

Underwood and Flinch: Night Crossing.

Smashwords Edition

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Night Crossing

On a chill night in the spring of 1958, the cargo ship *Glenmalloch* sounded its foghorn as it had done every ten minutes for the last twelve hours and edged slowly onward through mist towards Spain. The ship had left the Algerian port of Oran the previous morning carrying a cargo of fresh fruit, dates and tobacco; it also carried seven passengers, the majority of whom were in their cabins getting ready for dinner. However, two passengers stood alone at the stern. The men were dressed in formal black suits. The taller man appeared to be in his late thirties, while the shorter, who also wore a black overcoat, looked about ten years older. There was an attitude of stoical regret about both men, as if misfortune had recently come to visit and was now reluctant to leave.

'I'm so sorry, Lord Underwood,' said the shorter man as he extended his hands to take the body of the cat.

Underwood handed him the corpse and sighed. 'Never mind, Flinch. I know you did all you could. Let's just forget about it, shall we?'

'I know you're not fond of –'

'Really Flinch, forget it,' Underwood drew his watch from his waistcoat pocket and flipped it open. The second hand wasn't moving and he tapped gently at the scratched face. The hand began to move. He smiled. 'What time do you have, Flinch?'

Flinch dropped the cat over the side of the ship and checked his wristwatch. 'It's just after eight-thirty, sir.'

'Hmm,' Underwood adjusted his watch, wound it and put it back in his pocket. 'And what's our current speed? Any idea?'

'Five knots, sir.'

'Five knots?'

Underwood looked over the side and down at the sea. The ship's slow-churning wake confirmed Flinch's report.

'It's the fog, sir. A necessary precaution, I'm told.'

Underwood ran a finger along the hand rail and looked up at the single red and black funnel as the fog horn again sounded its low, two-note warning. 'I see. So what does that

make our estimated time of arrival?’

‘We should reach Malaga in about two hours, sir.’

‘Oh damn. I’d hoped we’d be there by now.’

‘Yes, sir. It is regrettable.’

‘Oh well, never mind, eh?’ Underwood began to reach for his cigarette case when he noticed the blood on his hands. ‘Oh, dear. Do you have a hanky or something, Flinch?’

Flinch pulled a white handkerchief from the breast pocket of his jacket and passed it to his master without a word.

‘Thank you.’ Underwood wiped the blood from his hands and then inspected the soiled handkerchief. ‘Sorry, Flinch,’ he handed it back. ‘I’ll get you a replacement when we reach port.’

‘Very kind, sir,’ said Flinch, folding the handkerchief in such a way as to conceal the bloodstains before popping it back into his pocket.

Underwood reached into the inside pocket of his jacket and took out his silver cigarette case. ‘Fag?’

‘Oh, don’t mind if I do, sir.’ Flinch accepted one of the proffered cigarettes and took out his lighter. He extended the flame to Underwood, who leaned forward to meet it.

For a moment, the flame illuminated a pale, handsome face, though one with an impression of being somewhat undernourished; the cheeks were sunken beneath high, sharp cheekbones. His hair was dark, parted from the left and fashionably slick with Brylcreem that shone in the light from Flinch’s flame.

His cigarette lit, Underwood stepped back. Flinch lit his own cigarette and slipped the lighter back into his pocket. ‘Everything go all right with the car?’ Underwood asked. ‘I didn’t really notice earlier on.’

‘Everything’s fine, sir. It’s lashed securely to the cargo hatch. Not that there’s much chance of it rolling around the deck in this weather.’

‘No indeed. What about the other things? How’s the move going?’

‘All very well, sir. Most of it is, as you know, coming by sea in the next few months. Until then, we’ll have to make do with what’s already in the house.’

‘You mean *you’ll* have to make do, such things are hardly my concern.’

‘No, sir.’ There was a note of regret in Flinch’s voice and he looked down at his shoes. He noticed a spot of blood on his left toecap and he took out the already-stained handkerchief and bent to wipe it off. He gave the shoe a brief, cursory polish before rising again with an air of complete composure.

‘Don’t worry, Arthur,’ said Underwood, smiling. ‘It’s got everything you could possibly need. You’ve been in touch with Senor Hernandez?’

‘Yes, sir. His handwriting is a little cryptic, or perhaps just his turn of phrase, but he reports everything is ready and awaiting your arrival. Other members of the Sect are making themselves very useful in the area. Besides Hernandez in Ronda, we have Senor Lago, a notary in Almacena itself, and a retired couple who are going to be helping out around the house and estate.’

‘Good show.’ Underwood took a drag on his cigarette. Then his eyes narrowed as, over Flinch’s shoulder, he noticed a figure in the shadows further down deck. ‘I say, have you noticed anything queer about any of the other passengers?’

Flinch frowned. ‘No sir.’

‘No one asking any questions?’

‘No. Might I ask why, sir?’

Underwood watched as the figure, perhaps sensing he had been seen, receded into the mist. ‘Don’t look now, Arthur, but I think we’re being watched.’

‘Watched, sir?’

‘Yes. Chap about twenty yards behind you, wearing a bowler hat.’

Flinch nodded slowly. ‘I think I know the fellow, sir. I caught his eye once or twice this afternoon.’

‘No contact though?’

‘No, sir. Not a sausage.’

‘Hmmm, I see.’

‘Is he still there, sir?’

‘No, he’s gone.’

Flinch turned to look but there was nothing other than the mist. He reached into his pocket and a second later the blade of his flick-knife snapped open. ‘Shall I ask to see his ticket, my Lord? Perhaps punch it?’

‘That won’t be necessary, Flinch. They’ll be serving dinner soon and I’m sure you’d rather murder a nice steamed steak pudding, hmm?’

‘I’m not overly hungry, sir. I ate a most satisfying luncheon.’

‘Did you, indeed? Well, I’m famished. So, why don’t you toddle off now and get yourself ready for dinner, okay?’

‘But what about the snooper, sir?’

Underwood smiled. ‘Oh, don’t concern yourself with him. I think I might seek him out myself. Perhaps he’d like to join me for dinner?’

Flinch nodded and closed the blade of his knife. ‘Right you are then, sir.’ He bowed slightly before turning and walking off in the direction of his cabin.

Underwood watched him go, and then rubbed his hands briskly together. The mist was chill and damp and he wished he’d had Flinch bring him along a warm coat. Still, he’d soon warm up. He slipped his hands into his trouser pockets and struck out in the direction in which he’d seen their observer skulk off a few minutes earlier.

His search was brief; as he turned the corner, he almost ran straight into him. The man started and Underwood held up his hands in apology. ‘Oh. I do beg your pardon. I was just out for a vigorous stroll around the deck. I didn’t expect anyone else to be about; it’s such a dismal evening.’

The man in the bowler hat laughed nervously. ‘Oh well, no harm done.’ He made as if to continue, but Underwood laid a hand on his arm.

‘I say, pardon me, but have we met before somewhere?’

The man frowned. ‘I don’t think so.’

‘You’re English, aren’t you?’

‘Well, yes, but, er ...’

Underwood smiled. ‘I know, England’s not exactly a goldfish bowl, is it? But I was just thinking perhaps we’d met in Algeria. You know, ex-pats, small communities?’

‘I’m sorry, I’m not an ex-pat.’

‘Oh, really?’

‘Yes, I’m afraid you’re mistaken. Good evening.’ The man again attempted to walk away.

‘So, are you here on business or pleasure?’

The man stopped and turned back. ‘If you must know, I’m travelling on business.’

‘Ahhh, I thought as much,’ Underwood chuckled. ‘I do hope you don’t mind me being so forward, but as soon as I saw the bowler I thought, ah, there’s a fellow Englishman.’

‘Really? Well, congratulations.’

‘Thank you. May I ask what business you’re in?’

‘Carpets.’

‘Oh? How interesting.’

‘Not really. Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m late for dinner.’ The man turned and walked

on.

‘I mean,’ Underwood persisted, walking after him. ‘It’s interesting because I thought you may be something else. A detective perhaps.’

The man stopped. He answered without turning. ‘Oh?’

‘Yes. I wondered if perhaps you might be following my companion and I?’

The man turned and looked back. He frowned. ‘Whatever gave you that idea?’

‘Oh, I don’t know, just the way you were watching us earlier on. I thought perhaps you might be a sleuth of some sort, perhaps from Scotland Yard.’

The man smiled uncertainly. ‘You have a vivid imagination, sir.’

‘Yes, I do.’ Underwood strolled up to the man and extended his hand. ‘My name’s Underwood.’

The man looked at the hand for a moment before taking it. ‘Jenkins. Harry Jenkins.’

‘Of the Yard?’

‘No, nothing so grand, Mr Underwood.’

‘It’s Lord Underwood, actually. Sorry, I should have mentioned that earlier. I keep forgetting; you’ve no idea who I am.’

Jenkins raised his eyebrows. ‘Oh, a Lord, eh? I didn’t notice a Lord on the passenger manifest.’

‘Really, Mr Jenkins? Why were you looking at the passenger manifest?’

‘I, er, I always like to know who I’m travelling with. It pays to know.’

‘Oh yes, always on the lookout for a potential carpet sale eh?’ Underwood took out his cigarettes and opened the case to Jenkins. ‘Fag?’

‘Thank you.’ Jenkins took one and reached into his coat pocket for a box of matches.

‘So, er, as I was saying, your Lordship. It’s strange, you not being on the passenger manifest. I’d have thought you’d have been at the top of the list, being a member of the aristocracy and all.’ He struck a match and cupped it for Underwood.

‘I like to keep a low profile when I’m travelling, Mr Jenkins,’ Underwood lit his cigarette. ‘I asked for my name to be kept off the list and the shipping company obliged. The captain and crew are well aware of my being here.’

‘I see. So, no red carpet treatment for you when you came aboard then?’

‘No.’

‘But they must have given you some kind of a welcome, surely?’

‘Of course.’

‘They did? Oh. It’s just that I didn’t see you come aboard, sir. I saw your friend alright, the undertaker chap, and I watched as they winched that hearse of his aboard. But I didn’t see you anywhere.’

‘Ah, so you are watching us, then, Mr Jenkins.’

Jenkins chuckled. ‘Well, a hearse swinging in a net isn’t exactly everyday cargo, your Lordship. A number of us were watching it, not just me.’

‘Yes. Yes, I suppose it is a little unusual.’

Jenkins nodded. For a few moments the two men stood silently smoking; regarding each other like chess players with cool aplomb. Then Jenkins dropped his cigarette and ground it out underfoot. ‘Well, I think I’d better be getting along, your Lordship. I don’t want to be late for dinner. Nice to meet you and er, thank you for the cigarette.’ Jenkins touched the brim of his hat and turned.

‘Yes. Nice to meet you too, Mr Jenkins.’ Underwood watched the other man walk for a moment before flicking his cigarette away and calling out. ‘Oh, Mr Jenkins?’

With an air of annoyance, Jenkins stopped and turned back. ‘Yes?’

Underwood took a step towards him, moving into a pool of light from an overhead bulb. His sunken face fell into the shadow of his brow, yet his eyes shone, reflecting light from

some unseen source. ‘Come here.’ His tone was casual, but firm.

Jenkins swayed slightly with the gentle motion of the ship, his eyes held by Underwood’s. Then he walked slowly back to where he was bidden. When he stood face to face with Underwood, he stopped.

‘What is your business?’ asked Underwood.

‘I’m a detective.’ Jenkins’ tone was flat, devoid of emotion.

‘A police detective?’

‘No. I’m self-employed.’

‘Who hired you?’

‘Mr and Mrs Haverlay, of Knightsbridge, London.’

‘Why?’

‘Their daughter was murdered in Oran by an Englishman, believed to be a gentleman or perhaps a confidence trickster posing as a member of the aristocracy.’

‘And you believe me to be this man?’

‘Yes.’

‘Do you have any evidence to support your belief?’

‘Some people have described you, named you as being a likely suspect.’

‘But nothing more concrete?’

‘No. Not relating to Miss Haverlay. But I have since linked you to other murders in Algeria and Tunisia.’

‘Have you now?’

‘Yes.’

‘And you suspect me of being – what? A homicidal maniac, is that it?’

‘Yes.’

‘And have you shared your suspicions with anyone else?’

‘No. I’m waiting to catch you in the act.’

‘Are you, indeed? And then what, you’ll come to the rescue I suppose?’

‘Yes. I’ll arrest you.’

Underwood smiled. ‘Really? Are you armed? You’d better be.’

‘I have a pistol.’

‘Show me.’

Jenkins opened his raincoat and revealed a revolver in a shoulder holster.

‘Well, well, you’re quite the man of action, aren’t you Jenkins?’

‘Yes. I was a commando in the war.’

‘It was a rhetorical question, Jenkins, I don’t want to hear your life story. Tell me – and this is a real question – which is your cabin?’

‘Cabin 14.’

‘Sharing?’

‘No.’

‘Very good. Why don’t you take me there and offer me a little something to drink before dinner?’

‘I don’t have anything to offer you. I don’t drink alcohol.’

‘Really, Jenkins,’ said Underwood taking the detective lightly by the arm, ‘who said anything about alcohol?’



Underwood opened Jenkins’ cabin door and flicked on the light. He looked around then beckoned Jenkins to follow him inside. Once the detective was in, Underwood closed the door and locked it. It was a small room with two bunk beds fixed to the wall. The top one was undisturbed but the one beneath had been slept in. There was also a chair and a table. On the table was a briefcase, an ashtray and various papers. A single porthole looked out over the

sea. To the right was a door. Underwood opened it and found a tiny shower room with a washbasin, a toilet and a shower stall. He turned back to Jenkins. 'Take off your hat, coat and shoulder holster and gun and put them on the bed there.'

Jenkins did as he was instructed.

'Now roll up your sleeves.'

Jenkins obeyed.

Underwood turned on the light in the shower room. He motioned for Jenkins to enter. 'In here, please.'

Jenkins stepped past Underwood and into the room. There was only enough space for one person to stand at a time.

'Get into the shower stall.'

Jenkins did as he was told.

Underwood inspected the items around the washbasin. He saw what he was looking for. The safety razor was slippery with soap scum and Underwood grimaced. 'Oh dear, you really ought to rinse this out more thoroughly, Jenkins. You know you could get an infection if you were to cut yourself with this?' He turned on the hot tap and rinsed the razor under the slow gurgle of water, washing away the soap and beard detritus before carefully unscrewing the head and removing the blade. He held the razor blade up between his finger and thumb.

'Hmm, looks a bit old. Obviously detective work isn't paying too well, eh Jenkins?'

'I – ' Jenkins began slowly.

Underwood cut him off. 'Oh, it's alright old chap, just another of those silly rhetorical questions of mine.' He looked to where Jenkins was standing facing the wall of the shower. 'Turn around, will you?'

Jenkins turned around.

'Now, sit down.'

The detective sat in the shower tray, his legs protruding out onto the floor and his trousers riding up his ankles to expose gartered black socks.

'Are you right or left handed?'

'Right-handed,' said Jenkins.

'Okay,' Underwood handed him the razor blade. 'Take this and open the veins across your left wrist.'

Jenkins took the blade, pressed it against the pale underside of his left wrist and then, without hesitation, drew it slowly across, slicing down, deep into the flesh. Blood erupted around his fingers. Jenkins, his face impassive, continued to draw the blade until it fell away from the wound. Then he looked back to Underwood for further instruction.

Underwood reached out and took the bleeding arm. He held it so blood sprayed over the shower walls for a moment, then pushed the hand inwards against the wrist joint to staunch the spurting arteries. He then positioned himself on top of Jenkins' legs, leaned into the stall, and brought the wound to his mouth. He hesitated for a moment to smile at the detective, then, opening his mouth, he eased the man's hand back. Blood gushed into Underwood's mouth. He closed his lips about the wound and let the blood surge around his tongue. He parted his lips and let it spill over them as he savoured its taste, its heat, its richness before finally closing his eyes and beginning to drink.

He was hungrier than he had realised; the cat had done little more than appease the gnawing hunger within. And now, as the blood began to fill his stomach, he felt his strength returning. His dull headache began to disperse and clarity returned to his thoughts. He held Jenkins' arm a little more tightly around the wrist, lessening the flow for a moment before letting the flow again and then relaxed his grip, giving himself a second rush of blood.

Tempting as it was to play with his food until his victim was dead, Underwood knew there was still work to be done. He gasped as he tore the wound from his lips. Blood

continued to pour and he again staunched the flow by pressing the hand in against the wrist. He looked at Jenkins, who was watching him with mild interest.

Underwood licked his lips. 'Now, Mr Jenkins, dip your finger into the blood and write, "Forgive Me", just there, on the shower wall.'

Jenkins, his movements weak and trembling, rubbed his finger in the blood that seeped down his arm, and began to write.

Underwood waited patiently. When Jenkins had written the *M* in "Me", he could wait no longer: he opened the wound and resumed drinking. He watched as Jenkins unsteadily continued to write, determined, it seemed, to complete his message before finally relaxing and letting his hand slide down the wall.

Underwood continued to drink until Jenkins' pulse was so weak as to signal the imminence of his death. Then, he relinquished his meal and lay the arm down beside the body so that the remaining blood would flow down into the drain. Then, feeling suitably sated, he stood up to examine the scene of the poor detective's apparent suicide. He smiled. If he did say so himself, it was a work of art. With an air of satisfaction, he wiped his chin on the back of his hand. 'Well, thank you for dinner, old boy. But now, I'm afraid I have to go. The ship docks presently and I have to be in my coffin and ready for the off.'

Whistling fragments of a Bing Crosby tune that had recently been haunting him, Underwood went to the basin and washed his hands and face with a small cake of soap. Afterwards, he had to clean the blood from both basin and soap as well. Once the area met with his satisfaction, he dried himself with the hand towel and neatly hung it back on the rail. Then, as he stepped over Jenkins, making sure that he wasn't trailing bloody footprints behind him, he said, 'As you so rightly observed, Mr Jenkins, I'm not on the passenger manifest. But, had you checked further, you would have noticed I am listed among the cargo... as deceased.'



Thirty minutes later, Flinch found his master at the bow of the ship, gazing towards the distant horizon. Without turning, Underwood said, 'Hullo, Flinch. How was dinner?'

'Very nice sir. Steamed steak pudding with peas and slightly lumpy mashed potato. And you?'

'Oh, a chap called Jenkins. Turns out he was a detective. But yes, very tasty.'

'A detective, sir? Should I be concerned?'

'No. Anything he had on us I bunged out of his porthole, along with his gun.'

'What about the body, sir? Do I need to do any cleaning up?'

'No, poor fellow made his own quietus.' Underwood smiled. 'At least, that's what it looks like.'

'Oh. Very good, sir.'

Flinch joined his master at the rail. Ahead of them the fog was thinning. A full moon shone like a smudged thumb print on the sky, its light reflecting on the surface of sea as if painting a silver path to their destination. Underwood pointed to a distant lighthouse that winked at them from the blackness. 'Look: land. It won't be long now. You must be quite excited, eh?'

Flinch tried to smile. 'I, er, I daresay life in Almacena will be very interesting, milord.'

Underwood looked at him. 'Is that all? I thought you'd be thrilled.'

'Well, yes, but,' Flinch looked down at his shoes, 'I just wish you'd reconsider, sir. I mean, it's not as though you'd be in any danger, not in Spain of all places.'

'It has nothing to do with danger, Arthur. It's more a matter of,' Underwood sighed. 'Exhaustion. What with the last war, that business in New York, the Suez affair. I need a rest, old man. Surely you can understand that?'

With a tight smile, Flinch nodded. 'Yes, sir.'

‘I mean, it’s a pity we couldn’t be going to the United States, California perhaps, but we both know that’s quite out of the question. And you say you’ve no desire to go to England, even if we could?’

‘No, sir. The weather’s so bloody grim. I’d like to see a bit of sunshine, you know?’

‘Er, actually no, not really. But you’re right, yes, you could do with a spot of sun; you look positively ghastly.’

Flinch chuckled. ‘Well, it comes with the job, I’m afraid, sir.’

‘Well, you’ll soon be able to remedy that, eh?’

‘Yes, sir.’

For a few moments they stood in silence. Then Underwood said. ‘Shame about the ship’s cat.’

‘Yes sir.’

‘Still, never mind, eh? I’m sure they’ll find another one.’

‘Oh, yes, sir. No shortage of cats in the world. Especially in ports. It’s the rats that attract ’em.’

‘Yes. Wherever there’s a plentiful source of prey there’s usually a predator.’ Underwood took out his watch. It had stopped. He tapped the glass and the second hand began to move again. ‘I say, Flinch. Do you have the right time?’

Flinch looked at his watch. ‘Ten past ten, sir. Time we were getting ready, perhaps.’

‘Yes,’ Underwood looked to where the lights of Malaga now glittered on the horizon, ‘though I think I’ll have one last fag before I get back in the coffin.’ He reached for his case.

‘Oh no, sir,’ said Flinch, ‘My flash.’ Flinch took out his packet of cigarettes and offered them to Underwood.

‘Thank you, Flinch. What would I do without you?’

‘You never need to worry about that, sir,’ said Flinch, flicking on his lighter. ‘Of that you can rest assured.’

Underwood accepted the light and both men turned to face the dark, oncoming land on the horizon. The first breaths of a warm wind drifted to them across the sea and Flinch sniffed. ‘Do you fancy you can smell oranges on the breeze, sir?’

Underwood smiled. ‘Sorry Flinch. But all I can smell is blood.’

Flinch chuckled. ‘Oh, very good sir. Very droll.’

The adventure of Underwood and Flinch continues in the novel, *Underwood and Flinch*.
The ebook and print versions of the novel will be available in 2013.

Thank you for reading

Night Crossing

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Also available as ebooks by Mike Bennett:

Hall of Mirrors: Tales of Horror and the Grotesque The Collected Stories

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Daniel Shaurette. Amazon.com review of **Hall of Mirrors: Volume One**

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Andrew Rothman. Amazon.com review of **Hall of Mirrors: Volume One**

While some of the stories were a bit much for me - for example, giant roaches gross me out beyond description - I loved the book. Mike Bennett is fresh, original, and creative, while still paying homage to what makes good horror good, and to those who came before him who knew and understood the same things.

Elizabeth Bingham. Goodreads.com review of the podcast: **Hall of Mirrors: Volume One**

An exceptional horror experience demands a few things. It requires suspense, sustainability, and a delivery that lives up to the first two. Mike Bennett's Hall of Mirrors delivers all three the way a steel worker delivers a hammer blow - with relentless force and a precision borne from experience.

H. Giffin. Amazon.com review of **Hall of Mirrors: Volume One**

If you liked Hall of Mirrors Volume 1, you are going to love volume 2. My favorite story is Salvation, one of the best descriptions of Hell ever. The most disturbing story is Wet Velvet, but I love it. Again not for the squeamish. For adults only.

Scott. Goodreads.com review of **Hall of Mirrors: Volume Two**

His writing skills could rival some of the biggest published authors out right now.

meow36. Amazon.com review of **Hall of Mirrors: Volume One**

There is only one word for Mike Bennett. Genius!

Thomas Kirkman. Amazon.com review of **Hall of Mirrors: Volume One**

I love his story telling, which is grotesque enough to make you squirm a little, macabre enough to make you shudder, but funny enough to leave you with a smile on your face. His characters live with you long after the story has finished.

Nutmegsmum. Amazon.co.uk review of **Hall of Mirrors: Volume One**

One Among the Sleepless (a novel)

A killer has come to town. The victims are connected; each pointing to the next, as if in

answer to the question:

Who is The One?

Is it Peter Reynolds: mild-mannered office clerk pouring petrol through his neighbour's letterbox in the middle of the night?

Is it Wayne Dolan: a man whose sexual fantasies about his neighbour spiral into dangerous obsession when he learns of her secret life as a dominatrix?

Or is it Gaz: leader of three friends who love nothing more than sex, weed and partying? All women are easy prey for his charms. All except Sally. And the one who doesn't want him, is the one he has to have – whether she likes it or not.

Mick Nixon has to find the connection, because people are disappearing. And if he and Sally are ever going to share more than just lunch, he'd better hurry up, or they could be next.

A dark, funny, and at times horrific ride, *One Among the Sleepless* is a thriller set just below the surface of suburban existence. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll throw it through your neighbour's window tied to a house brick!

"A tale that's harder to put down than a delicious bad habit." **Walt Kolenda. Examiner.com**

A dark humour which is compulsive reading. Nothing is predictable but everything is constant in its entertainment value.

D.J. Hammond. Amazon.co.uk review of the original paperback edition of **One Among the Sleepless**.

I just can't get enough of this book! It is fantastic, filled with absolutely everything – comedy, romance, death, and a nice healthy dose of sexual activity. Ok...perhaps healthy is pushing it a bit... I didn't find one dull chapter in this weird, raunchy, thrilling novel.

Ella. Podiobooks review of the podcast of **One Among the Sleepless**

Extraordinary! Absolute and unbridled genius. This novel, unrelenting in wit, humor, style and story offers just a glimpse at Bennett's unique brilliance.

Jake Slatnesky. Podiobooks review of the podcast of **One Among the Sleepless**

An interesting bunch of characters: the goofy stoners, the regular single girl who happens to be a dominatrix, and a pretty regular guy who proudly rides his chopper bicycle – even though he's an otherwise normal full-grown adult. But there's also the dim girl who'll do anything (yes anything) for the attentions of the guy of her dreams. And finally, there's a smelly homeless big guy with mirrored sunglasses and a conviction that out there somewhere is "The One" who he must let nothing and no-one get in the way of him "helping" ... I love this story.

Kevin FirstPersonShow.net Amazon.co.uk review of the original paperback edition of **One Among the Sleepless**

Here you have a tale that will cause smiles, tears, laughter, shock, unease, horror and ultimately satisfaction. The pictures in my head were vivid and detailed as this story sped along and I am left feeling that I have lived with these people.

Brella-Owul. Podiobooks review of the podcast of **One Among the Sleepless**

It has everything, drama, suspense, humour and oddity; plus all the naughty bits. It's a real human interest piece with a healthy dose of murder & bondage.

Onion Petal. Podiobooks review of the podcast of **One Among the Sleepless**

*Mike Bennett is a f**king genius. All the characters are not only personified to a scary realism, but shamefully*

relateable. Glen is the best supporting character since Harvey Keitel in Pulp Fiction.
Cincy Loves Bennett. Podiobooks review of the podcast of **One Among the Sleepless**