



BERSEH AND TAWNY UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTERS

Season I

Story and Illustration by Tshaw17

Featuring: Berseh, Tawny Tomsen

and as special guest: Miranda an OC from CybOrSpasm



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- Aaaand cut ! Shouted the director. Ok everybody that's it for today, great work.

Several technicians and staff members applauded Berseh when she left the stage and joined the director for the usual post shooting debrief.

Since everything went smooth today, it didn't last very long, and less than an hour later, Berseh was getting in one of the studio's cars, and was driven to Tawny's apartment downtown. She quickly sent a text to Tawny: On my way to you my Queen.

When she heard her smartphone buzz, Tawny smiled when she saw who sent the text message to her. Berseh would be with her soon,,,,. A second later another message arrived.

- This is even better, she whispered. A good friend of hers was telling her that the high-class massage parlor that opened a few months ago was not very busy at that time of the year and that she could easily book a room for Berseh and her.

It was done a minute later along with a reservation for a table for two in their favorite restaurant for the night. She was not worried about her own schedule at T&T, she only had meetings about ongoing projects that she could easily oversee from afar. She quickly rearranged her schedule. There, she now had the entire day to spend with Berseh,

At the same time, she heard a familiar voice coming from the apartment's lobby.

She quickly went to meet her beloved and hugged her tenderly. She cupped Berseh's face in her hands and kissed her deeply.

- What is it my love? You look exhausted.

Berseh smiled reassuringly at her lioness.

- I'm fine, don't worry. It's just that the shooting is really tiring. Everything is running well, but the pace is really fast, and the breaks between takes are short. I'm really looking forward to my day off tomorrow.

- Then you'll love what I'll tell you a bit later, answered Tawny with a wink. Berseh's smile broadened, knowing that her beloved mistress would probably find a way to surprise her again.

- But now, continued Tawny, come, I've prepared a light dinner. After that (she wrapped her arms around Berseh sensually) ... bedroom, and you'll tell me about your day.

- Yes my Queen, answered Berseh already feeling her worries and weariness melting under Tawny's confident and caring gaze..

An hour and a refreshing shower later, both women were comfortably lying on their bed. Berseh closed her eyes and stretched.

- Mmm, god, what a day... she said.

- Tell me encouraged Tawny, as she gently started to caress her face.

Her eyes still closed as she enjoyed the soothing touch of her marvelous goddess, Berseh told Tawny about the shooting, the numerous takes and the difficulties she sometimes had slipping into this particular character.

Tawny could see that her gorgeous lover was getting more and relaxed under her touch and went slowly down with her hand, gently fondling her breasts, teasing her nipples a bit, feeling her finely toned belly. Tawny smiled as Berseh let out a soft moan of pleasure when she rested her hand on her hip.

Berseh was in heaven. Even with her eyes closed she could feel Tawny's caring gaze over her body. And as usual she marveled at the incredible sensation of safety it brought her. She was loved, owned, and nothing else mattered.

She opened her eyes when she felt her Queen's soft lips pressing against hers.

- You know what? Tomorrow we're spending the day together.

- B..but, your work ? Asked Berseh,

- Taken care of, answered Tawny. And tomorrow I'm taking care of you, my love.

Berseh simply hugged her beloved mistress and kissed her passionately. A minute later they were cuddling together in a tender and loving embrace,

As they were both drifting off to sleep, Berseh whispered something so faint that Tawny almost missed it.

Yours. Always.



Tawny woke up early, the next morning, and sat up in her bed. Still a bit sleepy, she looked at Berseh, who was still asleep. She planted a soft kiss on her shoulder and got up as silently as she could. She was in the bathroom, freshening up a bit when Berseh entered and hugged her from behind.

- There you are sleepyhead, said Tawny gently.
- Mmmm... purred Berseh. There's nothing better than waking up knowing that I'm spending the whole day with you.

Tawny smiled and turned around to face her. God... even when she just woke up, she was gorgeous.

- I'm done here, said Tawny. Take your time my love, I'm gonna prepare breakfast. Join me when you're ready. Oh, and we need to be downtown at 10.00 AM, for our first...appointment...
- What have you planned? asked Berseh.
- Something you'll love, answered mischievously her lioness. Trust me.
- I do, I always do.

An hour and healthy breakfast later both women were ready and took the lift down to Tawny's personal parking lot. Knowing Berseh's passion for crazy fast cars, Tawny had decided to use the beautiful Reventon she bought last year from one of T&T's big client. Once seated, Berseh closed her eyes, enjoying the V12-engine roaring into life behind her back.

A quick drive later, Tawny parked her car in a street downtown. As they both got out. Berseh took a deep breath, savoring the quietness of an otherwise very busy street.

- Come my love, it's not far from here.
 - Where are we going ? asked Berseh.
 - Right there, answered Tawny, after their short walk.
- It appeared to be an elegant shop with a sign that said "Black orchid spa & massage"
- It's been a while since we had ourselves pampered right ?
 - Aaww, it's such a good idea. Thank you, my Queen.

They both went inside and headed towards the front desk. Of course, Tawny didn't mention that she had planned something very special to take care of her gorgeous lover.



As they approached the front desk, Berseh and Tawny were welcomed by one of the employees, a smiling redhead.

- Welcome to the Black Orchid parlor, ladies. How may I be of service?

Tawny spoke first.

- Good morning, Miss. We have a reservation for two, under the name of Tomsen.

- Let me see.... There, found you! Please follow me.

Both women followed her, taking the time to admire the luxury of the parlor. Finely crafted wooden panels, expensive rugs, the pleasant smell of scented oils...

- Wow, that's beautiful whispered Berseh.

- I know, answered Tawny. I couldn't believe my luck when I booked a room so easily. Even if it's early, I expected to see a bit more customers.

The employee stopped in front of a thick wooden double door.

- Here we are. Grand room for two. Please make yourself at ease. The masseuses will be with you shortly. She opened the doors and led them inside a luxurious room, fully equipped for massage and relaxation. It was a mix between functional modern equipment's and a very nice vintage touch. Berseh noted a very appealing jacuzzi in the center of the room.

- Thank you, Miss. Er... could you tell your colleagues to leave us an hour alone? The employee looked puzzled.

- Mmm... she hesitated a bit. After all it was not unusual for customers to ask for some time alone. Ad those two were definitely a couple...

- Yes, I'll tell them to join you in one hour.

- Thank you Miss. I'm very grateful.

The employee left them and closed the door behind her.

- All good? asked Berseh
- Yes my love. Let's get ready.

A short time later, they were coming out of the changing room, both wearing elegant silk bathrobes. Berseh sat on one of the massage tables.

- This is gonna be so good, she said, already imagining Tawny and her relaxing under the skilled hands of a professional masseuse.
- It will be, trust me, said Tawny. But first I'm taking care of you, remember? We have an hour together. She smiled mischievously.

Berseh smiled and shivered from pleasure as her beloved Mistress gently kissed her.

- Now my love, remove that robe and lie down. Berseh did as she was told, Tawny admiring her insanely beautiful lover.

Once again Tawny planted a soft kiss on Berseh's lips. God... she could spend the entire hour kissing her...

- Close your eyes, I have prepared something special for you.
- Yes, my Queen, answered Berseh, her voice full of trust and passion for her beloved mistress.

As quietly as possible, Tawny picked up the object she brought with her. It was one of T&T's latest products: a brand new multipurpose vibrator, called the... Deep Trouble 350 !?!? What the hell? Tawny shook her head. What are they thinking at marketing?? She'll need to have a serious talk with them tomorrow.

Just as she was lost in her thought, she noticed a particular bottle of oil on one of the shelves. She picked it up to see that it was indeed a bottle of... authentic nuru oil, bearing the T&T logo!

Tawny recognized the brand instantly, remembering how hard it had been for her to secure regular shipments from that particular Japanese supplier.

- This is too good to be true, I've always wanted to try this, she thought, and started to oil herself up. A minute later she was ready and climbed on the table, sensually pressing herself against Berseh's body.
- Oh! Mmm...that feels nice...

Encouraged by Berseh's first reaction Tawny continued her massage, knowing exactly which buttons to push to make her lover go crazy with lust.

Her increasingly louder moans and rapid breathing told Tawny that Berseh was close to orgasm and so she decided to finish things, by slipping a hand between her legs, gently rubbing her labia, and teasing her clit.

Berseh bit her lower lip, sensing a strong orgasm coming, but... no... at the last time, Tawny removed her hand.

- Nngg, please.... she moaned. Again Tawny removed her hand at the last time.

As she was almost ready to beg for it, Berseh felt that Tawny had completely stopped moving.

- What the... ?

Then suddenly, a single word whispered in her ear. "Cum".

- Oh! god yesyesyesYEEEEES !!!

When she opened her eyes. she saw that Tawny was still on top of her, smiling at her.

Trying to catch her breath, Berseh smiled back at her, still processing the fact that her incredible Mistress had managed to make her cum on command.



Tawny got up from the table to give Berseh some room and let her recover. Both women looked at each other, satisfied. Tawny was still seriously turned on after all this. She spread her legs seductively, looking at Berseh with an inviting expression. No words were needed between them, and she immediately got on her knees, focused on pleasing her beloved Mistress.

- Oooh ,yees,moaned Tawny, when she felt Berseh's enthusiastic tongue work on her crotch.

A few minutes later, as she felt she was reaching her own climax, Tawny suddenly put her hand on Berseh's head, grabbing her hair with a strong but still gentle hand. It was not rough, violent or anything like that; It was a gesture of control, made possible by the deep understanding, love and trust between the two of them. And so Berseh didn't even look up, immediately understanding her beloved Mistress's wishes and sped up her pace to make her orgasm.

- Nnnggg,don't stop don't stop don't STOOOPP !!!! YEEES !!

A few panting breaths later....

- Wow, as fabulous as usual said Tawny.

- Thank you my Queen, answered Berseh.

- We still have time to clean up a bit before the masseuses are here. Come, continued Tawny.

And exactly 10 minutes later after, they were both exiting the shower, when the parlor's employees knocked on the door.

- Good morning, ladies, said one of them. Are you ready?

- We are, said Tawny, and ready to be pampered.

The next hour passed very quickly as both lovers enjoyed one of the best massage they ever had. It was almost 1.00 pm when they left the parlor, and headed for their favorite coffee shop for lunch. After that, and knowing Berseh's passion for arts, Tawny had decided to take her to see the Morozov painting collection that had recently left the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris, and was in the town's museum for one month. Then a dinner in one of the best restaurant in town would be a perfect way to end the day. She turned to Berseh as she felt her squeeze her hand, and gave her a kiss.

Seriously, what could go wrong in such a perfect day?



Back home after visiting the museum, Berseh and Tawny took some time to relax, chatting pleasantly, and discussing the paintings they just saw. As usual when they were together time flew by very quickly.

- Ok, said Tawny. Time to get ready my love. I'll be with you in a bit.

In her bedroom Berseh picked up a couple of evening dresses, and finally made up her mind for a simple black one. The lace part covering her breasts was a bit see-through, but it was just the touch of discreet sexiness Tawny enjoyed seeing. She put on a pair of matching heels just when Tawny entered bedroom.

- Oooh you are gorgeous my love.

Berseh turned to see that her beloved mistress, true to her "dress to impress" way of thinking, had chosen a black leather body suit beautifully outlining her body.

- God, she's divine... thought Berseh. You're perfect Mistress.

- Thank you sweetheart. now turn around, I have just the right thing to complete that beautiful outfit.

Feeling Tawny gently caressing her neck, Berseh lifted her hair up, to let Tawny attach a black leather and velvet choker around her neck.

- There, said Tawny, the perfect final touch.

- Thank you my Queen, answered Berseh, touching the golden ring attached to the collar.

- You're most welcome. Now come, time for us to go.

A 30-minute drive later, they were both entering The Pleasant Meadows restaurant. Located on the outskirts of the town, the place was overlooking a nice park, giving the customers a great view of the surrounding area. A young waiter led them to their table, and gave them the menu, and Tawny and Berseh were soon enjoying an excellent dinner. The restaurant had opened a couple of years ago and had quickly gained a good reputation, mostly because they were serving only fresh products, directly bought from the local farms.

The waiter came back to Tawny and Berseh after their last course.

- Will that be all ladies ?

- We'll have a last drink on one of your terraces, answered Tawny.

- Sure, please follow me.

When they arrived, Berseh saw that the place was living up to its reputation. the view was indeed beautiful. The terrace was not crowded. only two customers were there. A man was sitting on one of the stools, drinking alone. And an... exotic looking woman was admiring the view, sipping at her drink, facing away from them.

Tawny noticed her, and gave Berseh a nudge with her elbow.

- Can you imagine Mario's reaction if you showed up at a meeting with him inked up like that?

- God ! Poor guy would have an instant heart attack. They both laughed and sat down on comfortable recliners, after having ordered their drinks.

- By the way said Tawny, before I forget, I'm gonna need you after your current shooting, to model one of our products. The girl I had in mind had to cancel it because of family issues.

- Of course, answered Berseh. What kind of product is it? She wondered what kind of naughty device her mischievous Mistress had in mind.

- Well.... said Tawny with a wicked smile. Do you remember the one-bar prison?

- Oooh yes I do. Berseh recalled perfectly the exhausting restraining device.
- We're about to launch an... upgraded version. But I won't tell you more, you'll see.
- Sure, my Queen.

They were so absorbed in their conversation that they didn't see the lone man getting up from his stool and heading towards them, waving unsteadily on his feet, visibly drunk.

- W...weelll, what have we h...here ??

Tawny instantly turned around. She knew the man looked familiar. Now she recognized him. He was one of the warehouse managers she had recently fired.

He spread his arms in a grand gesture, almost dropping the bottle he was holding, as if he was addressing a huge crowd.

- Behold, ladies and aannnd gentlemen... the Tomsen bitch!!



- God, Tawny thought, what are they thinking downstairs, letting him in like that. Beside her, she felt Berseh bristle when she heard the man insulting her.
- Look Walt, you're drunk. And HR warned you countless times. You got what you deserved. Because of your bad work, many shipments have been lost, causing loyal customers to leave us after YEARS.
- Soo, whhaat... they... would have got... their... merchandise... any... anyway.
- That's not the point, snapped back Tawny, getting angrier.

Berseh was watching the tense exchange, furious to see her queen insulted, and at the same time worried that the man could do something stupid. Tawny could perfectly defend herself, but with drunks, you never knew. She decided to step in.

- Please, mister, there's no need to be rude. Go to the bathroom and freshen up a bit, then leave, she said firmly.

- Oh ? Wha... Whaddya sayy slut?? He turned back to Tawny. Is that your... your new fuck doll?? And do you... g...get a refund if you break h...her ?? HAHAAAAHA !!

This sent Tawny over the edge. She got up. bringing her face inches away from his. Berseh knew her beloved Mistress very well, and could see that she was seething with rage.

- Enough, snarled Tawny. No one insults my Berseh like this. Apologize to her NOW!

Berseh looked at Tawny, alarmed but also proud that her Mistress would stand up for her like this. She could see by the look on Tawny's face that she was only seconds away from beating the guy up. Where was security, damn it !!

Both women were entirely focused on the man, so they didn't notice that a concerned third party was paying very close attention to the scene.

Suddenly, seemingly appearing out of thin air, a tattooed hand grabbed the drunk by his shoulder and roughly turned him around, almost making him fall in the process.

- I think he's gonna need a bit more incentive don't you think ? said the newcomer. Visibly annoyed, the tattooed woman had decided to intervene.



- Oooh said, the drunk. Another ... c... cunt! He tried to reach for her.

Without blinking, the tattooed woman grabbed his left wrist, and, taking a quick step forward, slammed her elbow in his throat, sending him reeling backward, coughing, and gasping for air. Tawny immediately stepped aside and seized the opportunity to teach him a lesson. She grabbed one his shoulder, and gave him a strong push, while extending her leg to make him trip. Two seconds later, the drunken man was lying on the floor, half unconscious, among the shards of his shattered bottle.

- Aaaaaahh... f..fuck you !! he moaned
- You wish ! simply answered the newcomer.

Berseh turned around to examine the other woman. She was heavily tattooed almost from head to toe, with an aggressive looking mix of asian and trash polka patterns. An even more... exotic hairstyle completed the picture, dyed in a violent shade of blue and purple.

- Er... thanks for your intervention, Miss, but we could have handled it.
- That's right said Tawny.
- I don't doubt it, she said, but I'm expecting a friend here in any minutes now and he was really starting to piss me off. So I decided to step in. Although I shouldn't have done it... you see, I'm not supposed to work tonight. By the way (she extended a hand towards Berseh), I'm Valerie.
- I'm Berseh, and this is Tawny Tomsen.
- Oooh answered Valerie. Then it's a real pleasure to meet you, Miss Berseh, I'm a fan. And Tawny Tomsen? From T&T?
- Correct, answered Tawny.

Valerie laughed softly.

- Then I'm also really pleased to meet you. Some of your products are quite ...efficient to say the least.

As the three women were making a bit of casual conversation., Tawny took the time to examine Valerie closely. She looked hot and was very athletic, that was for sure but... something was definitely off with her. The way she reacted... It was not simple self-defense, but real combat reflexes of a highly trained professional... Tawny took a deep breath.... feeling her tension ease away. From what she said, Valerie was sometimes working here? Always having Berseh's wellbeing and security in mind, Tawny thought, that the restaurant manager could be a good source of information about her ... But for now, let's try to end this evening on a more positive note.

The doors of the terrace suddenly flew open and four people came to them. A older man, the younger waiter who was serving here, a female employee and a huge towering guy dressed in black. Berseh recognized the security guy watching the entrance.

- Seriously? it's about time she thought. What the hell were you doing, you big idiot? She was still angry that someone had threatened and insulted he beloved Mistress.

The older man spoke first.

- Miss Tomsen, Miss Berseh, I'm James, owner of this place, and I'm deeply sorry for this inconvenience.
- You should be, answered a still angry Tawny. I was hoping to have a nice evening with Berseh, and this happens ??
- My sincerest apologies again, said James. He suddenly turned to his employees and spoke to the security guy.
- Dale, take him away, and call for an ambulance. After that, wait for me in my office, we're gonna have an... unpleasant conversation. Mark, go to the front desk and see that Miss Tomsen and Miss Berseh get a complete refund of everything they spent tonight. Then pay her fees to Valerie for an entire day of work, on my personal funds if need be.

The young waiter bowed and quickly left.
James spoke to the female employee last.

- Yelena, go to the kitchen and tell them to prepare the special. Come back A.S.A.P.
- Yes, sir !

Berseh and Tawny looked at each other, appreciating the manager's professional attitude and efficiency.

- Wow, I wouldn't wanna be that security guy right now, said Berseh.
- Me either answered Tawny, but He had it coming. Such a thing should never have happened. Berseh nodded.

Another employee came in an spoke to the manager.

- Sir? Several customers are asking if they can have a drink here, and Miss Valerie's... friend is here and asking for her.
- Take them to the other terrace and bring Valerie's friend here. Thank you Derek.
- As you wish.

Less than a minute later Derek came back and was almost pushed aside by a young woman with thick red and black hair and wearing a white dress.

- There you are Val! I can't wait to have nice drink here with you, and by the way, did I tell ya that... She interrupted herself. Berseh?? Tawny ?!!!?

Both lovers looked at each other, clearly taken by surprise, realizing instantly who had just joined them.

Miranda.



- What a cool surprise !! said Miranda. What are you doing here? And you also know Valerie??
- Well, answered Berseh, we had dinner, and we just met your friend tonight.
- After an unfortunate incident, completed Tawny
- Oh you mean the unconscious guy ? She turned to Valerie. Was it you? Did you kick his ass?
- I had to yes, answered Valerie. He was... bothering them and was really drunk.
- Daaamn I wish I had seen that!
- So Miranda asked Tawny. How do you know Valerie?
- Oh that's quite simple. We met a couple weeks ago at the pool house downtown. We got along really well and spent our next day off together. Shopping, fitness club, girl talk and fun ya know?
- I can imagine, muttered Berseh, hiding her smile.
- And what about you girl? How did you know meet Berseh and Tawny asked Valerie.

This time Tawny was faster than Miranda.

- A simple story of lunch together, and a cancelled flight. It was impossible to book a hotel room, so Miranda kindly offered us to spend the night at her apartment.
 - Ya ! And it wa so much fun. Just like with you, we got along really well.
- Berseh shook her head and smiled. It was impossible to get mad at her.

A moment the waitress arrived with the "special".

- For you ladies, she said. On the house. The special was an assortment of extremely high-quality liquors and alcohols, served with light finger foods.

As they continued to talk together, Berseh noticed that Tawny was still a bit tense, and had her gaze locked on Valerie almost all the time. She was apparently really intriguing her. She laid a comforting hand on her mistress's thigh, feeling her relax. Tawny suddenly lifted her head, intently listening to the music playing from the speakers.

- Mmm, that's my favorite song, she said, her fingers moving instinctively, as she was playing her bass guitar at home..
- You're playing ? asked Miranda.
- Bass guitar, yes, for several years.
- Oh wow, answered an amazed Miranda. I've always wanted to learn how to play an instrument but never found the time to do so. Several years? Gee, your fingering must be very good!
- You have no idea, whispered Berseh, seeing Tawny barely containing her own laughter. Valerie simply burst out laughing.
- Uh? Miranda giggled. Ok, bad choice of words. i was simply stating the fact that Tawny must be very good.

She suddenly checked the time.

- Ok, it's getting late, and my next photoshoot starts early tomorrow. I hope I'll be able to catch a cab.
- You won't, said Valerie. Come on I'll drive you home.
- Thanks Val!

The four women got up, ready to leave.

- I had a really good time said Valerie. I hope we'll be able to renew the experience soon.
- Let's hope so, answered Berseh with a smile.

- Miranda, dear, I need to go the bathroom said Valerie. Wait for me downstairs, and then we'll go.

As they were all heading downstairs, Tawny whispered in Berseh's ear.

- Keep Miranda company a bit my love, I'm going to the bathroom too.
- Ok but... What's wrong my Queen, sensing that her beloved Mistress had something in mind.
- Nothing answered Tawny, kissing Berseh softly. Trust me I'll be quick.

A couple of minutes later, Tawny was entering the women's bathroom, looking for Valerie. It was time for a little face to face talk.



When she entered the restrooms, Tawny was welcomed by Valerie's voice.

- I was wondering when you would finally decide to follow me, she said.

Valerie was indeed standing in the middle of the room, a smile on her lips.

- Ok, then answered Tawny, I'll make it simple. Who are you REALLY? You 're clearly A LOT more than a security employee.
- Oh? and what makes you so sure ?
- Simple. You executed a perfect and very dangerous elbow hit against him. Without the skill and control of a highly trained professional, that man could have had his windpipe crushed and would probably be dead as we speak.
- Oh? but maybe I was just lucky. Maybe he was so drunk that I just had to give him a light push to send him to the ground?
- Drop that act, Tawny told her. The way you move, that constant alertness, that ...super fit body...Everything about you screams of military training. And I'm sure you felt me following you, even before I came in here.
- And why would I tell you anything about me? countered Valerie. After all, I don't know you.

Tawny decided to try another approach.

- You've recognized Berseh, and I'm sure you've figured out the kind of relationship we have. So let me tell you this. She means the world to me, and her safety and well-being are everything that matter to me. So I always make sure she's surrounded by people she can trust.

Hearing the sincere love and worry in Tawny's voice, made Valerie wince as a shadow of sadness swept over her face. She quickly composed herself, but not fast enough for Tawny to miss it. God... how she longed being cared for like that...

- Uh? Something wrong?

- I've... had a rough day, simply answered Valerie, far more troubled than she looked.

- Oh... then I won't bother you more, said Tawny. It's already late and Berseh is waiting for me.

Not wanting to sound totally like a cold-hearted bitch, Tawny stopped before exiting the room.

- And by the way, she and I... had a good time tonight, she continued, looking one last time at Valerie.

But I'll see what I can find about you..you can be sure of that... she thought

Alone in the women's room, Valerie, closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

Was she checking me out ? She laughed, dismissing the thought.

- She's probably gonna try to dig up what she can about me. But you won't find anything Miss Tomsen...Grandpa made sure of that., she said softly.

No.... you don't have the resources and connections to find out who I REALLY am....

As they were driving back home, Berseh could clearly see that Tawny was preoccupied.

- What's wrong my queen?

- Uh ? Nothing my love, answered Tawny. I'm just wondering who she is really...

- Valerie? oh, that's why you went after her to the bathroom? And did you get any answers?

Berseh knew that her beloved Mistress always tried to know everything about the people they were meeting, especially when she sensed something...unusual.

- Not really, but I'm sure she's a former soldier.

- That wouldn't be a surprise, observed Berseh. it's quite common for them to work in security business or even be bodyguards, remembering a few she had herself in the past.

- True, but... I just wanna be sure that.... she's not trouble, answered Tawny.

They soon arrived in Tawny's private parking lot and took the lift to her apartment. In the lobby, Tawny hugged Berseh from behind, feeling her shiver from her touch.

- I won't let these...events... distract me from what I have planned to end this wonderful day, said Tawny sensually.

Berseh closed her eyes, and as always, felt her worries melting away just by hearing her Mistress's voice. Magical... this was just magical...

- Go to our room, you know what to do. Wait for me.

The voice was commanding of course but at the same time gentle, and full of respect. Tawny watched Berseh go and went to prepare herself.



A few minutes later, Tawny stepped in their room and smiled when she saw that Berseh was waiting for her, kneeling on a comfortable rug, and only wearing one of T&T's successful products: a gold plated collar, with matching wrists and ankle cuffs.

Tawny took a bit of time to admire the gorgeous young woman who was just calmly waiting for her. She marveled at the level of trust and understanding they had achieved together. Something that many people having the same kind of relationship could only dream of.

She quietly walked towards Berseh and gently hugged her.

- Mmmm...she moaned softly.
- Now my love, forget about everything, tonight it's us, just us...
- Yes Mistress, whispered Berseh.

And soon she completely abandoned herself in Tawny's embrace. A gentle kiss, a light pinch on her nipples, a soft slap of her crop... Berseh soon found herself getting more and more aroused by Tawny's skillful touch.

Suddenly, everything stopped and Berseh closed her eyes as she covered them with a light blindfold

- Sweetheart wait for me I'll be with you very soon.

Berseh heard Tawny's light footsteps and was left in the dark, wondering what her naughty Mistress had prepared for her.



Tawny came back in the bedroom a short while later, bringing with her a simple Hitachi magic wand. There's no way she would use something called Deep Trouble 350... Kneeling behind Berseh, she hugged her, kissed her neck, and took her time caressing her insanely beautiful body.

- Mmm... that feel so good Mistress... god... whispered a very aroused Berseh.
- Sssh. Enjoy it my love

Tawny sensed that all this was also really turning her on too. She switched the vibrator on.

- Nnnnngg... yeess, moaned Berseh as she felt that diabolical buzzing tool pressing against her labia.

After a couple more minutes of very hot and intense teasing, Tawny extended a hand and removed Berseh's blindfold. She gently caressed her cheek and set the vibrator to full speed. She brought her face inches away from Berseh's.

- Look at me at my love said Tawny, as she was quickly rubbing herself. I.... mmm..I want to.. god.... share this with you!

It didn't take them very long, and a mind blowing orgasm later, they were both hugging each other, trying to catch their breaths.

- Wow, sighed Berseh.
- I... agree answered Tawny. Wow. They laughed.
- Ok now a good shower and off to bed, we both have work tomorrow. You go first my love; I'll be with you in a minute.
- Yes my queen.

Tawny picked up her smartphone. It was time to get a bit of information on Valerie. It might reveal nothing, but, you never knew... She sent a text message to her friend at the local police department, asking him to find out what he could about someone named Valerie Austin, and that she'll call him tomorrow morning.

She got up and joined Berseh in the bathroom for a warm (and a bit naughty) shower.



Three days later

As she was leaving Mario's office, Berseh hurried to T&T's head office to meet Tawny for lunch. It was almost noon, and she didn't want to be late. Once arrived, she took the lift to the top floor and took some time to chat a bit with one of the assistants, a cute brunette named Sarah.

- Miss Berseh! So nice to see you!
- Nice to see you too Sarah, answered Berseh. How are you?
- I'm fine thank you.

She pointed at Tawny's office doors.

- She's here and waiting for you.
- Thanks.

Berseh pushed the double doors and entered the office, to see that Tawny was on the phone. She smiled and blew a kiss to her beloved Mistress, and quietly closed the doors.

- So what do you have for me Roy? asked Tawny. Ok... registered business for private security... bodyguard... former military... I knew it ! And her record? Clean... mmm ok. What? yes yes I'm sure, her name is Valerie Austin.

Another minute of talking and she hanged up.

- There you are my love, said Tawny. She hugged Berseh and kissed her.
- You were doing a bit of research on her? she asked
- Yes... You.... know how I am when there's new people around you.
- Yes, my queen and I'm always grateful for that, knowing that Tawny was always making sure people around them were trustworthy.

Tawny heard an e-mail alert on her laptop and sat at her desk.

- Come, she said to Berseh. Remember my old friend Roy from the precinct? He just sent me what he could about her. Berseh sat on the desk, sighing softly as Tawny started to caress her thigh. Look.

Berseh took some time to read the information on the laptop.

- Nothing seems unusual, she said. In fact, it's quite common for former soldiers to have a private security business. We regularly have some on the shootings, most of them being bodyguards. Does she have any social media?

- Nothing so far, answered Tawny. Guess she's not a fan of attention. Well, Roy told me he'd call back should he find something new.

Berseh nodded.

Tawny rose from her seat.

- Ok I'm starving, she said. Come my love, let's go.

- Yes, my queen.



Downtown pool house - later that afternoon

As she was comfortably tanning beside the pool, Valerie stretched contentedly, laughing softly as she remembered her meeting with Miranda here, and then at the clothes shop... They got along so well, that Valerie invited her at the Pleasant Meadows for a drink. And she met Berseh and Tawny there, completely by accident... She closed her eyes, remembering Tawny's word in the restroom, the deep love and care for Berseh she heard in her voice...and how those words had affected her...

She took a deep breath, trying to calm herself. Suddenly, her smartphone buzzed. She took it and frowned seeing that the text message was from someone she had not heard from in years. It was saying: "personal file request received at 1.00pm. Awaiting instructions"

Damn Someone was searching for information about her. And the fact that she received that text message meant that whoever was doing it was good and had connections. Valerie paused for a moment.

- Wait... Could this be Tawny? she thought. She made it clear that she was wary... She smiled.

- Not bad Miss Tomsen, not bad at all.... She quickly typed her answer: "Send decoy files. Keep me informed".

Valerie felt a strange kind of excitement growing inside her.

- So you wanna play? Ok let's play...

She googled T&T's website on her smartphone and quickly browsed through the pages to reach the job offers, and more specifically, the modeling jobs offers....

- Mmm, this could be fun, Valerie thought. And a good way to meet Tawny on her personal playground.... You want answers Miss Tomsen ? Let's see if you're good enough to get them...

Feeling that she had enough, Valerie checked the time and decided to go the dance studio she loved so much. It had been a while since she has danced, and it would probably help her clear her mind.

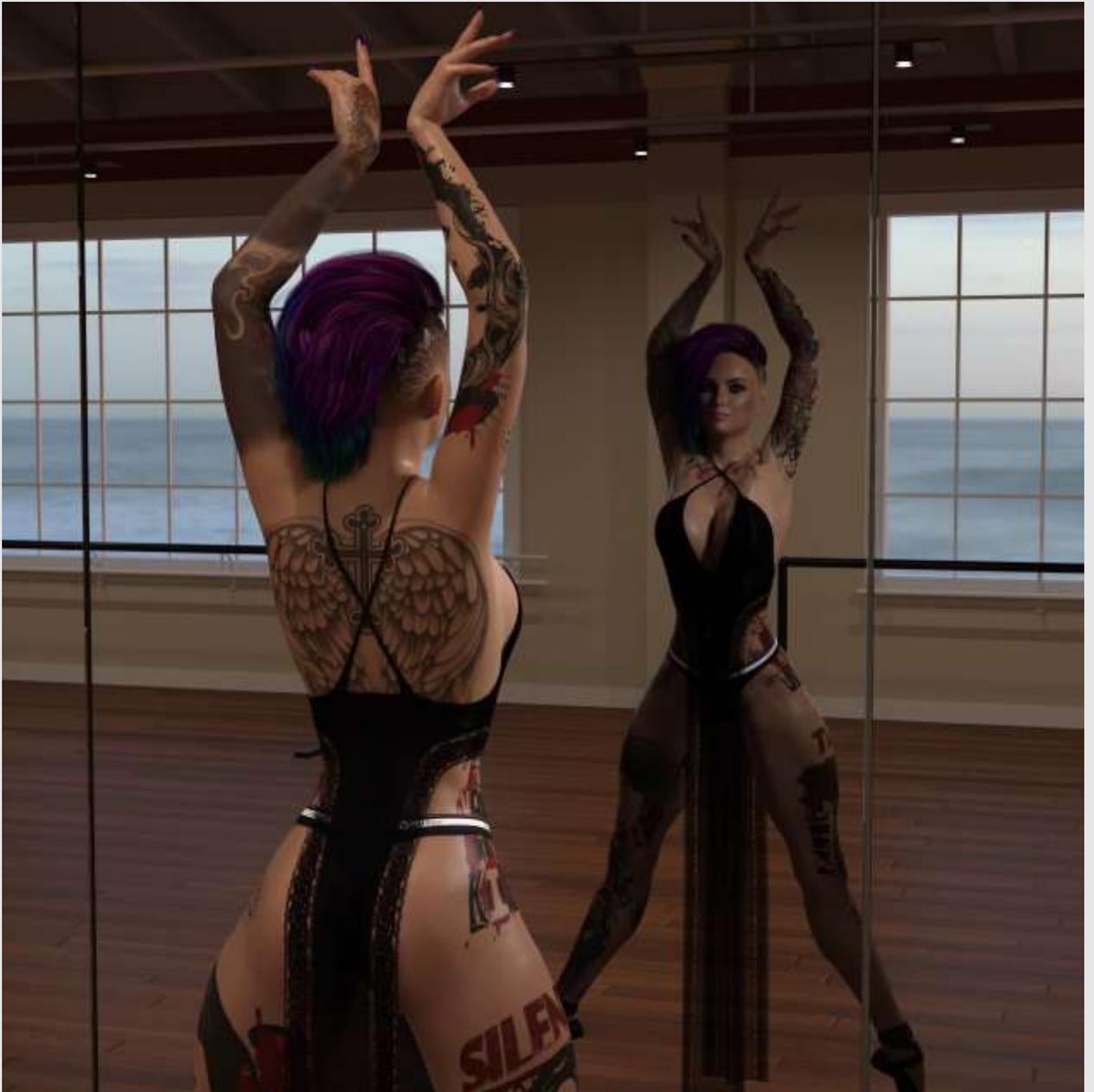
Meanwhile at T&T's head office

Tawny had finished her meeting with potential investors and was back in her office, when she noticed that her smartphone was flashing. She picked it up from her desk and saw that Roy has sent her.... 5 text messages !!! in the last 30 minutes?? All of them were saying the same thing:

"CALL ME A.S.A.P !!!"

When Valerie arrived at the dance studio, it was late afternoon, and the last dance class was leaving the building. She smiled as she watched the young girls chatting, probably dreaming of joining some famous ballet company.

In the women's locker room, Valerie chose a light black dress and stepped in the main dancing room. She plugged her smartphone and chose her favorite music. It was a beautiful classical piece called "le concerto de l'adieu" by french artist Georges Delerue. She didn't know much about him, only that he was born in France and was buried in Glendale, California.



Valerie looked at her reflection in the mirrors, imagining herself rehearsing for an upcoming show in a famous opera. She squeezed her chest and laughed.

- No girl, not a chance. Too much boobs.

She closed her eyes and started the music. Soon she was dancing across the room, spinning effortlessly between figures. But at some point of her choreography, as she had her eyes closed, she suddenly felt that she was elsewhere. A dark corridor, gunshots.... she was running... wearing combat gear?? Where was she?? She unconsciously accelerated her pace and danced even faster. Another flash... another location... a small town in an unknown sun-scorched desert... again, gunshots, explosions.... her aching muscles brought Valerie back to reality.

- Yees, I want more... nngg, more pain.... pain for what I've done... pain to make me forget.... Then the music stopped, and she fell to the ground, panting, on the verge of passing out, feeling bruised and battered like never before.

- I don't think Georges Delerue had such violence in mind when he wrote that masterpiece, said a voice behind her. It was Sven, the old janitor.

Valerie simply looked at him, still catching her breath.

- I've never seen such an aggressive choreography, and I've seen many.

- What do you want Sven ? She asked

- Miss Austin, Over the years I've seen countless boys and girls passing through here. All of them dreaming to become stars.

- Ok Yoda, get to the point, said Valerie more aggressively than she had wanted.

- All of them were dancing to live their dreams, do you understand? They were dancing to LIVE. This evening, you were dancing to forget. You were dancing to hurt yourself. So my question will be very simple: what are you running away from ?

Valerie winced as if she'd been struck. Over the years, she had built around her emotional barriers strong enough to deflect cannon fire. Miranda, Tawny and Berseh, and Sven.... in a few days, four people had pierced through them with frightening ease. When she felt rested enough, she got up, muttered a vague thank you to Sven, and headed for the locker room.

It was time to set things straight and leave her past behind once and for all.



After having freshened up herself and changed her clothes for her last meeting of the day, Tawny picked up her phone and saw that Roy has sent her two more text messages: 'CALL. ME"
She shook her head and called him.

- Hey Roy, what's so urgent? Wow wow, slow down! What's wrong ??

- Listen Tawny, as I told you I checked her record to see if I could find something, but everything looked clean.

- Yes so?

- An hour later the chief calls me in his office, and asks me what the hell I'm doing... I told him that I was just checking things out after the restaurant incident. It calmed him down a little, but he told me to drop things immediately and focus on the last murder case we just had. That's what I did, but during my break I called my old army buddy who's now working at National security. He said he needed three days to dig up information's about her.

- That's good news Roy, thanks a lot, said Tawny.

- Tawny, answered Roy. be very very careful. There's something odd about her record. Everything looks ...too perfect. That's a degree of perfection you rarely see. Former operative, black ops group...? She could be anything. I'm sorry I can't tell you something more useful.

She frowned. She had never heard the old cop being so worried.

- I'll be careful. Thanks a lot.

Tawny hanged up. Puzzled, she sighed angrily. During these 3 days, there was little she could do. Maybe she was overreacting after all.... But for now, there's no way she would let Valerie anywhere near Berseh.



Two days later

As she just finished her breakfast, Valerie took the time to think things over. Yesterday, she had received another alert on her smartphone. Someone made another attempt at her personal file. She was a bit surprised because the decoy files were usually enough. And this time the request had come from National Security... Could this still be Tawny? Could she have connections going this far? After all, in her line of business...Who knows the kind of resources she might have acquired over the years ?

Not wanting to be surprised, Valerie decided it was time to make her move and see if it was REALLY Tawny who was fishing for information's . Remembering the various modeling job offers she had seen on the T&T website, she decided to send a fake resume to their HR department. She had done a bit of glamour modeling a couple of years ago so, why not ? Of course it was nothing compared to what someone as famous as Berseh was doing, but the pictures would make sure that her resume was not thrown away too fast. Of course it wouldn't resist to a thorough examination.

Mmmm..she would have to play it smart to get an interview with Tawny herself.... And she didn't even know if she WAS indeed interviewing aspiring models. Valerie smiled. Finally something fun was happening in her life...

After a quick shower, she took various clothes from her closet and began to try them, taking time to imagine what would wear someone applying for a modeling job in the adult industry.

- Not bad... Valerie thought, examining the cutout dress, stockings and platform heels she had chosen after a few tries.

She struck a few poses in front of her dressing mirror. Her outfit was a bit extreme but, as her beloved grandpa kept telling her : "Always hide in plain sight when you have no other choice."



It was a bit early this morning when Tawny prepared herself. Three days had passed, and Roy had just sent a text message telling her to meet him at the nearby park. Finally! Maybe he would give her reliable intel about Valerie. Since her first meetings at T&T were scheduled later this morning, Tawny decided that a bit of running would do her good and dressed appropriately. Berseh had left home before her, for a business meeting with Mario.

Tawny smiled. She had asked Berseh to join her this afternoon, to review potential new models for T&T with her. Her insight would prove invaluable to Tawny, but most important of all, they would do this together.

Once ready, Tawny got out and headed towards the park, running at an even pace. 10 minutes later she arrived at the park and spotted Roy, seated on one of the benches. She greeted him warmly. He rose up and hugged her, a worried expression on her face.

- What's wrong Roy?

- This, he answered, giving her a small note pad. Tawny, what have you got yourself into ??

- I... what ??

Roy continued.

- As soon as my friend made a search about her, every possible alarm triggered, but he was quick enough to cover his tracks and get a bit of information. You have everything in this notepad.

Tawny frowned as she noticed that Roy was indeed worried and was casting quick glances left and right.

- And that's not all. He told me that there were rumors at National Security...

- What kind? Tawny asked.

- According to my friend, there's been some... super secretive black ops group that had been operating for several years in the country and abroad. Probably former special forces from the army... things like that...

- Ok, answered Tawny warily. And?

- Well, we're talking about four people. The first two male members are confirmed dead. The third one has gone missing. And for the fourth one, she...

- SHE?? Tawny interrupted.

- Yes, a woman. She is presumed to have left the group for unknown reasons. Tawny, everything about them, especially the woman, was hidden behind military grade firewalls! Please be extremely careful if you decide to push the matter further.

Tawny was not paying attention, her mind already racing. Could that mysterious woman be... Valerie? And if so, was she a threat? So far she hadn't done anything to threaten her or Berseh. It was time to plan her next move. The restaurant manager had said that Valerie was working there from time to time. It could be a good source of information. But for now, it was time to go back to work, get these meeting's done and prepare the best moment of the day: her afternoon with Berseh.

She thanked Roy profusely and headed back to T&T head office.

After a quick lunch, Tawny hurried back to T&T. Berseh was about to arrive and she didn't want to be late. She was in her office for only a few minutes when the doors flew open and Berseh came in.

- There you are my love, said Tawny enthusiastically. She hugged and kissed her.

- So good to see you my Queen, answered Berseh.

- Are you ready?

- I am. how many are there? asked Berseh.

- Three, answered Tawny. But we're not interviewing them here. Come, I have prepared something special for them, and we're gonna have a little fun with all this.



Berseh followed her, immediately recognizing the naughty gleam in her Queen's eyes. What was she up to?

A short while later they arrived at one of the photo studios. Tawny spoke to one of the assistants, thanked him, and opened the stage door.

- The first candidate will be here shortly, said Tawny, come, let's go change.

Berseh started to understand what her Mistress had in mind when she saw the big assortment of BDSM clothes, all of them belonging to T&T's catalogue : corsets, harnesses, collars, bodysuits...

She put on what her Mistress had prepared for her. It was a leather harness that was not covering... much to say the least, with a matching collar. When Tawny came to her she was wearing a leather teddy, elbow-length gloves and sexy ankle boots. As they were stepping on the stage, Tawny suddenly heard Berseh curse under her breath.

- What is it my love? she asked with concern in her voice.

- I.... she started

Tawny understood in a blink of an eye that Berseh was once again fighting against her own shyness. She gently grabbed her chin.

- Look at me my love, said Tawny in a soft voice. You can do it, because I'm with you, and because you are fabulously beautiful. She rested her hand on Berseh's hip and let her a bit of time to calm down.

As usual, her Mistress's magic touch did the job, and soon Berseh felt herself becoming calmer. She took a deep breath and smiled at Tawny.

She looked at Berseh one last time.

- Mmmm... the things I would do to you if we were home said Tawny in a seductive voice...Berseh giggled and followed her Mistress.

An hour later the first two applicants were interviewed. If the first one proved to be a disappointment, the second one was very promising, and Tawny will definitely call her back.

Suddenly her phone buzzed. It was a text message from Dwayne, the HR manager, telling her that he had sent the third applicant directly to her office. It was not uncommon.... and over the years Dwayne had always shown an amazing talent for detecting future stars.

Both women change back to their clothes.

- My love, could you bring this to HR and join me in my office after. We'll interview the third one there.
- Yes Mistress.

As she was arriving at her office Tawny stopped when she heard one the secretary talks with one of her colleague.

-....and you should have seen her tats.... and her hair!! She's a bit exotic but I'm sure Miss Tomsen will love her...

Tats? looking exotic ? Oh god no....

She hurried to her office, opened the doors and froze when she saw who was apparently waiting for her.

Valerie.



Tawny entered her office, clearly furious, but managed to contain her anger.

- What are you doing here? she said. And how did you get past HR controls?

Valerie got up.

- Easily, she answered. It's amazing what you can achieve with a man by simply crossing your legs and showing a bit of stockings...

Through sheer force of will, Tawny stayed calm once again.

- Ok then but maybe you can tell me why you're standing in my office, dressed up like you're auditioning for Brazzers ?
- ooh, but maybe I should be the one asking you questions Miss Tomsen ? Like, why are you so focused on obtaining information about me and about my past?
- I told you I'm making sure the people around Berseh and me are trustworthy. Her safety and well-being are everything that matter to me.
- God, how I wish I had someone who would care for me like that thought Valerie, sadly.

She continued.

- Miss Tomsen, I can assure you that I have no bad intentions towards you or Miss Berseh. But.... my... past is not something you should look for. Trust me, you WON'T like what you'll find. At all. And you have no idea what you'll trigger if you dig deeper.

Sensing that Valerie could give her the information's she wanted, Tawny remained silent. Valerie sighed.

- I can see in your eyes that you won't give up like that. So I'll give you what you want myself. My name is indeed Valerie Austin, and I was indeed in the military for 12 years.
- And about the rest? asked Tawny.

Valerie shook her head.

- Not here she said. If you want more answers, meet me there in two days.

She put a small business card on Tawny's desk.

- I must be going now, and I apologize again for that little...stunt... I pulled (not mentioning of course she had quite some fun imagining it). And please, don't blame your HR manager. Infiltration is something I'm extremely good at.

Tawny simply nodded.

- You know the way, she said coldly.

Once Valerie was gone, Tawny picked the card she left. It was indeed a small business card with a simple name on it : the Inner Sanctum - martial arts training grounds. This was definitely getting weirder.

When she exited the lift Berseh was surprised to almost bump into Valerie.

- Oh ! hi Valerie, what are you doing here ?
- Hello Miss Berseh, I... came to see someone, but I'm deeply sorry, I'm going to be late and I can't stay any longer.
- No problem, I understand, and...

Berseh stopped when Valerie suddenly put a hand on her shoulder and gave her a strange, sad smile.

- Bless every moment you spend with her, she whispered.

Berseh frowned

What was that?



After her visit at T&T, and her meeting with Tawny, Valerie spent the next day working. She came home in the middle of the afternoon and took some time to rest still more troubled than she cared to admit by these recent encounters.

She shook her head, thinking about how she almost bumped into Berseh, and about that fabulously ridiculous phrase.... I came to see someone ???

- Damn, she swore. And she had just bragged at Tawny, about her infiltration skills....

Valerie took care of some minor house chores until it was dinner time. She ate quickly and prepared herself for a quiet evening. Sometime later she got up from her couch, an uneasy feeling growing inside her. The same walls, the same room, the same boring TV shows...Suddenly Valerie felt the urge get out. She took a quick shower, put on the first dress and heels she got her hands on, and almost hurried across the street to the bar she enjoyed going to from time to time.

She pushed the door and was welcomed by Travis, the owner.

- Valerie? What a pleasant surprise! said Travis.

- Hey Travis, how's it going? said a disappointed Valerie, noticing that the bar was empty.

- Not bad, can't complain. But tonight, it's calm, as you can see.

- Of course thought Valerie, we're in the middle of the week. What were you expecting.... Damn it girl.

Without a word, Travis poured her a glass of her favorite Bourbon. She thanked him.

- Take your time, I'm closing in an hour, said Travis as he started mopping the floor.

- Thanks, said Valerie.

As she sipped at her drink. she looked at her reflection in the huge mirror in front of her.

- God... I'm so pathetic...

Time was slowing passing, and Valerie was so absorbed in her thoughts that she didn't hear the door open and didn't see the elegantly dressed man approaching her.

- We'd make a fine pair of Nighthawks don't you think?

Valerie looked at him. Edward Hopper? Not bad...

- Mmmm... The scene could do the trick, she answered, but I'm not sure we would be worth Edward Hopper's attention.

- Ouch, said the man laughing. I'm hurt. I'm Mark. Pleased to meet you.

- I'm Valerie.

- So Valerie, is there a chance for me to share a drink with such a lovely lady like you?

- Sure , she said. Have a seat.

And 30 minutes later, what had begun as a idle chatter, had turned into a friendly conversation that Valerie was really enjoying. Mark was definitely smart, funny, extremely well-educated judging from the way he spoke, and was also flirting with her in a very discreet and mature way. And last but not least, he was also REALLY handsome.

After sharing a last drink, Valerie decided it was time to make her move.

- Ok, girl, let's see if you still have it. So Mark, It's getting late and I'm working early tomorrow. We can part ways here or... finish that conversation at my apartment. I live just across the street...

- With pleasure, answered Mark with a warm smile.

10 minutes later, they were entering her apartment.

Unable to contain herself anymore, Valerie grabbed Mark and kissed him angrily. Much to her surprise and pleasure, he responded in kind and started to feel her up quite roughly. They stayed here for a while, hard groping each other, feeling their lust rapidly increase.

Valerie was rough, aggressive and deep down she knew that she was behaving like that out of despair and loneliness, but she didn't care. Tonight, she just wanted to FEEL something.

She suddenly broke their kiss and looked at Mark with lust filled eyes.

- My room is there. Take me upstairs and fuck me!



Their aggressive foreplay continued all the way up to Valerie's room, as they threw their clothes here and there.

- God, thought Valerie, I... I can't believe how much I missed that as she felt herself getting dripping wet.

A quick blowjob and some hard fingering later, both of them were on the floor.

- Ok, she thought, time for some real FUUUNNN OH GOD YEEES!! She almost screamed as she felt Mark's cock pressing inside her.

Surprised by her rapid bodily response, she decided to fully immerse herself in that blissful moment of pleasure and pain. Mark knew what he was doing, and soon Valerie felt her orgasm building inside her.

- Mmm.... yeesss... I ... want more.... yes... harder...YESSS just like that !!!!

Suddenly he changed position and started doing her from behind.

Valerie's mind was racing. Raw, brutal feelings... Pleasure... Pain....And just like when she was dancing, memories of some special operation she had done somewhere in the world came back to her. But this time, it didn't last very long as a sharp pain in her scalp pulled her back to reality.

- Ooooh yees pull my hair!!! I'm gonna CUUUUUMMMM !!!!

A second later it was his turn and soon they were both on the rug panting, catching their breath

- Wow... said Mark.

- Yes, wow indeed, answered Valerie. But tell me one thing: when a woman moans "oh god yes just like that", why is it that men almost always feel the need to switch position, change pace or... whatever ??

They both laughed.



Still puzzled by Valerie's invitation, Tawny parked her car near the entrance. Taking Berseh's hand in hers she walked down to the first building, admiring a beautiful zen garden on the way. They suddenly saw a man approaching them. He was Asian, most likely Japanese.

- Greetings ladies. My name is Hoshi. Miss Austin is already here, and we were told to expect both of you.
- Er... thank you Sir, answered Berseh politely.

After a short walk, they entered an elegantly furnished building that had a pleasant and relaxing atmosphere,

- I didn't think you would come said a familiar voice behind them.

Valerie came to welcome them, wearing a simple and elegant black kimono.

- Well, said Tawny, here we are.
- And I guess you still want your answers?
- I do, answered Tawny. And especially about all this. She handed Valerie a document folder, containing all the information's she had gathered about her, mostly documents and files almost completely blacked out.

Valerie sighed.

- Very well, she said. But before telling you everything. I need to verify something.
- Which is? Asked Berseh warily.
- Nothing to be afraid of Miss Berseh. You see, in my field of expertise, I discovered that the best of way knowing someone was to fight him.

She took a deep breath. It was now or never. And finally, she would have a chance to start making peace with her past.

- So, she continued. Here is my proposal: if you agree to spend the day here with me, and if Miss Tomsen grants me a sparring match, I will tell you everything about my... well... best forgotten past.

Tawny was thinking fast as she was listening to Valerie. A sparring match? After all she knew how to fight and was quite good.... And she never backed down from a challenge... And above all this, she was spending the day with her beloved Berseh.

- I agree (she heard Berseh gasp and gave her a reassuring smile). What are the rules?
- Simple : if you score one hit on me, you win, answered Valerie. Follow me to the locker room.

20 minutes later Valerie and Tawny entered the main dojo, where Hoshi was waiting for them. As she entered the dojo, Tawny suddenly felt Berseh grabbing her arm.

- Mistress, please don't! What if you get hurt?
- Trust me my love. You know I won't take any unnecessary risks. And besides, I'm starting to feel some kind of sympathy for her. So don't worry I'll be fine, knowing that you're here with me.

Berseh knelt on the mats beside Hoshi. She tried to hide it as best as she could as the fight started, but she was worried sick. She focused her attention on Tawny, as Valerie and her were circling each other.

Valerie moved first and threw a series of punches that Tawny easily deflected. She moved forward and attacked with a mix of punches and kicks that Valerie blocked or dodged with insolent ease. They continued for a while, and as they took a short pause, trying to determine the best course of action, Tawny saw Berseh's worried face and felt a sudden stab of guilt.

- I'm so sorry my love, she thought. I'll make it up to you I swear.

She focused her attention on Valerie again, realizing that she was not facing an ordinary opponent, but a professional soldier, trained to kill.

- Ok, Tawny thought. What I tried so far was useless, which means I'll have to take risks, and close the distance to try a lock.

Her plan in mind, she attacked again.
Yes, like that, and if I could just... What the?!? Oooof!!

Using a small opening in her guard, Valerie had managed to land a solid left hook to her jaw. Tawny saw stars for split second, but reacted out of instinct and, using the momentum of the blow, pivoted on her left leg, ducked under Valerie's high guard, and slammed her left hand in her abdomen as hard as she could. It was like hitting stone. Nevertheless, the blow was powerful enough to force Valerie to take two steps back.

- Hold... cough!

Tawny stood still and was genuinely surprised to see Valerie burst out laughing,

- You did it !! Well done that was brilliant! She said
- Well... thanks... I guess.... answered Tawny, massaging her aching jaw.

Seeing that things were over, Berseh stood up and ran to Tawny to see if she was ok.

- Did you really have to hit her that hard ?? she snapped at Valerie.
- I didn't hit hard, trust me, Miss Berseh. Er... well... You're welcome to use the showers, and after that I'll answer your questions, Miss Tomsen.
- Ok, answered Tawny. She headed to the locker room, trying to calm a furious Berseh along the way.
- I'm so sorry my love she continued, I felt really guilty when I saw that you were so worried. Look, I have an idea to make it up to you. When we're in the showers, wait until you hear the water running then join me in my stall...

Berseh giggled. How much she loved her naughty Mistress...



As they approached the locker room. Tawny spoke to Valerie.

- I'll join you shortly she said. I need to have a word with Berseh.
- Oh, sure. take your time, answered Valerie.

Tawny saw that Berseh was clearly angry. But before she could even utter a word, her beloved exploded.

- Mistress, what is WRONG with her!! Can't she just talk to us ??
- My love I know that you're angry, and I'm sorry but... began Tawny.
- And what kind of stupid game is that?? *Mimicking Valerie's voice* Hit me once and I'll tell you everything !!
- Berseh please, said Tawny. I know you're angry because I made you worry, I hate that and I'm deeply sorry.
- We don't need someone like her near us, Berseh answered in a somewhat calmer voice.
- Maybe, said her beloved Mistress, but remember. I was the one who asked for information about her, pulled out some strings to find out who she was.... But...I don't know why... I think we can trust her... So, what don't you come with me in there. We'll have a nice relaxing shower and after that we'll talk to her, ok?

Berseh smiled and followed Tawny inside. As they began to undress. Tawny saw that Berseh was hesitating, still showing mixed feeling on her beautiful face. Tawny hugged her from behind, sensually rubbing her leg against Berseh's.

- She's still angry, I can feel it thought Tawny. I need to stop doing things like these, I should have told her what I had in mind from the start.

- My love, she said. I should have told you everything. So, from now on, when we have these kinds of choices to make, we'll make them together I promise.

- Thank you Mistress, whispered Berseh, always amazed by the effect Tawny's touch and calm, confident attitude had on her.

Tawny didn't answer and simply kissed her tenderly. That very tensed moment forgotten, they both entered the stall to enjoy a nice shower together.



Their shower finished, Berseh and Tawny dressed up and followed Valerie, who was only wearing a black silk kimono, to a small guest room. They all knelt on comfortable cushions and thanked the young assistant who brought them a platter with what seemed to be a hot herbal tea.

Still preoccupied, Berseh brought her cup to her lips and inhaled deeply.

- Ooh, this is delicious, she thought as she swallowed a sip. It was indeed excellent, fresh, had a soft, sweet fragrance, and was probably hand made.

Tawny spoke first.

- So Valerie, we're here. Will you tell us a bit more about you?

Valerie looked at Tawny and Berseh with sad, weary eyes, and nodded

- I will. I was a part of what the media call a black ops cell. There were four of us. We were specialized in... tactical recon... intel gathering, and... other... tasks... I'd rather not talk about....

- Like... eliminations. ? Tawny asked. Valerie simply nodded. Berseh clenched her fist

- I knew it, she thought. She was about to retort, but when she saw the sadness in Valerie's eyes, she stopped. "Ok, let's hear her out"

Valerie took a deep breath and continued.

- Then, some years ago, I decided to quit, after an operation that failed miserably and a... terrible... mistake. The first two members were killed, the third one is missing, presumed dead. I... was lucky to escape alive.

- Could you tell me why you...set that whole "game" up? asked Berseh

- I wanted to know if I could entrust Miss Tomsen with the truth. And to be honest with you, I was really impressed by the way she handled the fight. Skill, patience, intelligence...So yes, I decided to tell you everything. And besides, we're quite far from the town, away from prying eyes and ears.

Berseh nodded.

The three women continued to chat, Valerie answering their questions, with as much honesty as she could. She was relieved to see that Tawny and especially Berseh were starting to relax a bit. Such a long way to go...

But of course, she didn't mention that the terrible mistake that has haunted her for so many years was hers, and hers alone...

- It's too soon Valerie thought. I can't tell you that yet.



When she came home after her meeting with Berseh and Tawny, Valerie was skeptical. Berseh didn't seem to trust her at all and Tawny... well... She was a bit different, but Valerie clearly didn't expect her to find as much intel about herself in such a short time.

- I just hope that the person who did this for her was good enough to cover his tracks... I'm sure a dozen alarms have triggered as soon as my name has been entered as a keyword...

Valerie wondered why Tawny was so determined to find information about her. She understood the desire to ensure Berseh's safety and well-being but... Oh well, never mind.

Dismissing these thoughts she powered her laptop and set to work on her security business. The evening came quickly, and, after a quick dinner and the usual boring TV shows, Valerie took a shower and decided to go to bed, having to wake up early for work.

She was asleep for less than two hours, when the nightmare that has kept haunting her began.

Central Africa - 7 years ago

She was running. Desperately. Behind her, dogs barking, shouts, and occasional gunshots. Valerie heard someone call for her. She recognized the wounded refugee who has helped her to escape her prison camp. The old man was doing his best, but he was badly wounded. After running for an unknown amount time, they decided to stop for a short break, and hid themselves under bushes and branches. Suddenly, Valerie heard a patrol approaching and swiftly covered the old man's mouth to silence him, since he was moaning in pain quite loudly. Hearing the soldiers walk away she breathed in relief and looked at the old refugee, realizing with a horrified gasp that he was dead, and that she had accidentally killed him.

Just like before, the cursed nightmare swept her away to someplace else. She was infiltrated in a military camp and was taking down the soldiers one by one with ruthless efficiency. After the accident and the death of her savior, she was out for revenge and blood. As she was neutralizing the last one, Valerie took a deep breath and, as usual, the red haze of madness and anger that was clouding her mind suddenly lifted.

This was no military camp, and the bodies scattered around her were no soldiers. In a horrible display of violence and madness, Valerie had murdered everyone in a small refugee village. Falling to her knees, she screamed at the top of her lungs.... and suddenly woke up, panting loudly and covered in sweat. After several seconds of panic, she managed to regain her bearings, and calmed herself, using the simple meditation routine Hoshi had taught her.

She got out of bed and went to her bathroom. As she was splashing her face with cold water; she took the time to look at a very particular tattoo she had. Designed with a specific invisible ink, it was only visible under a very particular light. It was a simple sentence written in French from the very popular poem compendium "La légende des Siècles", by French author Victor Hugo. It was the last verse of the poem "'La conscience"

"L'oeil était dans la tombe et regardait Cain"



Tawny's apartment - a week later

It was a sunny Sunday morning when Berseh and Tawny came into the kitchen for breakfast. As she was preparing her tea Berseh saw that her beloved Mistress had powered her laptop while sipping at her coffee. She sat near her and instinctively, without even looking at her, Tawny smiled and put her hand on Berseh's thigh making her sigh in satisfaction.

Tawny was completely focused on the screen and Berseh took some time to look at her in silence.

- God, I love seeing her like this... So focused... So concentrated...such willpower and strength radiating from her...

- What is it my love? asked Tawny.

- Nothing Mistress, I just love seeing you like this, answered Berseh.

- And what if, instead of only "seeing" you just came closer so that I could kiss you?

An instant later, both lovers were kissing passionately. after delicious and quite arousing seconds, Tawny broke their kiss and looked at Berseh tenderly.

- Mistress, are you still investigating Valerie's past?

Tawny nodded.

- Roy has received new information from his contact at National Security. Apparently our tattooed friend told us the truth.

- Anything new ? asked Berseh.

- Only one thing : among all the blacked out pages, you can find several times the words "the incident" and "Central Africa" and from what Roy told me, several years ago, something happened, something that cause the cell to split.

- My Queen, do we really need to dig this further ? Do you fear danger for us?

- I... don't know, my love. I hope I haven't triggered anything serious by asking Roy to search for information about her... And I've thought it over believe me...

- And what do you think we should do?

Tawny thought carefully about her words, knowing Berseh won't like what she was about to say.

- My love, I think the best course of action is to... well collaborate with her...

- But Mistress??? Why? I... don't trust her. Remember what she told us about... eliminations? What if she

decides that we're a threat to her mysterious past?

Tawny winced as she heard Berseh's words. Of course.... She was so eager to make sure they were both safe that she.... well... overlooked a bit the fact that it could backfire on them, or even on Roy... There was only one way out of all this mess.

- Look, I know you don't like all this. But I can assure you that this way we'll also be able to keep an eye on her too. And if you don't trust her, then trust ME.

- You know I do Mistress. I always do. I'm... just worried about you.

Tawny closed her eyes, more touched by Berseh's words than she would have imagined.

- I will take very careful and well thought actions, I can assure you of that, said Tawny in a firm voice. Berseh nodded and smiled, reassured by her Mistress's words.

They chatted for a while as they finished their breakfast, mainly talking about how they would make the most of such a beautiful Sunday.

Valerie's apartment - late afternoon.

Valerie came home around 5.00pm, after having spent a wonderful day out. As she was putting down her bag of groceries, she instantly felt that something was wrong. The atmosphere was just.... different. Always the professional, she checked all the rooms thoroughly and immediately noticed the small cellphone that was on her nightstand just beside a Japanese origami she immediately recognized. It was a crane, made from... an advertising flyer from T&T!! On the crane, the symbol of her former team... This could only mean one thing...

Trevor Daniels, missing member of their group and demolition expert, was still alive.



As she was examining the cell phone, it suddenly started to ring. Valerie hesitated and finally picked up.

- Hey hey Tattoo baby, it's been a while! How's it going?

Valerie closed her eyes. It was indeed Trevor. She took a deep breath and managed to stay calm.

- What do you want Trevor?
- Aaahh straight to the point as always. Wait now aren't you happy to hear from your old friend Val?
- We were not friends Trevor, only comrades. My TRUE friends died 7 years ago in that damn jungle, because of YOU.
- Bah you're still thinking about them? Have you already forgotten the kind of job we were doing? Shit happens you know.

Valerie was seething as she heard him speak so casually of their former team members, but managed to stay calm.

- Once again, what do you want? asked Valerie
- Hang on, I'll tell you in a minute. Oh by the way congratulations! I saw you manage to get yourself quite a respectable situation: a nice security business... and I saw that you were also making...friends... You? A professional killer? Making friends?? Hahaha!

Valerie froze. It was easy to understand that he had been monitoring her every moves for quite some time now...

- Trevor... warned Valerie. You do NOT go anywhere near Tawny, Berseh or even Miranda. Do you hear me?
- The little redhead? Not a chance. And the blondie with the glasses? Not a chance either. Looks way too boring to me, and I'm sure she's not even fun in bed. But her model friend oh my god... she must be a terrific fuck...

Valerie shook her head in disgust. She could almost that bastard drool. After all,... maybe she could make him repeat this in front of Berseh... She would probably murder him on the spot for insulting Tawny like this and the problem would be solved. She sighed angrily.

- You haven't changed Trevor, you're still a disgusting pig. and if you make the slightest move in their direction, I swear that you will die a very slow and painful death. Now, for the last time, what do you want ??
- I'll be in touch, he answered, before hanging up.

Valerie took some time to think things over. He was probably going to ask for her help for something very illegal, but there was nothing she could for now. So, she'd better prepare herself. After that she would probably think about the best way to warn Berseh Tawny and Miranda about all this.

When she moved in the building several years ago, Valerie had also bought the basement and had it transformed into her personal firing range. She took the password-protected lift and arrived in the small changing room. She quickly equipped herself with her combat gear and picked up her favorite weapon from one of the numerous racks. It was high-tech assault rifle, that could be equipped with a large variety of accessories, like additional clips, various suppressors, and scopes...

Satisfied, Valerie powered the automated firing range and readied herself. Time to shoot things.



3 days later - Valerie's apartment

Valerie had come home this evening. It had been a particularly exhausting day. She had forgotten how tiring it could be to be the bodyguard of a stupid rich kid who was more interested in parties and drugs than its own safety. In the end she had finally managed to handle everything as best as she could. She was asleep for 2 hours when she woke up abruptly. She immediately sensed that something wasn't right. Ever the professional soldier, Valerie simply sat up in her bed, closed her eyes, and listened : floor creaking, the sound of light footsteps... Yes there were definitely intruders. .. She didn't have time to get dressed so she simply put on the first top she found and picked up her P220-SIG from under her bed. Equipped with a suppressor, it wouldn't wake up the neighbor's if she had to use it. As quiet as a cat, she crept out of her bedroom, in search of them.

It didn't took her long to notice two small flashlights dancing in the dark. Judging from what she saw, those were clearly amateurs, slowly making their way inside her home. Knowing exactly where they would eventually arrive, she ambushed herself and waited. A few minutes later, she spotted them, and, thanks to their flashlights, saw that they were carrying guns! She made her move and got out of her hiding spot.

- Gentlemen? she said. Both thugs turned around, alarmed, and uselessly pointing their weapons. Valerie didn't let them use their guns and fired twice. Both bullets hit the intruders square in the chest and sent them to the floor. Puzzled, Valerie had immediately recognized the sound of rounds hitting a bulletproof vest. Where did they get them?

She turned the lights on and examined the two strangers. They were wearing hoods and had indeed bulletproof vest strapped to their chests. She immediately kicked their guns away and knelt in front of them.

- Ok, guys. It's late, I'm tired; so I'll make this quick. Who sent you? asked Valerie.

Seeing that none of them answered she fired a third time, straight in the first man's chest. The vest blocked the bullet but the impact was powerful enough to knock him unconscious.

- N... no no no, wait lady please! pleaded the second one. We were told to come here to deliver a message to you and well. .. keep anything we would find... for us...
- What message? asked Valerie angrily.

He handed a cheap looking prepaid phone to her. On it, a single text message " Hey hey Babe! If you're reading this, it means that you're still in good shape and that those two idiots have delivered my message. Have you killed them? No wait don't answer that, I don't care. And if you want to know more, you're gonna meet there in three days. Don't be late..." There was an address at the end of the message.... Valerie sighed angrily. Trevor....

- Ok guys time to get out. Pick up you friend and get out now!

A minute later she was locking her door again and took time to think about what happened tonight. Those two idiots would never go to the police, given the fact that they would probably be charged with breaking and entering.

- Three days... It gives me time to do a bit of recon... But what the hell does he have in mind??

Valerie looked at the time. It was 3.30 A.M, and she was way to alert to go back to sleep. So she prepared herself a strong cup of coffee and started to think about the best way to keep Tawny and Berseh informed about the situation. The T&T building was very well secured so the best course of action would be to start with Berseh, and given their relationship, it would be easier to reach Tawny this way.

- After all, movie studios are always looking for additional security, especially when they were shoot movies with someone as popular Berseh. I'm sure I can get hired.



T&T head office, the next morning

This morning, Tawny arrived a bit earlier at work. It was an important day because she would personally oversee the photoshoot for this month's T&T insider issue. The model she had chosen for the cover was a gorgeous redhead and an accomplished professional, so everything should go as planned.

- But not as beautiful as you my love.... she thought, as she looked at a picture of Berseh on her phone.

She hadn't heard from Roy, and she hadn't learnt anything new about Valerie so she would be able to focus entirely on her work. She took care of some minor tasks like answering e-mails, planning meetings, and made a few phone calls. An hour later, she heard a knock on her doors.

- Come in ! She called. It was Ross, a handsome man in his mid 40's, and one of T&T's best photographers.
- Boss? We have a situation.

Tawny sighed.

- Tell me.
- Heather just called, she's sick, answered Ross
- Ok... who's available? Jenna? Rose, Irina?
- Taken elsewhere. And... what about Miss Berseh, Boss?

Tawny shook her head.

- Movie shooting, she said. She paused for a moment. There was only one thing to do.,,
- Ross, get everything ready I'll join you in the studio within minutes.

Immediately understanding that his Boss was about to do the photoshoot herself, he simply nodded and left. Less than 10 minutes later, she entered the studio and went straight to the locker room to change herself. There was no time to lose. One of the assistants helped her to get dressed and brought her to have her make up done. Tawny took the time to admire herself in the mirror. She was wearing a killer looking latex and leather set; that came with well... rather high platform heels.

- Mmm.. not bad, not bad at all, they did a really good job, thought Tawny, maybe I should buy me one of these...

She sat in the comfortable chair to have her make-up done. Hearing the door open, she turned around to welcome Susan, the studio's make-up artist. She stopped when she saw that it was not Susan, but a young woman who was looking rather terrified, probably at the thought of doing T&T's boss make-up.

- M...Miss Tomsen, I... am Sarah, Susan's assistant. I will do your make-up if... if...you allow me... please?

- Hello Sarah, does Susan have a problem ? Asked Tawny.

- Well... her babysitter couldn't come today so she had to stay home with her daughter

- I'm sorry to hear that, answered Tawny, with genuine concern in her voice.

Tawny looked at Sarah. Her hands were shaking like crazy. She smiled at her.

- Come here sweetie, she said with a reassuring smile. Sarah, how long have you been working here?

- One year, Miss Tomsen.

- That's because Susan trusts you and, if she trusts you, then I'm trusting you too. So I'm sure you will do your best.

Reassured by Tawny's calm and confident attitude, Sarah nodded and started her work.

- Ok, girl, Sarah told herself. This is your chance, so don't screw up... God look at her, she's so beautiful... A while later Tawny got up and looked at herself in the mirror. It was good, it was indeed really good...

- Well done Sarah. It's really good, said Tawny.

- Thank you Miss Tomsen, answered Sarah enthusiastically.

- Come to my office this afternoon after your lunch break, we'll call Susan together to check on her.

Tawny exited the make-up room, and she was soon posing in front of the camera, following Ross skillful directing. 20 minutes and several dozens of pictures later, everything was done, and they had sufficient material to choose a good cover shot for the magazine.

As usual Tawny took the time to thank everyone on the set, and went back to her office after changing back to her usual clothes. She suddenly heard her phone buzz and smiled seeing that it was a text message from her beloved Berseh.

It was saying: « My queen. I can't wait to be with you tonight. Today is a perfect day of shooting so far and guess what.... the studio has hired additional security, and....I've been assigned a new bodyguard for the next few days... Surely, I must have done something bad in another life because Miss Tattoo will take care of me 🤔🤔!!! Oh, and she told me that she wanted to talk to us both,. I said we would be ok, as long she promised not to hit you 🤔😬😬!!! I miss you so much Mistress. »

- I miss you too my love, I miss you too... whispered Tawny.

It didn't take long for her to decide to pick up Berseh after her day, and this way they would finally have more explanations from Valerie.



Industrial area - Trevor's hideout

Trevor was pleased. So far everything was going as planned. He has faked his own death many years ago. He laughed. Thinking about his old partners, he shook his head, remembering how easy it had been to trick these two idiots back then in Africa. Betraying them to the local military had given him enough money to retire and disappear for good. But after a while, he discovered that Valerie had survived. No wanting to leave a witness to his treachery behind, he decided to hunt her down, but with no luck so far.

And then he had learnt that some time ago, some idiot had dug a bit too much and found information about her... So he set his plan in motion. He found a hideout in a place no one would check and started to plan things. He had started monitoring Valerie's activities, which revealed to be quite easy, given the fact that she had created a very profitable private security business. After a close surveillance, he had gathered enough intel, and made his move. He broke into her apartment and left her his little gift.

Trevor knew that Valerie would refuse and try to track him down, so he had taken a little insurance... He smiled as he looked at the sobbing young woman that was tied up on a nearby bed. It had been so easy to pick her up in that nightclub. A little something in her drink and she was done for...

Everything had been set in motion. He roughly pull the girl up and forcefully made her sit on a stool, making her yell in pain in the process.

- Sit here! And scream when I tell you to. I have a phone call to make.

Time to call Valerie.



T&T – Tawny's office

It was later afternoon when they entered Tawny's office. Berseh had been quite angry when she had learnt that the studio had chosen Valerie to be her bodyguard. But at the end of the day nothing happened. The shooting went really well, and Valerie behaved as the professional she was. The three women looked at each other in a moment of tense silence. Valerie was unsure how or where to begin.

- There are so many things they don't know... she thought

Tawny spoke first.

- Well Valerie, we're here. Berseh told me you wanted to talk to us?

- Correct, she answered. She took a deep breath and... was interrupted by the ringing of a phone... Trevor's phone.

Sighing angrily, she picked up.

- What? She snapped

- Oooh easy girl easy, that's not a way to welcome me right?

- Trevor, you've barely spoken for 10 seconds and you're already annoying me.

Berseh and Tawny looked at each other, puzzled. What was going on?

- Oooh very well. Meet me at the abandoned construction yard out of town. Tomorrow night, 10.00 PM. I'll tell you what I want. And don't be late. I have a friend here with me who will be very disappointed if you are...

In his hideout, Trevor put his phone on speaker and grabbed the young woman he had abducted by her hair, cruelly hurting her.

- OOWWW !!!! Please stop stop!!! Let me goooo!! she sobbed, crying in pain and terror.

Trevor let her go and resumed her conversation with Valerie, lying on the floor and sobbing in pain, Julia was terrified. What did that maniac want? He was probably going to rape and kill her, and she was not sure that the order mattered a lot to him...

Valerie clenched her fist in rage.

- Let her go you disgusting bastard! This is between you and me!

- Oh but I will let her go, he answered. You help me, you save her, and I disappear once and for all. It looks like a fair deal to me.

Tawny was intensely focused on the phone exchange, and was holding Berseh's hand, feeling her getting more and more tense as time went by,

- Very well, said Valerie. I'll meet you there but listen very carefully to what I'm about to tell you Trevor. If I don't find her alive tomorrow night. I will MURDER you. And believe me, it's gonna be messy, gruesome, and extremely painful.

- Yeah yeah just like you did with those villagers back then right? Wahahaha! Oh, and by the way how's the boring blondie? And her sidekick bitch?

Through sheer force of will, Valerie remained to stay calm.

- You know I killed those villagers because of you! Snarled Valerie through clenched teeth, and you do not go anywhere near Berseh or Tawny, they're off limits you understand??

- Yeah whatever! Bye hottie!

As soon as she hanged up, Berseh exploded.

- What the hell was that? Who was he? Someone from your « oh so mysterious » past right? And now he wants something from you and he's threatening people around you? People like us? US! Do you hear me Valerie? US!!

Tawny was really worried. She had almost never seen Berseh so angry, and decided to intervene,

- My love, she said, in a soft but firm voice. Please, calm down. She said she wanted to talk to us so let's hear her out.

Berseh rolled her eyes and, sighing angrily, sat down, with her beloved Mistress.

Sitting in front of them, Valerie spoke for the next hour and told them everything. Her job, the covert ops, her former comrades, the terrible incident in Africa seven years ago, her escape in the jungle, and how, driven half mad by thirst, hunger and rage, she had killed a dozen civilians in a small forest village, mistaking them for soldiers....Tawny asked her a question from time to time, wanting to have confirmation about the intel Roy gave her.

Once she had finished, Valerie remained silent, expecting to be fired on the spot.

- Valerie, could you give us a moment? I need to speak with Berseh,
- I'll be outside, she simply answered.

Outside Tawny's office, Valerie realized strangely that she felt a bit relieved. It was the first time in years that she managed to talk about that terrible incident, But the look on their faces, fear, anger, distrust, disgust...The story of her whole life.... She closed her eyes... God, she was so tired of all this....

The doors suddenly flew open. Berseh came out and didn't even look at Valerie when she spoke to her.

- Pick me up at 8.00AM tomorrow. Don't be late, she said in an ice-cold tone.
- Yes, Miss Berseh, Answered Valerie.

Tawny watched Valerie leave and came back in her office, cursing softly as she thought that her own curiosity might, at least partially, be responsible for that Trevor guy reappearance. She'd have to check on Roy tomorrow morning, to make sure she's ok.

Berseh and Tawny's apartment

Tawny stood for a moment in front of the closed door. Valerie just came to pick up Berseh and drive her to the movie set. Security was always very tight in such situations and from what Berseh had told her, the production had spent big money on it.

Tawny went to her bathroom and took some time to think about all this. Strangely, she still felt an odd kind of trust towards Valerie. She had her doubts all right, but she was convinced that she would keep Berseh safe.

- She'd better be, she muttered,

A little while later she was enjoying a nice refreshing shower. Her first meeting was at 10.00am at T&T so she still had time to do a bit of planning. Pacing back and forth in the bathroom, Tawny methodically examined every possible course of action. She paused and smiled, picturing Berseh in the room with her... It would probably end up with lots of kisses and a very very naughty shower....

Going back to today's situation, she realized that there were not that many possibilities. She immediately dismissed teaming up with Valerie and going up against Trevor. She shivered, remembering how much they had suffered after their last adventure together. She would never put Berseh through such suffering again.

Before doing anything, she would need reliable information's about the construction yard. And T&T's tech department had just the perfect person for that. Their computer expert would easily obtain the city's blueprints, even if it meant doing a bit of hacking into the town hall's servers.



That was the first step. Then remained the problem of the « on site » intervention.

- Think girl, think, she told herself.

Roy... Of course, she wouldn't ask him to intervene, or even call the police. It would only result in a big incident with probably many casualties, including the poor girl that bastard had taken hostage. But he told her once that the owner of the firing range downtown was a good friend of his and a former soldier. Maybe he could just happen to.... be in the area and... have a look around... while Valerie was confronting Trevor.

And if he couldn't do it, she would try to provide Valerie with as much intel as she could, about the area, to help her as best as she could.

A clear course of action in mind, Tawny finished to dress up, left her apartment and drove to T&T, ready to start her day.



T&T head office

When she approached Trent Davis's office, T&T's computer expert, Tawny was still hesitating to involve other persons in the situation with Trevor and Valerie. When she knocked on his door, she had reached her final decision. She would send all the intel about the construction yard and the old industrial area she could gather, and send it to Valerie, and that would be it. No need to endanger other people, and especially her beloved Berseh. As she entered his office, Tawny wondered, as usual, if she was entering Trent's office or Trent's brain. Computers, cables, neon lights, high-def monitors everywhere...

He came to her and greeted her with a warm smile.

- Hi Boss, how are you?
- I'm fine Trent how about you?
- Good, good, can't complain. Oh, and you should know everything's fine regarding our data center. I've upgraded our firewalls and now only a military grade cyberattack could break them.
- Thanks Trent answered Tawny.
- Now... what can I do for you ? asked Trent, trying his best not to look at her boss alluring cleavage.
- Do you still have the maps and blueprints of the old industrial area ? If you remember, we got them last year when I had the project to buy land out there to build another office,
- Er... yes, just give me a second.... there.... and... here they are!

Tawny took some time to observe them and handed a usb drive to him.

- Can you put them on this?
- Sure boss, but... why do you need them if I may ask?
- It's a personal matter, answered Tawny. I'm sorry but I can't tell you more.
- No problem, you're the boss, Boss, said Trent with a smile.

She thanked him and left the room. Once she was back in her office she sent the data to Valerie's smartphone and typed a quick message.

« This is the best I can do for you. Bring that poor girl back and be safe. T. »



Industrial area - evening

Valerie had been searching the area for 2 hours, but with no luck so far. According to the information sent by Tawny, this old, abandoned factory just in front of her was the last possible hiding place for Trevor. She silently thanked Tawny and moved forward. Everything around her was silent and bathed in shadows. From the rusted old machinery around her Valerie thought the place was probably some old manufacturing plant.

She was cautiously making her way inside, when she suddenly stopped. Valerie closed her eyes and tried to locate the mysterious noise she was now definitely hearing. A low humming sound, a regular thumping,,,, This was the sound of a generator. Who would need power in such a derelict place? No one, except a disgusting pig capable of abducting a young woman and hurting her just to make her come here. She took a deep breath. She needed to end this now. With Trevor gone, Berseh, Tawny and everyone around herself would be safe,

- Trevor! Trevor come out! Now or I'm leaving!
- Hold on! Hold on! Answered Trevor, as he came out from cover.

Valerie frown as she saw that Trevor was equipped in full battle gear and carried a heavy machine gun.

- Looks like we had the same idea, said Valerie as she raised her assault rifle. You never wanted to ask me anything right?
- You're wrong hottie. I never expected you to survive in that jungle back then. And now we have a problem. So my only questions would be: how do I solve that issue, and after that will I pay a visit that blonde slut and her friend to see which one of them is the best fuck in bed ? And after that of course, poof! I'll disappear again and for good this time... and maybe I'll take my guest with me.

While Trevor was speaking and boasting, Valerie examined him closely.

- New bulletproof vest? She asked
- Latest version, and entirely armored. That should be enough to block those high speed teflon-coated bullets you're so fond of.

Valerie didn't answer and simply fired three times. The bullets hit their mark with remarkable accuracy, and the force of the impact made Trevor take two steps back, but nothing more.

She was already diving for cover when he opened fire. A hail of heavy rounds showered the spot she was standing on a split second earlier, sending shards of metal and concrete everywhere. She quickly took two flashbangs from her belt and threw them towards Trevor. As they detonated, his goggles instantly darkened, absorbing most of the flash.

Valerie used that little time to run to another cover. But at the same time, something unexpected happened. From the crumbling catwalk located 15 feet above her head, two smoke grenades came down to land and detonate at Trevor's feet, plunging him into a thick mist.

Valerie tried to see who was up there, understanding in a blink of an eye that some unknown and visibly concerned third party had decided to join in.



From the catwalk, Tawny observed everything she could, making sure that Trevor was still in the thick smoke. She had seen him coming out from some underground corridor, opening some kind of metal hatch. She guessed that he was probably keeping that poor girl down there. If only she could reach Valerie, maybe they could set up something to divert his attention.

Tawny suddenly thought of Berseh, who had stayed T&T with Trent in his high-tech office. Calling upon his ... other contacts, he had managed to hack a live satellite feed from the area, allowing them to monitor Tawny's movements.

- My poor kitten, thought Tawny bitterly. You're probably worried sick. I'll make it up to you I swear.

Something caught her attention down below. The smoke was dissipating and Trevor! He had probably guessed that someone was on the catwalk and was aiming his machine gun at her! She ran as fast she could all the while firing her Glock in his direction trying to force him to take cover. Sensing the storm of bullets closing in behind her, Tawny accelerated, clearly decided to jump, and catch the metal cable she had spotted at the end of the catwalk. As she prepared herself to jump, the fragile structure suddenly crumbled down beneath her feet. But instead of plunging to the ground and much to Tawny's surprise and relief she found herself sliding down the metal plank she was standing on a second later.

- Ooohh this is gonna hurt....

A painful and spectacular fall later, a still dazed Tawny got up and was trying to get her bearings when a pair of strong hands suddenly pulled her away to cover. She blinked and realized that she was looking at a very surprised and very angry Valerie.

- Miss Tomsen?!? What the hell are you doing here?

- I'm starting to ask myself the same question answered Tawny but thought I could give you a hand.

- Are you insane? This no game and...

Valerie was suddenly interrupted by Trevor's mocking voice,

- Well!! Is that you blondie? You came to join the fun? That's cool. Looks like you're not as boring as I thought... Ok then I'm gonna get rid of my old partner and then I think I'm gonna play with your slutty little ass.. Hahaha !

Tawny's anger flared.

- My ass is too good for you, and you're not even worthy of my soles you fucking bastard! she shouted back.

Valerie laid a hand on Tawny's shoulder.

- You should know that he has an almost supernatural ability to piss people off very quickly. Don't listen to him Miss Tomsen.

- Oh yeah? Answered Tawny. Well, he's damn good. I've known him for 5 minutes and I already want to kill him three times!

Despite the tension, Valerie smiled.

- Miss Tomsen, what did you see when you were up there? Where did he come from? Did you see anything?

- Errr... he came out through some metal hatch or trapdoor in the ground, about 50 meters in that direction from here answered Tawny.

- Good, approved Valerie. I'm gonna draw his fire, and this way you'll have time to reach the hatch. That's probably where he keeps that poor girl. Save her and leave!

- I don't know if you've noticed but he has a heavy machine gun...

- Oh? And you think he's the only one with heavy artillery?

Flashing a predatory smile at Tawny, Valerie armed the grenade launcher attached to her assault rifle.



- Remember, Valerie said. Move each time I'm making noise, ok?
- Ready when you are answered Tawny.
- Now! And she fired a grenade towards Trevor. The projectile detonated against an old machinery, sending bits and shards of metal and concrete everywhere, clouding the area in dust.

Tawny crouched and moved as fast as possible to reach the hatch. Valerie was keeping Trevor busy, and the noise made was just deafening. Another explosion, another 10 meters towards the trapdoor. The entrance might have been trapped but she had no time to loose. As soon as Valerie fired another grenade she jumped through the hatch and landed two meters below. She could see a dimly lit corridor ahead of her. As silent as a cat, she slowly made her way through the various galleries and dirty rooms coursing under the old plant.

As she was wondering if the girl abducted by Trevor was still here, Tawny froze. She closed her eyes and tried to ignore the chaos above her. Yes... faint moans and sobs... Holding her Glock tightly, she burst into the last room, ready to shoot at any potential threats. No one... except a young woman, tied up, blindfolded and gagged, she was frantically turning her head left and right, scared by the noises she was hearing. Tawny immediately holstered her gun and came to her.

- Miss, Miss, calm down! She said in reassuring voice. I'm here to rescue you.
- Mmmpppphph ! MPPMPHPH !

She removed her blindfold, and gag, and freed her. The poor girl was terrified.

- Please help me help me! He's gonna come back! Get me out pleeeasee!
- Don't worry, I have a... friend up there who's taking care of him.

Holding the sobbing girl in a protective gesture, she was about to leave the room, when she stopped. This was definitely Trevor's hideout... with probably a lot of very sensitive intel... Maybe contacts... other hideouts... She would show this to Roy and let him determine the best course of action...She took the encrypted flash drive Trent had given her. From what he had told her, it would immediately download any data as soon as it was inserted in a computer.

There was no time to lose. Tawny quickly put it in the nearest computer. Two minutes later everything was downloaded. Satisfied, she hurried back from where she came, taking the girl with her, clearly intending on leaving that place as soon as Trevor has been dealt with... permanently.

Only one thing mattered to her now: coming back to Berseh.



Tawny was cautiously making her way back to the hatch and stopped, as another explosion rocked the surface.

- Easy girl, easy, she told the terrified young woman. Let me go first to see if it's safe.

She cast a quick glance around and saw that Valerie had maneuvered Trevor away from the trap door, to allow them to exit without being harmed. She told the girl, whose name was Julia, to wait in the corridor until everything was finished. Knowing that the girl was safe for now, she cautiously made her way to Valerie.

Her eyes widened when she saw that she was engaged in what was probably the most brutal and violent hand to hand fight she had ever seen. Both Trevor and Valerie were exchanging blows at terrifying speed. Trevor was more muscular than her and was using the classic close-combat techniques. On the contrary, she was moving faster and fought using a deadly mix of Krav-maga and Penchak Silat. Realizing that she had no chance of taking a shot at Trevor without hitting Valerie, Tawny remained hidden and focused her attention on the fight. It was clear that Valerie was faster and much more agile, and clearly had the upper hand. Trevor was already bleeding from half a dozen very well-placed blows. Suddenly, Valerie closed in and, dodging a powerful hook from Trevor, pivoted while unsheathing one the tantos she had at her belt and plunged it in his shoulder,

Trevor screamed in agony as his left arm went instantly limp.

- That's for Matthew she snarled. Valerie didn't let him react and stabbed him in his chest; viciously twisting her wrist and shredding his lung in the process.

- This is for Dave!

Trevor fell on his knees, already having trouble breathing through his pierced lung, and blandly looked at Valerie.

- They were good men, she continued. And they died because of you! And that last one.... will be for me, because I went through seven years of hell because of you!

She grabbed him by his hair and slammed the hilt of her knife in his throat as hard as she could, crushing his windpipe in the process. Gasping for air, not realizing that he was dying, Trevor looked incredulously at Valerie. One last breath later, he fell on the ground, dead. As she noticed Tawny approaching Valerie picked up her rifle and scanned the area for a minute, ready for possible other threats. Seeing that everything was clear, she quickly typed a short text message: « cleaning required ». She joined the coordinates and put her phone away.

- It's over?

- At last answered Valerie. Looking at her, she raised an eyebrow, noticing that Tawny's apparently indestructible glasses had seemingly magically appeared on her nose. She simply winked at Valerie with a smile.

- The girl is safe, continued Tawny. And... she hesitated and decided to trust Valerie.... I took the time to download what I could from his computers, showing her the flash drive Trent had given her.

- Well done Miss Tomsen I'm impressed, said Valerie. Now we'll be able thwart anything he might have planned. Now come on, let's get that poor girl to the hospital and go home. Miss Berseh must be waiting for you... *and pretty mad about me she thought...*

Berseh & Tawny's apartment – night

After leaving the old industrial area, they parted ways with Valerie. Tawny sent a text message to Berseh to reassure her and called Roy who; was conveniently on night shift at the precinct, and explained the whole story to him. Less than 15 minutes later he was coming to pick up Julia. He would bring her to a hospital and take care of all the paperwork, in a way where no unnecessary questions would be asked. It was time to go home and be with a probably very worried Berseh. once arrived at her apartment she quickly put away the military gear she had taken with her.

As she entered the living-room Berseh, who was trying to kill time by looking at the news on TV, got up and hugged her tenderly.

- I was so worried my Queen. Are you ok?

- I am my love, I am she answered. Everything went fine, and the poor girl that bastard had abducted was safe. We rescued her and I called Roy to take care of her. She must be at the hospital by now.

- Good. I hope she'll recover quickly, said Berseh. her gaze suddenly hardened. "And... our... mutual... acquaintance... "?"

- Valerie went home too, and told me that she would pick you up at 8.00 AM, take you to the studio and bring you back at T&T.



Berseh simply nodded. Tawny saw that her beloved was clearly upset, and much more worried than she appeared to be.

- You know what, said Tawny, it had been quite an eventful evening, and I don't feel like eating anything. But a nice shower with you would do me good before going to bed. What do you say my swan? Just you and me, sharing this together.

- I'd love to Mistress, answered Berseh.

A while later, both lovers were in their bedroom, when suddenly, Berseh threw herself at Tawny and hugged her tightly. Tawny frowned. She loved nothing more than hugging her beloved kitten but this was... unexpected.

- What is it my love? She asked with concern in her eyes.

- I was so scared, Berseh answered. When I was in the room with Trent. It was like looking at some sort of big video game, but without the possibility to save and reload.

- I'm so sorry, said Tawny, furious after herself, feeling how much Berseh was worried.

She looked at Berseh, plunging her blue eyes in hers. Between them existed a degree of love, understanding and trust that most couples could only dream of. And with this, came for both of them the uncanny ability to know when to talk and when not to talk. And Tawny understood that now it was just that: a « not to talk » moment. So, she simply held her. After a while, Berseh looked up at her Queen.

- I know why you wanted to help her. When we heard that poor girl scream, I knew you would do anything to save her. Berseh knew that from her early years at T&T, Tawny had vowed to protect and take care of all the girls coming to work for her.

Too many times had she seen girls dreaming of becoming glamour models, actresses, only to end up forced to shoot dirty porn 24/7, made addicted to drugs... and thrown away like trash when they were not useful anymore. Of course, at T&T there was nothing like that. Tawny had made sure that everyone had the best possible working conditions and was paid good money.

- I couldn't let that bastard abuse her. admitted Tawny. He would have probably raped her ten times before selling her to some slave trading ring, or worse...

Berseh nodded.

- I need to be sure about Valerie, she continued. Her assignment as my bodyguard ends in two days. Tomorrow, after the shooting, I'll have a talk with her. I want to look at her straight in the eyes and see if she's lying or not about her intentions and who she is.

Tawny thought this over for moment. This was a good idea. Basically, Berseh was used to being around people who were constantly playing roles and thus lying. Over the years she had always been extremely good at fishing out liars.

- Good idea, approved Tawny. She stretched and yawned. « But for now, off to bed, I can barely keep my eyes open. »

Less than two minutes later, Berseh and Tawny were cuddling together and rapidly fell asleep,

Movie set - Morning

As planned, Valerie had picked up Berseh at 8.00 am and brought her to the studio. Under her watchful eyes she prepared herself and was now rehearsing one last time with the stunt crew. Valerie saw that it was a complex action sequence involving hand to hand fight, among other things. She could see that Berseh was doing good, going effortlessly through the different steps of the choreography.

- Not bad at all Miss Berseh, she thought. You could become a really good fighter.

Suddenly the director called for everyone, and the shooting began. Valerie didn't see anything to worry about as the day went by. She escorted Berseh as she waited between takes and waited in a remote corner of the stage, during the shooting periods. When the director called for a stop, telling, everyone to take a short lunch break, Berseh came to Valerie.

- We need to talk about what happened, Valerie, said Berseh.

- Er... yes all right, simply answered a slightly puzzled Valerie.

Once in the trailer reserved for her Berseh spoke first.

- After last night, I need to know if you're gonna pull another stunt like that one.

- No, Trevor has been neutralized and the girl he had abducted has been rescued. There's nothing more to worry about,

- Oh yeah? Countered Berseh. And how can you be so sure of that? I'm sorry Valerie, but I still don't trust you on this. I've heard of so many atrocities committed by mercenaries, especially in Africa, that I'm always extremely wary around people like you. And I think that trouble has a way of finding you very easily,

- *People like me... thought Valerie bitterly.*



She was about to retort, but finally decided to go once again for full honesty.

- Miss Berseh, I can't deny the fact that I have done many... questionable things.... and that at some point, I couldn't take it anymore, so I quit, as I told you. I tried to leave my old life behind and build something new. That's why when we bumped into each other at the Pleasant Meadows, and when Miss Tomsen started asking questions about me and dig into things, with remarkable efficiency, I should say, I immediately decided to tell both of you everything, because I knew that lying would have done more harm than good.

- She wanted to make sure that you were trustworthy, answered Berseh, just like with every people around us.

- I can understand that said Valerie. And what about you Miss Berseh? Is that why we're having that conversation?

- Correct. You see, as you've probably guessed, Tawny is my everything, and she means the world to me so, just as she does her best to keep me safe, I try, in my own way, and with my own means, to make sure she's safe as well, and that the persons she meets can be trusted. So I'll keep it simple: tell me that you CAN be trusted.

Valerie took a deep breath and chose her words carefully before answering.

- Miss Berseh, I chose to give you my real name, I told you everything about my life, my career, who I am, and what I've done. I have nothing more to give you.

- I... respect that, answered Berseh but...

A sharp knock at her door interrupted them. It was time to get back to work. The rest of the shooting went fine, and after a short talk with the director, Berseh left the stage, applauded by everyone. It was around 3.00 PM when she left the studio with Valerie and prepared herself to meet the small crowd of fans and photographers that had gathered outside.

- Miss Berseh!
- Berseh, over here!
- Turn around please!

Valerie focused her attention on the crowd, ready to face any potential threats, while Berseh was taking some time to pose for the photographers and sign a couple of autographs. The crowd continued to call for her as they were approaching the black SUV waiting for them.

- Miss Berseh, a last one please!
- Berseh, look this way please!
- OUT OF THE WAY PUNK! WE WANNA SEE BERSEH!
- Ouch, thought Valerie, shaking her head. I guess that was inevitable,

A minute later they were all seated in the car and on their way to T&T.



T&T – Tawny's office – the next day

It was already noon when Tawny welcomed Berseh and Valerie in her office.

- So good to see you my love, said Tawny, hugging her kitten and kissing her. How was the shooting this morning?
- Everything was perfect answered Berseh. And I'm done for today so I'm all yours, should you need me for anything.
- Mmmm... in fact I might have something in mind, said Tawny. I'll tell you in a minute.

She turned towards Valerie.

- I must thank you for taking care of Berseh during those days, said Tawny. If I recall correctly, it ends today, right?
- Correct, answered Valerie. The studio just wired my fees this morning and I'm starting a new assignment in two days. So, this is the last time I'll be coming here.

Valerie straightened herself and made a stiff bow.

- Miss Berseh it has been an honor to meet you, and you too Miss Tomsen. I wish you all the best.

A bit surprised by this very formal farewell both lovers looked at each other and wished the same to Valerie. A minute later, they were left alone in Tawny's office.

- Well, that was... short.... commented Berseh.

- Yeah... I can't help but feel sorry for her. I hope she's gonna be ok. No one should have to endure what she's been through.

- I hope so too, answered Berseh. But to be honest with you my queen, I'm relieved that she has left. Someone with such a heavy past, is very often a magnet for all kind of trouble, and the Trevor case has proved it.

- True but.... Tawny hesitated... I wish I had the time to know her a bit better.

Berseh smiled and hugged her beloved Mistress. She had such a kind heart.

- But you're right, continued Tawny, we don't need the sort of trouble she might bring upon us. Now let me explain to you what I had in mind for this afternoon. For the new issue of our magazine, I decided to do an eight page lay-out of our best models, on various themes, like advertising our products and showing the latest lingerie creations of our designers. And I thought we could do a beautiful black and white centerfold together. What do you say?

- As long as it's something with you Mistress, my answer will always be yes, answered a smiling Berseh,

Tawny showed the project to Berseh, who made small comments about the planned shooting, recognizing the names of some of T&T's best resident models.

- Thank you, my love, said Tawny, you know how much I value your feedbacks, Now let's go.

Once arrived in the studio, Berseh took the time to speak with the staff members, when she heard a familiar voice behind her,

- Miss Berseh? What a pleasant surprise!

She turned around and recognized Ross Jensen, T&T's senior photographer.

- Hello Ross, how are you?

- I'm fine thank you. Are you here for the photoshoot? Miss Tomsen told me that she had something special planned for the centerfold... Could that be you?

- Indeed, yes, answered Berseh. Will you be directing everything?

- Yes, said Ross. And now that you're here I know that it's going to be even better. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to prepare everything.

Berseh was pleased. Ross was competent, had incredible technical skills, was always kind and respectful of the models he was working with, and had a confident, mature, and calm attitude that made people immediately at ease around him. All of this made the 50-year-old photographer extremely popular among the models. Of course, this had nothing to do with the fact that he was also devilishly handsome...

She laughed and joined Tawny to prepare herself. As expected, everything went smooth, and two hours later, Tawny and Berseh were on set, following Ross expert directing,



Valerie's forest cabin – 2 hours north of Town – a month later

As Valerie put her towel on the small wooden deck, she took some time to think about the recent event in her life. Her meeting with Tawny and Berseh, the reappearance of Trevor and the terrible fight in the abandoned plant.... Did she really put her past behind her once and for all? Only time will tell.

But she had realized soon that what troubled her the most had been her meeting with Miranda first, and then with Berseh and Tawny. Maybe she was lying to herself, or maybe she had really forgotten what those feelings were. So as usual she had hidden everything behind the super thick emotional armor, she had built around her over the years.

But Valerie immediately realized that it was already too late and that the way she protected herself would not work anymore. And then there was Mark... She remembered the first time they met at Travis's bar. With him she had a small taste of what her life could be from now on. So she called him twice over the last month, and each time they spent a wonderful evening and night. Valerie shook her head and laughed softly, remembering how she had almost begged him to fuck her senseless, the second time.... But soon she would have to make a choice regarding that relationship too, and she wasn't even sure of what she really wanted....

She also remembered Sven's words, at the dance studio. His question had been so true, so accurate... What was she running away from?

And last but not least, those damn nightmares were still haunting her nights...

So just like every time she needed to sort out her feelings, she took a few days off her work and left town to spend some time alone in her forest cabin. Thanks to the considerable fees she had earned over the years, she had bought a small parcel of land in a beautiful forest area on which she had installed a fully equipped wooden lodge.

A minute later Valerie was enjoying the soothing caress of the sun on her skin. She breathed deeply, trying to empty her mind as best as she could. She knew that her most difficult battle was still ahead of her.



This morning Tawny decided to work on the cover of the next T&T insider issue. She had chosen the theme; it would be a lingerie special. Apart from the traditional product advertising, interviews and various articles, a good part of the magazine would be used to show the most recent creations of T&T's designers: lace, latex, leather, and more classical things...

But she she felt that this time it was missing something. She wanted to add something more, something to attract more readers and of course, more potential customers. Knowing that Berseh had only a couple of business meetings with Mario this morning, she sent her a text message asking her to meet her at the photo studio.

Tawny had a few ideas, but she thought that, as usual, Berseh's insight would prove invaluable. She looked at today's schedule. Ross was working all day and would be directing several photoshoots. It wouldn't hurt to talk with him about it.

She rapidly finished what she had planned and went to the studio, hoping to catch Ross during his break.

- There you are my love, she said, as she saw Berseh chatting with some of the staff.

Berseh smiled and kissed her Mistress tenderly.

- I'm all yours my queen. What did you need me for?

Tawny took the time to explain everything to her. Of course, Berseh accepted on the spot to pose on T&T magazine, especially with her lioness.

- So what do you think? Asked Tawny.

- Mmm.. All of this sounds good. I agree on the fact that you need something more to really catch the eye. What about doing a three-person cover? You, me and another model looking well... more exotic?

- You mean like ink, piercings, things like that?

- Yes why not? Anyway, I trust you on this Mistress, I'm sure you'll find something great.

Tawny laughed and kissed her. A instant later, both lovers turned around to welcome Ross Jensen, who had just finished his current photoshoot. As Berseh was greeting him, Tawny suddenly realized that she knew someone who could pose with them. Someone whose body was almost entirely inked...After all they haven't heard about her during the last weeks, and as far as she knew, she was still in town, so why not?



A few minutes later Tawny had explained her ideas to Ross.

- I'm with you on that Boss, he answered. And I agree that something more exotic on the cover could be really great.
- Can you see if we have someone available for that?
- Sure, Boss. Now if you'll excuse me, my break is over, and I need to get back to it. Miss Berseh, it's always a pleasure to see you.
- Thank you Ross. Have a nice day, answered Berseh, letting her eyes linger on him as he left the room.
- Handsome right? Said Tawny, a naughty gleam in her eyes. I wouldn't mind having him joining one of our games... Don't you think?
- Rumor has it that he's pretty open minded, said Berseh. So.... she laughed,
- Now my love, continued Tawny, about that « exotic looking model » we were talking about... well... we have met one recently.... If you remember ...

Berseh sighed.

- I wouldn't mind if only there were not so many unknown things around her. Who knows what kind of problems *Miss buy one trouble – get the other for free* could attract?
- I know answered Tawny, but.... she paused, trying to choose her words carefully.... It's just that I thought it could be a good occasion to know her a bit better.
- I know how you feel my queen, and I know that you're trying to find a way to help her out of all this. I don't have anything personal against her it's just that I still don't trust her « past ».
- I can't deny that the fact that I really feel sorry for her but... she smiled at Berseh... If you're not comfortable with this and you still have doubts, then we'll forget it.

Tawny leaned forward and kissed her tenderly.

- You know that ...*kiss*... I respect you too much... *kiss*.... to force anything upon you ...*kiss*... and that your feelings and well-being are what matters the most to me... *KIIIISSSSSSSS*.

- Thank you Mistress, whispered Berseh after they broke their passionate kiss.

Tawny looked at the Sybian vibrator on the couch.

- Mmm... I wouldn't mind having a bit of fun of that diabolical thing, with you, kissing me all along...she said. She got up. « Too bad there's still too much people around here. »

Berseh laughed and followed her naughty lioness to her office.



Valerie had almost finished packing everything when she felt her phone buzz. It was Andrea, her broker in charge of finding and negotiating the security jobs that might interest her.

- Hey Andrea, said Valerie.

- Hi boss, she answered. How's it going?

- Not bad. What do you have for me?

- Nothing this week Boss. I took the liberty to refuse a couple jobs for this week, knowing that ... well.... it's in two days right?

Valerie closed her eyes. In two days, it was indeed his grandfather's anniversary of death. Knowing this would always be a difficult time, she was always taking a few days off to prepare herself and made the trip to the place where he was buried.

- You're the best Andrea, thanks, said Valerie.

- No problem boss, let me know when you're in town answered Andrea, as she hanged up.

Valerie finished packing everything, and climbed in her pickup. She took a deep breath, feeling the powerful engine roar into life.

Yes... difficult times indeed.....



Valerie's apartment – night

When she came home yesterday, Valerie decided to spend the day relaxing. She would need to have a clear mind for the day to come, knowing that it would be as stressful as usual. So she decided to go to sleep early. Was it because of the past weeks or because she started to feel things, she thought she would never feel again, but this night the nightmares were stronger than before.

As usual she woke up panicked, covered in sweat, her heart beating fast. She closed her eyes, trying to calm her breathing, but this time, Hoshi's meditation routine didn't work. And of course, surely because she was caught in a moment of particular weakness, the latent PTSD she had managed to hold at bay for seven years triggered and struck, at full force.

Suddenly, Valerie heard noises coming from outside her bedroom. Intruders? How could it be? She quickly picked up the silenced P220 she kept under her bed and ducked for cover, ready to shoot any intruder passing her door. She squeezed her eyes shut, telling herself that she was still dreaming, that all of this was happening in her head. But when she opened them, things were even worse. Everything around her was bathed in a color she knew all too well.

The red haze was back.

- Noooooo !! she screamed. How could... wait !! movement!

She fired twice at the strange shadows she had spotted, but to no avail. They simply vanished out of existence. Not wanting to get herself cornered in her room, Valerie dashed for her door and quickly took cover behind a nearby sofa.

- Murderer! Murderer!

- Leave me alone !! shouted Valerie to the voices accusing her.

Several times she fired at those strangers shadows. And as Valerie felt her panic reaching new heights, something unexpected happened. Her last shot had shattered a vase on a nearby table and one of the shards, bigger than the others, hit her in the cheek, cutting her in the process. It was only a small cut, but the sudden jolt of pain and the surprise were enough to pull her out of her madness,

Valerie simply dropped her gun and fell to the ground, feeling her heart rate slowly going back to normal. A moment later, realizing what had just happened, she burst into tears. Seven years... Seven years of efforts and iron discipline... All of this for nothing...

- I can't stand it anymore, she sobbed. I'm so tired....

Exhausted and defeated, Valerie thought that tomorrow, she would go to her grandfather's grave one last time, and she would put an end to all of this once and for all.

With that last grim thought, she simply fell asleep where she was.



Valerie woke up on the floor feeling bruised, but strangely calm and rested. She knew what she had to do. She got up and, ignoring the carnage around her, went to prepare herself some breakfast. A while later, she took a shower, and dressed up with her best working suit. In her office, she opened her safe, and took the mahogany box containing the .45 1911 Colt her grandfather had offered her.

A one hour drive later, she parked her truck on the forest track and walked to the spot she visited every year. God... how much she loved this place... She went to the clearing where the ashes of her grandfather were buried. She had chosen something simple. So there was only a plain stone slab with a single name on it: Alexander George Austin.

- I'll be with you soon Grandpa, she whispered.

Valerie walked back to the track and sat on the wooden bench, just in front of the stream that was flowing across the forest. She opened the box, took the gun and put it aside on the bench. As time went by, she lost counts of how many times she had picked up the gun and put it down.

- Come on girl; be brave one last time!

She picked up the gun, and spent some time looking at it. She took a deep breath, put it against her head and...

- WHEEW, said someone sitting beside her. I forgot it was quite a ride to come all the way here.

Valerie was so startled that she almost fell off the bench.

They say that in extreme circumstances, hope, fate, karma or whatever they would call it, always finds a way to reach out to deserving people. Most of the time it would be just a feeling, some sort of sign people would notice. Today was no exception.

But on this very particular day, as Valerie was only seconds away from ending her life, hope took the form of a wheezing old man. An old man who had left the security of his four walls at the dance studio, took his car, drove all the way here, and was now looking at her, a warm smile on his lips.

She blinked incredulously several times as she recognized him.

Sven.



- Sven?!?!? B...but what are you... How... Why are you ...

Valerie was so surprised she couldn't even speak, He smiled and gently grabbed the gun she was still holding.

- I'll tell you everything, but first we'd better put that thing away, he said with a smile. I don't want you to shoot me by accident right?
- Wh... what are you doing here? She asked.
- Sweetie, I knew I would find you here on that particular day, on the day he passed away so many years ago.
- You ... knew him?

Sven took a deep breath and held Valerie's hands in his. Poor girl... she looked so sad and miserable right now.

- Alexander, your grandfather, was a good friend. I remember him the day you joined the army. God, he was so proud... Then one day, he came to see me at the dance studio. He was devastated. It was seven years ago. Using his connections in the military, he had learnt about the african incident.

Valerie looked at him, appalled.

- You knew? She asked him, with tears in her eyes.

Sven simply nodded before continuing.

- That night, I think it was the first time I've ever seen him cry. Of course, he was happy to know that you had managed to escape and survive the whole ordeal, but he was also terrified, because, he knew the kind of toll it would take on you.

- Then you know how I feel for having done things that nothing can forgive, sobbed Valerie bitterly.

She suddenly threw herself at him and burst into tears. There was nothing to say in such a situation, so Sven simply held her as she sobbed violently in his arms.

- Look at her, old friend, he thought. Can you see how brave she is, fighting so hard? You can be proud of her.

A few painful minutes later, Valerie had calmed down a bit and looked up at Sven. Startled, he realized that the beautiful and fierce young woman was gone, and that he was only looking at a lonely little girl.

- How do I make the pain go away? She pleaded. How do I stop hurting, Sven?
- Oh my god, that was heartbreaking, he thought. Sweetie, one day you'll suddenly realize that the wound had become less painful, and you'll only remember it as a bad memory. It takes time of course. But I'm not worried. I know you're strong enough to overcome it. And soon you will see all the good you have done in your work, during all those years,
- So... *sob...* you don't th...think...*sob...* I'm just a murderer...?
- Of course not !! answered Sven fiercely.
- Those poor villagers...whispered Valerie.

Sven smiled and held her against him, as they watched the beautiful landscape around them, A while later, he felt that Valerie was somehow calmer. He suddenly got up and went to pick up something in his van. Valerie's eyes widened when he came back with his violin.

- I came here to pay my respects to my old friend, and I was hoping you could accompany me.
- Er... given how much I've cried, I'm not sure I'll sing very well...
- You will do just fine, and you have fabulous voice, trust me, said Sven., who played the beginning of a ballad she knew very well.

Valerie simply nodded and closed her eyes, remembering the lyrics and letting the music flow through her.

When Sven finished the song, he looked at Valerie, who had her eyes still closed and was breathing more calmly. She opened her eyes and looked at him, a weary look on her face.

- I'm so tired Sven, so tired of being alone.
- And who says you have to be ? said a very familiar voice behind her.



Valerie turned around and stared blandly at the two people looking at her. Tawny and Berseh. But they were not alone. From a fourth car came three more people: Hoshi and his wife from the martial arts school, and Travis, the bartender. She turned towards Sven, once again almost too amazed to speak.

- But?? How? How do you know them? What kind of magic did you work?
- Let's say I'm good at finding people, said Sven. But more seriously? Did you remember the last time you came to the studio? How much time you spent talking to me about those new persons you had met? How you were feeling connected again with people? This is no magic trust me, just connecting people.
- When he came to me, I immediately felt that something was wrong and that we had to go with him, confirmed Tawny.

As Valerie was speaking with Sven, Berseh took the time to look at her. She was looking miserable and seemed to have cried a lot. Suddenly she noticed something metallic on the wooden bench. Was that a gun? Remembering what Valerie had confessed to Tawny and her, and seeing the quiet land around them, Berseh understood immediately what had happened.... She stepped forward and stood in front of Valerie.

- Are you all right?

- No, simply whispered Valerie, shaking her head.

Her suffering was clearly visible. Berseh simply took Valerie's hand into hers.

- Whatever you might have done in the past, ending things like this... is never a solution. I have nothing against you personally Valerie, I just don't trust your past, and as Tawny and I told you, we're doing what it takes to keep us safe. But you didn't hesitate to give us your real name, and you told us everything about yourself. I ... highly respect that, just like I respect the fact that you are trying to leave your past behind and start something new. And call me a cheap shrink but I think your training and the incredibly hard discipline you have forced upon yourself over the years are only a partial answer to your problem.

Valerie gave Berseh a questioning look.

- What I'm saying is: don't you think the soldier has earned some rest after all these years? Maybe the woman could come forth and simply live? That doesn't mean you will forget who and what you were, you know,

Tawny smiled and looked at Berseh with pride in her eyes. This was the best advice she could give Valerie.

- Those were wise words Miss Berseh, suddenly said Hoshi. Valerie, take your time to recover and heal, and come see me at the school, we need to talk,

- I will Master Hoshi, she said.

Then Travis came to her and simply hugged her.

- Should you need anything, he said. You just come to me. Anytime.

- I will, answered, Valerie.

- You see sweetie, finally said Sven. All these people here, in their own way, are caring for you. So don't you ever say that you're alone again. To all of you I want to express my deepest gratitude for coming here on such short notice and showing Valerie that she's not alone.

Everyone gave Valerie comforting words and soon, they were all driving out of the area.



2 weeks later

As I exit the huge studio and heads towards the big SUV that will bring me back to town, I spend some time posing and smiling at the small crowd gathered here. I give them my best professional smile, and as I 'm about to climb in the car, a young girl bursts through and approaches me, handing me a single rose.

- For you Miss Berseh she says in a high-pitched voice. You're sooo pretty !!
 - Aawww, thank you sweetie, I answer her.

As I kneel, I notice that she's holding a cellphone. I gently take it from her and, holding her close to me, I take a couple of selfies of me and her, and hand it back to her. I smile as I saw her giggle and going back to her mom, waving me goodbye and saying « thankyouthankyouthankyou!! »

I finally get into the car, and make myself comfortable, ready to endure the 2 hour-drive that would take me back to town and to my beloved Queen. I send a quick text message to Mario to keep him informed about the shooting and put my phone away,

Then of course my thoughts immediately came back to my lioness.

- I wish you would be here with me Mistress. You'd have so much fun shooting those scenes, playing that badass girl, roaming the desert with me in your monster truck, battling bandits and slavers. I would be your obedient and loyal sidekick, always following your orders in all situations, even the naughty ones... well especially the naughty ones...

The more I think about it, the more I'm convinced that it was a good idea to accept that role in that cyberpunk / postapocalyptic movie. We were driving for 45 minutes when my thoughts suddenly came back to Valerie, and the forest incident that happened two weeks ago.

God... she looked so hurt and in such pain. Thank God (and Sven's incredible insight), things didn't end up in a dramatic way. But still... I hope she'll be ok... I know all too well how quick it can go sideways... I need to talk to Tawny about all this. Surely, we can do something to prevent a tragic ending...

An hour later, the SUV was going through the traffic in town, when an idea popped into my mind. What if called Denise? As a teacher she surely has encountered such issues among some of her students. I'm sure she'll have valuable advice about all this.



Berseh and Tawny's apartment – evening

After a nice dinner, both lovers spent some time watching TV, cuddled together on the sofa.

- Are you ok my love? Asked Tawny
- In your arms, answered Berseh, sighing contentedly, always.

Tawny smiled and kissed her.

- Mmmm, this is really boring, she said. Let's take a nice shower and go to bed.
- Yeah, let's go, answered Berseh, when she noticed the naughty gleam in her Mistress's eyes.
- You go first said Tawny, and wait for me in the other room.

Delighted, Berseh did as she was told, and after a refreshing shower, entered the other bedroom, which Tawny had arranged for more ...intense games... She smiled as she noticed the sybian vibrator on the floor, the bondage cross, and a banging machines with, quite large dildo attachments, remembering how much Tawny loved those. She noticed a set of cuffs, a matching collar and a leather blindfold, prepared on the bed. Wondering what crazy sex games her Mistress had prepared, Berseh hopped on the bed, put on the cuffs and the blindfold and knelt on the bed, her hands behind her back. Ten minutes later. Tawny entered the room and quietly closed the door behind her. She took some time to admire her beautiful lover waiting on the bed. How much she loved her... She climbed on the bed and hugged her from behind.

- Good, you're ready, she whispered in Berseh's ear. I like it when you're so eager. But we need something more... Something I would never let anyone do but me....

As she spoke, Tawny gently grabbed Berseh's wrists and tied them up to the ropes hanging from the bed's metal frame.

- Mmmm.. I could spend hours doing this, tying you, kissing you everywhere....

Berseh was breathing faster, getting more and more aroused by her mistress skillful carresses. A gentle kiss on her neck, a light nipple pinch, a bit of expert fingering and soon she felt herself dripping wet.

- Good, said, Tawny in those soft, sensual whispers that drove Berseh crazy. You're ready for the next part.

She picked up the magic wand she had brought and turned it on. Soon Berseh's moans of pleasure filled the room and Tawny kept teasing her.

- Mmm.... yes yes... please Mistress, Can I ... Oooh god YEESS!!

Again Tawny removed the vibrator, just before Berseh could orgasm. After a while, just when Berseh had been driven crazy with lust, everything suddenly stopped. and Berseh could only hear her lioness's steady breathing. This time the magic word came without warning.

- Cum.

- Oh! Oooohh!! god yesyesyes YEESSSS!!!! Han han han!!! YEESSSS!!

Tawny wrapped her arms around her and held until she caught her breath. She released her and removed the blindfold.

- What a blast said a still panting Berseh.

Tawny simply smiled at her and got on all fours on the bed. Berseh looked at her and had the thrilling impression that she was indeed watching a hot and sexy lioness circling around her prey. A mutual understanding look was all that it took to have Berseh enthusiastically working her tongue on her Mistress's crotch.

- Nnngnn, yes, just like that, yes yes!

A few minutes of loud pleasure moans later, Berseh decided to add a finger to make things more intense,

GOOOOD, YEES! Moaned Tawny, as she felt Berseh's fingers inside her, Don't stop, I'm... gonna... CUUUUMM !!!!!

Tawny took some time to recover and hugged her beloved kitten tenderly.

- Wow, said Berseh.

- Wow indeed my love, that was wonderful. Now, let's clean up all this and go to bed. It's getting late.

As they were chatting a bit in bed, Tawny noticed that Berseh was bit preoccupied.

- What is it my love?
- Oh, I was just thinking about Valerie, and how close we were to a real tragedy.
- Yes, she seemed to be in such pain, approved Tawny,
- No one should feel this way, said Berseh.
- I agree. We need to think of something about all this. But for now, let's sleep.

Berseh snuggled into Tawny's arms and quickly fell asleep. Tawny joined her shortly after.

- I wonder what she's doing now, she wondered. I just hope she's ok.



Pleasant Meadow restaurant – the same evening

As she was sipping at her wine, while listening to Mark, Valerie was still surprised that he had accepted this date so quickly. Maybe she was imagining thing, but he seemed to really enjoy her company. From what he had told her, he owned an art gallery in town, hence the Edward Hopper allusion when they met in Travis bar last time. After the forest incident. Valerie took some time to process Berseh 's advice. Her nights were still plagued with nightmares, but nothing like this horrible lucid dream she had experienced. She made a mental note to find a way to properly thank Sven, and also Tawny and the others who came. And so she had decided to do things a bit differently. She was taking baby steps of course, like going out for a bit shopping, to her favorite pool house and she even had a drink with Miranda. it was better than nothing.

- Stop questioning yourself girl, and just enjoy the moment.

After an excellent meal, both of them shared a last drink on one of the restaurant outside terraces. Just like last time, Valerie enjoyed the discreet and mature flirting from Mark. She smiled seductively, thinking that she wouldn't mind if it ended like last time.

He insisted on paying the bill and drove her back to her apartment.

- Ok, started Valerie, it's gonna sound cheesy but, you wanna come in ?
- I like cheesy, simply answered Mark.

Of course, it didn't take long for them to almost jump at each other, and they were soon kissing aggressively in the lift. Valerie fumbled a bit with her keys and shut the door behind them. Throwing their clothes here and they arrived in Valerie's room fully naked. Satisfied to see that all this aggressive foreplay had made him rock hard, she dropped to her knees and started to blow him, while rubbing herself, sensing that she was really wet.

- Nnnnggg, looks like you're still hungry tonight, girl, he said.
- Mmmphhpff, simply moaned Valerie. *You have no idea she thought. And I don't care if you think I'm a horny slut, I just want you inside me!*

After a while Mark lifted her up and sat her on the bed.

- My turn, now, he said with a smile,
- Oh yeah ? Answered Valerie. Then show me.

While speaking, she executed a perfect ballet split, looking at Mark with lust in her eyes.

- Oh wow, that's impressive, he said, as he started to skillfully work on her clit and her labia with his tongue, while caressing Valerie's muscular thighs,
- Goodd, yees, don't stop!!! It feels too good!!

When both of them sensed they were ready for more, Valerie positioned herself over him and lowered her hips, moaning from pleasure as she felt Marks cock pressing inside her.

- Oooh yes just like that.

She started pumping her hips up and down and was delighted to feel that just like last time, Mark was easily keeping up with her, as she rode him in reverse cowgirl,

- *Fuuuck he's good, she thought.* But this time.. ...l...nnggl want more...Nnnngg if I could just yes.... Oh god yes fits just like a glove!

- Ouch! Hey you could have warned me, said Mark as he realized that Valerie had just impaled her ass on his cock.

- Don't...nngng... tell me ... han han... you don't like it?
- I... do... but still.... you could have.....
- Ssshhh... less... talking.... more ...f...fucking...

It didn't take them very long to finish things in a very loud orgasm and stay on the bed to recover.

- Wow, you made quite a mess, said Valerie, looking at her cum covered tits.
- What can i say ? He answered. That's the effect you have on me.

Valerie giggled.

- Come on let's take a quick shower and sleep. I have a busy day tomorrow and I'm sure you have too.



Berseh and Tawny's apartment, the next day

It was still early when Berseh and Tawny were sharing a light breakfast, doing a bit of idle chatter. They were discussing the photoshoot scheduled this afternoon, and after that the final draft of the magazine would be sent to printing.

- So, what do you think my love? Asked Tawny

Berseh took some time to think things over. Of course, her beloved queen was talking about asking Valerie to pose with them for the three-person cover they had thought about.

- A week ago, I would have said no, without hesitation but.... after the forest incident.... well.... I guess it could keep her mind off things...

- My swan I know you don't like this too much. That's why I have additional security today. It's gonna be short so there shouldn't be any problems. The photoshoot is scheduled at 4.00PM so.... I'd like to make you assess her « skills » if you're ok with that.

- Assess her? Asked Berseh.

- Yes, confirmed Tawny. Just take some time to see if she has the basic modeling skills required for a simple photoshoot.

- Oh, this? Of course, Mistress answered Berseh with a smile. I'll do it.

- God then I'll call her, when we're at T&T.

Both lovers finished their breakfast, and prepared themselves, and soon they left the apartment. Their mornings passed quickly, Berseh had a business meeting with Mario, and Tawny had several reunions about ongoing projects. After a quick lunch, they were in Tawny's office when they heard a soft knock. A second later, Valerie entered the room, wearing her usual business suit and heels. As usual she made a sharp bow.

- Miss Tomsen, Miss Berseh. A pleasure to see you as always.

- *Mmmm... You should really try to relax a bit, girl, Berseh thought*

Tawny examined Valerie as she stepped into the room. The confident and professional attitude was back, as well as something a bit different than usual. She couldn't exactly point out what it was. Oh well... we'll see about that later.

- So, Valerie, since I've explained everything to you on the phone this morning; are you still ok to give us a hand this afternoon? It could be a good way to try something new for you.

When she received Tawny's phone call this morning, Valerie's first reaction was to refuse. After all, the recent events had proved that... well... things could still happen. But after the death of Trevor, the forest incident and Berseh's invaluable advice, she had decided to move on. Her past in the military was no secret, and her *other* past was only available to people with extremely good connections, like Tawny, so why not?

- I am yes. And all I can say is : lead on.

- Good, approved Tawny. Berseh will show you to the dressing room, while I make sure everything is ready in the studio.

A few minutes later, Berseh and Valerie stepped in the dressing room.

Good, said Berseh, noticing that everything had been prepared. So, these stockings are for you and those leather leggings are for me. Let's get dressed.... or not...

Berseh looked at Valerie as she undressed and put on the stockings.

- Ok, you're pretty, and you're definitely hot, she thought, but let's see if you have what it takes for this.

- I'm ready, said Valerie.

- It's gonna be simple. Just static shots meant for a cover, nothing too complicated. I can see that you're not exactly shy so it's gonna be even easier. Since we have a bit of time, we're gonna rehearse a bit.

- Ok, what do you need me to do?

- Walk towards me. er... no I said walk not march...as she saw Valerie taking a few rigid steps. There... much better. Now can you take a pose, anything you have in mind.... Mmmm, not bad, it does lack a bit of natural and charisma but that shouldn't be a problem, since Ross Jensen is real pro and is extremely good at making beginner models at ease. Do you have any questions?

- No, everything sounds good to me.

- Good let's go then,

- I'm right behind you Miss Berseh, said Valerie,

Putting on light dressing gowns, they entered the studio where Tawny and Ross Jensen were discussing together,



T&T head office - Ross's studio

Ross Jensen was finishing his preparation when he spotted Berseh and a purple haired woman he didn't know. Seeing his questioning look, Tawny explained the situation to him.

- She's an... acquaintance of us and has done a bit of modeling. Given her exotic looks, I thought she could do the trick for this month cover.

- I'd say that exotic is an understatement, and speaking of tattoos, I was expecting a back piece, sleeves or even a leg, but this.... wow, you don't see that very often.

Tawny nodded.

He welcomed Berseh and introduced himself to Valerie.

- Miss I'm Ross Jensen I'll be your photographer today. Welcome to T&T and my humble studio. As usual, she gave him her usual sharp head nod.
- Thank you Mister Jensen. I'm Valerie Austin. I'll do my best.
- I'm sure you will. Ok everyone let's get ready!

Ross started to take several test pictures, circling around them, trying various ideas for the cover, and directing them with practiced ease. Half an hour later, he stopped and showed what he had in mind to Tawny and Berseh. Both gave him approving nods, admiring once again the senior photographer's skill.

- Ok, ladies, please get in position.

The cover picture would be a standing shot of all three women, with Tawny in the middle and Berseh and Valerie on her sides. Ross had taken several pictures when suddenly he stopped and smiled.

- Boss? Do you really think I'm not seeing your left hand slowly and mysteriously moving down towards, well... Miss Berseh's.... behind, probably with the intention of caressing it or maybe even squeezing it a bit ? he said with a mischievous gleam in his eyes.

Tawny suddenly realized that he was indeed right, and burst out laughing. Of course the relationship between Berseh and Tawny was not a secret, and soon everyone in the studio was laughing.

- All right, all right, I'll behave said a still laughing Tawny.

And a minute later Ross took the final shots and uploaded them on his laptop.

- Thank you Miss Austin, you did really good for a beginner, he told her.
- You're welcome Mister Jensen, in fact I.. had fun, answered Valerie.

The studio staff worked as efficiently as usual and soon everything was prepared for the next photo session Ross was having. Back in the dressing room, Tawny suddenly hugged Berseh and kissed her passionately.

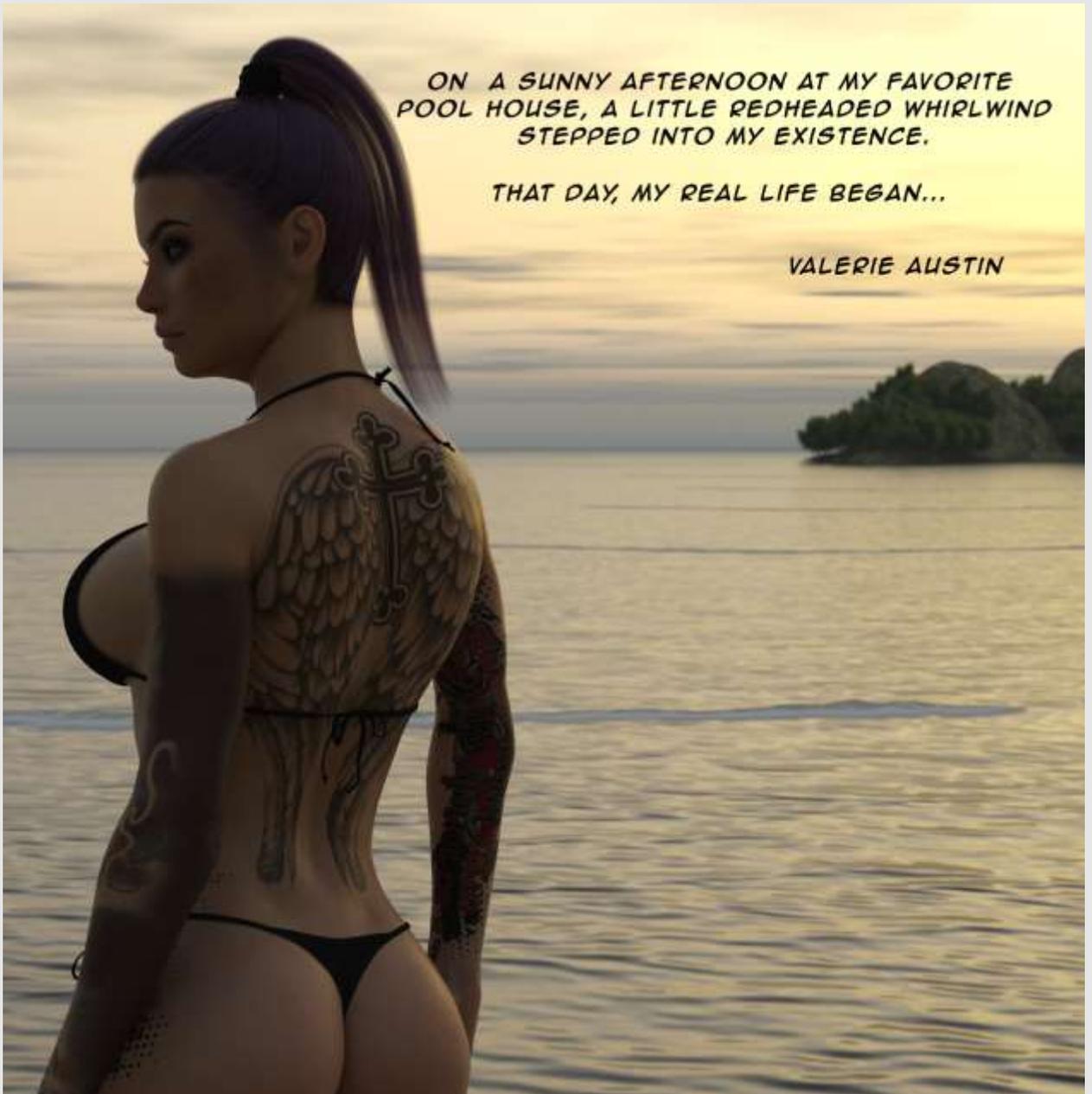
- Thank you my love, thank you for agreeing to this, she said. I know you still have your doubts about her past.
- I do, yes, but I can't help thinking about the forest incident, and how close we've been to... well you know... So, as I said, if it can keep her minds off things, well...

Tawny smiled and kissed her again.

Once changed back into their daily clothes, they went back to Tawny's office. After a bit of idle chatter. Valerie explained that she was working at the Pleasant Meadows tonight and had to leave. She turned towards Berseh.

- Thank you Miss Berseh. I won't forget the advice you gave me.
- Er... just be well... and remember that ending things like this is never a solution.
- I will.

She bowed and left their office.



ON A SUNNY AFTERNOON AT MY FAVORITE
POOL HOUSE, A LITTLE REDHEADED WHIRLWIND
STEPPED INTO MY EXISTENCE.

THAT DAY, MY REAL LIFE BEGAN...

VALERIE AUSTIN

Valerie's apartment - two months later

As she came home with Mark, Valerie left her beach bag in the entrance and kissed him aggressively. So many things had happened over the past few months. Miranda, Tawny, Berseh, the fateful battle with Trevor...

While Mark went to take a shower, she took some time to contemplate the city from one of the windows and sighed deeply. She smiled, knowing exactly what would happen after they had dinner.

And later that night, after a steamy hot session of hard sex, Valerie cuddled against him as she felt herself slowly drifting off to sleep.

That night, for the first time in years, the nightmares left her in peace.

THE END



Somewhere in town

Unknown female voice

- Haaa there you are baby girl, we'll meet again very soon...

phone ringing

- Yes? Excellent. Begin.

TO BE CONTINUED...

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