

Inertia

Aurie loved to be in motion. She knew some were just built for the kinesthetic, and she was among their number. So to be restrained was a special kind of difficulty for her.

Yet, she had a facile mind, and understood what her compact body was capable of. The only thing she currently lacked was opportunity, and it was clear that two of the men holding her were not shining examples of cunning. Time would tell if she'd get her shot or not. If she did, it was still possible to turn this around. What wasn't clear was the cost she would pay if or until she received the chance. Papa's words came to her while she waited, across the many years he'd been gone.

You will win, monkey. It's all there in you. I can see it right now.

She knew it was his hope when he'd said it, but also that seeds are planted in moments. They will only germinate later, bearing what they would bear. She hoped he was right.

There was one here that would be a problem, though. She knew she'd have to hit *him* first, and it needed to be a takedown to then be able to deal with the other two. Though, to be honest, they were all big. Each one would have to be fast, and decisive. As strong as she was, anything protracted would hand her a loss.

Aurie wondered at the situation she found herself in. She felt like she should be more scared than she was, but there was an element of absurdity to all of this that acted like a buffer from that deeper horror.

These guys had the wrong person. That was the crux of it. She'd tried to tell them, but they'd gagged her right after zip-tying her hands behind her back. Thankfully, her sensei had illustrated how to tense your muscles and hold your wrists slightly apart without appearing to. This had come early in her training, and Aurie remembered very clearly thinking at the time,

Well, that's information I'll never have to use.

Haha on her, evidently. Yet she'd known what to do in the moment thanks to that admonishment, and the zip-tie wasn't binding into her skin, at least. There was no way she was slipping out of it, though. A covert tactile exploration of the back of the office chair she'd been forcibly seated in had offered up a raised screw head. But it wasn't nearly sharp enough to cut through the tough nylon, so her only option had been trying to catch the locking tab on it. It was like trying to thread a needle behind her back blind, all without alerting the Alpha. The other two were busy eating, farting, and watching the big screen mounted on the wall of the hotel room. Alpha was on his cell phone, but his gaze was never too long away from her.

While she attempted this, the day played out again in her mind. She'd come out of her early morning college communication class, and was headed for the south parking lot. Two men had bracketed her at the end of the walkway, and a stereo-typical black SUV had pulled up right in front. Shame on her for not going ape-shit instantly, but she thought just the idea of something like this happening to her was ridiculous. She was chronically broke, and her parents weren't much better off, though they helped where they could. Buying an education on minimum wage was tough. So the idea that they had taken her for ransom was ludicrous, which would indicate they thought she was someone else. And what other girl rich enough to draw this sort of thing went to community college?

Alpha was starting to show irritation at the party on the other side of the conversation. His voice rose, and she could make out what he was saying now.

"You've got to be shitting me."

There was a response she obviously couldn't hear, and then all his attention was on his phone. She started to arc her spine a bit as she quested for the magic unleashing, since he wasn't watching now, even as his voice hardened even more.

"The wrong one? The fuck are you talking about? It was *your* intel!"

Aurie felt the catch snag on the screw head, and then a muted "zzzz" sound. The release was cathartic as she whipped her hands free and exploded out of the chair.

She was an object in motion once again, and her sensei's words were another mandate from the past.

Take what you can from where you are and use it.

Aurie had been staring at the breakfast dishes for some time. They'd not been cleared from the small table yet by the hotel staff. She hadn't clocked a "do not disturb" door hanger when they'd brought her in here, but there probably had been one. As she passed the table, she snagged one of the ceramic plates in her right hand, and a serrated knife in her left.

God bless steak and eggs.

Then it was all forward motion.

Alpha must've caught movement out of the corner of his eye, because he dropped his phone and turned towards her even as she brought the plate up over her shoulder, flinging it straight at his head.

He was fast enough to get a hand up in an attempt to block it, but she'd oriented the plate vertically. It blew right through his fingers and the leading edge smashed into his right eyebrow. The plate shattered and Alpha's head snapped backwards.

Then Aurie was there, whipping her left arm around to bury the knife in the man's neck to the cheap plastic handle. She immediately withdrew it, pulling it towards her. The serrated blade widened the wound even further, and bright arterial blood jetted out in timed arcs onto the gray industrial carpet.

She turned to face the two who'd been watching TV on the couch, even as the last shards of the plate hit the floor. They were both large and heavily muscled, but moved with no grace. Everything about them said "hired gorilla". They were almost to their feet, eyes still wide in surprise. The closest had turned towards her.

Aurie knew this next was a risk, as the knife blade was covered in blood, but she flipped it over and caught it by the tip. It did slip a little, but not enough to stop her. She brought it up to her shoulder and then threw it, following it and gaining what momentum she could.

It wasn't nearly as heavy as *her* knives, and nowhere close to balanced, but she caught a break. It hit the first ape to the left of his sternum, and penetrated enough to stick. It was certainly not a mortal wound. The man was stupidly looking down at it, confusion now on his face. He reached for it, obviously intending to remove it.

She leapt, turning sideways and extending her right leg, locking her knee. The bottom of her sneaker impacted his hand just as his fingers closed around the knife. The contact flattened his fist and drove the knife all the way in. Aurie bounced back onto her rear foot as the man staggered backwards, blocking ape number two for a few seconds.

And then there was one.

She circled, putting the sofa between herself and the last man.

There was a part of her that was horrified at what she'd done. She'd spent most of her life training her body to focus her seemingly unlimited energy, expressing it in movement. Several disciplines of martial arts, self-defense, and weapons training under her sensei since childhood had led to full-contact tournaments and exhibitions, but these were really just simulations in the end. This was real, and she was killing people here.

But that part of her was submerged in a lake of adrenalin, and her body was exultant in the chemically-fueled challenge of it.

Plus, they'd fucking kidnapped her, so....

Ape Two spoke as he pushed Ape One off of him. The body fell back onto one end of the couch, head and neck draped over one arm. He stared at her, surprise and confusion replaced now by anger.

"You are so dead."

She shrugged, and responded.

"Come take your shot."

She wondered which way he'd go around the couch to get to her.

Straight over it, it turned out. It couldn't have been a better choice, for her anyway. He took one step up onto the cushions, another onto the back rail, and leapt at her, arms outstretched.

She ducked under the leap and twisted, rabbit-punching him in the nuts with all her might as he passed above her. He crashed to the floor, a high-pitched squeal escaping him as he came to rest up against the same chair she'd been made to sit in since arriving in the room. She shot to her feet and rushed at him. His face was visible, red, and screwed down into a rictus of pain.

Aurie kicked him full in the face as though she was trying to score a soccer goal from mid-field, and through the top of her tennis shoe felt his nose collapse. More screams happened after that, but she was already on her way towards the door. En route, she grabbed her backpack, which had been sitting next to Alpha's chair. Thankfully, on the opposite side from what was now an impressive puddle of blood.

She exited the hotel room, and could feel herself start to come down internally, and the ramifications of what she'd just done began to sound in her head.

I didn't have any choice. He knew I was the wrong one.

A small laugh escaped her, but she couldn't swear it wasn't a sob.