**

I pull back a little on the crying, let’s not overdo it, but keep up the limp. Dudley checks in again. This time I hide the leg like I’m protecting it and I don’t want him to see.

He steps a little closer. I hold my paw up like I can’t stand for it to touch ground.

And now I can hear a key turning in a lock.

Now you’re probably thinking:

“Casper, you’re a pretty classy dog.”

Why, thank you.

“You would never stoop so low as to sack someone who was coming to help you.”



**CASPER (cont.)**

God's the one who put this battering ram at dick height, not me.

The door opens and I spring forward.

(CASPER sacks DUDLEY. DUDLEY lets out a pained groan.)

Dudley drops to his knees and, Boy Howdy, I'm outta there.

I turn a corner, running into Dudley's office – and you're not going to believe this... there's a Tabby cat sitting in an open window. It must be my motherfucking birthday. I leap up, towards the window, connecting headlong with that Tabby and it obliterates into a hundred-million fluffy orange particles.

Alright, not exactly like that, but let me have this one.

I feel a pinch in my leg as I land, but I don't have time for that right now.

I gotta get back to my human.

(NOLAN. The coffin.)

**NOLAN**

Hey. Here's a surprising revelation for you: being buried alive... not that big a deal.

In the dark, feeling helpless...

Waiting for something terrible that you already know is coming...

Turns out, I'm pretty adequately prepared for that.

And then breathing gets harder and fear starts to creep back up.

Not a fear of what comes next, you're immune to that. A fear of being alone.

I can feel the window above me, watching me, knowing it's my only way out, waiting for me to cave and strike a bargain.

**CASPER**

I make it back to the old Stratemeyer Estate. On the corner of the street I pass the pickup truck. *Mars Majestic Cemetary* on the side.

I'm running up the steps to the house, but something feels wrong about it. Like birds that can sense oncoming hurricanes, every strand of fur electrifies.

**NOLAN**

I put my hands up to my face again and take in a deep breath. It calms me, a little. That smell ...  
Rose and mint.

**CASPER**

As she had been coming out of unconsciousness, struggling to stay awake and alert, there had been very little that Nolan Blackwell could do. But that doesn't mean she had done nothing.

(We hear NOLAN searching thru her satchel.)

Rummaging thru her satchel, finding the small tin can of -

(The POP! of the tin container.)

lip balm. In the seconds before the kick came -

(The GRAVEDIGGER kicks NOLAN'S hands. She screams.)

<< If I knew what was good for me, I wouldn't fucking move again. >>

Grabbing as much of that balm as she could.

Nolan hadn't been able to fight back when he had grabbed her ankles. She hadn't been able to stop herself from going in that coffin.

But she had been able to rub that lip balm into the earth as she went.

Smells tell us pretty much everything we need to know about a situation.

To the side of the house. I see a mound of fresh earth, newly turned over. And the faintest trace of... Nolan. I start digging. I mean, nose in the dirt, sniffing like mad and digging.

**NOLAN**

And now I can hear something new.

**CASPER**

You're not sure what evolutionary imperative is pushing you on, but you dig.

**NOLAN**

Scratching. Scratching and ...

**CASPER**

It's instinctive and you don't even realize but you're growling.

**NOLAN**

... Growling.

Casper!

**CASPER**

You dig faster – pushing yourself.

**NOLAN**

Casper, good boy!

**CASPER**

And now my leg is starting to twinge, but that doesn't matter.

**NOLAN**

I try not to elevate my heart rate, but I'm screaming now – Come on, Casper! Come on, boy!

**CASPER**

And it feels like tendons are being rended off the bone – a bone that could snap again at any second. You feel pain like you haven't felt in such a long time and you dig.

Because she is down there. Because she is family. Because she is all that counts. And so you dig.

And now the dirt is coming up wet and you know it's because the pads on your feet are raw and bleeding, But now isn't the time to quit, mother fucker, now is the time to tuck your head and get to work.

And dig.

Until the work is done. Until you've dug up this whole goddam town. Until –

(BANG!)

You hit wood.

(The lid blows off and NOLAN emerges, breathing deeply. CASPER sits off to one side, exhausted, clutching his leg in silent pain.)

**NOLAN**

Casper. Good boy. Casper?

(NOLAN comes to him, holds him until he calms. Takes his arm and tightens the bandage. They look at each other.)

**NOLAN**

You ok?

(CASPER licks NOLAN'S face.)

**CASPER**

Good as new.

**NOLAN**

It's 2AM, and I've just been freed.

Now this might be the time when others would go home, where others would cut their losses, grateful to still be alive. This might be the time when others would call the police and let them deal with it.

But that's not what you do when you're a teen detective.

Let's build a trap!

(end of episode.)

### **CREDITS**

Zoinks!

Written by Trey Tatum

Directed by Bridget Leak

Starring Jordan Trovillion as Nolan Blackwell and Trey Tatum as Casper

Part Seven: The Break-Out was recorded by Grayson Halonen

Zoinks! is produced by Queen City Flash out of Cincinnati, Ohio.

More information, including transcripts, can be found at [QueenCityFlash.com](http://QueenCityFlash.com)