



*The only peace I've ever known comes from unconsciousness. Waking moments, 'reality' as it were, regardless of content or context has more often than not left me with some variety of dread & anger. I'd be delighted to tell you that this **was** not always the case. Picture me chipper when you picture me flying. Both being as likely as the other. It's not that I'm ungrateful for my lot in life. The suffering I've endured has made me something to **be***

endured. The waves that crashed against me previously have made me stronger against the waves that strike currently. In some small town where no one wants to be, a man sits in a chair made for rocking & whittles a piece of wood into an odd shape. The soft outer bits carved off until all that remains is the harder, sturdier core. The knife whittles the wood the way suffering has whittled me.

And my whittling began in the womb.

Or, Correction through assumption; It began before I did. Through those who would pass down systematic suffering **to** me & **through** me. I would've much preferred a rattle to shake than to being that which **was** shaken.

In any given moment of any given day I am reminded in ways both unmeasurable & uncountable that my life **was** worth nothing to those who'd bore me. My reflection, the sound of my voice, the manner in which I walk; All a memorial to the mixed & mingled malice that is my birthright. The devastation that is my reality. It waits for me in every room I've ever entered & outside of every building I've exited. I am only ever free in three places. The first and foremost of those being sleep.

In my dreams I am not reminded of who I **was**, but who I am. What I've become; not what I **was** made of. Granted I'm just as obdurate, just as cynical, just as angry in the dreams which come as I am in day to day reality. But in ways just different enough to be refreshing.

All of this is to make it clear to you that when I say I don't like to be disturbed while I'm free of these things; I don't mean it in a '**don't speak to me until I've had my coffee**' way. I mean '**I'll gouge your eyes out with your own fingers after I've torn them off**' sort of way.

Especially in situations such as these.

I had gone to bed the night before after an extended round of '**just one more**' with my favorite people (me). The hangover I **was** prepared for. Water by the bed, aspirin ingested before the pass out. Orange peels in my socks, & an ice pack in my pillowcase. They say 'make a plan and make god laugh.' Someone had decided to have a laugh with me.

But it wasn't god. At least, it wasn't **that** god.

A loud & violent ringing jolted me cognizant & crestfallen. The sound, horrible & impressive, likened to the liberty bell forcefully descending a stone staircase. I've got the best pain tolerance of anyone I've ever met, & the pain **was** so excruciating & unrelenting, I'm absolutely jealous I can't easily recreate it.

I tried to throw my feet over the side of the bed to get to my phone to silence the obvious source of the ringing, but my haste caused my feet to tangle in the sheets, & I fell to the floor with jaw rattling impact. I did not waste a moment to feel the agony, but continued crawling blindly onward, throwing my hands before me haphazardly pulling myself along. It felt as if I'd been crawling forever when I finally felt the leg of the desk as my knuckles struck against it. I attempted pulling myself up but found no strength to do so. I might as well have tried to take the liquid out of pasta with a paper towel. Or speak to Solomon Kline without him bringing up his daddy.

*Laying there on the floor with the tone increasing in volume & pitch, I starfished weakly against the cold hardwood floor. I just need a **moment**. A couple of a few breaths to regain my strenght. It **was** then that a hand slid through the slats of the wooden floor & clutched me by my throat. It squeezed & pulled me tightly against the floor. It felt as if the floor **was** rising, pushing into me in an effort to squeeze me clean of my contents like a rolling pin to a tube of toothpaste.*

*Then it stopped pulling me **against** the floor, and pulled me **into** it.*

*The wood parted against my form like jello to a heated spoon. I became enveloped in it. I could feel it snapping back into place around me. It **was** the opposite of birth.*

*For an eternity I felt like I **was** everywhere & nowhere. A solid, a liquid, a gas. I faded into & out of existence, over & over. When existence stopped spinning, I could feel the jello drip down around my body, forcing my arms and legs into position with its will outperforming my own. I opened my eyes despite the pain it caused, finding myself in a small & empty room. Void of all light save for a single ray stretching from above. The light lands on my eyes, burning my retinas like a pan does to bacon. I try to reach up to block it with my hands, only to find them secured to a chair. A wooden chair made of the very jello that brought me here.*

*I began thrashing about, trying to free myself. I feel my skin beneath the shackles begin to wear & tear from the friction as the chair might be jello but the restraint is not. I feel the warmth of blood running freely as it cuts more of my flesh away with every inch I writhe. My eyes suddenly adjust to the darkness, & I see who, or more appropriately **what**, has brought me here.*

*It stands in the corner. One arm outstretched with fingers fanned, admiring its fingernails. It grins at my misery. I am not known for an even temperament. I **was** in no danger of shaking that reputation any time soon.*

“ LET ME OUT OF HERE!! I’LL RIP YOUR FUCKING HEAD OFF!! YOU FUCKING CUNT! I’LL FUCKING END YOU!! ”

“ That’s no way for someone educated to speak, young lady. ”

“ I’LL TEAR YOU TO FUCKING PIECES!! ”

“ Why? This isn’t even real. This is your... ” This cunt waves her hand in front of her, a **colorless rainbow** forming in its wake. *“ Imagination. ”*

“ LET ME OUT!! I’LL EAT YOUR FUCKING HEART! ” I say, swiping at her viciously with lefts and rights.

“ Calm down. You’re not even in the chair anymore. ”

She **was** right. In my rage I hadn’t noticed being released from confinement. I **was** no longer sitting in a jello chair but standing in the middle of the room, the chair no longer in sight. Walls of skulls line the room on all sides. Empty sockets staring straight at me & through me from every angle. My chest **was** still heaving from the heavy breathing, & my heart felt like I’d ran a marathon or three. My palms sore from where my fingernails had dug in. My knees shook in the efforts to do their bidding & fall to the ground. I almost considered letting them.

“ Why do you continue to refuse my help? ”

“ BECAUSE EVERYONE HAS YOU! They all have dark fucking passengers, or alter fucking egos, or some form of you that they blame or credit or what-the-fuck-ever! I’m not them! I don’t need you!! I’m the FUCKING DARK PASSENGER!! I AM THE ONE WHO FUCKING KNOCKS!!! ”

“ That’s not the reason. Real or only. ”

“ Tell me, cunt. What do you know of reason? ”

“ I know more about your reasoning than you do. ”

“ How’s that? ”

“ I know the real you. All of you. Even the parts you’ve never spoken about. ”

them, Sarah. More than anything, you deserve to want to have them. You just have to deal with the truth. ”

“ ...are you done? ”

She slowly glided away from me, her eyes lighting up with a crimson aura, as she retracted into the shadows, and vanished into the darkness from whence she came. From said darkness, her voice echoed.

“ I’m only getting started. ”

I came to XWF to prove myself. To prove that **was** who I claimed to be, & not what this industry saw me as. Lacking. Only respected due to my proximity to a respectful list of people who vouched for me. Teaming with everyone’s favorite combatant Vhodka Black, & everyone sign language interpreters worst nightmare, Goth James Joyce, did nothing to silence that noise. No matter how many times I proved my worth I **was** written off as nothing more than a sidekick. A Junior Partner. 40-40-20. It’s much easier to write someone off than it is to understand them. The other two sides of the triangle are much sharper than mine. Have cut more flesh than I’ve. Not being as dangerous as them makes me seem dull by comparison. They say comparison is the thief of joy, but where I’m concerned it’s a supplier of agony as well. I’ve gone to great lengths to disprove this scandalous falsehood about myself ~~to~~ myself & all others. I’ve yet to truly accomplish my goal. It hangs above me, bobbing & weaving out of my reach like a pinata controlled by a fat drunk uncle. Here I stand, one eye poking out from behind a blindfold, trying to keep it in my sights. Trying to prove that I deserve the chance to swing the stick.

And lately...I just keep missing. Is it because I don’t have the talent? No. I’ve proven I do. Is it the timing? No. My timing is impeccable. Is it because I’m not right for this world? No. It’s because this world isn’t right for me. We sign our names on dotted lines to fight as if our life depends upon it and then some mealy mouth high school coach in a button down shirt, who has been given only a modicum of power, which is about the same amount of penis he **was** given by genetics, interrupts you and causes an unworthy, untrimmed set of eyebrows to repeat a mistake this business has let happen twice.

Forgive me, Lucy. This is meant to be about you & I. That’s this week. In the NOW, as they say. But how can I be in the now, vault girl, when all I can think is how close I had that giant head on a toothpick body moron to passing out-OR AWAY-that ref...

It bothers me. To be this close to something you wanted. Or more so, wanted to deny someone, and have it taken by someone not fit to lick the bottom of my heel. Listen, I

respect you Lucy. You're a woman in a world where women were never wanted. You don't take it very seriously, obviously. But you're here. I will always respect any woman over any man any day of the week. But this thing with King. It's going to affect you in more ways than a promo turned into a therapy session.

I'm afraid I'm going to hurt you, Lucy. Obviously that's the idea. We get paid to hurt each other. It's why we're here. Though, I must admit that the kind of hurt I'm looking to put on you...isn't going to be the **professional** kind. In fact, I do believe the word I'm looking for here is **FUCKING BARBARISM**.

I know, I know, I rarely curse so it **really** drives the point home how angry I am. But I'm serious. I almost had a crown sat upon my perfect head. I could have held that crown on my head & over his for the rest of our careers. Someone took that from me. I thought I'd work out this issue with Latoya Hixx but she's even useless as a punching bag. I need something to pummel that will try to pummel back. Because I'm angry, Lucy. Angry, & tired. Tired of getting **so close** & still being miles away. I'm tired of being overlooked & underbooked. Being adjacent to being dominant. Because I deserve better. I deserve more. Because I am tired of being wrong.

And I'm angry that King **was** right.

Much, if not all of what he said **was** on point. I wanted to prove otherwise. To take those words & shove them so far down his throat they'd find them during his next colonoscopy. But I didn't. Instead, he, and that **CUNT REF**, proved I **was** unworthy of the crown, & unfit as a challenger. That idea apparently spread like cancer from him, all the way up to The Big Bad Voodoo Thaddy. Who, a week after I damn near killed a king, throws me the court jester that is Latoya Hixx, (*who by the way I still have some of between my teeth.*)

I can't have this, Lucielle. I can't be pushed further down when I'm meant to rise above. I need to solidify my spot as someone worthwhile. Someone who can be pushed toward the upper echelons of this business. I need a spot that I can fight for. Not one that I'm relegated to out of necessity. Unfortunately, in order to get up **there fast**, I need to put you down **here** hard.

My entire life I have been storing my vitriol inside like a bank vault. Every moment of my life that I could not fight back against, has been stored away, gaining aggravation appreciation. Domestic Violence Dividends. Child Abuse Commodities. Assault Annuities & a host of other puns just as terrible that didn't make the list. They've sat in my vault for years, gaining interest, increasing in worth.

This pattern of **W-L-W-L-W** needs to end. I need to break **it**, so I need to break **you**. In body & in spirit. I need to make it so the 4 fights you have a year are traded in for 4 unassisted

steps you take a day. I need to feed you the beating of your life with the intent of making it the last solid food you eat for months. I'm not wasting my time going for one good match. I'm spending my time making any **one** of your **bad nights** look like a nap.

I'm going to open up **my** vault, Lucy. & send you back to **yours**.

The sound of my own heartbeat is the soundtrack to my awakening & overall confusion. I quickly raise my hands to my eyelids to ensure they're not restricted to some gelatin based furniture. Besides an IV & a hospital bracelet in french, I'm pleased to find they're not. I sit up & look around for something to use as a weapon, because that's the type of paranoid I am at this point. Someone put me here & it's never been my experience that this happens with my best interest in mind. I don't find a weapon, nor signs of a captor of any kind. But I do find a sleeping columbian child curled up in one of those cuck chairs they stick in private rooms like this.

I grab the remote control for the bed/tv. It's on one of those springly cords that keep it attached & easy to find but are terrible in the way of infection control. I put the thought of all the germs that live between the crevices of the buttons out of my mind & whip it at Regina as hard as I can muster. cracking her in the elbow before it snaps back and hits me in the chin. She wakes up and gives me the same look I want to give myself.

" What happened? "

" You hit me with a fucking remote? "

" Which I will do again. What happened to me? "

" What'd you mean? You went to sleep? "

" Regina, Why- "

It's then that I realize the most disturbing part of this whole thing. Not that I'm in a hospital in france for yet to be revealed reasons but the horrifying fact that for the first time in what seems like forever XWF flew me to someplace that wasn't Canada & I BROUGHT A CHILD!?

" Find my doctor. Ask when I'm being released. "

" ...released? "

“ I will change your school **so fast**. Tell me you don't know what '**released**' means. ”

“ You're waiting on some test results, but you don't need to be released though. ”

“ ...and why not? ”

“ Because- ”

I don't like these people. It's important to me you know that. I don't see them as Ross, Rachel, or any of the **Friends**. I don't see them as Letty, Dom, or any sort of **family**. They are the temporary solution to what I hope is not a permanent problem. It took everything I had to take that extended hand & not let it return to their side as nothing but then a skin colored bag of broken bones. The fact that I did this had to have surprised you. I'd wager the act is nowhere near as surprising as the reason why.

That being: Because I need them.

What? Did Sarah Wolf say she **needs...people**!? Have I gone mad? **Yes**, but not in the way you might think. King, & others have said it; My working relationship with Stratford & Vhodka is what I'm known for. It's what defines me. Not being one of the founders of Fight! Not being the very first Bare Knuckle Champion for that brand, & the longest ruling one to date.

For simply having **friends**. Friendship being a novel idea for a man like King. yes. The man has never met a dog that didn't piss on his scent after leaving him. Regardless, I need to dispel this rumor. I need to change this narrative. I need a new group that I could define rather than have them define me.

That's where this...**LaCk rAiNbOw**...comes into use.

Yelena Gorgo, who practically begged me to join on extended hand & bended knee knew she needed someone like me to balance this god forbidden grouping of insignificant inadequates. I allowed her to woo me & when she made the right offer I agreed to lend my skills to the pool of stagnant lampreys she'd compiled.

What **was** the payment, you ask? What could someone offer a person like me to get them to join people like them?

You've already seen it.

You watched as this group under my direction & instruction laid waste to our so-called King. I wonder; **was** that the coronation you expected? Heavy is the head that wears the crown,

but not so heavy is the man who wins it when the SuPeR GeNiuS Enigma pitched him to me like a softball pitcher named Debra.

I can't say this group will last forever. *I can't say it'll last a week.* What I can say is up until the moment we eat each other alive like starved forgotten hamsters, we aim to be a problem. I can't say if I'll direct them to the ring against you, Lucy. I can extend my finger & point to the first example of what happens to those who cross ~~me~~ **us**.

King. the others. All who said what they said about who I **was**. Are about to find out who I **am**. I'm the woman who **was** the lesser of 3, who now **is** the greater of 4. I'm the woman who **was** supposed to be queen, but now **is** something far more.

I am the person who takes what a person **is**, & makes them into what a person '**was**.' King **was** happy to have won his crown. There **was** no dominant stable in XWF. Now the King **is** as happy as he should be & there **is** a stable unlike any other power this place has seen before or will again.

Lucy. Will you prove that there is enough intelligence in you to not make a fight you already can't handle worse? Or will they say this **was** the biggest & perhaps last, mistake of your career?

It **was** up to you.

Now it **is** up to me,

" ..because why? " I shout at Regina, who's no longer in the chair she was just in but is now standing at the foot of the bed with a very squiggly looking French doctor.

" Good news, Madame. All of the results have come back. Everything is perfectly normal. "

" What results?? "

" The Angiogram, the CT Scan, the MRI. No deficiency was found. Your brain is fine. "

" Yeah, right. "

" Why was I given these tests? How am I even here? "

" See! fine? Right. "

“ I’m sorry. Chart says you complained of headaches, hallucinations, loss of tim-”

“ **Ok but how did I end up here??** ”

“ In france? ”

“ **IN THE HOSPITAL!!** ”

“ Excuse me for one moment. ”

It’s obviously time for his cigarette baguette and revolution over wages, because the speed in which he leaves the room is impressive for a man as old as he. Regina pulls out her cellphone, frantically swiping about. She comes to the side of the bed and shows me the phone. On it a video plays of me, standing at the front desk, my eyes wide and unblinking. My hand curled into a fist with drained knuckles.

“ A week ago you walked into my bedroom, told me to pack for France, and to email my teachers that I’d be back in school in two weeks. We got on a plane, we flew all the way here. We checked into our hotel. You barely said a word the entire time. You just...like looked at stuff? And then you called a cab and brought us here, and did this. ”

“ **what i..** ” *I say about the video she’s showing me.*

“ This is you **Admitting yourself.** ”

The video shows me, but not me. My face is odd, my eyes are wide, and my pupils are larger than usual. My hands are spasmed into a claw. As if I was grasping something. Something hard. Something like...

The arm of a gelatin based torture chair.

“ **So I have gone crazy?** ”

“ **Or.** ”

“ **WAS*** ”