

CASTLE - PILOT

She's armed.  
He's dangerous.

# CASTLE

PILOT

"Chapter One"

by

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

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ACT ONE

CLOSE ON:

A LANDSCAPE. Sand colored, stretching to a horizon of black. Very serene. And then we see a bead of red, rolling like a teardrop, and we realize this is no landscape. It's a body.

A GLOVED HAND reaches into a ziplock bag and withdraws a fistful of rose petals. The petals tumble slowly through space, landing on naked skin.

We follow the gloved hand as it picks up bloody clothing from the floor and stuffs it into a plastic bag. Bag in hand, the killer leaves the room.

We're left looking at the victim, a YOUNG WOMAN IN HER EARLY TWENTIES, staring out at us with lifeless eyes. And we hear a woman's voice whisper:

WOMAN'S VOICE (OVER)

Murder...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP, PUBLISHING PARTY - NIGHT

This is not your Daddy's publishing party. Waiter dressed as murder victims serve drinks, while hardcore hotties mingle with middle-aged men.

WOMAN'S VOICE (OVER)

Mystery...

A hush falls over the crowd. Around the room, GIANT PLACARDS display the PHOTOGRAPH of a handsome, roguish man - NICK CASTLE - and advertise his latest potboiler, "STORM'S END."

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

The macabre.

The woman, standing at the podium in front of the crowd, is GINA COWELL, 39 and holding. She's the President of Black Pawn Publishing.

GINA

What is it about a dark and stormy  
night that sets our pulses racing?  
What is it about a hard-boiled  
detective, a femme fatale, and the  
cold steel of a gun that keeps our  
bedside lamps glowing until the wee  
hours of the morning?

Waiting nearby is NICK CASTLE himself, late-thirties and a rock star of the literary world. Dressed in jeans, leather, and three days growth, he's the kind of trouble every woman hopes to find. And a couple of them have, much to his delight.

BLONDE

Are you really Nick Castle?

CASTLE

Are you really a blonde?

And somehow from Nick, it sounds charming. Back at the podium -

GINA

However the spell is cast, tonight we honor one of the masters of the form and celebrate the launch of "Storm's End," the stunning conclusion to his best-selling Derrick Storm mystery series.

Castle holds a SHARPIE at the ready as one giggling young beauty pulls her dress top aside to reveal a beautiful lace bra tastefully covering her breast. Castle grins and signs his name just above the bra line.

CASTLE

Call me when you're ready to wash it.

Gina glances over in time to witness this. A fleeting glimpse of disapproval crosses her face.

GINA

Ladies and gentlemen, the Master of the Macabre... Nick Castle.

Nick Castle trots up onstage to the applause of the audience. He and Gina exchange a kiss.

GINA (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Pig.

CASTLE

(sotto)

Witch.

The smile never leaves either of their faces.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Gina Cowell everyone. President of Black Pawn Publishing.

Another round of applause.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
(cutting)  
Isn't she something.

Castle looks out on the audience.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
You know, on the way over here tonight, it occurred to me... Detective Storm and I have been together longer than both my marriages put together. And when I thought of it that way, it made me realize something.

He pauses dramatically. Moved. Almost teary. And then...

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
(all smiles)  
No wonder I'm ready to move on.

Laughter from the crowd.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
Seriously. It's been a great ride. The book's a great read. And I look forward to seeing you all back here after I've spilled more ink and blood.

CUT TO:

FLASH. FLASH. FLASH.

Gina and Castle stand for the photographers. Gina speaks through her gritted smile.

GINA  
What kind of idiot kills off a best-selling main character?

CASTLE  
Are you asking as my blood-sucking publisher or my blood-sucking ex-wife?

The Photographer nods thanks. Immediately, the smiles drop.

GINA  
Is that what you're doing? Punishing me by killing the golden goose?

CASTLE  
I may be petty and short-sighted, but I'm not that petty and short-sighted.

GINA

Then for godsakes why?

As they move through crowd, people hand Castle books to sign.

CASTLE

I told you, I was bored.

GINA

You don't kill a billion dollar franchise because you're bored.

CASTLE

He wasn't fun anymore. Writing him was like... Work.

GINA

God forbid you work. You could've retired him, crippled him, had him join a frickin' circus! But no. You put a bullet through his head.

CASTLE

Big exit wound too. Real messy. Like Cortez burning his ships.

He grabs a glass of champagne for a passing tray.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Besides, Derrick Storm isn't the Golden Goose. I am. I wrote half a dozen best-sellers before him. What makes you think I'll stop now?

GINA

Oh I don't know. The fact the new book was due nine weeks ago?

CASTLE

You can't rush genius.

Gina pulls him aside.

GINA

I'm not hearing genius, Nick. I'm hearing blockage. I'm hearing you haven't written in months.

CASTLE

That's ridiculous.

GINA

My sources are very reliable.

Castle's eyes narrow.

CASTLE

Well, they're wrong.

But he says it a little too quickly.

GINA

They better be, because Storm or no Storm, you're still under contract. And if I don't have a manuscript on my desk in the next three weeks, Black Pawn is prepared to demand the return of your advance.

CASTLE

You wouldn't dare.

GINA

Try me, Cortez. Just try me.

As Gina walks away, Castle calls after her...

CASTLE

I already returned the advance. I spent it divorcing you!

Gina smiles at him and gives him a "Not my problem" shrug.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - NIGHT

NYPD PATROL CARS outside a pre-war apartment building in Chelsea. Uniforms hold back the looky-loos.

An UNMARKED CAR pulls up and out steps DETECTIVE KATE BECKETT, 29, street-savvy, confident. She crosses to the line and badges the UNIFORM.

BECKETT

Detective Beckett. Homicide.

UNIFORM

Apartment 217.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Beckett heads up the hallway, past Uniforms interviewing neighbors, to apartment 217. A couple of plainclothes are going over their notes. They are DETECTIVES TONY ESPOSITO (40s) and BRIAN McNULTY (30s).

ESPOSITO  
Beckett. Figured they'd send you down.

BECKETT  
Yeah? Why's that?

ESPOSITO  
Cuz. You like the freaky ones.

INT. APARTMENT, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

CRIME SCENE TECHS photograph the body of ALISON TISDALE. She lies on the DINING ROOM TABLE, nude, but covered head-to-toe in ROSE PETALS. Covering her eyes are two SUNFLOWERS.

ESPOSITO  
Alison Tisdale. 24. Grad student in  
Social Work at NYU.

MCNULTY  
Neighbors called to complain about the  
music. When she didn't answer, they  
had the super pop the door.

BECKETT  
Nice place for 24.

ESPOSITO  
Her father's money. Upper east side.  
Real estate.

BECKETT  
He couldn't spring for an alarm?

MCNULTY  
Top of line. It was off.

ESPOSITO  
No forced entry. No sign of theft. No  
sign of struggle. She must've known  
the guy.

A pregnant woman in her mid-thirties leans over the body,  
examining it. This is LANIE PARISH. The M.E.

LANIE  
Roses and sunflowers. Who says romance  
is dead?

Born and raised a Southern Belle, Lanie maintains a warm,  
friendly outlook despite her chosen profession.

BECKETT  
I do, every Saturday night.

LANIE

A little lipstick wouldn't hurt.

BECKETT

What is this? A slumber party?

LANIE

I'm just saying.

BECKETT

What'd she get besides flowers?

LANIE

Two to the chest. Low caliber. But here's the hinky part...

Lanie tweezes away flowers petals revealing the gunshots.

LANIE (CONT'D)

Fibers in the wound indicate she was dressed when she was shot.

BECKETT

Someone shot her, and then undressed her?

LANIE

Must've been a first date because that's as far as it went.

BECKETT

You find the clothes?

MCNULTY

We've got uniforms tossing dumpsters.

BECKETT

Fingernails?

LANIE

Clean. She didn't struggle.

ESPOSITO

What are you thinking?

BECKETT

I'm thinking you wanna kill someone, you kill 'em. You don't take the time to strip 'em and cover 'em with flowers, and you sure as hell don't leave the music blaring so the cops'll get here faster.

ESPOSITO  
Unless you're a genuine psycho.

BECKETT  
Or trying to send a message.

Something about the scene strikes Beckett. She stares intensely.

LANIE  
You okay?

BECKETT  
Does this look familiar to anyone?

ESPOSITO  
Familiar, how?

BECKETT  
Dead girl covered in roses. Sunflowers on her eyes?

LANIE  
I think that's something we'd all pretty much remember. Why?

BECKETT  
Because...  
(beat)  
I've seen this before.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP PUBLISHING PARTY, BY THE BAR - NIGHT

MARTHA HEATH (60s), a classic broad in the Broadway mold, touches-up her over-done make-up. A former actress on the Great White Way, Martha never made it nearly big as she thinks she did.

MARTHA  
Come on, dollface. Lemme give you a touch up.

ALEXIS  
No thanks, Gram.

ALEXIS CASTLE, 15, sits at the bar in a party dress, studying from a physics text book. She's a natural beauty, the kind of old soul more at home with adults than kids her own age.

MARTHA

A word of advice, kiddo. When it comes to real life, gals need makeup a helluva lot more than we need physics.

ALEXIS

What if I become a physicist?

MARTHA

Then not even makeup can save you. Look, it's a party. Let's at least gloss those lips.

Alexis relents, offering her lips to her grandmother.

ALEXIS

Feels more like a funeral, the way he's been acting lately.

MARTHA

He killed off his main character. Doesn't take Freud to see he's working through the five stages of grief. Anger, denial, booze, blondes, and rehab. Good news is he's up to blondes.

ALEXIS

I've never seen him this way. He's always been able to write.

MARTHA

That's debatable. "Hot lead poured from the cold steel." Let's face it, Shakespeare it ain't.

ALEXIS

Gram, I'm being serious.

MARTHA

Way too serious. Who does homework at a party?

ALEXIS

I have a test next week.

MARTHA

So do I. Liver function. You don't see me studying. Speaking of which -

She turns to the bartender.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Hey, sweetchecks. You hiding any gin back there?

BARTENDER

Sorry, ma'am. Beer, wine, or champagne.

MARTHA

Holy moley. No wonder the terrorists are winning. Alright. Gimme a hit of the bubbly.

CASTLE

Make it two.

Castle joins them.

MARTHA

Sales must be slipping, kid. They're only serving the soft stuff.

He may be a rock star to everyone else, but not to his disapproving mother.

ALEXIS

Hey Dad.

CASTLE

Hey sweetie.  
(turns to Martha, sharply)  
Mother...

MARTHA

Shh. Not so loud. I'm still hoping to get lucky.

CASTLE

Did you tell Gina I was having trouble writing?

MARTHA

I told her nothing of the sort.  
(off his look)  
I may have said you spend your days moping around the house in your underwear waiting for post time at Belmont, but hey, you're an artist. It's expected, right?

CASTLE

We had an agreement. I let you live with us and you don't talk about my work.

MARTHA

What's there to talk about? You haven't done any since I moved in.

ALEXIS

Gram!

MARTHA

Well, he hasn't.

CASTLE

Whatever I have and haven't done, I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't share it with my ex-wife.

MARTHA

Oh, what's the harm? If you ask me, she's still in love with you.

CASTLE

If by "love" you mean "hate", then yes, she is still very, very much in love with me.

MARTHA

Right. So what's the big deal?

CASTLE

You're missing the point...

Martha holds up her hand.

MARTHA

Hang on. I just got a hit on my Grey-dar.

She's locked in on a SILVER FOX (70s) across the room. Country club looks, spray-on tan. As he lifts his glass of champagne to his lips Martha scans his fingers.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Bingo. No ring.

CASTLE

Mom...

MARTHA

Later kid. Momma's going fishing.

And just like that she's gone.

CASTLE

You should have me committed.

ALEXIS

For letting her move in? I think it's sweet.

CASTLE

Won't be sweet when I strangle her in her sleep.

The bartender puts the two glasses of champagne on the bar. Castle slides one of the champagne flutes down to Alexis.

ALEXIS

You do know I'm only fifteen right?

Castle shrugs it off.

CASTLE

You're an old soul.

ALEXIS

Me and my soul can wait.

Alexis pushes the glass back.

CASTLE

You know, when I was your age...  
(he stops himself)  
Ah. Can't tell that one... Wildly inappropriate. Which is, oddly, my point. Don't you want to have wildly inappropriate stories that you can't tell your children?

ALEXIS

I think you've got enough of those for both of us.

CASTLE

Life should be an adventure.  
(beat)  
You know why I killed off Derrick? There were no more surprises anymore. I knew exactly what was going to happen at every moment in every scene. It's all become so goddamn predictable. Like this party. "I'm your biggest fan"  
"Where do you get your ideas?"

Alexis smirks.

ALEXIS

"Can you sign my breasts?"

CASTLE  
That one I don't mind.

ALEXIS  
Yeah, um, FYI - I do.

CASTLE  
Just once, I'd like someone to come up  
to me at one of these things and say  
something really unexpected.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Mr. Castle?

Castle turns to see DETECTIVE KATE BECKETT approaching with a  
pair of Uniforms. She holds up her badge.

BECKETT  
Detective Kate Beckett. NYPD. I need  
to take you in for questioning.

Alexis and Castle exchange a glance.

ALEXIS  
That's new.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Castle sits in an NYPD interrogation room. Green paint peels from the cinder block. Beckett enters holding some files.

BECKETT

Mr. Castle... You have quite the rap sheet for a bestselling author. A couple of drunk and disorderlies. Disturbing the peace.

CASTLE

Boys will be boys.

BECKETT

Says here you stole a police horse?

CASTLE

Borrowed.

BECKETT

And you were nude at the time?

CASTLE

It was spring.

BECKETT

And every time the charges were dropped.

CASTLE

What can I say? The mayor's a fan. But if it makes you feel better, I'd be happy to let you spank me.

BECKETT

Mr. Castle, this whole bad boy charm thing you've got going may work with bimbettes and celebutantes. Me? I work for a living and that makes you one of two things to me. The guy who makes my life easier or the guy who makes my life harder, and I assure you, you do not want to be the guy who makes my life harder.

She throws a photo down on the table of Alison Tisdale. Castle looks at it.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Alison Tisdale. Daughter of real estate mogul Jonathan Tisdale.

CASTLE

She's cute.

BECKETT

She's dead. You guys ever meet?  
Charity event? Book signing?

CASTLE

It's possible, but she's not in my  
little black book if that's what  
you're asking.

BECKETT

How about this guy?

Beckett slides over a PHOTO of a MAN in his 40s.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Martin Fisk. Small claims lawyer.

Castle examines the photo.

CASTLE

Most of my claims tend to be on the  
large side.

(eyes Beckett)

What's this got to do with me?

BECKETT

Fisk was murdered in his office two  
weeks ago. I didn't put it together  
until I saw the Tisdale crime scene  
tonight.

Beckett slides him a photo of the Tisdale crime scene. The  
roses and sunflower covered body.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

This is how we found her.

Castle leans forward, and recognizes the scene.

CASTLE

*Flowers for Your Grave.*

Beckett slides another photo of Martin Fisk lying face down  
in a pentagram.

BECKETT

This is how we found Martin Fisk.  
Right out of *Hell Hath No Fury.*

Castle looks up at Beckett, his tone serious.

CASTLE  
Looks like I have a fan.

BECKETT  
A really deranged fan.

CASTLE  
You don't look deranged to me.

BECKETT  
What?

CASTLE  
*Hell Hath No Fury?* Angry wiccans out  
for blood? C'mon. Only hardcore Castle  
groupies read that one.

He grins at her. She moves on.

BECKETT  
You get letters from these groupies?  
Disturbing letters?

CASTLE  
All my fan mail's disturbing. It's an  
occupational hazard.

BECKETT  
Sometimes in cases like these, the  
killer attempts to...

CASTLE  
(interrupts)  
Contact the subject of his obsession.  
I'm pretty well-versed in psychopathic  
methodology. Another occupational  
hazard.

(beat)  
You have gorgeous eyes.

Beckett doesn't take bait.

BECKETT  
So you'd have no objection to us  
looking through your mail.

CASTLE  
Knock yourself out.  
(off the gruesome crime  
scene photos)  
Hey, can I could get a copy of these?  
(off her look)  
I've got this poker game, mostly other  
writers.

(MORE)

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Y'know, Patterson, Grafton, King. I can't tell you how jealous these would make them.

BECKETT

Jealous?

CASTLE

That I have a copycat. In my world, that's the red badge of honor. The criminal Cooperstown.

BECKETT

People are dead, Mr. Castle. Doesn't that mean anything to you?

CASTLE

I'm not asking for the bodies. Just the pictures.

BECKETT

Doesn't it bother you that these people were killed because of you?

CASTLE

They weren't killed because of me, Detective. They were killed because some psychotic finally snapped. If it wasn't me, it would've been Black Sabbath or reruns of Full House.

BECKETT

I think we're done here.

Beckett heads out of the room. Castle watches her go, a little bit pleased he's gotten under her skin. We hear the flourish of a piano, accompanied by the strains, and I do mean strains, of a woman singing...

MARTHA (V.O.)

*It ain't so much a question of not knowing what to do.*

INT. CASTLE'S PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Castle enters his Penthouse apartment. From the living room he hears the sound of his mother belting out "I Can't Say No" from *Oklahoma!* (As we move through Castle's Penthouse, we'll notice that it is the home of someone who has a lot of money. Central Park West. Park View. Art. Gourmet Kitchen. etc.)

MARTHA (O.S.)

*I knowed whut's right and wrong since  
I been ten/ I heard a lot of stories  
and I reckon they are true/  
About how girls're put upon by men.*

Castle checks his watch (12:45am) and shakes his head.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

MARTHA is center room, dressed in a leotard and tights, performing like she's center stage at the Winter Garden.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

*I know I mustn't fall into the pit/  
But when I'm with a feller, I  
fergit!/I'm just a girl who can't say  
no! /I'm in a turrible fix*

At the piano is the SILVER HAired FOX tickling the ivories and drinking a Martini. As Castle crosses the living room, Martha notices him.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Hey dollface. Just showing Burt here  
how we did it at the Palace.

CASTLE

Does he know it's your theme song?

She makes a face at him, and then...

MARTHA

Five. Six. Seven. Eight... *I always  
say "come on, le's go" Jist when I  
orta say nix!*

Castle heads down the hallway.

INT. CASTLE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Martha can be heard faintly in the background as Castle enters and crosses to the fridge. As he grabs a can of WHIPPED CREAM, he notices Alexis at the kitchen table doing homework.

CASTLE

You're missing the late show.

ALEXIS

I saw it in previews.

He shakes the whipped cream can and sprays a mound of it into directly into his mouth.

CASTLE

Looks like we've got a new lead.

ALEXIS

His name is Burt. He does magic.

CASTLE

Let's hope he disappears by morning...  
*C'est apres minuit dans une school*  
night. Don't you turn into a pumpkin  
or something?

ALEXIS

Not if your Dad's escorted away by  
cops. How was the slammer? Anyone make  
you their bitch?

CASTLE

Sorry, Switchblade. I still belong to  
you.

ALEXIS

So you wanna tell me, or do I have to  
read it on the fan sites?

CASTLE

I thought we had a deal. Surf all the  
porn you want. Just stay away from the  
fan sites.

ALEXIS

Seriously, Dad. Are you in some kind  
of trouble?

CASTLE

Despite my best efforts, no. They want  
my help on a case...

He holds the whipped cream above her mouth, offering.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Baby bird?

ALEXIS

Already brushed.

CASTLE

Your loss.

He gives himself another squirt.

ALEXIS

What's the case?

CASTLE

Apparently, someone's been killing people the way I do in my books.

ALEXIS

Oh god. That's horrible.

CASTLE

Yeah.

ALEXIS

How many?

CASTLE

Two so far.

ALEXIS

Are you okay?

CASTLE

Yeah. It's just so senseless.

ALEXIS

Murder usually is.

CASTLE

No. Murder usually makes a great deal of sense. Passion, greed, politics. What's senseless here are the stories the killer chose.

And we see Castle is bothered.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

*Flower For your Grave? Hell Hath No Fury?* My truly lesser works. Why would a psychotic fan pick those?

ALEXIS

Maybe because he's psychotic.

Castle isn't sure. Alexis takes the can of whipped cream from her father.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Now, come on. It's bed time.

INT. ALEXIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Castle tucks Alexis into bed.

CASTLE

You call your mom back?

ALEXIS

She's coming into town next month. She wants to take me shopping. That okay?

CASTLE

What? And miss that awesomely awkward experience of being the creepy middle-age man loitering outside the dressing room of Juicy Jeans? Methinks I'll live.

Castle gives her a kiss on the forehead and heads toward the door.

ALEXIS

You think it was a mistake, don't you?

CASTLE

What?

ALEXIS

Killing off Derrick.

Castle stands in the dark. He doesn't respond.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

That's why you can't write, isn't it? You think you're never going to find another character that good again.

Again, Castle doesn't reply, but we see she's struck a chord.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

You will, Dad. I know you will. You just need something to inspire you.

CASTLE

Goodnight.

INT. HALLWAY -NIGHT

Heading to his bedroom, Castle passes by a doorway. He stops. Stares in. An empty chair is visible in the glow of a monitor.

A window is open on the computer screen. A document, blank except for "CHAPTER ONE." Castle takes a step, but can't bring himself to enter the room. Disappointed, he turns and heads back down the hall.

EXT. MANHATTAN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

A tower of steel and glass gleams in the sun.

INT. BLACK PAWN PUBLISHING - DAY

Posters of bookcovers line the walls. And of course, the company's logo, THE BLACK PAWN, is everywhere.

INTERNS hump bags of mail over to Gina and Beckett.

GINA

He gets about a thousand letters a week.

BECKETT

How does he keep up with it all?

GINA

Nick? He only wants the ones with naked pictures. We send a form letter to the rest.

BECKETT

In the last few weeks, anything odd turn up?

FEMALE INTERN

It's all odd.

BECKETT

How about death threats?

GINA

You've met the man. He positively inspires death threats.

INT. CASTLE'S OFFICE - DAY

"CHAPTER ONE" just stares at us. As he leans forward, Castle's reflection appears in the screen.

He's in a bathrobe sipping his coffee. His fingers hover above the keyboard, but then he clicks his writing window closed and opens a GOOGLE search.

Types in "Alison Tisdale". He starts making notes.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Beckett comes in with UNIFORMS carrying the bags of mail.

BECKETT

Set these up in interrogation three.  
We hear from the lab?

Esposito looks up from his desk.

ESPOSITO

DNA and prints are negative, just like Fisk. Guy was careful.

BECKETT

Any connection between Fisk and Tisdale?

ESPOSITO

Other than your boy there, no.

Esposito nods across the bullpen. Beckett sees Castle across the way, talking with CAPTAIN ROY MONTGOMERY -- African-American, mid-fifties -- Beckett's gruff but paternal boss.

BECKETT

What's he doing here?

ESPOSITO

Maybe he likes you.

Montgomery calls her over.

MONTGOMERY

Detective Beckett.

Beckett rolls her eyes and joins them.

BECKETT

Captain?

MONTGOMERY

Mr. Castle has offered to assist with the investigation.

CASTLE

It's the least I can do for the city I love.

MONTGOMERY

Given the circumstances, I think it's a good idea.

BECKETT

Sir, can I speak to you a moment? Privately.

INT. MONTGOMERY'S OFFICE - DAY

Beckett and Montgomery.

BECKETT

No. Uh-uh. Absolutely not.

MONTGOMERY

Detective...

BECKETT

I'm in the middle of a murder investigation. I do not have time to babysit some dime-store novelist who wants to play cop.

MONTGOMERY

I'm not asking you to babysit, Beckett. I'm asking you to use every resource we have to catch this son-of-a-bitch before we're knee deep in bodies, press, and Feeps.

(beat)

He knows his fans better than anyone. If there's a needle in that haystack, he may be the only guy who can recognize it. Do I make myself clear?

BECKETT

Yes, sir.

INT. POLICE STATION, BULLPEN - DAY

Beckett comes out and sees a smiling Castle.

BECKETT

What's so funny?

CASTLE

You got your ass chewed.

BECKETT

Hardly.

CASTLE

I read lips.

Beckett heads to interrogation. Castle follows -

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

- trying to keep up.

CASTLE

Look, why don't we just start over.

BECKETT

What's the point?

CASTLE

I think we got off on the wrong foot.  
I came off as a...

BECKETT

A callous self-centered jackhole?

CASTLE

Something like that.

BECKETT

Well, aren't you?  
(off Castle's look)  
Yeah. So why start over?

Beckett pushes through a door into...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

UNIFORMS are dumping the contents of the bags onto a large table. Beckett grabs some evidence gloves and pulls them on.

BECKETT

Okay, people. I want two piles --  
Ordinary fan mail here, and anything  
remotely threatening here.

UNIFORM

(sotto - to his buddy)  
This'll take hours.

BECKETT

You got somewhere else to be, Gomez?

UNIFORM

No, ma'am.

BECKETT

For those of you who haven't had the  
pleasure, this is Nick Castle, the  
writer and inspiration for our perp.  
He will be assisting. Feel free to ask  
him every annoying question you can  
possibly think of.

(beat)

Alright people. Let's go.

The UNIFORMS begin tearing in. Castle pulls on his own pair of evidence gloves and takes a seat by Beckett.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - HOURS LATER

We pan over stacks of letters. Envelopes litter the floor.  
Dead coffee cups scattered across the table.

But everyone is still at it. Beckett looks up and catches Castle looking at her.

BECKETT

What?

CASTLE

Nothing. It's just, the way your brow furrows when you're thinking. It's cute.

(beat)

I mean not if you're playing poker. Then it'd be deadly, but otherwise -

BECKETT

Can I ask you a question?

CASTLE

Shoot.

BECKETT

Why are you here? You don't care about the victims, so you aren't here for justice. You don't care it's your books, so you aren't here for outrage. So what? Are you here just to annoy me?

A beat as he considers her question.

CASTLE

I'm here for the story.

BECKETT

The story?

CASTLE

Why those people? Why those murders? Why my books?

BECKETT

Sometimes there is no story. Sometimes the guy's just a psychopath.

CASTLE

There's always a story, always a chain of events that makes everything make sense. Take you for example... Under normal circumstances, you shouldn't be here. Smart, good looking women become lawyers, not cops. And yet here you are. Why?

BECKETT

You're the novelist. You tell me.

CASTLE

You're not bridge and tunnel, no trace of the burroughs when you talk. That means Manhattan and that means money. Odds are you went to college, probably a good one. You had options, lots of options, better options, more socially acceptable options. And yet you chose this. That tells me something must have happened. Not to you - you're wounded but not that wounded. It was someone you cared about. Someone you loved. And you could've probably lived with that, except the person responsible was never caught. And that, Detective Beckett, is why you're here.

He can see by the look on his face that he's right.

BECKETT

Cute trick. But don't think that means you know me.

CASTLE

Point is, Detective, there's always a story. You just have to find it.

Beckett looks down at the letter in her hand. Scrawled on it are very disturbing childish pictures of murders, including the rose petal murder, the pentagram murder.

BECKETT

I think I just did.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. HOMICIDE BULLPEN - DAY

Controlled chaos. Ringing phones. HOMICIDE DETECTIVES working cases. Beckett's at her file-covered desk on the phone.

Castle's with Esposito by the board, re-examining the photos of Alison Tisdale and Martin Fisk.

ESPOSITO

You know in "Dead Man's Chest," when those fishermen find that body stuffed in a crabpot?

CASTLE

Yeah.

ESPOSITO

How do you come up with that stuff?

CASTLE

Congenital defect. My mother drank a lot of gin when she was pregnant.

(looks back at Beckett)

How about her? What's her deal?

ESPOSITO

Highest cleared case percentage. Youngest woman to make detective. I guess that's what happens when your mother's murdered. You end up working the job the way alcoholics work the bottle.

Beckett hangs up the phone.

BECKETT

Looks like we got lucky. They got a print off the letter.

CASTLE

Whose?

BECKETT

This isn't one of your books, Castle. Our system's backlogged. It'll take at least a week to run a match.

ESPOSITO

Assuming there's one in the system.

CASTLE

A week?

BECKETT

Welcome to reality, Superstar.

CASTLE

I never liked reality much.

Castle pulls out his CELL PHONE and dials.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Denise? It's Nick Castle. He in?

(to Beckett)

Like I said, the Mayor's a fan.

(into phone)

Yo, big cheese... It's Nickie. Good, good. Yeah. Of course...

He walks away as he continues the conversation.

ESPOSITO

Man's got the Mayor on speed dial. The rich really are different.

BECKETT

You want him? He's yours.

ESPOSITO

Oh no. A control freak like you with something you can't control? That's more fun than Shark Week.

Castle hangs up the phone and crosses back.

CASTLE

You'll have it an hour.

BECKETT

Mr. Castle. We don't do that here.

CASTLE

Do what?

BECKETT

Half the guys here are waiting for prints. We don't jump the line.

CASTLE

I think someone feels threatened.

BECKETT

(exasperated)

I'm not threatened.

CASTLE

No. I get it. I can call the mayor,  
you can't.

BECKETT

We have procedure. Protocol.

CASTLE

Yeah, and you always come to a  
complete stop and never fudge your  
taxes. Tell me, Beckett, you ever have  
any fun? Y'know, cut loose. Let down  
the hair. Drop the top.

McNulty nearby hangs up the phone.

MCNULTY

They just found another one.

EXT. ROOFTOP, POOL - DAY

A WOMAN floats face down in a pool. She wears a GREEN EVENING  
GOWN and a TIARA. A knife sticks out of her back like a  
dorsal fin.

CASTLE

*Death of a Prom Queen.*

Beckett and Castle stand with Uniforms.

UNIFORM

Maintenance found her about forty  
minutes ago.

BECKETT

We got an ID?

UNIFORM

Kendra Philips. She lives in the  
building.

BECKETT

Let's get her out of the water.  
(to Castle)

You. Wait over there. And don't touch  
anything.

CUT TO:

The woman's body is on the ground on blankets, lying face  
down. CSU scours the rooftop deck for evidence. Beckett,  
Esposito and McNulty speak with the MAINTENANCE MAN.

MAINTENANCE MAN

This time of year, no one uses it much. We were gonna drain it at the end of the week.

BECKETT

When were you up here last?

MAINTENANCE MAN

Yesterday afternoon.

BECKETT

That would've given the killer about a 24-hour window.

ESPOSITO

You mind showing us her apartment?

MAINTENANCE MAN

No. Of course.

Beckett starts to follow, but sees Castle hovering over Lanie as she examines the body. She sighs.

BECKETT

Anybody have a leash?

ON LANIE - examining the body. Castle leans in close behind her, startling her.

CASTLE

Sorry. Hi. Nick Castle. I'm consulting.

LANIE

Nick Castle, the author?

CASTLE

On my better days.

LANIE

Lanie Parish. Medical Examiner. I love your books.

CASTLE

Thanks.

LANIE

Y'know, you have a real gift with the details of death.

CASTLE

High praise from an M.E.

Beckett joins them.

BECKETT  
I told you to wait over there.

CASTLE  
I got lonely.

She turns to Lanie.

BECKETT  
You have a C.O.D?

LANIE  
Not until the full exam. But I don't  
think she was stabbed.

BECKETT  
She's got a knife sticking out of her  
back.

Castle jumps in.

CASTLE  
Lack of blood around the wound suggests  
she was dead before it was inserted.  
And there's no foam around the mouth,  
so we know she didn't drown.

LANIE  
Oh, you're good.

CASTLE  
She was killed and posed. Like the  
others.

BECKETT  
Mr. Castle. Can I have a word?

Beckett pulls him aside. Castle flashes his innocent eyes.

CASTLE  
Something wrong?

BECKETT  
This is a homicide investigation with  
multiple victims, not a day at  
Disneyland. When I give you an order I  
expect you to obey it.

CASTLE  
Then you don't know me very well.  
(looks at the body)  
Y'know, in my book the dress was blue.

BECKETT

Don't try to change the subject.

CASTLE

I'm not. Listen, did Fisk and Tisdale know each other?

BECKETT

We haven't found a connection, aside from your books.

CASTLE

What about motive?

Beckett's phone rings.

BECKETT

He's a serial killers. He doesn't need motive.

(answering)

Beckett... Yeah. You have an address? Yeah... Got it. Thanks.

(hangs up the phone)

We got a match off the print.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Beckett's car pulls up followed by SQUAD CARS.

INT. CAR - DAY

Beckett unholsters her gun and turns to Castle, vaguely threatening.

BECKETT

Stay here.

CASTLE

Scout's honor.

And Beckett is out of the car, moving with the cops.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Cops with weapons drawn flank a door. Beckett knocks.

BECKETT

Kyle Fogerty! NYPD! Open up!

No answer. Beckett steps aside and two officers slam a ram into the door. It bursts open. Beckett's the first through, weapon at the ready.

Moving through the apartment, the cops break off into different rooms, yelling "Clear" as they clear the rooms. We follow Beckett up the front hall and into the living room. No one's there. Beckett turns to see a BOOKCASE.

It's filled with Nick Castle books, and only Nick Castle books. Most are dog-eared from multiple reads. She pulls on gloves and takes one off the shelf. The pages are highlighted and notes are written in the margin.

COP

Detective. You gotta see this.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The cop opens a closet. Inside is a psycho mural collage of Nick Castle photos and crude childish drawings just like the letter Beckett found. It's a veritable shrine.

CASTLE

Well that's creepy.

Beckett turns around to see Castle right behind her.

BECKETT

You promised you'd stay.

CASTLE

What? I was never a scout.

COP #2

Detective.

Another cop pulls a garbage bag out from under the bed. Sticks his gloved hand in and pulls out bloody clothing. We recognize it from the Tisdale murder. Beckett checks the blouse, two bullet holes in it.

BECKETT

Tisdale's clothing.

And then the cop pulls out a gun. Beckett looks grim.

INT. GREEK DINER - DAY

A GEEKY LOOKING KID, oblivious to the world around him, mops the floor intensely while murmuring to himself. There's something a little off about him.

His mop hits someone's boot. Kyle looks up to see BECKETT.

KYLE

Careful, floor's wet.

She holds her badge up.

BECKETT

Kyle Fogerty. You're under arrest for the murders of Martin Fisk, Kendra Phillips, and Alison Tisdale.

The Uniforms move in to cuff him. Kyle turns to the restaurant owner.

KYLE

Mr. Papidakis, they're touching me.

OWNER

I'm sorry, Kyle.

KYLE

They're touching me! They're touching me! They're touching me!

Kyle starts to freak, screaming bloody murder, as the Uniforms subdue him. What the hell?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle Fogerty sits alone, rocking back and forth. We pull back and we're...

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

With Castle, Beckett and Montgomery.

BECKETT

State medical records say he's got pervasive developmental disorder.

CASTLE

That explains his fixation. PDD sometimes manifests in an obsession with a single subject.

BECKETT

Well your superfan also had a history of delusions. He was on anti-psychotics.

Esposito and McNulty enter.

ESPOSITO

I just got off with Social Services. Guess who his caseworker was?

BECKETT

Alison Tisdale.

ESPOSITO

Part of the volunteer work for her degree. She placed him in his job at the diner. Turns out Kyle didn't look too far for his victims. According to the owner, Martin Fisk and Kendra Phillips were both customers.

They move out...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MONTGOMERY

OK, let's get him a P.D. and send it up to the D.A.

CASTLE

What? That's it?

ESPOSITO

We got the guy, Chief. What more do you want?

CASTLE

The kid can barely mop a floor. How can you think it's him?

ESPOSITO

Oh, I don't know. He had the murder weapon and the victim's belongings at his house? C'mon. This one's airtight.

CASTLE

That's the problem. It's too easy. The reader would never buy it.

BECKETT

This isn't one of your books, Castle. We think what the evidence tells us to think. Out here, we find a guy standing over a body with a gun, he's the guy who did it.

They continue up the hall, leaving Castle a little stunned.

INT. PENTHOUSE, POKER LOUNGE - NIGHT

A poker game is in session. Cigar smoke in the air. We recognize some of the players - STEPHEN KING, JAMES PATTERSON, SUE GRAFTON, and of course, NICK CASTLE. King throws in some chips.

STEPHEN KING

That's twenty to you, Patterson.

JAMES PATTERSON  
You're bluffing.

STEPHEN KING  
Pay up and you'll find out.

Patterson tosses in chips. Castle just stares at his cards.

SUE GRAFTON  
Bet's to you, Castle. Castle?

CASTLE  
What? Sorry.

STEPHEN KING  
I know that look. Story trouble.

JAMES PATTERSON  
Should've never killed off Storm,  
Nickie. Shoulda crippled him.

STEPHEN KING  
Or retired him. The man was money.

CASTLE  
Just for that I'll call.

STEPHEN KING  
What's the problem?

CASTLE  
This thing I'm working on. Starts with  
a famous writer...

STEPHEN KING  
I like it already.

CASTLE  
Turns out some psycho is staging  
murders like in his books.

SUE GRAFTON  
A little self-aggrandizing, don't you  
think?

JAMES PATTERSON  
This is Castle we're talking about.

CASTLE  
The crime scene's clean. No prints, no  
DNA. But the psycho writes the author  
a fan letter and his prints are on it.  
(MORE)

CASTLE (CONT'D)

The cops are able to track him down,  
and in the apartment is all the  
evidence they need for a conviction.

SUE GRAFTON

OK. Then what happens?

CASTLE

That's it.

STEPHEN KING

That's it?

CASTLE

Yeah. They arrest him.

A beat. The other writers look at each other. And then laugh.

JAMES PATTERSON

Jesus, that's terrible. No wonder  
you're blocked.

SUE GRAFTON

Guy doesn't leave prints at the scene,  
but sends a letter with prints? Right  
there, you lost me.

STEPHEN KING

Yeah, I mean where's the twist?

CASTLE

Yeah, there's gotta be a twist. Like  
maybe this kid was set-up.

STEPHEN KING

That's what your story needs - the  
character that thinks the kid's  
innocent and keeps digging until he  
finds the truth.

A funny look crosses Castle's face. He smiles.

CASTLE

I know just the guy.

Castle lays his cards down on the table. The others groan as  
he takes the pot.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. POLICE STATION, DETECTIVE'S BULLPEN - DAY

Beckett enters to find Castle sitting at her desk, reading through her papers.

BECKETT

What are you doing?

Beckett snatches the papers from his hand and slips them back into their file.

CASTLE

Novelist's habit. Peeking through medicine cabinets, reading other people's mail.

BECKETT

My files are confidential.

CASTLE

Worse than that. They're boring.

BECKETT

Why are you here?

CASTLE

I just came down here to give you this. A little something to memorialize our brief partnership.

From his bag, he hands her a gift-wrapped box.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Don't look so suspicious. Go on. Open it.

She does. It's a copy of Storm's End. He opens it up to the first page.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Look. I even signed it for you. Not that I think you're a fan.

BECKETT

Thank you. That's actually kind of sweet.

He catches her with his eye and turns on the sexy.

CASTLE

Well...

BECKETT

Well.

CASTLE

Nice to have met you, Detective  
Beckett.

He leans in and gives her a kiss on the cheek, and walks  
away.

As she watches him go her face betray a little emotion. She's  
a little bit smitten. She sinks down in her chair, takes a  
moment and then turns back to her desk. She shuffles her  
files a beat and then...

Wait. Something's missing. She sorts through her papers a  
little panicked.

BECKETT

He didn't.

She looks through them again and her eyes narrow.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

He did!

She springs up.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

CASTLE!

INT. RECEPTION - DAY

Castle hears Beckett calling. He bursts out the door...

EXT. PRECINCT - DAY

And bounds down the steps, his arm waving.

CASTLE

TAXI!

BECKETT bursts out the front door to see Castle disappearing  
into the rear of a yellow cab. Beckett seethes.

INT. CAB - DAY

Castle looks back at her on the steps of the precinct and  
smiles a little grin. He reaches into his bag, pulls out the  
case files and starts to read.

EXT. NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Stone lions stand guard on either side of the stately steps.

INT. NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Castle sits in the corner of the long READING HALL with the case files spread out in front of him. He picks through the arrest reports, jots some notes, and examines crime scene photographs with a magnifying glass.

JEAN HILLPEPPER, a LIBRARIAN in her late 50s, places a stack of books on the table next to him.

CASTLE

Thanks, Jean.

The two of them go back a long way.

HILLPEPPER

Just glad to see you back. I was worried you'd stopped writing.

CASTLE

Never.

At the far end of the READING HALL, Beckett enters with two uniforms. She crosses to Castle.

BECKETT

You're a conniving, scheming, despicable liar.

CASTLE

You say that like it's my fault.

BECKETT

Of course it's your fault.

CASTLE

Would you have showed me the files if I'd asked?

BECKETT

No.

CASTLE

So you admit you left me no choice.

Beckett shakes her head, exasperated.

BECKETT

Cuff him...

Castle seems non-plussed as the uniforms begin to cuff him.

CASTLE

Mmm. Bondage. What's my safe word?

BECKETT

Nicholas Castle, you're under arrest on charges of felony theft and obstruction of justice.

CASTLE

You forgot "Making you look bad."

BECKETT

Y'know, for a minute there you made me think you were human.

CASTLE

How'd you find me anyway?

BECKETT

I'm a detective. It's what I do.

CASTLE

My mother told you, didn't she?

BECKETT

(to the cops)

No need to be gentle.

Beckett begins packing up the files, starting with the photo of a flower covered Alison Tisdale.

CASTLE

By the way, the rose petals in the Tisdale murder? They're grandiflora, not hybrid teas.

BECKETT

I'll make a note of it.

CASTLE

Yeah, you probably should. Because it means that Kyle Fogerty is innocent.

INT. UNMARKED CRUISER - DAY

Beckett drives. Castle's in the back seat in cuffs.

CASTLE

The kind of rose petal might not be important to you or to the murderer, but to a PDD with an obsessive fixation it would've been impossible not to get the details right.

BECKETT

So he was sloppy.

CASTLE

An obsessive's incapable of being sloppy about their obsession. The release comes from getting the details absolutely right.

Castle leans forward.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

If you ask me, these killing are the work of a second rate mind.

BECKETT

No one asked you.

CASTLE

The M.E. report says Fisk was strangled with a neck-tie, not suffocated by a plastic bag like in the story. And we both know Kendra's dress was green, not blue like it was in the story.

BECKETT

And the evidence all over his apartment? His knowledge of all three victims? I suppose you have a theory about that.

CASTLE

I said he didn't do it. I didn't say he wasn't framed.

BECKETT

And I suppose Elvis is still alive, and the CIA killed JFK.

CASTLE

Actually, Elvis killed JFK.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Establishing.

CASTLE (V.O.)  
*Swing low, sweet chariot, coming forth  
to carry me home.*

INT. HOLDING PEN - DAY

Castle sits on his cot singing, much to the chagrin of the others in lockup.

CASTLE  
*Swing low-ow-ow-ow-ow sweet chari-uht.  
Comin' forth to carry me home.*

GUARD  
Castle! Nick Castle! You made bail.

INT. POLICE STATION RECEPTION - DAY

Alexis and Martha wait with Beckett and Captain Montgomery.

ALEXIS  
Hello father.

CASTLE  
Hello daughter.

MARTHA  
Well, I wish I could say I was surprised. It's my fault really. He never had a father figure.

CASTLE  
That's not true, Mother. I had lots of father figures. I see you've met Detective Beckett and Captain Montgomery.

ALEXIS  
They've agreed to drop the charges, if you agree to behave.

MONTGOMERY  
No more interference in this case, Mr. Castle. Do we understand each other?

CASTLE  
Yeah. We understand each other. But tell me something, Captain. When did pursuing the truth become a bad thing?

Castle shoots Beckett a disapproving look. She shrinks from it a little.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
Come on. Let's get out of here.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Beckett watches the three of them get into a town car. Castle turns as he gets in and locks eyes with her. Then shuts the door behind him.

INT. HOMICIDE BULLPEN - DAY

Beckett's bothered. She takes a seat to find Castle's book still on her desk. She opens it. Then puts it down. Hesitates. And then picks up the case files.

INT. TOWN CAR - DAY

Castle dials his cell phone.

CASTLE  
New York. The number for Jonathan Tisdale.

ALEXIS  
What are you doing?

CASTLE  
If Kyle Fogerty was set up, then we aren't dealing with a serial killer. We're dealing with someone trying to get away with murder, someone who knew enough about Kyle Fogerty's fixation with me to use it to cover his tracks.

ALEXIS  
You're supposed to drop the case.

CASTLE  
But it's just starting to make sense! The killer had to have known both his intended victim and Kyle Fogerty. But the only victim that had any real knowledge of Fogerty's condition was Alison Tisdale. I think that's how he found out about Fogerty. I think Alison told him.

(into phone)  
No. In Manhattan.

There's a glee in Castle's voice. He's enjoying himself.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
I think Alison was the killer's target all along.

ALEXIS

What about the other victims?

CASTLE

Red herrings to throw off the cops. Even if our guy pins Alison's murder on Fogerty, the cops are gonna want motive. It's not open and shut. So instead of offing just Alison, he targets people that can be linked back to his patsy. No one looks for motive, because mentally unstable serial killers don't have motive.

(into phone)

Yes? Thanks...

He jots down a number.

ALEXIS

Gram.

MARTHA

It's no use, kid. Might as well enjoy the ride.

Castle hangs up the phone and dials the number.

CASTLE

But our guy had motive. He wanted Alison Tisdale dead. I just need to find out why.

ALEXIS

Dad, if I have to keep bailing you out, I'm gonna to seriously need you to raise my allowance.

CASTLE

(into phone)

Jonathan Tisdale, please.

ALEXIS

You need to raise it by a lot.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

PULL OUT ON: A photo of NICK CASTLE on a lobby bookstore display filled with copies of STORM'S END. CASTLE himself walks by, hiding behind his "famous person" sunglasses. His PHONE RINGS and he answers.

CASTLE

Castle.

INT. BLACK PAWN PUBLISHING, GINA'S OFFICE - DAY

Gina's on the phone overlooking the canyons of Manhattan.

GINA

Why aren't you writing?

INTERCUT: Castle crossing the building's ATRIUM.

CASTLE

How do you know I'm not?

GINA

Because you answered the phone. Now when am I going to see some pages?

CASTLE

What... crsshhh.... sorry...  
crsshhh... you're breaking up.

GINA

Really, Nick? Fake reception loss?

CASTLE

You're right. I'm sorry. That was childish.

And with that, Castle just hangs up the phone. He arrives at the RECEPTION desk where a pretty YOUNG WOMAN waits.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Hi. Nick Castle. I have an appointment with Mr. Tisdale.

The receptionist checks her list. Finds Castle's name.

RECEPTION

Go on up, sir. He's expecting you.

BECKETT (O.S.)

Is he now?

Castle turns to see Beckett walking toward him.

CASTLE  
This isn't what it looks like.  
(off her look)  
Okay. It's exactly what it looks like.  
But I can explain.

Beckett sighs. She heads toward an open elevator and gets in.

BECKETT  
Well, are you coming?

Castle looks around, confused, and then follows her into the elevator. The doors close behind them.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Beat. Castle looks at Beckett who stares straight ahead.

CASTLE  
Aren't you going to arrest me?

BECKETT  
I haven't decided yet.

CASTLE  
Great. What are you doing here anyway?  
I thought the case was closed.

BECKETT  
It is.

The doors open, Beckett steps out into...

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

CASTLE  
Oh I get it.  
(cracks a grin)  
You think I'm right, don't you?

BECKETT  
You know the difference between  
playing a cop and being a cop, Nick?  
It's important to you to be right.  
Whereas we can't afford to be wrong.

She lets that hang a beat, then...

BECKETT (CONT'D)  
So while you spent the morning, doing  
what? Playing Guitar Hero and drinking  
Bloody Marys?

He half nods, she's not so far off.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Yeah, I was re-interviewing witnesses, victim's friends, families, co-workers. Y'know, cop stuff.

She rings the doorbell.

CASTLE

What'd you learn?

BECKETT

Nothing to make me change my mind.

CASTLE

Yet.

JONATHAN TISDALE answers the door. He's a gaunt man in his late sixties. The last few days haven't been kind to him.

INT. TISDALE APARTMENT LIBRARY - DAY

Wood paneling, somber, with a God's eye view of the world. Tisdale, with sad and sunken eyes, holds a picture of Alison.

JONATHAN TISDALE

It's against the natural order for a man to outlive his own child.

BECKETT

Did Alison ever mention having enemies or being threatened?

Tisdale shakes his head.

JONATHAN TISDALE

People loved her. All she wanted was to make the world a better place and this is how she's repaid.

(beat)

I told all this to the other detective.

BECKETT

We're just following up.

CASTLE

Do you know of anybody who would've profited from Alison's death?

JONATHAN TISDALE

Profited? Mr. Castle, I'm rich. My daughter was not. She abhorred money.

(MORE)

JONATHAN TISDALE (CONT'D)

What little she had went to charity.

(to Beckett)

What's this all about? I thought the killer was in custody?

BECKETT

He is, Mr. Tisdale. Thank you for your time. We're sorry to have bothered you.

Beckett rises to go, but Castle holds his ground.

CASTLE

Mr. Tisdale, Fortune Magazine estimates your net worth at nearly a quarter of a billion dollars. Is that true?

JONATHAN TISDALE

I don't keep track day to day.

CASTLE

But it's in the ballpark.

JONATHAN TISDALE

I've been lucky, yes.

CASTLE

Out of curiosity, what happens to all that money if something happened to you?

BECKETT

Castle...

Castle shoots her a look - Just go with this.

JONATHAN TISDALE

Half my estate goes to my charitable foundation. The rest goes to my children...

(painful pause)

I mean my son. Why?

CASTLE

Just curious. Thank you for your time.

But Beckett knows this means something to Castle.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Castle and Beckett emerge.

BECKETT  
What was that about?

CASTLE  
He's dying.

BECKETT  
Who's dying? Tisdale?

Down the street is a Sabretts vendor.

CASTLE  
You want a hot dog? I want a hot dog.

Castle crosses to the hot dog stand. Beckett catches up.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
Two please.

BECKETT  
Castle...

CASTLE  
A Buddhist walks up to a hot dog vendor. Vendor says "What can I get you, pal?" The Buddhist says Make me one with everything.

She looks at him. What the hell are you talking about.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
The guy says that'll be two fifty. The Buddhist hands him a five and asks for change. The guy just smiles and says "Change comes from within."

With unbelievable speed, she grabs his nose between her thumb and forefinger.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
OW OW OW. What are you doing?

BECKETT  
Getting your attention. Now that I have it, what makes you think he's dying?

CASTLE  
Okay okay okay.

Beckett looks over at the hot dog vendor.

BECKETT  
No onions on mine. I'm not a Buddhist.

She releases Castle. He rubs his nose.

CASTLE

Okay. First clue - the pictures on the wall. He's thinner now. Sick thin, not workout thin.

BECKETT

His daughter was just murdered...

CASTLE

Second clue - the way he touched his hair. Like he was self-conscious.

BECKETT

You think it was a piece?

CASTLE

A good one, but it's new for him. The chemo's relatively recent.

BECKETT

So he's fighting cancer. That doesn't make him terminal.

CASTLE

It's a much better story if he is. You interview the brother?

BECKETT

There was never a reason to.

CASTLE

Well, now there is.

EXT. BROOKLYN DOCKS - NEW YORK

Cranes lift a shipping container off a ship.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Beckett and Castle get out of their car. Signs indicate that we're at TISDALE IMPORT/EXPORT. Out by the loading dock HARRISON TISDALE, late twenties, signs invoices while talking on his cell.

BECKETT

Harrison Tisdale?

HARRISON TISDALE

Yeah. Hey Mitch! Why aren't these pallets on the truck?

BECKETT

Detective Beckett. Nick Castle. We'd like to ask you some questions about your sister.

INT. HARRISON TISDALE'S OFFICE - DAY

Strictly functional. Papers piled on desks. White board calendars with routing info on them.

HARRISON TISDALE

Last time I saw her? About a month ago at Dad's.

BECKETT

Were you two close?

HARRISON TISDALE

Not really. Honestly, we didn't have much in common, aside from our last name. She always wanted to see the best in everyone...

CASTLE

And you live in the real world.

HARRISON TISDALE

That's right. Like that guy who killed her. She did everything to help him. Even brought him here and begged me to give him a job.

BECKETT

But you didn't.

HARRISON TISDALE

This is a business, not a charity. My employees mess up, I lose my bond.

(he softens)

I don't know... Maybe if I had helped him, things would be different. Maybe she'd still be alive. Or then again, maybe we'd both be dead.

BECKETT

How did your sister react when your Dad informed you he was dying?

Beat. We see Harrison's surprised they know but he covers.

HARRISON TISDALE

She was upset. We both were.

Beckett and Castle share a look. Confirmation.

HARRISON TISDALE (CONT'D)

What does that have to do with her murder?

BECKETT

We did a little digging. Your business is struggling. Your tens of millions in debt. With her out of the way, your inheritance stands to double.

HARRISON TISDALE

Is this some kind of joke? You already caught the killer.

BECKETT

Yeah, and the first thing his lawyers'll do is shift suspicion to someone else, someone with motive. And then they'll put me on the stand and ask me why I didn't investigate. Then the jury's gonna have doubts. You want justice for your sister, right?

HARRISON TISDALE

Of course.

BECKETT

Then you won't mind telling us where you were the night of her murder.

HARRISON TISDALE

I was traveling on business.

Harrison opens his desk drawer and pulls out a passport. He hands it to Beckett.

HARRISON TISDALE (CONT'D)

Check the stamps and you'll find I was out of the country for all three murders.

INT. BECKETT'S CAR - DAY

She drives. Castle's shotgun.

CASTLE

U.S. Passport.

BECKETT

Airtight alibi.

CASTLE

Absolutely unassailable.

BECKETT

And a total lie.

Castle looks at her, surprised.

CASTLE

What happened to "We think what the evidence tells us to think?"

BECKETT

I get him knowing exactly when his sister was killed, but the other two victims? He didn't pause. He didn't ask what the dates were. He didn't even look at his calendar and he was still ready with an alibi. In my experience, innocent people don't prepare alibis.

CASTLE

So what now?

BECKETT

I'll call passport control and check their logs. See if those stamps were forged.

CASTLE

That's not how he would've done it. It'd be too easy to get caught.

BECKETT

You have a better theory?

CASTLE

Second passport. Black market. Leaves the country on his own. Comes back on the other, commits the murder, flies back, and then returns home on his own. Airtight alibi. Perfect murder.

BECKETT

And almost impossible to prove.

CASTLE

Unless you find the passport.

BECKETT

If it even exists. If we're even right.

CASTLE

Oh, come on. We were having fun. Don't go all skeptical on me now.

BECKETT

Here's a fun fact. Judges don't grant search warrants based on conjecture. We need evidence.

CASTLE

That shouldn't be much of a problem for the youngest woman ever to make detective.

BECKETT

You just better be right.

INT. HARRISON TISDALE'S OFFICE - DAY

Harrison closes his office door and crosses to a wall safe. He spins the lock and opens it. Inside - CASH, a GUN, and ANOTHER PASSPORT. He tucks the gun into his waistband and pulls out the passport... A FRENCH PASSPORT. He stares at it a beat then sticks it into his shredder.

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. PRECINCT, HOMICIDE BULLPEN - DAY

Castle enters with a couple of Starbucks and places a Grande latte on Beckett's desk. She's just wrapping up a phone call.

BECKETT

*Oui. Oui. Merci.*

She hangs up and turns to Castle.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

That was the Paris hotel Tisdale stayed the night of his sister's murder. Housekeeping remembered him because his room went vacant for two days.

CASTLE

Paris is only a five hour flight.

BECKETT

I got the same story from the hotel in Mexico City where he was during the Fisk murder and the London Hotel during the Phillips murder.

CASTLE

I'm impressed.

BECKETT

You're not the one issuing the warrant.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

A TAXI pulls up outside an apartment building. The DOORMAN open the door for HARRISON TISDALE.

DOORMAN

Home early, Mr. Tisdale.

HARRISON TISDALE

Yeah, I'm a little under it.

(beat)

Anyone stop in to see me today?

DOORMAN

No. You expecting someone?

But Harrison ignores him.

INT. HARRISON TISDALE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Harrison crosses to his desk and sits down at his computer. He clicks open a file - photographs of KYLE FOGERTY and the victims. He highlights them and clicks delete. As he's doing that, he opens a locked drawer and pulls out a manila envelope. Inside it is a thick file folder. Scrawled on it tab in sharpie - "KYLE FOGERTY". Below that, on the line marked CASEWORKER, it reads "Alison Tisdale."

INT. NEW YORK SUPERIOR COURT - DAY

CASTLE sits on a bench outside the Judges' chambers, waiting. Across the way from him, sitting on a bench is a young boy and his mother. The mother is buried in a magazine.

Castle locks eyes with the boy. He makes a funny face. Beat. The boy makes a funny face back. Castle makes an even funnier face. The boy, not to be outdone, uses his hand to spread his mouth wide, and sticks out his tongue. Castle, getting competitive, pulls his lips up and his eyelids down.

BECKETT grabs CASTLE by the hand and yanks him off the bench.

BECKETT

You're like a child.

CASTLE

Did you get it?

Beckett nods to the paper in her hand.

INT. HARRISON TISDALE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Harrison is shredding the Fogerty files in his home shredder. He tries to feed too many sheets in, and the shredder jams. He switches his shredder between forward and reverse, trying to get the papers to shred.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

Beckett's car pulls to a stop around the corner from Tisdale's apartment building. Two SQUAD CARS pull up behind her. Beckett gets out of the car, followed by Castle.

BECKETT

Castle, do me a favor and grab the warrant from the glove compartment.

Castle reaches back into the car and pulls out the warrant. As he does, Beckett grabs his wrist and HANDCUFFS him to the grab handle above the car door. She smiles.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

This time you're staying put.

Beckett snatches the warrant and heads up the sidewalk.

CASTLE

OK. Very funny. C'mon Kate! Joke's over! Kate!

She rounds the corner and is gone. Castle looks at his cuffed hand, and then slides his other hand into his pocket and pulls out his wallet.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Cuff me once, shame on you. Cuff me twice...

He opens his wallet, fishes inside. Pulls out a HANDCUFF KEY.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

... Shame on me.

But the key slips and with one hand cuffed he can't catch it. It hits the ground. He goes to pick it up, but because he's cuffed his hand can't reach the ground.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Beckett, flanked by the uniforms, knocks on the door.

INT. HARRISON TISDALE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Harrison looks up from his shredding.

BECKETT (O.S.)

Mr. Tisdale. NYPD. We have a search warrant.

Panic on his face. He looks down. The file's only half-way shredded, and stuck in the shredder is the picture of Fogerty. Another KNOCK. Harrison grabs the papers, shredded and unshredded and shoves them into a garbage bag.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

Castle has his shoe and sock off and is trying to pick up the key with his toes. He's almost go it. No. Drops it. It's farther away now.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Beckett knocks on the door again. No response. Beckett looks past the UNIFORMS to the building's DOORMAN.

BECKETT

Open it!

The DOORMAN comes forward with his keys.

INT. HARRISON TISDALE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Harrison hears keys in the door. Clutching the trash bag, he picks up his gun, and looks around. Nowhere to go!

THE FRONT DOOR -

The door opens. Beckett enters the apartment followed by the cops. But there's no sign of Harrison.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

Castle's toes squeeze the handcuff key, and gently lift it up to his hand. He snatches it from his toes. As he goes to unlock his cuffs, he spots something strange -

DOWN THE ALLEY he sees HARRISON TISDALE quietly descending the building's fire escape, clutching a trash bag. No one seems to be following him.

CASTLE

Hey... Hey!

Castle quickly uncuffs himself and grabs his shoe.

INT. HARRISON TISDALE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Beckett bends down and examines the remnants of shredded documents on the floor. She puts her hand on the shredder.

BECKETT

Still warm.

Her cell phone rings. She answers.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Beckett.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

Castle dodges traffic as he runs across the street, cell phone in one hand, shoe in the other, racing to the alley.

CASTLE

He's coming down the fire escape.

BACK ON BECKETT rushing to the window. She throws it open and climbs out onto the...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

FIRE ESCAPE - Beckett spots Harrison below her.

BECKETT

Freeze!

Harrison looks up. Sees her. And jumps down to the alley. He hits pavement, but the BAG snags on the fire escape, ripping open. Evidence spilling everywhere. Harrison sees Castle racing toward him and Beckett descending from the fire escape. He turns and runs down the alley, with Castle chasing after him.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Castle, stop!

CASTLE

I got 'em! I got 'em.

Castle's still holding his shoe as he runs. He finally tosses it aside. Beckett swears under her breath as she finally gets to the bottom of the fire escape. She drops down to the pavement in time to see Harrison and Castle disappear around the corner. She chases after them both, gun drawn.

She ROUNDS THE CORNER to find Harrison using CASTLE as a shield, holding a gun to his temple. Castle's a tad sheepish.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Whoops.

HARRISON TISDALE

Stay back!

Harrison backs away, pulling Castle with him.

BECKETT

Don't be stupid. There's nowhere to go.

HARRISON TISDALE

I said stay back.

But Beckett keeps her gun trained on him. Harrison pulls Castle around the corner, heading for a subway entrance.

BECKETT

Castle, you okay?

CASTLE

Fine. Except psycho here needs a breath mint.

HARRISON TISDALE

Shut up.

CASTLE

No, you shut up.

HARRISON TISDALE

I'll blow your head off.

BECKETT

Castle, you're not helping.

They reach the subway entrance, Harrison pulls Castle down the steps, keeping him as a shield. Beckett follows. Some UNIFORMS have joined her.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Pedestrians scream and scatter. Castle's oddly calm.

CASTLE

What was it like killing your sister?  
I mean, your own flesh and blood.

HARRISON TISDALE

Shut up!

CASTLE

Must've given you nightmares. The look  
in her eyes when you shot her.

They've reached the turnstiles. Harrison yells at the attendant in the token booth.

HARRISON TISDALE

OPEN THE GATE!

BUZZZ. The gate opens and Harrison pulls Castle through.

CASTLE

But I guess the money was worth it.

HARRISON TISDALE

Self-righteous bitch would've given it  
all away to the ungrateful poor. She  
didn't deserve it.

CASTLE

And you needed it, didn't you? And then  
she introduced you to Kyle, the perfect  
patsy. already obsessed with murder.  
You know what your real mistake was,  
Harrison? A true fan never would've  
picked those stories.

A train screams into the station.

BECKETT

It's over, Harrison. Let him go!

HARRISON TISDALE

It's not over. Now drop your guns or I  
blow his brains out.

CASTLE

For chrissake. How cliché can you get?

And with that, Castle punches his elbow into Harrison's nose,  
and snaps his gun away. Harrison slumps against the subway  
train, his nose erupting in blood. Uniforms swarm him.  
Beckett storms up to Castle.

BECKETT

What the hell were you thinking? You  
could've gotten yourself killed.

CASTLE

I don't think so.  
(hands her the gun)  
Safety was on the entire time.

BECKETT

Why didn't you tell me?

CASTLE

I wanted to hear him confess.

LATER : Castle ties his shoe as the UNIFORMS haul away  
Harrison. Beckett crosses to him.

BECKETT

Well, I guess this is it.

CASTLE

It doesn't have to be. How about a  
dinner? We can debrief each other.

BECKETT

What? So I can be just another one of  
your conquests?

CASTLE

Maybe I could be one of yours.

BECKETT

It was nice meeting you, Nick.

CASTLE

Too bad. It would've been great.

She leans in and whispers in his ear.

BECKETT

You have no idea how great.

Smiling, she turns and walks away. Castle watches her go. there's a look on his face... something... He smiles.

INT. ALEXIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

3:00 a.m. Alexis wakes from a sound sleep. She hears noise from the other room. She gets out of bed.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Martha's up too, in her dressing gown. She puts her finger to her lips... shhh... and she waves Alexis over. Peering into her father's office, Alexis sees him in his writing chair oblivious to everything but his fingers on the keyboard and the words on the screen. Martha and Alexis share a smile.

EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS, MANHATTAN - MORNING

The sun rises over the city.

INT. GINA'S OFFICE - DAY

Gina enters her office to find a box on her desk. She opens the top to see the cover page of a manuscript. "Bullets and Bracelets" by Nicholas Castle.

INT. PRECINCT, HOMICIDE BULLPEN - DAY

Beckett's at her desk, reading a case file. CAMERA swings around her shoulder to reveal inside the case file is a copy of *STORM'S END*. She's on the last chapter and digging it.

MONTGOMERY

Beckett. My office. Now!

Startled, she closes the file.

INT. MONTGOMERY'S OFFICE - DAY

Montgomery looks over Beckett.

MONTGOMERY

I just got a call from the Mayor. Apparently, you have a fan.

BECKETT

A fan, sir?

MONTGOMERY

Nick Castle. Seems he's found the main character for his next set of novels. A tough but saavy female detective.

BECKETT

I'm flattered.

MONTGOMERY

Don't be. He says he needs to do research.

BECKETT

Oh no.

MONTGOMERY

Oh yes.

BECKETT

No way.

MONTGOMERY

Beckett...

BECKETT

He's like a nine year-old on a sugar rush... totally incapable of taking anything seriously.

MONTGOMERY

He did help solve the case. And Beckett. When the Mayor's happy, I'm happy.

BECKETT

How long, sir?

Montgomery nods over Beckett's shoulder to Castle, now sitting at Beckett's desk.

MONTGOMERY

That's up to him.

Castle grins and waves. We push in Beckett's "son-of-a-bitch" look, but as she turns away we see a hint of a smile.

END ACT SIX

END OF EPISODE