

Valerie Patrick is a stunt girl working on a film being filmed in the Smokey Mountains. A mob hitman has been hired to kill her. It takes all of her gymnastic skills to allude him. The hitman is over twice her size, but she doesn't care.

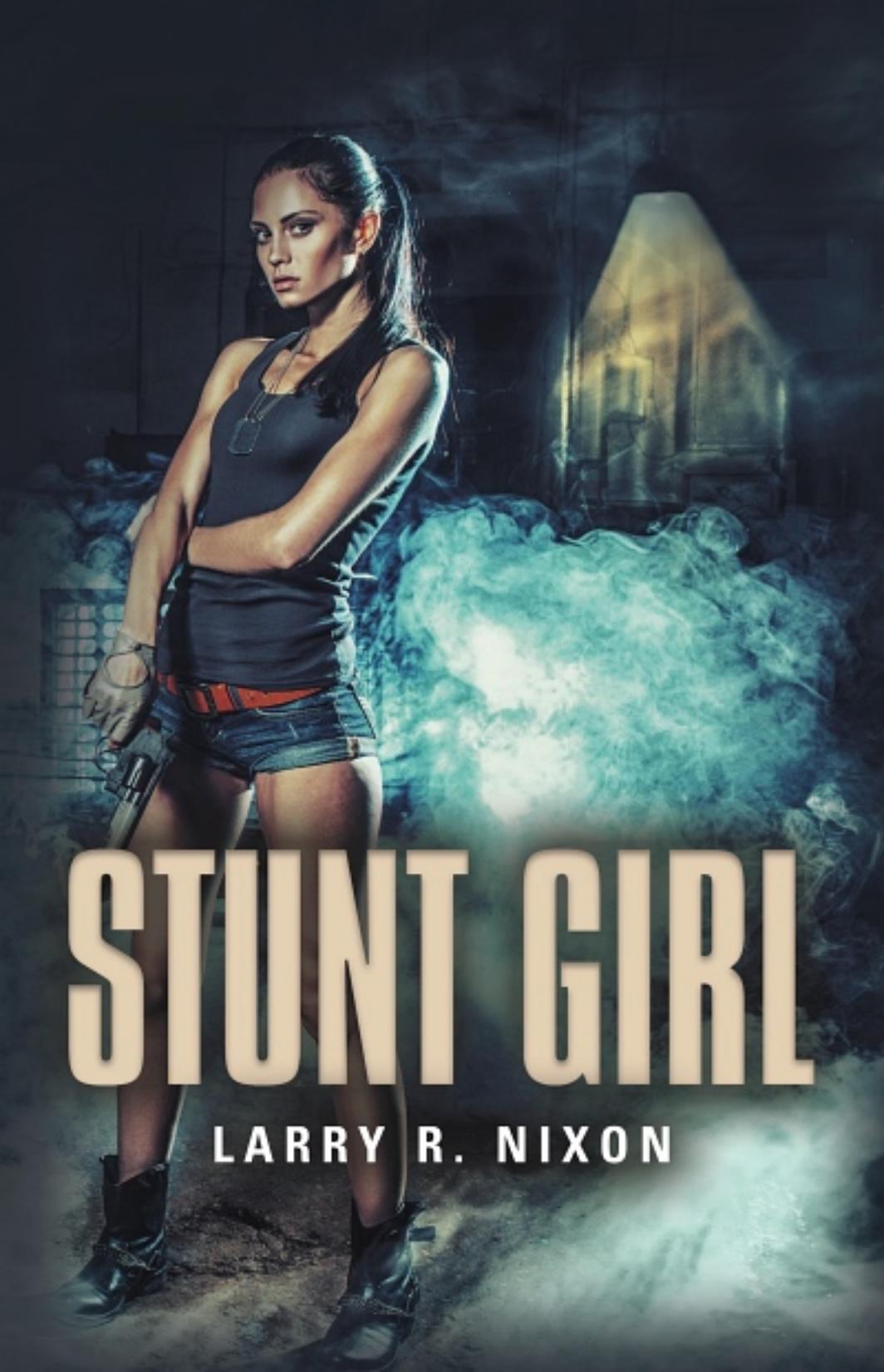
STUNT GIRL

By Larry R. Nixon

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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark tank top, denim shorts, and black boots, stands in a dark, industrial setting. She is holding a handgun in her right hand. The background is dark with a large, glowing blue light source and a structure resembling a tunnel or a large container.

STUNT GIRL

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: At your own risk

September 21, 2007 (Motel on I-85)

Clydesdale on the phone. “That bitch did it to me again, Jackson. “I’m through screwing around with her. There’ll be nothing left after I finish with her, not even enough to identify her body.”

“Finally, going to use your Claymore, huh?”

“Oh, come on, Rufus, you know I don’t have any Claymore mines. How would I get one? If you know where I can get hold of one, let me know. I may have to come up with something nearly that drastic, though. I have an M4 Carbine with me. I’ll put it on full-automatic and blow her ass to smithereens. Let’s see if she can dodge that.”

“All I know, Hoss, we’re running out of time. You better take care of that situation in a hurry. It needs to get done yesterday.” He slammed the phone down.

Actually, the little girl had really done a job on him, but he wouldn’t admit it to anyone. A mega hit of marijuana was helping a little. Must be a mild concussion, and then again, maybe not so mild.

September 21, 2007 (Back with the filming crew)

Everything was wrapping up when Buster and Valerie returned to the set. They joined Kathy for a ride back to the motel.

“I have a date tomorrow evening, Kath. I’m going out for some *libation* with Buster.”

Buster smiled, “We’re expecting you to come along, Kathy. I’d love to be seen with two gorgeous girls. It’ll make the patrons at that bar forget all about me getting my ass kicked the last time I was there.”

“You’re going back to that hillbilly bar? Have you gone nuts?”

“Oh, I’m not worried. With both of you along no one will dare bother me. In fact, I doubt if anyone will even notice that I’m there.”

At the motel, Buster left the girls and went to his room. A message, on Valerie's room phone, informed Kathy that there was a message for her at the front desk. She went to pick it up.

When she returned, she said, "That was a message from the Chief of Police in Boca. My hearing is set for Monday morning. I have to leave first thing tomorrow."

"I knew this had to happen Kathy. I've been dreading it, but it's been great. All of this hassle with Clydesdale has had one great side effect. I got to meet you, my new best friend."

"I'm going to miss you, Valerie. You'll have to find a way to come down to visit."

She smiled. "Once this job is done, I'll head down there for a couple days before I head back to Baltimore. We'll even be able to spend some time at the Swamp Office."

"That'll be fun. You'll find that winters are pretty nice in South Florida."

Kathy left for Florida the next morning. Valerie had never told her about working part time for the FBI. It was a secret she wanted to keep.

September 22, 2007 (Two dates with Jim Buster)

It felt good to be wearing normal clothes after spending the whole day in too-short shorts and a too-tight tank top. Valerie still wore shorts and a short sleeve shirt, but they weren't too tight or too revealing. Likewise, Buster wore his normal clothes, blue jeans and a snug-fitting Giant's baseball jersey.

They entered the bar only to be greeted by the little hillbilly, "Hey look here, guys. The pussy came back. Looks like he brought a bodyguard, too."

Buster and Valerie were shown to a table just inside the front door. Apparently, the bar manager hoped to stop any problems by placing them away from the rowdy patrons. The little guy was not going to oblige. They had just taken their seats when he stormed over.

"Didn't get enough the other night, huh, so y'all come back fer more."

“Not at all, sir, I came back to apologize for whatever I did to antagonize you.”

“What the hell y’all talk’n about? Ya think ya can come in here an throw around big words, like ya was smarter than us? I’ll show you. I whupped your ass before, an I gonna do it again, just ta prove it weren’t no accident.”

“Excuse me, sir,” Valerie had just started to the restroom, but stopped and confronted the man. “We just came in for a glass of beer and a burger. I heard this place serves the best burgers topped with Vidalia onions and the best home brewed beer around.”

“Y’all jus shut the hell up and get out’a my way, a’fore I grab ya by those little titties an throw ya out the front door.”

He leered at her and stuck both of his hands out with fingers spread and slightly cupped like he was going to grab her chest. He glanced at Buster to see if this got a reaction from him. While Buster showed no reaction, Valerie did.

She took a small step toward him, grabbed the back of his left hand and bent it down in a painful wrist lock. He back peddled across the bar trying to get her to release her hold until he crashed into the table where his buddies were waiting. She kept her grip tight. He drew his other hand to take a swing at her, but the wrist lock prevented it, but it did not prevent her from pivoting toward him and slamming her elbow into his nose. She released her hold on him when he landed on the table spilling a pitcher of beer.

One of his friends cried, “Damn you Zeke,” as he shoved him off the table.

Zeke stumbled and hit the floor in a nosedive breaking his fall with his face. She jumped on his back, grabbed his stringy ponytail, and smeared his face across the floor. When he managed to roll over, blood was spread across his face from his broken nose, and tears were flowing from his eyes.

“Oh, I’m so sorry Zekie, but you’re going to have a beaut of a shiner tomorrow, something to remember me by.”

“You bitch, I’m gonna break your arm,” he croaked.

“Don’t be crazy, pal,” Buster called from his chair. “I think you’d be better off just apologizing to her before she really gets mad.”

By then the bouncer arrived. He said, "I think we've seen enough. Just apologize to her Zeke, or I'll ban you from here for life. In case you were wondering, we all took bets on what was going to happen if this guy showed up again. The consensus was he'd put *you* in the hospital, and in my opinion, this chick wiping the floor with you more than qualifies for that."

Valerie handed Zeke a napkin before she finished her trip to the washroom. By the time she got back and took her seat, the bar had settled down. She picked up her beer. Buster winked at her, took his glass and toasted her. As if nothing out of the ordinary had just happened, Buster asked, "What's on the agenda tomorrow, Valerie? Does Wilson have plans for you?"

They ignored Zeke as he slid off his chair and headed toward the front door. One patron yelled, "Nice going Zeke. Y'all showed them."

The bartender called after him, "No hard liquor for you anymore, Zeke, just beer and not too much of that. Incidentally, I did not hear you apologize to the lady, yet."

Zeke swore, and then said, "I'm sorry ma'am." He looked at Buster and under his breath, he muttered, "I'll be seeing y'all, soon."

He left slamming the door behind him.

September 22, 2007 (Ann and Dan back in town)

"Valerie, why didn't you tell us about your part-time FBI status?" Ann queried, "Didn't you trust us?"

"Not enough to believe you would leave me alone long enough to let Bill hang himself. I was sure as soon as you found that out, you'd get me fired from the film crew. I need to have a part in the movie in order to nail him."

"Well, you made fools of us," Dan said, "You must have had a good laugh at our attempts to train you."

"You've got to be kidding me, Dan. I learned a lot from you, and especially from your Florida connection. The truth is, I was selected for this assignment because of my job as a stuntman on the movie, that's all."

Ann countered, "The reason for that turned out to be a mistake. The head writer was innocent of any collusion on discovering the CIA methods."

"They sent me to Quantico for a quick class on how to work undercover. Since I had been offered the stand-in job on the movie, I was asked to take the assignment. It was not dangerous, so they sent me, an inexperienced part-time agent."

"Still," Ann said, "You should have clued us in. Who knows, we may have cornered William Clydesdale by now."

"With what? In my judgment, we have nothing concrete on him anyway, but that brings a question to mind. How did you find out his real name?"

"Good question, Valerie," Ann turned to Dan. "Just how did Sue and Vic learn his name? You never explained that to me. You only cautioned me about the sensitivity of the source of their knowledge."

"Oh man, I hoped you had forgotten about that."

"Why?"

"Alright, I'll fill you in, but you both have to swear to me you will not talk about this, to anyone, not even someone in the Bureau."

Ann raised her right hand and said, "Sure, I can do that."

Valerie nodded, "I promise."

Dan sighed, "I made the same promise to Sue and Vic a few years ago. Of course, I did not really believe that Sue had anything to keep secret. I felt she was just super smart and came up with the results on her own."

"What are you talking about?" Ann asked.

"Let me explain." Dan sighed again, "Years ago, Sue and Vic developed an artificial intelligence computer program that worked beyond belief. They call it by the initials AI."

"Okay, but why the big secret?" Ann asked. "Artificial intelligence programs are all around."

"Not like this one. It was so powerful it could predict the future in exacting detail. Knowing that, they could use it to change future events. The computer could tell them simple changes to make that would revise the future of that particular situation. It worked so well it

scared the hell out of them. What would happen if it got into the wrong hands, like one of our *Honest Politicians*?”

Valerie shook her head.

“Anyway, Sue destroyed the original program, but then built another one not nearly as powerful. Apparently, she used it to discover Clydesdale’s real name.”

“Okay, since she destroyed it, why the big secret?” Ann asked.

“She won’t say. Actually, I believe she still has access to the original, but no one can figure out where the AI computer is stored.”

“Come on, Dan, a computer that can change the future? That’s science fiction.” Still shaking her head, Valerie said, “You know what, Dan? I don’t believe it. No computer program can predict accurately enough to change the future.”

“Let’s go with that,” Dan said. “Such a program does not exist, anywhere.”

“Enough of this fiction, we need to find, William Clydesdale, and put him in a lineup, and we need to do it soon,” Ann said.

“I agree,” Valerie nodded, “but who do we get to look the lineup over?”

Dan shrugged, “When was the last time you saw him?”

“A couple days ago while filming. He worked his way into working on the movie and nearly killed me. Thanks to your training, I survived him, and put some serious hurt on him.”

She told them the story.

When Dan stopped laughing, he said, “You did great. So that means he’s around here somewhere.”

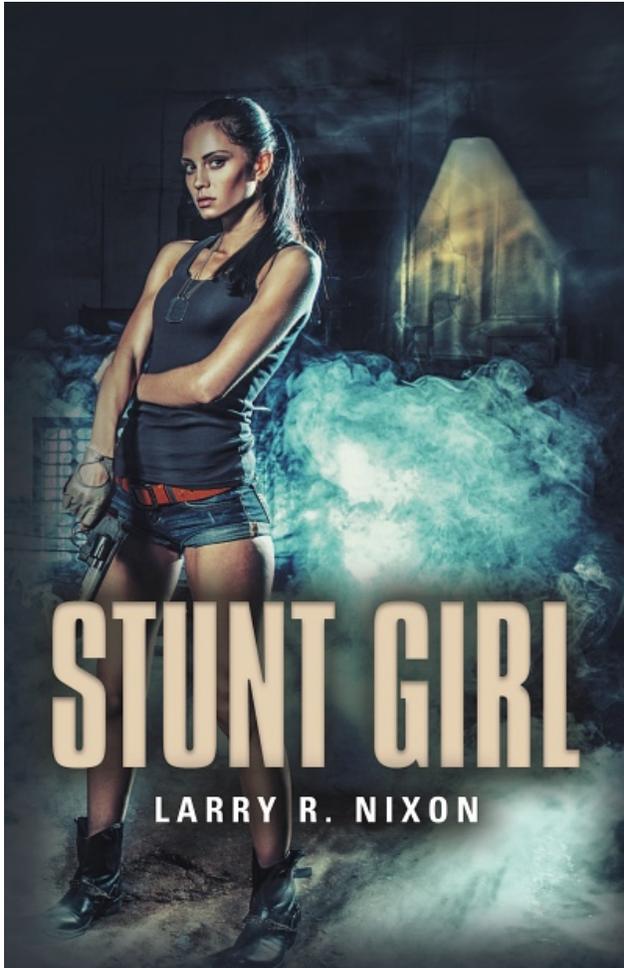
“Yep, and I’m ready to lure him in.”

“We can’t ask you to put yourself in jeopardy, again,” Ann countered. “You’ve been very lucky. One of these times he may be the lucky one, and I don’t want to be a part of that.”

“How about you, Dan? I may not be an Agent, but I’m working for the FBI. Don’t you think that this is just part of my job?”

“Well, I don’t hanker to be the one who gets y’all hurt,” Dan smiled.

“Oh, come on, you two,” Ann cried. “We can come up with a plan to nail him without putting anyone in danger.”



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