

I Saw a Mouse

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Format Description:

A limited serial drama of 3 episodes, "*I Saw a Mouse*" is a fantastical tale of deception, theft, murder, and love set in the present day. Most of the action takes place in a large, converted house known as Stanley Mansions with some scenes set in the Amsterdam area.

Episodes 1 and 2 are mirror episodes with the story being told by the main characters in each one. Episode 1 is Chris's story with episode 2 being Matt and Margie's'. The antagonist throughout is Jessica Proctor.

Episode 3 focusses on our antagonist, Jessica.

Logline:

An ageing and volatile member of an ancient European crime family has been outcast and unable to control her impulses, she spirals out of control causing innocent lives to be lost or changed forever until she is stopped.

Main Characters:

The following are the main characters of this story. There are several smaller supporting characters whose names are listed under "Supporting Roles".

The Family: during the 1600s when Amsterdam was at the height of its prosperity, a group of individuals gathered to form a secretive organisation to make the most of the more unlawful opportunities that increase in wealth brings. Rules, laws and social mores obeyed by everyone else were of no consequence to this group of people. The Family runs to its own strict code of conduct with rules and regulations that a modern time government would be jealous of. Over time, the organisation became so powerful, it was able to hide more efficiently and soon became mythical in status, running everything from the shadows, with multiple layers between what went on at street level, to the corporate board room to the church's most inner sanctums and to its own key leaders.

Jessica Proctor (aka "Pickety"): Orphaned at birth, Jessica started life as a street child in the darker quarters of the City of Amsterdam. Recognised for her special set of skills, she was taken under the wing of a local crime organisation (described under "The Family").

Pickpocketing and scamming became her everyday norm and with no close ties to anyone in particular, she never learned to love, share or empathise. Cold, guarded and fiercely ambitious with a flair for killing, she gradually made her way up the Family's hierarchy. Dangerous and volatile, Jessica was not one for being controlled and in the end proved to be too much of a loose cannon, jeopardizing the stability the Family had enjoyed for many a decade. After an incident that went horribly wrong, she was "retired", sent away never to return.

Jessica was given enough money to buy a property and ensure she had enough to live on. However, the criminal itch never disappeared and as time went by, the itch only increased in its intensity. As the series progresses, Jessica is engaged by her former employer for a low level, routine job. However, she uses the job to satisfy her own “itch” which incites the Family’s anger who become hell bent on sorting her out once and for all. She is in the late 60s, early 70s age range.

Chris: Brave, sharp witted, creative, Chris’s fiancé has not long died after a brief but nasty battle with cancer. All alone in “their” flat, quiet and thoughtful, Chris keeps the sadness and anxiety at bay during the day through his work. He is a script writer on a long running drama and is well thought of. His background is “normal”, A Levels, University and straight into writing. The loss of his fiancé is the hardest thing he has ever had to face. At night, Chris has trouble sleeping and feeling comfortable in “their” flat, often writing late into the night.

Jessica, his next-door neighbour, was a super fan of his fiancé but for reasons that are not clear to him, she took a dislike to him not making any effort to hide that fact. Hiding his post, deliveries and general sneering, Jessica makes Chris very uncomfortable and insecure. To help him cope, Chris has given Jessica a nickname, “Pickety Witch”. As we see the story unfold, Jessica’s hounding of Chris worsens and he endures a storyline that wouldn’t be out of place in drama he works in. A victim of Jessica’s whims, she pushes him to the edge of madness, will he survive?

Jani (Janine): Jani is an old university friend of Chris’s. Like Chris, she is in her late 20s. She is single and lonely. As a child, she was a full time carer for her mother until she died when Jani was 13. An outsider, not fully understanding the rules and mores of her peers, she was brought on by one of her teachers at the time. Jani developed a love numbers and puzzles, and became a teacher of maths. Kind, thoughtful and always wanting to see the good in people, Jani is the type of friend who will walk through fire with you, never minding the consequences or impact to herself.

Matt: is tall like the true Dutchman he is, fair and in his late 20s. Another recruit to The Family upon the death of his parents, he works as a tour guide on one of Amsterdam’s river tours whilst at the same time working off his obligation to the Family, doing whatever it is they need him to do. He is a low level “foot” soldier and has yet to have committed any crime that involved violence. Because of that lack of exposure to violence, Matt does not understand the full implications of being caught up in the Family. Matt is warm, open and friendly which suits his non-criminal job to a tee but gives him a naïve edge in his criminal career. As episode 2 unfolds, we see Matt in the flat below Chris in Stanley Mansions. He has been sent to the UK on a job for the Family to retrieve a priceless artifact. Housed by Jessica at Stanley Mansions, she uses Matt’s presence to her own ends. It will not turn out well for Matt.

Margie: same age, nationality and height as Matt. She has family but is estranged from them after a falling out. A peg higher than Matt, she is reliable, gets the job done and is a little more experienced than Matt. She has tried to put herself out of reach and currently works as a dog walker. Hoping against hope that by keeping quiet she will be forgotten about but the Family have other ideas and she is sent to babysit Matt through his job. Sharing the same flat as Matt, she too falls under the spell of Jessica. It does not end well for Margie. The consequences of this are huge for Jessica as it turns out the family Margie

is estranged from are at the most senior level of the Family. It is final act involving Margie that puts a price on Jessica's head.

Uncle "Oom" Tom: Oom is Dutch for Uncle. Tom is one of the Family's top fixers/recruiters. He works out of a front in Amsterdam which is an old-fashioned pipe store. He has been with the family for as long as he can remember and even, he cannot tell the myth from the truth anymore. The term "Uncle" or "Oom" is the title given to members of his level by the Family. A nod to being less militaristic than their Italian equivalent. A kindly, gentle, thoughtful man of steel, in his 50s – 60s, Tom has been around a long time and has "rescued" countless individuals, some who take to the life well and others for whom the life is short lived. Never married, he is never short of female company. He knows Jessica from his early days when she was a force to be reckoned with and so, understands how she works and thinks. As punishment for using Margie in the latest scam, Uncle Tom is sent to Stanley Mansions to find out what happened and where she is and do whatever it takes to provide the Family with restitution.

We see Uncle Tom at different points in the story and he is the means by which we get to understand some of the deeper machinations of the Family.

Supporting Roles

Grace & Lily – sisters who share one of the flats. In their 70s – 80s, they are both wily and not at all what they seem.

Russell – a friend of Chris and Jani, Russell scraped through Uni as he spent most of his time at one party or another. He defines himself as non-binary. He is a conveyancing solicitor and is bored.

Clarissa – Chris's boss. In her 40s, bright, ambitious, and extremely pragmatic

Uncle "Oom" Harry – another of Jessica's victims. He seeks revenge for what she did to him and has been looking for her for a very long time.

Synopsis:

Act 1

Our main character is Jessica Proctor, an orphan of the Dutch streets. She is picked up by an old Dutch crime "family" and over time works her way through the ranks. After a serious incident, Jessica is forced into retirement and sent away from Holland. She finds her way to an inconsequential part of the UK where she sets up home. Although "retired" from criminal activity, she is offered a chance to return when her services are called upon by an old contact Uncle Tom. Jessica has been called upon to assist in, what is known in Uncle Tom's world as a "boomerang scam" – this is when an ancient, highly illegal, artifact is sold to a mark on the black market. The artifact is delivered, this maintains credibility of the salesperson, but is soon after stolen and returned to its original "owner". Jessica has been asked to provide a safe haven for the thieves of an artifact that has recently been sold to a highly regarded international lawyer. Once stolen and the heat is off (usually a year or so) Jessica has been instructed to return said artifact to Uncle Tom's pipe shop, where it will be stored for a few years before being sold again. The scam is watertight as the mark cannot admit to owning the artifact, claiming on their insurance is not an option. Done right and without getting greedy, this scam earns millions of euros without any trouble or violence.

Jessica owns an old house that has been converted into a number of flats (Stanley Mansions) and she has agreed to allow the 2 thieves in one of her flats which is currently empty. She is to look after them and make sure that they do not arouse any suspicion. Nothing more than that. However, mistakenly seeing an opportunity to return to her former life and to scratch that criminal itch that has been lying dormant for so many years, she decides that merely babysitting the thieves is not enough. She must prove herself to the Family, earn their forgiveness and trust. She must go above and beyond. Provide a showcase, a clear message that she has not lost her touch. That she is back. The thieves must die! There can be no loose ends. This is one of the top 5 rules the Family lives by. The thieves are nothing, foot soldiers. Their loss will not be felt or even noticed.

However, murder in her new home country is not so easy. She does not have access to the network of handlers, cleaners and fixers that she relied upon back home. Jessica needs to use what is around her. Jessica begins to plan. Who could she use as a fall guy? In comes Chris. Chris moved into the flat next door to hers at a time when she was nursing a hefty gambling debt and sold the flat to him to pay that debt off. Something Jessica never forgave Chris for, even though it wasn't his fault. She decides that Chris must "pay". Firstly, she knows Chris's current state of mind and comes up with a plan to destabilise that state even further. One evening, Jessica listens through the wall between hers and Chris's flats to a drunken conversation Chris has one night with his friends Jani and Russell about how to carry out the perfect murder and decides to use it to her own ends, framing Chris in the process.

The drunken conversation overheard by Jessica runs along the lines of - Chris, Russell and Jani enact a murder using the TWO TIME-FRAMES narrative technique with them talking it through over dinner and wine and also showing the murder in place, in the flat below. Inspired, Chris, a script writer for a long running drama "Rappart Road", writes the evenings shenanigans into a plot line he hopes his boss will be pleased with.

A short time later, Chris is coming home from one work one evening and is shocked to find Stanley Mansions cordoned off by the police. Interviewed by detectives, Chris is accused of and arrested for murder. Not for the thieves, that would've been too simple. No, Jessica has hatched something more complicated than that. She has framed Chris for her own "murder". A murder without a body. Her own death in play, this will give her time to carry out the murders of the 2 thieves and dispose of their bodies without raising any suspicion. Jessica secretly watches Chris being driven away by the police, happy with her plan so far. At Chris's trial, the jury find him guilty and as Chris is trying to absorb that, he notices Jessica at the back of the public gallery and breaks down as she turns and leaves, her work here done... for now...

One year later, Jessica returns to Stanley Mansions, pretending to the residents that she has been on a cruise. The police are alerted and come to pay her a visit.

Meanwhile, in prison, Chris has made a life for himself, directing rehearsals by some of the inmates in a play to be staged later on that month. He looks well and is rested and relaxed. Based Jessica's return and therefore no murder, Chris is released and returns to Stanley Mansions a little more broken than before. Jessica resumes her torment of him and unable to cope anymore, Chris ranges around his flat, unravelling.

In the flat below, someone in a forensic suit has gone in. We see a scene of death. 2 bodies, now skeletal, are in the bath. They are the thieves. Every surface is covered with air fresheners.

The suited one, exits the flat with an armful of black bin liners. They take down their hood and we see Jessica.

In Chris's flat the curtains to an open window waft in the breeze. There is no sign of Chris.

Act 2

Matt and Margie are recruited by Uncle Tom for the 2nd part of the "boomerang" scam. Usually only one person would go but as Matt is new to this sort of scam and does not have the necessary street smarts as yet, Uncle Tom recruits Margie to go with.

The artifact they are after has been bought by a lawyer of some international repute from the UK. Reluctantly, Uncle Tom reaches out to a former employee of the Family, Jessica to sort out some digs. Having an empty flat in Stanley Mansions, she readily agrees thinking that this may be the way back to her former life. But, her arrogance not diminished, she sets some conditions for Matt and Margie to abide by

Matt and Margie arrive at the flat after a long journey. There are rules when carrying out a job for the Family with no alcohol being one of them. Needless to say they have smuggled some in. Alongside these rules, Jessica has set some of her own. Matt and Margie think that they are very strange rules but thinking they have been set by the Family, they abide by them. They are not to be seen which makes sense but the other rules about playing loud music late at night and not their own music but the music provided for them

Uncle Tom has also, through another contact, got them a cleaning job at the house of the lawyer so that they can scout out where she may have hidden the artifact and then after a short period of time, steal it.

So, by day Matt and Margie are cleaning a large house scouring it for their prize and by night, following the rules set by Jessica.

One night, after a lot of wine, they forget to do what they are supposed to do. Whilst they are out the next day, Jessica comes in and cleans out the flat of all alcohol and contacts Uncle Tom. That evening when Matt & Margie return home, they find the flat spotlessly clean and all their stuff gone. There is an envelope with some more instructions, Matt loses his temper and threatens to leave. Margie, against all protocols, rings Uncle Tom. Uncle Tom is now regretting his decision to use Jessica as memories of her lack of balance and stability come flooding back to him. He pleads with Margie to not rock the boat. Finish the job and then get the hell out of there, and fast.

Chris is being driven mad; he is full of flu. Jessica is keeping him awake all day with the radio blaring and the constant noise from DIY, drilling etc., Then by night, the loud music from the downstairs flat pumps out in earnest. His friends come round to support him and with Jessica listening in at the wall, they plot a murder.

As the job comes close to finishing for Matt & Margie and with Chris well enough to go back to work, Jessica swings her devious plan into action. She steals into Chris's flat and sets up some equipment that feeds into her own flat. Once done, she puts an anonymous call into the police, saying she would like to report a murder.

The police arrive at Stanley Mansions. Matt & Margie panic and once again contact Uncle Tom who tells them to remain calm, not answer the door to anyone and to stay very, very quiet. They are not the only ones panicking, Lily and Grace are in the midst of nefarious deeds themselves when the Police knock on their door, conducting door to door enquiries.

That evening on arriving home from cleaning the house of the lawyer, they find another envelope. Exasperated, they open it only to find good news. They can stop playing the music and there is a surprise in the fridge. They spend the evening drinking, relaxing and getting to know each other better.

The following day, as Matt & Margie leave to clean the house, Jessica smuggles herself out of her hiding place and into their flat and begins to make preparations. Back at the house of the lawyer, cleaning, Matt & Margie finally come across the artifact. They smuggle it out of the house and take it home. The deed is done, the job is finished. There is another envelope awaiting them when they get home. This time, they are instructed to lie low for a couple of days but by way of a thank you, there is champagne in the fridge.

The following morning, Matt & Margie are feeling worse for wear. Needing some fresh air, Margie attempts to open a window but finds them locked. Matt checks the front door but that too is locked, from the outside. Feeling drowsy and nauseous, Margie heads to the bathroom to be sick. Matt is not far behind her. They both climb into the bath and after a brief time, fall unconscious.

Jessica, in a forensic suit and wearing breathing apparatus, enters the flat. Assured that Matt & Margie are now dead, she begins to tidy up the scene, opening the windows to let the noxious fumes out before closing them again. She leaves the bodies in the bath but seals the flat so that no smell will filter out into the building as Matt & Margie's bodies decay.

Engorged with her recent success, 2 undetected murders and a "suicide", Jessica takes the artifact across to Amsterdam. She enters Uncle Tom's shop to hand him the artifact and over the conversation, Uncle Tom is horrified to find out what she has done and terrified of the consequences of her actions.

Back at Stanley Mansions, as new family is moving in, Jani and Russell are making their way to Chris's flat. They are soberly dressed having just been to his inquest. This family is headed by Uncle Harry. Jessica wronged Uncle Harry some time ago and he has been looking for her ever since. Revenge is in the air. Jani and Uncle Harry make eye contact and sparks fly.

Act 3

Enraged by the 2 murders and more specifically one of their own, Margie, the Family seek revenge. As punishment for using Margie in the scam without their blessing, Uncle Tom is sent to Stanley Mansions to find out what happened and where she is and do whatever it takes to provide the Family with restitution.

We meet Uncle Harry who has also arrived at Stanley Mansions, renting a flat during Jessica's absence. Wronged by Jessica many years ago, he has spent those years searching for to exact revenge. Uncle Tom stays with him. Now with two of the Family's Uncles having arrived, they start to make their presence felt. Jessica does not fear them and grows more and more arrogant, relishing the prospect of taking them on.

Also moving in are Chris's friends Jani and Russell who have moved into his flat. Russell does not believe Chris took his own life and determined to find out what happened, starts his own investigation. Winning Russell over, Jessica inveigles herself in his investigation. As Russell gets closer to the truth, Jessica takes matters into her own hands and fatally wounds him.

Jani is inconsolable and blames herself for her friend's death. Unable to be comforted by anyone, she spends the evening in Chris's flat surrounded by Russell's investigation paraphernalia, drinking wine. Fairly drunk, she does not hear Jessica enter the flat. Opening the window that Chris jumped out of, Jessica sweet talks Jani into moving closer to the window. The 2 Uncles have cottoned on to what Jessica is doing and crash through the front door of the flat, hoping that they are in time. Uncle Harry rushes at Jessica and together, they both fly out of the window, hitting the ground like rag dolls.

Uncle Tom visits a graveyard and meets another member of the Family who tells him all is well, he is forgiven, to take some time and return to them when he is ready.

The final scene is a picnic with Uncle Tom and Jani who has now been taken under his wing.