

GOLD STREAK

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The lights dimmed.

The music blared.

The curtains opened, and she stepped in.

She had none of the dainty grace of other strippers. Her footsteps boomed against the wood, pushing against the song's beat.

Casting her gaze on the clubgoers, she did not smile. She leaned on the pole, head nodding to the autotuned words of some budget popstar:

"Been on top so long, they call me Goldstreak, Goldstreak."

The bass dropped, the lights flashed, her muscles bulged and glimmered; she cracked her knuckles and watched the audience scramble to the edge of the stage. Even squatting, Kim towered over the men and women who fought for her attention. Some held items, others tips. She beckoned forth those who carried both.

One handed her his jacket. She held it up for a moment for the crowd to see, made a show out of trying to wear it – her arms nearly popped she sleeves – and checked its pockets. She found a folded banknote and a cellphone. She gave the phone back and stashed the money in her cleavage. Someone at the end of the club laughed; Kim didn't.

In her hands, the faux leather folded, blunt spikes and all. She rolled it into a ball, took a deep breath, and opened her mouth. Her hot breath billowed forth in wisps of condensation, mixing with the cigarette smoke; her tongue rolled out, flat and wide, pointing down towards her chin. A string of saliva thinned into a droplet that shattered at her bare feet. She pushed the jacket in, and the mass of heavyweight fabric became little more than a bulge on her throat. She threw her head back to show it off, turning every inch of her neck into a show – and dozens of onlookers followed the bulge's descent, between beads of sweat and throat contractions, until it disappeared between Kim's breasts.

Someone else threw her a dildo. She snatched it out of the air as if to say, "not done yet." She waited until the shifting mass inside her finished its descent, until her esophagus cleared; only then did she look at her latest offering.

She shook her head. Massive as it might have looked to your average clubgoer, this toy, no bigger than a human forearm, provided no challenge. Since it came with no tip, too, she used it to make a point. One end in each hand, she pulled, and the mass of pure silicone ripped in two with barely a tensing of her powerful muscles. She tossed both halves over her shoulder and heard the crowd chuckle as they bounced along the stage.

The next item made her raise an eyebrow. A young woman with a pixie cut pushed a wad of cash and a battered microwave oven at Kim's feet. She cursed the one time she'd allowed someone to get away with an electric kettle; the tip may have been good, but not enough to justify being turned into a disposal unit for broken kitchen appliances.

She glanced at her manager, sitting alone in the corner of the VIP area. He peered over his glasses. Kim knew that look; she knew it all too well.

With one deft and practiced motion, she ripped her shorts off. The crowd cooed and whistled; she twirled them in her finger and tossed them at the pixie cut girl, who hugged them against her chest.

Kim squatted over the microwave. She spread her legs, and the first row of spectators leaned forward, trying to get a better look. Kim provided; two fingers spread her lips, exposing the glistening pink underneath; two more fingers plunged in, readying her inner folds for insertion. She lowered herself onto the offering, her cunt gaping in anticipation. Glistening tendrils seeped from her, sticking to the white plastic case, melting down its smooth surface. One

inch at a time, she claimed it, and when the grip of her pussy became iron-tight, she rose. Half of the microwave dangled from between her legs – not sliding out, as one would have expected, but sliding *in*. As slick as her juices might be, and plentiful, and as heavy as the metal and plastic were, none of it mattered; she drew them in with ease, and once her labia clamped shut around the last corner, all she had left to do was pull, and watch as the power cable followed suit.

Kim tapped her knuckles on her womb. They clanked against metal. She took stock of the crowd and found them hanging on her every movement. The music blared. The lights shone. She closed her eyes and flexed her innards, and the rectangular bulge on her stomach began to strain. Metal whined and bent, plastic crumpled like paper. Her walls pushed and squeezed, and though the microwave resisted at first, Kim's womb was like a compactor, and soon, after a cacophony of squeals and cracks, the bulge on her stomach condensed into a smaller, more amorphous form.

She pushed it out, and it fell at her feet, steaming with her juices; a lump of crushed electronics, rubber, and wires. She pushed it towards the pixie cut girl, who stared up at Kim with awe; her fingers trembled as she picked up the item, holding it as one would a child.

Kim had little time to enjoy the moment. There were more large items to be consumed. More rubber and metal and wood to invade her body, to challenge her form. They all lost – nothing entered Kim's body and came out unchanged – but at what cost?

A basketball rolled onto the stage. Kim caught it under her foot, tossed it into the air, spun it on her finger. Like the jacket before it, it stretched her maw beyond all reasonable limits. But even it was a simple nudge away from sliding down her throat, and when that nudge came, pink overtook orange, Kim's eyes shut, and the massive bulge dragged down until it was no more. The crowd cheered, but she silenced them with a raised hand. The hand slid down her body, following the basketball's own journey. Only Kim felt it push out from within. Only she felt the satisfying release once it pushed into her stomach. She jutted her belly out, turned to the side, and her engorged belly cast a long shadow over the catwalk; her fingers ran over her tense abs, lingering, teasing.

Then she clenched.

A gunshot, muffled by her body, echoed through the club. The sheer force of the popping battered at her stomach walls, expanding them for just a moment before they tensed back to place. She resisted the urge to wince, to crumple, to show any kind of weakness. A tear formed in the corner of her eye, but she wiped it away with a disguised fist pump. The dislodged air forced its way up her throat, splitting her maw with a resounding belch and the bitterness of regret.

The music dimmed.

The lights flashed.

As the curtains closed behind her, Kim allowed herself to limp.

The backstage's soundproofing brought her some relief. None of the other strippers dared meet her gaze. They scurried out of their way as she passed, like shoals of fish splitting before a shark.

Like prey, Kim thought, and smiled.

She opened the door to her dressing room, ducking over the doorway. The undersized couch creaked under her weight.

She barely had time to close her eyes before there was a knock on the door.

"Fuck off."

The knocking continued. Kim pinched the bridge of her nose.

"Fine, come in."

The door opened, and a young gentleman stepped inside. Sharp-dressed and well-groomed, he looked as out of place in the strip club as Kim felt.

"It's a pleasure to finally meet you, Goldstreak."

"And you are?"

"A longtime fan. I don't usually do these places, but a friend asked me to come. He said there was untapped talent in here," he smiled and extended a hand, "and he was right."

Kim took his hand and shook it. Like any prey grip, it felt limp compared to hers.

"I don't do private shows."

"That is not at all what I'm here for," he said, sitting next to her. "I'm here because I think you have it in you to go big time."

"Big time?"

"You're a boxer, aren't you?"

Kim's smile thinned. "How do you know?"

"A lot of my friends are boxers. In fact, that's what I'm here for. My name is Everett, Jonah Everett – and I have a business proposition for you, Goldstreak. One that could make us both very rich."

Kim looked out the window of her new apartment. The mug in her hands steamed, fogging up the glass. Below, the streets lit up with Christmas decorations. A lone gritter plodded down the road, its amber light flashing.

Her unmade bed, still warm, awaited her return. Just another sleepless night. She brushed her hand over the bruise on her arm, and winced and smiled at the memory. That last challenger had put up one hell of a fight, from the ring all the way to her stomach. Amongst normal people, he would have been a heavyweight – against her, little more than a speedbump. And now, days later, after taking her new home gym for its first spin and burning off all that extra mass, bruises were all she had left to remember him by.

After the high of victory came the crash. Lack of appetite. Drowsiness. And, of course, as Kim noted that night – difficulty sleeping.

She took a sip of her tea. The hot liquid warmed its way down her sore throat.

The doorbell rang, and she ignored it. She expected no-one.

The doorbell rang again. Kim buzzed them in, and while she waited for the knock on the door, she scrambled for a robe to conceal her sorry state. When she heard footfalls coming out of the elevator, she peeked through the door. She saw nobody until she looked down.

"What do you want?"

The girl huddled in her raincoat. "I need to talk to Goldstreak."

Kim tried to close the door, but a snow boot lodged itself in it.

"Please," the girl said; something about her tone, at once desperate and defiant, gave Kim pause.

"Wipe your feet," she ordered.

Once inside, the girl made herself at home in her oversized environment. She threw her raincoat over the waist-high coffee table, climbed over the couch, and produced a pack of smokes from one of her jacket's many pockets.

"Mind if I smoke?"

“Yes,” Kim growled, just in time to see the shimmering flame press to the end of the cigarette. The bitter smoke soon filled the air. “Looks like we’re off to a rocky start. I could end you right here, you know.” “I’m well aware,” the girl said. “And you would, too. That’s why I told my friends exactly where I was going, and who to call if I’m not home by dawn.” She extended a hand. “Name’s Anna.”

Kim eyed the hand. Before she had a chance to decide what to do, the girl retracted it with a huff.

“Yeah, I suppose I don’t want to shake my hands with a murderer.”

Kim chilled to the bone.

“Now, don’t get me wrong – I think what you do is sick and I hope you rot in jail for your crimes one day,” Anna said. “But I’m not here to start a fight.”

“If you know what’s good for you.”

“Calm down, big bad predator. Nobody’s challenging you to a dick measuring contest. Now, about the matter at hand.”

She pulled a portable ashtray from her pocket and tapped her cigarette. “You have a match booked next Wednesday. It will be with a man called Jacob King. He’ll want to fight you, and he’ll refuse to back down. If he gets into the ring, he’ll lose.”



“Mind if I smoke?”

“Yes,” Kim growled.

“Looks like we’re off to a rocky start. I could end you right here, you know.”

“I’m well aware,” the girl said.

“And you would, too. That’s why I told my friends exactly where I was going, and who to call if I’m not home by dawn.”

“Name’s Anna.”

"I don't take dives."

Anna ignored her. "He's not even a fighter. He watches boxing on TV, but he's never thrown a punch in his life. The moment he steps in there with you, he is effectively dead."

"You know a lot about this guy."

"I should. I'm his wife."

Kim sighed. "That's your problem, not mine. If your husband is stupid enough to sign up for a fight he can't win, that's on him."

Anna glared over her glasses. "Not stupid, *desperate*."

"We're all desperate around here. I was strong and smart enough to claw my way up to where I am now."

"Atop a mountain of corpses?"

"I'm a predator, I eat. People pay me to eat. People want to see me eat. People want to be eaten by me, otherwise they wouldn't be lining up to fight me. Predators eat, prey get eaten."

Anna's fists clenched. Smoke billowed from her nostrils, but she bit her tongue.

"If you people keep rewarding me for doing it, and if you keep being too stupid—"

"*Desperate*."

"Too *stupid* to not stick your heads in the guillotine for shits and giggles, why should I be the one to take the high road?"

Anna took a puff of her cigarette. "Because you're the one pulling the trigger."

Kim bit her lip.

"I'm just asking you to give me some time to talk him out of it," Anna said. "Call in sick. Take a dive. Disappear for a couple of days – I don't care. Just don't be there that night. Please."

"And what do I get for ruining my rep and pissing off my employer?"

"Peace of mind."

"Sorry, sister."

"If we had some way to repay you, he wouldn't be signing up to play for keeps, would he?"

The more she spoke, the more the color drained from her face. Now that embarrassment and fury boiled no more, only pallor remained. "We have some... troubles. I owe some money to the wrong people. He found out about it."

Her eyes met Kim's. "My husband is going to die on my account. And you're going to facilitate it. Can't you see how fucked this all is!?"

"We live in a fucked world, sister. I don't like it any more than you do."

"Then do something! Call in sick!"

"Someone else would fill in for me. Someone less sympathetic to his cause."

"How about – how about you go easy on him? Let him win, we'll bet against you, we'll give you the prize money."

"I don't take dives."

"You're worried about sportsmanship with a life on the line?"

"It's the only thing I have left to be proud of."

Anna's fists trembled; she noticed she was on her feet. Something burned her lips, and the cigarette butt fell on the carpet. At once, she pulled another one out. She checked her phone – dawn would soon break.

"I need to go. I wasn't bluffing earlier," she explained. "They *will* call the cops on you if I'm not home in thirty."

She picked up her raincoat from the now soaked coffee table.

"This is my number. Let's continue this conversation over a drink or two. I got you to listen, that's a start – if we can figure out a way to solve this in a way that benefits us both, there's no point in being stubborn, is there?"

"There won't be."

"Just humor a widow to be, will you? Call that number by tomorrow, or I will stick my foot in your door again."

Kim stepped into the bar. The freezing wind followed her in. She cast her gaze over the dim room, so full of life and that very specific brand of joy that only emerges after a drink or two. She stepped up to the counter, was rebuffed, and joined a line; moments later, gestures from one of the tables at the periphery of her vision drew her attention. There Anna sat, twirling a glass of Prosecco between her fingers, her cheeks red as blood. When approached, she raised it in greeting.

"You're late, G–"

"Kim," she cut Anna off.

"You're late, Kim. The text said eight."

"Looks like you've been passing the time just fine without me here."

"Ah, can it."

Kim blinked. "What?"

"Shut up, get yourself a drink, and sit down. I need someone to talk to about this mess, and you're the only one who's gonna listen and not call the cops."

Kim said nothing; she was still reeling. Who did this *prey* think she was, talking to her like this? When her higher functions came back, she found herself back in line, fists balled, scattered retorts flying through her mind. Her state did not go unnoticed, either; the crowd around her dispersed, and the barman shrunk away from her predatory glare. She saw him glance at a bouncer, and knew she was a signal away from getting escorted out.

"Whiskey, neat."

"Whiskey, coming up."

"And leave the bottle."

She joined Anna with her glass already empty and her throat already burning. It felt no bigger than a shot glass in her hand.

"Must be pricey for your people to get tipsy. Lucky you, I've got a tab, and I'm feeling generous."

"You won't bribe me. I don't take dives."

"Damn it, woman!" Anna said; the glass in her hand trembled. "You sound like a fucking tape recorder. If I wanted to talk to a bot I would have stayed home. Just drink and have a good time, okay?"

Kim rolled her eyes and brought the bottle to her lips.

"I had a shit day, by the way, thanks for asking. Jacob heard me coming back home and started asking questions. Things got heated. I cried. We didn't say anything to each other over breakfast, but he hugged me when I left for work. Stacy – she's my boss, one of you people – gave me weird looks all day. She must have thought I'd gotten into a scuffle or something."

Kim raised an eyebrow.

"Which I *didn't*," Anna clarified.

"Ah."

"Well, after that, it was the usual. Classes to prep, assignments to grade, meetings." She took another swig and rolled her eyes. "Meetings, meetings. So many meetings. Never become a teacher, Kim."

"I'm not qualified."

Anna rubbed her temple. "That was a – you know what, nevermind. You?"

"Hmm?"

"How about you? How was your day?"

"I worked out."

Anna waited for her to elaborate. She didn't.

"Oh, do you happen to go to SpeedVit, down the street from where you live? I have a friend who works there. Do you know a Tammy Peterson?"

"I have a home gym."

"Ah."

The silence lingered. Anna emptied her glass; Kim, her bottle.

"Read any good books lately?"

"I don't really read."

The bar's bustle provided no respite from the awkwardness.

"What do you usually do with your free time?" Anna asked.

"Exercise. Train."

"Other than for work. TV? Movies? Pottery? Beekeeping?"

"I watch TV sometimes."

Anna clapped her hands together. "That's a start! What kinds of shows do you usually watch?"

"Boxing matches."

Anna deflated.

"I don't want to hear about that stuff right now. Is there *anything* you like doing that isn't related to fighting?"

To her own surprise, Kim found herself furrowing her brow. Realization crept onto her features, followed by a blush. Anna's smile faded. Kim's silence spoke louder.

"I'm sorry," Kim said. "I'm not the kind of person who has a lot to say. I don't mind listening, though."

"Yeah, I've gathered as much." Anna looked down at her empty glass. "Someone must have slipped something into this. I—"

Kim rose to her feet, fists clenching, her glare already scouring the bar for a guilty party. A few worried glances met her, and the bouncer rolled his shoulders.

"—think I'm starting to feel pity."

"Oh."

Kim sat.

"Enough of this. We're not getting anywhere. If you want to help your husband, you need to look elsewhere. Why don't you call the police?"

Anna slid her fingers into her pocket and pulled out a cigarette. She knew better than attempting to light it indoors; just keeping it in the corner of her mouth offered her some relief.

"Two problems. One, nobody gets desperate enough to play for keeps without building up some ill-will with the law in the process. Two," she bit on her cigarette, "we had a very nice

man come over, give us a photo of my parents' house, and tell us exactly what would happen to them if the cops got involved."

Kim bit her lip. Her hands crossed over the table; she felt her body begin to slouch. "He's going to lose. You said he watches matches on TV – there's no way he doesn't know how fucked he is."

"He's never been an optimist, but he seems certain that this is the only way."

"We're at an impasse, then."

"You can quit whenever you want."

"Cute that you think that," Kim said.

Anna buried her face in her hands. "God damn it, woman, give me something here. My husband's going to leap off a cliff, and it's all so avoidable! Just stop being stubborn."

"I have pride in my work. If you don't have pride in yours, then I'm sorry."

"Your 'work' is getting naked in front of a bunch of greasy fat creeps and fucking innocent people to death. Your 'fights' are glorified donkey shows, and your 'pride' makes me sick." Anna's eyes met Kim's, and Goldstreak found herself cowed by a mere prey. "Don't presume to compare yourself to me. I have pride in who I am, not what I do. I could be out of a job today and I wouldn't be any less of a person for it. Would you?"

Those words, so politely delivered, so calm in their cadence, stabbed at the heart.

But after shock came fury, and Kim slammed her fist into the table, shaking the very ground under their feet.

"We're done here," she growled. "If it were up to me, I'd be sending you to meet your husband."

"It *is* up to you."

Kim stormed out. The crowd parted to make way. Even the bouncer stepped aside, unwilling to test his fellow predator's patience.

The cold winter wind shattered against her burning skin. The street spun around her. That prey bitch! She didn't know anything. For the first time, Kim had something good going on in her life. It wasn't her job to look after other people's husbands; if they were stupid enough to play for keeps, that was their own fault. The train isn't at fault if someone jumps on the tracks. The tides aren't to blame if someone gets pulled by the current.

Yes; she could not be blamed if Anna's husband were to die. He had made his choice and cast his dice; no-one could save him from himself.

Why, then, did she feel so guilty?

"This way, Miss."

"Hey, Fletcher. How's the wife?"

"Unfortunately, still alive."

Coming from anyone else, it would have been a joke. But Everett's accountant was not known for his sense of humor.

Kim forced a smile, and allowed the black-suited man to lead her through the hallways and staircases she knew so well. The silence between them weighed heavy on her shoulders, but she said nothing else. She distracted herself by admiring the walls of the once dilapidated warehouse, now become a venue to challenge any legitimate business.

“He’s in a good mood today,” Fletcher said, gesturing towards the door. “Don’t ruin it.”
Left with those cautionary words, Kim entered the office.

“Evening, Goldstreak.”

“Hey, Jonah. Do you have a moment?”

“For you, always. Step right in.”

Everett’s office suited its owner well. Under its high ceiling, atop its tall office chair, fingers tapping on its wide desk, he seemed so small. Kim remembered feeling bad for him during her first visit; a fish among sharks. The notion soon faded.

Kim pulled up a seat. Like all in Everett’s office, it was designed with predators in mind. In this luxurious office with bright lights, trophy shelves, fine carpeting, and leather office chairs, the visitors’ seats were cheap IKEA stools.

Jonah Everett had more shark in him than most predators.

“You look glum, champ. Having another bad day?”

“We need to talk, Jonah.”

“My friend, I’ve never heard a sentence I liked less. Hold your tongue, now, and let me give you some news first. Some good news.”

Kim crossed her hands on her lap.

“You remember that last guy you beat?”

“Which one was that?”

Everett smiled. “Doesn’t matter. Well, look like you sold his hits very well, because your fans think you got all banged up.”

“I don’t sell hits. He really did hit that hard.”

“So you do remember!” Everett steepled his fingers.

“Get to the point, please. I’m not having a great day.”

“But you will when you hear this! The bets for tonight are in. Those sorry idiots think the jobber I booked you with has an actual chance of beating you.”

Everett knew how to get under her skin. Every word he said needled at Kim’s pride. Referring to her fans as idiots. Calling the match a job, knowing full well she hated the word and what it implied. And to cap it up, the worst implication of all – that she’d lose to some prey.

Her fists clenched over the table, and she sucked her lips in. Everett smiled and continued.

“There’s a lot of people betting on this Mr. King. It’s such a strong name, isn’t it? *King*. It punches hard. Our audiences seem to agree. We’re going to make a small fortune when you win tonight.”

“About that...”

Everett raised a hand. “I’m not finished.”

Kim lowered her head.

“Remember how we got this thing started, Kim? Just you and me. The talent and the management, rising through the ranks. It’s the classic success story, isn’t it? It’s been how long, now?”

“Three years.”

He clapped his hands together. “Three years! And you’ve been my golden goose since then. That’s why I’m going to make you a partner.”

“A... partner?”

“Don’t kid yourself, Goldstreak, you’ve done as much for our little enterprise as I have. I think it’s time we upgrade your salary into a share. A big one, at that. Half of this,” he gestured all around, “will be yours. Just in time for tonight’s big payday.”

She opened her mouth; no sound came out. Everett leaned forward.

“Now, what was it that you wanted to tell me?”

Kim shook her head. “I forgot. It must not have been that important. Excuse me, I need to make a call.”

“I’ll give you some time to think about it,” he said as she walked out of the room. “But have your mind made up by the end of the match.”

Her steps hastened once outside. They echoed through the corridor, becoming one with the plumbing’s whines and the ruckus down in the arena. The crowd was already rushing in, chased from the streets by the heavy snow.

She pulled out her phone, swiped under Anna’s name greeted her. She pressed the call button – no reception.

“Well,” Kim said, looking far into the skyline. “I did all I could.”

In her thirst for reassurance, she believed her own lie.

She wandered the venue, heart buzzing in her chest. She saw all the faces she worked with – all the men and women this slaughterhouse fed. She heard all the praise, all the little things that made her feel appreciated, and she thanked them. No side glances, no mutters when they thought she wasn’t listening. Everyone here *got it*: they knew the why and appreciated the how, in a way the likes of Anna never could.

They were all partners in crime, after all.

When Kim tired of meandering, she made her way backstage to her dressing room. The noise from the arena mounted like a storm. The crowds thronged the bleachers, their individual voices warping into a murmur that resonated through the building’s very foundations. For the first time, Kim failed to zone it out. It made her head throb.

She opened the door, and a familiar face turned to greet her.

“Girl, aren’t you early today!”

“Ada.”

At her behest, Kim took off her parka and placed it on the coat hanger.

“That’s *Doctor* Ada, now,” the girl said, flashing a big grin. In the corner of the dressing room sat a wooden stepladder; Ada dragged it through the floor and climbed on it.

Kim mustered a smile. “I thought your thesis was a hack-job?”

“Top or no top?”

“Top today.”

“Gotcha. Take the sweater off, then,” Ada said, pulling up her sleeves. “And who told you that?”

Kim’s sweater flew onto the nearby couch. “You did, last week.”

“Arms.”

Kim opened her arms, and Ada’s oil-soaked hands slapped against her flexed muscles. She ran them up and down, slathering the scented oils over every inch of Kim’s exposed flesh.

“Well,” Ada said, puffing up her cheeks, “looks like the board disagreed.”

She moved on to the other arm.

“Dr. Ada Zhang, PhD. Doesn’t sound half bad,” Kim said. “So I’m guessing I’m going to find a replacement soon, huh?”

“As if. Do you know how much Everett pays me for this? Not everyone’s a main eventer. Some of us have student loans to pay.”

“Ouch.”

“Pants.”

“Right, sorry.”

Kim unbuttoned her jeans and kicked them aside. Ada’s warm hands left her arm, rubbed up against each other, then pressed to her lower back. Her boxers soon followed; she pulled them down with trained nonchalance, stepped out of them, and placed them on the dressing table.

“Looking a bit pasty on the bottom half. Have you been taking care of your skin?”

“Eat me, Ada.”

“Just checking!”

Ada worked her way down. Her ministrations left glistening skin and delineated muscles in their wake. From Kim’s waist, she moved down to her ass, cupping the firm shapes in her fingers, drawing lines of oil over them. From there, she moved down to the thighs and shins, and stopped only when her feet rested on the lowest of the steps.

“Turn.”

Kim obeyed, and Ada’s caress resumed, this time on her abs.

“You look glum, Kim. Everything okay up there?”

“A lot on my mind, that’s all.”

“I hear you, girl.”

Kim shuddered as the fingers slid towards her inner thighs.

“The weather’s been dire,” Ada continued. “We end up locked up at home, wallowing in our problems. No wonder all the big holidays are during Winter.” She squirted some more oil in her hands, and worked the knees for a while. “Anything in particular bothering you?”

“Just stuff. It’ll pass.”

Ada winked. “Everything does,” she said, wiping her hands on a towel and stepping back. Her smile faded when she saw Kim’s face. The half-smile came too late, and even though her cheeks burned, Ada knew a downer when she saw one.

“You don’t look so eager. Need some fluffing?”

If Kim could blush more, she would have. “I think I might.”

“Bend over, please.”

Kim heard the sound of a rubber glove unrolling over skin. She felt fingers slide open her labia, slip between the folds of skin into the flesh beyond, and come to a rest. Ada waited. Kim did too. Her body relaxed, bit by bit, until the hand inside was just another part of her, motionless and easily forgotten.

Ada read her body like a book. And when it relaxed, she bit her lip, and thrust.

Tchk.

Kim gasped. Ada’s clenched fist forced itself up her cunt, triggering her fighter’s instincts. She stretched around it, easing its way in. Slick juices seeped from her walls, mixing with the lube. Frictionless, Ada’s knuckles slid deeper into Kim, coaxing a moan out of her. Only the bend of Ada’s elbow stopped the entirety of her arm from vanishing into the hungry hole. She unclenched her fist, spread out her fingers, tested Kim’s insides.

Then she pulled out.

Tried to pull out.

Kim's body sensed the escape attempt and rebelled against losing what it had already claimed. Her lips gripped at Ada's arm. Each inch of flesh around her skin clamped down, and overflowing juices ran down her arm, past her glove, soaking her clothes and dripping on the floor. She resisted the peristaltic pull, struggled against the suction that threatened to send her whole body the same way her forearm had went. Kim's body, even inert and under no conscious control, was beyond Ada's ability to manage. When she felt her elbow start to bend, and those dripping lips to claim her upper arm, she bit her lip. "Easy."

Kim winced at her words. Slow with reluctance, her cunt's grip loosened. Ada pulled back, caught her breath, and thrust again. Again Kim moaned. Again her insides clamped down, though easier this time.

Tchk. Tchk. Tchk. Ada's movements, steady and trained, soon reached a rhythm. Grueling pulls followed fierce pushes.

With her free arm, she wiped some sweat off her brow. Kim laid before her, bending over – she couldn't see her face, but she knew she must have been embarrassed. Ada herself fared no better. When Kim looked away, she could afford to not be professional. She could admire those tight curves, gaze upon those mighty muscles.



The heat that spread across Ada's body threatened to overtake her, and only the steady effort required to resist Kim's demands – even restrained as they were – stopped her from doing something foolish. The thought had occurred often, after all. How easy it would be to just forget to pull, or to lose her footing at a critical moment, surrendering herself to that famished hole, to those throbbing walls, to the crushing embrace of her womb.

But reason prevailed, as it always did. Each tug threw her off balance. Each squeeze of Kim's flesh sent pins and needles down her forearm. Even holding herself back, Kim could kill her.

"That's good, thanks."

Kim's words, sighed out more than spoken, snapped Ada back to reality. She bit her lip and made her next pull the last one. Kim released her arm with a wet *pop*, and once free, it slumped down. Ada squeezed it here and there, checking if she could still feel anything other than the remnants of the predator's grip.

"Feeling ready yet?"

Kim straightened up. "As ready as I'll ever be," she said; Ada recognized the same frustration her tone always carried after a fluffing session. It never ceased to hurt her ego; even at her best and finest, even with her most hearted attempt, Ada could never stimulate that body enough to bring it over the edge.

Fluffing was the best she could ever hope for with the likes of Kim.

"You need to go easier on me next time," Kim said. "I gotta have something left for the ring."

Ada smiled.

"You're too kind, Kim."

"I'm really not."

Kim first saw Jacob as he was emerging from the crowd. The first thought that crossed her mind was, *he's taller than I imagined*.

Anna picked well, was the second.

He stepped onto the ring, tense and almost trembling, his facade already all but shattered. Kim knew fear. She thrived in it. His primal urge to flee beckoned forth her urge to chase, but they both resisted their base natures. The prey advanced towards the predator. The predator allowed it.

Only in playing for keeps could such illusions shatter.

"I wish we could have met in better circumstances, Jacob."

He took a step back upon hearing his name escape a predator's lips.

"You don't know who I am?" Kim asked.

"You're Goldstreak. The reigning champion."

Kim nodded. "Ah. I see."

She glanced towards the crowd.

"You still have time to surrender," she whispered.

Jacob put his dukes up. "You can't psych me."

"I wasn't trying to."

Spoken in any other way, the words might have reached him. A little less bravado, a hint of a smile, a different intonation. But fear breeds suspicion, and Jacob, like any convict, held little goodwill towards his executioner. Kim saw his expression grow defiant, and knew.

She tried again.

“Please surrender.”

“I can’t.”

“You won’t win.”

“I have to.”

“Take a swing.”

“What?”

“Take a swing at me. Quick, before the bell rings.”

Jacob hesitated. Kim dropped her guard. Emboldened by the opening, Jacob struck. His glove slammed into her abdomen; she barely winced. He struck again; this time, she was ready for him. Kim threw a leg around his neck. His fist slid along her thigh, guided by the lines of her form towards her groin.

Slurp.

The crowd went wild.

Kim’s chest tensed. Her muscles locked: her insides stretched, accepting the offering. The sheer force swept Jacob off his feet, and his own momentum took care of the rest. The last thing he saw was Kim’s cunt, drooling and agape, waiting for him. He felt its embrace spread through his arm, and its wet kiss on the left side of his face, for but a moment; the force of her pull sucked the air out of his lungs, and when he inhaled again, the scent of her lust burned through his nostrils.

Another contraction. The flesh below him relaxed, and the suction ceased; at once, he felt himself as he was – a dumb heavy body, curled up and slick with lubricant, with gravity as the only ruling force. The ring welcomed him back to a bitter reality; he wiped the juices from his brow and forced his heavy eyelids to open. Above him, amongst the goopy strings that swayed like pendulums to each breath, Kim’s cunt gaped still, muscles pulsing and twitching underneath.

She extended a hand. Shivering, and despite his better judgment, Jacob took it. He expected a finishing move; he received aid. Kim helped him to his feet, gave him space to breathe again, and even handed him her towel, which he promptly dropped.

“You sneaky bitch.”

“I could have ended you right there,” Kim said. “You like watching matches, don’t you? You know what I could have done.”

“How do you know so much –”

“You know what I could have done to you, there.”

Realization hit Jacob. She was right – most fights would have ended by now.

“Surrender.”

“I wish I could.”

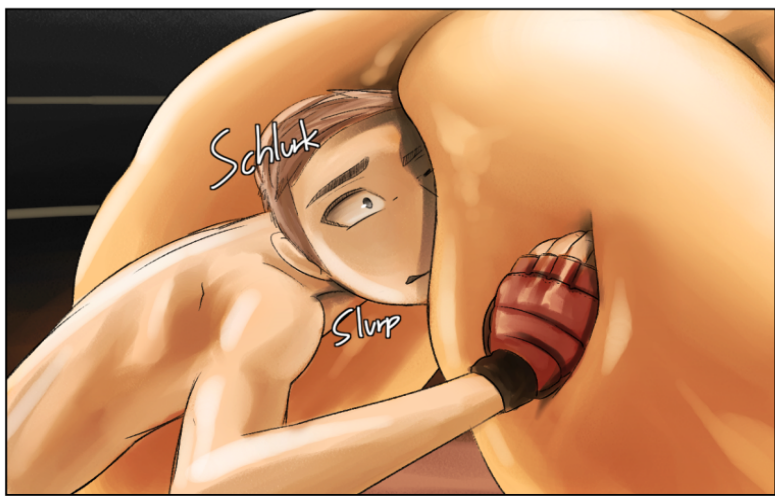
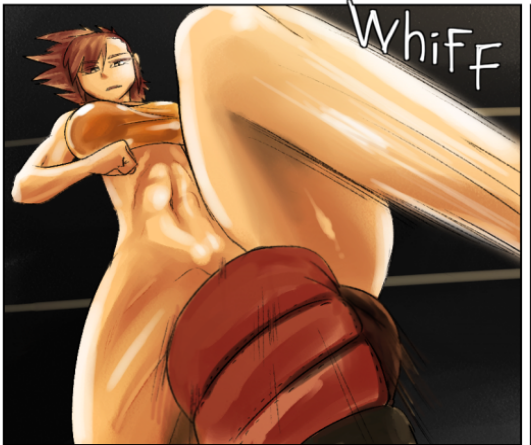
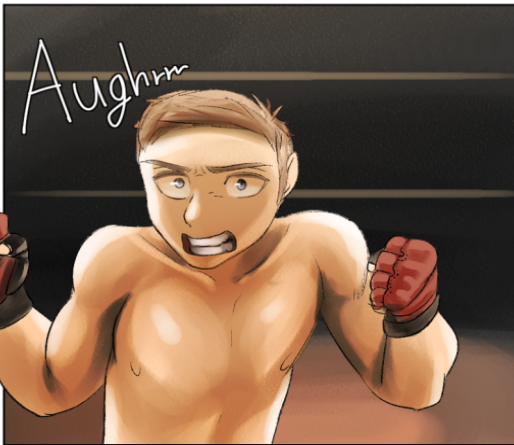
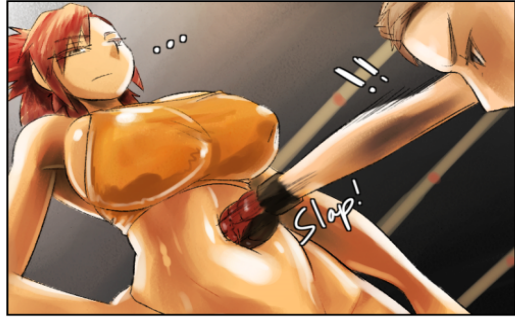
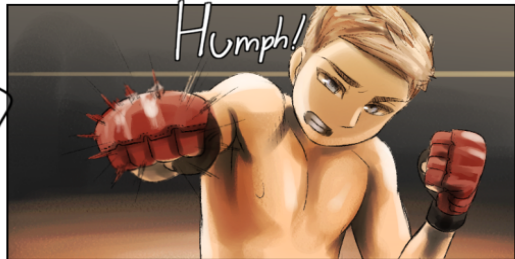
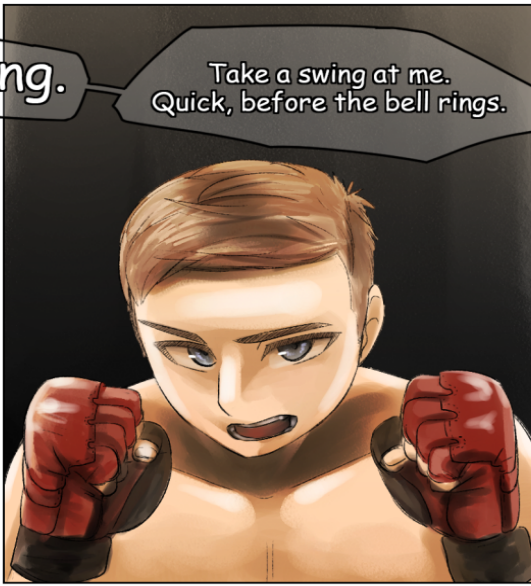
“What do you expect to achieve here?”

Jacob looked up at her, as if trying to sort her out. “I made some bad mistakes. I suffered from them, and that’s fair. But my loved ones don’t deserve to be weighed down by my burdens.”

“I don’t understand.”

He gestured towards the betting booths. “Win or lose, those burdens lift tonight.”

“You’re insane.”



“No, I’m desperate.”

He extended his hand. Kim sighed and bumped it. Jacob shook his head, and Kim found herself looking down, confused, at his outstretched hand. Only then did she understand. Her handshake was as firm as her womb’s grip.

“Good luck, Goldstreak.”

“Good luck, Jacob. Your wife loves you very much.”

The bell rang.

Kim left the ring. Goldstreak entered it.

The match ended almost before it began.

The cruel machine moved with precision and efficiency. All that was animal in Kim directed her movements; all that was professional in her sharpened them to a fine point. Her body flowed around Jacob’s clumsy strikes, and when they did connect, her hard body took them without flinching. Again and again and again he tried, and failed, to topple the juggernaut before him – and Kim, as if mocking him, did not as much as try to redirect his strikes.

Perhaps she wished him to reconsider. Perhaps she was toying with her kill. Or perhaps it was all a ploy to tire him out. In Jacob’s mind, there was no difference. The futility of his attempts never registered. Each failed offensive, each new plateau of exhaustion only incited him to try again harder.

Kim, meanwhile, felt the flames within grow. Sparked by her genes, developed over a lifetime, and maintained by Ada, they now found kindling in this mockery of a match. The crowd’s whistles and shouts, their *oohs* and *aahs* as she outdid Jacob at every turn; the sting of hundreds of eyes on her bare skin, taking in their lust and making it her own. In her element, she excelled. All those pesky worries and doubts left her. Only the match remained: movement without thought, awareness without understanding, bliss. When his gloves found her skin, they left not a bruise, but a caress. As her lust grew, so did the predator take over. The shark smelled blood. She was made to devour, built to digest, and each second abiding the existence of prey was agony.

The crowd shouted her name, and it was Goldstreak. Jacob lost his; he became but the Challenger, the speedbump, the cause and solution of all her rampant desires. Her insides writhed, full of want. Saliva pooled in her mouth, and juices dribbled down her legs.

The show had gone on long enough.

For Jacob, it was an uppercut like any other, slow like most of them, less a gambit than an act of defiance. For Kim, it was a fatal mistake, and her trained eye saw in it an opening all but absent from serious matches. The temptation to go for the jaw and end, alluring as it might have been to most challengers, was dismissed by all but the most inexperienced. It could end a match before it started, sure... but those taking that shot had better see it through.

A professional could have made it work.

Jacob was no professional.

Kim leaned back, and Jacob’s fist slid over her oily skin, guided by her abs, lodging between her breasts. A moment’s hesitation, a sluggish movement, was all it took – all it took for Kim to open her mouth, sink to her knees, and take his fist into her maw.



Even now, in the heat of battle, she saw the shock in Jacob's features; moves like these never made it on highlight reels. Gasps emerged from the crowd. To Jacob, they sounded like mockery.

The other fist swung, but it was desperate – sloppy. Again, a professional could have made it work; as it stood, Kim found it easy to nudge it away with the back of her hand.

Their eyes met. She saw no fear in them, only regret.

When the weight pressed down the base of her tongue, she swallowed. Her lust-addled mind, incapable of complex thought, could not hope to suppress the demands of her body. She

hungered, she sensed food, she fed. He tasted of sweat, oil, and her own musk, three flavors that triggered a Pavlovian response in her, hastening her bites and swallows, loosening her esophagus and stomach, raising her lust to fever. The sound of each gulp, each peristaltic contraction resonated through her body, warming her muscles and heightening her desire.

Jacob's desperation only grew. The embrace of Kim's throat tightened around his arm, ever pulling, ever pulsing. Her teeth raked at his skin. He'd failed to overpower her pull of her cunt, despite gravity, despite its slickness; what chance did he have against her throat? Each swallow dragged him like the current after a crashing wave. It overwhelmed him, and no matter how many punches he threw, and how many kicks, he succeeded only in losing his footing further – a mistake Kim capitalized on. When the time came, she opened wide, channeling all her rabid hunger into a mighty swallow.

Jacob felt himself weighless. He felt the walls of her throat crushing his arm. He felt the teeth part, and the warmth of her breath washed over him. Her plump tongue guided his head in. He tried to move, but her palate constrained him. The only force applied to him pushed him forward and inward, into the same gullet that had already claimed his arm. His body submitted to the bend of her throat. Saliva seeped, abundant, from the pulsing walls. It filled his mouth when he tried to shout. It filled his nose when he tried to breathe. Soon Kim's body denied him even the purchase to fight back. When all became cramped and slippery, he knew he'd lost.

Kim basked in her victory. Only when her lips closed around his feet, only when she felt the entirety of his body, from tip to toe, molding her throat and her stomach – did she feel whole at last. Every thrash resonated through her. Each scream was hers to silence.

Her whole body rumbled. Her tongue lolled out of her mouth, her eyes rolled in their sockets. Her muscles relaxed, her vision blurred, and feel-good chemicals flooded her brain. The weight moved from her chest to her gut, pressing down on her groin, and something *sparked*. The catalyst to open the floodgates.

Release.

The crowd's cheers drowned out her moan – not a predator's roar, but a whimper.



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The weight moved from
her chest to her gut,
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The catalyst to
open the floodgates.

Release.

In the throes of orgasm, she opened her eyes. She basked in the crowd's support. They chanted her name, and it felt right. Her eyes jumped from person to person, and in every face, they saw awe, and frustration, and fear.

Then she saw Anna. She saw her friend, standing up from her front row seat, shaking her head, tears running down her cheeks. And as arousal bled from her, slow and creeping, lifting the twin fogs of sex and bloodlust, Kim saw her one friend vanish into the crowd. And there was no one else left.

Kim stood hollow in a hollow room.

It all came crashing down.

“Anna!”



From his office's window, Jonah Everett watched his would-be partner vault the ropes and wade through the human tide.

Fletcher barged through the door and stumbled to his side. His suit was crumpled. His tie was undone. "Boss! Goldstreak's —"

"She's leaving," Everett said, lighting a cigar.

"I'll call the boys."

"No, you won't."

"Boss?"

Everett's nostrils flared, spewing out plumes of gray smoke. "You don't have a clue, Fletcher, and it's honestly starting to piss me off. This is just kayfabe. She's putting on a show."

"I don't understand."

"Anyone can sell sex, Fletcher. Any genetic freak can step onto the stage, flash some skin, and break some dumb kid over their knee. It's what we're here for. Most predators we have on our payroll think that's enough, or aren't good enough to see beyond it."

He followed the tall figure until it reached the doors.

"Goldstreak is a professional. While the rest of our talent uses crayons, she paints with oil. You may not be able to tell the difference, Fletcher, but they can, even if they don't know it yet." He gestured towards the audience. "And that's why they keep coming back. Think about it, Fletcher. Would you miss the next match, after you saw *that*?"

He returned to his chair, rested his palms on his desk, and smiled. "Business as usual, Fletcher, business as usual. Now get out of my sight – and make sure her dressing room is clean for when she comes back. I can't believe she's finally coming around!"

Kim ran.

Half-naked and freezing, she waded through the snow. The empty streets stretched out before her. Drivers slowed as they passed. Some sounded their horns, others took pictures. Others still simply watched for as long as they could. A commotion followed her. She looked over her shoulder and saw in her fans everything and nothing: a deadly stampede, Everett's men come to get her, maybe even the police, come to take her away at last.

No. Not yet. I need to find her. I need to let him out.

Kim cradled her bulging stomach. The last of her warmth was within, the byproduct of stomach acids working at her only friend's husband. In the freezing night, her gut felt like a furnace. The rest of her grew numb, but still she ran.

Each alley she passed, she peered into, hoping to see that face, hear that voice. Even if to say she hated Kim. Even if to say she wanted Kim to die. But she found nothing in the frozen wasteland of the city past midnight.

No matter how many turns she took, how many doorbells she rang, how many cars she hid behind, the commotion followed her always. Only when she found herself in a public

restroom, kneeling on the cracked porcelain tiles, with no memory of how she got there, did she find the time to stop and breathe.

Kim closed her eyes, and at that moment, she knew.

She knew she would never see Anna again. She knew Everett would never take her back. She knew she was alone. Again. Forever.

Only one hope remained, and it resided inside her, its breaths growing shallower by the second.

“Please, be alive,” Kim whispered, knowing she could never stick around long enough to find out.