

Quickfingers

Part 2

The shock of jumping over 6000 years into the future was jarring to say the least. Carriages now had no beasts to pull them. People had weapons that were similar to crossbows but smaller and way more powerful. Streets were a solid black and no longer cobble stone. Buildings were taller than the trees around them, way taller.

This wasn't the most jarring thing though, it was knowing that she was here with Silverleaf, a place and time where their relationship will not be frowned upon. A place where the two of them could live together as lovers. It was almost as exciting as this new time was scary.

The first thing they did was get away from the police officer. The trog seemed nice enough, except he was talking to a princess.... She just realized that she was no longer a princess. A smile crept across her face.

The troll looked at her as if he just asked her a question and was waiting for an answer. His Sperethiel was bad. She could understand him, but a troll should not sully the language of the high born. She looked at him with contempt. The troll must have been used to it, he didn't flinch at all.

"What is your name?" he said again in his broken Sperethiel.

Thinking a moment she decided to take the name of one of the maids from her parent's palace.

"Roseblossem" she said simply, her accent almost giving away her royal training.

"Where are you from Roseblossem?" The officer asked dryly.

"Tir Tangier." Stated simply and without the flourish of her normal speech.

The questions went on and on. At sunup the officer escorted both elves to a waiting area where a jolly and graying dwarf was waiting for them.

"Good morning Roseblossem, I am Dana and I will be helping you with getting set up in the city."

Her Sperethiel was better than the trolls at least, still it should not be spoken by these lesser beings. Dwarves, trolls, what is next? Orcs?

The dwarf turned to a man who was holding a data pad (Found out what it was later) up to his face. When he pulled it down to greet both elves, Roseblossem and Silverleaf both noticed the toothy grin of a young orc. He didn't speak, instead his voice was coming out of a device attached to his wrist.

A very mechanical voice spoke up, "Hello ladies, my name is Joseph. I will be your advocate today. We will be processing you for a SIN, issuing you a comlink, and preparing you for your legal life in the Tir."

Both Silverleaf and Roseblossem looked at each other questioningly. They had no idea what this creature was saying to them.

The rest of the day went by more or less the same way. People coming and going, asking questions that neither woman could answer, measuring them up and down, and preparing them for their release. It

was confusing for both women. Pictures that moved, people waving their hands in front of their faces, but not seeing anything, not unlike magic, but without the benefits of the spell being cast.

That evening both women were released, both were given a thing called a credstick with money on it, and they were directed to a hotel where they would be allowed to stay for a week free of charge.

For some reason the police officer put down that they were Metahuman trafficked for sex? Not entirely sure what that meant, but it was allowing them to get some of the basics until they could learn the ways of life in this world.

One of the officers, before cutting them loose, was nice enough to show them how to use the Vid. There was so much information at their fingertips, way more than all the scrolls in her father's library. At least they could learn about this new land that they would be living in.

After they were released, both women were driven to the hotel. It was a Motel 6, not high end, but amazing for women who had beds made of animal hide only warmed by fire. The modern amenities were like nothing that could be imagined. Silverleaf even pointed out a man who was riding a horse with wheels and no head. It was found out later that it was a motorcycle.

That night was bliss. The elves spent the night talking freely for the first time in their lives. They were excited, afraid, and happy to finally be free.

Just as they were going to bed, there was a crashing sound from the kitchenette. Roseblossem jumped up and ran toward the noise, while Silverleaf went and tried to hide under the bed.

Roseblossem turned the corner and froze, standing before her was a vile creature oozing ichor and Spite. The malice it intended was dripping off of it with the blood oozing off of its body. She could tell that this was the same being that brought her to this time.

Roseblossem didn't give it another second, she started screaming its name. Then, just as quickly as it came, the spirit was gone. A silence filled the room that was suffocating.

"Silverleaf, are you ok?"

Silverleaf was climbing out from under the bed, "I am now thanks to you. You are my hero my princess."

Roseblossem rolled her eyes, "I am not a princess anymore," she reminded Silverleaf.

"You are my princess and I will love you and follow you forever."

Over the next several weeks, the two elves were starting to understand the way this world works. They were meeting with a counselor for Sexually Trafficked women who, even though they told them they were not sex slaves, taught them how to get by in the world. The counselor even got them jobs with no skills needed to help them get on their feet.

Their encounter with the spirit becoming a memory.

Roseblossem found she had a knack for finding things, talking to people, and palming from unsuspecting people. Silverleaf gave her the nick name of Quickfingers because of how fast she could lift a credstick, empty the funds, and return the stick to the owner without them ever realizing it happened.

Silverleaf got a job at a hotel resort as a maid. It was similar enough to what she grew up doing that they told her she was a natural at it, once she got the computer side of things down. She found she actually liked the line of work.

Five weeks after coming to this time, they purchased a condo in a mid-level building. Secure enough for their needs and close enough to an Organic Grocer for them to enjoy real food. They both realized quickly that they didn't like the soy dreck that everyone seemed to eat here.

The second night in their new place, Silverleaf created a culinary masterpiece. It was an amazing blend of Italian and Elfish cuisine. They had just sat down to dinner, Quickfingers was pouring glasses of wine for them, when someone knocked at the door.

Silverleaf jumped up and went to the door. Quickfinger assumed she was waiting for a delivery. Silverleaf did love having things delivered.

Quickfinger heard the door open then there was a muffled scream and a thump. She jumped into action. She sprinted into the hall where the door was located, and saw that same damn spirit as before. It was engulfing Silverleaf who was obviously having problems even breathing through the blood and gore.

Quickfingers, not wanting to lose Silverleaf, didn't speak the name of the spirit but charged at it with a furry no one had ever seen from her before. She was fighting for her life, and the life of her best friend, lover, and she was hoping someday soon wife. That moment a clarity came to Quickfingers, she had to kill this spirit now to save Silverleaf.

Quickfinger flew into action. She drew a small dagger that she had acquired since getting here. She focused her energy into the blade and saw a faint glow around it. So did the spirit. The writhing pile of flesh and goo started to move away, dragging Silverleaf with it.

Quickfingers dove forward, the tip of her dagger in front of her as she flew into the spirit. Slashing and stabbing at any part of the spirit that wasn't near Silverleaf. She knew she didn't want to accidentally hit her.

The spirit screamed with pain, and threw out a tentacle toward Quickfingers. She aptly dodged the grapple, but got slammed into the wall by another tentacle that she failed to see. She saw stars and felt instantly nauseous.

Fighting through the pain and nausea, she redoubled her attack. Kicking, punching and stabbing at any part of the spirit she could get. Large chunks of the spirit were falling away under her blade. She was exhausted. The fight has only lasted a few minutes, but she felt drained of her energy. She looked down and realized that a tentacle had wrapped around her leg. It seemed to be draining her energy.

Quickfinger cut the tentacle off of her leg, she was still drained, but instantly felt better. She continued to slash and punch the creature. It started to flee the condo, leaving Silverleaf in a wet bloody mess. Quickfinger realized this had to end now if they ever wanted to have a normal life. She pressed the attack.

In the hallway the creature filled the entire passage. It was huge. It looked like it had been absorbing more of Metahumanity since getting here. There were now other races faces and arms showing through

the lumpy body. A face of a troll, a snout of a wolf, anything and everything living seemed to be on its menu.

Quickfingers threw the knife at the spirit, hitting it center mast. She then focused her energy on her hands, turning them into lethal blades that were strong enough to kill anything that stood in her way. She called upon the power of her killing hands.

She struck again and again, disrupting the mana flow of the spirit. It hit her only one more time, ripping the flesh off of one of her arms before it was sent back to the abyss. Nothing of the spirit remained except the damage that it had done. Her arm was throbbing, there was blood everywhere in the hall. Silverleaf...

She rushed back into the condo. Silverleaf was still laying where the spirit had left her. In a puddle of blood and gore. She wasn't breathing.

Quickfingers pulled out a medkit that she had purchased recently, and hooked it up. It said she was too far gone. Not believing the tech, Quickfingers started to do manual breathing that her father taught her. Pinch the nose, tilt the head, breath, let the air out, and then breathe again. She did that for a long time, crying the entire time. Silverleaf was growing cold by the time the police showed up.

The same officer that found them the first night here was back. He pulled Quickfingers away from her now dead lover. He was talking to her, but she didn't hear a word. She passed out from her exhaustion and wounds.

She awoke sometime later in a hospital. She was hooked up to a lot of machines. Wires across her chest, head, and tubes going into her arm. Her other arm was wrapped in a bloody gauze. A moment after she woke up an orc nurse came into the room.

"Roseblossom, I am nurse Dana. I will be here all night to help you out."

"Where is Silverleaf?"

"Officer McGlinns will be in here shortly to speak with you." She stated just ignoring everything Quickfingers was asking.

The troll, officer McGlinns came into the room a moment later.

"Roseblossom." He nodded a greeting, there was no smile on his face.

"Where is Silverleaf? Is she ok? What happened to my finance?"

"I'm sorry to inform you," he couldn't even finish. She was already in tears. Crying uncontrollably. She realized the officer was still here waiting for her. She stanchd the tears. No one would ever see her cry again. Her tears were for herself and only herself from now on.

"I'm sorry," she started, "I should be controlling myself better."

"I understand. If I lost my wife," he trailed off.

"Do you know who sent that spirit after you?" he asked.

"No." she lied.

Quickfingers just wanted to get out of the hospital and get away from the Tier. Far away. It would be a few days because of the flesh for her arm having to be grown. Someone had covered all her expenses, so she was getting the best treatments.

The day before she was to be released she got a bouquet of flowers. Blue roses. The note said, 'If you ever need anything, just ask. -H'

Now she knew who covered her expenses, it was time to get out of town.

Officer McGlinns came back later that day. "Roseblossom, I was told to give you this data chip. It has information that you can use to set yourself up away from the shadow of what happened. I was also told to give you this comlink. If you ever need to get ahold of him, just hit quick dial 1."

He smiled knowingly. Dreck he knows who she really is.

"I think I need to get away from him and everyone he knows."

"I understand. I have a friend, my brother actually, who can smuggle you out of the country. I normally wouldn't suggest doing anything illegal like this, but I don't like or trust him or the people that he represents."

Quickfingers looks at him with disbelief.

"My brother was an archeologist who, the corporation he was working for said he was stealing the items. He wasn't. He has since gone into the shadows. He is a Shadowrunner that goes by the name Barney. You can't miss him. He has bright purple hair between his sweeping back horns. He is a little tall at just over 3.3 meters. I can get you in touch with him. I will never know where you end up, and I guarantee that neither will he."

He slid a piece of paper with a com number scribbled on it. "He is a good man. He is a criminal, but not by his choice. He is a good man who shouldn't have had to go into the shadows."

She glanced at the paper. It was obvious that she didn't understand a lot of what was being said, but she understood enough he thought.

"I will leave you to it then. Good luck Mrs. Roseblossom. I hope you find some happiness." He smiled, "If you ever need anything from me," he handed her his card. "On the back is my personal number."

She looked at him. His toothy grin almost made her laugh. She realized then that this troll was friendly. It called all of her prejudices into question. These lesser beings were helping her without being ordered to. She would have to reevaluate her learning from childhood. But that will have to wait. Now she needs to get out of the Tier.

"Thank you officer. For everything."

He let himself out.

That evening she made a com call. The image of a large troll with purple hair lit up the holo-screen. "You're not my brother." He said in a deep, gruff voice.

“No I am not. Barney, your brother gave me your com to help me out. He said you have a way to get me out of the Tier and someplace I can work.”

“What kind of work?”

“I acquire things, make connections, and learn new things quickly.”

“I know just where you should go. I have a friend in Seattle that needs some help with his work. He is older and needs an apprentice to teach the ways of his job of choice. He needs someone with your skills.”

“What is it he does?”

“He acquires things, makes connections, hires teams for jobs.” He smiled and the screen flashed a second. “I need to get off this line. Meet me at the McQ’s on 19th and Burnside. I will be there for dinner around 2000.

He didn’t wait for a reply. The line was dead.

She checked out of the hospital and went back to her condo. She went in, ducking under the police tape. She realized there was nothing in her that she wanted. Then she saw a picture of her and Silverleaf in the park downtown. It was a happy picture, when her lover was alive and well. She poked the picture and headed to the McQ’s.

She got there early, ordered some food, and sat down and started eating. Looking around she noticed that this was a rougher part of town. There were gang members wearing their green colors. These gangers were all elves. She felt she was safe, but kept her head down staring at her food. The gangers eventually left then the other Meta’s came in.

About 10 min till 2000, a HUGE troll strolled into the restaurant. He had to be 3.3 meters tall, approximately 210 kilos. His horns bent back like ram horns and were polished to a gleaming sheen. His hair, which was full and long, was bright purple.

He wore a leather duster and had a pistol on his hip in plain view. He was sending off an aura of, don’t frag with me.

Quickfingers stood up and walked over to this behemoth. “Barney?”

“What gave it away chika? Was it the hair?” His Sperethiel was broken, but understandable.

Chika. That was a word she didn’t know. “What is this chika?”

“It is slang in Aztlan Spanish for young woman. Do you speak English or Japanese?”

“Not yet.”

He pulled out a device and started talking into it. It was translating his speech into Sperethiel. It wasn’t perfect, but it would suffice.

“We leave tonight at midnight. I will have a transport waiting for you behind the abandoned hospital off of 23 Ave. Here is a digital pin of the location.”

“What is that?”

“Pull out your comlink.” He went through how to accept a pin and how to set the comlink for navigation. “I will be in the transport. It will be obvious when you see it.”

“Ok. What should I do until then?”

“Get your things. Money, weapons, armor, and any personal items that you would want to keep. You will not be coming back here. I already had my friend Doom wipe your SIN. I got your information from my brother, I hope you don’t mind, but you no longer exists in the Tier.”

That made her smile. “Thank you.”

“What should I call you?”

“Quickfingers.”

He raised an eyebrow at that but didn’t ask any questions. “We will be landing in Seattle tonight outside of the Redmond barrens. I have a safe house set up that you can use for a few weeks, until we can get you set up in the local circuit.”

“Um.”

“Don’t worry, I won’t leave you high and dry. I am doing this as a favor for my brother. I am sticking with you until you learn the ropes. You are going to join our team. We will help keep you alive in the shadows.”

“Keep me alive?”

“That is the idea.” He smiled slyly at that. “Don’t worry, it won’t be so difficult. You just need to learn a few things, like English.”

“Who is on this team?”

“We will talk more at the safe house. I don’t want anyone overhearing this information. I will see you tonight.” An employee headed over with two large bags of food and handed it to Barney.

“Tonight.” She said as she walked out.

That night she was sitting on the curb across from the hospital. The building itself was overrun with gangers, homeless, and lesser metahumans. Dreck, she had to stop thinking of them that way. That was her father talking.

Right at midnight there was a light from the sky, a helicopter landed in the street in front of her. It had a bright purple dinosaur painted on the side. Barney stuck his head out and said, “Welcome to my ride.” Obviously this was supposed to be some sort of joke, Barney and the Purple Dino. Whatever it was she didn’t get it.

The flight itself was uneventful. Whoever was piloting was keeping it low to the ground and moving between hills. It was thrilling to be in a flying machine and terrifying at the same time. She couldn’t pull her eyes away from the window.

“Do you always travel so?” she finally asked Barney.

“Nope, only when smuggling things from country to country. It is easier to avoid locals if we are in the air.”

She went back to being silent.

A few hours later they landed in a parking lot of a collapsed building. A few people ran out and pulled the helicopter under a cover that resembled rubble. Then they pulled up a fake wall so it couldn't be seen from the street.

Barney showed her where the safe house was located. It was in what looked to be a collapsed building. The door was laying down on its side, and the roof was a crater. Barney opened the door and sidestepped into the safe house.

Once everyone was inside he made introductions.

He first pointed to a slightly older human with pale skin, black hair, with machine parts sticking out of his head. “This is our decker Digital Doom.” He turned to a large elf that had some cat like features. This is our infiltration specialist, Shade. And finally,” he turns to a short dwarf with a bright green Mohawk and beard, “our rigger, Sprocket. There is one other member of our team, but she is away on other business at the moment.”

“Hello all,” she wasn't feeling very talkative, especially seeing they were using that linguasoft still. It gave her a headache trying to hear a flowery elaborate language in a machine voice.

Barney looked at her, “You can stash your stuff in this locker, and you can have that room.” He pointed at a door that looked almost rusted through. “If you need anything one of us is always awake.”

She smiled a halfhearted smile and went to the room. Unlike the door, the room was clean and fresh. There were no windows to speak of, but there was still fresh air getting in. She laid down on the bed and was out in a moment.

The next evening she woke up to the smell of coffee. Not soy, but real coffee. She hurried out of bed and went out into the main room. The human, Digital Doom, was there with a fresh pot. “Good morning, or evening, coffee?”

It took her a moment to realize he was speaking in nearly flawless Sperethiel. “Yes please. What do I call you anyway? Digital Doom seems like a mouth full.”

“Most of my friends call me DD. Some Doom. It really depends on you. I answer to almost anything. I guess I spent too many years in the military. Anyway, that is another story. Today you are going to meet a fixer friend of ours. You will be apprenticing with her. When she says you are ready, we will also take you on a few runs to show you the way things are. We are trying to give you options for your future.”

“Why?” she asked it honestly out of curiosity.

“Because Barney asked us to. Let me be the first to welcome you to the shadows. After today, you will be considered a Shadowrunner.”