

HEROINE: PROOF OF CONCEPT

Written by

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INT. MMA GYM - NIGHT

Of the many tattoos that cover RILEY SULLIVAN (31), the most obvious is the large Gothic cross that spans her back.

Her muscles ripple as she bounces toe-to-toe with a heavyweight brute, JAKE (23), in the worn ring of a dimly-lit inner-city gym.

He sidesteps her round kick and reaches for a grapple.

She thwarts him with a block and a jab.

He scowls, winds up, and throws his hardest right cross.

It WHIFFS as she ducks inside his guard.

Her fist explodes upward into his chin so hard that it lifts him clear off of his feet.

The BOOM as Jake's back hits the mat shakes the whole ring.

Riley pauses. Jake lays unconscious.

She turns and walks toward the corner where her TRAINER (40s) stands outside the ring with a scowl on his bearded face.

TRAINER

I told you not to hit that hard in these practice matches.

Jake's trainer climbs into the other side of the ring, behind her, to check Jake's status.

RILEY

Yeah, well I didn't want to keep dancing around all friggin' night.

She spreads the ropes and climbs out of the ring.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Besides, he wouldn't have learned jack otherwise. See ya' next time.

She breezes right by him toward the locker room.

TRAINER

Just a sec...

RILEY

Yeah?

TRAINER

Any chance you've changed your mind? The kids could really look up to someone like you.

RILEY

Those kids could really use a break from the brainwashing, too. You gonna keep making 'em pray?

TRAINER

C'mon Riley. You know it's a Christian youth center.

RILEY

Then nothing's changed.

She turns on her heel and heads for the locker room.

INT. MMA GYM, LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Riley towel-dries her hair in the gym's dingy locker room.

Her phone beeps in her gym bag. She fishes out a phone in a scarred-up rubberized black case and glares at the screen.

RILEY

What the hell do you want?

She hits the voicemail speaker button and slaps it down on the aisle's wooden center bench.

She freezes at the BLEEP of a secure military radio being patched through to her voicemail.

The deep voice of STEVE SULLIVAN (58) breaks through the STATIC, with the CHOP of rotor blades in the background.

STEVE

(shouting over background noise)

Riley, I know we haven't talked in way too long, but I think you're the only one I can trust right now.

She reaches down and cranks the volume all the way up.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I've got a bad feeling that Prince Hussein Abdullah might be taken hostage in the next few days. He's at the coffee shop in the Georgetown bookstore right now.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

Clean cut, fair skin for an Arab,  
probably a polo shirt, glasses.  
Please, just warn him for me. I may  
not get there in time. Still love  
you Kiddo. Out.

She scowls.

RILEY

After five years, Dad? Fuck that.

She chucks the phone back into her threadbare gym bag.

INT. RILEY'S JEEP - NIGHT

Riley slams the flimsy door of her OD green CJ-5, then pauses  
and stares at the dash in thought.

Her scowl melts to a concerned expression.

RILEY

Damn it Dad, not again.

She fires up the jeep and backs out.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Riley scans the quiet campus coffee shop as she enters. It is  
nearly empty except the SKINNY KID behind the counter. A  
MACHO COP and a CHUBBY COP sip coffee in the very back.

Her gaze rests on a lone student in the opposite corner.

Prince HUSSEIN ABDULLAH (21) hacks away on his laptop. He  
doesn't even look up when she reaches the table.

RILEY

You Prince Abdullah?

HUSSEIN

(perfect English)

Yes. But please call me Hussein.

He looks up with a charming smile.

RILEY

I came to warn you...

Hussein's smile melts as he glances to her right and left.

Riley sees hooded silhouettes just behind either side of her  
in the reflection off of Hussein's glasses.

She sees the GRUFF KIDNAPPER pull something from his waist.  
She hears his pistol's slide quietly rack.

GRUFF KIDNAPPER (O.S.)  
(thick Syrian accent)  
You should leave, woman. Prince  
Hussein, you will come with us.

Without hesitation, Riley shoots her arm cross-face to the source of the voice and wraps it around behind the Gruff Kidnapper's neck as she steps back, forcing his back to arch.

She pulls up hard. Vertebrae CRUNCH.

TEEN KIDNAPPER digs under his belt for a concealed handgun.

Gruff Kidnappers's skull hits the hardwood with a THUNK.

Teen Kidnapper racks a round as he turns.

Riley sweeps his feet out from under him before he fires.

An errant shot POPS off as he falls to the deck.

She stomps the pistol grip. His trapped fingers CRACK.

She stomps hard on the side of his chin with her other boot.

His jaw SNAPS, and blood spurts across the floor.

With a sharp kick, the gun slides free of his broken fingers.

Macho Cop and Chubby Cop draw their weapons as they charge from their seats across the shop.

MACHO COP  
Freeze!

CHUBBY COP  
Hands up!

Riley raises her hands.

CHUBBY COP (CONT'D)  
(to Macho Cop, under his  
breath)  
Dafuck was that?

MACHO COP  
I dunno. Stay sharp.

Macho Cop holsters and snaps his sidearm.

MACHO COP (CONT'D)  
 (to Hussein)  
 You're coming with us, Prince.

He walks straight for the Prince as he draws his cuffs.

Riley suddenly rolls right through his path to foul Chubby Cop's line of fire and recover the dropped gun.

She rolls right up into a kneeling position.

POP, she shoots Chubby Cop's far knee out; he crumples away.

Macho Cop fumbles for his gun as he spins back.

POP, her next round tears through his hip at point-blank.

Macho Cop grimaces as he falls away face-first to the deck.

Riley scans the scene, back on her feet. Skinny Kid cowers in the fetal position behind the counter.

HUSSEIN  
 Why would you do that!

She kicks Macho Cop's half-drawn pistol out of reach.

RILEY  
 How do you think these assholes  
 know you're a prince?

She steps over and kicks Chubby Cop's gun out of his reach.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
 And why go for the guy who just sat  
 there watching the ass-kicking?  
 Instead of me? Sellouts.

She drops the mag and pops the chambered round from the kidnapper's pistol, then tosses it back toward them.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
 Any idea who they are though?

Hussein stares at Gruff Kidnapper and shakes his head.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
 I think we'd better pull chocks...

Hussein sits stunned.

RILEY (CONT'D)  
 Let's go!

She grabs his shirt and drags him up.

INT. RILEY'S JEEP - NIGHT

They speed out of town.

HUSSEIN

I think you just saved my life. I'm not sure how to thank you.

RILEY

Pretty sure we're not in the clear just yet. Lucky as hell I listened to Dad's message though.

HUSSEIN

(Jordanian Arabic)  
God is great.

RILEY

I'm the one who saved your ass, not some imaginary friend. Come on kid!

HUSSEIN

Yes, I am in your debt. But I also know Allah must have willed it.

Riley slams the brakes, spins the jeep around, and the tires chirp as she floors it back the direction they came from.

HUSSEIN (CONT'D)

Fine, fine. Point taken.

She slows down and U-turns back the way they were going.

RILEY

Good. I'm really sick of that kind of nonsense, so give me a break.

(beat)

I was just BS'ing you though. I'd never actually turn you over to those psychos. Regardless of how much your silly beliefs annoy me.

Hussein turns and starts to open his mouth in retort, but reconsiders and silently turns back.

INT. WALEED'S SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

The glow of monitors light the stoic visage of WALEED AL-BAGHDADI (42) in a dark apartment-turned-headquarters.

He contemplates the stolen feed of the coffee shop's security camera on the monitor in front of him: all four of his men down and the prince escaped.

WALEED  
(urban Iraqi Arabic)  
If God wills.

He picks up a disposable cellphone and DIALS.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

The officers struggle to get up. But the kidnapers, though alive, lay still other than their wheezes.

CHUBBY COP  
She's right you know. They check  
our bank accounts, we're screwed.

Teen Kidnapper's cellphone blares Koranic verses in Arabic.

Skinny Kid peers over the counter and his eyes widen.

Chubby Cop looks over and sees Teen Kidnapper, in a pool of blood with his eyes swollen shut, grope through his jacket.

Teen Kidnapper produces the red button of a detonation cord.

CHUBBY COP (CONT'D)  
No, no, NOOOOOO!

TEEN KIDNAPPER  
(loud but slurred Arabic)  
GOD IS GREAT!

He mashes the button.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

THUMP, the windows all shatter outward to bits, and a massive orange and black plume envelopes half the building.

TITLE CARD: "HEROINE"

FADE OUT.