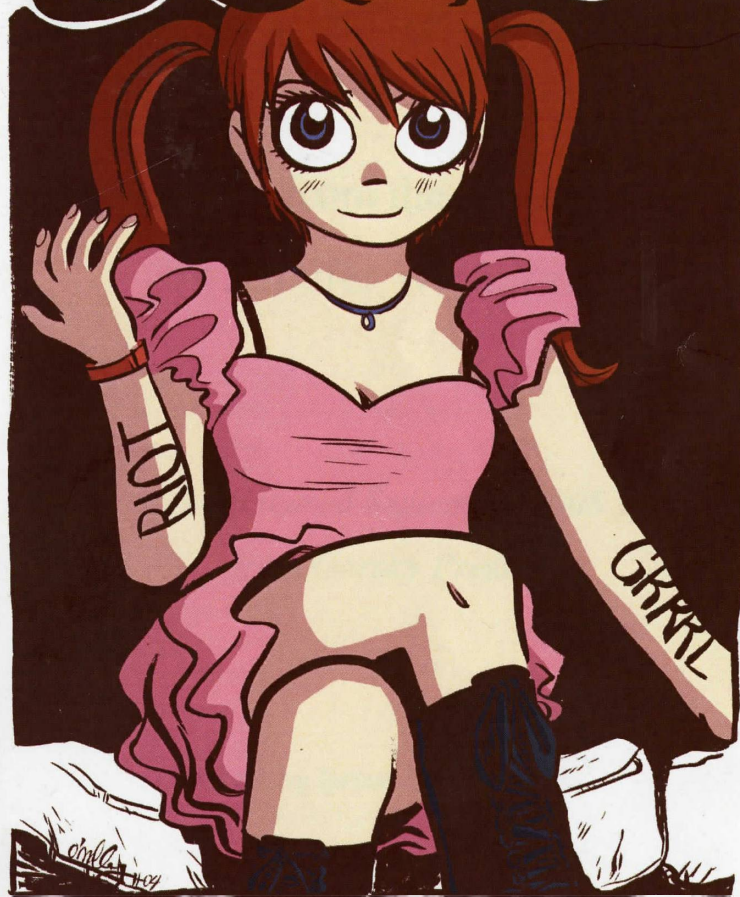


36(lead



AN EXCERPT FROM THE FORTHCOMING NOVEL "GRRRL"
BY JENNIFER WHITEFORD

36 (D)EAD

an excerpt from the novel *Grrrl*

by Jennifer Whiteford

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I'm exhausted. I slept until 11 and I woke up exhausted. Exhausted, exhausted, exhausted. Last night was amazing in so many ways and crazy in so many others.

I should start from the beginning.

The student centre (where the show was) was this really weird bar/café type place with a little stage and all sorts of stairs and levels with tables and bars on them. I'd never really seen anything like it. We wore what I said we were going to wear and

I used magic marker to write "riot" on one of my arms and "grrrr!" on the other. Nettie wrote "queen" on one of hers and "bitch" on the other. My ponytails looked great. We walked in, found the stage and then WOOOSH this girl goes by us and Nettie grabs my arm and says, "It's Hannah Scott!" THE LEAD SINGER! She disappeared backstage before we could talk to her.

It wasn't very crowded in the bar, so I pestered Nettie into asking some bartender guy what time the show started and he said at ten PM. It was only 8:30 so Nettie decided that she'd better call her mom. So we walked over to the phones and I was standing there digging out a quarter for her when I look down this ramp and Hannah Scott is walking right towards me! She looked so cool! She was wearing this top that was kind of like a bikini top with ripped up fishnet stockings like a shirt over top of it and a really weird plaid skirt with kneesocks and converse. She had lots of black eyeliner on and red lipstick. Nettie was talking to me and when I didn't answer she looked up and there was Hannah and Nettie just went, "Oh my God!" and Hannah said, "Hi. Is this where the phones are?"

We just nodded because I had no idea what to say. Hannah got on one phone and Nettie got on the other one and I tried to pay attention to Nettie and not eavesdrop on Hannah's conversation. Fortunately, they both got off the phones at the same time and I

whipped out my 36(d)ead zine for Hannah to sign. She smiled and signed it and then she said, "So now you have to give me your autograph." I was like, "What?" and she said that she doesn't consider herself to be a celebrity or anything because there's nothing that she does that any other grrrl couldn't do so when she signs something for somebody she always gets them to sign something for her because all grrrls are equally important. Or something like that. Anyway, she had this little notebook in her bag and it was just FULL of signatures and little notes that I guess were all from people who are her fans. She opened it to a blank page for me and I wrote my name and I drew a little cartoon of myself with big boots and my pouffy skirt and ponytails. I drew a women's symbol on the skirt of my dress. I felt kind of weird but also kind of cool. Hannah looked at it and smiled at me and said, "Thanks, Marlie." And even if she doesn't want to be considered a celebrity I must admit that just hearing her say my name made me feel like I was floating in space. Then she gave it to Nettie to sign and Nettie had this HUGE smile on her face and that was really funny to me because Nettie hardly ever smiles, she usually just looks all scowly and cool. So I was smiling and Nettie was smiling and Hannah was smiling and it was just so great. I even got up the courage to ask Hannah if I could interview her for Music Box and she said YES! She gave me an address to send the questions to and said she'd send the answers back to me after the tour was finished. Then she said good-bye to us and went down the ramp and I guess went backstage.

When she was gone Nettie and I just grabbed each other's arms and started jumping up and down and I had to cover my mouth to keep from screaming. We were like, "She was SO NICE!" and we were just laughing and wanting to scream. It was great because Nettie doesn't usually act like that, but I totally would have jumped up and down whether or not she did it too. After we calmed down we decided that it was time to go and sit by the stage to make sure that we got good spots. More people were starting to come in and I was happy because most of them were grrrls that seemed like Nettie and me. And a bunch of them had stuff written on their arms too! One girl had "Bitch" like Nettie

and I saw one girl who even had "whore" written on her legs. I wasn't sure what she meant by that, but I guess it's just like writing "bitch". It's what boys think of us anyway, so why not scare them by letting them see what they are thinking written on our bodies?

I smiled at all the grrrls and they smiled at me and at Nettie but I didn't have the courage to go up and talk to anybody. They seemed to be a little bit older than us and I was still ashamed of my big red "underage" wristband. But then I saw that most of the other grrrls had red ones too. I started feeling a little bit better.

The opening act was a band called The Sylvias and they were AWESOME! They had a little tape with three songs on it and I bought that. They are just from Toronto so maybe we can go and see them again. Nettie and I were right up close to the speakers right at the front of the stage. It was the best place to be because we could see everything perfectly. We were so close that if I'd put out one hand then I could have touched the guitarist's skirt.

Right when The Sylvias were finished playing I noticed this big pack of boys coming into the room. They didn't look like the boys who were already there who all looked kind of skinny and maybe gay and they were all with grrrls who I guess they were friends with. These new boys were like the boys from my school with baseball caps and ugly sports team t-shirts and stuff. I was wondering if they were in the wrong place and maybe they were going to leave but they just sat down at one of the bars. I pointed them out to Nettie and she put her scowl back on and told me to *keep an eye on them*. After that I kind of forgot about them. I was just too excited for 36(d)ead to come on.

We didn't have to wait for very long. They came on stage and there was Hannah looking so cool and tough and all the other grrrls in the band were just as cool and the first thing that Hannah did was ask that all the boys go to the back of the dance floor and let the grrrls come to the front. Most of the nice-seeming boys just shuffled to the back like they were even expecting that they'd have to do that. I immediately turned around and looked at the guys at the bar and they were all talking

to each other and looking at Hannah and pointing. Nettie was watching them too and we just looked at each other and raised our eyebrows. I really didn't want anything bad to happen.

Hannah said, "Now all the women are safe to dance!" and then she raised her one arm up really high and yelled, "THIS IS THE REAL REVOLUTION! FEMINIST FURY NOW!" and they all started playing "Carnivore" off of the record. The audience just went nuts and we started jumping up and down and Nettie and I were screaming the words along with the song. All the other grrrls were doing it too and we were all dancing in this big pack at the front and I didn't even worry about any boys grabbing my ass or pushing me because it was all grrrls and it was SO
FUCKING GREAT!

Hannah was amazing to watch, just like she was in Seattle and she was jumping all over the place and twirling the microphone around and crashing into the other band members. And sometimes someone in the band would make a mistake with what they were playing and all of them would just look at each other and laugh and keep going instead of acting like it was the end of the world. It made me want to play guitar in a band SO BADLY but in a band like that where I could mess up and it would just be funny instead of being this big, big deal.

The concert went on like that for a while and Nettie and I were having totally the best time but when Hannah introduced the song "Dead Men Don't Rape" those guys who had been sitting at the bar just started coming through the crowd of girls and pushing their way to the front. One of them put his hand on my shoulder and shoved me so hard that he knocked me into Nettie and we both fell down on the floor. They all started screaming at Hannah and she was trying to calm them down and get them to back away while at the same time telling them how stupid they were and everyone in the audience was just stunned. All the girls who had been pushed down were trying to help each other up but we were being totally silent. The worst part, I thought, is that some of the guys were laughing. Like it was funny to come in to a place where girls were having fun and make everyone feel

angry and scared just because you're bigger than them and you feel threatened by what they believe.

Hannah was still yelling back at them when Nettie and I finally got back on our feet. Everyone else was quiet and watching. And then Nettie just shuffled past me and *pushed* the guy near us with all of her strength! He was so surprised that he almost fell over, which would have been really funny, but he just kind of stumbled and then turned around to look at Nettie who was about half his size but she looked really angry and REALLY SCARY! Then SHE started yelling at the guy, saying like, "FUCK OFF! LEAVE US ALONE! GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE YOU STUPID DICK!" and even Hannah got quiet and we all started to watch Nettie.

And then a few seconds later another girl started yelling and then a whole bunch of us did and eventually the guys just kind of backed up and walked away and yelled some more insults but then walked out of the bar and didn't come back. Everyone was kind of shocked but we cheered and a lot of grrrls were hugging each other and Hannah was kind of smiling and then she said, "On with the show!" and they started back into the song.

When I looked over at Nettie she was watching but totally crying huge tears and looking just... worn out I guess, and totally miserable. It was too loud to ask her any questions, but I knew that she was thinking about that guy Robbie and I thought that it totally sucked that he could still make her upset. Especially when she had just been so tough and we were learning all this stuff about our own power and how we can be however we want to and no men can control us. But I guess he is controlling her.

She seemed fine after a couple of songs and even started kind of dancing again and when it was over we all screamed and howled until they came back on and did another song and then Hannah jumped into the audience to talk to people and the band started putting away their instruments and I knew it was totally over. I was glad that we'd gotten to talk to Hannah earlier because she had so many grrrls surrounding her after the show that I knew we

would have never gotten to talk to her like we did by the phones. Nettie seemed fine coming home and we talked mostly about the show except that we didn't really mention the guys or anything. I

didn't want her to get upset because I didn't know what I'd do and last time she seemed almost mad at me when I tried to help. It was really sad because I was thinking about all this stuff we're learning and how it's supposed to be better for girls to talk about their feelings and experiences and share them with each other instead of keeping everything all junked up inside of ourselves.

Nettie and I totally agree with that when we're talking about other people, but I guess we're not going to do it for ourselves.

I have to call Sheena and tell her everything about the show, but I don't think I can tell the story all over again just now so maybe I'll have a nap first. I'm still so tired from everything. I'm almost looking forward to going back to school on Monday where everything is boring and predictable.

Marlie.

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MARLIE'S FAVOURITE
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COMING TO HER TOWN TO
PLAY AN ALL-AGES SHOW.
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A
WHOLE BUNCH OF ANTI-
GRRRL JOCK BOYS CRASH
THE CONCERT?