

I

Staring at the gaping hole in the back of his head, my only thought is survival and how to get to the side door that remains ajar for safe passage. Blood is thick, and tends to exude from the body differently than presented on television. Even now, at least thirty minutes later, the blood continues to spurt out, like the last spasms of ejaculate after a good cummin'. As the bullets continue to ricochet off of the hood of the car and the trunk and every inch of surface on the passenger side, I duck down along the floorboards, scrunching down between the back bench seat and the middle console. The smell of the cigarettes in the ashtray of the console (you know, the one for use by backseat passengers) has an annoying aroma. I am on the verge of blowing chunks when I gather my inner strengths and say a few words before departing amidst the flying shrapnel. I remember the *Hail Mary* from all of the teachings on catechisms and psalms:

Hail Mary:

*I ain't a killa
But don't push me
Revenge is like the sweetest joy
Next to gettin' pussy
Picture paragraphs unloaded
Wise words being quoted...*

*Pray to God
Hopin' that he listen
See them coppers comin' for me
Through my diamonds, when they glisten
Now pay attention
Bless me please father
I'm a ghost
But yet and still
Hail Mary
Catch me, when I go*

When I finally get to the side door, there is no one to be found anywhere. Before me lies a long, dimly lit corridor. To my extreme right, there's a stairwell ascending up and descending down. Still no sign of anyone. I can hear the shouts of the SWAT team.

"He ran in the side of the building Sarg!"

"Teams Alpha and Camp, take the perimeter. Bravo, into the building in standard two by two!"

II

The fact of the matter is... a lot of county resources have been diverted to counterterrorism efforts. I could give the guys another big speech on how evil in the human character allows one human being to shoot and kill other human beings for money, but that will

not replace the two armored Hum Vs that we lost this year. I mean, they want us to go into some of the most heavily armed urban areas, with what? Squad cars. We are up against AR-15s, AK-47s, grenades and Molotov Cocktales. We've been chasing these guys for two months now. I'm beginning to believe that SWAT stands for *Suckers Without Any Testicles*. And now, they've hit another bank. I stand before these men, these men of honor, men of courage, men who would follow me to the depths of hell and I know that I have to ask them to go on a mission that we have failed at countless times before.

"Alright men. The news just came down. The Marauders are active right now at the Wilshire Bank and Trust on Jefferson and Wilshire. The local authorities have already laid down a lockdown perimeter barrier, hopefully unbeknownst to the bandits. Let's suit up and get these assholes this time," I say with all the bravado I can muster.

Unsure if I really had the men with me, I yell out, "SWAT's the *real* shit!"

"You bet your ass Sarg!" from the men, came back at me in unison.

"Madsen, I allow you to drive because you claim to be the best," I yell. "Don't let these fuckers get away!"

"Sarg, you *could* shoot out a tire or something. Give me a fighting chance," Madsen shoots back.

"Alright. When we get up ahead bit, get in the left lane so that I can get a good shot off," I direct.

"Sir, yes sir," Madsen replies with the enthusiasm of a young school boy on a field trip.

As the two cars race down the almost deserted four lane street, Madsen positions the black and white squad car in the further most westbound lane. I lower the front, passenger side window of the car. The department for which we work provides services for one of the wealthier counties in the state and here I am wrestling with the manually operated windows of the squad car.

"I thought I told you to get these things oiled," I lash out in the direction of Madsen as he prepares to steady the vehicle's direction and speed so that I can obtain the best shot.

III

When I was first born, I thought that life would be wonderful for me. Born in Japan, I was the product of some of the best Japanese mathematical and engineering minds ever assembled. My inner workings are the things that legends are made of. The way my organs sit neatly upon one another, snugly, allows for the maximization of my body's cavity. At six months old, I was sent to the United States of America. I could not believe my luck: Japanese parents, American relatives. How much luck could a girl have?

The guy that I have been seeing most recently is an odd soul. Unlike the first guys that I met in America – you know, the ones in the blue jumpers and the orange hats and gloves who work on the huge ships – this guy has really taken out time to get to know me. I must admit though, there are times when he leaves me with his friends for days and weeks at a time. They wonder at my slim, sleek bodylines. They fondle me. They keep me up really late at night: sometimes they never go to sleep. And, unlike my guy, they don't keep me full all the time. My appetite is ravenous and these other guys (my guy's friends) are less than satisfactory.

For the past two weeks, my guy has been taking me to see all of the experts that specialize in repairing any part of my body that might ail me or be problematic in any way. I am running much faster and much cleaner these days. I mean, I can get from the apartment that we share to downtown in less than five minutes.

And today, it seems as though I have another surprise in store. All the guys are here: my guy, Jim, John, James and Jimmy. Looks as though we are all going out. Maybe to the gun range for more practice at shooting some of the new guns that Jimmy bought on his last "business trip." He's the one guy that I know does not have a job. I never come home after a day with him full. Any way, we must be going somewhere where you have to dress up. I mean, I even have a new look. When I first met my guy, my favorite color was red. And that's how he described me: red hot! But now, I am really dark. That's cool though. Keeps me warm at night.

I hope that my next guy treats me better. Here I am. Fresh off the boat. Less than a year old and all busted up.