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☆☆☆☆☆ “Intelligent secret society thriller, pure genius, one of the finest mysteries ever read!”

**This is part of a Three-Book Series!**

**81 Minute Books Presents**

*Iconics Volume 1*

*Preview*

**Written by Ron Knight**

**Part 1**

***Future Icon:*** “A person who will become widely known and change the world.”

***Iconics:*** “A secret society that protects future icons.”

It’s not understood how the Iconics started or who funds their secret society. In fact, not many people know they exist.

Here’s what we do know...

The Iconics protect people who will someday change the world.

The person being protected is kept a secret.

There are many stories about the Iconics.

Here’s one of them...

~

*This is a true story...*

*January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1967*

When you hear strange voices at 9:09 in the evening, nothing good could come of it.

Jess Hobson rose from her bed, listening to her grandpa speak from the hallway.

“She’s only twelve,” her grandpa pleaded in a loud, frustrated whisper.

“We’ve taken them at a younger age.” The voice was deep with a slight British accent.

Jess scooted her blankets off and walked silently to the door, pressing her ear close so she could listen.

Grandpa: “Where will you take her?”

Voice: “Mountain View.”

Grandpa: “Mountain View?” Her grandpa’s tone became shaken. “Who will she live with?”

Voice: “Let us handle it. You know how this works.”

The door swung open, knocking Jess to the floor. She immediately sprung back to her feet; skin flushed with embarrassment when the light flicked on. Jess looked at her grandfather; his eyes lost in a deep place.

Jess: “What’s going on?”

“It’s time,” her grandfather said with a cold voice. He stepped to the side, allowing the strange man to enter her room.

He had blond hair waved to the side, a brown polyester jacket and black wool scarf.

Jess took a step back. She already knew what was about to happen...the Iconics were ready to take her.

Jess’s parents were drug user’s and once left Jess alone for eight days straight to fend for herself. By the ninth day she called her grandmother to explain that something was wrong, and she was all alone.

Three days later Jess was picked up by her grandparents.

Jess: “Where’s mom and dad?”

Her grandmother answered the question without emotion. “They overdosed on drugs during a sit-in to protest the Vietnam War and the Bay of Pigs Invasion.”

Jess didn’t react for a moment. Suddenly she went into a state of shock, then felt the world slip away, collapsing to the floor.

Jess’s grandmother told a story in which many years ago she had been assigned to protect a Belgian singer by the name of Jacques Romain Georges Brel, or better known as Jacques Brel.

“That was my destiny,” her grandmother explained to Jess. “I had been chosen to be an Iconic and protect Jacques Brel so he could change the world. Someday you’ll be chosen as well by the Iconics.”

Her grandmother went on to explain that the Iconic’s are hidden. They shadow the person who is assigned to be protected, but no one knows what they are doing, not even the person that they are guarding.

Jess’s grandfather was also chosen by the Iconics. He had been assigned to protect Lord Rutherford of Nelson, who went on to become the “Father of Nuclear Physics.” (Among other things.)

Shortly after Lord Rutherford died in 1937, Jess’s grandfather left New Zealand and moved to Paris, France where he met Jess’s grandmother.

When her grandparents received the phone call from Jess that she was all alone and didn’t know where her parents had gone, they moved to Wisconsin to take care of her. They discovered a few days later that their daughter and son-in-law died from a drug overdose.

Despite all of this, it was a violation of the Iconics rules. Once you were assigned to protect someone, you must continue doing that until they die...unless you die first.

Jess’s grandmother refused to move back to France and leave her granddaughter and husband, so she told the Iconics her days of protecting Jacques were over.

She mysteriously died a week later in her sleep.

Jess’s grandfather knew there wasn’t anything that could be done. He also knew someday the Iconics would come for Jess.

He explained the rules to Jess and taught her all the ways to protect someone else. This included fight tactics, how to research information and how to live on your own.

At age twelve the Iconics came knocking at the door to take Jess away.

Jess's grandfather sat on the bed, pulling Jess close to him. "The man standing in this room is from the Iconics. You'll call him John, although that's not his real name. Do you remember what I told you about what your grandmother and I had to do?"

Jess glanced at John, then brought her eyes back to her grandfather. "I'll be assigned to protect someone. The person won't know I'm protecting them. In fact, no one will know except the Iconics."

"That's good, honey." Her grandfather took a deep breath. "Tell me why it's so important to protect that person."

"Because they will be famous someday."

"Not just famous," her grandfather explained. "They'll change the world."

A tear spilt down Jess's face. "I don't want to leave you."

Her grandfather pulled her in for a hug, then pushed her back and stood. "It's time you understand how to be strong. You can't walk away from this."

Jess wiped her face with the back of her hand. "Where am I going?"

John stepped forward. "Mountain View. It's in California."

Jess pulled in a deep breath. "I'm only twelve. How can I protect someone?"

John: "The boy you're protecting is supposed to be in the fifth grade, but he's being forced to attend middle school against his will."

Jess wiped away another tear that drizzled down her cheek. "I don't understand. What's the big deal about an advanced fifth grader attending a middle school early?"

John glared at Jess with eyes like steel. "We need you at the school, making sure nothing happens to the boy. The school is known for bathroom stabbings and students beat to death while walking home."

Jess's heart smacked against her chest as she stood. "What can I do? How can I protect him?"

John opened the closet and grabbed a jacket, then filled two duffle bags with random items. "You'll have to figure that out."

Jess looked at her grandfather. "Will I ever see you again?"

Her grandfather gazed at her for a long moment. "Probably not."

Jess wanted to fall to her knees and cry, but she held it together and accepted the coat from John. "I need to change out of my pajamas and put on some clothes."

John looked around the bedroom. "We'll have clothes for you in your new home. You'll have pretend parents and even a pretend older brother. They have nothing to do with you except provide you with a home. They know nothing about the Iconics." John leveled his eyes with Jess. "They're being paid to take care of you, but not help you in any other way."

Jess forced herself to look directly into John's eyes. "Okay...I get it."

John stood tall, took one more glance around the room, then began walking. "Let's go."

Jess wanted to hug her grandfather, but it would have made her weak. She had accepted this was her fate.

As they walked outside into the brisk night air, Jess asked, "What's the name of the boy I'll be protecting?"

John looked down at her and said, “Steven Jobs.”

*To be continued...*

*You have completed 9 minutes of this book.*

**This 81 Minute Book series is available at the Middle Room Haunted Store.**

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