

# CHAPTER ONE

Memphis, Tennessee

I didn't like Dr. Clyde Nunley the first time I met him face-to-face.

THE RECORD OF THE MEN AND WOMEN INTERRED HERE IN OLD ST. MARGARET'S CEMETERY WAS DISCOVERED THREE MONTHS AGO. SINCE THEN, NO ONE BUT MYSELF HAS BEEN GIVEN ACCESS TO THE INFORMATION.

I ALONE KNOW THE TRUTH.

Nunley had a smug, smooth air about him that said he'd brought me here to be an object of derision. That said he'd never believed I was anything other than a fraud.

LAST WEEK, WE HAD A MEDIUM...

FOR WHAT? LUNCH?

...WHOSE ABILITIES PROVED DISAPPOINTING.

Offered under the aegis of the anthropology department of Bingham College, the course Nunley taught was titled "An Open Mind: Experiences Outside the Box."

The irony was not lost on me.

NOW, WITH NO INSIGHT OTHER THAN HER "TALENT", MISS HARPER CONNELLY HAS PROMISED TO TELL US THE NAMES OF THOSE BURIED HERE AND HOW THEY DIED.



WELL, MISS CONNELLY, WE'RE ALL ANXIOUS TO SEE YOUR DEMONSTRATION.

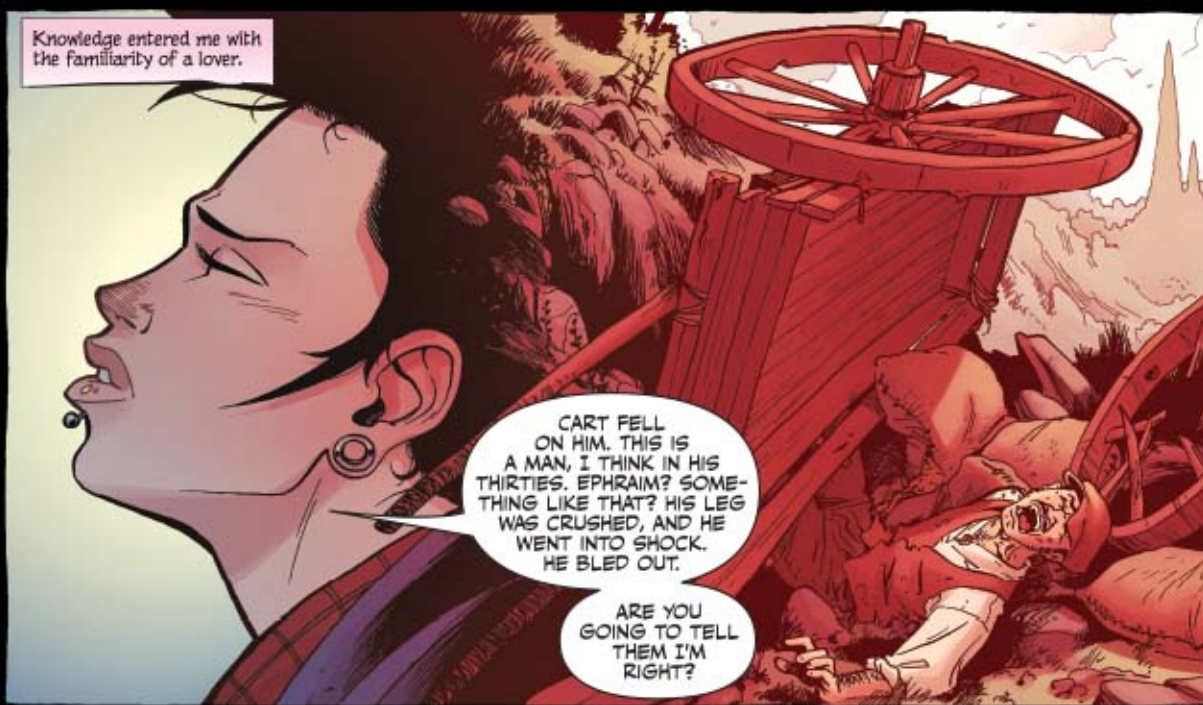
WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO BEGIN?

THIS ONE WOULD BE FINE.



I shut my eyes and concentrated. The bones were directly underneath me.

I sent my extra sense down into the ground under my feet.



Knowledge entered me with the familiarity of a lover.

CART FELL ON HIM. THIS IS A MAN, I THINK IN HIS THIRTIES. EPHRAIM? SOMETHING LIKE THAT? HIS LEG WAS CRUSHED, AND HE WENT INTO SHOCK. HE BLEED OUT.

ARE YOU GOING TO TELL THEM I'M RIGHT?



...YES. YOU ARE.

HOW... HOW DID SHE KNOW?

How?

Clyde Nunley thought he was paying me to be exposed in front of the "An Open Mind" class. He thought I considered myself some form of psychic, or maybe a Wiccan.

Of course, that made no sense. Nothing I did was occult. I didn't pray to any god before I got in touch with the dead. I do believe in God with a capital G, but I don't consider my little talent a gift from Him.

I got it from a bolt of lightning.

When I was fifteen, I was struck through an open window of the trailer where we lived.

At that time, my mother was married to Tolliver's father, Matt Lang, and they had two children, Gracie and Mariella.

Crowded into the trailer (besides that lovely nuclear family) were the rest of us -- me, my sister Cameron, Tolliver, and his brother Mark.

It was Tolliver who performed CPR until the ambulance got there.

I recovered -- more or less. I have a strange spiderweb pattern of red on my torso and right leg.

That leg has episodes of weakness. Sometimes my right hand shakes. I have headaches.

I have many fears...

...And I can find dead people.



WHAT DO YOU SEE HERE?

ISABELLE. OH, SHE DIED IN CHILDBIRTH. WAIT A MINUTE. THE BABY'S IN THERE WITH HER. POOR LITTLE THING. NEXT?

DR. NUNLEY?



YES, RICK?

HER MANAGER SHOULD STAND SOMEWHERE ELSE. WHAT IF HE'S SOMEHOW FEEDING HER INFORMATION?



GOOD POINT. MR. LANG, IF YOU'D STAND OUT OF MISS CONNELLY'S SIGHT?



HARPER?

IT'S OKAY, TOLLIVER. I'LL BE FINE.



Next, I found a woman who'd died of pneumonia...

...A child who'd died of an infected appendix...

...A baby who'd had a heart malformation...

...And a pre-teen boy who'd had one of the fevers, scarlet, maybe.



After thirty or forty minutes, Nunley seemed almost won over. He pointed to a grave in the corner of the cemetery farthest from the gate.

THIS IS THE LAST ONE.

This is a draining process, so I was beginning to get tired. At first I attributed my extraordinary reading to that.

IT'S A GIRL.

HA!  
WRONG!

I'M NOT  
WRONG.

SOMETHING'S  
DIFFERENT ABOUT  
THIS GRAVE.  
THERE ARE TWO  
BODIES HERE,  
NOT ONE.

THAT'S  
WHAT I  
SAID.

TWO  
BODIES?

Yep. Mr.  
Open Mind.

I had the ominous creeping feeling you get when you just know something's right outside your realm of knowledge -- a bad piece of future poised to jump out from behind a door and scream in your face.

THE LOWER BODY,  
THE OLDER ONE, IS A  
YOUNG MAN NAMED JOSIAH,  
LIKE THE HEADSTONE SAYS.  
BY THE WAY, HE DIED OF  
BLOOD POISONING  
FROM A STAB  
WOUND.

THAT'S...  
THAT'S  
CORRECT.

THE UPPER  
BODY, THE  
NEWER ONE, IS A  
YOUNG GIRL.



HOW RECENT IS THE SECOND BODY?

TWO YEARS AT MOST.



SHE'S A MURDER VICTIM. HER NAME WAS... TABITHA.

As I heard what my voice was saying, an awful sense of doom flowed over me. The door of knowledge had opened, and the boogeyman jumped out.



Tolliver felt it too.

TELL ME IT'S NOT.



IT IS.

WE FINALLY  
FOUND TABITHA  
MORGENSTERN.



# MISSING



Tabitha had bushy reddish-brown hair she hadn't yet learned to deal with. She'd had big brown eyes, and braces, and she hadn't begun to mature physically.

She'd liked gymnastics, and art lessons, and she'd hated making her bed and taking out the trash.

It had been the spring of the preceding year when Tabitha had been snatched from her yard in an upscale Nashville suburb while she was watering the flowers in the beds around the front door.



By the time the Morgenstern family summoned us to Nashville, Tabitha had been gone a month.




I'd toured nearby junkyards, ponds, parks, landfills, and cemeteries, in the process finding one other murder victim in the trunk of a junked car and one natural death, a homeless man in a park.




For nine days I'd searched, until the time came when I'd had to tell Diane and Joel Morgenstern that I couldn't find their child.






Which is what I was thinking about while waiting for the police to examine the scene.


The initial skepticism and anger on the part of the two uniforms who'd rolled up on the scene had been understandable and predictable.




They didn't imagine anyone would dig up a centuries-old grave on the say-so of a lunatic woman who made her living as a con artist. But the more Clyde Nunley explained, the more they began to look uneasy.



To no one's surprise, we were "asked" to come down to the police station.



And there we sat, left to vegetate inside an interview room.







HOW'D  
TABITHA  
DIE?

SUFFOCATED.  
WITH A BLUE  
PILLOW.



YOU THINK  
SHE'S BEEN DOWN  
THERE SINCE SHE  
WAS MISSING?

NO. THE  
GROUND WAS TOO  
FRESHLY DISTURBED.  
BUT I THINK SHE'S  
BEEN DEAD THE WHOLE  
TIME. I REALLY  
HOPE SO.

I've done this a while. The only thing more awful than a murdered child was a murdered child who'd been subjected to prolonged torture or sexual abuse.



IF SHE WAS HERE IN  
MEMPHIS, THERE WAS  
NO WAY YOU COULD  
HAVE FOUND HER IN  
NASHVILLE.

NO. THERE  
WASN'T.

But it wasn't for  
lack of trying.

HARPER  
CONNELLY--



--YOU'VE  
GOT A LOT OF  
EXPLAINING  
TO DO.

TELL ME HOW YOU CAME TO BE HERE THIS MORNING.

## DETECTIVE CORBETT LACEY

WE WERE INVITED BY DR. NUNLEY TO COME TO THE OLD CEMETERY. I WAS SUPPOSED TO SHOW THE STUDENTS WHAT I DO.

AND WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU DO?

I FIND THE DEAD.

YOU TRACK PEOPLE?

NO, I FIND CORPSES. PEOPLE CALL ME IN, AND I FIND THE BODIES OF THOSE WHO'VE PASSED ON. IF THE LOCATION OF THE CORPSE IS ALREADY KNOWN, I CAN TELL YOU THE CAUSE OF DEATH. THAT'S WHAT I WAS DOING AT THE CEMETERY.

I'M NOT A PSYCHIC. I'M NOT A PRECOGNATE, OR A TELEPATH. I DON'T SEE WHO KILLED THEM. I ONLY SEE THE DEATH WHEN I'M NEAR THE BONES.

WHY WOULD ANYONE BELIEVE THAT?

BECAUSE I PRODUCE RESULTS.

MAYBE SO. BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT'S QUITE A COINCIDENCE?

YOU WERE CALLED IN BY THE MORGENSTERNS WHEN THEY WERE LOOKING FOR THEIR LITTLE GIRL, AND NOW, MONTHS LATER, IN A DIFFERENT CITY, YOU SAY YOU'VE FOUND HER?

HOW DO YOU THINK THOSE POOR FOLKS ARE GOING TO FEEL WHEN THE AREA'S DUG AND THERE'S NOTHING THERE? YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF.

THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. I'M NOT ASHAMED OF ANYTHING. SHE'S THERE. THEY SHOULD HAVE REACHED HER BY NOW.

BZZZ  
BZZZ