



ENDGAME

A tale of Terrorbelle

Patrick Thomas

LIFE IS BUT A DREAM, ONLY THE BUTT I WAS FACING WAS nothing short of a nightmare. Of course the fact that it wasn't human had something to do with it.

I fight monsters. It's what I do. Part of it, anyway. I'm big and strong, especially for a woman, plus I like to hit stuff. Sometimes I shoot things, but I'm not as crazy about that. I'm a damn good shot. Usually when I have to shoot, it's not an easy situation. That means things like flesh wounds are rarely an option.

I'd never admit it, but I can be a real softie. Hard to believe with a name like Terrorbelle, but it's true. Killing anything bothers me, even a monster. Maybe it's because if some people knew where I came from or could see the razor-sharp wings that I keep hidden, then they might think I'm a monster, too.

That doesn't mean I won't kill if I need to, just that it bothers me. In the end, if it's a choice between saving my skin and ending a monster, human or otherwise, the world will be less one bad guy.

That left me the problem of how to deal with Badass here. Sadly, that was her name. Maybe it wasn't the one she was given at birth, but it's what I call her. And it fit.

Badass was shorter than my five foot ten by the better half of a foot. Badass wasn't ugly, though her face wasn't going to be winning any beauty contests, but who was I to talk? She had a tiny hourglass figure with most of the sand up top, which tended to more than make up for any other shortcomings with a lot of men. Trust me, I know. I have half a beach worth's up there.

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Badass had the requisite number of eyes, arms and such to pass unnoticed on a New York City street. As long as she covered up her fanny.

I'm a butt woman. I like them round and firm and I don't mind bouncing quarters off them when the mood strikes me. I've never been interested in my own fair gender, although I can still appreciate well-formed buttocks on another woman. Usually I tend toward the jealous side. My own butt is muscular and well shaped from my pixie heritage, but it is large—especially when compared to a human's—thanks to the ogre half of my parentage. But Badass' posterior . . .

Let's just say it could chew up other butts and spit them out.

I first encountered her over two weeks ago and I hate to admit it, but Badass pulled a con job on me.

It was late enough to be early and I was walking home from having a drink with a friend. In Manhattan, the streets are never truly deserted, but they were quiet...until I heard the shouting.

My reaction was perhaps a little different than some of my fellow New Yorkers. I ran toward the screams. I turned the corner into an alley and saw three men and one woman. One of the men was bent over and holding his crotch like it had been kicked hard. As soon as the woman saw me, she started crying.

"They were trying to rape me," she mumbled between sobs. Whether she knew it or not, that was the right button to push. I had been eleven when soldiers had...let's say it wasn't good. Something like that stays with you always. It colors your perceptions.

I pulled my gun. That was the cue for the other two to make a run for it, which left me torn between giving chase or aide.

The woman made my decision for me. "I'm okay now. Please don't let them get away."

The man on the ground wasn't moving, but it could be a feign. A groin shot isn't always crippling. "I already called the cops. They'll be here any second," I lied. I figured that would keep him from getting any bad ideas and gave chase. I was a soldier in the Daemor, an elite group of women who would make Special Forces look like amateurs. You wouldn't know it from my large girlish figure, but I never stopped my exercise regimen. Skipped it because of a hangover or a better offer, sure, but I never gave it up. I was able to catch up to the pair without having to resort to taking off my padded pink trench coat and using wing power. I can't fly in magic-poor environments, but by using the wings to lessen the weight I'm carrying, I can keep pace on foot with a horse in the short term.

They weren't bright enough to split up, so I followed them down into the subway. They leapt over the turnstiles and I did the same. The booth attendant was so busy chatting away on her cell phone that she either didn't notice us or didn't think we were important enough to stop her conversation.

The two jumped down on the tracks with plans of crossing to the other side until faced with the reality of crossing over the third rail.