

Wednesday, August 31st, 2016

Mayfair

They were running and they were running fast.

They made it back to the hovel which had been their lodgings and quickly uncovered the motorcycle. Shannon started the machine and Jamie climbed up behind her. No conversation was exchanged - they both felt very scared and more than a little depressed about how things had turned out.

Shannon made the decision to head west, back towards hell - Fraser would never expect that she reasoned.

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After a tortuous route across the country, avoiding major roads and locations where they might be easily spotted. It was dark as they pulled up outside a caravan park on the outskirts of Andover. They rode in as if they belonged there and then, after dark, they brazenly walked up to what turned out to be a rental caravan and currently empty, so they figured that as long as they were out early the following morning, all would be well. They both slept on the floor with a blanket pinched from a cupboard. Jamie squirmed into Shannon for warmth and she wrapped her arms around the boy, pulling him close.

They both fell asleep almost immediately.

Thursday, September 1st

The first night had been hell.

Once they had found a place to eat, the following morning, which was safe, they talked - if only to keep up their sagging morale.

"How were you taken, Shan?" Jamie asked as he dug into his bacon roll.

Shannon looked even more miserable as she thought back.

"Sorry - I shouldn't have asked. . ."

"No, Jamie - it's a story that has to come out, one day, and I want to tell it."

"Okay."

"I was nine. It was the beginning of November 2011. Things were going badly at home. Daddy had lost his job - stormed out, he said - and been deployed elsewhere; he had left that very night. I was upset, so I had decided to go for a walk. . ."

November 2nd, 2011

Colorado Springs

The young girl was in a foul mood and glaring at the sidewalk as she made her way anywhere but home.

The nine-year-old never saw that she was being followed by a team of four men. Two were on foot, a dozen or so yards behind her. The other pair were in a drab-coloured, mud-streaked, Jeep SUV. Despite her anger, her mind told her to stop before she crossed the street. So, dutifully as she had been taught back when she was four, she stopped at the kerb and she looked right, left, and then right again. As she crossed the street, she clocked the Jeep SUV coming toward her from the left but it was far enough away that she was able to continue crossing the street safely.

Despite her anger with her father, she followed all that he had taught her and she was a very street-smart youngster. She knew that she should not speak to a stranger and she knew that her best safety mechanism was her voice and her lungs. Her Daddy had taught her to yell and scream should anything bad happen to her - it might scare her assailant and it could signal that she was in distress and in need help. None of that was in the forefront of her mind as she continued along the sidewalk. Her anger-fogged mind did register the sound of a car engine very close by, however, and then the squeal of brakes.

She turned just as any curious youngster might, only to find the Jeep SUV beside her and a man coming towards her from two each direction on the sidewalk. Her mind told her that something was very wrong but she froze not knowing what to do - so she screamed and she screamed. That did not last long as a hand clamped over her mouth and she was physically hauled into the backseat of the SUV. The hand was replaced by a piece of tape and a hood came down over her head.

"Fucking move and I'll fucking slit your throat!" a hoarse voice hissed in her ear.

Shannon froze, sobbing silently.

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It was a relatively short journey before the SUV stopped and Shannon was hauled out of the SUV. She blinked in the harsh light which filled her vision as the hood was yanked off her head. The tape was ripped off her mouth and she screamed with the sharp pain.

"Hyde!"

"Yes, instructor!"

Shannon saw a boy run towards them and stop. The boy looked her over briefly before looking up at the man who stood beside her.

"This is Millar, Hyde - you will take her to be processed - you can start the processing over there; dump her clothing in the trash bins."

Shannon struggled to understand what was happening to her - she just registered a few words: '. . . processing . . . clothing . . . trash . . .'

"Yes, instructor - Millar, come with me."

Shannon looked around, totally bewildered as she was led by the boy over towards a collection of large dumpsters. He stopped her and then smirked as he ordered her to strip.

"All your clothes: take them off - now!"

"No way!" Shannon retorted.

"You remove them, or Hyde does," the hoarse voice from earlier called over with a barely concealed chuckle.

Shannon began to shake and the tears flooded down her cheeks as she reluctantly pulled off her clothing, piece by piece. She felt humiliated as she was forced to strip in what was an enormous, and very well lit, vehicle garage. People were visible, just a few dozen yards away - adults and other kids; both male and female. She was even being forced to strip before a boy who was maybe a year or so older than her. She was only nine, so she had nothing to show for herself, but that was not the point; she valued her privacy.

Once she was naked, Shannon gasped as the boy gathered up all her clothing and, without ceremony, it was thrown into a dumpster. She shivered as a cold blast of air-conditioned air rushed over her bare skin covering her with goose bumps. Then the boy took the sobbing girl by the arm and he dragged her through a set of double doors and down several corridors. Shannon's humiliation was increased way beyond anything that she had ever endured as they passed boys and girls of varying ages. Some smirked at her naked body, others looked half apologetic and very grim. Her humiliations continued as they arrived at their destination and Hyde thrust her into a large changing room full of kids, most of whom were naked and showering.

"Get in the shower and get yourself cleaned up," he ordered.

Shannon did as she was ordered, not able to do anything else, her resolve rapidly diminishing.

"Move, you little fuck!" an older girl, naked as the day she was born, growled as she shoved Shannon out of the way.

Shannon struggled to shower in front of all the other kids, especially the boys. She also noticed that they all had short hair - very short hair - even the girls. That fate came to the fore as she left the shower, dripping wet to find a male instructor standing with a battery-powered hair trimmer in his hand. He deftly removed her beautiful long, dirty-blond hair which she had been growing all her life. She sobbed through the haircut and was then shoved back under a shower to remove the last traces of her hair. After that shower, a white towel was thrown at her and she was finally allowed to cover herself.

Next, she endured a full medical at the hands of a very unfriendly doctor. Shannon was sore by the time she left having been slapped more than once for refusing to comply with directions during her examination. On the other side of the coin, she had left the doctor dressed in grey joggers and a white T-shirt. Hyde then escorted her to draw the rest of her clothing before he took her to her dormitory. There, she was met by many faces all looking at the new girl.

"Welcome to hell!" a girl grinned - she spoke with a strong Irish accent.

"Millar - you get the bed next to the Irish tart!" Hyde said with a wink at the Irish tart.

"Fuck you, Hyde!"

"In my dreams, Doherty, in my dreams!"

Thursday, September 1st, 2016

So much had happened.

So much crap had been thrown at them. Just the thought of all that had passed was enough to give them the hope that they would eventually find peace.

Jamie had been abandoned, forced out of his lodgings and forced to live hand to mouth constantly watching out for himself. He had taken a trip to Whitby - probably the best decision he had ever made, he thought!

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"I saw the commando dagger - I've got one too," Jamie said calmly.
"They abandon you as well?"

The girl did not hesitate as she grabbed Jamie's head and pinned him to the table before she twisted his head none too gently to one side so that she could reach his right ear.

"Hey - my head is actually attached to me, you know!"

As she let go of his right ear, she released his head and they both sat back.

"Sorry - I'm Shannon Drake. . ."

"Jamie Carter . . . thanks for saving my life."

"How old are you?"

"In three months, I'll be nine."

"In four months, I'll be fourteen."

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That had been three months previously and it had started a wild ride: escaping a raging fire in Whitby, to a cunt of a landlord in Nottingham, to the hell of the Capital.

So much had happened.

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Jamie noticed that Shannon was looking very forlorn. He was not feeling all that happy, either, but he hated seeing his friend unhappy.

"A penny for your thoughts?"

"I was just thinking of my family - what I had left behind. Do you think they will still remember me? I've changed so much."

"Shannon, I'm sure they'll remember you; you've changed, but only for the better."

Shannon grinned sheepishly.

"But, what about what I am? What I have done? I'm a killer."

"So am I, but I don't let it get me down - I know that my parent's will always love me; even if I did kill them and my sister."

"A warped way of looking at it but that's you, Jamie - thanks. I'll always look on you as a very close friend - if you had been older then it might have been something more."

Jamie grinned, his cheeks turning a deep shade of pink.

Tuesday, September 6th

Each day blended into the next.

They just loitered around supermarket cafés and generally kept out of public view. The depression that both felt was well entrenched and without anything to work towards, they both felt lost. *Predators* were always intended to work alone but there was always to be a command structure that would oversee their tasking and answer any questions that they might have. The overseeing officer would monitor their welfare until the mission was complete. Once the mission was completed, the *Predator* would be returned to the fold until they were required for the next mission. During that downtime, they would train and they would have the companionship and human contact of their fellow *Predators*.

Jamie and Shannon had no overseer and they had no other companions or human contact. They were both fugitives of some kind or another. People had died at their hands and the police had to be searching for them - not to mention William 'I'm a complete fucking bastard' Fraser and his mercenary army of wankers - that was Jamie's take on the man.

"He was a creepy bastard," had been Shannon's response.

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That morning, they left the Tesco Superstore and headed for the alley down the side where they had parked their KTM motorcycle.

The time spent wallowing in their own worries had dulled their senses and they never noticed the ambush until it was far too late. Jamie dived for the motorcycle and he was able to grab the MP7 which they had appropriated two weeks previously and as Shannon dove for the ground, Jamie sprayed the alleyway with the full twenty-round magazine. Four men dropped with bullet holes in various painful places. Three of the men died almost instantly while the fourth writhed around the concrete floor of the alley grasping his left knee in agony. Jamie feverishly scrambled for a spare magazine but before he could do anything, the remaining two men dived at him. Shannon pulled her own pistol but she dared not shoot in case she hit Jamie. Her indecision cost her as she was struck from behind by more men.

Jamie and Shannon hardly had a chance as they were set upon by a total of six men who kicked and punched them both, ignoring the fact that they were fighting a thirteen-year-old girl, just six weeks before her fourteenth birthday, and a boy with less than a month before his ninth birthday. The *Predators* both fought harder than they had ever fought before, knowing that they could not be taken. Shannon got in some good strong kicks early on, as did Jamie, but neither was a match for the men with their huge fists and big muscles. The fight lasted barely five minutes before the two kids were forced to the ground, blood dripping from busted lips and hurt noses. Jamie was in a lot of pain as he tried to regain his feet, but to no avail, as he was well and truly pinned. The boy was roughly searched, as was Shannon - but not well enough; Shannon managed to produce a small knife from her trousers and she slashed a man's leg deeply.

"Fucking little whore!" the man yelled.

"Get her to the van and search her again - better yet, just fucking strip her naked!" another man growled. "The fucking brat, too!"

Duct tape was slapped across both young mouths and the struggling boy and girl were quickly thrown into the back of a windowless panel van which began to move once all the men were aboard. Shannon fought but the men were stronger and within seconds, she was pinned to the steel floor of the van, completely naked. She glared up at the leering men as she was flipped onto her back, Jamie swore and yelled as he also was stripped.

"Let's make sure you're not hiding nothing. . ." one of the men chuckled as he pinned Shannon and then rammed his fingers past her labia and deep inside her.

Shannon screamed in agony as the man pulled out his hand and he wiped it off on Shannon's bare breasts. Jamie made to hit the man but he was punched viciously in the stomach, causing him to double over in agony before he fell to the floor of the van gasping for air.

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An hour later, the van slowed to a stop and the doors were hauled open. Jamie and Shannon had been forced to endure the entire trip lying naked on the bare steel floor of the van. They had both been handcuffed and they were watched every moment of the journey.

Shannon was hauled to her feet first and the handcuffs were removed. Two men armed with Tasers watched her from a few feet away. Shannon's clothes were thrown at her just as Jamie had his own cuffs removed.

"Move it, girl! Pick up your clothes, you little brat!"

Shannon and Jamie did as they were ordered and then the unthinkable happened.

"NO!" Shannon yelled as her friend was dragged off in the opposite direction to where she was being pushed. "JAMIE!"

"SHANNON!" Jamie yelled as he was pulled through a doorway and the door was slammed shut cutting off all sight of Shannon.

Both of them had tears streaming down their faces as they were dragged apart. They both worried that they might never see each other again. Shannon was pulled down a corridor and then dragged up two flights of stairs before she was finally shoved into a room where she fell against the wall, gashing her head as it hit the wooden floor. She lay there, hugging her clothing to her body as she sobbed with the pain from her wounds and the pain inside her from losing Jamie. The door was slammed shut and she heard the sound of bolts being driven home.

Jamie fared little better as he was led down several similar corridors before he found himself thrown into a very small room and the door was yanked shut behind him. He lay on the cold concrete floor and sobbed through the pain that seemed to come from every part of his body and an even deeper pain that stemmed from his heart.

It was the end of the line, both thought.

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Nobody came to see either of them for a full day. They were left cold, miserable, and very hungry. Shannon and Jamie both yelled out for each other and then for anybody - but nobody came. They were forced by their bodies to make use of the plastic bucket which stood in the corner of their cells with an attendant part-used roll of toilet paper. Both had avoided using the bucket for as long as

possible but their bodily needs had to be met so they eventually gave in and engaged in the humiliating act.

Shannon was fully aware of what was happening, even if Jamie was not. They were both being conditioned to their new life. Shannon had been there before as she was ripped from her comfortable life in a happy home and then thrust into the harsh environment of the *Predator*. Jamie was young enough that he barely remembered life before he had become a *Predator* - the boy barely remembered his time as a Yellow.

The monotony for both had been a visit from a tall man who just glared down at the two youngsters while he made notes on his tablet computer.

"What do you want?"

"Why are we here?"

"Why won't anybody talk to us?"

The questions went unanswered as nobody spoke to them. The man had left after only a few minutes and a paper plate of cheese sandwiches (it had been difficult to tell which was the paper plate and which was the sandwich) had been left in each 'cell', plus a glass of water. An hour later, the door opened again and bedding was thrown in - a thin mattress, a thin duvet without a cover, and a bare pillow.

That was the last contact either child had with a human being.

That morning

Tuesday, September 13th, 2016

She felt so alone.

The loneliness dug into her like a knife.

She longed for human company but apart from some food and water pushed inside her prison cell at indeterminate times of the day - sometimes during the night - she had not heard a voice say a single word to her. She had yelled. She had pleaded. She had begged. Nobody had ever replied. She had strained her ears to hear anything, maybe Jamie's voice, anything that could tell her if he was still alive.

The week of solitude was like nothing which she had ever felt. It reminded the girl of her first two weeks as a *Predator*. Her memories were all she had as she appeared to have no future.

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The Irish girl had been nice to her for about an hour before a whisper had swept around the dormitory spreading to every ear but her own. Shannon had tried to talk to the Irish girl but she just shook her head and moved away. Nobody spoke to her, not even to

tease or berate her as had occurred from the moment she had arrived in the dormitory. By dinner, that evening, when Shannon had been forced to sit alone at an empty table to eat, she realised what was happening to her. Her father had used the British term once or twice: she had been sent to Coventry. To send someone to Coventry was an English idiom which related to an often-cruel punishment of deliberately ostracising someone. Kids were especially good at it. The person in question was avoided like they did not exist or they were invisible and inaudible. Nobody would talk to them, nor would anybody tolerate their company.

As if the nine-year-old could not feel any more miserable.

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Surprisingly, that afternoon, the door to her prison cell was opened and a man walked in, pulling the door closed, behind him. Shannon felt fear course through her as he smiled down at her - the smile was evil and Shannon's mind brought forward everything bad which could happen to her and her mind was being very cruel with its visuals. She also took in the scar beneath his left eye.

"Strip, you little bitch - I want some of that soft skin and that tight twat of yours . . . fuckin' move!"

All the fight had gone out of Shannon and the many days of languishing alone in her cell had demoralised her, making her totally compliant. Without a word, or a moment's hesitation, the girl pulled off her dirty clothing and she allowed it to fall to the floor all around her. Shannon's bruised face looked upwards at the man who began to unzip his trousers. The man ignored the many bruises that marred the once beautiful body of the almost fourteen-year-old. His eyes were only interested in the ruby-red nipples, the mass of dark pubic hair and what lay beneath - the bulge in his trousers betrayed that fact to Shannon.

Once the man had thrust his trousers and underwear down around his ankles, he shoved Shannon backwards so she lay on her back on the mattress. The fear in her eyes only increased his hunger for what lay between her perfectly formed thighs. He hastily knelt down, pushing her legs apart and then. . .

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Shannon was shaking with fear.

She was no longer a deadly, killer *Predator*, she was just a normal teenaged girl who was about to live through the heinous nightmare called rape. She began to sob as she felt his rough hairy skin on her softer skin, she felt something hard being forced between her thighs . . . but then she screamed as she felt something hot and wet strike her chest and face. The man above her had frozen in position but then he fell to his left and rolled onto the floor.

Shannon found herself staring up at a young girl of maybe eight-years-old. She looked very angry. Shannon had no idea what to do so

she just lay there, naked and with everything exposed. She could feel herself shaking as she struggled to cope with what had almost come to pass.

"Get up and get dressed - now!" the young girl hissed.

"What?"

"Move it - I can get you out, but only if you hurry."

Shannon sat up but it took the young girl thrusting clothing at her to get her moving. The thirteen-year-old girl pulled on the clothes, urged on by the unknown little girl who stood impatiently before her.

"What's your name?"

"Rebecca."

"I'm Shannon."

"Pleased to meet you - let's go!"

"You a *Predator*?"

"For six whole weeks - but I picked things up fast."

Shannon was ushered out of the cell for the first time in a week. But before Rebecca could drag Shannon away from the prison cell, Shannon pulled her arm away.

"I'm not leaving without Jamie."

"You have to go get help - you can't get to the boy. Please."

"What about you?"

"I'm staying until your friend is safe. I can help him until then."

"Rebecca. . ."

"Please, just go get help. They'll think you murdered that man - not me."

"I promise I'll come back - I owe you, Rebecca."

"Yes, you do - come on!"

Rebecca dragged the reluctant Shannon down various corridors before she stopped at a large wooden door. It was not locked. Rebecca pulled it open, and waved urgently at Shannon to leave.

"You sure?"

"Fucking move!" Rebecca hissed angrily as she forced the door shut on Shannon.

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Shannon found herself outside in the darkness and it was raining.

She had no jacket, just her T-shirt and sweatshirt, jeans and boots so she began to shiver very quickly. She forced her foggy mind to think. She had to be at one of the Scorpio facilities and both had roads not too far away. She willed her mind to function, to remember the maps. Two A roads ran almost east-west to the north-north-west of each site - the A354 and the A30. If she headed north-north-west, she would intersect one of the roads - eventually. She also knew that the night time hike would be hard but she had no choice and somewhere along the line they would come looking for her.

Shannon was under no illusions as to her future - they would kill her instead of capturing her again. She dutifully picked out the north star which was just barely visible through the rain and its associated cloud cover. She adjusted and picked out a landmark on the horizon before starting to walk. Within minutes she was soaked to the skin and mud was clinging to her boots and the legs of her jeans. She had fallen twice already but only to her knees. Then after walking - or stumbling - for an hour, she had fallen headlong into a muddy puddle.

That had pushed her over the edge and she had begun to sob uncontrollably. Her morale was at rock bottom and her body was struggling to keep up with all the abuse of the past couple of weeks. The only thing that prevented her from just giving up and curling into a ball to die, was a nine-year-old boy that deep in her heart, she knew was still alive.

Somewhere, somehow, they would be reunited again.

*This storyline continues in the latter portion of **Chapter 326: Stormtide of Forsaken.***