

Beat City

By

Mark Skinner

Tyler lived with his grandparents on a quiet residential street in suburban Chicago. During the winter months, whenever possible, building a snowman became part of his daily routine. With no siblings and somewhat reserved Tyler was a solitary individual.

Son of local lawman and resident bully, Rocco Hammer, took it upon himself to lead the torment aimed at Tyler, until an unlikely incident during the winter of '87.

As dusk approached on this particular day, Rocco sat on his bike eating an apple waiting for Tyler to appear. With nothing but the remains of the previous day's snowman on the lawn, Rocco wondered if he'd finally broken Tyler's spirit.

Though not broken, Tyler was tired, particularly of being harassed. Concerned as to why Tyler was not outside his grandfather gifted him an old Cubs scarf that Tyler's uncle once wore, suggesting he might want to dress the snowman with it.

Illuminated by street lighting, Tyler rebuilt the snowman, carefully wrapping the scarf around its neck. Rocco looked on, whilst moulding fresh snow around his half-eaten apple, before viciously launching it at Tyler.

Implausibly, milliseconds before impact with Tyler's face, the snowman flung out an icy arm and caught the snow-covered apple, reflexively returning it with added pace, sending Rocco crashing backwards.

"How do you like them apples?" the snowman hollered.

Tyler's grandmother approached her husband as he beheld events through the kitchen window. "Just watching the grandchildren," he marvelled, sensing her presence as she peered over his shoulder.