

Joel S. Williams

THE BLUEGOON

A story from the “Spacetale” chronicles.

By Joel S. Williams, aka Mr. Ogunberry.

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CHAPTER ONE: A CRASH COURSE IN ACCIDENTAL DISCOVERY!

“Would anyone in the class like to answer?” Mrs. Daisy droned, knowing fully well the typical outcome.

The class of thirty made clear their disinterest; if they weren't muttering amongst themselves, they were sleeping. If they weren't fiddling with some electronic device discreetly behind their books or under the desk, they were reading something unrelated to school, carefully hidden with the pages of their textbook.

Hung on the cream-colored walls were charts with notes about paying attention, studying, eating healthy and the motto of refining young minds for a better tomorrow. All of which was ‘bull to the children as far as Mrs. Daisy saw it.

Mrs. Daisy glared behind her spectacles, her lips glowing red on account of applying too much lipstick. She wore a simple yellow tunic and one of her many frilly dresses the children often joked was a tablecloth, contrasting the students' black uniforms with blue undershirts peeking from beneath.

Her methods proving insufficient, Mrs. Daisy decided to throw out a bait, whose flavor entice the young ones. “Hey children,” she said in a mocking lively tone, “I heard that Rapper Sprite Pinkable just released a new single!”

Their heads snapped up with awestruck gapes and blissful smiles.

“Really?” said a girl.

“No way!” a boy said. “Mrs. Daisy you listen to Sprite Pinkable?”

And just as the chatter aroused, Mrs. Daisy slapped the ruler in her palm. “You little buggers! So that got you all fired up, eh?”

The winds of confusion swept through the class, wiping away the smiles on their faces. They muttered amongst themselves, throwing questions back and forth.

A boy of African descent with his hair in cornrows said, “So, wait...Mrs. Daisy, Sprite Pinkable didn’t release a new single?” He had a smartphone in his hands already typing in the artist’s name in the browser’s search bar.

Mrs. Daisy clenched the ruler in her hands, tensing as if she meant to break it. “No...Richard. He didn’t.”

The class erupted in displeased groans and hoots.

Richard said, “Mrs. Daisy that’s not a cool joke to make yo!”

“Yeah!” said a buck-toothed girl. “Don’t play with our emotions like that!”

Mrs. Daisy slapped the table. “Quiet!”

The class abruptly yelped, and silence followed—except for a boy who choked on the bubblegum down his throat. He was Montgomery Estevez, or Morty for short.

Mrs. Daisy’s petite face mustered as much muscle and nerves to create a formidable frown. “You kids think this is a joke?” No one replied, however there were nonchalant expressions and gestures. “The end of term exams are three weeks from now, and your grades look like something Bram Stoker would’ve wrote. They’re piss-poor!”

One thing that was always a surprise to the students and teachers in Bluntwick High was Mrs. Daisy’s talent for producing an imposing voice, though high-pitched, from her delicate throat and lips. She always made sure to use it in moderation as to maintain its novelty, and the effects of which worked to make the students uneasy.

But Mrs. Daisy’s eyes caught a student’s head still down, as always. She tapped the table, “Shaun?”

The boy abruptly lifted his head. His caramel eyes beamed at her. “What—huh?”

The children around him sniggered. Shaun frowned and looked around at the mocking gazes.

“He was reading those stupid comics!” blurted Shelly, a brunette with dark eyes and freckles.

Richard said, “Hey weaboo, you seen She-hulk yet?” Richard’s taunt was accompanied by a cacophony of giggles, particularly from Stan and Bob, two youths who were the staple members of his posse.

Shaun grimaced. “All of you shut up! I was busy reading my text book!”

Shelly got up. “Really?” She hurried over to Shaun’s desk and snatched up his book.

“Hey!” Shaun reached for it as Shelly hopped away. She opened the book and dropped this week’s issue of Superheroes Weekly on the cream-colored tiles.

A student pointed at it immediately. “Look!”

Shaun clenched his fists as the laughter ensued. Had it not been for his dark skin, his face would’ve undoubtedly been red-hot like a bed of lava.

Having enough of the distraction, Mrs. Daisy slapped Shelly on her shoulder with the ruler. The girl winced and spun around. “Ouch! Mrs. Daisy...you hit me!”

“I know,” she said. “Now go call your parents so I can give them some too.”

Shelly regarded the teacher with a such a malicious stare that half the class got quiet, thinking she would lunge at Mrs. Daisy. But Shelly revoked the urge, and mumbled something that by the school’s standards would’ve required a letter.

Mrs. Daisy gestured to her desk. “Now sit!”

Shelly scornfully cut her eyes from her and took her seat. Mrs. Daisy turned to Shaun, who had quickly taken up his book and was putting them together. He didn’t look at anyone, his frustration evident on his face. Shaun crossed his arms and looked at the teacher, then casually looked around the room.

Mrs. Daisy said, “It’s obvious you all think this is a joke. You don’t understand that you’re all playing with your future here.”

A student raised her hand, a slender build girl with a black hijab adorned with yellow flower patterns. She had brown skin that brought out her dark eyes and lips.

“Yes Barbara?” said Mrs. Daisy.

Barbara lowered her hand in her lap and said in a most modest tone, “Mrs. Daisy, I think the answer lies within the school’s curriculum. It’s a bit too much for us to digest all once.”

“She’s right,” said Robert, a boy with long hair and an ever-present set of headphones with star stickers. “They started cramming in all this stuff relating to some hardcore science stuff. That’s like, some PHD level bull right there.”

“It’s because of the rise in alien activity.” The voice was Shaun’s, who got everyone’s attention. “It was in 1994, thirty years ago, when the first alien ship landed in Nigeria. The other aliens managed to come back for it, but since then we’ve been experiencing paranormal activity all over the world.”

“Yeah,” said Richard, “leave it to the dweeb to bring that up.”

Barbara added, “He has a point though. I mean, if you look at the news you’ll see that half the time it has to do with some monster incident, or some human that developed powers.”

Feeling at ease that someone was finally able to back of his point, Shaun added, “Plus isn’t the government planning on opening a special branch that deals with paranormal stuff.”

“I saw that report once,” Betty said. “They want to open a branch that’s comprised of mostly superhumans to combat the monsters. I think they want to influence us with these new subjects in school to develop a profession in that field.”

“Bull!” said Shelly. “They’re raising us to be a bunch of monster hunters?”

“They want you all to be prepared,” said Mrs. Daisy. “We don’t live in the seventies anymore. This is a day and age where the world has to deal with terror from outer space as well as from each other, so they want you all to be well informed. Besides, this curriculum was implemented ten years, and others have passed. You don’t have any excuse to fail.”

“I wish I did,” Morty murmured.

“Regardless.” Mrs. Daisy sat on the edge of the desk. “In three weeks, you have your exams, and based on what I saw here today, you’re a long way from hitting the mark. If you don’t pass the exam, this class will continue to be the dunce class up until graduation.”

“...Geeze,” said a boy in the back. “Mrs. Daisy that’s a bit harsh?”

She crossed her arms over her small breast. “Really, you’re offended? Then what do you think the first and second place classes call you all?”

“Screw ‘em!” said Richard.

“Watch your mouth in my class, boy,” Mrs. Daisy sneered. Richard rolled his eyes and looked elsewhere.

“At the end of the day this will all reflect on your school report and determine whether you get to do certain subjects come the end of your school days,” Mrs. Daisy continued. “If you’re bad in school, it will carry

over into the real world. And trust me, unless you have some rare skill or lots of friends with cash or connections, you're going to be left in the wind."

The bell rang in with gusto, and tables and chairs shifted noisily as the students took up their belongings and hurried towards the door.

It was Friday after all.

"Make sure to stay safe," said Mrs. Daisy as the students left the room. "Our town's had monster sightings for months—but don't forget we have crazies and rapists running around. And make sure to study!"

Mrs. Daisy saw the glee of irresponsibility on the students' faces as they passed her, and planned to go home to pray her words didn't fall on deaf ears. But there was a silver lining with a few of her students.

Five of them. One of which was the last to leave.

Mrs. Daisy held him by the shoulder to get his attention. "Shaun, I need to have a word with you for a moment."

Shaun held onto the strap of blue backpack, adorned with stickers and badges of the icons of pop culture, in particular Japanese anime. It was this fascination that led to him styling his black hair in a spikey manner.

"Is there something wrong, Mrs. Daisy?" said Shaun.

Mrs. Daisy crossed her arms across her lap and offered a smile. "I want you to study really hard over these coming weeks."

Shaun nodded. "Sure..."

"I'm serious," the teacher said. "You, Barbara, Morty, Bonnie and Robert are the few children in my class I see putting out any effort."

Shaun's shoulders slumped. "Yeah," he said. "But I can't even reach seventy percent. It sucks."

“You can,” she said. “Just give the comics a break for a few days and take up the books. It will do well for me as well. You don’t want them to say your teacher isn’t doing any kind of work, do you?”

Shaun gave her a playful smirk and a side-eye. “So you’re only encouraging me because it will help you?”

“It will help the both of us,” she said. “Barbara and Robert already agreed to have me come over their house on Sundays to help with their studies. Would you like me to do the same for you?”

“...Ah, nope.” Shaun shifted his backpack. “I really appreciate your help, but I like doing things on my own.”

Mrs. Daisy’s mind brought forth something she’d heard about Shaun’s family, rumors amongst the faculty, and wondered if it lent to Shaun’s anti-social tendencies. She caught a glance of his hands, covered in a few cuts and bandages around two fingers. “Is your mother okay?”

Shaun hesitated before he answered, looking thoughtfully at the ground before bringing his eyes back to her. “She’s fine.”

“You know, Shaun, I’m always here to help you if you need anything.” Mrs. Daisy touched his hand.

Shaun wasn’t sure about the resolve of adults. It seemed they only cared about children when it benefitted their own needs. More and more each day he was beginning to see that. The biggest example having been his mother.

“Yeah,” Shaun said. “I’ll see you on Monday Mrs. Daisy.”

Shaun left and went into the hallway of azure walls and white floors and ceilings. Children flooded from the classrooms and filled the corridors with the excited prospect of being able to stay up late tonight and stay in bed tomorrow. Being so close to end of year, their carefree attitude lent to posters of summer events that overshadowed the notices the school staff had put up.

There were a few students Shaun recognized, none of which knew him. In particular, one girl always managed to magnetize his eyes on her each time, and there she stood at the bend of the corridor.

Bright blonde hair and eyes of crystal blue. Her nose was rounded, and her smile always wide and bright. The girl's skirt was just above her knees and stretched like that of a ballerina, showering her toned calves that gave away her identity as a member of the school's track team, resulting in the crowd of boys and girls around her showering her with admiration.

Not to mention her family was known for their deep, fat pockets.

Betty Cullenfield, Shaun thought. He got a whiff of the intoxicating scent of her perfume, like one of those cartoons where the scent manifested in a buxom, gyrating woman beneath the character's nose.

It seized Shaun's hormones and dragged hi, closer to the crowd, where he heard piece of the conversation.

Betty said, "I mean seriously, did she really think I was going to give her my ID because she's a cop? That bitch must've been on something"

The crowd erupted in a boisterous laugh that made Shaun flinch. Particularly amongst the jocks, wearing their red and yellow jackets with the emblem of a bear on the back, the mascot of their school's football team.

Shaun swallowed a nervous lump, and straightened his back. "Um. Hey Betty?"

Like a hammer on a nail, his voice drove their conversation to an abrupt halt. They casted confused and annoyed stares at Shaun, as if they meant to melt him with their eyes.

Betty's smile took a complete one-eighty into a disgusted frown.

Undiscouraged, Shaun said, "H-hey Betty?"

“What?” she said.

“...I...was just saying hello,” said Shaun, giving her his brightest smile.

Betty looked him up and down quizzically, and turned to a girl and said, “Who gave this dweeb my name?”

“I don’t know,” her friend replied.

One of the jocks confronted Shaun. “Get lost pipsqueak.”

“I wasn’t talking to you Bradley,” said Shaun. His hand shook, and he clenched it into a tight fist.

“I know him,” another sneered. “He’s from the dunce class!”

“Yeah, he is!” said another.

Another one of the jocks, a square-faced brute of youth named Calvin, shoved Shaun and said, “Why don’t you bum outta here already with that wacky hairdo of yours!”

“He’s one of those anime dorks, I think!” a girl said. “A weaboo!”

Shaun stared Calvin in the eye. Shaun wasn’t one of the self-proclaimed alpha males from the science club or the sports teams, but he wasn’t a pushover either. “You put your hand on me again asshole and you’re gonna regret it.”

Calvin and the other boys cooed at Shaun. “Really now?” And Calvin shoved Shaun again. “Do something you little bitch!”

And just as Shaun dropped his backpack, a teacher called out to them, “Hey! You all break that up and get home...*right now!*”

They turned to the direction of the voice and saw Mr. Taylor, an English teacher with receding hair and a bulging gut.

Shaun turned to the kids and saw them slowly walking away. Even Betty, his beloved, regarded him with unimpressed eyes of contempt and followed her friends.

And even Shaun heard her say: “I might need to change my name since that bum knows it.”

Shaun heard the tormenting cackle of Betty’s entourage peers, and snatched up his backpack and marched away. “Assholes...”

Shaun forced his way through the cacophony of warm bodies and made his way to the main hall, the highlights of this area being a few words of advice to struggling students (none which told how to break the necks of bullies and get away with it to Shaun’s dismay) on the walls, a map of the important locals on the compound and the monthly “High Flyers” notice board, advertising the students with a ninety percent average and over on their school report.

There were the constants on the board; one being a Nigerian kid named Oswald Oyanda, and the other Eren Ishida. These two were in a constant competition for the number one spot, with this month’s victor having been Oyanda. The third place belonged to a raven-haired boy named Walter Ornscoot, and fourth belonged to a girl who herself stood before the flyer with the list of names, looking at it with pursed lips and a continuous thoughtful tap of her finger on her chin.

Genevieve, right? Shaun thought. Looking at the girl whose skin was similar to his. Her skirt was a little below of her knees, and her jacket open. She usually wore her white socks up to her knees like legwarmers, a style that would’ve usually gotten jeers from others, but her ranking in school balanced that out with respect for her IQ. Her face was narrow, her eyes dark, and her hair was done in four puffy braids that stood off her head.

Shaun didn’t feel the same kind of urges for her as he did for Betty, but she wasn’t unsightly either.

A girl stopped next to Genevieve, perky in her posture and tone with large blue eyes. Shaun heard that her name was Rebecca Steinberg, or “Crazy” as the often labeled her.

“Hey Genny!” she said.

Genevieve replied with a nod, her eyes unflinching from the list.

The girl folded her lips, switching her eyes from the poster to the student who seemed to be entranced with it. “...Umm, you okay?”

“Close,” Genevieve droned. “I’m getting really close...”

The girl next to Genevieve caught Shaun staring at them intently. Rebecca started to get jittering and suddenly hurried off.

Shaun turned to Genevieve again, only to see her set her fingers like guns and point them at the names at the top of the list. Genevieve snapped her thumb and pulled back her hand.

And Shaun took his que as Rebecca did and hurried off.

Outside a path of cobblestone ran towards the front gate and the parking lot, splitting in the center to encompass the rest of the compound. There were two oak trees adjacent from each other, as old and commanding in their size as the thirty-foot statue of a bearded woodsman combating a bear with a shovel was in the middle of the yard.

There were benches around these three icons, where the students usually got together on their break and lunchtime or when they were in the mood to idle. Though there was the football field and track field around the back of the school as well.

Richard and his cronies usually occupied the tree on the right, marking it with their names. But they were constantly contested by other groups who crossed out their names and wrote their own, especially the upperclassmen. This resulted in multiple carvings on the trees, some wacky and some lude.

The other tree was usually shared between the herbology club and debate team, but Shaun wasn't interested in any of these clubs, cliques or extracurricular activities. His time was occupied with a more important after school task. One that got him fed.

Shaun suddenly heard a series of jeers and laughs and turned to see the cheerleading group following and berating a girl. To Shaun's dismay it just so happened to be one of his classmates. Shelly.

"Spready Shelly! She's so smelly! Get that dick and get that belly!" The cheerleaders struck a pose. "Goooo Shelly!"

Laughter of the most diabolical followed. Shaun clenched his fist as he saw Shelly giving them a smoldering glare. Like in class, Shelly seemed ready to lunge, even folding her fingers into hands. Shaun's class being at the bottom of the food chain meant that almost everyone was fair game. Bullies could be bullied once they weren't apart of the higher class.

But despite this, Shaun felt uneasy seeing them torment Shelly. Before Betty, Shelly was his love interest, until she told him off. Yet his sympathy for her couldn't be shed.

"Bitches..." Shaun made after the cheerleaders, and abruptly stopped when Shelly marched towards them, reaching into her backpack.

"Oh, whatcha gonna do, hit us?" A girl said.

"You bet your ass!" And Shelly took out a water bottle and squeezed it, spewing yellow fluid from the spout at the girls.

They yelled and flailed off the fluid, which quickly filled the air with a rank smell. Realizing the familiar scent, Shaun gaped, then smiled. "Pee?"

Shelly tossed the bottle at the black girl at the front, conking her in the head. It was Ella, the cheer squad's captain. "Ouch!" Ella held her head and pointed at Shelly. "Get that bitch!"

Shelly spun and hastily scampered across the lawn to the back of the school.

Shaun relaxed, feeling somewhat relieved Shelly fought back—until he remembered how she now bullied him, and became indifferent, and confused. He didn't walk through the gates without being reminded that he was a loser too, as an empty soda can clapped him in the head. "Ow! Dammit!" Shaun spun in the direction of the projectile, and saw Richard, Stan and Bob grinning at him.

"You're gonna go home to fap off to those anime girls now?" said Richard.

Shaun took up the can and threw it back at them. "Go eat donkey-ass, losers!" Shaun retorted. He said it loud enough for a few passersby to hear and laugh, much to his delight. And Richard's disdain.

"Whaddya say punk?" Richard didn't wait for Shaun to repeat, but leaped over the bench and bolted after him,

"Yikes!" Shaun took off through the gate with the gang behind him, weaving through the crowd and bumping into those he couldn't avoid. Shaun outran his pursuers and their threats of folding him into his locker and shoving things in all of his orifices until he reached the main street. Shaun took a few cautious glances behind him until he was sure they weren't still after his hide. Only then did he catch his breath and relaxed into a casual walk.

Shaun's town was by no means a big metropolitan city, but what it lacked in size it made up for with different flavors of eye-candy.

The architecture incorporated more brick designs and patterns into the buildings, large ones albeit that could be easily carried and refitted, giving it some old-timey feel that was meant to entice mostly the tourists. The highest and biggest buildings were the three banks, the hospital, the tax-office, and the newly constructed emergency alarm tower over the

police station, standing at twenty stories. If viewed from the perspective of a map, Krumple Town was like an irregular circle, with five main districts known as the “Arms of the Star” that divided the town into five land points, further minced by smaller streets like angular rivers. Treppen, Gooten, Furvert, Sherlock and Oaklake were the districts, the second being the location of Shaun’s school.

In the distance over the hills was the hazy shape of the skyscrapers of the big city, whose economy had spilt over into the town. As with modern day American society, pop culture had taken up half of the daily lives of the town’s citizens, with a further half of that being space, alien and paranormal related that had seeped into the culture over the last forty years. Half the toys, merchandise, cosmetics, technological advancements and even the names of certain foods had some influence of the otherworldly.

Not that Shaun had a problem with any of this. In fact, it was one of the only joys in this world he relished in.

Sixty years ago, if someone was interesting in comics about superheroes and monsters he’d be considered a no-good waste of space in society. Now, the likes of literary legends such as King Author, Hercules, Superman, Batman and Goku were getting overshadowed by real-life superpowered beings such as Sonicfist, Swagnado, Hyperslime. As well as the most notorious villains such as Gammanitor, Coalven, Hellquake and Hoghead.

Now it seemed ignorant for people like himself to be mocked when their real-life idols existed. Shaun wasn’t the richest, coolest most popular kid in school, and it got to him at times. But the fact that one day he could become something more, something super, propped his head eternally high in his times of doubt.

Shaun fitted the backpack on him and smiled as he crossed the street, looking at billboards and posters on the windows and of the superheroes and monsters associated with TV shows, comics and video games.

The hero Sonicfist, iconized by his yellow helmet, black mask and edgy red glasses, had his face posted on nearly half the surface of any medium of advertisement. This was partially because he was one of the first superhumans who had taken it upon themselves to fight off the other enhanced humans and lifeforms who posed a threat to the safety of the society.

Shaun passed the local arcade, Fifth Player, whose outside and inside wore the latest logos in pop culture on its sleeves, luring the children who it had been strategically placed in the town to attract. Shaun glanced inside at the squares of light, flat screens that some of his schoolmates had already seated themselves before, hands occupied by controllers or junk food.

It was one of three such places in the area, and Shaun preferred another one, particularly because it had game stations that were boarded off.

But Shaun had to save that leisure for tomorrow. His job came first today.

It was close to four 'o clock when Shaun reached the street that lead into his neighborhood. It was spruced with flowers growing on the side of the road, and modest sized homes all divided by the branching street.

Shaun's home was a three-story apartment complex painted in a light shade of blue with black as the secondary coloring on the edges and roof. The paint was peeled off in some places, and the lawn seemed to

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