

Author's Note: *The protagonist in this story is a few weeks past her fifteenth birthday and she is a Phase 3 graduate of the Urban Predator program that was operated by the CIA and ultimately terminated by Fusion (See my story **The Fusion Ultimatum**). For background on Urban Predator, see **Chapter 243: Urban Predator of my story Forsaken**.*

*This story exists within my **Forsaken Universe**.*

Wednesday, 11th May, 2016

London, England

The young teenaged girl had naturally red hair with blue eyes.

You would expect her striking, eye-catching beauty to be detrimental to her 'career choice'. Ignoring the fact that 'choice' had not been part of where the young woman found herself at that moment, in the capital city of the United Kingdom, her looks had been seen as a bonus; an asset. She was tall, an inch under five and a half feet in height. Boys and men alike enjoyed her impossibly long legs which were another of her many assets.

Guinevere Murdoch, her mother had named her after the wife of the legendary King Arthur, was at that moment sitting in a coffee shop where she was enjoying a banana and apple smoothie. She focussed on the smoothie as a few feet away, five, very immature boys of a similar age to herself, were examining her visible assets – mainly the long legs which were folded beneath the table but in full view. They were also discussing her hidden assets. After almost fifteen minutes of listening to the chauvinistic arseholes, she calmly finished her drink and stood up.

"How about a twirl, you gorgeous bitch, you."

Normally, she would just let comments like that wash over her, but as she looked around the small cafe, she saw some appalled faces – mainly parents with young children who should not be exposed to such abusive language. Guinevere glared at the boy who had just spoken. He obviously had balls to speak to her like that and he seemed oblivious to who else might be offended by his language. He stood up, approaching Guinevere. He reached out and took her hand. . .

The boy yelled out in agony as Guinevere twisted his hand and arm so he was forced to his knees. She kept up the pressure.

"You're going to break my fucking wrist!"

"Well, in that case, you'll just have to get one of your mates to jerk you off, tonight," Guinevere growled.

"I am going to. . ."

A mere ten seconds later, Guinevere left the shop after apologising to the manager for the boy who was struggling to breathe after having been viciously jabbed in the stomach by Guinevere's left shoe. The manager had given Guinevere a voucher for a free smoothie as a thank you.

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After returning to her room, which was in a shared student house, she logged onto her computer and accessed her secure email to check for an assignment – any assignment. She had been 'active' for three months without any contact, from anybody. Half a minute later, there was a single email

waiting. After entering her personal decryption key, she opened the email. It contained a single code phrase which directed her to make emergency verbal contact with a controller. Excitement coursed through Guinevere – maybe she was being activated . . . maybe she had a mission. She picked up her mobile and enabled a voice encryption application before she dialled a memorised number.

“Search twenty. Agent Alpha-two-delta.”

There was a pause and then a man spoke – he spoke with a strong French accent.

“If you are a *Predator*; *Urban Predator* no longer exists. . .”

Guinevere instantly cut the connection and she frowned. She had two more numbers to call – she tried each one and while the first line she tried was dead, she found the same person as before, on the second line. What was wrong? Where were her controllers? What was the status of *Urban Predator*?

Then it dawned on the young woman like a punch in the chest; she had been abandoned, she was very much alone and she would have to fend for herself. That comprehension only raised more questions.

Where would she go? Was her current location secure? Was there anybody out there to look after her? Did she have any family left? While she had training, she could not survive on her own.

The young woman sat down and she turned on the TV.

Sky News excerpt. . .

“In foreign news, it was reported today that several employees of the American Central Intelligence Agency have been found dead at an undisclosed site in Toulouse, France. The French Government have refused to comment on the events that led to the deaths of CIA Deputy Director Noah Vossen and Dr Albert Hirsch. Rumours abound that an unknown group of well-armed mercenaries were part of the operation that took down an illegal CIA operation which is reported to be closely related to *Operation Blackbriar* that became front-page news, around a decade ago. A spokesman for the Central Intelligence Agency has refused to comment on the reports.

“Closer to home, a man was found dead in his home, in the village of Theale. The details of the man’s injuries have not been revealed by authorities. Neighbours report that the forty-eight-year-old man lived alone and he was not known to have any relatives. Police say that there are *no* suspicious circumstances.

“In other news, conspiracy theorists have been flooding the internet with talk of a black helicopter that landed in fields not far from the village of Bradfield, despite local authorities denying any knowledge of such an aircraft. Conspiracy theorists believe that black helicopters are used by the Government to undertake nefarious activities, however, there is very little evidence of their existence.”

Reading between the lines, Guinevere knew that it was partially about *Urban Predator*.

She was vaguely aware that there was a training centre, or two, in France. By the sounds of it, they had been overrun and then shut down by the French authorities. Deep inside her, she felt relief – it was over. Had many other kids survived? So many questions but so very few answers.

She spent the next few hours working out what she could do with herself. By five that evening, she was surrounded by screwed up pieces of paper, several empty Mars wrappers, and nine empty cans of Pepsi Max. She held a single piece of paper before her:

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Assets

One Glock 19 Gen4 pistol in nine-millimetre
One Glock 26 Gen4 pistol in nine-millimetre
One H&K MP5K submachine gun in nine-millimetre

Eight Glock 15-round magazines
Six Glock 10-round magazines
Four H&K 15-round magazines
Two H&K 30-round magazines

1,400 rounds of nine-millimetre ammunition
Miscellaneous suppressors, torches, and cleaning equipment

8,600 Pounds Sterling (in cash)
9,000 US Dollars (in cash)
12,000 Euros (in cash)

British Passport
US Passport

...+...

She had been staring at that same piece of paper for almost twenty minutes trying to figure out what to do with her assets and how they might be able to assist her in her future. She had her *Predator* skills, of course, but they were only really useful if she were trying to kill somebody.

No – that was not quite accurate. Her *Predator* skills also allowed her to research a mark. She had been taught to account for everything and to miss nothing. So – instead of researching a mark, she needed to research Guinevere Murdoch; she was to be her own mark.

She hit a brick wall almost immediately; she had not been born Guinevere Murdoch, she had been born Guinevere . . . what *was* her birth name?

She had no idea, none whatsoever.

Early the next morning Thursday, 12th May

Guinevere awoke with a jolt.

The clock beside her bed showed that it was a little after two in the morning. She had had a surge of inspiration. Over the past few years of her life, certain memories had moved around in her mind and

filtered through the brain washing. Most of those memories were foggy and indistinct but right at that moment, one memory stood out, stark as day.

She dived out of her bed, clad only in knickers and a bra, and sat down at her laptop, bringing it out of sleep mode. She opened up Google Chrome and then typed in a single word: Southampton. She then went on to track down images of seven-year-olds, at primary school, during 2008. She would have been just seven, but crucially, she had still been a normal young girl, free from the world of the *Predator*.

Four hours later, as dawn crept around her curtains, the tired girl sat back and stared at the screen. Staring back at her was a little red-haired girl with blue eyes. The caption beneath the photo referred to the girl as: 'Guinevere Jones'.

Finally, after many hours of work, she had a starting point.

Jones.

Unfortunately, it was a fairly common name – so a *lot* of digging was required. After a brief trip to the bathroom, Guinevere made herself some toast and a coffee before she returned to her laptop. She ignored the fact that she was still wearing her underwear and she continued to dig into her laptop. A little over an hour later, she had more, much more.

She had a file on herself:

Name: Guinevere Murdoch *nee* Jones

Date of Birth: 28th March 2001

Mother: Mollie-Ann Jones (*deceased*)

Father: Graeme Jones (*deceased*)

Siblings: None

Current Location: London, England

She had a file on her mother:

Name: Mollie-Ann Jones *nee* Raeside

Mother: Elizabeth Raeside (*deceased*)

Father: Robert Raeside (*deceased*)

Siblings: None

Children: Guinevere Jones

Current Location: Deceased

She had a file on her father:

Name: Graeme Jones

Mother: Angela Jones (*deceased*)

Father: Neil Jones (*deceased*)

Siblings: Rachel Saunders

Partner: Mollie-Ann Jones (*deceased*)

Children:

Current Location: Deceased

She had a file on her aunt:

Name: Rachel Saunders *nee* Jones
Mother: Angela Jones (*deceased*)
Father: Neil Jones (*deceased*)
Siblings: Graeme Jones
Partner: William Saunders
Children: Juno Saunders
Current Location: San Diego, United States of America.

Apparently, she also had a destination: San Diego, across the Atlantic and an entire continent, on the west coast of the United States of America.

The following morning

Friday, 13th May

City of San Diego

United States of America

The phone rang.

“I’ll get it, Mom! Hello?”

“Hello. I’m looking for Rachel Saunders, please.”

“Oh – okay. . . MOM!”

“What, honey?”

“It’s for you.”

“Who is it?”

“No idea – sounds foreign to me; maybe a Brit, like you.”

Two days later

Sunday, 15th May

San Diego International Airport

United States of America

There had been no reason to hang around, in blighty, so . . .

After a mammoth, and exhausting, twelve-hour flight, she had arrived at her destination. Guinevere Murdoch was very tired as she flashed her United States Passport at the customs gate to ensure speedy entry into the country. Minutes later, she stepped out into the arrivals zoo and looked for anybody who might be awaiting her arrival.

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An hour later, Guinevere was getting annoyed – as she understood it, her Aunt only lived about twenty minutes away from the airport. She rang their number but received no response – maybe they *were* on their way. Twenty minutes later, she had had enough, so she hailed a cab and a further

twenty minutes later, she alighted a few hundred yards down the street from her intended destination – she never took taxis directly to her destination; *Predator Tradecraft* 101.

Her bags were not heavy – everything heavy was coming via a different, more secure, mode of transport. As Guinevere approached the property and turned up toward the front door, something made her pause. The front door was ajar and she was certain that she had just heard a scream. She placed her holdall and her rucksack off to one side and she instantly went on alert. Her training took over and guided her brain without any conscious effort.

Guinevere gently nudged the front door open and stealthily moved into the property. Her senses went into overdrive as her brain strove to gather intelligence on the situation as it unfolded. The ex-*Predator* could smell blood – the coppery smell was thick on the still, humid air. Her ears picked up the sounds of struggling, of moaning, of crying, and of muffled screams. Instinct directed her to move into the kitchen – it was empty. She moved through the room, sweeping up a kitchen knife with an eight-inch blade as she went.

Guinevere peered around the doorframe and all colour drained from her face.

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There were seven people in the living room. The most obvious were four men and it quickly became very obvious that they did not belong there. The home invasion appeared to have been underway for probably a couple of hours which would be why nobody had collected her from the airport. The men had obviously been very busy – a haul of cash, jewellery, and similarly valuable items were strategically stashed on a table a few feet away from Guinevere. It appeared that now the important work was complete, the men were enjoying some relaxation and enjoyment.

Guinevere's eyes darted about the room, taking in everything, and missing nothing. Another man, who Guinevere assumed to be her Uncle, looked to have taken a beating and he was lying on the carpet, a pool of blood adjacent to his body which was being steadily topped up from the man's stomach – a bullet wound. A few yards from him, a woman – who Guinevere assumed to be her Aunt. The woman was in a similarly bad way having also been shot in the stomach. The man was unconscious but the woman was trying to reason with the men, two of whom had another person pinned down on the couch.

The other person present was a young girl of maybe twelve. She was fighting for her life as she lay face down and naked. Her clothes had been ripped away – they lay on the floor in a pile of tattered remnants – and one of the men was raping her. The girl's petrified screams were muffled by her face being thrust into the sofa's upholstery. Something inside Guinevere snapped, like a weapon arming switch being moved from Safe to Live. With a flick of her wrist, she sent the kitchen knife arrowing through the air with incredible force and the blade sank a good six inches into the rapist's back.

The bastard screamed as his back arched and he fell backwards onto the floor, landing on his side. His colleagues were a little slow on the uptake, but Guinevere took full advantage of that. As she entered the living room, she swept up a small glass ashtray and then made for the nearest man

Juno Saunders was having the worst day of her short life.

A few hours earlier, she had been over the moon; her British cousin was coming to stay, all the way from Great Britain. Then, just forty minutes or so before they were due to leave for the airport, four men had barged into their home. They had promptly shot her father and then forced her mother to

open the safe before shooting her too. Juno had been viciously punched in her face and she had huddled beside her father's body while their home had been ransacked.

When the men had gathered their haul, Juno had hoped that they would just leave . . . but no.

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The men had begun to compare Juno and her mother – Juno had quickly figured out what they were after when two of the men had focussed on her. She had tried to run but they were too strong and she had found herself seized and thrown onto the couch. She had screamed as she had felt hands on her pants and her top. Within a minute, she had been stripped naked and then. . .

The pain was excruciating for the twelve-year-old to experience and she just buried her face into the couch and sobbed her heart out. She did her best to distance herself from the pain which built between her legs and the knowledge of what was happening to her, but it was all but impossible. Then, the man stopped thrusting, and he fell backwards, almost taking Juno with him. The young girl fell to the carpet and rolled to one side. Her eyes went wide as she saw a man with a massive knife sticking out of his back inches from her. The man was struggling to reach the knife, but his attempts were getting more and more feeble as he approached death. Juno felt nothing for the man who had raped her.

Then her eyes were attracted to movement, over by the kitchen. Somebody was there, but Juno had no idea who, but whoever they were, they moved fast and the man nearest to her fell to the ground, a huge gaping hole in his skull. A glass astray, covered in blood fell to the ground beside him. Then a face appeared in her vision.

“Juno? Get behind the couch, now!”

Juno could not make her limbs move, but a strong hand pulled her up and shoved her over the back of the couch before turning and facing the two remaining house invaders. Juno had never seen anything like it. The young woman moved with supreme skill as she evaded kicks and punches being thrown by the two remaining men. Knives were produced but that did not appear to bother her saviour as first one blade and then the other was turned on the men until both lay on the carpet, blood flowing steadily into the thick pile.

It was over.

Juno sobbed hysterically as she took in the scene of total carnage which was laid out before her terrified eyes. The newcomer checked her father for a pulse and gently shook her head before she moved over to her mother.

“Aunt Rachel?”

“Guinevere? My God, you look so much like your mother.”

Rachel Saunders was just able to look around her devastated living room which was now filled with death. Her face was filled with sorrow as she took in her husband's dead body a short distance away. Then her eyes fell on the huddled, naked form of her daughter. Rachel quickly turned her focus back to Guinevere.

“Guinevere . . . please take care of Juno. I place her into your care . . . Juno?”

“Mom. . .”

“You will go with Guinevere and she will take care of you – do everything that she tells you.”

“No, Mom, I can’t leave you. . .”

“Guinevere, promise me . . . promise me that you . . . that you will take care of my daughter. . .”

“I will, Aunt Rachel; I promise.”

With one last look at her daughter, the eyes glazed over and Juno’s mother died.

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“We need to move, Juno,” Guinevere ordered breaking through her grief.

Guinevere dived deeper into the house and she found the bedrooms – more specifically, she identified Juno’s. She grabbed a large holdall and began to thrust things into it: clothes, shoes, makeup, personal effects; anything which might be useful for the younger girl. When Guinevere returned to the living room, Juno was standing up, but the twelve-year-old appeared frozen and unsure of what to do next.

“Juno! Get dressed, or so help me God, I’ll take you down the street naked.”

Juno could not move, so Guinevere seized her by the chin and then slapped her, hard across the left cheek. Juno screamed out but suddenly appeared to come to life. Guinevere handed her a T-shirt and a pair of shorts from the holdall and Juno began to dress. By the time Guinevere had checked the table for some car keys – she had noticed two cars parked on the drive outside – Juno was just forcing her feet into her sneakers without undoing the laces. Juno then allowed herself to be led by the arm, past the six dead bodies, including those of her parents, and outside.

There, Guinevere tried to put her into the wrong side of the car before swearing violently and moving Juno around to the passenger side. Once Juno was seated and out of the way, Guinevere opened the trunk and threw in her own bags before she headed back inside and found another bag which she proceeded to stuff with all the cash and valuables which appeared to include Juno’s passport and birth certificate – it looked like the men were into identity theft too. Guinevere made a quick survey of the property, including the open safe. She swiped up some more personal effects and other items which appeared to have use, plus some coats that appeared to be of Juno’s size.

All that kit, she dumped into the trunk along with the holdall of Juno’s stuff before she went back into the house for one final check around. She glanced at the now discarded pistols but rightly decided that they were murder weapons and she did not want to be caught with either of them. Instead, she just kicked each man in the head to ensure each was dead. She took a few moments to say a short prayer over her Aunt and Uncle before she headed out the door for the final time.

She slammed the trunk and climbed into the driver’s seat of the car. Juno was staring forwards – the ubiquitous thousand-yard stare. God only knew what was going through the young girl’s mind at that moment – it was probably like the aftermath of a nuclear explosion in there. Come to think of it, Guinevere was back at square one; where, was she going to go? An added complication was that previously, it had just been her, but now, she had twelve-year-old Juno to worry about – and Guinevere swore that she would protect Juno. . .

With her life, if required.

After driving ten miles north and then another two to the east, Guinevere stopped the car amongst a long line of cars parked at the kerb and she dragged the baggage from the car, two hundred yards up the street. That baggage also included the twelve-year-old Juno who was on auto pilot. Just as she hailed a cab, Guinevere dropped both the car and the house keys down a convenient drain. As before, she gave the cab driver a destination which was a couple of hundred yards short of their true destination.

That destination was a seedy motel on Morena Boulevard. Once Guinevere had checked them in, under an assumed name and using a fake but passable American accent, she shoved Juno into the room and, once all their kit was inside, locked the door. Guinevere guided the comatose twelve-year-old over to the large double bed and sat her down on the end. Guinevere knelt down and looked directly into her cousin's eyes.

"Hello, Juno. My name is Guinevere and I am your cousin."

"Hi."

"Let's get you cleaned up, okay? You're one hundred percent safe; I guarantee it."

Guinevere untied the laces on Juno's sneakers and removed the shoes. After pulling Juno to her feet, Guinevere lifted up Juno's T-shirt and gently eased it over her head. Juno did not resist as Guinevere continued by pulling down the shorts. Juno was tall for her age, and she had flowing blonde hair which reached down past her shoulders. Her eyes were brown and Guinevere was able to tell that she was about a year into puberty with plenty of growing still ahead of her. Juno was manoeuvred into the bathroom where she was unceremoniously shoved into the shower.

"Get yourself cleaned up; it'll help you feel better," Guinevere suggested as she turned on the water.

Juno yelped as the cold water hit her skin but then sighed as the water turned hot. Guinevere passed over some shampoo and body wash.

"Hey!" Juno exclaimed. "These are mine. . ."

"I'll leave you in peace. . ."

"NO!" Juno shouted almost immediately. "Please . . . stay."

Guinevere smiled as she sat down on the lowered toilet lid.

After twenty minutes, Juno shut off the shower and stepped out. Guinevere passed her a towel and the younger girl quickly covered herself up with an embarrassed smile. Neither of them spoke as they sat down on the bed and both of them just stared into nothing.

Then Juno began to sob.

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Guinevere awoke with a start and it took a few moments for her to realise where she was. Then she smiled as she looked down and saw Juno asleep on the bed beside her. The girl had been almost hysterical after the shower, but Guinevere could not remember falling asleep. Her watch told her that they had both been asleep for many hours – the flight had tired *her* out, not to mention the fighting. Juno was also exhausted for understandable reasons.

Guinevere pushed back the duvet and slid the other girl underneath before she stood up and pulled off her boots and jeans. She slid under the duvet, herself, and was soon fast asleep.

One week later
Friday, 20th May

Mission Road

Guinevere awoke to find Juno cuddled up beside her.

Despite Juno having her own room, Juno would still find her way into Guinevere's bed, each night. The motel room was gone, and both girls now occupied a small two-bedroom apartment north-east of San Diego in the Mission Valley district. The landlord had given them a rebate on their initial rent if they moved in straight away. Guinevere was not happy with the huge dent the first three months, plus deposit, had made on her cash reserves. The cash was finite, at least until she could secure a steady income.

Guinevere was hungry – she leapt out of bed, took a very quick shower, and then pulled on a sports bra and a pair of knickers. She made her way into the kitchen and poured some chocolate cereal and cold milk into a bowl. As she sat down, she smiled as a zombie appeared from the bedroom and slumped down at the table. Juno groaned as her head rested on the table top. Guinevere laughed.

“You are *not* a morning girl, Juno!”

“You woke me up!”

“You were in *my* bed,” Guinevere countered.

Ten minutes later, Juno was looking a little more human as she downed a glass of cold milk. She studied Guinevere for a moment before she spoke.

“So, Hit Girl, what's *your* story?”

Guinevere chuckled uneasily and grimaced.

“No way am I Hit Girl, but you are *not* all that far off the mark. Okay – this may shock you and I will understand if you see me as something you don't want as your cousin.”

“Huh?”

“I am . . . well, I *was*, a *Predator*.”

“What is that?”

“A killer, an assassin; a bad person.”

“A week ago – that was not the first time you'd killed.”

It was more statement than question.

“No – I've killed before. I'm just really sorry that I couldn't have got there before. . .”

“Guinevere, you had no way to know . . . but you saved me and I will always thank you for saving my life. I know that I can never go home – I have nobody . . . except for you.”

“When I was eight, I fell asleep in the back of my parents’ car. I awoke to find myself being lifted out by somebody I didn’t know. I screamed. They hit me until I lost consciousness. I spent the next seven years being trained to become an assassin. Most of my memories from my early life are missing. I know very little about when I was taken and what happened immediately afterwards. Somewhere along the way, my name changed from Jones to Murdoch.”

“That sounds a little farfetched, Guinevere.”

Guinevere did not reply – she simply walked into the bedroom and returned a moment later with something in her hand. She placed it down on the table before Juno. It was a Central Intelligence Agency ID card. It showed Guinevere’s picture and her details.

“And I thought *my* life was fucked up!”

It was the first time that Guinevere had heard her cousin swear.

“I may *look* like a good little girl, but looks can be deceiving!” Juno quipped with a cheeky grin.

Two days later

Sunday, 22nd May

After two more nights of having a twelve-year-old taking over the bed, two more days of a sullen twelve-year-old appearing at the breakfast table, and two more days of having a twelve-year-old mope the day away, Guinevere decided to make some changes.

Therefore, that Sunday morning, as Juno finished her cereal and was about to make the four-yard journey to the couch and the Disney Channel – maybe cable wasn’t such a good idea – Guinevere raised her hand to halt the girl.

“You don’t like wearing bras, do you?”

“Huh?”

“I noticed you haven’t worn a bra since we’ve been together, despite you having several in your bedroom.”

“I find them uncomfortable – Mom . . . Mom bought me my first about six months back.”

“Do you have a sports bra?”

“No.”

“Do you have a swim suit?”

“Yeah.”

“Two piece?”

“I’ll go get it.”

Juno sounded a little confused but she returned with her swimsuit which was two-piece and the top near enough resembled a sports bra.

“Put that top on – got some tight-ish shorts?”

“Yeah.”

“Go put them on – your sneakers too.”

Juno did as she was instructed and soon returned wearing only the top, shorts, and her sneakers.

“What are we doing?”

“Running.”

“Where to?”

“The beach.”

“What? That’s like twenty miles!”

“More like nine point six miles, actually.”

“I’m not running *that!*”

“No – we’ll leave that for another day.

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Fifteen minutes later, a cab dropped them off at the entrance to Presidio Park.

“We really gonna do this?” Juno whined.

“Yup.”

“You do remember I’m still a bit sore between my legs, don’t you?”

“You run with your legs, not with your vagina.”

Juno stopped dead and went bright red as she looked anywhere but at Guinevere.

“You are kidding me. You’re twelve and you wince when people use terms like vagina?”

Juno said nothing as she tried to hide her smirk.

“Cock!”

Juno giggled.

“Christ! Labia. . .”

“Stop!” Juno demanded.

“Penis. . .”

Juno laughed and her face went even redder.

“Clit. . .”

Juno’s mouth dropped open at that one.

“You do know what one is. . .?”

“Of course, I do!”

“Well, move it and the rest of you, in *that* direction.”

Guinevere pointed in a westerly direction and Juno’s shoulders slumped as she began to jog.

“Faster!”

An hour later

As the two girls ran along the Ocean Beach Bike Path past Robb Field, Guinevere had a moment of worry when they jogged past a pair of uniformed San Diego Police officers. An alert had gone out for the missing twelve-year-old, but Guinevere had considered that issue and Juno’s hair was now a much darker blonde colour thanks to some hair dye. At that moment, Juno was also looking very dishevelled and sweaty, so even her own mother might not have recognised her.

The past three and three quarter miles had taken an age and Guinevere was very annoyed with the time taken to complete a relatively easy run. Juno was *not* as fit as she had thought which she readily pointed out – every five minutes.

“If you put all that energy from your mouth into your legs, we’d have shaved off twenty minutes.”

“You saying I talk too much?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Well, I’m twelve and that’s what twelve-year-old girls do.”

“Okay – let’s go do some exercises.”

Juno collapsed onto the sand and pretended to cry.

“Bloody drama queen!”

In general, the girls kept to the apartment.

Juno rarely went out, except for a daily jog around the block under escort. Guinevere went out, for food, and to keep on top of what was happening at the Saunders home. The Police had found the murder scene the following morning and an alert had gone out for one Juno Saunders. The Police were investigating Juno’s disappearance and the possible interference of an unknown player [Guinevere]. The murders of Juno’s parents had been put onto the men as the murder weapons were both present. So, apart from Juno’s disappearance, the case was all but closed.

However, there was something else which Guinevere’s keen eye had identified as she read through several newspapers each morning.

“Again – that’s twice this week!”

“Huh?”

“I never said you could stop – you’ve still got fifteen push-ups left.”

“Bitch!”

“I’m a British bitch – they don’t come any worse; remember that, kid.”

“There’s been two home invasions this week alone – yours, plus at least one other before that. This is a pattern – I’d bet my twat on it.”

“You Brits are weird. . .”

“Eight more. . .”

“Much more of this and I’ll look like Arnie.”

“Keep dreaming, honey.”

A few nights later

Wednesday, 25th May

San Diego Police Department HQ

1401 Broadway

The policeman detailed with investigating the Saunders murders and the home invasions was Lieutenant Patrick Bonanno.

That evening, Lieutenant Bonanno was leaving the building at the end of his shift and he headed directly for his car. Strangely, the street light above where his car was parked, was out and when he turned to unlock his car, he tensed up as he heard a voice.

“Don’t turn around, Lieutenant. . .”

“So, you know who I am, then. . .”

“I am not going to hurt you – I just want to talk . . . anonymously.”

The voice was rough and sounded tough – maybe a woman’s voice, he thought.

“The Saunders murder – a dead end?”

“Saunders? Home invasion – four men broke in and killed the family. The daughter is missing, presumed dead.”

“There appears to be another three similar events. . .”

Bonanno sighed.

“Yes – I saw that. Budgets are tight and my Captain sees only a flimsy connection.”

“But you see something stronger, I’m guessing.”

“Yes. I need substantial evidence and right now – there’s more important cases.”

“I understand. Thank you for your candour, Lieutenant.”

“Who are you?”

“A friend. You can call me Lilith.”

“Lilith – the female demon?”

There was no response and when he turned, he was alone.