

MS. GRIMSLEY

WRITTEN BY B.A. SAVAGE

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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 geoses.”

“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 mooley 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."

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