



THE THIRD TREE

written by **m.lathrom**

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FADE IN:

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

WILLIAM GLOVER (42), holds a Bible in one hand, a shovel in the other. The sun sets behind the pine trees that line the field. William wears a worn hemp shirt and rugged jeans. His breathing a bit panicked.

The shadow of the tallest trees shift with the sun.

William watches it. Checks his old timepiece.

CLOSE ON HIS WATCH. The big hand at 6. The minute hand strikes 45.

MAN (V.O.)

What if you could know everything?
The outcome of every decision you'd
ever make?

The shadow moves over the waving wheat. He checks the watch, then the shadow again.

He flips open the Bible. Drawings all over pages in Genesis. What looks like a map. Lines and circles connect. Strange symbols scatter the page. He slaps it closed.

He struts to the tip of the tallest tree's shadow.

Stakes his shovel on the spot.

LATER

William stomps on the shovel in the 3 foot hole. Tosses out a chunk of earth. He shoves it back in. THUD.

He kneels down, wipes away the dirt. A brown chest with leather straps and metal buckles.

MAN (V.O.)

What would you do?

He checks his watch.

CLOSE ON HIS WATCH. The second hand ticks. Ticks. Slows. Stops.

He taps the glass face. Nothing.

Worry washes over him as he peers down at the chest.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

An old farm house. William unbuckles the chest that sits on the table.

He cracks it open. Peers inside.

ANGLE ON THE CHEST. He lifts the lid to reveal a plump, orange peach. The peach has a delicious glow. A single leaf comes from the small stem. Perfect.

Next to it, an old revolver.

OTHER MAN (V.O.)
Well, there'd only be one thing
left worth doing.

William eyes the peach with fear. He reaches in, plucks the leaf off.

MAN (V.O.)
And what's that?

The leaf dissolves into ash in his hand.

A new leaf sprouts from the peach's stem.

William panics, slams the chest shut.

Another man's voice emerges in response.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The chest sits in the back of a country truck with a wooden flatbed. Straps hold it in place. A tarp covers it.

The truck drives off.

William watches it disappear down the dirt road.

INT. BIPLANE - DAY

The shaggy PILOT (51) peers back at his load. Among the boxes sits the chest. He smirks.

EXT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - DAY

A DELIVERY GUY (46) dollies the chest down the ramp.

He trucks it to the entrance of the luxury apartment building.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

A hand signs the delivery slip.

MAN (O.S.)
And if I find any damage?

The delivery guy snatches the slip, walks off.

DELIVERY GUY
Get it fixed.

THOMAS FINE (37), a chiseled, affluent man in a suit, slides the chest inside.

The apartment is vast and modern. Original artworks scatter the interior along with antiques and artifacts. The furniture is minimal to make room for the collections.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The chest rests on the large, oak table.

Thomas takes in the moment, examines the chest.

He unbuckles it with care. Cracks it open.

Inside, the divine peach rests next to the revolver.

Thomas takes the peach with care. Rubs it's soft surface. Smells it.

He sets it down on a plate in front of him.

He takes the revolver. Flips open the loader. A single golden bullet in the chamber. He peers at it, curious, then sets it down next to the plate, where the silverware would go.

He takes a seat. Lifts the peach. Brings it to his mouth.

Takes a bite. The juice runs down his chin. Satisfaction on his face. He swallows, then...

Opens his mouth, as if unable to breath. His eyes shoot open. His pupils dilate, the glow orange.

A flash of light as we zoom into his eye.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Thomas laughs with a woman in a restaurant.

B) Thomas holds a child in his arms in a hospital delivery room.

C) Thomas, older, in the subway. A grungy man runs up to him, stabs him, raids his pockets, runs off.

D) Thomas jumps into a pool. A scar across his stomach.

E) Thomas, grips his chest, falls to his knees. A heart attack.

BACK TO SCENE

The orange light from his pupils dies out. His expression goes blank.

OTHER MAN (V.O.)

Well, if you knew everything that was going to happen. If you really knew the future, there'd only one decision left worth making.

THOMAS (V.O.)

And what's that?

OTHER MAN (V.O.)

The last one.

Thomas grabs the revolver, sticks the gun in his mouth, pulls the trigger. BANG.

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END