

The following week
Friday, August 5th, 2016

San Diego, California
United States of America

Four attackers . . . no escape.

Ah, the joys of seemingly unwinnable fights!

They were probably late teens, maybe early twenties. All four men were tattooed up the wazoo - gangbangers. While she was only fifteen and she seemed to be potentially an easy target - at least from the outside, the men were about to get a rather upsetting response. The men encircled her, ensuring that her attention was evenly split in four different directions - they obviously were not as stupid as they looked. To Guinevere's seasoned eyes, the four men were seasoned fighters who were used to winning their fights.

Unfortunately for them, their apparent winning streak was about to come to a crushing close.

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The fight was over within a very few minutes.

They had not been as good as their gangbanger tattoos had appeared to suggest. While they had not been all that good, they had still required consummate skill to put down. Even more skill had been required to keep them breathing - instinct told the girl to kill them, but she had fought against that instinct and kept them alive; dead people generally attracted the Police and their attention was *not* desired.

Okay, she *had* dragged it out some - she was trying to keep a low profile, after all . . . not to mention that she was being observed by countless curious eyes. So, considering that she was trying to keep a low profile, why was she engaging in a public hand-to-hand fight with four cunts?

Yes - that was the very same question which was foremost in the fifteen-year-old's mind at that moment as she studied the four prone idiots.

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Guinevere had just returned from the store.

The sight which she had found before her was one which she could not just walk by and ignore. One of her neighbours was shouting at four young men - she knew why, too. Those young men dealt drugs around the neighbouring blocks and the mother of three, including Sasha, could not stand the blatant selling of illegal substances within feet of her young children.

Any other morning, and she might have just provided moral support. However, she was feeling a little angry and the day had not gone

well to that point, so, when one of the young men had shoved Mrs Andryusha to get her out of his face, she had kind of snapped. After taking a deep breath, Guinevere had handed her two bags of shopping to Sasha, Mrs Andryusha's twelve-year-old son.

"Hold these, please, Sasha - I'll be back in a couple of minutes."

Two minutes or so later, she had collected her bags from the boy and headed up to her apartment.

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"So, there you are - I was being a good Samaritan," Guinevere said as she finished explaining everything to a grinning Juno.

They had barely put all the shopping away when there was a knock on the door. Juno scampered to answer the door, peering through the spyhole. She giggled excitedly as she unlocked the door.

"It's Sasha and Nikki."

Guinevere groaned. She had nothing against the kids, but dealing with Juno was enough pain.

"Hi, Guinevere," Nikki said with a wave. "Thank you for what you did for my mom."

"I did what I could - is she okay?"

"She's fine, just lying down - Svetlana is with her."

"You weren't even trying!" twelve-year-old Sasha pointed out.

"Of course, I was," I responded.

"It was pretty obvious that you could have done better," thirteen-year-old Nikita confirmed.

"I'll try better, next time, I promise," Guinevere commented and Juno laughed.

The following evening

Saturday, August 6th

Clairemont

They left after dark and headed into the city.

Lilim was unusually quiet, Lilith noticed. Normally, the intercom was buzzing with Lilim's voice - the girl had a nasty case of verbal diarrhoea which appeared to be a permanent affliction. Lilith knew exactly why Lilim was silent; she was nervous and scared. Earlier that evening, she had been told that Lilith was to take a step back and Lilim was to do all the hard work that night.

"You going to talk to me, Lilim?"

Lilith felt the gentle squeeze as Lilim gripped tighter around her mentor's waist.

"It's alright to be scared; just remember not to show it. I will be there, every moment."

"I'll be okay once we get started - I think."

"You'll be perfect, I guarantee it."

Lilim never said another word until Lilith slowed the motorcycle on Garnet Avenue and she turned right just before the I-5 flyover and stopped.

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"We leave the motorcycle here and we patrol the area," Lilith explained.

"Why here?"

"Because, little Lilim, you see that building on the other side of the I-5?"

"Yeah. . ."

"Well, honey, if all goes well and we get us some funds, that will be where I'll turn you into a lean, mean, killing machine."

"Lean, mean, *what*?"

"Never mind."

Lilith headed away from the I-5 before she then took a left down a poorly lit side-street.

"You lead, Lilim."

"Gee, thanks!" Lilim muttered as she took point and she urged all of her senses into overdrive as her eyes moved from ahead, to either side, then ahead again.

Behind her, Lilith kept a wary eye on their rear as well as what was ahead of her apprentice.

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The area which Lilith had selected to be the site for their Haven, was one with relatively low crime, commercial neighbours who would not pay much attention to who was coming and going, plus access to very good transport routes.

There was one small issue and that was the local drug dealer who needed to be given his marching orders. A local drug dealer meant police and other law enforcement agencies. None of which mixed well with an illegal fledgling vigilante organisation. Organisation? That was a laugh - what kind of vigilante organisation started with just two people?

The dealer operated after dark - he must have had a real day job - and conveniently, it was 'after dark'.

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Lilim was doing well as she kept to the shadows.

Every step was planned and she was watching her sectors. Her bearing was perfect, like a coiled viper, ready to strike. Lilith remembered her first point mission - she had been so scared. She had also been alone, with her backup a long way away. Lilim slowed as she approached the dealer's place of business then stopped. The two of them slunk into the shadows and took a few moments to check out the surroundings.

Directly across the road was a collision repair centre which stayed open late - how convenient! Cars went in and out on irregular timings which to Lilith's trained mind just smelt wrong.

"Bingo!" Lilith growled as a 2012 Range Rover SUV pulled onto the forecourt.

"That's the perp?"

"Huh - 'perp'?"

"Okay, maybe I watch too many cop shows," Lilim growled back.

"Maybe? Yes, that is the top man - the boss."

"Okay - we gonna scare the bastard shitless?"

"Yes - just stick with the plan which we discussed, okay?"

"I can do that."

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Dean Shaw ran a successful collision repair centre by day and a very successful drug distribution centre by night. Mostly high-grade pharmaceuticals which normally required a doctor to prescribe. He was able to use his legitimate business to launder funds for his illegitimate and very illegal side business. He could afford to be driving a much newer SUV, but he was cautious enough to maintain his cover as a hard-working businessman - at least by day.

As they watched, two more vehicles left the repair centre and Lilith nudged Lilim in the back. Lilim checked the road - getting knocked down by an unseen car could ruin a vigilantes' entire night - and then she ran cross the street and then crouched down behind a tree where she pulled out her pistol. Lilith followed, drawing her own weapon once she was crouched behind her protégé. Both affixed suppressors onto the barrels of their pistols before the two vigilantes moved forwards.

Lilith went ahead and she pulled open the left hand of the twin glass doors so that Lilim could go ahead, her pistol raised up before her.

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The main reception area was small, just a few chairs for clients to wait, plus a reception desk. Beyond that reception desk were two offices, one of which was occupied by their target. Located above the reception desk, over on the left wall, was the main electrical distribution unit for the offices. While Lilith stood watch, Lilim jumped up onto the built-in desk and she flipped open the cover before she flipped off every circuit breaker followed by the main switch.

The offices were plunged into darkness, along with the reception area. Almost instantly, there was the sound of movement and angry voices. Lilim jumped down from the reception desk and she kicked in the door to Dean Shaw's office. By the light which filtered in by an observation window into the main workshop area, two men could be seen at the large desk - one seated on each side.

"Move and I drop you both!" Lilim growled, her pistol readily visible in the limited light.

To Shaw and his chief enforcer, Ray Carter, two pistols had suddenly become visible out of the semi-darkness, but the holders of those pistols blended into the shadows almost perfectly. Dean saw himself has a hard man, so he decided to open up the discussions.

"You trying to do me over?" he demanded.

There was no response from the shadows.

"You know who you're fuckin' with?"

"We do," came another voice out of the shadows.

"Then you know that you ain't walkin' outta here alive."

"I have a message for you: leave San Diego. You have forty-eight hours to take your drug dealing elsewhere before I kill your sorry ass."

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The reaction to their declaration was swift. Carter brought up his left arm and tried to grab Lilim's pistol - but the girl was just as swift as she swapped the pistol to her left hand and deflected his strike. She then took pistil-whipped the thirty-year-old man across the face. He yelled out in pain as he fell off his chair.

Lilith moved towards Shaw in an attempt to dissuade him from doing anything stupid. Shaw wasn't taking hints as he kicked his desk, shoving it into Lilith's right thigh and sending her sprawling onto the floor. Lilim made to help her mentor, only to find herself yanked to the floor by her ankle.

"Shit!" she muttered as she dropped her pistol when she hit the floor.

There was no time to search for the black pistol on the almost just as black floor of the almost just as black office. Shaw lurched in her direction - for some reason, or other, he was a little pissed at Lilim. The man was more than twice her size with well over a foot of extra height. He kicked Lilim in the side and punched her in the face. To her credit, Lilim fought back, kicking and punching with everything that she had. All the lessons, all the pain; it all came back to her as defensive and offensive moves came to the fore in her scared mind.

She felt herself operating on automatic as her limbs flew at the man, delivering some nasty strikes. Lilim was so focussed on the man before her that she became oblivious of all else which was going on - at least until Lilith cannoned into her, flattening her up against the wall. The two girls suddenly found themselves facing off against two very angry men.

"Fuck, this!" Lilith growled as she flicked a pair of throwing knives into the air.

Both blades flew straight and true a very short distance before thudding into Carter's chest. Close behind, a third blade struck Shaw in his right shoulder. Lilith followed up by pulling a small backup pistol from her left ankle and she fired off a round into Carter's right thigh, followed by another into Shaw's left thigh.

Both men fell to the ground - all thoughts of fighting gone.

"Fuck with us, again, pretty boy, and the next bullet takes off that little piece of insignificant flesh that you call a penis," Lilith growled. "I trust you will be gone in twenty-three hours, cunt!"

The Apartment

Seventy minutes later, Juno slumped onto the living room floor.

"That went so bad!"

"It could have gone better. . ." Guinevere breathed as she fell onto the couch.

"I'm useless - I'm so sorry, Guinny; I'm a total fuck up!"

Guinevere sat up and stared at the younger girl.

"We need to talk, you and me."

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After a lot of swearing and a little screaming, both girls had stripped off and then, very carefully, they had sunk their bruised bodies into a soothing bath of hot water.

Juno looked very unhappy and she was sulking. Guinevere stared at her cousin and smirked. The smirk just made Juno sulk even more.

"Come on, Juno - you did really well. It was your first night on point and shit happens."

"I failed."

"Horseshit!"

"I let him get the better of me."

"Juno, honey, I have no complaints about how you performed. You were awesome."

Juno forced a smile.

"I'm not kidding."

"I hate letting you down, Guinny."

"You didn't let me down, Juno."

"You mean that?" Juno asked as her scowl changed to a grin.

"Do I have bigger boobs than you?" Guinevere chuckled.

"That's just evil!" Juno moaned as she covered up her chest.

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Dinner that night was animated, to say the least.

Juno seemed to still have plenty of energy - at least for talking! There was no need for an official debrief as the floodgates had quite literally, opened. Juno replayed each and every second of the fight and it was a good hour before she finally ran out of steam and fell asleep on the couch. Guinevere, herself, was very tired, so she went to bed after laying a blanket over Juno.

Guinevere lay awake in bed for a while, reliving the evening's events. It had been a success - maybe not what she had intended, but Juno had shown what she had learnt and she had executed her learning in a very spectacular way. But was she ready for the next step? Was Juno ready to take on some of the nastiest bastards that San Diego had to offer?

Only time would tell.

The next morning
Sunday, August 7th

Guinevere felt refreshed - but sore - as she awoke.

She made her way to the bathroom, peed, and then enjoyed a brief shower. Ten minutes later, she was dressed and she emerged into the living room. Juno was still asleep, sprawled on her back, a broad smile on her face. Guinevere decided that the young girl needed to get up, so she poked her cousin in the side.

"Ow . . . let me sleep . . . I'm too tired, Logan."

"Logan?" Guinevere repeated.

Juno's eyes opened and she looked up at her mentor.

"Having a nice dream, were we?"

"It was pleasant," Juno replied.

"Was Logan naked?"

"What!"

"You said his name just before you awoke."

"Did not!"

"Oh, yeah!"

"I didn't."

"Yes, you did, honey. Don't feel embarrassed about expressing your sexual urges," Guinevere chuckled.

"Sexual . . . ewww!"

"You're a teen; it's expected."

"I am not remotely sexually interested in anybody," Juno retorted as her face went a deeper shade of pink.

Guinevere pulled back the blanket and looked down at Juno's underwear.

"Are those knickers damp?"

Juno leapt up from the couch and she vanished into the bathroom, slamming the door behind her.

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All through breakfast, Juno glared at Guinevere who just grinned. After breakfast was finished with and cleared away, Juno vanished into her bedroom and Guinevere began to plan for their next few evenings out on the town. There was a lot to plan, ensuring that they both stayed alive. As well as figuring out routes, Guinevere also had to work out exit strategies that could be used no matter what the circumstances, or what might have gone right or wrong.

Her biggest worry - other than getting herself or Juno killed - was the San Diego Police Department. They were still searching for Juno, although the investigation had been much reduced as the months had passed. The very last thing she wanted was to get into a shooting match with a cop. While *Urban Predator* had had almost no rules when it came to collateral damage, Guinevere knew that if they were to survive in the city, then they would have to develop their own rules.

As such, she had drummed into Juno that innocents were not to be harmed - no matter what. Innocents included members of the general public and anybody wearing a uniform - such as the police. Killing a

drug dealer was one thing, but accidentally killing or badly injuring a cop would be very bad and would bring down hell onto them both. That would most probably result in a life sentence in Jail. Guinevere had lost her childhood, there was no reason why Juno should.

"What you doing?" Juno asked as she emerged from her bedroom.

"Planning."

"Okay."

"You want to help?"

"Yeah - cool!"

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That afternoon, Guinevere headed out, alone, to check on Dean Shaw. As she cruised past the repair centre, she noticed that security had been stepped up, even during daylight. Maybe the man wasn't for taking a hint. But Guinevere had come prepared for that. As she and Juno had left the previous evening, she had attached a small device to the rear suspension of the Range Rover SUV which Shaw drove.

With the press of a button on a remote which she carried, the device became active. Guinevere left the area, knowing that if she loitered for long, then Shaw's security might clock her and figure that something was up. She headed for a garage and obtained a foul-tasting coffee before sitting down to wait. Fifteen minutes later, just as she was finishing the coffee, the remote in her hand vibrated and a red light illuminated. Guinevere smiled as she threw the empty coffee cup into the rubbish and pulled on her helmet.

She stopped half a mile from Shaw's repair centre and she removed the motorcycle's rear number plate, flipping it over and reinserting it into the holder. Both sides were fake but good enough to pass a cursory police check. She slowly cruised past the repair centre, stopping directly outside. There was a very angry Shaw yelling at his security men. The cause of his anger was obvious - his Range Rover SUV was squatting. The rear suspension had been destroyed by the explosive device, dumping the back end of the expensive vehicle onto the ground.

Guinevere revved her engine a few times, garnering the attention of several security men, plus Shaw and Carter. Shaw's right arm was in a sling and both were hobbling. Guinevere drew her right index finger across her throat and pointed at the two men in an unmistakable indication that they were going to die. Realisation crossed Shaw's face and he yelled out in fear.

"It's her - from last night; get the bitch!"

Guinevere was gone before he finished his order, speeding away and heading home.

The Apartment

"He still there?"

"Yes - but I destroyed his SUV!"

"Was that the package you attached to his car, last night?"

"It was - a small slice of C4 - just enough to fuck up his ride, but not kill him; we don't need the San Diego PD investigating a car bomb."

"Not good. . ."

"No."

"So, you think he's gonna leave town?"

"If he has any sense, then yes."

"You gonna check?"

Guinevere gave Juno a withering look.

"just askin' . . ."

Later that night

Clairemont

It was knocking on ten o'clock when Lilith next saw Shaw.

She was lying in hiding with Lilim, watching the repair centre from up near the railroad. She had felt it far too dangerous to actually approach the building directly. Turned out she was right. Shaw had some friends with him and they were all armed with automatic weapons. Three men were covering the road from each direction. Shaw, himself, was to be seen a few feet within one of the repair bays, pacing - well hobbling - backwards and forwards, a MAC-10 in his right hand.

"I think you upset them," Lilim commented dryly.

"Looks like it - we need to be smart, girl; you got that?"

Lilim nodded.

"Let's move. Just follow the plan and everything will be fine."

"Like last time?"

Lilith grimaced.

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Lilith moved off ahead, running towards the road junction a hundred yards or so away with Lilim close behind. They ran down the street to the left and then paused before the I-5 flyover. Lilim went first, scrambling up a tall grassy bank, stopping at a wire fence.

She easily climbed up and swung herself over the top - Lilith was close behind checking their rear. They both climbed another fence which took them into a building merchants. They ran across the yard and stopped against the wall of the repair centre. Nobody had seen them, nor was anybody aware that they were literally just feet away from their primary target.

Guinevere had sat Juno down, a few hours previously, and explained that there was no need to leave a dozen bodies stacked up for the cops to find. The idea was to wound and give the bastards a chance to leave San Diego alive. It went against her Predator training, but San Diego was to be their home, so killing everybody, left right and centre, before they had secure premises where they could hide from any Police scrutiny was short-sighted.

As such, they each carried a number of throwing knives, as well as their suppressed pistols. Lilim was not ready to kill, so she was perfectly happy to wound.

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The two guards were patrolling up the back of the yard, guarding the back fence. Neither of them noticed the dark form who crept across the roof of the rearmost building a few metres above their heads. Lilith held a wicked looking blade in each hand and she flicked both downwards. The silver dart-like objects flew through the air, silently, their deadly tips driving unerringly for their intended targets. The first blade struck the first man in his left side and he yelled out at the same instant that the next blade struck his colleague in the left thigh.

Dean Shaw almost jumped out of his skin when he heard the yelling and screaming. His men were looking all around trying to find a target for their automatic weapons, but nothing could be seen in the darkness.

"Where the hell are they?" one man shouted.

Then another man fell screaming, a blade embedded in his shoulder. Psychologically, the gunmen began to feel real fear. They were used to using their muscles and their bulk to force people into submission; they were most definitely *not* used to being terrorised by an unseen enemy.

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Up on the roof, Lilith drew her pistol and she removed the suppressor. Lilim gave her a strange look, indeed, but her mentor just chuckled and held up a hand. As Lilim watched, Lilith pointed her pistol down at open concrete, several feet away from the nearest guard - then she squeezed the trigger, just the once.

The atmosphere below was way beyond tense, so when the bullet struck the concrete and as the sound of the gunshot echoed around the site. First one guard opened fire, and then another, followed by another. . . Automatic gunfire ripped out into the night. It took several

minutes for their boss, Dean Shaw, to calm things down - only it was too late as sirens screamed from every direction and the night began to turn blue and red as half-a-dozen Police SUVs and cruisers screeched to a halt. Dean Shaw and his men soon found themselves at the wrong end of almost a dozen pistols, rifles, and shotguns.

They were caught red-handed with illegal firearms - not to mention that they had been firing said weapons.

The Apartment

"That was so awesome!"

"I suppose it was."

"You British - have some fun, for God's sake!"

"It was a victory, yes, but the war is just beginning, my little Lilim."

"What do you mean?"

"We have work to do in this city. We are going to make it safe. We are going to make it a home for the both of us. Just you and me."

Juno smiled as she jumped off the floor where she had been pulling off her boots and she dived onto the couch beside her cousin. She wrapped both arms around Guinevere and she squeezed.

"As long as I am with you, I'll be happy. You gave me my life and you are doing everything you can to keep me on the straight and narrow. You are constantly looking out for me despite you have enough on your plate. Thank you, Guinny; I love you very much."

"I love you too, Juno. You've been a very brave girl through everything that's been thrown at you over the past weeks. You're a wonderful person and I love spending time with you - despite your childish antics! Let's get to bed, and tomorrow we can start our planning for the big assault on those druggie bastards."

"Love you," Juno said as she gave her cousin a kiss on the cheek before darting off the couch and running into her bedroom.

Guinevere was left sitting on the couch. She smiled as she considered her plans for San Diego. She worried about the future and what it might hold for both her and her ward, but she decided that things were looking up, slowly but surely.

They were the Creatures of the Night and San Diego was their territory to protect.