

Chapter 3: The Great Escape

"Your choices are electrocution, gunshot wounds, or, best--or maybe worst--of all, I can keep talking!"-Reno Lynley

Reno awoke with a start, giving a slight, pained groan as his neck cricked from the strain of sleeping in the chair. He just sat for a moment, staring at the ceiling, stained with Ramuh-knew-what, and wondered what it was that had woken him from his light sleep.

Just then, he heard it again. It sounded like a scuffle was going on in the room next door; the room that belonged to the nameless girl that he had fought on the beach. There were some quiet thuds, and muffled shouts.

Reno tipped his chair on its back two legs, leaning against the wall, and closed his eyes in an effort to fall back asleep.

That was right when something slammed into the wall right behind him, sending his chair crashing back to the floor and forcing him to open his eyes with a jolt. "Son of a bitch," he muttered, turning in the tattered chair to see the faintest indentation of a human body protruding from the wall.

Again, though, he settled back down in the chair and his eyelids began to flutter closed...

Wham. Another massive thud rocked the wall, sending a rain of plaster down on his upturned face and making everything in his room shudder.

Eyes snapping open, he climbed out of his chair, snatched up the bangle from where he had thrown it the night before and attached it to his upper arm. Picking up his compact, black Beretta handgun and checking the ammunition, he flicked on the safety and tucked the weapon into the waistband of his pants, letting his shirt fall over the bulge to conceal it. Next, he grabbed a belt and his nightstick, threading the leather through the loops in his pants and hooking the deadly weapon to it.

All of this was done with an ease and grace born of long practice; if he had stopped to think, he probably wouldn't have taken everything. But he didn't think; it was all reflex.

Reno slammed out into the dark hallway, leaving the door to his room ajar as he went to the door with an askew brass numeral reading 'five.' Not even pausing, he rapped hard on the aging wood.

A sudden sound drew his attention down the hallway even as the door opened, and he glanced to his right to find a young Solian couple passionately making out several doors down. The woman's legs were wrapped around the man's waist, and he seemed to be struggling to find his key and open the door.

"Listen, I don't give a flying fuck what you do with your time at night, but would you mind keeping it the fuck do--" Curiosity abated as the couple disappeared into their hotel room, Reno finally looked at who he was addressing standing in the door--and halted dead in his tracks.

There was a huge burly white man standing there, meaty arms crossed over his broad, black-clad chest. His head was completely shaved, and two annoyed brown eyes were glinting viciously at Reno from where they were sunk back deep in his thick face.

Both were completely silent for a moment, Reno's mind working furiously as he noted that the man was at least eight inches taller than him.

A sudden outcry from inside the room behind the large man broke the silence, and the ex-Turk suddenly noticed the scene playing out behind the bulky man.

Four other men, looking quite similar to the man that stood before him now, were in the room, and they were struggling to grab the girl. They looked like thugs, dressed all in black and with shaved heads. Each was well over six and a half feet tall, and carrying the bulk and muscle to back their height up. Compared to them, Reno was a featherweight.

One of the thugs had his hand over the blonde woman's mouth to keep her from yelling, and she bit into the man's hand deeply. The man yelled and let go, but the woman didn't scream now that her mouth was free. Instead, one of her fists rocketed into the man's face, shoving him backwards and away from her. Just then, though, the other three rushed her, and she was driven back to slam against a wall.

To her credit, it took the three huge men--each almost a foot taller than her and at least one hundred pounds heavier--to hold her down as she raged and fought wildly. One of them, his forearm pressed to her neck, reached into his pocket with his other hand and withdrew a syringe. He violently stabbed her in the neck with its long silver needle, and she cried out for the first time, the outcry a mixture of a choke and a sob. His large thumb went to press down on the plunger and empty the blue contents into her bloodstream--and the man standing at the door in front of Reno held out one dinner plate-sized hand.

"Wait."

"Uhh, listen, I'm sorry, I seem to've come to the wrong place at the wrong time; why don't I go away now and come back--urk!" Reno's cautious voice--and his surreptitious backing away--was cut off when the man grabbed him by the front of his shirt and pulled him into the room, slamming the door.

"Who the fuck are you?" questioned the large man, voice a deep bass growl.

Reno ignored the fact that the other man had even spoken. "Damn. Y'see, I was just gonna back off gracefully and let you have her." The redhead unclipped his nightstick from his belt and stabbed the man in the side with it. The brawny thug dropped Reno in surprise, glancing down quickly to his stomach. "Now, though, you've gone an' pissed me off, you stupid son of a bitch." The emerald eyes were hard as he turned the voltage to 'on.'

The huge man screamed a horrid, agonized screech and convulsed as a lethal 100,000 volts of pure electricity arced through his body.

"Oops," deadpanned Reno, pulling the thin weapon back as he took his finger off of the button. Stepping over the still-twitching corpse and ignoring the stench of seared flesh, he looked to where the three men pinning the woman--and the woman herself--had completely frozen. "Ladies and gentlemen, for those of you--such as this stupid motherfucker right here--who didn't recognize him, our guest judge tonight is one Reno Lynley, formerly of the Turks!" the redheaded man crowed in an imitation of a game show announcer, eyes shining in an amused, carnivorous light as he took a step closer to his opponents. "Now, on tonight's show, you can decide the method of your death by spinning...the Wheel of Doom! Your choices are electrocution, gunshot wounds, or, best--or maybe worst--of all, I can keep talking!"

Confused blue-gray eyes meeting with his emerald orbs for a moment, the blonde woman suddenly exploded into action, pulling her right arm out from the grip of one man and snatching a knife from its sheath at his waist. In the same smooth, graceful movement, she stabbed the arm holding the syringe in her neck.

With a curse, the man's hand withdrew from the syringe, and she slashed the knife across his throat. A gout of blood splashed across her as his attention immediately withdrew from her and he staggered back, hand going to his throat as he struggled to breathe.

The cold steel sang through the air as she stabbed to her right, driving the dagger deep into the throat of one of the two men remaining. He gagged, then astonishingly enough, pulled the blade from his throat and began to scythe it downward into her hand.

A hand suddenly tapped him lightly on the shoulder, and the large black man instinctively spun.

The strange redheaded man grinned wickedly at him. "Say g'night." He brought up his handgun directly into the man's face and mercilessly pulled the trigger.

There was an explosion of blood, ichor, and brains that splattered across the wall, the only remaining man, and the girl as the body slumped to the floor with a thud.

Even as Reno glanced up from the dead man, he saw the woman pull the syringe from her neck with only the faintest of wincing, stab it deep into the throat of the final thug, and press the plunger. The burly man immediately crashed to the floor on his back.

The sudden silence seemed deafening as the woman's hand went to her neck, where a thin stream of blood was dribbling down her creamy skin. She stared for a moment at the carnage, before shaking her head furiously and stomping on the throat of the man that she had just injected. There was a strangled gulping sound, then nothing as his windpipe collapsed.

She crouched beside him and fumbled at his waist for a moment before producing a large black handgun, which she flicked the safety on and slipped it into her pocket. Then, and only then, she rose and darted to the door, pausing for a split second in the doorway to turn and look at Reno, almond-shaped eyes meeting with his. "Are you fucking coming or not?" she spat out.

"Why the hell would I be coming?" he questioned.

"Because there are more of them here in Sol; they didn't come alone, you know. They'll be along any second now." Her face was eerily intent. "This time, you won't get the drop on them."

Instead of replying, he reached down and grabbed the knife from where the final man had dropped it, then jogged to the door where she stood.

Taking that as an answer, she bolted through the hall and down the steps, with Reno hard at her heels, into the humid, hot night of Costa del Sol. "Those are their bikes," she called over her shoulder to the ex-Turk, pointing to a veritable fleet of jet-black, state-of-the-art, brand-new motorcycles.

"Well, fuck," Reno muttered when he took in the number of bikes, and as she dashed to the lead motorcycle.

Using the knife that he had swiped from the dead man upstairs, the ex-Turk quickly and efficiently slit the tires of the thirteen bikes.

An engine roared in his ears, and Reno looked up from his work to find that the big motorcycle was halted beside him, with the young woman seated at the handlebars.

"Get on!" she shouted over the clamor of the engine.

Reno slashed one final tire, then dropped the bloodstained dagger and jumped onto the seat behind her, arms swiftly encircling her waist. The girl revved the engine again, and they shot off out of Costa del Sol and into the night.

The redheaded man glanced back and saw several dark shapes convalescing on the now defunct motorbikes, and he grinned.

The bike sped off into the night, swiftly leaving Costa del Sol behind as its wheels spun on the path.

"Who the fuck are you?" Reno bellowed up to the girl.

"That's nothing you need to know," she replied snappily, her answer tossed back to him by the wind.

"What's your godsdamn name, then?"

She hesitated. "...Dinah."

The redhead felt sure she was lying, but said nothing. "Yeah. Would you mind doing something about your Kjata-be-damned hair?! I'm not really enjoyin' choking on it!" He spoke the truth; the golden strands were being driven by the wind directly into his face, stinging his eyes and filling his mouth whenever he opened it.

"It's fine the way it is," she barked at him.

"Bitch," Reno muttered under his breath. What the fuck was I thinking when I got mixed up in this?

The ex-Turk remembered thinking that he was going to get harassed about his black eye when Monday came. Now he found himself wondering where he was going to fucking be on Monday...

* * * * *

Dinah's name is pronounced DEE - nah.