

September 21st, 2013

An unknown location in the USA

They kept us in a cage.

It was more cage than prison cell; at least that was what Steph thought. The walls were not bars, like the cells you had in a prison; they were a tight mesh that I could put my hand through, but nothing more. On one side of the cage, there was a door and on the outside I could see a large padlock. Within the cage, there was only one piece of furniture, a single bed with a clean duvet and a clean sheet, plus a surprisingly clean single pillow – it was not very comfortable, but we could both sleep on it okay.

The only other item in the cage was a bucket in one corner.

“What’s that bucket for?” I had asked innocently.

“I have a sneaking idea but I hope I’m wrong, Jamie...”

“I don’t understand...”

“You wee . . . in the bucket...”

“Oh... What about...?”

“Yes – that too.”

The Present

Monday, May 23rd, 2016

Whitby, United Kingdom

The nightmare was as strong as it always was.

The thirteen-year-old girl tossed and turned as the nightmare played out in her mind. Sweat was evident on her face and her pillow was soaked. As she moved in the bed, her pillow moved with her and it was possible to see the butt of an automatic pistol, partially hidden beneath the pillow.

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Four weeks previously

Milan, Italy

The girl was running for her life.

All around her, there was gunfire. Her fellow Predators were being gunned down mercilessly by those that were supposed to have been training and protecting them. Screaming – it was all that she could hear in between the sound of gunshots. The other kids screamed as they tried in vain to escape the massacre. The girl screamed in shock as a much younger girl, no more than ten, was shot between the eyes by a man with a Glock pistol which was fitted with an extended, twenty-five-round magazine.

The man turned his weapon on the girl and she stared down the gapping muzzle – there was a flash...

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The young girl sat bolt upright in the bed and her grey-blue eyes snapped open. There was a look of fear on her young face and she sunk her head into her hands. She sobbed for several minutes. Once the sobbing eased, she looked over at the cheap LED clock which sat on some equally cheap drawers beside the bed – 6:42 A.M. – she grimaced.

“Oh, fuck!”

The girl scrambled out of the bed and made her way unsteadily over to the attached bathroom. Once she had accomplished the required activities, she washed her hands and headed over to the sideboard below the window where there was a cheap electric kettle. She checked that there was sufficient water present before she flipped the switch to ‘ON’ and a red neon glowed steadily.

While the kettle boiled, she pulled off her t-shirt and shoved her knickers down to the floor before stepping out of them. She headed back into the bathroom and turned on the pathetic shower. After a very brief, and very unsatisfying, shower to wash off the sweat and then wash her long dirty-blond hair, she towelled herself off and pulled on a clean black bra and matching knickers before she added a pair of black jeans and a dark blue t-shirt to complete the ensemble.

The crappy kettle finished boiling the water and she made herself a tea without milk – the milk was a little bit too lumpy, so she poured it down the sink. With the usual early morning activities out of the way, the teenage girl pulled on a pair of dark brown hiking boots and a black leather jacket before she headed downstairs and then outside to find some breakfast.

The B&B served breakfast, but it was shit, so I ate out most mornings.

For the moment, cash was not a big problem. I was able to blend in, as I could mimic the right accent and if necessary, I could sound like a native. I may have been American by birth, but England was like a second home to me. I had spent many years in the country as a young girl . . . before I had been taken when I was just eight-years-old.

My family lived in the USA and so far, the CIA had made sure that I never set foot in my native land. The past few years had been spent in France or England. I was very much alone and I had no real idea of what I was going to do. I had no contacts and no support apparatus that I could trust. I would have to fend for myself with whatever resources I could acquire along the way.

I was a Phase 3 *Predator* and I intended to use every skill at my disposal to ensure that I reached adulthood.

Seventy miles to the southwest
CIA Safehouse, Leeds

As usual, I awoke feeling crappy.

I dragged myself out of bed and pulled off my sweaty clothing. After peeing, I turned on the shower and allowed the hot water to wake me up. Once all of the night’s sweat had been washed off, I enjoyed the hot water for a few minutes more before I turned off the shower.

I quickly dried myself and dressed – the house was not all that warm first thing in the morning. Breakfast was three Weetabix with hot milk and a mug of tea. I looked out the window as I sat at the

kitchen table and ate my cereal. The day looked crappy as people headed out to work and whatever else they did. As I watched the world move, I ran my plan for the day through my mind.

I would begin to shuttle equipment to what I would call Safehouse H – I figured that I should be able to manage maybe four trips during the day without attracting too much attention. I didn't bother wasting a second on considering the ramifications if I were caught lugging illegal weaponry through West Yorkshire – at least the United Kingdom did not have the death penalty. I would just spend the rest of my natural life in prison having some bastard shove his cock up my arse.

Did I mention that I was always armed when I left the Safehouse? I had my H&K in a holster in the small of my back along with a small knife on my left ankle. I would just have to take my chances that the West Yorkshire Plod, sorry, Police would not choose me for a stop and search or I'd be down the nearest cop shop quick as a flash.

After breakfast, I cleared away my dishes and grabbed the first of the ten backpacks which I had collated the night before. It was heavy and bulky but I managed to lift it onto my back and pull the straps tight to spread the load.

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I trudged my way to the Metro station and caught a train to Menston. Manoeuvring the backpack in the tight confines of the carriage was not easy and at one stage, I heard something clang as the backpack made contact with a seat.

What was in the pack? Oh, yes: two M18A1 Claymore Mines, several pistols, and quite a few rounds of ammunition. I realised that there would be more than a little explaining to do if one of the Claymores went off accidentally . . . for the moment, I made sure that the Claymores were aimed *away* from me. Otherwise, I sat back to enjoy the ride and I was only interrupted by the conductor as he made his way down the train and I showed him my pass.

I whiled away the time by thinking back to when I still had my sister.

September 19th, 2013

Two days earlier

An unknown location in the USA

I had woken up to find myself in a small room.

My sister lay on her side, a few feet away – her wrists and ankles were tied and as I tried to move my own wrists and ankles, I found that I was tied up too. The hoods were gone, which was something. I began to feel so alone and I began to cry – I missed Mummy and I missed Daddy...

I did not have long to wait as soon after I awoke, the door to the room opened and a man walked in. He was tall and he scared me.

“Stop snivelling, you little brat!”

His tone scared me even more as he turned his attentions towards my sleeping sister. He kicked Stephanie in the side.

“Wake up, you little bitch!”

Stephanie came awake with a start and she yelled out in pain as the man then yanked her to her feet by her long blonde hair. He ignored her screams as he pushed her very roughly towards the door and before I knew it, the door was slammed shut. Stephanie was gone. I yelled after her but nobody responded and I began to cry again.

I hated being alone.

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When the door next opened, it was the man again.

“Here’s your sister, kid!” He chuckled as he roughly shoved Stephanie back into the room. “Now, it’s *your* turn...”

I was shocked to see that Stephanie no longer wore any clothes – she also had a vivid bruise on her right side, a nasty red mark on her left cheek, and her hair was wet. Stephanie fell to the floor and she sobbed as she shrank into the corner of the room and attempted to cover herself.

I was grabbed and roughly hauled out of the room. The door was slammed as before.

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I was dragged down a short corridor and then pushed into a room. Two people were there, both women. They were not smiling and I felt really scared as they stared down at me.

“Right, you little shit, get out of those clothes...” One woman almost yelled.

I flinched away.

“NOW!” The other woman yelled.

I started to cry again and I soon found myself grabbed by large hands. My clothes were all but ripped off me. I was then slapped around the face and a strong hand held my chin upwards. A face stared down at me.

“You do what you are told, when you are told,” the woman yelled. “Do you understand me, you little fuck?”

I stammered a ‘yes’ before they hit me again and I was shoved under a stream of mildly warm water. I was held there for what seemed like an eternity before I was yanked out and handed a towel. I had never, ever, been treated so callously and I had absolutely no idea what I had done to upset these people and make them treat me the way that they were.

“Stop snivelling and dry yourself off.”

I did so and then the towel was ripped away from me. I was taken back to the same room and I was thrust back inside. Stephanie looked really worried and she grabbed me as the door was slammed shut.

We hugged and cried together.

The Present

Monday, May 23rd, 2016

Leeds, United Kingdom

Highroyds, Safehouse H

I worked my way inside the Highroyds building and I found a good hiding place for the first backpack.

I set some more tell tails around my stash before I headed back to daylight. After a short but careful look around, I left the site for the walk back to the station and then onto the train to collect another backpack from the Safehouse.

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After a second trip with an equally heavy pack, I was exhausted. 'Only eight more to go!' I thought dejectedly. I was not sure if I could manage it, but I had no choice if I really wanted to be safe. I pushed on – I had been trained to use my stamina to my advantage, so I did; I pushed myself. By lunchtime I regretted my decision, but nevertheless, I had moved the third pack and I decided that it was as good a time as any to have a late, very late, lunch.

It was after three in the afternoon when I bought myself a Big Mac Extra Value Meal. I even found room for a Cadbury McFlurry!

September 21st, 2013

An unknown location in the USA

They kept us in that room until the following morning.

Neither of us had any way to tell them, except by using the daylight that streamed in the single window. We were both naked and very cold as we shivered through the night without anything to keep us warm. Stephanie was really scared and I could feel her shaking as she sobbed for a large part of the night. I was not much better and many tears were spilled by both of us by the time dawn came.

Dawn also brought more pain.

He door flew open and we were both dragged out of the room. Stephanie screamed and she received a slap across her face for her trouble. I kept my mouth shut after witnessing that... Our next stop was a large white room. Something in my mind told me it was a doctor's room. I recognised some of the items from my own trips to see a doctor.

A tall man appeared. He wore a white coat which told me that he was probably a doctor. We were both weighed and had our height measured. The man made a cursory examination of our bodies, including looking in our mouths and ears. Stephanie fought him and she received a slap on her backside. I tried to help her, but I was slapped myself.

Mercifully, we were then handed clothes – just a white t-shirt and some light grey joggers, but it was better than going around naked. A few minutes later, we were pushed into the cage.

"I'm hungry," I said quietly but firmly.

"Me too," Stephanie added.

The woman who had escorted us to the cage actually smiled – sort of.

"Don't cause any trouble . . . and you will eat."

