

## Copyright

“Snap 5 – The Beginnings – Who is Ashtoreth?”

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Authors: Ace Donovan, Brock Edwards, Mickey Stone

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## Chapter 1 - Pork and Beans, Hoosier Style

"Then that sumbitch grabbed my two fingers and wouldn't let go. I grabbed it by the tail and went to snapping it; trying to snap its neck," Stubby Swanson said. Joey McCormick and Reggie Evans began to double over with laughter. "I realized that the water moccasin was dead. and I grabbed the line cutter from my pocket and cut these two fingers plum off", Stubby added. Reggie and Joey simply couldn't stop laughing. Tears were forming in their eyes and flooding out of their collective eyes. "It twern't funny. Sumbitch hurt like a vice had ripped those, what do you call, falamges?", Stubby said.

"You mean phalanges?", Reggie said through coughs and laughter.

"Whatever dem is. Sumbitch hurt now", Stubby concluded.

Reggie and Joey were sitting at the bar listening to Stubby tell stories and they had heard the story of how he had lost his fingers

down at Lake Ashtoreth. Stubby owns a bar named Stubby's Pork and Beans. Only not Pork and Beans Hoosier style. A breaded pork tenderloin and coffee. That is the only thing on the menu. Open from 9 pm until 3 am, it is a place for drunks to come and hang and sober before going home. Some guys just come and hang out to listen to Stubby's stories from the Marine Corps. He was a black belt in the Marine Corps Mixed Martial Arts Program better known as MCMAP. Stubby saw what drinking can do to a family, He had two friends die in a drunk driving accident and one other died from basically drinking himself to death. It was a close friend from the Corps, Maxwell Smith. Robert would not stop drinking and eventually slipped into an alcohol-induced diabetic coma.

Around 1994, Stubby turned the 'shop' over to his boys, Mike and Gabe. Stubby at 6-2 looked small compared to the 6-4 Mike and the 6-6 Gabe. Both were former stars in basketball and football at Winston High School. Mike was a sharpshooting guard who averaged 22 points a game and later took that shooting eye to the

Army where he was a gunner for tanks. Gabe, meanwhile, was a beast of a power forward who went to Purdue as a Tight End in football; and used the ROTC program to become an officer in the Army where he became a brilliant strategist.

All three of the Swansons were musically gifted. They could play anything with strings and several without and about once a month they joined together to play music of the 70s. Anything from Johnny Cash to the Cars and everything in between. The drunks and the story seekers all loved it. In a three-on-three basketball game do not bet against the Swansons and in a bar fight as Stubby would say, "Those other sumbitches better watch out".

## Chapter 2 - The Newbie in Town

Tommy Carter was the basketball coach and Terry Levine was the baseball coach at Winston High School. They had both been hired two years ago to take over their respective programs. Tommy had a hard task as the basketball team had floundered at or near 500 for six straight seasons. In his two years they were a combined 26-18 and showing improvement. Terry Levine took over a program that was typically successful and had a young phenom named Klem Karrington who was a flame throwing lefty. A state championship was in grasp. Both being single, they decided to rent a three-bedroom house with two bathrooms and would rideshare when possible. They decide after the first year to be each other's assistant.

Today was the first day of teacher beginning of the year meetings. Tommy and Terry arrived just in time for the meeting in the auditorium. They took their traditional positions near the back.

Far enough from the front that as they chatted and occasionally dozed off, they couldn't be seen but close enough they appeared interested. Principal Melvin Gordon welcomed everyone back for another great year (he has said that every year for the last decade) and introduced the new teachers of which there were four and lastly introduced the new school counselor, Ashley Torrence. Ashley looked like a young Raquel Welch. Tommy glanced through a slit in one eye and immediately sat up as Terry was mesmerized by her beauty.

Ashley confidently stepped to the microphone, "good morning. I am so excited about coming to Winston High School. A little about myself, I have an undergrad in Modern Dynamics from Cal Berkeley, a master's from Long Beach State in Educational Leadership and a doctorate from the University of Michigan in Child Psychology", she said.

"What the heck is Modern Dynamics?", Tommy asked Terry.

"Shhhh, I think I am having a wet dream", Terry said with a muffled laugh.

"Good grief", Tommy said in return.

Dr Torrence continued, "I spent four years at Watts High School in Los Angeles, three years in the same position at Woodrow Wilson High School in Detroit and three years as Head Counselor at Ben Davis in Indianapolis and I am downright giddy to be here. I am here to ensure that everyone is safe and successful; I believe in equality and diversity. Bullying will not be readily tolerated in any shape or form".

"Is she running for office?", Tommy said with a chuckle.

"She wins the election for my office", Terry said, raising his eyebrows. Tommy rolled his eyes.

"When I was fourteen, a friend and I were splashing around in a pond, and I felt a slap to the back of my head. I was angry and turned quickly to see it was a six-year-old child. It was slapping the water vigorously and I realized he was drowning. I grabbed him



under the armpits and swam him to safety. I will never allow anyone to drown here. My door is always open. We cannot and will not allow anyone to drown here at Winston High School. We will save them all", she added.

Some of the teachers groaned at the last part. They were jaded by years of teaching. Some of the teachers, especially the younger ones, were delighted. Some were barely listening. Some were jealous of her good looks, and some were hoping she was single. Tommy just felt there was something a little strange about Dr Torrence. He was almost certain she had two sets of eyelids. "Man, I must be tired", Tommy murmured.

"What was that?", Terry said. Tommy just shook his head.

"...And I am just so blessed to be here", Dr Torrence said in conclusion.

## Chapter 3 - Sethritch Pharmaceuticals

Dr. Ashley Torrance sat across the desk from the man in charge. He spoke, "good afternoon Dr. Torrance, I hear through the grapevine that you are going to be a great addition to our community.

"You may call me Ashley, Mr. Schnell. I intend to be an enormous influence on this community. I was brought here to do a job, and I will do that job", she said. The man across from her was Helmut Schnell. Helmut Snell was the CEO and part owner of Sethritch Pharmaceuticals. More importantly he is a major player in a group known as the Lords of Brimstone. It is a secret society that exists for the sole purpose of hedonistic activities. It is a group of influential individuals from all walks of life. A group that Ashley Torrance is also a member of.

"I am here to assist you in any way I can. I can provide you with financial assistance or physical and spiritual help", Schnell said.