

Episode 7

19 / Ginny

After the incident with the intruders breaking into his house while his kids were home alone, Nehemiah Dunn asked the police department to send out an officer to watch his house during the evenings and evenings when he wasn't there. He thought again about leaving the whole business about the Correction behind. Keeping his children safe seemed like a good excuse for that. He couldn't help but think that his late wife, Waverly, would never forgive him if something happened to Tonya or Cody.

His shift ended before his kids got home from school, so he drove by the house to make sure an officer had been stationed as promised. Across the street from his house was an unmarked car with heavily tinted windows. Nehemiah drove past slowly and nodded to the officer sitting in the front seat.

Nehemiah didn't want to feel like he was giving up on something both his mother and father thought was important. At the very least, he owed it to them and to himself to find out exactly what he was handling — whether it was real history or wild fantasy. His father wanted him to have the book that was hidden in the lighthouse. When he had first laid eyes on it, he had felt that it was something enormous, huge, bigger than himself. But, now, as he looked at the old, leather-bound, handwritten book resting in the passenger's seat of his SUV, he felt that it was only a small piece of a very large puzzle. Now, he had to find out about the other pieces of the puzzle.

As he turned north on the New Jersey Turnpike, he felt like he was finally getting a grip on the mystery. Doing something made him feel like he was in control.

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It was late afternoon when he arrived on the campus of Columbia University in the City of New York. He found his way to Fayerweather Hall — a six-story building that housed the Department of History. He parked on a side street, tucked the book underneath his arm, and entered the building. The door of the first office he came to was ajar. He knocked.

"Can I help you?" said a woman who was sitting at a desk with her back to him. She didn't turn around.

"Yes," said Nehemiah. "I'm looking for Ginger Boone. She teaches here."

The woman held up two fingers. "Go up the stairs. Second floor. Fourth door on your right." She paused a moment and then said, "She likes appointments, so if you don't have one, you'll probably have to come back."

Nehemiah hadn't thought about calling ahead. "Thanks," he said to the woman and turned back to where the stairwell was by the entrance. As he walked back, students leaving and entering the building gave him strange looks, and he realized he had been in such a hurry to get there that he hadn't changed out of his police uniform. With all the violence on school campuses, he couldn't blame them for thinking that something was up with a man in uniform walking the halls.

When he arrived on the second floor, the fourth door on the right was closed. He knocked.

"I don't have any scheduled appointments this evening, so if it's not important, please put your name in one of the available time-slots on the board by the door," a lilting voice said.

Nehemiah scowled at the magic marker board hanging by the door. A gray nameplate hung above it; "Dr. Ginger A. Boone" was printed on it in white letters. He pushed the door open.

An elderly woman sat behind a nondescript office desk that was cluttered with papers and books. Her gray hair was gathered in a messy bun atop her head. A pair of emerald flyaway glasses sat on her nose. She peered over them at Nehemiah standing in the doorway. "If you're here to arrest someone, you have the wrong lady," she said.

"I'm not," said Nehemiah. "I'm here to see Dr. Ginger Boone...and it's important."

The woman peered at him intently. "Please take a seat. And, you may call me Ginny."

20 / Meeting

Bent against the brisk wind, Senator Rory Phillips walked into Kramerbooks & Aardvarks Cafe on Connecticut Avenue in Washington D.C. In his briefcase he carried a stack of research that one of his assistants had brought to him from Henry McAllen's office at Resurrection Cathedral in New York City. Only two people knew that Professor McAllen was likely dead by now. Of course, being the reasonable man that he was, Senator Phillips thought it was a shame that such a beneficial life had to end so abruptly. But, McAllen had refused to cooperate, and that simply could not be tolerated. Now, McAllen was dead (probably) and Phillips was in possession of his first-hand research into the matter of the Correction.

He, of course, had heard the news about the cell phone explosion in New York City. On one hand, that was troubling because it hadn't been part of his plan. But at least it would cloud the investigation into the disappearance of Henry McAllen further and serve Senator Phillips' purposes of remaining undetected in his quest to find the historical document that would transform the country.

He shoved the door to the bookstore open with his briefcase, nodded curtly to the clerk at the counter, and headed over to the cafe. A senior Senator was sitting alone at a table in the corner, a steaming mug of coffee on the table in front of him.

After brief greetings, Senator Phillips sat down. He ordered a cup of coffee, and when the waitress left, he quickly got to the matter at hand.

"If we could formulate the articles of the Correction into a bill and introduce it in the Senate and get our colleagues in the House to do the same, we could begin making major changes to America's system of government. It would be a second Revolution — not one won by guns and blood, but by reason and dialogue," Rory said. "As it is, with only the Constitution at our disposal, our hands are pretty much tied."

The senior Senator tapped his gold-tipped cane on the paneling. He was dressed in a brown suit and had tufts of white hair on both sides of his head. His name was Gregory Pierce. "Like I told you before," Gregory said, "before anything is done, you must find the original Correction. A copy is not good enough."

"I don't see why that is the case," said Rory.

"Oh, it is very much the case," said Gregory. "If the original Constitution were not preserved, we would never make progress as a nation. Someone would always be raising questions about whether the Constitution allowed for this or objected to that -- or if even the copy we had was a fake."

"I see," said Rory. "And what if the original has been lost?"

Gregory shrugged and spread out his palms. "Then, there's nothing we can do."

Rory Phillips cocked his head and eyed Gregory. "Are you sure you are one of the so-called 'thirteen'?" he asked.

"I am certain," Gregory said. "I have traced my family's lineage all the way back to William Pierce, one of the original thirteen who helped draw up the Correction or so they say."

"What made you do that?" Rory asked.

"When my father told me about this strange matter, I didn't believe him. But he begged me to believe him and made me promise I would pass the knowledge down to my children as well," Gregory said. "Before he died, I began to research my family's lineage to see if we were somehow tied to the so-called founding fathers, or at least those who would have been founding fathers if they hadn't left the Constitutional Convention early."

"I see," said Rory. He thought for a moment before continuing. "Do you believe the original document of the Correction still exists?"

"Why, of course I do."

"Then, how do you propose that we find it?"

"I believe that the Sunrise Society didn't tell anyone the exact location of the document. Instead, they provided a set of thirteen clues -- one to each of their descendants -- so that it would be necessary for all thirteen to come together or at least tell what they know in order to find the document."

"I see," said Rory his brow furrowed in thought. "Then we must find each of the families or at least find out what they know."

"I have an idea," said Gregory.

"What's that?" said Rory.

"Let's start with me."

21 / Investigation

Saundra Boone handed the cab driver a wad of cash and slipped away from the scene of the explosion. The NYPD had cordoned off a length of the street. Officers and emergency personnel swarmed in from side streets. A helicopter hovered between the tall buildings on either side of the street.

Still shaken from how close she had come to death or severe injury herself, Saundra found a payphone and called in a vandalism report for Resurrection Cathedral and a missing person's report for Henry McAllen, the rector of Resurrection Cathedral and an American history professor at Boston University. She had been on her way to meet with him to conduct an interview for the new book she was publishing for him at Hancock Press. When she had arrived at the cathedral, she found the offices deserted and McAllen's ransacked. His cell phone had been left conspicuously on his desk. Saundra had taken it, and her attempt to make a call triggered the bomb. Clearly, someone had intended to kill Henry or wounded him severely.

Saundra walked the rest of the way to her office from the scene of the explosion.

"How did it go?" asked her assistant who was standing in the break room with a remote control in her hand. She was watching coverage of the explosion on the TV in the corner.

Saundra paused in the doorway. She got a sick feeling in her stomach when a reporter announced that three pedestrians had been injured. An ambulance careened past the reporter on screen, and a few moments later, she heard the siren's wail echoing past the Hancock Press office space on Avenue of the Americas.

"Not good," said Saundra and she turned and headed down the hall to her own office. A few minutes later, she popped out again. "I probably won't be back in today," she told her assistant.

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Nearly four hours later, Saundra pulled into a parking space at Boston University. The late afternoon sun had turned the chilly day unusually warm. She pulled her sky blue cardigan sweater from the back seat and put it on as she got out.

She had been to Henry's office on the Boston University campus only once, but she remembered where it was. She remembered the wood-frame glass door that served as the entrance to the historical studies department. The inside was dimly lit, and her footsteps echoed loudly in the empty hall. She could hear the murmur of voices from behind closed doors -- classes being taught, meetings being held, advice being given.

When she reached the entrance to Henry's office, she peered into the opaque glass pane in the door. Inside, she could tell the lights were on, but she knocked anyway. Receiving no response, she opened the door, half-expecting to see evidence of vandalism here too. But she didn't. In fact, everything seemed to be in order, as if Henry had just finished his duties and left for home.

She walked around his desk and sat in his chair. His computer was on a small table behind the desk so that when she turned to it, her back was to the door. Swiveling around in the chair, she opened each of the drawers in the larger desk. The smaller drawers held pens, keys, paperclips, markers -- typical office supplies. The larger drawers held dozens of folders with students' names on them either printed on labels or scrawled in McAllen's handwriting.

Nothing out of the ordinary here, she thought.

Leaving the larger drawers open, she swiveled around to the computer desk and tapped the keyboard. The monitor lit up showing her McAllen's e-mail program with the university's logo in the upper right-hand corner.

So the last thing he did was check his e-mail, Saundra surmised. She knew it was probably illegal to read someone's e-mail without their permission. But if the man was missing and probably in danger, she supposed no one would blame her for scrolling through his inbox. Resolving only to check those messages that could possibly aid her in her investigation, she scrolled through the list of messages. From the first unchecked message, she could tell Henry hadn't checked his e-mail for at least forty-eight hours. Nothing jumped out at her in the inbox.

She tensed when she heard voices passing in the hall and wondered if there was a lock on the door. Looking over her shoulder, she saw that there was, and wondered why the door hadn't been locked when she arrived. If he was forced out, he wouldn't have had time to lock the door, she thought, and a shudder ran through her body.

The voices passed in the hall, and she relaxed, turning her attention back to Henry's computer. Only a few more minutes, she clicked the 'Sent' folder. Nothing piqued her interest, and she felt a hint of disappointment. She browsed Henry's desktop and then returned to the e-mail program. Leaning back in Henry's chair, she stared at the screen wondering what to do next. It seemed that her hasty trip to Boston had been a waste.

She suddenly noticed there was a number "1" beside the Drafts folder icon on the e-mail client. Impulsively, she clicked it. Ah here was something. There was a solitary message in the folder. The subject read: "Re: Sunrise Society."

She clicked the unfinished composition and began to read. Hearing voices and footsteps in the hall again, she decided she had overstayed her welcome. She quickly searched for the 'Print' option and pulled out her cell phone to call her mother.

"Hello, Saundra. Is this important?" her mother answered. "I'm kind of occupied --"

"Yes, it's important," Saundra said quickly keeping her voice low. "You remember Henry McAllen?"

"Yes, I do. You told me about him," her mother said.

The footsteps in the hall drew nearer. "Good. I need to know everything you know about the Sunrise Society." After fumbling through a few dialog boxes, Saundra found the one that sent the draft message to Henry's printer.

"What? Why?" said her mother. "It's not that much anyway."

"Anything will help," Saundra said as she cradled the phone against her ear and reached for the paper coming out of the printer.

A knock sounded against the door. "Dr. McAllen?" a male voice called.

Probably a student looking for his teacher, Saundra thought. "He's not here," she called out without thinking. Realizing what she had done, she hurriedly swiped the printed out sheets from the printer and pushed the power button on the monitor.

The door knob turned and the door creaked open. Saundra whirled to face the visitor.

The man was tall and swarthy-skinned; his hair was dark and his eyes bright. He had a vicious-looking scar that ran from his forehead to his nose. "Hello, Saundra," he said. "I had a feeling I would find you here." He held out his hand. "Come, let's go see our good friend, Henry McAllen."