

'The Finger Snatcher: Part Two'

by Rory Donohoe

Detective Stephen Cross sprinted out of his police precinct and into the bustling streets of New Haven. He was being hunted by a deranged killer who he had just cracked the case on: Michael Marston, or more commonly known in the media as 'The Finger-Snatcher.' He was killing innocents and collecting their fingers as souvenirs. Cross was now on Marston's list, and the detective had never felt so scared in his life.

Cross ran to his sedan parked across the road. The old car spluttered into life, and the detective heard his tires screech as he tore down the street towards freedom. For a moment, Cross felt safe in his steel box, but before he could take a sigh of relief, a vehicle behind him began to blare its horn. Cross started, and as he looked into the rear-view mirror, all the colour drained from his already-pale face. Marston was directly behind him. The detective braced himself as his car was rammed over and over. He was now racing beside the river, and it suddenly became clear to him that he wasn't going to be okay. The sedan was slammed for the final time, and the aging vehicle crashed through a fence and into the freezing water.

The bracing water enveloped the car and shock consumed Cross, plastering him to his seat momentarily. He had to act fast. Taking off his seatbelt, he fell forwards onto the dashboard. Cross realised that his car was facing down into the cold depths. Attempting to open the driver's door, the immense pressure fought against it, and the dark liquid began to pour in. A cold wave shot through the detective's body, and with no hesitation, he pulled out the revolver resting in his glove box and started shooting the front window of his vehicle. Cross was blasted with water and shards of glass, but he was able to make his way out onto the surface of the river. Cross gasped for fresh air, and luckily for him, the river's current helped him reach land. As he crawled on his hands and knees, a sharp pain surged through his left leg; there was a gash left behind from his escape, and he was losing a lot of blood.

Cross removed his dripping shirt and tied it around his wound to stop the bleeding. He finally looked up to see that he was at the rear entrance to the abandoned New Haven carnival. His pocket vibrated. He was being called from an unknown number. Reluctantly, Cross answered, and the detective was greeted by a familiar voice.

“I watched that whole thing, well done! To be honest with you, I really didn’t think that you’d survive. I doubt you did either, right?” Cross couldn’t muster up the strength to speak. “The silent treatment, eh? Alright, I understand. Go have fun in the carnival, I’ll meet up with you in a second. Bye!” His laugh echoed in the detective’s ear as the killer hung up. Slowly bringing himself to his feet, Cross pushed against the searing pain that was coursing through his limbs. He surveyed the area; the carnival was the only place he could reach. Urging himself forward, Cross limped over to the rusted gate and went inside.

The once bright and cheery fair ground was now a shell of its former self; faded colours and washed-out signs stared at Cross with sad expressions. The detective wasted no time reminiscing over childhood memories, and trudged across the litter-laden paths. Desperately searching for anywhere to hide, ‘The House of Mirrors’ caught his eye. He stumbled inside, hearing the crunch below his boots; very few mirrors were left intact. Cross placed himself in a spot well into the attraction, wincing as a shard of glass pricked his thigh. Finally, he had a moment of levity until he heard a familiar chuckle. He had been discovered.

“Hey buddy!” The warped image of a dozen smirking Marstons made Cross’ stomach lurch. A butcher’s knife brandished by the killer let the detective know that he wasn’t getting out of this alive. The eerie silhouette of Marston engulfed the light as everything surrounding Cross faded to black...