

MS. GRIMSLEY

WRITTEN BY B.A. SAVAGE

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SENSATIONAL AMERICAN WRESTLING: FICTIONAL WRESTLING, JUST LIKE IT IS ON T.V. WITH OFF THE WALL COMMERCIALS AND CHARACTERS.

CHAPTER ONE

It's another typical busy sales day at Cosi Records, the place to get the newest and hottest music released on vinyl, in McLaughlin City. It's near closing and one of the co-owners Claire Grimsley totals out the last customer of the day, as her daughter Janell waits patiently for closing time. Janell has tuned out everything else but her radio headset.

"Thank you for stopping in again Mrs. Day" says Claire, the thirty something and hippish store owner.

"Oh, you know me. I might not be into all that Presley rock and roll stuff that you young kids are into these days but I have to have my daily dose of good ol' Mr. Bennett. And you guys always seem to have the best prices in town and my choice of music too. So, thank you dearie. I'll see you later, and bye bye, Janell."

The little girl, despite not hearing one word the older lady said, has a good feeling what was said, simply because of the shopping frequency of this particular customer. "Bye bye, Mrs. Day."

Claire locks the door as soon as Mrs. Day exited. With a big grin, she turns immediately toward her daughter, who's still rocking out to her headphones.

"Janell? Janell!" Still smiling, Claire shakes her head, "You and your father, with those infernal headsets. I'd swear they were frying your brains if I thought you two had any."

She walks in front of Janell, which gets her attention.

"What's up mom?"

"What's up mom? Well, I'll tell you what's up young lady, if you could take a minute away from that darn KUBE radio station. Sometimes, I feel they have more control over you than me."

Smiling back, Janell turns off her headphones. Claire starts the closing procedures with assistance from her daughter.

"Well, haven't you even wondered where your father's been all day?"

"Naw, Clint can take care of himself."

"I really wish you wouldn't call your father by his name. I know we're trying to raise you more independent than this

generation's kids are but for crying out loud, Janell.”

“Yeah, sure, Claire.”

“You know, you sure have a smart mouth for being only eight.”

“Yeah I know. I get it from you.”

During this whole exchange, smiles never left their faces, “Why you little...!” Claire starts to chase Janell around the store and when she finally catches her, she pins her down and started tickling her.

“Mommy, mommy! Stop! I'm gonna pee my pants! Stop!” cries the little girl between giggles.

“Oh, I'm mommy now, huh?” Claire tickles her just a little more, then let's her up, dry.

“As I was saying...brat!”

Janell sticks her tongue out at her.

“Your father and I have a big surprise.”

A huge grin, fitting of a typical eight year old covers Janell's face, “I like surprises! Does it involve me getting gifts? Huh, mommy, does it?”

“Well kinda. We're all getting a gift. Remember how we always talked about... well, you might not remember. You were just a little girl then, but your father and I had always dreamed of opening a dance type night club, but decided to settle for this store, which I might add has been a blessing. And thanks to the success of this place...”

She pauses for effect.

“Yes, mommy?”

“We are gonna open our own night club!”

“With lotsa of loud music?” says the little girl excitedly.

“Yes! And we...” Claire cuts out of her own sentence “could invite some of your friends and have a party.” because Janell really has no friends, unlike they did as kids.

In all their efforts to be “cool” parents and giving her the full opportunity to grow as an individual, they “adultified” her. That, combined with being a child genius, only helped to alienate her from the other kids her own age. The most common word used by her classmates to describe her was “creepy.”

Not letting anything ruin this moment, she covers the omission quickly and with a smile, “... we can play anything you want and as loud as you want and at any time!”

“Far out mom!”

“Now, let’s hurry up and finish closing. Your father is waiting at the warehouse we’re going to be renting. He just signed the papers last week.”

CHAPTER TWO

In their car, on the way to the warehouse, Claire notices the nervous look on her daughter's face. Being a parent, she notices the little things that her daughter does when she's nervous about something. One of those things is playing with her necklace.

The necklace itself is a thing of beauty, which she won at the Romanian World Touring Carnival. After a day of disappointing losses at seemingly every game, little Janell Grimsley finally won a prize by knocking down three pins on a single toss. Instead of receiving the stuffed purple teddy bear she wanted, one of the Romanian twins working the booth handed her a necklace with a dolphin over a pentagon and a single jewel encrusted where its eye would be.

Clint tried to protest this prize but Janell thought it was "pretty" and the two handsome twins used their showmanship to seal the deal. Upon further examination, to Clint, the necklace seemed to have too much craftsmanship to be just given away as one of the carnival's usually junk prizes. He was going to go and get it tested to see if it was really worth something but Claire protested that idea, stating "It's worth something to her, don't ruin that."

Claire asks Janell, "What's wrong dear?"

"I don't know. Something...well, I just feel weird."

"Weird huh? Sick kinda weird or worried kinda weird?"

"More like worried"

"About what?"

"I don't know mommy."

Figuring this isn't going anywhere, she decides that Janell will let her know what's wrong, when she knows what's wrong and when she feels like talking about it.

Across town in an uptown office building, Big Sal tells his boss that everything is ready to go. His boss Vinnie speaks out his objection, "I don't like this, not at all."

"You want me to call it off boss?"

"What are you an idiot? This is over ten mill we're talking about. We can't afford to let those slanted eye Jap wannabe mobsters get their hands on it. Cuban businessmen don't care who they sell to. I just don't like the fact that we are switching from

our usual location.”

Little Sal, whose been sitting near the back of the room, quietly speaks up also, “Yeah boss, I don’t like it either, but we have our reason to believe the Feds are on to those places, so it’s wise to switch up and only let the Cubans know at the last minute, so they can’t set us up either. Plus, I personally checked out this new place last week. It’s a warehouse in the middle of nowhere, hasn’t been used in years and the owners are out of town. So no one should even notice we’ve been there.”

The boss grimaces, “Yeah, but I still don’t like it. But go ahead, call the Cubans with the location and let’s get this over with.”

“On it, boss” replied Big Sal.

The phone in the moving limousine rings.

“Uh huh. Ok. Got it. We be there in thirty. Right. Bye” said the dark-skinned and muscular Cuban who answered the phone.

“So? Everything a go?” asked a light-skin Cuban in an expensive suit.

“Yeah, boss that be them and all things ret to go.”

“Good.”

“See, I told you everything would go smoothly right?” asks the greasy haired and greasy looking Italian, who’s sitting next to the light-skinned Cuban.

“You sure did Guido, you sure did.”

CHAPTER THREE

“So, what do you think?” Clint asks Janell as they overlook the old factory.

“It’s kinda dirty.”

“Well, we can clean it all up before we open the club right?”

“And what about all those big, dusty machine things?”

“The owner already found a buyer for all the junk equipment and storage containers. So you gonna help right?” He said with the same smile he has always used to get her to smile. It worked.

“You know it, Clint.”

Claire smiles and shakes her head at Janell for calling her father by his first name like usual.

Clint stands up from the picnic blanket that is spread out on the floor of the foreman’s office, which is high above the plant, overlooking the old and dusty machinery.

“Well, time to give some of nature’s fruit juice back to the distributor, good ol’ Mother Earth.”

Janell giggles.

Claire says, “You are so gross, and you too for laughing.”

Janell replies, “And you smiled too Claire.”

As Claire starts to correct her about calling her “mom” instead, all three end up saying at the same time, “It’s mom, not Claire.”

After a split second of silence, they all start laughing. Clint smiles and says, “Anyways, I’ll be right back, you silly gooses.”

“Ok...dad.”

He smiles again, then turns on his radio headset. The music can be heard blaring out the sides of the headset, as the elevator doors shut, taking him to ground level.

At the same time the Grimsleys were enjoying their picnic, the mobsters arrived at the same warehouse and were waiting for their Cuban counterparts.

Vinny yells at Big Sal, who had just started to sit on the hood of their Mercedes, “What the hell are you doing?”

“Who me?”

“No, my dead uncle Pauley. Who do the hell do you think I’m talking to?”

He sits up attentively, “What boss?”

“That’s a car, not a fucking park bench. You look like a fucking moolie sitting on his caddy or something.”

“Sorry boss.”

Little Sal adds, “And I don’t need to be surrounded by fucking moolies anytime soon. Ten hard ones was no joke.”

Vinny replies, “But the family took good care of you right?”

“Of course boss, good care was taken of me boss. It’s just I hate damn moolies with their fucking jive talk and afros and fucking basketball. It almost drove me crazy.”

Big Sal adds, “I don’t know if I could do ten years, that’s a lot of time.”

Little Sal fires back, “Only a fucking rat bastard would do less.”

“You calling me a fucking snitch?”

“What the fuck if I am?”

Vinny intervenes, “Both you need to calm the fuck down. You both acting like fucking moolies. No wonder the fucking the Japs are kicking our asses. You two are fucking family, act like it!”

A horn honks.

The black limo that is holding the Cubans pull inside the sliding double doors that the Sals opened. They shut the doors once the limo pulls though completely.

Vinny reiterates, “Now act professional and not like no fucking niggers.”

“Yes, boss.” Both men stand on opposite sides of their car with the boss in front of it.

The Cubans exit their car along with Guido, their Italian liaison, who does the introductions of the bosses.

The Cuban boss says, “So you got the…”

Little Sal, who’s been eyeballing the man ever since he stepped out of the car, cuts him off abruptly, as he pulls out his gun, “That guy’s a fucking cop!”

Big Sal and the two other Cubans also all draw their guns.

Guido, the middle man, trying to calm down this suddenly

hostile environment, says, “Man, what you talking about? This man’s no cop.”

Big Sal says, “If Little Sal says he’s a cop, he’s a cop!”

The Italian boss asks, “What’s this about? Why’d you say that?”

Little Sal says, “I never forget the fucking face that busted me, no matter how long ago it was. The same rat bastard with the same fucking rat voice. What did they promote you because of me?”

The man replies coolly, “What? Is this guy fucking kidding? I am no cop. This is only the second time I’ve been in the States. Hey Guido, you need to tell your friends something.”

“Guido ain’t telling me shit, I know the pig that busted me 10 years ago, what? Didn’t expect me to get early parole?”

Vinnie says, “Everyone calm down, let’s all take a moment to figure this out.”

The moment stays tense.

Both Janell and Claire are sitting down talking about the club. Claire’s trying to convince Janell to see past the old factory equipment and dusty atmosphere to the big picture.

“Can’t you just see it? Disco lights all over the ceiling, speakers in the corners and all over.”

“I only see what reminds me of our attic; dusty and junk everywhere.”

Claire stands up and strolls over to the foreman’s window used to survey the factory’s internal workings.

“Well, I can see it, and so can your father.” She smiles as she looks down and sees Clint walking, and stopping to dance every so many steps.

“He’s getting better at doing the robot.”

Sudden movement a couple hundred feet in front of Clint, doesn’t catch his attention, but it did catch Claire’s.

“Who’s that? What are they doing here?”

“Who Claire? Who’s here?” Janell asks.

“I don’t know.” She strains her eyes and to her horror she notices what appears to be guns drawn. “Oh my God!”

“What mommy?” Sounding like a scared child, “What?”

“Nothing dear. You stay down on the blanket. I gotta go get Clint.”

“But mom...”

“No buts, Janell, you sit your rear right here until we get back! You got it!”

“Yes, mom.”

Claire frantically runs to the elevator and keeps pushing the close door button as if to make it respond faster. Janell starts to hold her necklace tight. She can just sense something isn't right, her eyes start to well up.

“Dancing, dancing, dancing, I'm a dancing machine,” is blaring out of Clint's headset as he mouth's the words. Claire's elevator door opens and she flies out of it in the direction that Clint was headed.

The Cuban/Italian standoff is interrupted, as Clint does a twist move out of the shadows and to the right of Guido who had stepped out of the sight lines of guns.

“Hit me!” blurts out of Clint in mid twist.

Janell disobeyed her mother; she's standing by the window. She sees her mother running toward her father, then a flash from in front of Clint. He stops dancing and falls lifeless to the floor. Her mother paused for a split second and then ran full speed toward Clint lying on the ground.

Guido hits the floor as soon as Clint was shot by a rattled Little Sal.

“You bastard!” Yells the Cuban, he draws a gun from his coat as he takes cover.

“You're doing life for this one you greasy little bastard!”

“I told you he was a cop.” Screams Little Sal toward Big Sal.

No response.

He looks over and sees Big Sal's dead.

The Italian boss is nowhere to be found. The Cuban notices gunfire coming from his side, the other Cubans with him, are now firing at him. “Fuck!” He tries to find cover behind some of the old factory equipment.

A bullet bounces off the metal an inch away from his head. He turns and fires at the first person he sees, unfortunately it was Claire approaching Clint's body. “Oh shit!”

“Nooooo!!!” screams Janell as she sees her mother also fall

to the ground. She's crying and shaking uncontrollably, she's gripping the necklace, as she can't take her eyes off her dead parents, who are sprawled next to each other. The flashes of light from the gunfire doesn't draw her attention from her parents. After a few minutes of staring, the tears stop, and a slight grin starts to develop. She slowly loosens her grip on the necklace, revealing that she squeezed it so hard, that there's an imprint and a small cut making her hand bleed. That small grin is now a full grin.

Little Sal runs out from behind his shelter and dives behind the car Big Sal is dead by. He drags his brother's body behind the car.

"Come on, little bro, you can't die on me. Tough it up! You can't die." As he leans down and holds his brother close crying, he doesn't notice Big Sal's eyes open. Little Sal lets out a loud scream from behind the car; then silence.

One of the Cuban men is attacked from behind by an unseen assailant.

The other Cuban notices and starts calling for his comrade. He notices that there's a pool of blood under the car where he saw him last.

Figuring his comrade was dead, he focuses on saving his own life. He hears something behind, he turns and it's Little Sal and his partner, they both have bullet holes and blood pouring out of them. They seem unaffected.

He shoots Little Sal twice, who keeps his pace toward him.

"What the hell!?"

The Italian boss has enclosed himself behind some metal storage containers. He turns his head sharply to see someone approaching, he lifts his Derringer, ready to fire until he notices who it is, "Bu, but, but you're dead. I watched you die! It can't be!"

Janell stared out of the window, without the grin wavering one bit. There is no more gunfire. She stands with the same look, until one of the warehouse doors opens and lets light pours in. Her look turns to panic. She runs and enters the elevator. As the door shuts, the same grin appears.

CHAPTER FOUR

Deep within the dark enclosed cavernous lair lies a laboratory filled with high tech gadgets and decomposing bodies. The bodies are stored in a cylinder like structures, filled with an unknown substance. Out of the darkness that serves as doorways to this room, enters a huge muscular black man, in a torn monk style robe. His walk is steady and emotionless. As he passes by several machines he approaches a stairwell that seemingly leads to an upstairs area.

Once he has passed the stairwell a dark figure leaps from the top of the stairwell. This figure comes crashing down on the back of his neck with a sword. The momentum of the attacker and the motion of the sword sent the black man rolling forward several feet. The black man stands up amazingly unharmed from the attack. He turns around and looks at his attacker, a dark mysterious woman with a look of disappointment on her face.

The man says with a monotone voice, “You and your infatuation with death have never ceased to amaze me. Hopefully one day this will not wear thin on my patience, and you end up dead yourself.”

The man turns and continues his walk down the path he was originally going. The woman looks at her sword and is visibly upset that it did no damage. Violently she swings the sword at the stone wall, taking a huge chunk out of it. She throws the sword to the ground, and follows after the man. Once she arrived a few feet from where the black man stopped, she also stopped. He pays little attention to her presence. It doesn't seem to bother her.

As the black man types in a password on the computer in front of him, and starts looking at the information on the screen he asks out loud, “Well, how have the bodies taken to the enhancements?”

His question is answered from what appears to be a creature flying slowly towards him also from out the darkness, “Master, they have taken well, as you have predicted, the range in which she can control them seems to be a mere 300 feet.”

“Good, I have managed to inquire the Stones of Forgat, which should allow her ability to be broadened by ten-fold.”

The lady walks up and stands beside the man overlooking the information as well. The creature that was flying has landed on

the counter to other side of the man. The creature's appearance is quite unique. It stands two and a half feet tall, with bat like wings, and matching fangs. With a chimpanzee body, scorpion like tail, and its right arm has a lizard feel to it with razor like claws, while the left arm still has its chimp form. Its head has the same feel of its right arm, but its eyes appear to be that of a raccoon.

The man says to the lady, "Grimsley, go retrieve Kane; it is time for part two". The lady walks off and up the stairwell.

The black man continues, "Were you able to acquire enough bodies to help us get better specimens now that I am back with the stones?"

"Yes, Master, we were able to capture and eliminate enough transients, and we are waiting for your command."

"Good job, Diabolical Chee-Chee."

The man continues to type on the computer and study the information.

He thinks out loud, "It's amazing how much more the human body can take when it's dead and silent, versus being alive and complaining."

Chee-Chee replies, "Yes, Master, complaining is a very humanistic trait."

"I agree."

Ms. Grimsley walks back down the stairwell with an even bigger black man in tow. Once both individuals are in close proximity of the man typing, the man turns around and asks Kane, "Is it time yet?"

"No, Master, it is not."

"Good, let's start part two."

CHAPTER FIVE

Detective Thomas Allen is walking back from the water cooler when he is confronted by two fellow police officers.

“Steal any good jewelry from the stiff’s lately?” says the officer holding a bagel and cup of hot coffee.

“Yeah, or did you accidentally steal it from a sleeping street person, who you mistaken for a stiff?” adds the other.

Before Detective Allen could muster a response, Captain Dennis Dearmyer calls for him to come into his office. He heads towards the Captain’s office but not before he gazes over the accusing officers with angry in his eyes.

As he enters the office, he asks, “Yes cap?”

“Shut the door.”

Allen does.

Dearmyer says, “Son, I know you are a good cop just like your father was, but I don’t know what to do with you.”

“What did I do? Those idiots started with me first. Everyone acts like I’m a curse.”

“Some people think you are.”

Thomas just shakes his head in disbelief.

Dearmyer continues with a reassuring smile, “I’m not one of them. That’s why I had you re-assigned here. Now, I’m not going to talk to those two or anyone here about the way you are being treated. We are all adults and you all need to handle it like adults. If I talk to them, it would only make things worse. Time will work things out. Trust me; I’ve been on the force for 20 years.”

“I know. Cap, I hope this is not the only reason I was called in here.”

“No, it is not. Got another case for you.”

“No disrespect Cap, but this dead body detail is not helping with my image around here, with the whole curse thing and all.”

“I understand, but I figure something basic like dead body abductions would be a good start for the cursed man.” Dearmyer finished that statement with a smile that received a smile in return.

“Plus this one is not missing...yet.”

With his curiosity sparked, Detective Allen asks, “yet?”

“Just call it a hunch. Six mortuaries have been robbed

within the last 3 weeks. All the bodies taken within 48 hours of being buried. That is correct right?"

"Yeah."

"Well, I don't imagine, whoever these sick fucks are, that they would overlook the dead body of a semi-celebrity."

"Who?"

"Chris Schrock"

"Semi-celebrity?! Are you joking?! The six time Mr. Karate USA, the star of his own TV show 'Sure you wanna kick it with me?' Spokesman of Ha-Ya Action Gloves? Semi-celebrity?"

"I remember, when you were a little kid and your father took you to see him in person. He's one of McLaughlin's City's most famous celebs ever, but he's not really known much outside the martial arts world."

"Yeah, I guess so. I heard about his death too. Died filming his first ever major motion picture. Man that sucks."

"Well, he is going to be flown back to Mack City, this weekend. We need you to stake out the place for the two days after the funeral. We have you an apartment set up with surveillance; you'll be teaming up with one of the vets here, McBauer. He's a good cop. Here's your info."

Allen graciously takes the folder.

"Kid?"

"Yes, captain?"

"Be careful, there's no telling just how weird these fucks are. Don't hesitate to radio back up if you need it. The mayor was a friend of this family, so you know brass has their hands in my pocket and they ain't just fishing."

"No problem, cap."

CHAPTER SIX

“Well Kid, I’m about to go see Tina. Think you can handle it by yourself for a while?” says Detective McBauer.

During the first six hours of the stake out, pretty much all that could be talked about was talked about, and during that time frame one thing that Detective Allen picked up was that McBauer’s wife’s name was not Tina, “I thought your wife’s name is Sally?”

“And your name better be Mud.”

“Ohhhhh...Ok, don’t be gone too long, just in case I need you.”

“Kid, I’m not your babysitter. You’re doing just fine and I’m in it for the cheap thrills, I don’t use pills, so I won’t be long.”

“Too much information.”

“You asked.”

McBauer exits the apartment.

About thirty minutes pass and Detective Allen is daydreaming back to the moment he first met his childhood hero, Chris Schrock. His father told him all week that they were going to see his uncle’s prized moose head that he just caught. Young Thomas thought it was going to be another boring trip to his uncle’s, whom he despised. Ever since, he heard Schrock state a real man uses his hands and faces his adversaries face to face, not with a gun and out of arm’s reach. To young Thomas, his uncle was a coward, hiding in a bush, camouflaged, with a gun with a scope, “what kind of challenge was that?” He thought.

He had hoped that if he had fallen asleep during the car ride, his father would just let him sleep in the back seat until it was time to leave. To Thomas’s father, the stern proud Cuban that he was, father-son bonding was just that, bonding. He woke Thomas as soon as they arrived.

Wiping away the sleepiness from his eyes with both closed fist, Thomas sat up in the seat to find that they were at the Americall Shopping Plaza.

“What are we doing here? Thought we were going to Uncle Toupes?”

“We are, just not today.”

Confused and still groggy from the car ride, Thomas followed his father into the mall. It only took a few steps inside before Thomas realized what was going on in front of him. On center stage at a podium with an American flag on it, was Chris Schrock, surrounded by 100's of kids, mostly with their fathers.

Schrock did everything that day from breaking boards and cement blocks with his bare hands, to signing autographs and an inspiring speech, part of which Thomas took with him to help keep him motivated through the tough times of losing his father and mother.

As the adult Thomas looks out the apartment window, he mouths those life changing words, "Dream it, believe it, live it."

Movement from across the street in the cemetery grabs his attention. He quickly grabs the high-powered binoculars. He sees two people who have just starting to dig at the grave and two people standing by, apparently the look outs.

He looks at his watch, "Damn it! Where the hell is McBauer? I can't wait!"

He radios for backup to the location, and then hightails it out of the apartment, down the stairs and across the street toward the graveyard.

Once in the cemetery, Thomas approaches slowly and in the shadows. He waits patiently behind a large gravestone, label "Johnson". He cracks a joke to himself about the name, "this is one big Johnson."

Thomas looks on as the two people digging have almost finished exhuming the casket.

"What the hell is taking back up so long?" He listens for sirens but nothing. "I can't let captain down." He leaps from behind the cover of the tombstone with his gun drawn, "Freeze! Hold it right there."

The two apparent lookouts don't budge, as if they didn't even hear him, yet they are facing him. The two digging stop digging until a voice can be heard shouting, "Imbeciles! Continue to dig. Grimsley will take care of the officer."

The men do as told, while the other two still stand motionless.

Thomas looks around to try to find where the voice came from.

"Up here you imbecile!"

He looks up on top of a huge stone monument over 20 feet tall. There is a woman, with long black hair that covers most of her face. She is wearing a black cloak that almost blends in with the darkness of the night. On her shoulder is a bat-like creature. It appears to be a mixture of several different reptilian creatures and some creatures of the night mixed into one, two foot tall creepy doll.

“What in the hell?”

The creature on her shoulder speaks, “You could not even begin to comprehend what I am, imbecile!”

The lady tilts her head enough that Thomas can sense that she is looking at him. Even in this darkness, the cold darkness of her eyes stands out. She then looks back at the two motionless men. The men start toward him.

This grabs Thomas attention, as he points his gun and yells the same instructions as before.

The men don't stop.

“Damn it, don't make me shoot!”

They continue.

Thomas thinks to himself, “This is the part I hate, but kinda like.”

He puts his gun away, and readies to defend himself hand to hand style.

Thomas lands several martial arts kicks and punches to the approaching men sending each to the ground on several occasion, only to watch them get up as if they were getting up from watching TV to use the restroom.

“What gives? They should be hurting, shit my hands are! They aren't even making a sound.”

That pause, allowed one of the attackers to get close enough to grab him with an icy grip.

“What ice box did they you climb out of?” Thomas flips his attacker over his shoulder and to the ground as he leans for to punch him, he notices that the man's face is decomposing.

“What in God's name?”

The crackling of a whip can be heard right before Thomas feels his feet being drawn together from behind and taken out from under him. He hits his head on a rock on the way to the ground.

Thomas is trying to fight blacking out, but is losing the battle and everything seems to be blaring together. From his

sideways view of the world, he sees the creepy creature that was on the woman's shoulder floating toward him.

“About to die and the only thing that you can ponder in your pathetic mind is what is the creation that is in front of you. Imbecile!”

The creature extends his paw and its razor claws; he lifts his paw to strike, then stops suddenly. “Are you sure? You are lucky imbecile, next time you will not leave my presence alive.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

Thomas's involuntary concussion nap is broken by the jolt of the gurney being lifted to the lock position. He tries to sit up but the restraints are holding him down. "What the hell? What's going on? Get these off me."

A paramedic states, "Sorry, detective but you were out cold, restraints were necessary. Let me get those off of you."

As Thomas sits up, Captain Dearmyer walks up to the gurney. Thomas asks, "What's going on Cap?"

"I don't know, you tell me. I got here and you were out cold, the body is gone and there is no sign of anyone, and where the hell is McBauer?"

"Right here sir." McBauer had approached almost as the same time as the captain did.

"And where the hell were you?"

"Umm... family emergency."

"Family emergency?"

"Yeah, I told the kid about it. I told him I'll be right back. Right kid?"

Thomas agrees with the look of obvious disbelief, "Yeah, right back."

"I guess I just had bad timing, huh?" McBauer gives a small laugh.

Captain is not smiling. He turns his attention back to Thomas, "So why didn't you radio for backup?"

"I did. They never came. I sat here as long as I could; I had to act, but I gave them at least ten to fifteen minutes."

"Well I'm going to look into this. I was told that this was called in by a passerby that thought that people were fighting in the cemetery."

"Well, we were fighting in the cemetery."

"And where are they now?"

"Like I know."

"Well, someone better know! I got the Mayor and the Chief breathing down my neck and I thought you could handle this."

"Captain, these were no ordinary grave robbers. I hit them with kicks and punches that would have dropped a cow, and they just kept getting up."

“I don’t know about a cow but this situation sure is bullshit.”

“Come on captain, I’m a 3rd degree black belt in 3 different art forms. I know how to take a person down and out. I’m telling these people...well, this is going to be hard to believe...but I think they were...dead.”

“Dead? Did I hear you right? Dead?” Dearyer motions for the paramedics, “Strap him back down, he’s got head trauma.”

Pushing the paramedics off him, “I’m serious captain, the two that attacked me were cold and decomposing.”

“Good Lord, this is what I have to give to the Chief? Dead bodies being abducted by dead bodies?”

“I know how weird it sounds but it’s the truth.”

“You get some rest, you got some explaining to do first thing tomorrow morning.”

Captain walks off.

McBauer walks up to the gurney, “Good looking out kid, but come on, at least my excuse was believable. Dead bodies, get out of here.”

Thomas shakes his head in frustration and lays back down on the gurney. They roll him off.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The two men who were digging the body up earlier are now dragging a 10 foot by 6 foot crate on wheels. Laying next the crate, also being pulled is the lifeless body of Chris Schrock.

“Man, these jobs would be so much easier if we didn’t have to dragged this damn crate around everywhere.” Mumbles one man to the other.

“You know what’s in here right?”

“Yeah, and have you noticed that this thing has a parachute on it, and we don’t even have one for us on the copter?”

Unnoticed, the creature from the graveyard has flown and land quietly on top of the crate. “Is there some reason that you two are speaking?”

“Sorry Chee-Chee.”

The creature’s eyes lights up with anger, “It is the Diabolical Chee-Chee! Imbecile!”

The man cringes in expectation of something bad, but nothing happens. “Yes...of course, sorry Diabolical Chee-Chee.”

The creature flies away toward a dark corner of the cavernous lair. As he lands he says, “Where do we get these imbeciles from?”

The Host emerges from the darkness, “The human race is not a good breeding resource. That is why I create beings such as yourself. Even with my greatness, I still cannot seem to remove the temperament that all you Chee-Chee’s seem to have. Oh well, it’s not necessarily a bad thing, now is it?”

“No master”, replies Chee-Chee calmly.

The Host walks over to the body, where Ms. Grimsley is crouched down, seemingly inspecting the corpse. “So, this is the body? Appears to have been in good shape while he was alive. A little more aged than I would like for this test but then again it’s not the body as much as what the mind can retain after death that is the purpose of this experiment.”

The Host looks at the two men who dragged the crate and the body. “Take the crate to its usual resting place, then you may leave and go see your families. I don’t need to remind of the time allotted, do I? I’m sure you would not want your families to witness your horrific deaths, correct?”

One of the men responds, “That is correct Master.”

“Yes, Master. We would not want that to happen.”

“Good, Kane will see you out. He’s expecting you.”

The two men drag the crate off.

“Now that the mortals are out of the room. I would like to ask you how this expedition went.”

Ms. Grimsley doesn’t respond.

Chee-Chee states, “It went well.”

“Well?” questions The Host.

“Yes, master.”

“I would not call almost being caught by the local law enforcement, well.”

“The situation was never out of our control, Master.”

“Indeed, but you spent almost an hour digging up a corpse for his fighting abilities, yet left alive an obviously well trained fighter. Why did you not kill him and bring him along. A two for one it could have been, correct?”

Ms. Grimsley looks at The Host with a look of curiosity.

The Host answers, “I have eyes and ears everywhere.”

Chee-Chee answers apologetically, “The officer was unattainable due to other law enforcement arriving on the scene. I’m deeply sorry for our failure Master.” He bows down in front of The Host.

“You did not fail me. I was testing your honesty. I am aware of the situation and you made the correct choice. I was simply testing to see if she had turned you against me.”

He glances over at her to see her cold eyes glaring at him. He is unmoved. “Anyone who loves death as much as Ms. Grimsley, well let’s just say I wanted to assure that the life I gave you is still completely intact.”

The Host starts to walk back over to the darkness he enters from. “Inform me once the augmentations have been put in place. I have a special practice run planned, if my intel is correct.” He disappears back into the darkness.

“Yes, Master” answers Chee-Chee

Ms. Grimsley is back hunched over the body.

CHAPTER NINE

Knock, knock, knock, knock!

Someone is pounding on Detective Allen's door.

"Who the hell is knocking on my door like they are the police? I am the police." He looks at the clock next to his bed. It's 6am. "What? And this early too? It better be important."

Knock, knock, knock, knock!

"Damn it! Hold your horses!"

He puts on a robe over covering his 'Rick Rules' boxers and T-shirt that has a silhouette of a man with a huge afro and the statement, "Can I get down?"

Once at the door he looks through the peephole and sees nothing but someone's chest. "Wow! Who the hell could this be?"

He opens the door and looks up to see the person's face. The visitor is well over 6 foot, around 250 pounds. It is a white male, shiny bald head, and wearing black goggles with black lenses. "Can I help you?"

The guest answers with, "We need to talk."

"Do I know you?"

"No, but I'm here to help you with your case."

"I've never seen you around the station."

"I don't work for the police."

"Then you can't help me." He turns and starts to shut the door. The man puts his hand on the door to stop him from shutting it. "I know about the living dead that were at the cemetery."

This sparks his interest, he opens the door. "Come on in."

Blowing cold air smoke, Detective Allen asks his guest, "Aren't you cold? In that tank top and all?"

The man is wearing a black tank top with no jacket. "No, I'm fine."

"So what can you tell me about the walking dead? They were dead right?"

"Yes. They are the works of a mad scientist who calls himself The Host."

"Mad scientist huh? Sounds like a B-movie, but who am I to judge? Captain didn't believe me when I said they were dead. Can you blame him? I wouldn't believe me, and I wouldn't be believing you if I didn't see it with my own two eyes."

He notices the man is still standing, “Hey you can have a seat, want some coffee?...and...umm, what’s your name?”

“No, and thank you. My name is Scorch.”

Scorch picks up Detective Allen’s badge and looks it over.

Detective Allen says, “Oh, this is just like a B-movie. Didn’t know gang members fought against the walking dead. Oh yeah there was a show on WEBS that has a show like that, but anyways, isn’t the dead supposed to stay dead?”

Scorch answers as he puts the badge back down, “In a perfect world, yes, but somehow he has managed to awaken the dead and use them for his dirty work. We don’t know exactly what his plan is but we think he’s been kidnapping the homeless for months before he went on to dead corpses.”

“We have no reports of kidnapping of the homeless recently.”

“Who reports the homeless? And who would believe them?”

“I see your point. If you knew he was doing this, why not stop him? And who is ‘we’?”

“It’s kinda complicated but we have very reliable information that he is an immortal... and a very disgruntled immortal I might add.”

“Immortal? As in can’t die?”

“That’s right, well we know of a way but we have no way of obtaining the materials needed.”

“And who is ‘we’ again?”

“We don’t really have a name but we are a few people who watch out for the city under the radar.”

“A government organization?”

“No, not at all.”

“I don’t think I need to know anything else.”

“We are not some kind of cult or anything, we help protect people from what others don’t see, such as walking dead bodies.”

“So, why did you need to talk to me?”

“We need someone to help us on the inside, that has seen first-hand part of the world that most don’t even know exists.”

“I’m not going to be an informant for some kind of B-Team.”

“I think it was A-team, and we are nothing like that.”

“Whatever, I... You’ve been following me haven’t you?”

That's how you knew about the dead people at the cemetery. How long you been following me?"

"Since, we realize there may be a direct connection between you and the walking dead, as you like to call it."

Now really curious, "What kind of connection?"

"Have you met Ms. Grimsley yet?"

"Who?"

"The lady at the park."

CHAPTER TEN

The Host's intelligence was correct, and he held off telling Ms. Grimsley the information that was most likely the most important to her until he explained the whole plan first.

"Well, that is all."

The Host dismisses the crew involved in the mission except Ms. Grimsley and The Diabolical Chee-Chee. "Now that the not-need-to-knows are gone, I have some information about that cop that attempted to stop you at the gravesite that you might find...motivating."

Ms. Grimsley understood that he was directing this to her, so she turns toward him but remains silent and emotionless as usual, that was until he says, "He is the son of the man who killed your parents years ago."

The only, yet very noticeable emotion she displayed is to open her eyes wide in shock. This only lasted a few seconds and came right back after The Host explained that the cop works out of the police station that they are about to attack. Her eyes went back to their usual dead look but her body is visibly shaking. It's either anger, anticipation or both.

The Host doesn't care and continues, "Do not mistake me giving you this information as an act of caring about you or your past. I gave you this information in hopes that it motivates you to bring back this cop, dead or alive...or even mutilated. His martial arts background is impressive and will make a great addition to my army. Do not forget that you work for me and that if you do not do as I command, you will get closer acquainted to death sooner than you expect."

He turns and starts to walk off, he says as he walks off, "Diabolical Chee-Chee, make sure that you bring me what I want."

Chee-Chee answers, "Yes, Master."

The Diabolical Chee-Chee and Ms. Grimsley walk off to join their team.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

“And enough is enough!” yells Captain Dearmyer. All the officers in attendance immediately look forward if they weren’t already paying attention. He continues, “I listened to the calls last night, and crossed the ones in which Detective Allen called for backup with where some of you were located at the time of his calls. I’m very disappointed. We get enough shit from the taxpayers and government officials on how we are not doing our job protecting the public, in that we don’t need this kinda of shit happening internally.” He looks around the room with accusing eyes.

The room is silent.

“We are a family here.” He holds up his badge, “These here are our wedding rings, our bond, our kinship or whatever it needs to be called to get you all to understand that if we don’t have each other’s back out there, who does? I know not one of you would leave a family member out in the streets asking for help or protection. What happened last night, while fresh, is still the past. Today, begins a new day. Today, things will change going forward or you will not be part of this squad. Do I make myself clear?”

An unanimous ‘yes sir!’ echoes throughout the small conference room.

“Dismissed.”

The group of roughly twenty men pan out in their separate directions. Detective Allen goes back to his desk and starts looking through some paperwork. Detective McBauer stops at his desk, put his hand on his shoulder. “Hey kid, sorry bout last night. I really do appreciate you covering my ass on that. I got your back whenever you need anything, to me, you are a standup guy.”

“Thanks.”

“So kid, what the hell really happened out there?”

Before Allen can reply, there is a commotion in the lobby that gathers everyone’s attention as a woman screams, “What in the hell is going on over there?” asks McBauer.

The cop working the front desk replies loudly, “It’s cool, we just got some drunk playing grab ass with one of the pros out here. We got it under control.” The apparent drunk man has two officers trying to restrain him as he staggers around. They are

having a tough time with him. Detective Allen looks back at McBauer and starts to answer him again but stops mid-sentence when he hears in the background one of the restraining officers state, “Damn, this guy is freezing cold.”

Immediately Thomas yells, “Get away from that guy!”

As almost on cue, the drunken man straightens up and delivers a leaping split kick, nailing both officers in the chest, sending them to the floor. A second later, both double doors to the stationhouse are flung open and a horde of clearly dead homeless are emerging from all directions. The ringleader is a dead Chris Schrock.

He looks over around the room until he finds Detective Allen. Once they have locked eyes, the once seemingly random attacking horde, now turns their collective attention onto him. Allen does a decent job of fighting off the approaching dead men, and once the other officers seemed to notice that all eyes are on him, most do their best to help out but the sheer numbers have them overwhelmed.

Schrock has made it across the room with a broom stick in hand and is about to nail Allen with a broom handle when the top of his head is blown off, spraying residue onto the back of Allen. He turns around to see a massive and muscular Native American man with guns in both hands blazing numerous bums in the head with precise accuracy while running towards him. Once the man has made it to Allen, he says, “You must be Detective Allen. Scorch sent me. I’m Big Chief Gunz but my friends call me The BCG. We got to get you to the roof, seal the door and get you out of the open. That way we can actually set up shop and protect you till this mess is done. Follow me.”

“Wait! How do you know where the roof is?” questions Detective Allen.

“Duck!”

Allen does, allowing BCG to put one through another walking corpse’s head.

“We don’t got time for explaining right now, once we’re safe we can work out the details.”

Allen nods in agreement and they both make their way to the stairs leading to the roof, through the walking dead and dead comrades on the ground. Once on the stairwell, they fight off a few more followers, make it through the door and lock it shut with

a few approaching deadheads on the stairwell. As they both look at the door, questioning silently if it will hold, Detective Allen asks, "So, what the hell is going on? Is it my imagination or were all those...things...coming after me?"

As both men turn towards the noisy helicopter that had caught their attention, BCG is hit in the face with a 2x4 that was broken off of a pallet a few feet away. This drops the big man to the ground quick and hard. Detective Allen checks on him and looks up to find a gun pointed at his head.

"Come with us!" demands Kane with the 2x4 still in his hand. The other man with the gun adds, "Hurry the hell up!"

"Who are you and what the hell do you want with me?"

"Just get the fuck up and move. Or would you rather me just shoot you in the head right here."

"Well, I prefer you not to shoot me in the head right here or anywhere matter of fact."

Kane drops the 2x4 and walks over and handcuffs Detective Allen. As they head over to the helicopter, unnoticed to them was a man who had climbed up the side of the building with amazing speed and near humanly impossible movements. The man is wearing a black body suit that seems to be lined with thin metal strips all over it. Once the man has reached the top of the building, he stands straight after doing odd movements as in popping his joints back into place. He looks over at BCG, who is still trying to recover from getting his clock cleaned. BCG says as he staggers to his feet but falls back to one knee, "I'm fine Doc, but they got him on that copter."

The two men and Detective Allen are on the copter when they notice this man running towards them. "Up! Up! Up!" yells one of the men to the pilot, who does as told.

Dr. Q, quickly approaching the copter uses one of the rooftop fan casings to make a desperation leap towards the ascending helicopter. As his outstretched hand nears the landing gear he smiles but that grin is replaced with shock when he is shot dead center mass in his chest. He exclaims, "Oh, green tacos on a Wednesday!"

The impact of the bullet was like running into a brick wall and he drops like a ton of bricks back to the rooftop.

Across the street on another rooftop is a sniper posted in laying position next to Ms. Grimsley, who has been orchestrating

the dead army from high above. She is extremely focused and doesn't notice the approaching individual until the sniper next to her is snatched up, smacked around and thrown a few feet away. This grabs her attention. She turns around to find Scorch in front of her. Ms. Grimsley pulls out a two foot fighting staff from a sheath on her back. It extends on both ends to a length of six feet. Scorch picks up a loose pipe that was on the roof to even the playing field. She charges Scorch and they both fight with Ms. Grimsley making most of the contact. After Ms. Grimsley took Scorch to the ground for the second time, Scorch leaps up and says, "I have had enough of this."

Ms. Grimsley gives a slight smirk.

Scorch drops the pipe and claps both her wrist together and then immediately extends her arms with palms outward. Fire shoots from them like a flame thrower.

Ms. Grimsley does a graceful backflip that allows her to escape the hot cloud burst of flames. Now with a little distance between them, Ms. Grimsley looks over at the police station and notices the approaching helicopter. She puts her staff away, and grabs her whip from her side and runs towards the edge of the building with Scorch in tow. Once the copter is above the edge of the building, Ms. Grimsley whips the whip towards the landing gear in hopes to wrap it around the landing gear to pull her to safety as it lifted upward again. This did not work as expected. The whirling vortex of the helicopter blades drew the whip towards it along with Ms. Grimsley. As she rapidly was being sucked towards the blades to her death, Scorch stopped underneath her waiting to catch her when she let go and fell back to the rooftop.

The blades were eating up the whip as if it was a hungry monster, at the last moment, she let go of the whip and falls back towards the roof. Lucky for her, one of the men in the copter, who was tethered in, was able to grab by the wrist and save her from being capture by Scorch whom was a mere foot away from grabbing her foot. "Damn it! Hey what's this?" He notices a necklace on the ground. It's Ms. Grimsley's.

On the other rooftop, Dr. Q helps BCG to his feet. BCG asks him, "You ok, Doctor?"

"Yeah, bulletproof vest built into this suit. It's a very light

durable polymer that I created. But I bet there might be some internal damage. Have to get that check out when we get back to HQ.”

“Damn, I wish I had the same no pain condition you have.”

“Trust me; you would not, if it meant being a quad like I am when I’m not in this suit.”

“Yeah, sorry Dr. I forget that you are, you know since I see you doing amazing stuff all the time.”

“No worries.”

“Hey Doc, did you really scream something about green tacos when you were hit?”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“It’s better than cursing right? With over an I.Q. of over 200, I can’t be sounding like every Johnny-come-lately right? I thought it was quite clever.”

“Yeah, clever. Almost as clever as Scorch putting that tracking device in Detective Allen’s shoes at his house without him knowing.”

“Yeah, of course it’s clever. I created the device after all.”

BCG rests his arm on Dr. Q’s shoulder, who is about a foot shorter than him.

They both watch the helicopter fly off until they hear one of the living dead approaching from behind. BCG says, “Oh yeah, forgot about them.” He turns around and blows its head off, dropping it to the ground.

Dr. Q’s says, “Let’s go finish off these things and then go find just where they are taking the poor ol lad.”

CHAPTER TWELVE

On the helicopter, The Diabolical Chee Chee is talking to The Host on a headset as he sits in the co-pilot seat. Once finished, he hands the headset over to Kane who is pilot.

The Host tells Kane, "I should have seen it coming. Humans are so fragile and their existence next to pointless. It is not the necklace that allowed her to control the dead, yet it's her natural ability, the necklace only seemed to unlocked her dormant ability. My guess is due to the traumatic events surrounding her parents' demise. It became apparent once I saw her aboard without her necklace, yet live news feeds show the corpses still attacking until a little after she left the area. The Stone of Forgat did enhance the range but what is the use of that with the frailty that is human existence?"

Kane nods in agreement and continues to listen after acknowledgement of agreement. The Host continues, "If something was to happen to that pathetic shell, years and millions of dollars would be wasted, and for what? A warehouse of relics years later. I want you make sure she does not come back to the lair alive. Is that understood?"

"Yes Master."

"Good, I am still going to go to our lair at the Isle of Reckoning. Rendezvous with me once you have completed what I have requested."

"Yes, Master. Understood. Kane out."

The communication was terminated. Kane takes off the headset and started to turn around but before he was able to, Ms. Grimsley cuts his head off with the sharp blade she used earlier on The Host but this time with a successful outcome. Kane's body disappears, yet his clothes remain. She glares at the rest of the shocked crew, whose shock seemed only momentary as they almost immediately went back to what they were doing.

Chee-Chee on the other hand, has his eyes closed. As Ms. Grimsley approaches him, he says telepathically to her, "I'm assuming Kane disappeared right? It was an unsettling site the first time I witnessed it. It appears that he is linked to the Betty Hughes Museum in Craptown. Every time he dies, he reappears there, naked. While The Host won't admit it, that museum even scares him. Since the incident, no one knows what is actually going on

inside it.”

Ms. Grimsley clears her throat to get him back on track, “Oh, sorry Master. The Host informed me that he knows that your ability is innate, therefore not due to the necklace and in short you were expendable. He said he saw you without it in the copter. Combine that with the information that he was able to ‘see’ at the graveyard when we first ran into Detective Allen, I deduced that he was able to see through me. So, the last time we were at the lair, I searched around on the system’s network and found that my right eye was actually being used as a camera for him. With me mostly being animal DNA and parts, I am unable to close one eye individually and I figured you would not want him to see you kill Kane, whom was supposed to kill you. So please remove his clothing, and I will open my eyes.”

She does and he opens his eyes, he continues to talk telepathically, “Good thing The Host does not know you turned me the first day you met me, otherwise you might be dead already. And apparently, all the tinkering in my genetic makeup has allowed for us to have more meaningful conversations than most of those bags of skin we tend to use, otherwise I would be forced to let everyone in on the little plan I conceived.”

They both grin.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Aboard a different helicopter, one that is more designed for stealth, sits BCG in the pilot seat and Scorch in the co-pilot seat. Dr. Q is looking at a holographic image of a woman, along with Scorch, with BCG giving occasion glimpses back. The woman says, “The tracking device has slowed dramatically, so I’m assuming they are all on foot now. Somewhere on Holt Island, they must have a hideout. You must find it and try to retrieve any information that you can on what they are doing to the recently deceased. Worst case scenario blow the whole thing up, but not until you have found the detective, dead or alive. I will be jamming all satellites and radio broadcast in the area, so you will be ‘ears and eyes closed’ for one hour. That’s about all I can give you. This should help prevent from any kind of backup being called in.”

Dr. Q replies, “Should be as easy as advanced neurosurgery, well for me of course.” He laughs at his own joke, then asks, “So, any news on the big game? Did A.J. Colton make us tons of money?”

“You better be joking, gambling on him is strictly prohibited.”

“I was joking. I’m not your common bar nuts eating, beer bleaching comrade I tell you. I was simply wondering how he did?”

“They won, 45-15. Anything else?”

“Nope. Starting radio silence now Nina. Talk to you in one hour.”

The holographic image disappears.

Scorch asks Dr. Q with a smile, “You like picking on her don’t you? Does it bother you that a woman is smarter than you?”

He replies, “First, little lady, mind your elders.”

Scorch smirks, “Secondly, we have never actually had a true measurable battle of intelligence, therefore neither of us is, how you said it, smarter than the other.”

BCG pushes a button on his belt and two mechanical arms descend from the roof above the pilot seat. As the hand grips lock firmly on each side of his waist, he says to, “Well regardless of who is smarter than who, I’m just glad that you Scorch old buddy are smart enough to fly this thing. Especially when nature is

calling like it is.”

The arms lift his upper torso, which is lined along the bottom with electrical connecting devices, and carries him over to a pair of mechanical legs that his upper body connects into. After a few clicking/clasping sounds, fully together now, he walks over the restroom compartment.

Dr. Q asks, “Well big fellow, I’m curious to know, are you fully function down there? I mean is the anatomy correct?”

“Wanna find out? You can hold it for me.”

“Ummm..no. I’ll pass. I will just look at the schematics once back at HQ.”

“To Hell you will! My private is private, got it?”

Dr. Q looks embarrassed as BCG looks back over his shoulder at him with a serious look, as he lets a lengthy one continue. Scorch can be heard laughing under her breath. Dr. Q looks at her and says, “I have also always wondering, just how do you go, too? I mean, I know you are all woman under the man suit, but I don’t see any zippers or any way you can remove the suit. So is it like overalls someway? Or is there some kind of reservoir, colostomy bag contraption?”

BCG says firmly, “Just drop it doc. Otherwise, we are gonna think we got some perverted old man on our hands.”

Scorch adds, “Yeah, please do.”

“Fine. I was only curious in a scientific way. Since I am the latest member of the team, I am at a disadvantage when it comes to team members’ histories and origins.”

Scorch notices smoke coming from a crash site. “I think we found out why they are on foot now.”

BCG, just finishing up his business, adds, “Well its time to lock and load baby.”

Dr. Q asked observantly, “I don’t think I heard you wash your hands.”

BCG replies with a smile, “You didn’t.” and reaches out to touch the doc who turns his head complete 180 degrees away from him, while his arms try to hold him at bay, “Oh gross, knock it off.”

Scorch laughs as she lands the copter.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

In this dark and slightly damp room that is faintly illuminated from the various machinery lining the walls, is a gurney like operating table. Strapped to the table is Detective Allen and slowly circling him like a vulture does its dying prey is Ms. Grimsley. She is wearing a black leather butcher's apron covered in blood. There is a bright operating room light beaming down on to him. He's unconscious.

Meanwhile, in a side room connected to the central area of the underground lair, the two henchmen are standing guard next to the giant crate they were dragging around earlier. One says to the other, "So, how long are we supposed to be his servants? Can you believe we are crate sitting. This damn thing has its own room and we sleep on the floor until we are allowed to go home. I'm just saying for crying out loud, it seems like it's gonna be forever."

"Well without the antidote what choice do we have? Don't you remember what happened to Dick? Dick exploded right in front of our eyes!"

"Of course, I haven't forgotten about Dick exploding in front of our eyes. Wait? Do you know how perverted what we just said sounded? Haha! Imagine if someone just over heard just that part of the conversation."

"What? I'm being completely serious. Seeing Dick blow up everywhere and getting all over me still gives me nightm...oh wait...oh my God, you seriously took that out of that? You are the one who brought up the subject and then you..."

"Brought what up?" asks the Diabolical Chee- Chee in a stern way. He had swooped in and gently landed on the top of the crate without them noticing.

"Umm...nothing Chee...Diabolical Chee Chee."
Responded one of the henchmen.

"That's what I thought. You two are not here for a friendship to blossom with each other or anyone matter of fact. And truly, neither of you know Dick." He gives a slight creepy smile.

Both henchmen look confused and slightly scared. They can't seem to figure if Chee Chee was trying to be funny or was it just an accidental joke.

The Diabolical Chee Chee shakes his head in disgust, “I can’t believe I even wasted my time with you lower life forms. It is called a double entendre imbeciles!”

As one of them starts to laugh, when Chee Chee cuts them off, “Sssshh! Didn’t you hear that?”

Back inside Ms. Grimsley’s private laboratory, the operating table is now horizontal. She holds a vial of something under his nose till he wakes from his apparent drug induced slumber.

Detective Allen shakes his head trying to clear the bats from his belfry, “What? Where am I?”

He looks over at her and she smiles.

“You? Where am I?” He struggles to move, “What have you done to me? What do you want?”

She shakes her head as if she wants nothing from him. She walks out of his view and out of the light.

“Wait! Where you going? You got to let me go. I’m a police officer; do you know how much trouble you are getting yourself into?”

She doesn’t respond.

Growing more nervous by her silence and being restrained, he frantically tries to look around but realizes that even his head is restrained to looking straight ahead. He comforted a little when noticed out of his peripheral vision that she was coming back.

“Good. You came to your sense. Just let me go and I promise I won’t press charges. I will just chalk it up to a drunk weekend when asked where I was at. Ok?”

His nervous rambling is interrupted when she puts her finger in front of her mouth and says in almost a whisper, “Sssshh...”

He acknowledges her by being quiet as he looks at that creepy grin for the second time in a few minutes.

She doesn’t back away and keeps the pose. He had looked down but looks back at her again, puzzled on why she is still keeping that pose. He looks at her and thinks, “Man, she is a weird one. And she has pretty manly hands for a woman.” Her lack of movement forces him to focus more; he notices something odd about her finger. “She has a scar on her index finger like I do,

that's odd, what are..." Her grin grows as she can see by the look in his eyes that reality has worked its way into his mind.

"That's...that's...oh my God that's my finger!"

She slowly lifts his arm upward until he can see where she cut it off from the rest of his body. The open end is still dripping blood.

"No!!!!!!!!!" screams Detective Allen as Ms. Grimsley starts to give a slight giggle with her huge grin.

The door to the lab is blown off its hinges; smoke pours in along with the sound of gunfire and soldiers fighting. Once the smoke clears the doorway, BCG steps through, "Maybe he's in here."

She looks back over her shoulder and BCG and Ms. Grimsley lock eyes, "What in the hell are you doing?" BCG demanded as he could only see Detective Allen's head past her and what looked like his outstretched arm. That is until she turned a little more, and then realized what she did to him. "Oh you fucking freak!" He starts shooting at her and with cat like graces she escapes between two machines along the wall and exits out through a secret corridor, dropping the arm to the ground on her way out. He walks over to the arm and to his horror; she had cut off both Detective Allen's arms and legs. He looks up at Detective Allen, who has been frantic ever since seeing his own detached arm. "That crazy bitch cut off my arm! Why would she do that?! My fucking arm!"

Squatted over the body parts, he realizes that Detective Allen must not be able to move his head much, as to the fact that he is stating 'arm' in the singular sense. Looking at him on the table, he can see that she cauterized his extremities to prevent blood loss and that she had done an amazing job. He thinks to himself, "Well, I guess that is good news, she didn't want him to die. But how am I supposed to tell him that he has no legs or arms? He's freaking out from an arm, which he has truly has a right to be freaked out but what am I supposed to say? I wish the Doc was in here, he has a way with words."

"Hey, get me down from here! And grab my arm. Maybe there is a way to save it."

"I'm just hoping there is a way to save you." BCG mumbles to himself.

Ms. Grimsley, hunched over comes near the end of the escape tunnel and notices a flickering light. She steps out of the tunnel leading to the room the crate was housed in to find it on fire. She freezes in place and starts shaking uncontrollably. She reaches to grip her necklace and despite it not being there, she keeps her hand closed and by her chest as if it was. The crate, engulfed in flames starts to fall apart and two decomposing bodies emerge from within.

Not frightened, Ms. Grimsley stands still, despite the ever growing fire and loud explosions and exchanging of gunfire in the adjacent areas. The two bodies reach outward towards as they slowly make their way towards her.

She can hear them in her thoughts, “Release us. Please. Release us.” They continue to repeat, as she starts to cry. She mumbles softly, “No. I can’t”.

They continue their approach. The smell of rotten and burning flesh doesn’t bother her as they close in, still constantly asking to be released.

She finally moves, but towards the burning duo and yells, “I can’t! Without you mommy and daddy, I have no reason to live!”

They all embrace each other and hold on to each other despite the fire and cavern coming down all around them. A loud explosion causes the cave to collapse.

Dr. Q staggers into the room that both BCG and Detective Allen are in. “Well, that’s the last of them.” He finds that BCG is trying to comfort a crying detective. “Well, what do we have...” he cuts his sentence short as he was approaching them and noticed the body parts on the ground. He looks at them and sees where those parts should be. “Well, umm, Scorch is trying to get as much information out of the computer system as she can. It seems that The Host has wired this place to blow, so we don’t have much time. Umm..can we move him?”

Detective Allen says in somber tone, “Just leave me. Even if I survive, what kind of life would I have? Just please leave me.”

All three men look down and Scorch comes to the door, “We gotta move it guys, less than two minutes before something bad happens based on that countdown timer on the computer I was

at.”

She sees Detective Allen, and asks everyone, “What’s the hold up? He’s alive, right?”

BCG answers, “Yes, but…”

“Then let’s go, grab him and let’s get the hell out of here. What kind of rescue mission would this be if we found him alive and left him?”

Detective Allen protest, “I’m not going anywhere! Just live me here to die!”

BCG looks conflicted and so does the doctor.

“Fine, I will carry him out!” yells Scorch.

“No! Leave me here, please! Just let me die!”

He protests the whole way out as they make it safely out and back to the helicopter. She doesn’t argue with him, she doesn’t say a word and neither do the other two.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

A few days later inside McLaughlin's City top secret Abnormal Science and Phenomenon research facility, two orderlies are making their rounds. One of them asks the other, "Hey, have you seen the latest freak show they brought in?"

"You talking about the one they brought in a couple of nights ago? The one in the Urel Foy unit?"

"Yeah, but I mean have you actually seen it?"

"It?"

"Well, I say 'it' cause it was so covered with burns that you couldn't tell if it was a boy or girl. All its hair was burned off too."

"Damn, naw. I got to go see this."

They make their way down to the special unit and stop at door, N-103.

"Ok, dude, get ready to upchuck your lunch."

"Dude, it can't be that bad."

"Man, I saw it the first day it was here and it's still haunting my days. It seems like they would have had it strapped down or knocked out with drugs, with burns that bad but the thing wasn't making a sound as they walked it chained down to this room."

"Ok, dude, here I go." He leans forward and peers into the room, "What the hell, man?"

"See, I told you. Messed up huh?"

"What? There's nothing wrong with her."

"Her?" puzzled, the orderly looks in to find Ms. Grimsley. Her skin is a little splotched here and there but doesn't look like a burn victim at all.

"Hey, must be some kind of mix up." He leans back to look at the door number on the door pane and it reads, "N-103".

"Maybe, they moved it."

"I don't know. They never tell us much around here. Well let's get back to work. This was lame."

"Sorry dude, I thought that thing would still be in here."

Once the men are gone away from the door, Ms. Grimsley looks up at the door. She has a vacant look on the face. She starts to look back down until a voice is heard from the shadow in the corner of the room. She looks at it. She can make the outline of a

man. He says, “Ms. Grimsley. My master is gone. I have come to serve a new one.”

She grins an eerie grin as the man in the shadows kneels down yet still in the shadows.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

“I’m not doing it. I’m not going to be some sideshow freak.” Detective Allen surveys the room and adds, “Sorry guys, I didn’t mean anything personally guys.”

BCG answers for the group, “None taken. We all know how difficult it is to adjust to the new augmentations, but if it wasn’t for them we would be just your everyday average handicap Joe, but these make us...”

Scorch cuts him off, “Don’t say it.”

“What?”

Dr. Q answers, “That it makes us handicappable. I’m sorry, but that was lame the first time I heard it.”

Scorch adds, “Plus, I was able bodied without this suit.”

BCG replies, “Yeah, but you couldn’t do much with your skin the way it was. I mean with all the skin grafts and nerve damage it wasn’t a pretty..”

Nina, the head of this misfit group and creator of their gadgetry, cuts him short, “Don’t ever tell a woman she wasn’t pretty.”

BCG looks down and Scorch smiles, and Nina adds, “Even if now she looks like a man.”

“Hey!” fires back Scorch, “It’s not my fault that men don’t seem to respect a nice rack and legs to die for.”

They all have a good laugh, except Detective Allen. “That doesn’t change anything. I’m still not gonna have some nickname and walkaround like some robot cop. Damn, I feel like a broken record but it just feels like I’m living out some B movie.”

BCG says, “Hmm...a movie about a robot cop huh? That sound like it would be a blockbuster movie to me, especially if he had guns that came out of his thighs like mine do.”

They all start giving their two cents in as to how a movie of this type would do, when Allen clears his throat to gather everyone’s attention. “Still not doing it.”

Scorch says, “Have you ever wonder why I didn’t just let you lie in that cave and die?”

This clearly has been a sore topic in the past few weeks. Detective Allen answers with a coldness in his voice, “Yes, I told you. I would have been better off dead.”

Scorch says with a more empathic tone, “I was you, I

served the people. I was a firefighter once. Was trapped in a fire and pretty much left for dead. After years of trying to get the men in the firehouse to respect me and treat me as an equal and finding out it was for nothing. When I realized that my own company turned their backs against me. You see in the movies, B rated or not. Firefighters usually risk their own lives to save a fellow fighter, but not in the movie that was my life. That day, they let Lorelei Marie die. No one came to my rescue.”

The other members of this group get more serious as they have heard this story before. Detective Allen listens quietly as she continues, “I thought I had died. I came through on a table just like you. Unable to move, to feel anything. The first person I saw was Nina. She had rescued me, and to this day, I still don’t know how and don’t care. The fact that she did was good enough to me. I had burns all over my body and without this suit, I would have died. She gave me the choice to live and continue to help others like I had sworn as an oath as a firefighter or to die and let the naysayers win, prove to them I just didn’t have it. I choose to live, and that meant that I would spend pretty much the rest of my life in this suit. I accepted that and I have kept my oath.”

Detective Allen looks on the fence about what to do.

Nina’s next statement seals the deal, “I didn’t want to tell you this until you made your decision but I was outvoted. At least, we did agree to tell you if you seem hesitant to try to use your new abilities. Ms. Grimsley survived and later she escaped from McLaughlin’s City’s ASP center three days after her arrival.”

His look turns to stern and serious, “Then let’s get this training started with.”

While everyone in the group looks happy with his decision, Nina asks, “Are you sure? This can’t be fueled by revenge; you will fail if it is.”

He looks her in the eyes, “I said I’m ready to train didn’t I?” Then he smiles.