

SHEMAR FRAZIER



REVOLUTION
THE NEW WORLD

Revolution: The New World

Revolution, Volume 1

Shemar Frazier

Published by Shemar Frazier, 2021.

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ISBN-13: 978-0-578-84743-6

Cover design by: Tunmbi Olaleye Printed in the United States of America www.shemarjfrazier.com
shemarjfrazier@hotmail.com

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Dedication

My mom, dad, aunt, and cousins for being supportive.

My cousin Asia for helping me with the photography,
hair design, and book trailer.

Zack, Stephen, Clayce R, Zachary, Jeramie, Daniel,
Earl, Troy, Dan, Landon, Kobe, Samson, Alfred, Marco,
Malieck, and Justin for being good friends.

Mikalya and Daniel for beta reading the early drafts of
the story.

Dale for inspiring me to become an entrepreneur.

To everyone who helped with the book's promotion
and fundraiser.

And to you for taking the time to read this book.

Preface

I love zombie and sci-fi stories so I thought of a way to combine the two genres and ended up creating "Revolution."
Hope you enjoy the adventure.

Prologue

April 5, 2069

0012 MST

Outskirts of Hermosillo, Mexico

La Mansión Del Rey

Death. Our latest group of recruits were massacred by the Deathstalker Scorpions. It was six years since we decided to take shelter in an abandoned mansion for the night. I was twelve years old when it happened. My guardian, Veronica Shinka, and I quickly escaped towards the hallway that led to the safe room. Sadly, it and the mansion were filled with friends and foes alike, but the ones that surrounded us were no longer human. Death claimed their lives, only to give them a new, horrific, second one as an undead. They suffered the inevitable fate of reanimation and became zombies; the devilish creatures that rule this world with no empathy for life!

“Luke, stay close to me!” Veronica yelled out in urgency.

She was hell-bent on annihilating the monsters that stood in our way, as she effortlessly wiped out the immediate threats one by one.

Like the rest of the world, there was no electricity here, and the darkness only added to the overwhelming advantage the undead had over us. We could barely see the threat in front of us, but I got a close enough look at it when one grabbed my arm and took a big bite out of my skin. It felt like time slowed down when it happened. The closeup of the shithead’s bright, blood-red eyes forcibly reminded me of the rest of their disgusting features. Their decayed, dehydrated and wrinkled skin, deadly rotten teeth, and *noxious* scent they give off is beyond terrifying. I was powerless as I watched it growl, and feed on my arm as it attempted to satisfy its insatiable appetite. Soon a sharp pain that burned like hell erupted across my wound,

resuming and rapidly advancing the timer. I knew what the pain meant. I was bitten and would die soon.

“Luke, stay still!” Veronica screamed.

She pointed the gun at me and then...

BANG!

One clean shot through the head ended its life for good. A loud *thump* is what I heard as its lifeless corpse hit the ground.

“Luke don’t fall behind! We’re almost there!” Veronica ordered in distress.

I was surprisingly calm and followed Veronica’s directions. I knew better than to continue to think about the bite because reaching the safe room was the immediate priority, Mom and Veronica taught me well. I just had to continue evading the undead and stay directly behind her as she cleared a path in the dark corridor. Luckily, zombies are slow, at least *these ones* were. We made it to the safe room about 30 seconds later, but then another zombie appeared out of the darkness and grabbed Veronica.

‘Click. Click.’

An empty clip; a rare and seemingly fatal mistake.

“Shit!” she panicked with a terrified look on her face.

I watched helplessly as the zombie took a big bite out of her skin, followed by her traumatic scream of anguish. We were infected, meaning we would *both* die soon.

I had no gun, I had to leave it behind when Veronica dragged me out of bed and alerted me of our persistent pursuer’s presence. My marksmanship was nowhere near hers especially in the dark, so... I doubt I could’ve prevented our fate.

Her loud cries of pain, the sound of distant gunfire, and seeing several faint red eyes throughout the darkness, eventually snapped me out of my panicked state. I rushed to Veronica’s free left arm and quickly gave her my survival knife. She grabbed and plunged it into the temple of the zombie. A soft *squish* noise is all I heard, followed by the

cold thump of its corpse. Veronica quickly recovered and scrambled to open the large, silver door.

*

We wasted no time with the locks, but we both knew we were just delaying the inevitable. The safe room was filled with eight different colored candle lanterns, allowing us the gift of visibility. Our haven was the size of a large bedroom, and a sizeable, unpacked sleeping bag was on the floor of the top left corner of the room. There were numerous amounts of essential supplies neatly scattered about. The thick, sturdy walls and the solid steel door reinforced the notion that nobody could break-in there.

Unfortunately, we were in the middle of the mansion, which meant we had no way of seeing what was happening outside. If the enemy knew where we were hiding, they would've forced us out with tear gas or set the mansion ablaze. Taking hostages would've been another effective tactic, but I doubt negotiation ever crossed their minds.

Their goal was, undoubtedly, Veronica Shinka. Her zombie kill ratio is minuscule to the number of enemies she's made, that I know of. But she's been taking care of me since my mom died and I'll always follow her no matter what. The fact that they *didn't* set the mansion on fire meant they wanted to make her suffer by their own hands. The Deathstalkers pursued us for years, but... they just vanished after this. What... happened?

Neither the zombies nor the Deathstalkers were even the most prominent threat at the time. The safe room wasn't really "safe". It was more of a way to collect our thoughts and think about the most critical and dangerous facts.

A million thoughts ran throughout my mind all at once and I was about to panic, before remembering my teachings. "Focus on the most important task at hand." I assumed it was escaping without dying, but with so much

chaos outside *and* our bites, that goal seemed impossible. I failed to think of anything useful and instead looked at Veronica to see what she was doing. It was the first time I got to see her clearly that night. An Asian woman in her late 30's. She had long dark black hair with small braids on the left side, bangs that partially covered her brown eyes, and a look of deep concern on her face as she concentrated on crafting an orizuru, an origami goose from a small piece of paper. She was wearing a black tank top, black jeans and was carrying her enigmatic small black purse.

There was a mirror that allowed me to take a quick glance at myself. Messy black afro, black skin, brown eyes, dirty white t-shirt, and blue jeans. The reemerging burning sensation on my arm forced me to inspect my wound out of fear. A chunk of my skin was gone, blood was oozing out and it was the sharpest pain I've ever experienced in my entire life. I hoped that a doctor would've been able to save me, but I wasn't naïve enough to think I was special.

Getting bit was...*is* a death sentence. I should've died in less than 12 hours and became the very thing I hate the most. All they do is eat, people and animals; living, dying or dead; it doesn't matter to them. The fucks don't even *need* to eat to survive! They just eat and eat on a seemingly endless appetite. It's a cruel fate that all of humanity shares upon death, and nobody can stop it.

"Veronica, what are we going to do?"

The gunfire was becoming more rapid and the growling was decreasing, but she didn't say a word. She just looked at me with a blank look on her face before inspecting her own wound. She seemed deep in thought for a few minutes before reaching into her purse and took out two small metal containers, the size of a lipstick tube.

I quietly watched as she pulled out two syringes from the containers. One was filled with a red liquid, and the other filled with a blue liquid. Just what the hell were they and why didn't I say anything?! I just continued to watch as she

put the red syringe back into her container in her purse. Next, she injected the blue colored syringe into the wrist of her infected arm. Then she let out a deep sigh of relief and looked relaxed for just a split second before returning to that concerned look of hers.

She silently walked towards me as she brought out the red syringe again. I had so many questions, but I was too scared to ask. I couldn't control my breathing, and my heart felt like it was going to explode!

"There's no time to explain, but this will keep you safe and get us out of here," she vaguely explained in haste.

There it was again, that *cold* glare in her eyes as she knelt down to match my height. Death was approaching us from inside *and* outside the room, and I couldn't do a damn thing about it. My mind raced with crazy thoughts. Am I going to be shot to death first? Burned alive? Will I turn before Veronica? Will we have to kill each other to prevent the turning? Is it too late to cut off our arm to stop the infection? Will I live to see Olympus and the other kingdoms?" If only I didn't get bit, and if only I had my gun to protect Veronica from getting bit, then at least one of us would survive!

I couldn't move, and I felt hot and cold at the same time. Nerves? Or were these the things that happen to us before certain death? Yet, I somehow maintained eye contact with her. She seemed so calm yet, so worried. So smart and amazing, but so cold and mysterious.

"Luke, I'm so sorry about this," she apologized in guilt.

Veronica injected the red syringe into the wrist of my infected arm, and then....

Act 1: Olympus

Chapter 1: Shelter

Six Years Later

June 21, 2075

0630 CDT

Olympia, Kansas

Veronica Shinka's Establishment

Luke Miller's Point of View

"Luke Miller, wake up!!!" Veronica furiously shouts from downstairs.

I never went to bed, Veronica. Too anxious but why? Why can't I remember! Our scars and the fact that we're still breathing is proof that it wasn't a dream! We should've died! We got bit, that's how it works! How did we escape?! None of it makes sense!

Waking up in a car was the next thing I remembered. She didn't even explain anything. She just said, "Don't worry about it. Go back to sleep because we'll be gathering supplies for our journey to Olympus." I hate that I can't find the courage to ask her what the hell happened, even after all these years. Ah! I gotta stop beating myself up over this. I have to focus on the task at hand, today's the day I dread the most. June 21st, Draft Day.

"I'll be down in a second!"

"Meow," Akemi greets in interest.

When did she get in here? Veronica and her adopted black cat perfectly complement each other's mysterious personalities. The look of disapproval on her face must be because of my room. It *is* a mess, but I guess I should quickly clean up since it'll probably be the last time I see it.

It's a tiny but comfortable bedroom. I'll miss the worn-out queen-sized bed and sheets, and the blue curtains that

cover the window, and the orange shelf filled with books and comics from Teresa to distract me from the fact that I wish I had a working television, but that will always be a pipe dream.

The Thunder Castle is the only building with electricity anyway. Thunder Castle requires electricity for our Thunderbolts to function properly. The council also requires a way to communicate with our overseers.

Let's see what's under my bed, boring textbooks, homework, homework, more homework, and an empty water bottle. What's on my nightstand? Woah! The frames are too close to the edge!

Phew. Fixed it. Squad Zeus's crisp graduation picture, Veronica and I's welcome to Olympus photograph are my room's highlights. But enough procrastinating, Veronica is ready to blow a fuse and my friends are waiting for me.

Chapter 2: Dreams & Nightmares

Six Years Ago May 4, 2069

2019 CDT

Near Del Rio, Texas

Luke Miller's Point of View "Olympus is a very civilized kingdom, home to thousands of people inside of the city and its nearby settlements," Veronica explains in excitement.

Olympus! I can't wait to see it! I'm so tired of the desert, and the further we get away from Scorpius, the better! But road trips make me so sleepy. The loudness of the dune buggy's engine was annoying at first, but I've adapted to it, like everything else. The sun *will* be setting soon, so maybe sleep is a good idea. There's nothing out here except sand, rocks, cacti, and desert animals anyway. No zombies in our sights, at least for now, and it'd be impossible for them to catch up to us at this speed. Despite that, the Black Scorpions and bandits are our newest threats to look out for. We've been on the run for four years, never getting a chance to rest, but it'll all be over soon.

It's been twenty-nine days since the hellish mansion incident. Finding a functional vehicle is never easy, and obtaining gas is even harder. The Deathstalker's cars didn't suit the terrain for the destination, yet we were able to make use of their gas by siphoning it.

"Olympus is run by a council, each member in charge of overseeing separate sections of the kingdom. Not only am I one of those leaders, but I'm also a founding member," she continues while adjusting her sunglasses.

Being out at dark is too risky but the Black Scorpions limit our options. Their "shoot first and not even bother with the questions" mentality only increases the mortality rate of

The New World. At least we have plenty of spare gas, food, weapons, and water for the trip, but something is missing, and I think she knows what it is.

Sniff sniff.

We stink, almost as bad as a zombie!

“They should have warm water in Olympus,” she assures with a chuckle.

Your laughter is as soothing as our newly scavenged black cloaks, but it doesn't match that constant cold look in your eyes. Your sunglasses are just another disguise, similar to the movie stars of The Old World. You only go by Veronica Shinka when you're alone with me, “Hisako Tsumi.” I don't really know much about you, but I still trust you with my life, despite what I've overheard about your past. You're the perfect guardian and a great teacher. Nevertheless, your history is the one thing you always avoid, because of the unspoken rule. You like to be in charge, ever humorless, and only smile whenever you're around me.

You're human though, just like me so how in the world are we still alive?! I'm still too scared to even ask. Neither of us experienced a fever, uncontrollable sweat, rapid dehydration, or periorbital puffiness. Even our clearly fatal wounds, have turned into normal scars.

“I lost contact with my friends shortly before I met you. Like all kingdoms, Olympus contains a barrier that prevents the undead from entering the city,” she proceeds with her explanation. “An abyss known as The Styx River, encircles the entire city. Four drawbridges are located on the north south east and west parts of it, allowing Olympians to safely enter and exit the kingdom.”

“It's a good thing that zombies can't fly, Veronica.”

Shit, that's a terrifying thought!

“Thank God they can't fly, they're already horrifying enough! I'm getting nightmares just thinking about it,” she quickly acknowledges in frightening haste. “Anyway, Olympia has protection on the inside as well. Every citizen

must wear an electronic bracelet known as a Thunderbolt. The Thunderbolt lights up red if someone is infected, green if healthy, and black if dead. The communications branch is in charge of overseeing and dispatching the Police Force to deal with an infected or dead citizen,” she explains in her usual informative tone.

You always love explaining and breaking things down to me. Your emotions are proof of your humanity. I wouldn't know what to do if you were a robot.

“I'm going to remind you of our overseers now because it feels appropriate,” she states in a somber tone. “Nineteen years ago, after The Old World collapsed, and The Age of Zombies began, The World Government turned their back on humanity and fled from their responsibilities like cowards. They were smart enough to leave some of their own behind as they occupied a kingdom for their inevitable return. This kingdom became known as Gaia, formerly Los Angeles, California, and Hawaii. The remaining Royals escaped into orbit on a dozen massive ships, known as The Twelve Zodiacs, each containing one-thousand people each. The bastards... just sat on their asses in peace as we all suffered!”

Cowards....

“The rest of humanity entered a short state of chaos before The Nine Kingdoms were created for shelter. Olympia, Athenia, formerly Fernando De Noronha, Brazil. Scorpia, formerly Mexico City, Mexico. Rion, formerly Nagoya, Japan, Inpu near Osaka, Japan. Hephaestus, formerly Tokyo, Japan. Sarpedon, residing within Africa's Lake Victoria. Prometheus, formerly Novaya Zemlya and Severnaya Zemlya Russia, and Gaia, were... are humanity's last line of defense against the undead army,” she calmly explains. “Each kingdom is unique from one another, with their own set of regulations, but then the Royals decided to dictate the survivors with an unjust set of laws. The cruelest of their rules state that each kingdom can only have a

certain number of people inside. They warned The Nine Kingdoms to obey their authority or face the deadly outcomes of their uncooperative actions.”

Bullies...

“The Nine Kingdoms were rightfully pissed, Rion being the most vocal of all. They threatened immediate retaliation; consequently, the Royals decided to use them to illustrate what happens when a kingdom defies their law. They aimed their superweapon directly at Rion as a demonstration of their powers. All of humanity observed in awe as a glowing red beam of light illuminated across earth’s blue skies. Rion was obliterated just like that. Nobody knew the Royals had such a destructive weapon in their possession, and this superweapon became known as Thanatos, The Titan of Death. The Eight Kingdoms dared not to defy the Royals ever since Thanatos’s emergence.”

How cruel...

“Leaving a kingdom and its borders means being forced to fend for yourself in The New World but staying within one means you’ll have to follow rules you don’t agree with.”

Bastards! Life is already hard enough without safe shelter, but the added oppression from the Royals is evil! This hellish world is fucked beyond repair, and it’s all because of the zombies and the Royals!

*

“One more thing, Luke. Don’t *ever* bring attention to your scar. If anyone notices and asks about it, tell them you got it from scavenging. It’s crucial for both of us that you understand, ok?”

There’s that serious tone again.

“I understand, Veronica.”

Huh. The sun is finally setting. Wait....

“Holy shit! Veronica, look! A shooting star.”

“Oh, wow. Make a wish, Luke.”

I wish I was an astronaut or a ranger. All I would do is explore and protect the ones I love in a perfect world. I want the Royals to stop being jerks, and I wish that the zombies would just disappear.

"I wish we could shower. We *really* stink, Veronica."

"Hilarious," she snorts with a hysterical laugh?

I've almost forgotten what your laughter sounds like. Now, I can't stop myself from laughing! Humor makes us forget how shitty the world is, even for just a few seconds! Wait! This will be the best wish!

"Oh, come on, you're going to waste your wish on something as silly as that?" she questions with a disapproving nod.

At least I finally made you laugh. Now to reveal my real wish.

"I wish this moment could last forever. Just me and you, and the sound of our laughter. Watching the sunset and stargazing in this perfect weather. If I could make time go on repeat, *this* would be the definitive moment I'd choose. Cruising through the desert on this perfect night with no immediate worries. If only the buggy had unlimited gas or-,"

That's a huge smile.

"Luke, you have no idea how much that means to me because I was thinking the exact same wish," she interrupts as she takes off her sunglasses.

You're *crying*?

"There's just one small thing I'd change," she reveals as she wipes off her tears.

"What?"

"Music. We need some tunes. If only we had a CD."

"Nah, we don't need any music. It's perfect as it is."

Getting sleepy. Let me grab this blanket before I freeze. Staying warm is the priority now.

"Maybe you're right, Luke," Veronica considers.

"But I'll keep an eye out for a CD."

This blanket is so comfortable.

“You’ll keep an eye out for a CD in the dark, scary desert *while* falling asleep?” she asks softly.

“I’ll sleep with one eye open.”

“Smart-ass,” she chuckles.

“I *wonder* who I get it from.”

“Goodnight, Luke. I’ll wake you up before sunrise so you can keep watch and let me rest.”

You’re saying, *I love you and will always protect you.*

“Goodnight, Veronica.”

I love you and will always protect you too, but life is so ruthless. Anyone can die at any moment without warning. Maybe, just maybe, I’ll know what safety is like for the first time once we reach Olympia.

Chapter 3: The Cooper Twins

15 Days Later May 19, 2069

1200 CDT

South Olympia, Kansas Rachel Cooper's Point of View "So, what do you think 'bout it, Billy?"

Olympia! Our new home is so spectacular! I hope he likes it as much as I do, but I don't understand how he sees anythin' out of that massive brown bowl cut of his. Vision is the most essential sense for survival; therefore, I will always wear my colorful headband to cover my bangs wherever I go! You shouldn't be so unkind 'bout his hair, meanie. Not only is it rude, but you also have long and messy brown hair that's never ever been cut. Hmm. Now that I think 'bout it, our brown hair and brown colored eyes are probably the only things we have in common, except my hair has been mixed in with a bit of blonde from Ma. Regardless he's a boy, so my hair is automatically much more spectacular than his.

"I'm not sure. It seems awful," he replies cautiously. "Hey Rachel, do you think we stand out?"

He might be on to something! City life is so strange, and people seem so tense. Everyone is dressed differently too. Nobody is wearin' gray overhauls with olive-green shirts like us!

"No way, Billy. I don't think we're the weird ones 'ere. If anything, I think *they're* the odd ones. They need to learn how to chillax."

Residents aside, Olympia is beautiful! Sunny skies, perfect weather, horse traffic in this busy street, merchants sellin' clothes, tall buildings, and plenty of police patrollin'. Oh, but I feel so homesick already! I wanna go home! The uglies ruin everything!

"Draft Day is a scary thing," Billy unexpectedly blurts out. "I mean, what kind of evil bein' could come up with

such a thing? I don't think they'll pick us to become apprentices. They'll probably appoint someone better like the Hoovers. *Sigh*. I miss home already, sis."

"I miss home too, Billy, but I'm sure we'll be able to return in no time! Besides, I would love to join the fight against the uglies if it means we'll be able to help Olympus again."

"What?" he asks, with what I imagine is a raised eyebrow. "Why do you always call the zombies uglies? You're uncool."

"You said "spectacular" wrong. I call them uglies because they're pretty ugly, duh."

"Pretty ugly *and* scary, so I reckon you're not wrong. And I reckon I'm spectacular as well because I'll be helpin' you out," he responds with a chuckle.

So brave!

"That's fine, Billy, but as the little brother, you'll have to settle for bein' just a bit less spectacular than I."

"You're surprisingly confident today, Rachel."

"I'm shocked that you can see that. You'll never attract "chicks" with horrid hair like that. Allow me to help."

There, a quick pat on the hand!

"Voila! I've passed on some of my spectacularness to you! *Gasp!* Stop talking!"

"But I didn't sa—.."

"Down the alleyway! Kids our age are approaching, and they look like they're ready to welcome us to Olympia!"

Yay! One of them is a girl, and she looks to be 12 years old like me! Time to make my first friend!

"So, it's true, Nia," the boy says to the girl next to him.

He's very muscular lookin' and pretty freakin' tall! Hispanic, wearin' a brown football jersey with the number 12 on it and blue jeans. I don't think he realizes that his jersey is too small, though! I can see his bellybutton! I have a feelin' that he could knock someone out with ease, but I am absolutely positive that Billy could take him! Not like it'll

ever come to that, Rachel, but boys will be boys. It's just another reason why girls are superior.

"I can't believe this shit, Rico," Nia responds in disgust?

She's a Black girl, a bit shorter than Rico, and has long hair just like me! She's wearin' an identical jersey, but it doesn't match her pink sweatpants and sandals. Her shirt looks more like a dress since it goes all the way down to her knees! She appears to be irritated. *Gasp!* I know the perfect conversation starter!

"Greetings!"

Darn it, brain!

"Uh, I mean, howdy. I think you're irritated 'bout somethin', and I can relate to that because my brothers irritate me. This means we have somethin' in common, which is why we must become friends!"

Now for the handshake. No! Stop, Rachel! You're too sweaty! Did she notice?! Of course, she did! She crossed her arms, which means you've been rejected *again!* Where did I go wrong?!

"I think you lead on too strong, Rachel," Billy answers. "Also, you're the irritatin' one just so you know."

Duh!

"I forgot 'bout the introductions. My name is Rachel Cooper, and this is my twin brother, Billy Cooper. We are new residents of Olympia, originatin' aaaaaaall the way from Bracketeville, Tex-."

"Shut the hell up," Nia rudely interrupts.

What? I'm so bamboozled! What did I do this time?!

"We don't fucking care who you are. We want to know what you're doing here," Rico asks in a curious tone.

They don't know?

"Um, the Black Scorpions raided our ranch, and then we got attacked by uglies. However, the heroic Olympian army saved us, and now we live 'ere, currently searchin' for friends."

“Wow. You hear this shit, Rico?” Nia asks in confusion as she puts a hand on her hip.

Hmm. That gaze is quite unfriendly.

“I hear it, but I don’t believe it,” Rico scoffs.

“Shit’s ridiculous,” Nia states with an eye-roll.

I thought I explained it correctly.

“I don’t think they get it. They must be stupid,” Billy whispers into my ear.

“It’s rude, but it may be true.”

“The rumors of the capital’s poor education system are true!” Billy suggests.

“What are you hicks whispering about?” Nia asks with that intimidating gaze.

Hicks? That’s offensive. I’ll have to let her know how hurtful it is in case she’s unaware.

“So, here’s what I got from your sob story,” Rico begins to say as he cracks his knuckles. “You think you can just waltz into Olympia uninvited and eat up all our food because you were too weak to defend your home.”

Why is he so upset? We’re all Olympians, ain’t we?

“I’m sorry, but that’s wrong. It’s not that we *wanted* to leave; however, we were left with no choice. Brackettville ain’t the only ranch in the kingdom, so there’ll still be plenty of food available for everyone,” Billy clarifies as he approaches Rico.

“Ridiculous,” Nia declares with a head shake.

“Very,” Rico agrees.

Rico is getting... a bit, too close in my brother’s face.

“My older brother was killed by zombies, defending *your* fucking home! I can’t fucking believe that he died for stupid, ungrateful hicks!” Rico shouts in anger.

He needs to stop backin’ Billy into the wall.

Push!

What’s wrong with him?!

“Billy!”

Snatch!

Ow! My hair!

“Let go, Nia!”

“Stop!” Billy cries out.

Get up, Billy! Fight!

STOMP!

Billy!

“An Olympian? You’re as fucking delusional as you look. Pussies like you won’t survive long enough for Draft Day,” Rico insults in a sharp tone.

SPIT!

Ew, right in his face! He needs to stop steppin’ on my brother’s chest!

“What’s wrong with y’all?! Please stop!”

This is evil! Is no one gonna stop this?! They notice us, but they’re not helping! Ow! Why Nia?! Why?! We could’ve been friends!

“Nobody’s gonna bother with trash. Outsiders *don’t* fucking belong here. You have just as much value as to what’s on the bottom of our shoes,” Nia rudely explains.

Just stop pullin’ my hair!

“Case in point,” she continues while pointing at Rico’s shoe.

“Y’all ain’t friendly at all!”

Tears?! You’re the oldest sibling, yet you’re such a big baby who can’t even protect your brother! My worth *is* equivalent to what’s on the sole of their shoes!

PUSH!

My elbow! The ground ain’t soft at all!

“The cops won’t help your asses either. They don’t give a shit what happens in South Olympia as long as nobody is killing anyone,” Nia clarifies with a malicious look in her eyes.

KNEE!

My stomach! Get off of me!

“Welcome to Olympia,” Nia chuckles.

No! Not a fist! I'm sorry, Billy, but your sister sucks! This is gonna hurt!

"Leave them alone!!!" a girl's voice *booms* with fury.

Chapter 4: Ruby Redheart

May 19, 2069

1205 CDT

South Olympia, Kansas Billy Cooper's Point of View

“Oh shit,” Rico says in horror.

He finally took his foot off of my chest!

“Just our luck,” Nia says, takin’ her knees off Rachel.

Is someone comin’ to save us?!

“Billy! Are you ok?” Rachel cries as she... helps me stand up.

“I’m... ok, Rachel.”

“It just *had* to be *her*,” Nia says with a glare on her face.

“Who is it?” Rachel and I ask in unison.

“You wanna tell the stupid twins, or should I?” Nia asks Rico.

“I got this,” Rico responds. “She’s the *biggest* and *baddest* bully in the entire capital, *extremely* loud, a public menace, and known as the rascal of Olympia. Her obnoxious personality makes her impossible to ignore. She doesn’t give a fuck about the rules and gives less of a fuck about the consequences. Ruby Redheart is a fucking lunatic loner who should be avoided at all costs.”

“And that’s why *you’ll* be talking to her,” Nia quickly declares with a shove.

What a strong push!

“Wha-? Oh shit. H-hello Ruby,” Rico says to Ruby Redheart.

“What the hell are ya idiots doin’?” Ruby inquires.

What a strange gal. She appears to be our age, which will definitely make Rachel happy if she’s friendly! Ruby Redheart is a redheaded gal, wearin’ sunglasses like a celebrity and is eating a lollipop as she stares down Rico. Caucasian, short hair and is wearin’ a black shirt that says, “Evil on Tour,” along with black jeans, a hole in the right

knee. This gal is also carryin' a black guitar case on her back and is wearing black fingerless gloves over her hands. She's even wearin' a black beanie with a white skull and crossbones, on it as her ultimate accessory! She's the strangest stranger I've seen all day!

"Well, you see um. *Achoo!* Oh, my allergies. Nia should explain. Go ahead, Nia," Rico diverts to Nia.

ELBOW!

What a nasty elbow from Nia.

"Oh, um well, you see. *Cough!* Sorry, we're not feeling too well, Ruby. Let's talk later," Nia chuckles.

"Oh, I see," Ruby says in a sympathetic tone. "*Achoo!*"

"It's not flu season right, Rachel?"

"I'm not sure, but I hope we don't catch whatever illness is goin' around," Rachel says hesitantly.

"My allergies are acting up too," Ruby says to Nia and Rico as she puts her sunglasses on top of her beanie.

Her bright green eyes are super cool!

"We're sorry to hear that, Ruby. That's why we should all go home, *right?*" Nia requests in a concerned tone.

"Do you know what *I'm* allergic to?" Ruby asks as she inspects her fingernails.

She seems to be intimidatin' the two, based on how they're backin' up.

"What do you think she's allergic to, Rachel?"

"Hmm. Definitely bees," she answers in confidence.

What a weird answer.

"No way. I bet she's allergic to birds."

"There are *lots* of birds and bees here, so let's just stay quiet and find out," she replies in excitement.

"What are you allergic to, Ruby?" Rico and Nia ask in unison.

What a mean look from Ruby!

"I'm allergic to *bullshit*, and that's *exactly* what I smell around here, so tell me the truth! We can do this the easy way, or" she calmly says as she puts on brass knuckles. "we

can do this the hard way. Kicking ass is in my job description, so I'd pick the easy way if I was you two, but I'm hoping we can do this shit the hard way."

"Stop acting all tough, Ruby. You're just a scared little girl who's looking for attention. That's why you won't be anything except zombie bait when it's our time for the draft," Rico recovers as he straightens up his posture.

"Wow. I can't even express how happy you just made me with words, so let me show you with my fists," Ruby fires back in confidence with a smirk.

She means business!

"I'm not scared of some crazy bitch," Rico says in a stern voice, clenchin' his fists next.

"Oh yeah? Is that why you just pissed yourself?" Ruby giggles.

"What? I didn't piss myself," Rico says in disbelief as he looks down.

PUNCH!

He threw up!

"Oh, that's so, so gross dude," Ruby states in disgust.

PUNCH!

A powerful uppercut to the jaw and he's out cold!

"Holy shit!"

Jinx.

Now she's eyeing Nia!

"Nia, buddy. Easy way or," Ruby asks as she shadowboxes, "Hard way?" She asks with a quick glance at Rico.

"We was just saying hi to the new people," Nia answers in fear.

Liar!

"Oh, really? Because it looked like you guys were harassing my friends. At least" Ruby replies, adjusting her brass knuckles. "It looked like that to *me*. What about you two?"

"Is she talking about us, Billy?" Rachel asks in confusion.

“I think she’s talking about us.”

“I’m talking about you two!” Ruby yells in rage.

“OH!”

Double jinx.

“What should we say, Rachel?”

“Um, Ruby saved us, but if we agree with her, she’ll lay her flat like a pancake, and I don’t think Ma and Pa will appreciate that,” Rachel whispers in my ear.

“Yeah, we might get in trouble.”

“Ruby, um, they were just saying hello,” Rachel answers as she steps forward.

“What, with their fists?” Ruby responds with an eye-roll, unconvinced.

Time to step in!

“They were just getting a little too rough, don’t you know?”

“No, I don’t *know*. Unbelievable!” Ruby shouts in frustration! “Nia, you can... go.”

“She’s already gone!” Rachel points out.

“I can see that captain obvious. Damn it. I was going to tell her that she should switch jerseys with her boyfriend,” Ruby says in disappointment.

“Right?” Rachel giggles. “You could even see Rico’s...”

“Bellybutton!” The two laugh in unison.

Gals are weird. What’s so funny about a bellybutton?

“I think we should check on Rico to see if he’s ok. You probably hit him too hard,” Rachel says in worry.

“Nah, he’s ok. It’s not like I killed him. Besides, that asshole had it coming,” Ruby says in assurance. “Anyway. Ahem. Names?”

The handshake!

“I am Rachel Cooper, and this is my younger twin brother Billy Cooper,” Rachel introduces, extending her right hand.

Ruby took it back!

“Too slow!” Ruby snickers!

We fell for the classic!

“Aww. Rico said that you’re Ruby Redheart, the rascal of Olympia?” Rachel asks with enthusiasm.

“I am known by many names. Most of them are not nice words, but yes, I am the *one*, the *only*, the *amazing* Ruby Redheart!” She introduces as she puts her sunglasses back on. “I’m extraordinarily talented, but people here are too close-minded to recognize my skills. People just don’t understand that as an artist, I have the need to express myself,” she discloses with a shrug.

“With your fists?”

Triple jinx.

“*Scoff!* No! Well sometimes, but only to other bullies,” Ruby explains with a sheepish smile. “Listen, if you’re gonna hang out with *mwah*, then ya need to learn how to defend yourselves, *especially* in these streets, capiche?

Troublemakers like to roam around here because our education system *sucks*, but who gives a fuck, right? Most of us will be zombie chow when we turn 18 anyway. And by most, I mean roughly 80% of us. But not me, of course, and not you two if you follow my lead.”

“That percentage is sad to hear. I wish the world wasn’t like this,” Rachel says in a gloomy tone.

“We’ll do whatever it takes to save Brackettville.”

“Hey, if that’s your goal, then go for it. I have a dream of my own,” Ruby says as she puts her sunglasses back onto her beanie.

“What’s your dream?”

Quadruple jinx.

“Well, I doubt that someone will take me up as an apprentice, but those idiots are missing out on greatness. I got it all! Knowledge, skills, explosive personality, and endless talent,” Ruby happily explains.

“What’s your dream, Ruby?” Rachel asks again.

“Heh,” Ruby chuckles with a big smile. “I’m going to be a world-famous rockstar, just like the ones in The Old World! Everybody on earth will know who Ruby Redheart is one

day! In fact, I already have my band's shirt made. Our name is "Evil on Tour," and it's pretty badass if I do say so myself, and I do. My band and I will perform the best rock concert of all time in front of the 8 Kingdoms! We'll even kick zombie and shithead ass along the way!"

"Shitheads?"

Quintuple jinx.

"The Royals. I call them shitheads because that's what they are, duh," Ruby giggles.

"You like nicknaming things just like me! We call the zombies, uglies," Rachel explains in glee.

"She calls them that, not me."

"Uglies? That is amazing! I have a feeling that we'll be best friends, Rachel Cooper! We'll be as thick as thieves. Los dos amigas, ok?!" Ruby yells in excitement.

She's so close to Rachel's face!

"Billy boy! You have yet to impress me!" Ruby shouts.

Why are you so close to my face?!

"If you want to hang out with a future celebrity, then ya need to dazzle me!" Ruby loudly explains.

"Ok fine, I just need some space, please."

"Your wish is granted, dude," Ruby respects.

I just... need... a few seconds.

Burp!

"HAHAHAHA!"

Mission accomplished. Ma always said laughter is the best medicine.

"Ok, I *am* impressed. I'll admit, I had my doubts," Ruby laughs.

It seems like we're fittin' in so far.

"So Ruby, how many people are in your band?" Rachel asks in curiosity.

That's a good question. I wonder if they'll like us.

"What a good question. It's actually one of the reasons I rescued you from Rico and Nia. You see, the path to stardom

is very lonely, especially when you have no fans...and no bandmates,” Ruby explains in an unenergetic tone.

“I see.”

Sextuple jinx.

“*But*, that’s where *you* two come in!” Ruby yells with a sudden burst of energy. “I’ll accept your offer of friendship *if* you agree to join my ban-”

“Deal!” Rachel agrees.

The handshake confirms it!

“You have a deal, Ruby!”

And I’ve sealed the deal!

“Huh? What’s wrong, Ruby?” Rachel asks in worry.

“Um, nothing. I-You guys are just weird,” Ruby cries.

Her voice...

“*Hug*. It’s ok to cry. Everyone cries. We’re as thick as thieves like you said, except we’ll be los tres amigos instead of amigas,” Rachel says in tears. “I have a feeling that you’re the best friend that I’ve been looking for my entire life.”

Gals are odd and very emotional, which is another reason why boys are superior.

“Damn it, Rachel. You’re making me feel all feely and weird!” Ruby cries in frustration.

“You’re hanging out with a bunch of weirdos, so that makes you a weirdo yourself,” Rachel replies in laughter.

“Yeah, well, I guess it does, and I’ll kick anyone’s ass who tries to fuck with us. Alive, dead, or dying, I don’t give a fuck! Anyone can get their ass beat when I’m around,” Ruby responds in full confidence. “Rachel! You’re on bass. Billy! You’re on drums! I’ll teach you guys how to play before we have to start our *stupid* military training in 2 years.”

“The perpetrators are over there officers! They attacked me and turned my friend into a recliner! Please stop their madness!” Nia shouts from down the alleyway.

“Hey, you kids! Stop right there!” The officer’s shout.

Oh no!

“You’re such a liar, Nia,” Ruby bellows in rage. “Shit guys, we gotta go. Like now!”

Time to run!

“Are they who I think they are?”

“You are correct, Billy. Those... are *pigs*,” Ruby answers.

“Those are some oddly shaped pigs.”

“Not those kinds of pigs dude. They’re Five-O,” Ruby says with an eye-roll.

“50?”

Septuple jinx.

“It’s not nice to talk about old people,” Rachel responds with a glare.

“No, I mean, it’s the one time, the heat, the boys in blue, the po-po, the police.”

“Oh, you could’ve just said police.”

Octuple jinx!

“Look, the point is, they’re asswipes. They don’t like me, and they *definitely* don’t like outsiders. I’d like to avoid jail this week, so I came up with a plan. It might sound offensive, though,” Ruby explains!

“Did you say jail?”

“Plan?” Rachel asks with a puzzled look on her face.

“You guys are from the country, and we won’t be able to outrun them for long, so my brain was like, hey, let’s just borrow a horse. I mean they’re ranchers right so they should know how to ride a horse. Also, there’s someone I need to see. She’s *very* mischievous,” Ruby quickly explains.

Ruby Redheart is one crazy gal but she’s fun to be around, saved us, and makes Rachel happy so she can’t be as bad as Rico said. I think she’s right about outsiders being treated like garbage, so the smart thing to do would be to avoid police and go with her plan.

“Ok, Ruby, let’s borrow a horse!”

Did I just say that?

“This is so spectacular!” Rachel shouts in joy.

Chapter 5: Notorious

5 Minutes Later May 19, 2069

1210 CDT

South Olympia, Kansas

Ruby Redheart's Point of View "Found one," Billy boy proudly notifies us.

He found a horse! Awesome, and the two know the importance of staying in shape. We should be safe in this new alleyway for the moment. But shit! A large crowd of people, merchants, and coppers stand in the way between us and freedom! Oh, why does my fame have to be a blessing *and* a curse? I wonder how my new friends are coping. Rachel has an ecstatic look on her face, and Billy has a slightly *less* elated facial expression. Time to test their loyalty.

"Well, what are we waitin' for?" Rachel asks in confusion.

Stop!

"Um, no."

Let me move the clueless girl away from the exit.

"In case you guys forgot, we've been framed, and I'm not talking pictures. I'm public enemy numero uno. All of Olympia knows my beautiful face, which is pretty sweet and unsweet at the same time. They saw you with me, so that makes you two my accomplices."

"So?" Rachel pouts.

"So that means we're notorious, in a gi-fucking-normous way. We'll need disguises to reach the horse."

I gotta take off my guitar case. God, it's so heavy!

"Where are we gonna get disguises?" Billy asks in worry.

"We're wearing them! I have to do something that involves privacy, so turn around, Billy! Rachel!"

"Huh?"

"We're gonna switch our clothes with each other. They're looking for the redhead with a black shirt, but they're not

looking for the redhead in a collared shirt. It's a big city, so trust me. It'll work."

*

"Wow, Billy. You look so cool now," Rachel says in amazement.

"You're right!" Billy says confidently.

Ok, you do look pretty cool, but only because of *my* sunglasses and jeans. Rachel's white t-shirt compliments the look.

"Ya look like a hipster which isn't a bad thing. Also, I definitely need to add fashion designer to my resume."

"What 'bout me, Ruby? What do I look like?" Rachel asks in excitement.

Let's see. You're wearing my black band shirt inside out, and your current blue jeans *should* be ok. Your long fucking hair stands out, so I don't even know if the beanie I gave you will help.

"You look like you're in disguise because you're on the run, but that's ok because it's the look we're going for. We just have to hope that no one else notices. Now, as for *my* disguise, as you can see, I look like a fucking disaster. Um, no offense, it's just not my natural look."

Your collared shirt looks like shit.

"What 'bout your red hair Ruby?" Rachel asks in concern.

"Don't worry. I'll *borrow* a hat from a merchant."

"Ok, just make sure to give it back," she whines in disapproval.

"I will, I promise. We'll have to hide the extra clothes and my guitar in this alleyway before we split up. They're looking for a group of 3 kids, so just chillax and act natural."

*

Just keep moving through the crowd, you got this. I want to keep this hat, but freaking Rachel made me feel all bad about it, so I *guess* I'll return it... in a month or two. *Gasp!* They made it!

"You two are adorable. Trying to get a car is impossible, so ol' horsey here will have to do."

Horses are freaking tall! How do I mount one?

"Where are we goin' again?" They ask in worry, offering their hands in assistance.

"*We* are going to go to the north to visit an acquaintance of mine. Her name is Teresa Young. I hate her."

"Why do you hate her?" Rachel asks with puppy eyes.

"Because she's freaking annoying, a know-it-all, and pretends she's so sweet and innocent! Don't let her fool you because she's evil, mischievous, aggravating and, she has a big freaking head! But I need the big brain inside of that massive head of hers to coach me because there's a certain someone I have to beat up."

THUD!

Oh god!

"Oh no, my baby! Move!"

Phew. No damage was done. My silver sphere of destruction is ok.

"What happened?!" Rachel asks in distress.

"My ultimate creation fell out of my pocket. His name is OBAE."

"OooBAE?" the twins ask in unison.

"One-big-ass-explosion! Don't tell the pigs, in case we get caught. Don't tell anybody, actually. If anyone sees it and asks about it, tell them it's um, makeup, or something. But it's not even a big deal. OBAE is completely harmless as long as he's in the sphere."

"Makeup? I don't think they'll believe that," Billy boy says in skepticism.

"Are you *doubting* the amazing Ruby Redheart?"

“My brother may be right, Ruby. They might have a hard time believin’ you because I don’t think makeup glows red.”

“Then I’ll just tell them it’s treasure. Now enough chit chat because we have to find Teresa.”

Thank you for helping me back onto the horse, amigos.

“Hey! The hell you doing with my horse?!” An angry man shouts from afar.

Uh oh.

“Shit, let’s go, Billy!”

Yes, so fast! What a successful escape!

“We’re so sorry, sir! We just have to borrow this horse to escape the pigs that are chasin’ us!” Naive Rachel apologizes.

Street fights, meeting new people, dodging pigs, fashion designing, borrowing merchandise, obtaining a horse, and taking care of OBAE. It’s not the most exciting way to start the day, but at least I have new bandmates. Kicking the new girl’s ass will be yet another incredible achievement of the amazing Ruby Redheart!

Chapter 6: Teresa Young

20 Minutes Later

May 19, 2069

1230 CDT

North Olympia, Drink-n-Forget

Rachel Cooper's Point of View

“This is ridiculous! *We* are grown-ass men and women! How the fuck do we keep losing?!” A feller cries out in disbelief.

Ooh, a bar. It seems very... bar like? Two stories, several pool tables, dinin' tables, and everyone has a scary look on their faces! All the attention is focused on the large crowd in the center of the building. Oh, but I feel so bad 'bout the horse we've abandoned! But Ruby said she'll be fine and that we've successfully escaped from the fuzziness, so I should try to relax.

“Follow me,” Ruby instructs.

Is she angry? Oh wow, So many people!

“This kid is amazing,” a feller says in wonder.

“She's a freaking genius!” A woman shouts to the top of her lungs.

“No way, this is bullshit. She's cheating somehow. Kids are sneaky,” another feller grumbles.

“Psst guys,” Ruby whispers. “Don't listen to these idiots. Teresa Young is pure *evil*. She didn't even want to be my band manager. What a jerk.”

We'll see, *Gasp!* That must be her! Sittin' near the round wooden table.

“You're cheating! I don't know how, but you are, Diamond!” A big burly lookin' feller sittin' across from a little girl shouts in anger.

SLAM!

Goodness, gracious! The table has done no wrong to his fist.

“Heh. Sorry, Pumpkin Pie, but I don’t *speak* sore loser,” Diamond responds with no fear whatsoever!

Diamond must be Teresa! She seems so mysterious and a lot smaller and skinnier than I imagined. She’s wearin’ a dazzlin’ white cowboy hat, a white tank top, and a blue skirt. Two large, floppy black pigtails are hangin’ off the sides of her hair from what I can see. Of Black and Caucasian lineage and she’s agitatin’ her opponents with an extremely mischievous smirk. Wow! She’ll definitely be my friend!

“Excuse me for being blunt, like a certain annoying and big-headed red-haired friend of mine, but I’ve won yet again. You got mopped by the best poker player in all of Olympus, so quit wasting my youth and pay up,” Teresa demands with confidence as she leans back in her chair.

Ooh. The bravery.

“I’m not annoying, you’re annoying,” Ruby mutters in anger.

“Excuse my friend here, sirs, *and* ma’ams. What she meant to say was, “*I have won, so please pay me.*” She *loves* her rewards very much,” an Asian girl in olive green business clothes, with medium length black hair that’s dyed pink at the edges, standin’ next to Teresa clarifies.

“Thank you, Kim. Did you fools hear that? Are you *honestly* going to deny the request of the *almighty*, Kim Farrington, daughter of Brian Farrington? Do I need to remind you that Brian Farrington is our brave general who fights a gazillion zombies every day, while you losers just sit on your butts sulking, wondering how I constantly whoop you?” Teresa continues to negotiate.

My lord!

“Holy shit!” The rowdy crowd roars.

“Hah! I hope they beat her ass!” Ruby rudely laughs.

Elbow!

“Ow! What the hell, Rachel?” Ruby grumbles.

“Don’t say that, Ruby. It’s not nice.”

“Yeah, well news flash, life ain’t nice,” she replies in frustration.

“That doesn’t mean we should be mean,” Billy nicely explains.

“Ugh! Fine, whatever! I’ll *try* to be nicer just for my two new friends,” Ruby says in haste with an eye-roll.

Yay! Pa did say I was a good influence on people.

“Ok, *Diamond*. We just want one more rematch. Is that too much to ask of you?” Pumpkin Pie requests apologetically.

OBAE, pigs, shitheads, and now Pumpkin Pie! The capital is filled with so many spectacular nicknames.

“Yawn! You have some nerve, making demands from the champion of champions,” Teresa says in uninterest.

“*Ahem*. What she means is,” Kim clears up.

“I’m boooored! You guys are boring me! You and your demands are unreasonable; therefore, Kim and I politely decline and will take our business elsewhere!” Teresa interrupts.

“Hah! Big talk from small fry,” Pumpkin Pie laughs.

“Forgive my bluntness again, but I notice you and your friends like to run your mouth when you get scared. It’s a shame that a little girl has a better poker face than you adults,” Teresa taunts in a calm tone.

“Ok, *Diamond*. I have the perfect deal. Agree to one more rematch, and we’ll double your reward. All we want is another chance to defend our pride,” Pumpkin Pie negotiates.

“Hmmmmm. You almost had me, but you lost me at *double*, so I will have to politely decline. Let’s get outta here, Kim.”

“Wait, you’re making a huge mistake! What more could you possibly want? We’re offering you a big deal. *Double* of your reward is impossible to pass up,” Pumpkin Pie yells in desperation.

“Your deal *does* interest me, but I have just one humble request,” Teresa says innocently.

“And what would that be?” Pumpkin Pie asks curiously.

“Heh. Forget double, double. I want my payment to be tripled, tripled, tripled!” Teresa smiles.

“Triple?!!!!” Everyone shouts in an uproar.

What the heck is happenin’?

“You’re funny, Diamond. I can tell jokes too,” Pumpkin Pie says in laughter.

“Oh my god. Do you see me laughing? Who even taught you how to play? Your poker faces, *and* your skills are nonexistent, so don’t even say nothing,” Teresa insults in disgust. “*Triple* is too low. I want my reward *quadrupled* after I win again!”

“Quadruple is silly. No deal!” Pumpkin Pie denies.

“BOO! YOU SUCK!” The crowd jeers.

Teresa stood up on her chair!

“Oops. I think I forgot to mention something about my friend Kim here. My intellect is zilch compared to her,” Teresa reveals with a chuckle.

“And what do you mean by that?” Pumpkin Pie asks in confusion.

“Heh. Kim here is Olympia’s newest apprentice, so show respect. After all, she is the apprentice of Ver-...”

“QUIET!!!” A man screams in fury.

I’m gonna have a heart attack! He silenced the bar! The crowd even cleared a path for him to converse with Teresa.

“I won’t allow *any* talk of that she-devil to be allowed in this bar,” the bartender announces from behind his desk, as he inspects a glass cup.

“Typical adults,” Teresa says in disappointment. “Sorry, Kim, I guess I got carried away.”

“Well, *I’m* about to get carried away next!” Kim shouts in anger as she storms towards the bartender’s counter. “Don’t call Doctor Shinka a she-devil, sir! She’s very kind and contributes *way* more to Olympus than you do!”

“Little girl” the bartender grumbles.

SLAM!

Not the glass cup!

“You have no idea what you’re getting into. I’ve witnessed countless friends die at the undead’s hands, and I’ve beheld the origins of Olympia,” the bartender reveals with a nasty glare.

A stare down!

“We get it. You’re a walking history book, old enough to be my grandpa. Forgive my rudeness, but that doesn’t mean you can call my mentor mean names, you ass,” Kim responds, unshaken by his intimidating glare.

“I’m telling you this for a reason, daughter of our brave general and apprentice of *that* woman. I’ve learned that there are four things you shouldn’t fuck with in The New World. First you don’t fuck with Behemoths, because they will rip you to *shreds* in the blink of an eye. Second you don’t fuck with the Royals because they *will* use Thanatos to disintegrate your sorry ass along with your entire kingdom. Third the two kingdoms that should be avoided at all costs are the Scorpion Kingdom and Prometheus. You simply *don’t* fuck with them. Fourth *none* of these threats hold a hair to Veronica Shinka’s capabilities. Her infamy is known worldwide, and if given the choice of death by zombies, Thanatos, or *her*, I would choose to get killed by zombies or turned to dust by Thanatos in an instant. She’s a living nightmare who never should’ve been allowed to return. Now I’ll give you and your friend what you want, multiplied by 4 because you were going to win again anyway. But I’ll have to ask you to leave for disturbing the peace,” the bartender explains.

“Fine! We were about to go anyhow!” Kim yells as she angrily stomps towards Teresa.

“Yeah, we were just leaving! It smells like butt in here anyway, my guy!” Teresa spews in anger.

O-M-G.

“That was so, so intense, amigos. Um, I have to chat with Teresa for a second. You two just hang around here and play darts or something. They’ll compensate kids if you beat an adult in a game, but the prize might be scarce because of Teresa’s obnoxious ass,” Ruby explains.

“Wait! What are the rewards, Ruby?!”

Ha-ha. Jinx, Billy.

“Go win and find out! You gotta learn how to take the initiative,” Ruby yells as she hastily departs.

“Hey, Rachel,” Billy says in awe.

“Yes, Billy?”

“Olympia is quadruple times more interesting than Brackettville,” he says with a smile.

“It certainly is! Now come on, let’s learn how to play darts. I want to know what the spectacular reward is!”

Chapter 7: Big Head

May 19, 2069

1240 CDT

North Olympia, Drink-N-Forget's Outside Entrance
Ruby Redheart's point of view “Ruby freaking Redheart,” bonehead Teresa says the *moment* I walk out of the smelly bar.

“Don’t *Ruby freaking Redheart*, me you supervillain. I have yet to forgive you.”

“Ruby, I can’t be the manager of a band that only has one person. I, umm, what the heck are you wearing?” Teresa rambles.

“It’s a long story that would never interest you. Anyway, I need a favor, Teresa. There’s a new girl in town, and I need your help to teach her a lesson.”

“Ruby, you can’t just go around beating people up because you don’t like them,” stupid Kim interjects.

“How dare you? These hands are exclusively reserved for troublemakers.”

“Ah, so you’re a bully who bullies other bullies,” Teresa finally understands.

“Exactly, Teresa.”

“That doesn’t make it right, Ruby,” Kim says in usual disapproval.

Whatever. Someone has to do it.

“It’s irrelevant. Are you guys going to help me out or what?”

Ugh! Stupid Kim. Stupid Teresa. Your heads become twice as massive when you whisper and giggle to each other like little girls.

“After a very lengthy and thought-out conversation, we’ve come to a conclusion Ruby,” Teresa notifies.

“Ok and? What’s your decision, Ms. smarty-pants?”

“I will notify you shortly, my loud redheaded acquaintance. Are you ready for me to reveal this exciting conclusion?” Teresa annoyingly giggles.

“Yes! Holy shit. You’re so infuriating.”

“Heh. She’s so impatient Kim but she provides endless entertainment for me, which is why I *love* to annoy her,” Teresa says with a light chuckle.

“I hate you.”

“Wow, Ruby. Don’t bite the hand that feeds you. Why does the *amazing* Ruby Redheart need my help anyway?” Teresa asks with a stupid smirk.

“The new girl is rumored to be a Black Scorpion. They’re supposedly a bed of badass motherfuckers, but nobody is tougher than yours truly. You’re good at strategy and shit, so I need your assistance. This is the biggest fight of my career, so I’ll look like an ass if I lose.”

Please help me! You’re the smartest girl in the entire kingdom!

“I think that you should leave her alone and stop acting so tough. You’re gonna be in for a shock if you fight this girl. Don’t embarrass yourself more than you already do, Ruby,” Teresa says in a stern tone.

Why did I even bother?!

“Whatever! I don’t need you anyway! You can’t spell independent without I!”

“And you can’t spell troublemaker without u,” Teresa snickers.

Is she right? No. No. I’m right. I’m always right. I can beat this chick’s ass. *She’s* the one who should be fearing *me*.

“Teresa, I think we should help Ruby. You know how stubborn she can get,” Kim chimes in again.

“Kim, the only way I’ll help Ruby is if she gives me—”

“Ruby!!!” Billy and Rachel scream in excitement as they burst through the door.

That was fast!

“Rachel is pretty good at darts!” Billy boy reveals with pride.

“They were all out of prizes, though!” Rachel cries in distress.

They’ve impressed me yet again.

“I know we just met, but I love you guys.”

Hug.

“You lack manners, Ruby, but even you should know when to introduce new peop—” Teresa spews in disbelief.

“Here’s your prize, Diamond,” a man presents as he bursts through the door. “A *shitload* of candy and root beer, just like you wanted,” he bestows upon the idiot queen.

“This will last us for months, Teresa!” Kim shouts in glee.

“Heh. You mean this will last us for *weeks*. We should share with our new friends here,” dull Teresa says as she turns her attention to Rachel and Billy. “I have manners, unlike Ruby. My name is Teresa Young, and this here is my best friend, Kim Farrington. Let’s feast on the unhealthy food that is candy.”

You’re only being friendly with them for your own benefits and knowing Rachel, she’s going to say...

“Billy! We’ve made new friends! This is the most spectacular day ever! Hello, Teresa, I am Rachel Cooper, and this is my younger less cool, twin brother, Billy Cooper. We would be delighted to eat candy with you. We’ve never had any so-”

“What?!!!” Teresa yells as she brazenly invades Rachel’s personal space.

“Unbelievable!” Kim follows up with a shriek.

“Ruby freaking Redheart. I will help you in your self-destructive, idiotic, egotistical, and redundant path that will ultimately end in an embarrassing defeat that will teach you humbleness, in exchange for getting to know your new friends and introducing them to the wonderful world that is candy,” Teresa announces with a rude-ass finger point.

“I’m gonna prove you wrong, Teresa! I mean it’s not like someone as amazing as me needs your help. You’re just insurance and another witness to my eternal fame. You better put this miraculous achievement into one of your books!”

“Ruby, if I wanted to watch people beat the crap out of each other, then I would just hang out at this bar after dark,” Teresa arrogantly laughs. “Heh. I don’t know if my help will be enough, though, Kim, which is why we need Drew,” she continues with a malicious smirk.

Smirking is the definition of pure evil.

“Hmm. He’ll be a tough one to convince, though,” Kim contemplates.

“Who’s Drew?” The twins ask in unison.

“Drew Howard is *the* most vicious, merciless, unpredictable, wild, and extravagant kid in the entire capital. His personality resembles a handsome action movie star!” Teresa poorly explains.

“Wow, really?!” Innocent Rachel asks in glee.

“Nah, I’m kidding. He’s very dull, the opposite of what I just described. His personality is like watching paint dry, excuse my bluntness. Ruby has a crush on him, though. Opposites attract, so it makes sense,” Teresa rudely reveals.

“Huh?” Everyone asks in confusion.

So embarrassing!

“See look! Her blushing red face is proof! It’s only right for her name to match her face!” Teresa cackles like the witch she is.

I’m gonna strangle you!

“*Ahem*. What Teresa means to say is that she’s just teasing because it builds character and is normal among friends, which is what we all are. *Right?*” Kim quickly interjects.

“Get the hell outta my way, so I can show her how much I value our friendship!”

“We see.” The twins misunderstand.

No! You *don't* see! Stop nodding your heads! Stupid Teresa!

"Fine, whatever! Get Drew, I don't care. The more, the merrier! Rachel! Billy! We're switching back to our original clothes while the all-powerful Teresa and the almighty Kim find Drew. The Black Scorpion was rumored to be hanging out around Flex-a-Lot."

"Excuse me?" Teresa asks stupidly.

"*You* brought him up, so *you* go get him, and if you want to talk to *my* friends, you'll help *me* with whatever *I* need."

"Ok ok, whatever floats your boat. Let's get outta here, Kim," Teresa finally complies.

*

"Are you ok, Ruby? You seem..." Billy boy asks quietly.

Great! Here *you* go!

"Aggravated? Bitchy? Cranky? D, all of the above?! I'm not fucking perfect, ok, so just leave me the fuck alone!"

"Oh," Billy mutters sadly.

"Ruby, I know you don't mean that. I will *a/ways* worry 'bout you because you're my friend, so please stop acting like a rascal to everyone. You're the toughest girl I know, but you're not invincible, so get your shit together!" Rachel says in a surprisingly assertive tone.

Rachel?

"Whatever. Let's just... go somewhere so we can change our clothes."

Chapter 8: Drew Howard & Ho Văn Duy

1 Hour Later

May 19, 2069

1340 CDT

West Olympia, Kansas. Near The Styx River

Teresa Young's Point of View

“Why in the world would she do that?” Drew asks in confusion.

“You know how she is, Drew. I don’t actually need your help, but I knew you’d be interested in this one-of-a-lifetime downtown throwdown between gals.”

I haven’t seen you in a long time, Drew. You are a very inquisitive fellow you 12-year-old suave young boy. Black with a fresh buzz cut, and a fellow lover of books. Your plain white t-shirt and blue jeans reinforce your lack of style. Heh. Maybe Ruby can teach you a few things when you finally become a couple.

The Styx River is directly behind Hades, this massive stone wall that surrounds Olympia. Oof. I doubt that there’s an actual river down there now that I think about it, but no way am I going down there to find out. This entire area feels like a barren wasteland. So quiet, eerie, ominous, but I swear I can hear death waiting on the other side like a tax collector!

“Let’s go, big brother. I wanna see!” Drew’s younger sister, Jaliyah, comments as she tugs on his shirt.

You’re taller than me now and still love pink. You’re wearing a magnificent pink dress, beautiful hair tied into a ponytail, and still retaining that innocent smile.

“I expect you to come with us, Drew. I did *not* walk all this way for nothing. I’m little, in case you haven’t notice, dude.”

“Violence on the inside, and violence on the outside. Life is awful, and this wall is the only thing preventing us from becoming zombie food,” Drew says aloud at the wall, completely ignoring me.

“Um, I don’t think we should loiter around here for too long. The world *does* suck, but when life gives you lemons, make lemonade. In other words, we should find something positive in bad situations, such as gambling, candy, root beer, or watching Ruby throw down with a Black Scorpion.”

“How many zombies do you think are down there, Teresa?” Drew asks, *still* ignoring me.

“Enough to get the heck outta here, now come on, dude! And don’t make some lame excuse like you need to read or something. We’re young! We should enjoy our freedom before we start boot camp. Ruby needs your support too!”

“Drew and Ruby are finally dating?” Jaliyah asks with a curious look in her eyes.

“No, Jaliyah, we’re not. Teresa is just irritating, as usual,” Drew denies in annoyance.

“Hey Teresa, speaking of boot camp, shouldn’t you be studying for the apprenticeship test?” Kim freaking reminds me.

You and Drew are massive buzzkills.

“Heh. Study? What’s there to study when you know everything? Eating candy is much more fun than practicing for a stupid test. (*Don’t look at me like that you three!*) Last chance, Mr. pouty.”

“Ok, fine. We’ll watch the stupid fight,” Drew mumbles.

“That’s the spirit, my guy!”

Heh. All this excitement is making me hungry.

*

Meanwhile in Flex-a-Lot, Central Olympia
Luke Miller’s Point of View

Sonya Grey, a perplexing girl who's the same age as me. I don't know why but, I think you're the most beautiful girl I've ever met. Afro-Latina, two long black braids on your back, and your bangs partially cover your piercing bright brown mesmerizing eyes. You're wearing a silver tank top, blue basketball shorts, and you always seem so serious.

"This will be sufficient enough for me," Sonya announces as she inspects the gym.

"You like exercising?"

"Yes. I must stay in top shape at all times should I wish to live," she explains in a nonchalant tone.

Gyms are awful! The gym's right side is filled with people doing aerobic exercises. The left side contains weightlifting machines, and the middle of the gym has a giant blue mat, most likely used for sparring matches.

"Yeah, I like exercising too."

"Luke, you think that you feel the need to impress me, but I'm asking you not to. If we're going to be friends then I don't want you to lie to me. I like you for you, so consider this a warning and don't *ever* try to bullshit me again," she says in an aggravated tone with a death glare.

"Got it. Won't do it again."

Wait. Did you say you like me?

"Excuse me, but does this wimp not like exercising?" A boy's voice says from behind.

Who's this douchebag? He's a big muscle-bound, greasy black-haired boy, Asian, has a unibrow, and is wearing a white V-neck and brown shorts.

"You two must be the new kids that everyone's talking about," he arrogantly chuckles. "But everyone is talking about *you*, especially," he says with a creepy smile to Sonya. "My name is Ho Văn Duy, and my lady friend at my side is Julie Young. I'm interested in knowing *your* name," Duy rudely introduces.

Push!

Ah! What the fuck, dude? You didn't have to push me to get to her! Your lady friend agrees as well, based on her reaction. She's a shy looking Caucasian girl with short blonde hair, a mole on her right cheek, and is wearing a purple dress.

"Oh?" Sonya says with a grin, obviously unimpressed.

That's it!

"Hey!"

"What's your problem? What the hell do you want? Can't you see that you're rudely interrupting my conversation?" Duy ignorantly says in my face.

You're testing me! Trying to make me look as bad as your unibrow!

"You think I don't know what you're doing?"

"Huh? I don't know what you're talking about. I'm sorry, but not really. I must have forgotten to ask for your name. What's your name, kid?" Duy asks with a sneer.

Kid? We're the same age, jackass!

"My name is."

"Didn't ask!"

"That's it!"

"Woah woah. Ladies, don't get your panties in a twist," an unknown voice interjects from behind. "My name is Jayce Soleus, and my father owns this gym. Medical supplies are limited, so let's settle this dispute with a classic arm-wrestling match instead of beating the shit out of each other," Jayce offers with a grin.

Everyone has strange haircuts in Olympia! Jayce is a tall Caucasian boy with a spiky black mohawk, wearing a pink tank top, and golden Muay Thai shorts.

"Fine! I'm kicking your ass, Duy!"

"Kick *my* ass? I'm like twice your size kid, but fine, I could use some entertainment. I'll embarrass your scrawny ass *and* steal yo girl for your lack of manners."

This is not what I thought Olympus would be like. The first person I meet is a total jackass, but after I beat his ass,

I'll gain respect among my new peers! Not only that, but I'll be able to impress Sonya.

Chapter 9: Sonya Grey

30 Minutes Later May 19, 2069

1440 CDT

Inside Flex-a-Lot, Central Olympia Drew Howard's Point of View “Heh. Looks like we made it just in time, Drew,” Teresa notifies.

So many familiar and unfamiliar faces. Julie, Alessa, Sean, Jayce, and zero adults, most likely because of Jayce convincing his dad to empty the gym. Everyone is gathered near the center of the gym, focused on the two girls inside the large blue mat.

“This is very interesting,” Kim says with a chuckle.

We just gotta squeeze through the crowd.

“Introducing the hometown hero!” Jayce announces, full of energy.

Ruby’s stepping forward. She has her hair tied up in a ponytail and is wearing her black band shirt and black basketball shorts. She has her headphones in, so she’s most likely listening to rock music from her MP3 player.

“We’re about to be on the scene of a tremendous ass-whooping here, Drew!” Jaliyah blurts out in excitement.

Sigh. She’s only 10, so she doesn’t know any better. She shouldn’t be watching this, but seeing two strong girls spar will prepare for life outside the kingdom.

“No swearing, Jaliyah.”

“Oh, shi- I mean shoot. We’re about to see a tremendous butt whooping Drew,” she says with a sheepish smile.

“Rip her fucking head off!!!” A voice yells in the background.

“Ladies and gentlemen! *The infamous* rascal of Olympia, everyone’s favorite redhead, the lead singer/guitarist of the rock band *Evil on Tour*, she skips class to kick ass, and has an explosive personality like no other! Make some noise for

the unpredictable and amazing Ruby Redheart!" Jayce introduces in excitement.

Sigh. I can't tell if she's more focused on the fight or the crowd with the way she's soaking in the cheers. Just be careful, Ruby.

"Hey, Drew, what do you think Ruby said to get the new girl to fight her?" Teresa asks as she observes Ruby blowing kisses to the crowd.

"Something extremely insulting."

"She probably said something cheesy like *Black Scorpions? I hear they're tough, but as you all know, nobody is tougher than Ruby Redheart!*" Teresa predicts in Ruby's voice.

"Ok, listen up everyone. Black Scorpions? *Scoff!* Yeah, I hear they're tough, but as you all know, *nobody* is tougher than Ruby Redheart!" Ruby says with confidence as she takes off and pockets her earphones.

Teresa is spot on.

"Heh. Now she'll probably say something like *You're about to witness the butt-kicking of a lifetime, so I hope someone brought a pillow because I'm about to put a "b" to sleep,*" Teresa prophesies in Ruby's voice again.

"You fools are about to bear witness to the ass-kicking of a lifetime! And I hope someone brought a pillow because I'm about to knock a bitch out!" Ruby loudly boasts to the crowd.

"Holy shit, Teresa."

"Ooh. What happened to no swearing big brother?" Jaliyah asks with a smirk.

"Ruby likes to hear herself talk and is a very expressive individual. Her weakness is already showing, which means this will be a quick fight. I hope she doesn't get hurt though," Teresa reveals in a somber tone.

Her weakness... Could it be?

"Oh, hey Jaliyah," Ruby greets with a bright smile as she approaches. "Ugh! *Teresa, Kim,*" she says with absolute revulsion as she rolls her eyes.

“Kim, watch this,” Teresa says with an evil chuckle. They’re so close to my face!

“Um, Hiiiiiii, Drew,” Ruby and Teresa say in unison with hi-pitched voices.

“You guys are about to witness greatness,” Ruby says with full confidence, now respecting my personal space.

“I thought we were about to witness the *ass-kicking of a lifetime*,” Teresa corrects with a grin.

“The greatest ass-kicking of a lifetime,” Ruby replies with a smirk.

“Ruby!” An unknown voice calls from behind.

“Drew, Jaliyah, meet my new friends from Brackettville, Texas, Rachel, and Billy Cooper,” Ruby proudly introduces.

“Salutations. Nice to meet you,” Rachel and Billy greet in unison.

“They’re also my first new bandmates since, you know, uh, *someone* didn’t want to join my band,” she reveals in a sharp tone.

Don’t look at me like that!

“What? You wanted me to join your band as *that one friend who gets to hang out backstage*.”

“How could you decline such an offer?!” She responds as she grabs my shirt and invades my personal space again. “You smell so nice,” she resumes with a big smile. “Um, I mean, brush your teeth, Drew!” She spews in anger, finally letting me go.

What? And Teresa said she’s predictable. I just don’t understand girls.

“Rachel!” Ruby calls out.

“Yes, Ruby?” Rachel asks in glee.

Toss.

Uh, what the heck? Ruby handed her some kind of strange silver device.

“Take care of my baby,” Ruby calmly commands with a stern look in her eyes.

“I will protect him with my life,” Rachel responds in seriousness.

“What is that?” Jaliyah asks in curiosity.

“Um, it’s makeup,” Rachel says with a sheepish look on her face.

“Why is it glowing ominously?” Jaliyah asks with a curious look on her face.

“Um, it’s, it’s treasure,” Rachel answers nervously.

“I see,” Jaliyah acknowledges with a head nod.

“Let’s give a big welcome to Ruby’s opponent! From the viscous Scorpion Kingdom, she’s a perplexing adversary with a deadly background,” Jayce proclaims as this new girl steps forward. “Give it up for a member of the *ferocious* Black Scorpions, Sonyaaaaaaaaa Greeeeeeeeey!”

Sonya Grey, her bright brown eyes contrast the cold stare she’s giving Ruby. Numerous amounts of tattoos and battle scars are spread across her arms and legs. This chick is hardcore! Ruby is in over her head, more than usual.

“STUPID!!! OUTSIDER! NONSENSICAL! YELLOW BELLY! ARACHNID!” The crowd brutally jeers.

“I-I don’t think she’s a crowd favorite,” Rachel states in a nervous tone.

“Yeah, it’s almost like Olympians and Black Scorpions hate each other.”

“I wonder what she’s doing here,” Teresa replies with a curious look.

“She’s not a fan favorite now, but just wait until you see her in action,” a boy’s voice I don’t recognize says as he approaches us. “My name is Luke Miller. Sonya and I are new here.”

“Howdy, my name is Luke Miller. I’m Teresa, and I would love to hear all about you, but can you tell me more about Sonya first?” Teresa asks in interest.

“It’s just Luke, and I wish I could say, but I just met her. She’s been with us for a few weeks, and seems cool so far,” Luke quickly answers.

“Us?”

“Oh, we came here with a founding member of the kingdom. My guardian, Veronica Shinka.”

No fucking way! If they are friends of the she-devil, then Ruby—!

“Ok, girls, here’s the rules. A hit to the face is a point, a knockdown is a point, and going out of bounds is a point to the opponent. Whoever gets 3 points first will be the victor. Are. There. Any. Questions?!” Jayce explains as he gets in between the girls.

“No! Now move your ass!” Ruby shouts in rage.

That’s a fierce look from Ruby! Maybe... just maybe. Jayce is out of the ring.

“Ok! Round 1, Figh-” Jayce announce-
PUNCH!

“OH SHIT!” The crowd roars in excitement.

Ruby was about to send her head flying with a sucker punch, but Sonya managed to block it with her left arm in time.

“A boxing jab? Not bad,” Sonya compliments with a smirk.

“Shut the fuck up!” Ruby yells out in outrage.

Ruby’s going for the ribs!

WHOOSH!

Sonya dodged the right cross. Ruby’s left side is open!

GRAB!

Shit! Sonya’s got her in a standing chokehold from behind!

“Let go and fight me like a woman!” Ruby pleads as she struggles.

“You promised them the “ass-kicking” of a lifetime, correct? You shouldn’t disappoint the crowd,” Sonya threatens in a malicious tone.

No!

PUSH! KICK!

“NO WAY” The crowd howls in hysteria!

“Ruby Redheart is! Out! Of! Bounds! Sonya Grey wins the first round!” Jayce announces.

Sonya literally, kicked her ass.

“God damn it, motherfucker!” Ruby screams, quickly recovering.

“So, Luke Miller. Do you know *anything* about this girl? How did you guys meet?” Teresa asks in wonder.

“She almost sliced my head off,” Luke chuckles as Jayce begins the 2nd round.

Sonya is dodging each blow with seemingly little effort now.

“Wow! She sounds like a bad-ass motherfucker!” Jaliyah blurts out in excitement.

“Jaliyah.”

“Oops. Sorry,” she quickly apologizes.

“Punch back, damn it!” Ruby cries out as she continues to struggle.

“Ruby’s punches have slowed down. Sonya is pretty smart,” Teresa explains.

She’s right, Ruby is getting tired. Even someone as hyperactive as her has limits.

“You’re too hasty!” Sonya fires back as she ducks Ruby’s exhausted jab.

She’s going low, this Sonya girl is a monster! It’s like she has the agility and nimbleness of a cat, but the strength and speed of a tiger.

“Humbleness will take you a long way,” Sonya announces as she takes a slight step forward.

SWEEP!

A devastating low spinning sweep kick aimed at Ruby’s left ankle is enough to knock her flat on her butt.

“Another point for the seemingly invincible, Sonya Grey!!!” Jayce declares.

Silence...

“Yeah! Beat her ass!” Two familiar voices yell out, breaking the silence.

“YOU’RE A BOSS, SONYA!” The crowd explodes in cheers. Those voices, they sounded like those jerks Rico and Nia. “Alright! Time to begin round three.” Jayce sa-
“Wait!!!” Ruby orders, as she stands up and rubs her butt.