

Bambi and The Chopper: Episode 1

Bambi and The Chopper Are Born

by Martin Flett

'I've heard a rumour about you,' she says in a hushed, seductive tone. If this were the fifties, she'd be sucking on a long cigarette holder, letting the smoke seep slowly from her soft lips so it hung in the bar-room around us.

Her boyfriend looks up at the man, and then at his girlfriend with a querying look in his eye. He's not sure he likes what he sees.

'I've heard a rumour,' she says again, this time adjusting her pose so she brushes ever so slightly against the man's shoulder.

Her boyfriend looks again.

'They say you're ... shall we say, like, not short?' says the girl, with the slightest flick of her hair, and a raise of her eyebrow.

At over six feet tall, this was no overstatement, but before the man has chance to respond, the boyfriend chips in, 'Huh?' he says, with a sudden realisation. 'You have ... a Chopper?'

In the corner of the same room a small group is gathered. To the rear, stands a shorter man, saying nothing as the others sit in conversation. He glances at his beer glass - nearing empty - and he takes a swift look around the room, a hint of fear in his eyes, mild bewilderment across his face. He can see three people, two men and a woman, in the centre of the room, almost super-imposed against a backdrop of movement and John Does. One of the men looks across at him, just as the girl rests a hand against his arm. He looks away.

'A Chopper?' the tall man replies, but has no opportunity for further questions, as he tries not to look like he's completely 'out-to-lunch'.

The girl continues, 'Yeah, you know, a Chopper,' and her hand slides down the man's arm before resting on his hip. 'That's what I've heard anyway.'

Her boyfriend is obviously irritated now, sighing heavily as he tries to protectively put his arm around his partner. She steps away.

Right then the door opens and in walks another man, tall and slim with a leather jacket and a pony tail. He stops and looks around before heading to the bar. The girl in the trio eyes him up and down before returning to stroking her new-beloved's limbs.

'Hey man, what's with you? You look like the rabbit died or something!' One of the other guys in the group by the bar has noticed the expression on the shorter man's face.

'No, man, he looks like his mother died, like Bambi or something,' another chimes in; they all laugh - except the one they call Bambi.

'Whatever, man,' he shrugs. 'Whatever works for ya.' His attention is on the man in the leather jacket, who is having words with the barman.

Bambi lifts his glass to his mouth, looking over the brim trying to lip-read the leather-jacket's words. He can't make them out, but he's sure something's going

down. Something was *always* going down in this town, you just had to know where the meat was at. And he knew Cruz; Cruz always had the meat, it was his job after all. Tomorrow Bambi would find him and hear what he knew.

Right now though, something else is going on: things are getting hot with the trio in the middle.

'Hey, hey, look man, I don't want any trouble. This chick is yours and that's sweet,' the tall man says, backing away from the girl.

'Yeah, sucka, don't be forgettin' it,' says the girl's boyfriend, backing down a little.

The three of them find themselves stood by the bar now and the leather-jacket next to them gives the tall man a look of disdain, 'This punk giving you problems, my man?' he says to the boyfriend.

'Nothing I can't handle, Puppet, man. He just needs to respect a dude's territory, ya know what I mean?'

Throughout all this the girl is still fondling the tall-man's arm, who has now pressed himself as far up against the bar as he can in an effort to get away. He looks up, across to the other group of people, pleading with his eyes for someone to intervene.

Bambi catches the eye of the tall-man, who seems to be trying to climb over the bar. He notices the leather-jacket sniggering with the other man now, and the girl whispering in the tall-man's ear. This doesn't look like something Bambi wants to get involved in, but he might not have a choice: the Professor has just walked in, and is heading straight for the situation.

The Professor is lean, with obligatory white coat and round spectacles. His appearance alone earns him his name, but it's more than that: this guy has all the juice - *literally*. Orange, pineapple, cranberry - you name it, he's got it. Cellars full of the stuff. There was one summer when you couldn't get a glass of freshly squeezed apple juice for miles around; people from all over the place were turning up just to get refreshed. But that's another story.

As well as all this, The Professor has the juice about the town - local knowledge is his thing. If there's something going down, you can bet The Prof knows where it's at and, with his technological wizardry, can hook you up with a route and an entrance in minutes. Some say he used to work for NASA, though it's never been confirmed. He's a useful guy to have around that's for sure, if only he had his own wheels.

Bambi puts his empty glass on the bar and strides purposefully to intercept The Professor.

'You know what, dude? I'm not so sure I do agree,' remarks the leather-jacket known as 'Puppet', who has stepped away from the boyfriend and is surveying the girl and the tall-man. 'She seems pretty sure what she wants!'

The boyfriend glares at Puppet, 'What?' he says, with forced calm, 'she's mine, dude. You know that.'

'Hey, all's fair, I say. If the girl wants this ... Chopper ... I'd reckon your deal's done. Ya know what I'm sayin?'

Clearly he doesn't like this stance from the Puppet, and the boyfriend moves square to him, 'Bro, you're takin' sides with this dufus now? I'm not down with that...'

'I just says it like I sees it, if you can handle it man, that ain't my problemo,' the Puppet says, leaning back against the bar triumphantly.

The Professor meanwhile, having taken one look at the group, has realised the

situation and drawn alongside the tall-man. He whispers, 'Hey, we callin' you Chopper now?' but there's no time for a reply.

The boyfriend is losing what's left of his cool, 'I ain't gonna stand here and take this, I don't care who you are,' and he jabs the Puppet in the shoulder, who laughs derisively.

'Dude, you don't really wanna go down this road, do ya? You've seen what I'm about round here...'

The others in the bar have moved away and Bambi has joined the Professor, 'You know this guy?' he asks, nodding towards The Chopper.

'Sure!' The Prof replies, 'don't you?'

But the distraction has cost the men dear: the Puppet and the boyfriend are on the verge of a full-blown fight, standing eye-ball to eye-ball just feet away. The Prof looks at The Chopper and then at Bambi, and all three make a break for the door just as the first fist is thrown, missing Bambi by inches as he ducks underneath.

The fist belongs to the boyfriend and it lands on the Puppet's chin with a crack, but before he can retaliate, the barman, a man of considerable size, steps in. He takes a hold of the boyfriend's collar, and then the Puppet's shoulder, and hurls them towards the door without so much as a word.

The timing is either perfect or terrible, depending on your perspective; The Professor, Bambi and The Chopper have just made it through the door when the two ejected men hurtle into the street unexpectedly, careering straight into them. There's a blur of bodies and a screech of voices as all five men are flung to the floor, scuffling and scrambling; in the melee it's impossible to see whose arms and legs are whose.

Finally the dust begins to settle, and The Professor is first to catch his breath. He sits up surveying the scene in front of him: Bambi has landed on the boyfriend's shoulders, pinning him unwittingly to the ground while, right next to them, the Puppet lies, with the Chopper sprawled over his back like a washed-up octopus.

Bambi and The Chopper, dazed and surprised, look at each other, taking in their respective positions.

'Hey, man, what do we do now?' The Chopper asks his new partner.

'Let me handle it,' Bambi replies confidently. 'Here, you take hold of this one,' and he goes to swap places with The Chopper.

Swiftly they move over and Bambi takes hold of the Puppet's hands, holding them to the ground. The Chopper straddles the other fall-guy, forcing him to remain flat-out.

'No, man, you wanna do it like this,' The Chopper says, 'Come on, let me handle it!' And once again, the two men swap positions.

'No way. That's not working. You get over here, let me handle this!' Bambi says, once in his new position. And the two men exchange victims again.

This strange trading game goes on for five minutes, with each man declaring he knows how to handle it. No one is sure why the boyfriend and Puppet just lie there, allowing it to continue, but over and over the two men switch, until finally another voice enters the fray, 'Now then, I think you should let *me* handle this,' it says from somewhere above the action.

Standing above Bambi and The Chopper is a policeman, truncheon in hand, with the barman at his side. Clearly events have been explained to the officer, who is reckoning to sort it out. And Bambi and The Chopper are more than willing to let him.

'Hey, sure, we don't want any trouble, especially with the |Fuzz,' The Chopper says, looking at Bambi, who nods in agreement.

The two captors get up, leaving the boyfriend and the Puppet in the hands of

the law and walking away without so much as a glance over their shoulders, The Professor trailing behind.

Bambi turns to The Chopper, 'So,' he says, 'good to meet you dude. Fancy another pint?'

The Professor stands and watches as they disappear into the darkness down the street and towards another bar.

Next morning, lying on a beige shag pile carpet, Bambi opens his eyes. Across the floor, The Chopper's eyelids twitch, and then open.

'Dude,' The Chopper says, looking puzzled, 'what happened to that guy's chick?'

'Dunno, man,' comes Bambi's reply, 'but it's probably for the best.'