

Chapter 1

He goes by the street cred of Concrete. He gave himself the alter ego designation so he can be feared as strong and indestructible. He's a big time wannabe king of the gangsters and will never achieve the goal because he doesn't have the smarts nor the leadership qualities. He's less of a thinker and more of a brute, acting tougher than tough and has his massive muscular frame of six and a half feet to back it up. Creeping into his mid-twenties, you can say Concrete is your typical man-boy who still lives with his mother and obeys her every command or, as she would put it, "Get a good booty beating." By his hulking size, you wouldn't think of him as a momma's boy but they come in all shapes and sizes. He's a chameleon who changes his mood according to his surroundings. When he is with his mother, he acts like a twelve year old and when he's surrounded by his cronies, he's the rough guy you don't want to mess with. He doesn't mind being treated as a child as she would constantly ask him if he changed his underwear and his answer would always be the same whining and moaning, "Yes, momma! I did!" Being the only child, the relationship between them is odd. Every time Concrete did a bad such as not throwing out the trash when told to, or even spilling milk, his mother would yell at him. It wasn't one sentence of yelling but would rage on for ten minutes or longer. And on a bad day, she would go nonstop for hours. You would think as he got older he would despise her for all the mental torment but it was more the opposite and embraced her even more. It could be a Stockholm syndrome thing. And she always reminded him of a good whopping if he ever got into trouble with the law. Concrete does break the law more than occasionally and so far hasn't been caught. His criminal activities are due to keeping up with his larger than life lifestyle and his pride and joy - a white mint condition nineteen-seventy-five Cadillac sedan. As long as momma doesn't find out about his illegal activities, he's all cool with it.

Concrete is dressed in a crisp white suit that nicely compliments his dark skin tone. The suit is about to rip at the seams as his muscles got bigger since he bought it, or got it a size too small. A black shirt is unbuttoned half way down his chest displaying a dozen gaudy fake gold

necklaces currently and grossly out of style. On the other hand, the exceedingly massive cubic zirconium stud earrings on each ear look super fly against his bald head. Then again, he over does it as all his fingers sport thick-assed bogus gold rings encrusted with a bunch of rhinestones. And to top it off, he wears the most popular counterfeited gold watch, which stopped working ages ago, stuck at quarter-to-twelve. Like most folks on a limited budget trying to show off by dressing extravagantly, he's just a chump trying to be a style pro when he's just a style rookie.

Concrete is in a dark and unpleasant alley. What makes the alley unpleasant is it's late at night and it's in the part of the city you don't want to be in, regardless of the time of day. The only light entering the alley comes from street lamps a good distance away. The filth is accentuated by overflowing garbage cans and a huge dumpster with grease and slime oozing on the side that continues to the ground. Then there are the rats the size of overfed house cats and the toxic aroma emitting from the sewers to give it an extra touch of ambiance.

The entrance of the alleyway is only wide enough for one vehicle to get through and it's blocked by Concrete's Caddy. He stands a short distance from his ride and is having an unfriendly conversation with a young female.

Vivien Clark has an athletic body she works hard to get by eating wisely and training regularly at the gym. Up until a year ago she exercised at a community college facility and after graduation she continued her regime at the local Y. Her workout routine is at least three times a week beginning with fifteen minutes of high intensity interval training, then spends the rest of the time on strength training using weights and nautilus equipment. And depending on how busy she is, she may spend anywhere between one to two hours per session. She is quite fit to say the least.

She is dressed in a skimpy miniskirt and a black biker style leather jacket hugely popular back in the eighties, all thanks to rock 'n' roll. It's complemented by a tight tank top showing off her very fit exposed midriff and a pair of black high heel leather boots almost reaching the knees. The way she's dressed, she could easily be mistaken for a pay-by-the-hour girlfriend and wears enough makeup to strongly add to the suggestion. The blush is too strong even for a geisha, the color of the lipstick is too bright on the red, and the eyeliner is too Cleopatra-esque. Her natural beauty is hidden under all the cosmetics and her ill-fitting

prescription black-rimmed glasses covering half of her face doesn't help the case. Most guys may prefer to gawk the other way when they pass by her on the street. Vivien knows it and doesn't really bother her, yet it doesn't explain why she is dressed so scantily tonight. It could be to boost her self-esteem or maybe to dress it up every once in a while outside the routine of jeans and a t-shirt. Underneath the guise of the eyeglasses and all the goop, she has beautiful pouty lips and big brown eyes. You might even think Van Morrison wrote that song specifically for her. Her shoulder length pixie hairstyle has been dyed black for so long she sometimes forgets the original color. If she wanted to know the original color she can always check the color of the carpet, however can't since she's been doing the hardwood floor route for as long as she has been dying her hair. She could wait a week or two for the carpet to grow back but the itch down there would drive her crazy it instantly goes back to hardwood floors, which is taken care of couple of times a week.

She stands at an arm's length in front of Concrete and screams right in his face. "I already fucken told you! You'll have your fucken money next week!"

Concrete firmly grabs both of her arms by the biceps and shakes her violently. "Next week ain't good enough, yo bitch-clot!"

It's funny how Concrete speaks in his deep menacing voice of ghetto linguistics characterized by riddled grammar and having the slang "yo" at any part of the sentence to give it the extra cool ghetto emphasis. This is far different from how he speaks to his mother and tries to separate his home life from his thug life. And ironically, when Concrete speaks the ghetto lingo at home, his mother would always yell at him, "Boy! How many times I be's tell's you bout's proper grammar?!" Sometimes it can get tough for Concrete to juggle the two different life styles.

"Let go, you fucker! You're hurting me!" screams Vivien as she futilely swings her arms aggressively trying to get loose from his vise grip hold.

The struggle continues as Concrete grudgingly drags her towards his Caddy parked a few feet away. Vivien does her mightiest to resist the pushing and shoving as he opens the driver side door of his Cadillac and throws her in violently. Once both are inside, he starts the engine and Vivien dares an escape by opening the passenger door. A pointless

attempt because every time she gets halfway out, he pulls her back in the vehicle.

All of a sudden and out of nowhere, surprising both occupants of the car, a masked individual jumps on the hood of the Caddy making a loud thud and placing a huge dent on it.

The masked individual is literally dressed in black from head to toe with the exception of a pair of yellow-tinted ski goggles. The individual blends in perfectly with the darkness of the alley. He sports a balaclava covering his entire head except his eyes, which is covered by the goggles. The black collarless leather jacket looks tailored to his exact size, fitting him perfectly. An inch smaller and it would not adequately fit his lean and not too bulky muscled body frame. The skinny jeans fit impeccably and aren't ridiculously tight to how a female might wear a decent pair. His gloves and ankle-high black leather boots are similar to those issued in the military. In addition, he wears a thick black leather belt with a large oval shaped belt buckle made out of pewter, comparable to the most important piece of a cowboy's outfit. The belt buckle is in its natural color of grey and weighs in at nearly half a pound. The design has a couple of eagles on each side facing one another with a partial American flag in the background and the words "Live Free" across the bottom.

His six-foot frame stands confidently on the hood of Concrete's white Cadillac with his feet shoulder width apart, arms sprawled, fists clenched and ready for action.

Concrete is confused and surprised by this strange figure. He sticks his head out the window and says, "What the fuck's you's 'posed to be, yo?" Then takes a closer look at the hood of his car noticing the dent and is angered. "You's put's dent in my ride! I be's rips out you's spine! Now get's the fuck off my drive, yo!"

Vivien looks at the masked avenger in awe, then looks at Concrete singing in a childish taunt. "*He's going to kick your ass!*" And claps her hands like an excited little girl ready to blow out the candles on her birthday cake.

"Shut's it, yo bitch-clot! No one's be's asking you!" growls Concrete with rabid anger.

"Release the young lady," requests the masked avenger.

"Mind you's own fuckin' business, yo! Whatever fuck's you's 'posed be! And I ain't gonna tells you's again, sucka MC! Get's the fuck off's the ride, yo!" screams Concrete.

“I will not ask you again! Release the young lady!” exclaims the masked avenger.

“If you’s not’s get’s off my ride, I be’s make you’s get off, yo!” screams Concrete putting the car in drive and slams on the gas pedal.

The car speeds up ten feet with screeching tires and stops abruptly. The masked avenger flies off the hood of the car and lands on his back unscathed. Concrete slams on the gas pedal again and aims towards the masked avenger. As the car gets closer to him, at the last second before fatal impact, the masked avenger jumps and throws his body on the hood of the car grasping firmly on the windshield wipers as the car hurls through the alley.

“Stop this car and release the young lady!” yells the masked avenger to Concrete, almost face to face, divided only by the windshield.

“Got’s be fuckin’ kidding me, yo. The fuck you’s be, huh?! Some ski mask vigilante lunatic?!” laughs Concrete in a heckling way.

“I am not a ski mask vigilante! Or a lunatic! If you stop this car and release the young lady, I shall spare you the gruesome pain and agony you are about to receive!” screams the masked avenger, while hanging on for dear life.

“You tell him, ski mask vigilante!” shouts Vivien.

“I am not a ski mask vigilante! Do not confuse me with some criminal element!” yells the masked avenger looking at Vivien.

“You figure with the ski mask and taking crime into your own hands, you might be called a ski mask vigilante,” says Vivien to herself.

“Fucken lunatic’s, yo!” chuckles Concrete thinking he has the upper hand of the situation.

“So be it! Remember this! I did ask nicely!” screams the masked avenger and moves his body to cover the windshield of the car.

“Move yo’s, batty-boy! Me’s can’t see’s, yo!”

“That *be’s* the idea, yo!” mocks the masked avenger imitating Concrete.

Unable to see where he is headed, Concrete loses control of his car and smashes into a collection of garbage cans. The masked avenger flies off the hood of the car from the force of the impact and slams onto a bunch of garbage cans. He is a little shaken and dazed but uninjured. The occupants of the car are also unharmed. Concrete angrily gets out of the car to confront the masked avenger who is slightly stunned and on his hands and knees trying to get up.

Concrete stands over the masked avenger, fists pumped, wearing an evil smirk. “Ski mask, you’s gonna wish you’s never got’s out of bed today, yo.”

“I told you. I’m not ski mask. What do I have to do? Wear a name tag or something?” responds the masked avenger.

The masked avenger has shaken off the dizziness and makes a swift side-kick to Concrete’s stomach while still on one knee and both hands. Unfortunately he misses his target as Concrete, being fast for his size, steps back quickly and throws a punch of his own. It’s dodged by the masked avenger and he gets up quickly followed by a one-two punch to Concrete’s face that connects. His neck is thicker than his head and helps from the force of the impact.

“That’s be’s best you’s got’s, yo?” smirks Concrete countering a left and right punch to the avengers head, both connecting and followed by a hard uppercut to the stomach.

The masked avenger falls back down to his knees as Concrete savors every moment watching him suffer and takes his sweet time to make his next villainous move. Taking his time was a big mistake as the masked avenger does a fast double-leg takedown, picking up his opponent high in the air with ease and slamming him hard on his back to the ground. Concrete rolls with the momentum and tosses the much lighter body, weighting two-thirds of his own, a few feet across the alley. This stuns the masked avenger.

Vivien gets out the driver side door, as the passenger side of the car is wedged against the wall of the building, and screams, “Kick his ass, ski mask!”

“Now you’s gonna hurt, sucka MC,” says Concrete to the fallen masked avenger.

“Get the fuck up, ski mask!” cheers Vivien, pumping her fists up and down.

“Please... stop... calling... me... ski mask. It’s... so... annoying,” says the masked avenger painfully, clenching his stomach, trying to get back in the game.

Concrete walks towards him to finish the job. The masked avenger still having a difficult time getting up on his feet, reaches into his pocket and pulls out his version of a Saturday night special, a tiny bottle of pepper spray. As soon as Concrete is at arm’s length, he quickly points it directly to his face and sprays. Concrete lets out a loud banshee screech as his hands cover his face. The masked avenger quickly jumps

to his feet and kicks him hard in the crotch. Concrete's screaming stops immediately and is replaced by a squeal and his hands move from his face to his crotch, dropping down to his knees. The masked avenger whacks him hard in the face with his elbow, breaking his nose and knocking him out cold. Concrete falls on his back, sprawled on the wet grimy ground of the dark alley, ruining his perfectly crisp white suit. The masked avenger stands over him with clinched fists and shoulders proudly arched back.

"Way to go, ski mask!" shouts Vivien and suddenly remembers her savior does not like to be called that and corrects herself. "I mean, whoever you are."

"Sir, this is the last day of your life you will use ladies for your own personal gains," says the masked avenger to the unconscious scoundrel.

Vivien is puzzled and more so furious by his little victory speech and confronts the masked avenger. "Hey! What are you insinuating?! I'm some prostitute and he's my pimp?!"

"Well, it is quite evident the way he treated you..." replies the masked avenger looking at Vivien head to toe in an inoffensive way, "...and the way you're dressed."

"The way I dress doesn't mean I'm a hooker whore, you dumbass! And what is wrong with the way I'm dressed?!"

"My apologies. Umm... if you don't mind me asking... then why was he harassing you?"

"He's just a petty prick I owe fifty bucks! I'm no fuckin' whore!"

"Fifty bucks, huh? Yes, that is petty," says the masked avenger and looks at the unconscious Concrete, then Vivien.

There is an awkward moment of silence with one being too peeved and the other too embarrassed to say anything.

The masked avenger breaks the silence. "Well, it's been a long night. If you would require any further assistance..."

"I think we're done. Go away," says Vivien angrily cutting him off.

"Because if you do..."

"Goodbye!" says Vivien coldly as she cuts him off again and looks the other way crossing her arms across her chest.

"Again, I am sorry for making an incorrect assumption," says the masked avenger trying one last time to amend an irreparable situation.

"Oh, fuck off already!" shouts Vivien far beyond highly irritated. Her arms still crossed by her chest, still not looking at him, she raises one hand and gives him the finger.

Not uttering another word, the masked avenger takes his queue and runs off into the dark alley as his shadowy image disappears by the cloudy white smoke emitted from the sewers and accented by the street lights.