

The Present

Thursday, June 30th, 2016

Nottingham

Jamie with Shannon

Two weeks we had been cooped up, and tempers were getting frayed.

“Will you stop apologising, for fuck’s sake!”

“Okay!”

I felt responsible for getting shot and having to rest until I was healed. I felt responsible for losing my pistol. I felt responsible for fucking everything up. Okay – I was getting a little bit down with everything. . . and there was a major feeling of déjà vu!

“I know you hate being cooped up in here but we can’t risk making a run for it until you’re back to one hundred percent.”

“I know, Shannon – I just get so frustrated with everything.”

“It can’t be helped, Jamie; but it must be hard on you. Anyway, shit happens!”

“I’ll try to be a good little boy,” Jamie grinned facetiously.

“Like that is ever going to happen!” Shannon snorted.

“Fuck you, bitch!”

May 16th, 2014

An unknown location in the USA

Two days of doing nothing but talking was getting us down.

Abigail and me, we talked to Rachel to keep her spirits up as best we could. Abigail was horrified by what they had done to Rachel – fourteen it had been, apparently, and full force too by the looks of the welts on Rachel’s buttocks. Even the yellow dweeb was less of a pain to us – he hated seeing Rachel’s wounds just as much as we did.

Rachel was getting mad with yours truly as I felt so damn guilty.

“Will you stop apologising, for fuck’s sake!”

“Okay!”

I felt responsible for what had happened to her – it *was* my fault after all. Rachel spent a lot of her time on her side or her front – she could not sit and lying down on her back hurt her too much. She would scream herself awake if she accidentally rolled onto her back during the night.

“I expect you to make mistakes, Jamie – your only six. I knew what I was getting into when I agreed to take you on.”

“It was my fault, as well, Rachel,” Abigail offered for about the tenth time.

“You two are *really* pissing me off and if it weren’t for these damn bars. . .!”

Thursday, June 30th, 2016

Nottingham

Jamie with Shannon

We had bitched away all day – not that we could do anything else.

Then we had a visit – the landlord!

“Got your money?”

“We’ll have to for you . . . tomorrow?” Shannon offered hopefully.

“You said that yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that – you get the picture?”

“Please – we have nowhere to go. Me and my brother will be homeless. . .”

“I’m sorry – I have a business to run here and not a homeless shelter, kids. I’m not heartless – you got four hours and then I come back with the Police.”

Four hours later. . .

“So, what now, doofus?”

“How the fuck am I meant to know; I’m only the ‘little boy who fucks up all the damn time’!”

“I didn’t mean that, Jamie. . .”

“Bullshit!”

“Fucking little shit!” Shannon growled angrily as she stalked off down the street before turning. “You coming, dickhead?”

“Fuck you, you damn lesbian slapper!” Jamie retorted as she caught up with Shannon.

“Bitchy!” Shannon chuckled as she gave Jamie a hug.

“Get off me. . .”

“Make me, brat . . . fucking ow!”

The next morning

Friday, July 1st

London St Pancras International

“We need money.”

“Good thinking, Sherlock!”

“Just trying to help – we need somewhere to sleep, tonight.”

“You are so full of such wonderful ideas, today!”

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It had not helped the general mood between them that Jamie had awoken on the train that morning after what he had seen as the weirdest of dreams – or maybe should it have been a nightmare, he had thought.

“Fuck!” he had shouted as he’d bolted awake.

Shannon had bolted up too and looked over at her travelling companion. Jamie found himself sitting in the train set and sweating.

“Bad dream?” she had asked.

“Weird. I just saw my sister getting shot – she was in Chicago . . . impossible; I killed her, years ago,” Jamie had replied uneasily.

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“Why don’t we go *acquire* some cash?”

“You’d fuck that up, too.”

“Would not. . .”

“Would too. . .”

“Not. . .”

“Too. . . stop that!”

Jamie had hold of a large amount of Shannon’s long hair.

“Look, Stormy, I’ll let you go when you promise to stop fucking with me. . .”

“Alright, just let go of my hair – your hands are filthy – and stop calling me that!”

Jamie released his hold on Shannon’s hair and then found himself slammed against the wall.

“Touch my hair again, you little weasel. . .”

“Let go – I have a mark. . .”

“Where?” Shannon asked as she released Jamie.

“You see that youth? He’s carrying – may be part of a gang or maybe a drug dealer; could have some cash. . .”

“Not bad, runt; not bad at all.”

May 21st, 2014

An unknown location in the USA

As the yellow dweeb handed us our clothes, we looked back at Rachel – she had another day remaining of her sentence.

The anger inside me was at war with a part of me which knew I had to behave – if only for Rachel’s sake. Abigail and me were very subdued as we headed for the dining room and our first proper meal in a week.

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After we had eaten, we headed for our first class that afternoon – close-quarters combat – our favourite! Today was a relative free for all and I quickly partnered up with Abigail who appeared keen to demonstrate to the others that the ‘King of Fight Club’ was actually a dweeb who had just got lucky.

“You’re goin’ down, Jamie boy!” she hissed as we both faced off against each other on our mat.

“Don’t hurt your fanny, this time!” I retorted and Abigail scowled as her face turned pink and the boy on the next mat laughed.

“You are *so* going down, Jamie boy.”

“Bring it on, little tits. . .”

Abigail lunged forwards and she kicked the younger boy to the floor. Jamie leapt back to his feet and he prepared for another attack from his older friend. There was almost exactly two years between the two kids – not that you might think so as they fought against one another. Abigail was very skilled, but so was Jamie. Both had been predators for a similar amount of time. You would have expected the older, taller, girl to have an edge, but no.

Jamie was able to use his small size to dart from side to side and dodge the strikes and kicks from the older kid. Abigail was well aware of his tactics – she had taught some of them to him and had been around when Rachel had taught him others. Jamie was also aware of that fact so I had learnt to mix and match the tactics so that neither girl knew what might come next. As Abigail threw a punch at him, he grabbed her wrist, twisted and rammed a knee into her unguarded solar plexus.

The eight-year-old screamed and she doubled over onto the floor.

Friday, July 1st, 2016

London St Pancras International

The youth made his way along the Upper Concourse towards the entrance to platform 1.

He had a single task to perform. He was a courier. That morning, he was carrying a small fortune back to his boss. He would receive £75 for making a successful the delivery and as a result, he would enjoy a fruitful Friday night with his girlfriend. Unfortunately for him, his mind was on what might happen at the end of Friday night and not his surroundings. He never saw the two youngsters approaching him as he stopped to read the nearest departures screen. The youth did, however, feel a hand on his collar followed by something hard in his side.

“In there, move!” came a harsh voice. “Keep your hands where I can see ‘em.”

The same hand shoved the youth into the disabled toilets where he was pinned up against the tiled wall, facing away from his captors, as a boy slammed the door and locked it.

“Who are you? Do you know who I work for?”

“Do we give a fuck?” the girl replied as she pistol-whipped the youth across the side of his head and he crashed down to the floor.

The boy frisked the youth and he produced a bi-tone pistol.

“Nice – XD MOD.2 four-inch in nine-mill.”

“That’ll replace the one you dropped!” the girl replied snarkily.

“No more mags . . . but he *does* have a package . . . ooh . . . must be several thousand quid, here!”

Forty minutes later

Regent’s Park

For the first time in days, they ate like kings.

Both felt very fat as they lay back on the grass and enjoyed the early morning sun. Neither had said a word as they had munched their way through bacon sandwiches, Coke, and copious amounts of chocolate.

“I feel a lot better after that,” Shannon commented and she received a loud belch from Jamie in response. “Animal!”

Jamie laughed.

“Who do ya think that money belonged to?” he asked.

“Who cares – we have it, they don’t.”

“Now that I’m tooled up, what we going to do next?”

“Well, I suppose we need to find somewhere to stay and then we can figure out a long-term plan for our lives,” Shannon replied.

“Let’s enjoy the sun for a while,” Jamie muttered as he dozed.

Two days later

Sunday, July 3rd

Southwark

For the first time, in quite a while, I awoke with a smile on my face.

Shannon was still asleep – I liked it when she had her hair down – and she seemed content to sleep, so I left her to it. Nobody was hunting us and for the moment, we had a roof over our heads (a shitty B&B), and we had cash in our pockets. Once Shannon awoke, we could go find some breakfast, but for the moment, I chomped on a Mars and sipped at a can of Dr Pepper.

Before me on the table lay my new pistol. It was not a model that I was familiar with, but the Springfield Armory product was of a high quality and at least it gave me a weapon. I would need to tray and obtain some spare magazines and some more ammunition. On that score, I had two-thousand pounds in my pockets – *all* in used twenties.

Over dinner the night before, we had discussed setting up a Safehouse where we could stash our stash and also be safe. On that score, we had identified three potential properties which would be very suitable and we would – well, we’d squat for as long as we needed.

The following night

Monday, July 4th

Mayfair

We had decided on a property in a well-to-do neighbourhood where everybody kept themselves to themselves.

The property had decent security which was capable of defeating most crooked individuals – only, we weren’t crooked, and we had training that most burglars could only dream about. We gained entry from the roof terrace, five storeys up. We heard the beeping within seconds of our entry and we found ourselves on a spiral staircase. We descended – fast.

Third floor – fifty-five seconds remaining.

Second floor – fifty-one seconds remaining.

First floor – forty-six seconds remaining.

We reached the ground floor and made for the front door. Shannon skidded and fell on the marble floor before she slammed into a wooden panel that was cunningly camouflaged.

Thirty seconds remaining.

“Open it!”

Shannon pulled open the panel and we found the master control unit for the alarm. I pulled a small box out of my back pocket and placed it against the panel.

“Twenty seconds. . .!” Shannon warned.

“I know, dammit!”

I pressed a green button on the box and the small box of tricks went to work.

May 23rd, 2014

An unknown location in the USA

She had been out a day but it was not until the following day that we got to see her.

“You okay, Rachel?” Jamie asked tentatively as the twelve-year-old sat down to lunch across the table from Abigail and Jamie.

“I’ve been better – a little sore – but, I’ll survive.”

“I’m. . .”

“If you *dare*. . .!” Rachel hissed and Jamie flinched backwards, away from the older girl.

“Okay,” Jamie replied. “I’m *not* sorry that you got your bare ass strapped and then thrown into the cage.”

“You’re *not* sorry!” Rachel growled dangerously.

“But. . .” Jamie tried.

Rachel laughed and so did Abigail.

“You two are such bitches!” Jamie growled.

“Well,” Abigail commented. “We are *Predators* – being a bitch is kind of a pre-requisite.!

“Jamie – just promise me to be on your guard and watch what you’re doing; okay?”

“I will – I promise,” Jamie replied – and he really meant it.

One pastime available to *Predators* was swimming.

There was an immense swimming pool which had various uses. Every *Predator* was taught to swim and an aspiring *Predator* could not progress from Phase 1 to Phase 2 without being a competent swimmer. Understandably, due to certain parts of their training, some *Predators* hated the pool and stayed away from it during their free time.

Jamie was not a strong swimmer, but neither did he sink like a brick. Due to his string nature, he had refused to allow the repetitive dunking to put him off swimming – something he had always enjoyed.

“Why are we doing this?” Abigail demanded as the three of them reached the poolside. “I hate water.”

“It’ll help you to relax,” Jamie explained. “You look tense.”

“Of course, I’m tense!” Abigail retorted. “I’ve just spent a week in a sodding cage with a six-year-old halfwit!”

“Tetchy!” Rachel laughed as she sat down on the side of the pool and dangled her feet in the water. “The water will help sooth my aching bones. . .”

Jamie laughed.

“You’re twelve, not seventy, Rachel,” Jamie reminded his friend before he cannonballed into the water.

“Little brat!” Abigail growled, refusing to be upstaged by a boy two years her junior.

She jumped in after Jamie and did her best to duck the boy but he dodged her half-hearted attempts as Rachel laughed.

Friday, July 8th, 2016

Mayfair, London

We had been in our new digs a week without any problems.

Most of the time had been spent recuperating from our mad dash around the country. We had cleaned ourselves up and bought new clothing. Shannon had bought makeup – I didn't think she needed it, but who was I to judge – I was only eight. We had also decided to improve our cashflow and also to see if we could acquire some more weapons and equipment. That would not be an easy set of tasks; it was not just a simple matter of ordering some guns and ammo from Amazon!

It was Shannon's plan and while I didn't really agree with it, I couldn't come up with a good enough excuse not to go along with it. Our target was purely random and two nights of surveillance had provided us with him. His behaviour had also provided Shannon with an 'in', as she termed it. The target was probably in his very late teens, or maybe into his early twenties. Either way, he was a creep, a pervert, a dickhead. . . take your pick – or maybe just select all of the above!

I had rolled my eyes at Shannon's choice of clothing for the night out; to me she had looked like a tart, but again, who was I to judge – I was only eight!

Deptford, London

The two of us were south of the River Thames in a very shitty part of London.

Even as a *Predator*, I did not feel very safe and that was saying something! The place creeped me out, especially the estate where we were walking, in pitch darkness. We were heading for Convoys Wharf – a derelict and mostly cleared former Royal Dockyard which was now a stretch of open concrete awaiting planning permission for new residential premises. It was also a location for certain types of individuals who tended to only come out after dark – druggies, 'escorts', rent boys, and prostitutes.

We were not vigilantes, so we had no crazy ideas on trying to tidy up the city – that was somebody else's problem. We kept to the shadows as we made our way up Dacca Street on the outskirts of Convoys Wharf. We passed a few groups of people – older teens on a night out, some dubious individuals in hoodies, and the usual wankers who took one look at my partner and wolf-whistled . . . despite her best efforts, Stormy was blushing wildly.

Stormy was wearing the shortest skirt I had ever seen and you could just about see her knickers without bending down too far. It was lucky the night was warm as her top exposed her entire midriff and showed *way* too much skin in my opinion. She wasn't wearing a bra and I could make out her nipples pushing their way through the thin material on her top. Her long hair was all up and even I had to admit that she looked very beautiful – if a bit hussy-like. She had considered some high-heels, but changed her mind as she knew that we might be running for our lives at some point if all went to shit like it usually did!

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Our target turned up a few minutes later than usual. He was checking out every bit of skirt he could see and his leering expression was creeping out ever female who passed – including Shannon. Maybe she was having second thoughts and I would not have blamed her for heading back to our Mayfair Safehouse.

As the creep approached us, Shannon stepped out under a streetlight and she allowed the light to show off her very long legs which, as expected, almost instantly gained the attentions of the sleazy tosser as he came closer.

“Well, little lady, those are some perfect legs – wow. . .”

I could see his eyes working their way up Shannon’s legs and not stopping until they reached her crotch. I saw Shannon struggling to keep her cool and allow her training to take over. She was successful in removing the cringe from her face – she smiled to cover up her embarrassment at the creep’s leering expression. To make it even worse, his left hand openly massaged his groin. Shannon allowed him to get closer until he reached out and touched her left breast – she slapped him.

Creepy bastard just smiled. While he studied Shannon’s feminine assets, I concentrated on *his* assets. He had a bulge at the back of his trousers which indicated a weapon. There was also a bulge in the right pocket of his trousers which indicated a possible knife. Most importantly, he was wearing a vest under his jacket. By vest, I meant a whole load of pockets which we *hoped* would be stuffed with cash.

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I had wondered how far Shannon was going to take it before she signalled me to act. Personally, I thought she was enjoying herself just a bit too much! Then came her signal just as she had successfully manoeuvred the creep out of the streetlights and into the darkness beside some lockup garages. She kneed him sharply in the bollocks and as the creep doubled over, I took the butt of my pistol across the back of his head having loitered in the darkness with Shannon taking his attentions away from his surroundings.

With practiced ease, we both stripped the creep of a small Beretta pistol, a flick-knife, and a large quantity of cash.

The following morning

Oakland Quay, Canary Wharf

“That’s two in two weeks and over eighteen-thousand-pounds!”

“Yes, Boss – we have no idea who, but both couriers were mugged.”

“Are we being targeted?”

“No idea, Boss. . .”

“Well you had better go and fucking find out then!”

END OF PART I

of

PREDATOR