

# Jimmy's Girl Friend

By : **Ben A Vanguarde**

I just couldn't believe Jimmy's new girlfriend was such a knockout. But seeing is believing. Isn't it?



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The car horn beeped once. It wasn't rude, it was our prearranged signal. On this crisp winter day, the bright morning sun favorably illuminated the doctor's well maintained, expensive two story white house with aquamarine trim. Stepping out of the car, I opened the trunk and then opened the rear passenger door to await Jimmy.

A young woman I'd never seen before strode purposefully before Jimmy. She wore a 70's style peasant dress over her well-formed and classically proportioned figure. Her smooth, olive complexion and dark, naturally curled hair, which ranged down her shoulders, screamed Italian. Italian goddess. Her large brown eyes and muted red lips smiled sincerely at me. It was clear she was happy and welcoming. Few times in my life have I ever seen a woman so beautiful.

À Hello,À I said looking at her. She did not answer but lifted the skirt portion of her dress to her knees and slid into the car, scooting over to sit behind the driver's seat. She left a strong trail of delicious fresh gardenia perfume.

À Hello Jimmy,À I greeted my charge. À You look good today, young man.À Jimmy had both good days and bad days.

À Hello Mr. Hazlette,À Jimmy answered. À Thanks for volunteering in my hour of need.À

À What did you say, Jimmy?À I asked. À Remember I can't hear well.À I cupped my better, left ear.

À I said, À thanks for volunteeringÀ ,À Jimmy yelled. À I really had no one else to take me today.À

À You're welcome son,À I replied. À Sorry for the annoyance. I should receive new hearing aid batteries later today.À

Jimmy rolled his wheelchair over to the open door. He handed me his book titled *Spooky Haunted Houses* and lifted himself into my car. While I folded the wheelchair, I stole a glimpse at both pimply Jimmy, who fooled with his ipod, and the beauty beside him. Her inviting eyes locked onto mine. I stowed the wheelchair in the trunk and got into the car.

Her eyes caught my glance inÀ the rearview mirror. À I'm Enrica,À she said. Her voice was perfectly clear and spoken in a timbre and pitch as if I were her lover. Her generous smile seemed as if I had just presented a rare and precious gift.

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I responded, "Nice to meet you." Then I glanced as Jimmy untangled the ear bud wires. "Do you like ghost stories, Jimmy?"

Jimmy inserted the ear buds into his ears and opened the book. Talking to himself, mumbled Jimmy and he settled into his seat fully absorbed.

"You're never too old for a good ghost story," Enrica said with a bewitching smile. I backed the car out. "If you don't mind Mr. Hazlette, while Jimmy's registering for classes, would you drive me by my old home so I can pick up something? It's only six blocks from the university and I won't be long. I promise."

Looking into the rearview mirror, I answered, "I'd be happy to." I continuously stole looks at her and each time her pleasant gaze met mine. She did not signal annoyance or a come hither look but radiated joy, perhaps as if being freed from prison. How did little Jimmy score a beautiful girlfriend like Enrica? In the best of my days, she would have never looked twice at me. Enrica appeared about 26 and I knew Jimmy was 18. Did her personality match her looks? I wondered if Jimmy appreciated this rare treasure.

"How long?" I tilted my head towards Jimmy.

"I've stayed with Jimmy and his parents for almost a month now," she looked slightly sheepish. "They're such sweet people."

"Yes, they are," I replied. "They were so kind after my wife passed." I paused and glanced into the mirror again. I asked many questions about her life and experiences but she masterfully got me to babble on about my life and career instead. I learned nearly nothing about her.

Finally, I could no longer hold off the question which screamed inside my mind. "It surprises me that Jimmy never said anything about you, Enrica. You've heard it all your life, I'm sure, that you have looks to kill for." Enrica immediately flashed a sad expression. "I mean, I don't mean anything bad. I just don't know why he never showed you off before. I certainly would, all the time."

"No offense taken, Mr. Hazlette," Enrica replied. "Perhaps he didn't want your competition." She chuckled.

I responded, "At seventy-three!"

Jimmy interrupted, almost shouting at me. "Mr. Hazlette, please make the next left and then you can let me out anywhere near a sidewalk, okay?"

"Yes sir, Jimmy," I responded.

Wheelchair out. Jimmy out. Back in the car. Enrica now in the front seat.

I tried to make small talk with this beauty. "You wear that peasant dress well. I really haven't seen those dresses in decades. I'd forgotten them, actually. You'll probably bring back the style, if you're seen in a magazine."

"Thanks. It's comfortable and what I like."

As we seemed to get closer she appeared apprehensive, as a child faces a new rollercoaster ride. "Is there someone to let you in, Enrica? Or, do you have a key?"

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“ I can get in. I’ve lived there a very long time,” she answered.

“ Do you have a career?”

“ No,” she seemed annoyed. “ I really just like to stay at home.”

“ Do you have any children?”

“ One stillborn. Otherwise, no, I had no children. I wish she had survived,” she said, eyes lowered and sounding full of regret.

“ *Had?* You are still young enough to have children. You just have to meet”

She interrupted sternly, “ Mr. Hazlette, please. Don’t make me any sadder”

“ Sorry. I’m an idiot. Of course you know,” I apologized. “ But sad? You seem the picture of joy. I can’t remember anyone so happy.”

“ It’s the two story house with the aquamarine front door,” she pointed out.

“ Would you mind just pulling onto the swale?” The car nosed onto the grass. “ A little further up, please?” The car came to a rest at the property line and the street. “ Leave the engine running, please.” She just looked at me expectantly.

Finally, it dawned on me. “ May I get the door for you?” I asked.

She smiled but her countenance had turned to look like she had smacked her thumb with a hammer, “ Mr. Hazlette, you’re a true gentleman.” The old house seemed to signal some strong emotions for her.

I got out and opened the door as gracefully as I could. “ Actually Enrica, I appreciate the opportunity for gallantry. Not much call for it anymore.”

As I opened the door I noticed the aroma not of gardenia but of freshly dug sod and soil. She affected a smile. “ Why don’t you find some good music on the radio?”

I punched up some music and looked back but she was gone. The front yard had numerous patches of dried sand surrounded by brown grass. The hedges and foliage had only a few leaves on the dark, skinny branches to support their lives. The white and aquamarine flaked paint screamed neglect, despair, and inhospitality. Downstairs the drapes were open but upstairs the old faded drapes were closed tightly.

After longer than I cared to wait, I got out of the car and surveyed the house for any sign of movement. “ My eyes blinked and my jaw dropped as I realized this was the exact same house as Jimmy's except it appeared older and not very well kept. ”

The front door suddenly swung open and a woman and man in their mid-sixties bolted to the sidewalk.

“ God damn her!” she yelled, turning to face the house. “ Why did she have to come back?”

“ She can rot in Hell!” he screamed. I could hear them clearly. “ What are we going to do now?”

“ I thought that priest got rid of her,” she said. “ Lying bastard. This is all your fault, you know. We’ll have to pay him again.”

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â Youâ re not innocent. Remember, you had a hand in it.â They both turned in unison and stared at me in disbelief,â an intruder in their private world on the sidewalk. â The man reached into his pocket.â

Quickly,â I turned toward the ramshackle house. â My eyes were immediately drawn to the large window, curtains open, on the second floor where I beheld the pained and anguished expression on the face of Enrica, as she glared out at the couple below. My focus lowered to the large crimson red stain, which soaked the white top of her dress. Just above her left breast protruded only the handle of a very large steak knife. Obviously a fatal wound.

Enrica turned her gaze to me and spoke as clearly as if still in the car, â This has been my home for the last forty years. I want to stay here. Good bye, Mr. Hazlette.â

Despite hearing the metallic click and footfalls, my eyes continued to feast upon the beautiful but distraught Enrica until the man stood just to my left, facing me.â Beginning with a pinch to my stomach, the pain quickly spread and radiated out to all extremities.â He jammed the knife blade so hard I fell backwards into the dirt lawn.â I struggled to stop the bleeding and the pain.

"Wha--" I began to ask before he stomped his shoe on my mouth and then kicked the side of my head.

The man looked up and down the street.â "Take his car to Benny's.â He'll bring you back.â I'll lay him next to the bitch."â Then I watched helplessly as he grasped my hair in one hand and cut across my neck.â The blood gushed out furiously though I tried to stop it with my hands.â My legs soon turned cold.â The smell and taste of blood were everywhere.â I struggled to stay awake.â My face and body became frigid.â He grabbed my ankles and dragged me toward the side of the house as my body spasmed.â "Stop that," he demanded in a low, harsh voice.â I looked up for help from Enrica.â She returned a look of pity.

I awoke and became aware of sound although my eyes were still closed.â Thump.â Then, thump again.â Talking only to himself the man said, "Why was that bastard here?â I didn't want to kill him.â It's all his fault."

I opened my eyes and looked asâ dirt flew through the air and thumped onto the pile of freshly dug dirt.â The man, soaked with sweat and covered with dirt, shoveled and stood waist deep in the hole.â To my left stood beautiful Enrica and a short figure that looked like a turd-man: short, thin legs and corresponding arms.â He had no neck because his sex-less, naked body was one long cylinder, dark brown and lumpy, like a turd.â He held a silver trident, as long as he was tall, about four feet.

I stood and attempted to brush off dirt that should be on me but there was none.â My eye beheld my body still prostrate on the ground. â Looking closer, I realized the three of us were translucent.â

Turd-man spoke, "James Laurence Hazlette?"â I nodded.â "Come with me."

"No," cried Enrica.â "You can stay with me.â Tell him you'll stay.â Please, Mr. Hazlette."

"Can I stay?â And, where would you take me?"

"James, before you must appear at the judgment throne room, two weeks to remain here on earth has been granted to you.â Mercifully, not as long as Enrica.â Your wife, your parents, brother, and sisters are waiting as are friends, and other relatives you may not even know but have watched over your life."

"Please stay with me, Mr. Hazlette.â We need to get back at them for killing you.â And me.â There is much work to be done.â Please, I am so lonely.â I need you."

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"James, the Prince of Peace requires your decision, right now." ^ ^

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THE END

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