

BREAKPOINT – Part 4

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Part Four

Harry

When he opened his eyes, he was in what could only be described as a 'clean room,' as the overriding theme of the entire place was white. White walls, white benches (including one that he was strapped to), white doors and an abundance of white lights all around the room to infect his view with diffused light, as if everything was seeped in a heavy white glow.

He wasn't the only one in the room, however, as he noticed two other people strapped to benches. All three of them were dressed in white hospital gowns, hanging down to the knees. They were all shackled at the wrists and ankles, as well as straps around their waists, shoulders, knees and necks, making sure they had near no mobility, although they could turn their heads. Each of them was gagged, though, so none of them could talk to one another. They were on tilted slabs, mostly elevated, with their feet resting against a metal slat across the bottom, the two women at 45 degree angles off each side.

The woman to the left of him looked like she was either Latina or Mediterranean, with coal black hair down to her shoulders and well-tanned skin, her light green eyes whipping around the room, trying to take in her surroundings. She looked incredibly familiar to Harry, but where he felt like the look of her should connect to a memory, his brain kept returning back 'File Not Found,' something that made his head ache just a little bit, the absence of memory made that much more conspicuous by knowing something *should* be there. She was certainly attractive enough that she would've made an impression, short and slender, but still more than a little busty, as he could tell from how the gown clung more tightly around the chest area.

The woman to the right of him also seemed frustratingly familiar, although again he could not connect the person he saw before him with a memory rattling around inside of his brain, another 404 error being kicked back when he tried to follow the image to something more substantial in his mental library. She was Asian, about the same height as the woman to his left, so several inches shorter than him, as Harry was a decently tall guy, a little bit over 6' tall. Her facial features looked as though they leaned towards Thai or Korean, but he was mostly just taking guesses there, as he couldn't find any real details inside of his mind to connect to the woman's look other than, well, 'lush.' Both of them were more than a bit fit, and that felt important, but he had nothing to connect it to. Her black hair was kept long, swept back behind her ears, hanging down her back some length he couldn't tell based on the positions of her body in relation to his.

There was no one else in the room with them, but they were all sort of vaguely facing the same direction, the one part of the room that wasn't white, instead a matte black, a giant LCD television screen that was currently off. After a few minutes, once all three of them were clearly awake, the screen flickered to life.

Whatever camera they were using to shoot the image, it was clearly being put through a number of filters, or maybe shot through gauze, or maybe even both, as the whole image itself was slightly fuzzy and distorted, not that Harry imagined it would make much of a difference, as what he was looking at only made him even more confused.

The image was that of a single figure situated behind a wooden desk, something old and antique, but also rather sturdy looking, like it had seen a few hundred years without blinking. The figure was wearing a red and black yoroi, or samurai armor, which concealed any real details about the person underneath it in terms of physicality or gender. The face was wearing a big rubbery Richard Nixon mask, the kind with the overly large nose sticking out. Instead of eyes, however, there were bright red LED lights shining around the eyeholes, obscuring any level of detail there. On top of the

head was a giant, wide brimmed black fedora that extended out almost to the edge of the shoulderpads of the yoroi, with a single brown band around the base of it.

Behind the figure was what looked like an endless number of green vines covered in thorns woven together as some sort of backdrop, sprouts with leaves jutting off from some of them, each of them trembling a little bit, as if a strong wind was being blown across the set. It also almost looked like the vines themselves were shifting up and down a bit, although Harry wondered if that was just his eyes playing tricks on him.

On top of the desk in front of the figure was an old golden set of scales, the kind he'd only ever really seen in statues of Justice, although the scales themselves seemed balanced, with nothing on either of them. To the left of the scales was a ball composed of what looked like clockwork or some other sort of gear based machinery. To the right of them was a cage with a large rodent-like creature, although it was hard to see, as much of the cage was hooded. Maybe it was a wolverine or a mongoose. Harry didn't know, and frankly, didn't know if it mattered.

The whole image was so utterly baffling that he wasn't sure what details, if any, were even relevant for him to try and commit to memory, so he was doing what he could to keep it all impressed in his brain, as a voice on the other end began to speak, the sound of the voice heavily distorted and garbled through what had to be a number of vocal filters, changing the sound of it to something inhuman and alien.

“Good morning, captives,” the voice said to them. “We are certain you are wondering where all of your memories have gone. You do not have need of them at this time, and should they become of actual importance, you may find them returning to you naturally. Until then, you should consider them to be unimportant and give them no further attention.”

Harry wanted to argue, but knew struggling against the gag would serve no real purpose, and instead chose to keep quiet.

“Very soon, you are being sent to The Retreat, where you will spend an indeterminate amount of time. In some ways, the amount of time you spend there will be up to you, male figure. We have decided upon an experiment with the three of you and your introduction to The Retreat.”

As much as Harry was listening to the voice, he was also trying to focus on the image, hoping to see whether or not the figure was making any movements at all, but the constant sway and slithering of the vines in the background, as well as the poor level of video quality, made it very difficult to tell.

“From your arrival, you will have one week to make a decision. At the end of the week, one of these two women will be killed, and you will decide which one. If you do not survive the week, *both* of these women shall die, so it is in their interests not to let you be harmed, and, in fact, to find a way to co-exist with you comfortably, as whichever of the two women survives will be linked to you for the entirety of your time on the island, her health linked to yours, and vice versa. If either of the two women die before the week has elapsed, all three of you shall die, so do not consider that a loophole, ladies, that you can exploit.”

Harry was already starting to do calculations in his head, considering what he knew about each of them, and what was the best possible way to make a cold and level-headed assessment but he just knew things were going to get a lot more complicated once they were on the island. He glanced between the two women expecting to see panic and/or desperation in their eyes, but instead he saw only solid resolve.

“We've also got some modifications made to you three, but you'll see those in time, we are certain. Now it is time for you all to sleep, but when you awaken, remember this – you are being watched, and you are being judged.” A heavy white fog started to fall into the room, a knockout gas, Harry was certain, and while he could've held his breath, he knew they would wait until enough time had passed that they were all unconscious before entering the room. The last thing he heard before he passed out was the voice saying, loud and booming, “No one escapes Oversight.”

When he awoke next, his ears were popping and the sky was falling all around him, except sort

of in reverse. Within a few seconds, he realized he was strapped in to a large inflatable raft that was parachuting towards the ocean, along with the two women he'd seen in the room earlier. Time had clearly passed, although he had no idea how much. His internal clock was generally pretty good, and he felt like he'd been out somewhere between twelve and sixteen hours, at least some of that which must have been spent in an airplane, probably that giant fucker he could see zipping away off in one direction, which looked like it had also thrown a handful of crates out after them, all of which were also parachuting down towards the ocean below.

There was an island of what looked like a decent size off to one side of them, and other than that, it was just blue seas as far as the eye could see in any direction, even from their decent height. Based on the temperature, he was guessing they were somewhere in the Pacific and in the southern hemisphere, but that was a giant amount of blue space they could be anywhere within, the sun almost ready to set on the horizon.

Both of the women had woken up and were taking in their surroundings, but really there wasn't much to do until a minute or two passed and the craft landed on the water. "So who're you then?" the Asian woman asked him. Her voice sounded like it might have been from Hong Kong, which would have put her with the Ministry of State Security, although it was still possible she could have been with the National Intelligence Agency (Thailand) or the National Intelligence Service (South Korea). Harry didn't have anywhere near enough experience in the Southeast Asian Theatre to be able to spot that right away. "Why're you so important?"

"I'm not," Harry shot back. "I'm just a cut-out, a go-between for two different groups with real power, so I know bugger all about what game they're playing."

"Bullshit," the Latina said, and he could tell that her accent was actually Portuguese, which meant she was likely from the Defense and Strategic Informations Service (SIED), which was like Portugal's MI-6. As former MI-6, he'd had a couple of encounters with SIED during his time in the service, and found them to be generally capable and reliably dangerous. But whether or not that included any time with this particular woman, he just didn't know. Once again with that empty space, and no frame of reference as to how big that particular chunk of empty space was. "You gotta know something, limey."

"Anything I think I might've known got burned out by whatever they put us through, ladies, so your guess is literally better than my own might be," Harry shot back, just before the life raft hit the water.

There was a zippy little speedboat that came out to gather up the packages and the life raft Harry and the two women were in, hauling them back towards an island that Harry had been dreading arriving at ever since they'd begun discussing the plan.

The women were busy focusing their attention on him as the speedboat pulled them towards the island, but Harry was doing everything he could to study the island itself. He'd always had a good grasp of spatial location, so he was trying to build a overall structure of the island that he could use to fill in later, but as the speedboat was dragging them towards the island, Harry felt like any time he focused on any single portion of the island for too long, his vision started to blur a little and his head started to hurt, so he decided not to spend too long staring at any one thing, trying to build a general picture of the size and shape of it.

Once they got to the island itself, a swarm of people immediately began transferring all the crates from the water to a series of golf cart like trucks. Harry found the whole story their host, a genial enough fellow named 'Tex,' to be plausible enough, but resolved to take a longer look at it sooner rather than later.

Things got weird fast, though, when Harry decided to ask Tex about Oversight, just after Tex had finished explaining about housing and accommodations to them. "So tell me what you know about Oversight, Tex," Harry said to him, as Tex was driving them over towards one of the blocks of apartments.

“Who's Oversight?” Tex said, and for the life of him, Harry was pretty sure he was being genuine.

“That's what the people who sent us all here called themselves in a message they sent me before they dropped us out of an airplane,” Harry said as Tex slowly brought the golf cart around the corner and then moved to put it in a parking space.

Tex nodded, scratching his chin. “That's the first time we've heard them refer to themselves as *anything* so I guess it's as good a name as any. We were just callin'em Management. What was the message they gave you?”

“Some bullshit about having to decide which of these two women lives and dies,” Harry sighed, leaning back in his chair.

“Who the fuck are *you* to decide?” the Latina said to him from the back seat.

“That's just it, ladies. I keep telling you, I'm nobody.”

“Nobody here's nobody,” Tex said with a smirk. “But if you don't remember who you are, there's no shame in that. Lots of us here don't remember who we are or even which teams we used to play for. I'm dang certain that Tex ain't my real name, but when I woke up, I was talking with a drawl, and so everyone kept calling me Tex, and it stuck, 'cause any time anybody asked me my name before that, I had fuck all to tell them.”

“Didn't catch any of your names,” Tex said. “So I better ask.”

“Harry.”

“Stella,” the Asian woman said, offering no information past that.

“Calisto,” the Latina woman said.

“Well, normally I'd offer you a tour of the units, tell you about all of the features available, including our nifty pneumatic tubes system, but to be honest, you folks showed up far later than our arrivals normally do, and I'm just too damn tired to want to get into it tonight, so you can swing by my bar with any questions, or just ask your neighbors anything you need to know. The only thing I'm going to tell you now so it's not a shock is that there aren't any locks on any doors here on the island, so consider everything that isn't on your personage as 'borrowable,” he said with a dry chuckle. “Despite the fact that you've probably been sleeping for ten to twelve hours, you're also probably tired as fuck, so go claim a room and we'll see you folks around tomorrow.” Tex gestured with a wave of his hand before suddenly raising a fingertip. “How long did Oversight give you to decide which one of the two women lives and which one dies?”

“They said a week,” Harry replied. “And it had all sorts of weird rules about it, but they can't really just kill somebody on the island, can they?”

“They can, have and do all the time, my boy, so I'd start putting some serious thought into which of these two women's lives you want to make significantly longer than the other.”

“Bloody hell,” Harry grumbled to himself as he grabbed the box with his name on it off the back of the cart, just as Calisto and Stella had done moments earlier, the two women waiting for him at the stairs, looking at him expectantly. “What?”

“Where are we going, limey?” Calisto said to him.

“What makes you think *we* are going *anywhere* together?”

“There aren't any locks on the doors, and until one of the two of us is dead,” Stella said, “we're both going to be your fucking shadows, so you'd better wrap your head around that idea.”

“Great,” Harry said. “Doesn't this just sound like a laugh and a half?”

He walked up the stairs with the women both keeping just a few steps behind him, as he made his way up along the side of the building to the third floor, making his way down to the fourth unit on the floor, knocking on the door before pushing it open. “Anybody in here?”

Harry set foot into the room, finding it empty. The décor was certainly about forty years or so late, with wood paneling on the walls of the living room and a yellowish-green hue to all the cushions on the couches.

“1972 called,” he muttered to himself. “It wants you to give up the ghost.”

True to Tex's word, Harry didn't see a lock or even a latch on anything. Tex had also been right with how exhausted Harry felt. There was a clock on the wall that was running and said it was only a little past seven in the evening, but there was no way in hell he was going to stay awake much longer, so he set the box with his name on it on top of a dresser in the bedroom (which was lined bricks painted white and exposed wooden beams) before he kicked off his boots and hopped up into the bed, laying his face down against the pillow, finding it a little dusty, so he started to pull the top sheet back.

“The hell are you doing?” Stella asked.

“Going to fucking bed,” Harry said. “Whatever the hell it is you want to ask me can wait until the goddamn morning.” He moved to slide underneath the sheets, laying on one side, reaching over to hit the light switch next to his bed, which plunged the room into relative darkness, although there was a soft purple glow seeping into the room from a neon sign just outside of the window.

“Hey!” Calisto suddenly said loudly, which made Harry glance over, only to see Stella stripping down to her bra and panties, tossing the jumpsuit aside. “What the fuck do you think *you're* doing?”

“Getting in bed,” Stella said, smugly. “My life depends on this man, so if you think I'm sleeping out on the couch, you are mistaken.”

Calisto looked like she was ready to shit bricks, but as Stella was moving to crawl into the bed behind him, she started stripping down as well. Calisto decided to take it one step further, though, and shed her bra and panties as well, exposing her slender and elegant body for any who would look over. Harry could also see a couple of circular scars along the left side of her belly, the sort of pockmark scars left behind by gunshot wounds. He had one himself on the front and back of his left shoulder, just below his collarbone.

As Calisto was crawling into the bed in front of him, he could feel Stella moving to shuck her remaining clothes as well, despite the fact that Harry had just crawled into the bed in the flightsuit he'd been wearing when they through him out of the plane earlier. Once Stella had stripped down to nothing, she pulled Harry to roll onto his back, sliding one of her arms over his chest, just in time with Calisto doing the same with one of hers.

He was fairly certain he was going to be miserable come morning, but the rules of the game had been set and there was nothing left to do but play the hand that had been dealt him. He drifted off to sleep, convinced that by daybreak tomorrow, he'd have a better idea of what was going on.

Instead he woke sometime in the dark middle of the night, a shiver running up his spine as he realized that while Calisto was still asleep next to him with his right arm pinned beneath her neck, he couldn't feel Stella on top of his left arm. That was, of course, when he realized he could feel someone running their tongue along his cock beneath the covers.

Since his left arm was mobile, he used it to lift the sheets enough to peek down, and sure enough, he could see the top of Stella's head as she glanced up at him with a little smile, bringing her index finger to her lips in a shushing motion before turning her gaze back down, sliding her lips down along the length of his dick, Harry having to bite his bottom lip a bit.

Back when he'd first joined Scarab, he'd had a conversation with all of them about how he'd generally been the wheelman for most of his operational work to date, he'd never really been subjected to a full-on frontal assault of a female operative using her charms, and asked how one went about resisting being influenced by it.

Rin, in typical Rin fashion, had said that if Harry allowed himself to be swayed by a piece of ass, then he'd be dead within a few missions, and they'd worry about finding his replacement. Harry had shot back asking if Rin had ever been the piece of ass in question, and Rin's smile disturbed him just as much as her reply. “Not that anyone alive can tell you about.”

Mick's, by contrast, had gone completely the other direction. He'd pointed out that men and women had been doing this particular dance for as long as there had been men and women, and that men inevitably came up on the short end of the stick. “You're not gonna beat 10 million years of

evolution, kid,” Mick had told him. “So your best bet is to just be aware of the manipulation and understand the consequences, so you can minimize and manage them, best you can. Don't lose your pants, because you're gonna lose your shirt no matter what.”

And Len, the team's founder and de facto leader, who'd been keeping quiet during all of it, had sort of chuckled, giving a little shrug. “Best thing I can tell you, FNG, is that it's enjoyable to take what's being offered, but you gotta make sure you're never giving back *more* than you're being given. It's like working any other asset in our business. You're always gonna have to give'em *something*. But you need to make sure that when the rent comes due, you always got more than you gave, and you never gave anything you couldn't afford to lose.”

Harry was trying to keep all of that advice swirling around in his head, but in the end, Stella was doing far too good a job bouncing her head up and down onto his cock, her tongue coiling around it each time she drew her head back up, the blanket muffling most of the sound, although he could occasionally hear the wet slurping of her lips puckering on his prick. The sound was at least muted enough that it didn't seem like it was in any risk of waking Calisto.

He was trying to use what he'd learned in terms of how to time and temper his breathing, to control the pace at which Stella was sucking him off, but her fingers were cradling his balls and her tongue was squeezing around the head of his cock, the foreskin pushed back so that she could toy right against his glans.

In his head, he was trying to run all the things he could do to prolong the experience, but it had been a while since he'd had anyone in his bed, and the added thrill of Calisto being naked and asleep pressed up against his side only enhanced the sensations. Before he knew it, he felt like the release was about to hit him, so he reached down to tap on Stella's head, a polite notice that he was about to cum, but instead of backing off, she pushed her head down as far as she could, like she wanted to be sure not to let even a drop of his cum escape her mouth.

That was when things got *strange*.

When his orgasm started to rush through him, he felt Stella's lips lock down hard, but he could feel her starting to vibrate against his leg at the *exact same moment* as Calisto also began to tremble against his side, her lips parted to let one of the most intense moans he'd ever heard pouring right into his neck.

Calisto opened her eyes, an almost wounded expression on her face. “What the fuck was that?” she said to him, as Stella suddenly moved up from beneath the sheet alongside of him, swallowing his load.

“God, I think I came when you did,” Stella said, glancing over to see Calisto's panting face. “What's wrong with her?”

“I came when he did,” she whimpered. “I was completely asleep and then suddenly I was awake and orgasming...”

“Wait, what?” Stella said. “Are you saying *we both* came when *he* did?”

From the living room came a loud SHUNK sound, startling all three of them, although Stella hopped out of bed first, running into the living room, glancing around before seeing the capsule inside of the pneumatic tube, a single sheet of paper in it.

Stella opened the chamber, took out the capsule and closed the chamber back up, before opening the capsule, taking out the sheet of paper, reading it as she walked back towards the bed, a look of consternation on her face. “What the fuck is happening?” she said, holding out the piece of paper to them.

In large printed block letters read a simple message:

“WELCOME TO YOUR NEW LINKED LIFE. 6 DAYS AND COUNTING. -OVERSIGHT”

Stella crawled back into the bed, and both her and Calisto clung to Harry tightly, to calm their anxious nerves down.

Harry's nerves, on the other hand, would run wild until daybreak.

Rin

Since Len's arrival, it had been easier for the two of them to start building a map of the populated area of the island, however it was strange how the *rest* of the island wasn't reliably the same each time they went out to explore it. Len had argued that she was just imagining it, but she made him count the number of paces to the first reliable landmark and one day it was 56 paces and the next it was reliably 85.

Len had insisted on walking those 85 paces at least five times, there and back, before he finally believed the space was entirely different. That wasn't even the reason Rin had rushed back to the village to grab him, pulling him deeper into the jungle.

"Rin," Len said with a sigh. "At this point, I'm almost positive there is nothing about this island that is going to throw me for a fucking loop at this point." They were hiking a good ten minutes before Rin answered him.

"Okay then, boss, you look at *that* and tell me it's not throwing you for a loop," she said as they came over the hill, looking down into the little ditch where Rin had hidden the thing she'd shot with her bow and arrow about an hour ago.

In the ditch was the corpse of a praying mantis the size of a *pony*, with Rin's arrow jutting out from one of its eyes. Attached to the back of it was a small bundle of machinery about the size of Rin's fist, with a long, singular antenna jutting out like a thin metal spike.

"Huh," Len said. "You're right. I'm fucking thrown."