

CRESCENT CITY CHRONICLES

Written by

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ACT ONESUPER: 15 YEARS LATERINT. ARCANGELI HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A TRUMPET wafts in from another room. A jazz standard.

Uma (now in her early 40s), is wearing a subdued but elegant floral dress; flour in her hair. Cake batter on her face. She checks on a cake in the oven. Then, breakfast on the table.

BEEP. A TEXT POPS UP: I'd love to see you again...

Uma pauses her dance of controlled chaos. Smiles.

UMA: Me too. ... Kids' birthday coming up. It's hectic.

BEEP. TEXT: Could always invite me to the birthday party. Would love to meet 'em. Maybe it's time?

The SOUND of FOOTSTEPS RUNNING DOWN THE STAIRS interrupts Uma's indulgence. She quickly hides the phone away. A breathless, disheveled JEETA (15, Indian) enters...

JEETA

Printer's not working. Need to head to school early. Love you.

Jeeta heads towards the front door.

UMA

Hey... Wait a second.

JEETA

Maa, I gotta go. Really.

UMA

Why are we printing last minute?

JEETA

Because "we" are freshmen taking 3 APs and on the soccer team.

Uma comes over. Kisses her daughter's forehead. Hands her a plate of food.

UMA

Eat. I'll fix the printer.

She exits towards the office.

Enter NAT (15, Indian), Jeeta's twin brother, looking dapper

JEETA

(mimics gagging)

Ew. Are you wearing the whole bottle of cologne?

NAT

Nooo.

JEETA

Mm hmm. Sure sure. It's the new girl, right? Coco? Cody?

NAT

Courtney.

JEETA

(mimes making out)

Ooh Courtney. Mmm. You're so hot. You're trying too hard, bruh.

Nat fires back at his twin.

NAT

You're not trying at all.

JEETA

Fuck the patriarchy. I don't have to dress up for boys.

UMA

LANGUAGE.

Uma enters with Jeeta's paper.

UMA (CONT'D)

(to Nat)

I think you look handsome.

She gets close and gets a whiff of the cologne.

UMA (CONT'D)

But maybe next time... Easier on the cologne.

Jeeta laughs.

NAT

Thanks, maa.

JEETA

(mimics)

Thanks, maa.

Then she looks at her paper.

JEETA (CONT'D)
I mean... Thanks, maa. Really.

Nat picks up a plate and starts on breakfast.

NAT
How's the Doberge coming?

UMA
It's... Coming.

Uma smiles. Nat and Jeeta smile. They all break into a laugh.

Enter Louis (18), rockin' a bandana & afro , carrying his trumpet. He goes and hugs his mother.

UMA (CONT'D)
That's how good kids greet their loving parents in the morning.

Jeeta pretends to gag again.

NAT
Are you sure we shouldn't just buy the Doberge?

UMA
I got it, baby. You'll have your Doberge. That's why I'm not waiting till the last minute.

She walks over and pokes Jeeta. Jeeta makes a grumpy face but gives in to her mother. The love here is real.

Jeeta grabs her bag. The kids pile out. A chorus of "Love you, maa" in their wake.

Uma takes out her phone. Replies.

UMA: ~~Maybe~~ [Deleted]... .. Soon.

INT. DELACROIX HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

The study where Uma first met the mysterious Ved. Now, lackluster and withered. Ved (now late 40s), battle-worn over the years, rifles through books, looking for something.

Gone are his regalia. All that remains of his former self are the tattoos and the UROBOROS ring.

Enter Lavina (now also in her late 40s). She wears a head wrap now and a necklace with a FLEUR DE LIS LOCKET in it. Her right hand inexplicably now looks **PERMANENTLY BURNT**.

LAVINA

Mon cher, You betta get some crawfish for the étouffée tonight.

VED

Need to meet with Breaux about the council. No time for this, chérie.

LAVINA

Make time. The council can wait. You been gone all week. Seeking ghosts of god knows who. Chasing prophecies and rumors of enemies god knows where. Tonight, you gone have dinner wit yo dawta.

VED

Something's happening out in St. Bernard parish.

LAVINA

Something's happening in yo own home. I won't have an absent fatha in our child's life.

VED

Awaaz? AWAAZ....

Awaaz peeks in at the doorway. **UNAGED BY TIME.**

VED (CONT'D)

Need ears and eyes in St. Bernard.

Awaaz nods. And he's off. Dutiful as ever.

VED (CONT'D)

It's gonna be worse this time. My absence is the price.

LAVINA

No, mon cher. There are already empty chairs at our table. This family has already paid the price.

Ved looks at Lavina's **BURNT HAND.**

INT. POLICE OFFICE - HOMICIDE DEPARTMENT - DAY

CAPTAIN ABSALOM DUARD (50s), NOLA born and raised. A strong & silent man who's proud that he never abandoned his beloved city when Katrina hit. He walks fast and with purpose.

CAPTAIN DUARD
Listen, best not tell Solange you
went to Country Day...

Trailing behind him... Is the neophyte, DETECTIVE KIRK BODENHEIMER (late 20s). Caucasian. English Turn suburbanite.

BODENHEIMER
Yes, Cap.

CAPTAIN DUARD
This is a good day as any to learn
the city I guess.

BODENHEIMER
I know the city.

CAPTAIN DUARD
Living out in English Turn. No...
You just think you do.

Detectives duck out of the way as they see the Captain and the rook. No one wants this hassle. The Captain walks up to the messiest desk in the precinct.

CAPTAIN DUARD (CONT'D)
Solange?

SERGEANT SOLANGE (late 30s), mixed-race Cajun. *A woman who lives at the intersection of dedication and obsession.*

SOLANGE
Captain, just the man I wanted to
see. Looks like there's some
trouble brewing in St. Bernard.
(sees Bodenheimer)
Oh no no no, Captain.

CAPTAIN DUARD
I ain't asking.

SOLANGE
Sir, I got...

The Captain puts up the universal "talk to the hand" sign.

CAPTAIN DUARD
What you got are open cases.

They all look at the mess that is Solange's desk.

CAPTAIN DUARD (CONT'D)
Here's help to clear your cases,
Sergeant. Be grateful. Say thanks.

SOLANGE
Thanks a lot, Captain.

And with that... the Captain heads towards his office.
Bodenheimer reaches out to Solange for a handshake.

BODENHEIMER
Kirk Bodenheimer. Call me Bodhi.

SOLANGE
Rook, where you from? Uptown?

BODENHEIMER
English Turn.

Solange groans.

SOLANGE
A fucking bona fide cake-eater. You
gotta be joking me.

SNICKERING from some of the other detectives around.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

NAVAR (40s). Dressed in all black. Except a red pocket square. Black fedora. Dark sunglasses. It's hard to see his face. He watches the school from across the street as...

School buses pull up. Kids spill out like bees. Buzzing off trivial gossip, stories of heartbreaks and family drama. Older kids drive up in their cars. A lucky few, their own.

Navar watches Lavina drive in with her daughter... Jeune (16) wears a necklace with a FLEUR DE LIS LOCKET, identical to her mother's. Navar's gaze focuses. His ears perk up.

SLOWLY, the sound of the conversation in the car floats in.

JEUNE
Maa, can I go to Tip's?

LAVINA
Lawd, you too young...