

The Robbery

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“Give me the fucking money!”

Some said that during their careers, everyone working at a gas station or small store wound up hearing the words. Samantha had hoped it would have taken longer than two weeks. Staring down the barrel of a gun had her body frozen, but her mind raced. She knew it was unlikely anyone else would happen upon the scene. It was a small gas station by an infrequently travelled road. The small convenience store in it was the big customer draw, but in the middle of the night even the locals rarely dropped by.

“You deaf or what? Move it bitch!”

Samantha startled into action. She glanced outside while she started to open up the cash register. There was an old car at one of the gas pumps, running. It was the getaway vehicle. She could see the shadowy figure of the driver in it.

She fumbled with the buttons and had to make several tries to open the register. Each time she did, she could tell the robber was getting more and more agitated. She glanced up at the man once more before giving the register another try.

He wasn't very old, that much she could tell even behind the blue and white scarf that covered the lower half of his face. His pants looked like they could fall down any moment if he started running and the over sized t-shirt hung all the way down to his knees.

He looked just like any other kid who followed the rappers style of dressing.

“Bitch, if you don't have that register open soon I'm going to pull this trigger and blow a hole in your head so big birds will look at it as a possible nest.”

Samantha nodded, hands shaking. At nineteen, it was her first proper job. She'd done small stints at other shops during the holidays, but this was the first one she was living off from.

The register let out its ring and opened.

The lights went out.

It made Samantha let out a small cry. She heard a loud bang from the outside. Metal screeched as it was being bent in ways it did not want to be. There were noises that could have come from someone crying out in terror, but they were drowned out by everything else.

The lights flickered back on.

The gun was still pointed at her and that moment Samantha realized she had lost her opportunity to turn things around. Just to the right of her, under the counter, there was a gun. The owner had showed it to her and instructed in its use, but there had not been an opportunity to grab it earlier. Now, she had lost the chance to do it. Though she had to admit to being hesitant to take it. When you wrapped your fingers around the handle in such a situation you had to be prepared to use it to take someone's life.

Samantha had her doubts about being able to do it.

The robber wasn't looking at her even if his gun was. He was looking outside and Samantha followed his gaze. The car that had been there was nothing more than a pile of twisted metal. Under the dim light of the overhead lights, she could see a hand draping from one of the broken windows. There was no chance anyone was still alive inside the pile.

"What the fuck?" the robber muttered, bewildered and with a hint of fear in his voice. His gun shook and lowered slightly. He turned to Samantha and raised the weapon once more. "What the funk did you do?"

"Me?" Samantha asked, surprised the man would even think she had something to do with the wrecked car. "I didn't do anything. How could I?"

The man eyed her. The only impressive thing about her was the narrow waist that gave her an hourglass like figure, but that was hardly something that would allow her to wreck a car like that. The gun had been on her the whole time. She couldn't have done it. Then who did?

"Gimme the money," said the robber, still planning to make it out with something to show for it. The faster the money was in his hands, the faster he'd get away from the mystery.

Samantha grabbed a paper bag and started piling money in it. There wasn't much, a few hundred at most. Nothing worth getting yourself killed over. She couldn't help but notice how the robber kept glancing at the wrecked car, but showed little emotion at the probability of his friend being dead. If he didn't care about losing a friend, there was little chance he'd have a problem shooting a random gas station employee.

At the same time she feared he was the least of her worries. How could a car be destroyed like that in seconds? What had caused it?

She pulled the last set of bills from the register and started to hand it to the robber.

The lights went out again.

She heard something scratching the roof above her. Steps made their way over the counter and into the store. A crashing sound, like something had dropped through the ceiling.

Samantha took in panicked breaths and dropped the bag.

The lights came back on.

The robber was still there, standing in front of the counter, facing her. Two bone white spikes had pierced through his back, protruding right from under his collar bones. Behind him, two more curved spikes loomed in the air, held up by glistening, dark green tentacles.

They struck down and pierced the man through the chest before ripping him to pieces. Samantha screamed and ducked behind the counter. She crawled to the gun and held it with both hands before remembering to release the safety like the owner had instructed. She had her back against the counter.

Looking around for an escape route did not give her much hope. The door leading to the back room was only a few steps away, but even that seemed like it would be too much. She'd be left exposed to what ever was out in the store.

She stifled her sobs and held her breath.

Heavy steps were coming her way.

The counter creaked when something heavy climbed up on it.

Samantha did not dare to look up. Some clear goo dripped on the floor next to her. Was it better to die without seeing or face the executioner eye to eye? The gun did not seem nearly as consoling as before.

The light from a cars headlamps swiped over the store.

The counter creaked and a panel from the ceiling fell. Steps from above told what ever creature had been there was going away.

Samantha took a wavering gasp of breath.

Even though it didn't feel safe, she peeked over the counter. Many of the

near by shelves had been splattered red. There were pieces of the robber on the floor and hanging from where ever they had landed. The low hum from the coolers was all that she heard.

Looking out the door and through the glass that covered the entire store front, she could see the car that had pulled in. Seeing the logo of the sheriff's department sent waves of relief through her. She could see a man examining the warped car with his flash light shining light here and there.

Nervously, she glanced up at the ceiling. There was one panel missing and another lodged half way over another. What ever had gone up there had been big. For now it seemed to be gone though.

Samantha gathered up her courage and rushed from behind the counter. She did her best to avoid slipping on the robber's remains before running out the front door.

"Help me!" she cried out the moment the cool evening air hit her. The flash light jumped at her, blinding her.

"Stop! Throw down your weapon!" a commanding voice shouted out.

"I need help!" Samantha cried out.

"Drop the weapon!"

On the second try the command sunk in and she dropped the gun.

"Good. Now slowly walk towards me with your hands above your head."

Samantha did as told. While the local sheriff's were mostly reasonable she was starting to remember how trigger happy they could be at times. More than one case had been brought against them for shooting first and asking questions later.

"All right, that's far enough. Turn around and keep your hands above your head."

She did as told and soon felt a strong hand grab her left arm and the metal ring of a cuff being fastened around her wrist. Her other hands soon followed.

"Why are you arresting me?" she demanded, near tears. "I work here. They tried to rob the place."

"Ma'am, I'm not taking any chances given the situation." Having fastened the cuffs the man turned her around and nodded towards the warped car. The smell

of gasoline was thick in the air. "What happened to that car?"

The officer was younger than she had expected. Probably not many years on the job. He had a pleasant enough face that calmed Samantha down a bit. It didn't seem like he was looking to cause grief for her.

"I don't know," Samantha replied. "The lights went out and then when they came back on the car was like that." She then remembered the most pressing matter. "You need to be careful. There's something inside the store."

"Another robber?" asked the officer and eyed the store the best he could from his vantage point.

Samantha shook her head. "The other robber was killed by something. Something not human." She wanted to get away from the place. Even with him there she could not shake the feeling of threat.

"Not human?" the disbelief in the man's voice was evident. He eyed Samantha suspiciously, no doubt thinking she was under the influence of some drug.

"You have to believe me. Don't go in there. Just get us out of here," Samantha pleaded. "It ripped the robber to pieces just like that and probably crushed the car."

It gave him pause and made him glance at the pile of twisted metal once more. Finally, he shook his head. "All right, I'll put you in the car." He grabbed her by the cuffs and started leading her to the patrol car.

"No, don't lock me inside!" Samantha pleaded. To her it looked like a cage, ready to offer her as feed for what ever was out there. There was no escaping from the back of a cop car. "We have to get out of here!"

Her pleas fell to deaf ears, but it didn't matter.

They were ten feet from the car when something dropped on it from the shelter above the gas pumps. It was a large SUV style vehicle, but the roof was flattened under the weight of what had fallen on it.

It stood on four legs, the dark, almost black skin glistening under the lights. From each of its shoulders a tentacle emerged and swayed above it. The two at the front had the straight, white bony spikes on them while the two at the back had curved ones. It let out a low rumble and exposed a row of sharp teeth. It's

head had a smooth, curving bit that flowed far along its back. It's scorpion like tail whipped about behind it.

“What the fuck?” the deputy managed to mutter before the creature jumped at him. Samantha threw herself on the ground and felt it whisk past her. The scream that followed told her it had found its target. She could hear cloth being torn and the moist sounds of tissue being torn and crushed.

She struggled to get up and run away. She got on her feet and started to run away, past the damaged sheriff's vehicle. Something bumped into her and sent her staggering against the hood of the car. She rolled on her back only to be face to face with the monster. With its front legs it pressed her down on the hood by her shoulders. Sharp nails dug into her flesh. She screamed in pain.

A sharp row of teeth flashed inches from her face.

Samantha tried to struggle. She screamed from the top of her lungs, but none of it accomplished anything. She only calmed down when one of the tentacles came down and ripped away the cloth covering her stomach.

Something started to slither up her leg.

“No, no, no,” she pleaded, tears rolling down her cheeks. She looked down and saw the glistening, black strand slither up to her stomach. Before she could say anything more it plunged through her bellybutton and started to wiggle inside her.

The sharp pain made her gasp for breath.

She could feel it slithering up inside herself. Shudders of disgust ran through her body up until a sharp sting hit her heart.

Mere moment later a pleasant warmth spread through her body.

A numbness crept to her mind, stopping the screams.

Still, she felt the thing wiggle inside her, making its way down. Even in the haze she was afraid she knew where it was going. Her fear was confirmed when another jolt of sharp pain ran through her. A bulge made it past the tight spot her naval area formed and finally deposited inside her.

It withdrew from inside her, leaving behind not pain, but a pleasant warmth.

The creature leaned forward, its thin lips touching her nose. A strand of clear goo was left hanging between them as it started to withdraw. It slowly

landed down on all fours in front of her and stared at her for a moment with dark eyes.

It trotted away as Samantha started to slump down on the ground, her body numb and void of strength.

How long she laid there she had no idea. Her next memory was a man in army uniform leaning over her, shaking her to see if she'd wake up. It was a struggle, but with help from the man she made it to her feet. The fog in her mind started to dissolve.

In hindsight, big warning sirens should have gone off in her head. Why was it the military that was there instead of police, but at the time it did not click in her head. She was just happy to get to safety.

They didn't treat her badly in the beginning. They took her to a truck and drove her to see a doctor at a military base. Why not the hospital she had not the wherewithal to ask. They patched up the wounds on her shoulders, made her take tests before finally telling her there was nothing wrong with her, but that they'd like to keep her for observation.

They had her talk to all sorts of scientists, psychologist, military people whose ranks she forgot. She gave them an honest account of the events even though in the back of her mind a voice cried out for her not to. Had she paid attention, the looks the men gave each other at various points would have had her shut up.

When they gave her a new set of clothes and walked her over to a large transport plane, she knew she wasn't going home any time soon. Soldiers with rifles escorted her, ensuring there would be no escape. The flight was a long one and no one told her where they were going. All she knew was when they landed there was nothing but desert in every direction. The hot wind sent the sand flying and made her grateful when she was finally escorted inside a large hangar. An elevator took her down to what could only be described a bunker. The guards led her through concrete lined corridors until finally shoving her inside a room, locked behind two metal door.

There was a bed for her, a table, some chairs. A shower cubicle, sink and toilet took up one corner. One wall had a large window on it. The other side was

dark so she could not see anyone on the other side, but she was certain they would be keeping an eye on her. There were also cameras in all corners of the room. Nothing would go unseen by the people observing her.

A month passed without incident.

Samantha was fed three meals a day. Sometimes they'd take blood samples, ask if she felt any different, have her do some physical exercises. At first she had rebelled against it all, demanded to be taken home, but as those demands had fell on deaf ears, she'd come to terms with the fact there'd be no escape. This was her life now.

Then the rash came.

Samantha woke up one morning, feeling itchy all over. She made her way to the mirror and stared at her own image with sleepy eyes. She saw the red patches on her neck. She parted her tank top to see it slither down around her breasts and stomach all the way down to her legs. It didn't take long for the scientists to rush in and start examining her. They reassured her it was nothing to worry about, that she'd be fine, but believing them was a hard task for her.

And they were wrong in the end.

Over the next month the rash hardened, like a protective shell covering most every vital spot on her body. It changed from a red into a dark green, almost oil black. From the hardened spots the green spread to the rest of her skin, making it tougher. Even her hair went from a blonde to a toxic green.

Her captors were eager to test things on her after they found out their needles could no longer get through her skin to draw blood. It was then that they showed their true colours and made Samantha realize she was nothing more than a test subject to them. They'd strap her in place in a standing position and send in men with various weapons. They tried to stab her at various points of her body. They used guns of all calibres to see what it would take to get through the tough skin.

It took their most powerful sniping rifle to cause a small wound on the palm of her hand.

The resentment Samantha had grew stronger because of it. Had the skin not been as tough as it was – though to her it seemed more like it was elastic enough

to deflect bullets rather than stop them – death would have collected her several times. But her situation had not changed. There was still no escape for her. The steel doors were too strong, there were far too many guards.

Then the tentacles grew.

First they were nothing but lumps at her shoulder blades, but over just a few weeks they grew, spikes first, out to a length of sixteen feet. As she swished the two deadly weapons around, she could see the change in the attitude of those coming to examine her. There was fear in their eyes. They knew she now had the means to kill any of them should she so choose. Soon after realizing it, they started knocking her out with gas if they wanted to get close.

For her the change from a human into what could only be called a monster was not pleasant. The moment it had started she knew her old life was buried. There was no going back to being a clerk at a gas station. She had her doubts whether she'd ever see any place outside the small room given to her. If there was one thing the movies got right about the military, it was their fondness for secrets and keeping the public in the dark about any controversial subject. And Samantha had certainly grown into one.

“How do you feel?” came a voice from the speakers on the walls.

Samantha paced around in her small space. The spiked tentacles swished around her. They were slender yet held in them strength that had surprised the scientists. She could control them with her mind, but most of the time they acted on her moods and instincts. The bulge of her stomach made it difficult to move around.

The latest gift from the monster that had attacked her.

A baby.

It had been nearly nine months since the attack and now it seemed the entire goal of it had been revealed. To bring a child into the world, but first it had altered the mother to be more suitable for it. Her body was tougher, she had the means to protect the new life growing inside her, though at times she contemplated turning those weapons against it.

What was she carrying inside her?

The scientist had not shared that with her.

“What do you think?” she snapped and brushed aside a lock of her hair. It was stiffer than before and acted almost like a helmet. At least a hit from a baseball bat felt like nothing to her. “You've got me locked up here for months. You've essentially tried to kill me more times than I can count. I have this thing growing inside me and I've turned into a monster. How should I be feeling? I'm ready to kill every fucking one of you.”

Her lips curled into a smile of irony at that. Had she been willing to shoot that robber maybe she wouldn't be in this predicament.

“If you are feeling agitated there are drugs we can give you,” said the voice.

Samantha laughed. She was certain they had a drug for everything. “Aren't you worried what it might do to the baby?”

She made her way to the glass window and placed a hand on it. With her nails she scraped long grooves in it. They were strong enough to scrape even the concrete walls without giving her any discomfort. More deadly weapons at her disposal.

There was nothing but silence from behind the glass.

“Answer me!” Samantha demanded and one of her tentacles smashed into the glass, driving the spike deep into it. It pulled away, leaving behind a deep hole, but not deep enough to have penetrated the entire glass.

Gas started to hiss into the room.

Samantha laughed again and sat down, leaning against the wall. No point falling off your feet. It wasn't long until she was unconscious.

She woke up in the familiar room, laying naked on her bed. The smashed glass had been replaced by a new one. What else they had done she couldn't know, but at least nothing felt different and as she examined herself it looked like no harm had been done.

She put a hand on her stomach and felt the new life inside moving. She was unsure how to feel about it. How could anyone know what to feel in such a situation? Confusion with a hint of fear was the only sensible thing to feel.

With a slight groan she pushed herself up from the bed and stood up.

Liquid splashed onto the floor.

“Fuck.” Had they done something to her to start the labour? She wobbled

over to the window and started banging it. No matter what they had planned, she doubted she'd survive giving birth alone. Gas started to fill the room again.

The next time Samantha came to she was strapped down to a table by metal restraints. She couldn't move any part of her body. There were people all around her, wearing doctors masks and gowns. It was the pain of contractions that made her scream.

"Doctor, she's awake," one of the people said. A woman by the voice.

"Thank you, I'm not deaf," replied the man sitting between Samantha's spread out legs. "Listen, Samantha. Just push and remember to breathe and this'll be over soon."

"Aaa, fuck," Samantha cried out and pushed as her body urged her to. She couldn't blame them for strapping her down. Even if she didn't want to harm any of them it could have easily happened by accident. She could feel her tentacles trying to thrash into freedom so they could protect her.

Another push.

"Good, good. One more Samantha. One more push," said the male doctor as the others fussed about, getting ready to receive the newly born into the world.

Samantha groaned and made the final push, which left her panting.

She heard the small cry, the only sound breaking the silence in the room.

It wasn't a human sound.

She opened her eyes and looked down just in time to see the small tentacle pierce the doctor's neck as he was about to give the child away. Blood spurted out and the doctor fell. Another small tentacle hit the bed between her legs and pulled the baby with it.

With a mix of horror and relief she watched her baby crawl up her body. Dark eyes looked at her from a face that was an odd mix of hers and the creature that had started it all. Already a row of small, sharp teeth lined its mouth. Its nails felt like small needles as it made its way over her stomach. Had her skin not been toughened she had no doubt each move would have caused a bleeding wound. A small tail waved behind the baby as it crawled onward on all fours.

The baby gave a small cry when it made it to her chest and settled down to suckle on one of her breasts. The hardened pieces of skin on her gave it the

perfect support, as if designed just for that. The baby wrapped its small tentacles around itself, effectively creating a cocoon for itself to protect it from the outside.

The people around her looked on, horrified at what had happened. Some tried to help the bleeding doctor, but it looked like their efforts weren't going to save him.

Samantha paid little attention to them. It was hard to focus on anything else but the small life feeding off from her. She wanted to hate it. It was the culmination of everything that had robbed her of her old life. But at the same time the instincts of a mother had kicked in and she couldn't bring herself to want harm to come to it. She wanted to protect it.

A siren started to blare.

A voice came on the speakers. "Red alert! Red alert! Alpha one is in the facility. I repeat, alpha one is in the facility. All non-military personnel are to evacuate immediately. This is not a drill. I repeat. This is not a drill."

Samantha burst out into laughter before turning to those still remaining in the room. "You'd better run. Daddy's here and he won't be pleased with you."

The room emptied quickly. They even forgot to close the door.

Samantha waited. She knew it would be coming. It would find her. What it would do was a mystery to her, but at least she'd be out of the facility one way or another.

Screams echoed down the corridor.

Samantha looked down at the baby, contently sleeping against her bust. She wanted to reach out and touch it, but her hands remained restrained.

She heard the steps coming closer. It appeared so quickly she could barely register it before it had jumped on to the bed and stood over her, looking down at her.

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked Samantha in a calm voice and stared back at it. She hoped for death, but at the very least she hoped not be left there tied down.

The creature leaned in closer, its lips touching hers. It was at that moment that she felt it. It had an intelligent mind. There was purpose behind its actions. Images started flowing through her mind.

She saw the creature leaving a nest filled with its kind. Several others like it did the same. They were launched into space from a planet different than Earth. It had travelled through space for a very long time, drifting, hoping to hit a planet where it could start a new nest. It had stumbled upon Earth. It had found Samantha. It now had a queen. A first born. All it needed now was a nest.

It parted from her lips and lashed out with its strong claws, freeing her from the restraints.

Samantha put her hands on either side of its smooth head. She leaned in and licked some of the clear goo from its forehead. It tasted sweet to her. "Let's go make our domain."

The creature jumped to the floor, allowing Samantha to get up on her feet. For the first time she could touch the baby clinging to her. It let out a satisfied sigh at the touch of her hand. She wrapped one of her tentacles around her upper body to protect the new life.

As she started towards the door a soldier appeared there. Her free tentacle struck through his chest before he could let loose a single bullet.

"Come on," she said to her new found partner. "We have a nest to build."
And they walked out, leaving behind nothing but death and destruction.