

# Defense Against Demons: Part One. (1 of 2)

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Defense Against Demons is a story revolving around a government Organization called, well, Defense Against Demons. Each story I will submit is set in the world of DAD, which means each one will have totally different Agents being the main characters in it, with the exception of cameos. Anyway, this agency deals with Vampires and a vampire-created race known as the Arachnicides, AKA big-ass talking spiders. The Humans drove out the Vampires and Spiders and forced them to make a new world, the Underworld. Queen Veronika of the Underworld had her sorceress assistant, Illyra, make this new world. However, that world died very young, causing the remaining vampires and spiders to flee back to our world, hoping we died out. But we didn't. So, Illyra made a spell to eradicate all humans, but she was captured and hidden by DAD so that she could never do the spell. Now Veronika is on a global search to try and recover her. Meanwhile, Tara Harris, an Agent for DAD, is trying to hunt Veronika down so that she can't free Illyra. This is the first of the stories I will write, and there might be a couple millions typos in it, but have fun with it and comment!

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The petite blonde vampire walked back and forth against the cold castle dungeon's ground. She frowned. "You know, even though you're the one duct taped to the folding chair, I'm really the victim here. I mean, all you have to do is tell me where my advisor's carcass is and you're free to go." Veronika frowned as the mulish man grinned at her cockily. She hated smugness. "You better watch your facial expressions, you little nerd. I'm like this close to snapping." Veronika bent down so her face was only centimeters away from the suited man. All of a sudden, Veronika collapsed into the DAD agent's lap in wallowed sadness. "Why do you torture me? I'm just a girl. A stylish, attractive, centuries year old girl who's patience is about to be driven off a cliff, like Thelma and Louise style. Please, just tell me where my advisor's sarcophagus is, and you won't be sent into the fiery depths of the 27th fire dimension." Veronika met the agent's eyes and smiled at him hopefully. Seeing the evil reflected in her smile made the DAD agent's blood boil. He spat directly in the demon's face. Veronika stood shocked for a moment, staring into the agent's blue eyes as if staring into the pith of his own soul. Her shocked features then turned into enraged fury. She stood up, fire in her eyes, screaming like a banshee, and kicked the agent's chair into the wall, shattering both the chair and the agent's spinal chord. Veronika cursed as her grunts rushed to collect the agent's shattered remains. Her second advisor, Callao, quickly appeared at her right side to allay her anger.

"Temper, temper, oh desirously scrumptious one, for this is the seventh time you have killed Agent Shaman, and we don't have enough Omnica blood to keep performing the rebinding spell and—" "Whoa, there, Callao, run on sentences much?" Veronika placed her index finger on the Spider Demon's fanged mouth. The touch of the Underworld's queen's hand made the Spider Demon's skin sear, for it was considered against the magic law to feel the grace of an empress's touch. Callao loved the pain; it gave him great joy. Veronika saw this ecstasy in his face and wretched a little. "Ugh. The creatures I'm fighting for are SO gross. Anyway, Cal, does it look like I give a care about our grocery shopping? Just skip the trip to the magic Wal-Mart and put Humpty Dumpty back together again without your little beetle juice. Got it?" Veronika turned to her wall mirror and examined her glamorous features. She frowned, rotating her cheeks counter clockwise. "Goddess, my pores are HUGE." Callao quickly came to her side and replied "Oh, no, your Imperial Viciousness, your pores are the exact size you want them to be." Veronika growled and quickly grabbed her secondary advisor's throat. "Are you, a SECONDARY Advisor, questioning my judgment?!" asked the queen of the Underworld with rage boiling in her eyes.

Callao was quick to make amends "No, no my queen, I was merely trying to complement you!" "Well, Callao, apparently your little scheme to try and kiss up to me screwed itself up! Go make yourself useful and get my hostage set up again!" The Queen went to her room at the top of the castle, using her lightening fast speed. She crumpled onto her bed, obviously frustrated by her situation. All she wanted was her advisor, Illyra, out of her stupid sarcophagus so she could help her take back the World that was originally hers and enslave the human race. What was so bad about that?

At this moment, her thoughts were rudely interrupted by flying electric waves came at the Empress at hundreds of miles per hour. They made no damage to her physical state, only leaving electrocution marks all over her and making her ensemble a smoldering mess.

Veronika gritted her teeth in anger when she saw another DAD agent. "HOW DARE YOU?! THAT WAS A VERSACE ORIGINAL! YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE I HAD TO KILL TO GET THAT DRESS?!" Not knowing how to respond, the agent kept firing his waves at the demon empress. She walked over to him and punched a hole through his chest. "It serves you right for ruining my dress." She quickly pushed him aside, only to hear more humans coming from all directions. Veronika could feel her beautiful features giving way to her horrible, beast like face as her blood began to boil like a pot of hot wax. She howled, struggling to maintain her human face. She looked up to the skylight to see a giant helicopter, with DAD agents hopping out of it like those dwarf people from Cirque Du Soleil. "Oh, crap," Veronika

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said bitterly, "This just isn't my day, is it?" she asked the mass of the agent's now cold carcass on the floor.

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"I need six mystics on the castle grounds. No demon, spirit, or even evil human gets out of that fairy princess castle alive." Tara Harris said in the Defense against Demons Helicopter, electrocution gun ready and poised. The gun was like a Taser with a higher wattage, no Demon could go up against it. "This mission can not, I repeat, CAN NOT fail. This Veronika is said to be indestructible, so our best bet is to find the hostage and avoid her. If you run into any of her grunt workers, fine, do your thing and crush, kill and destroy, I don't care. Just as long as we get Agent Shaman out of there in one piece like still in one piece, that is." Tara whipped around to look at her agents: Julia Adams, a cute little blonde who was probably the biggest kiss-up on this whole helicopter; Sam Doe, a short, brown haired man who was in his late twenties and didn't really talk unless he was trying to correct Tara on the Code of Agent Conduct; and Dan Reed, who had absolutely no personality or motivation. Like Sam, the boy was very quiet, but unlike Sam, Dan didn't try to upstage Tara at whatever she did. "We are going to meet up with the other squads, who are already inside the castle distracting everyone in battle. I'm meeting squad two in the top of the castle, and I am going to work my way down after that; Julia, you are going to take the east hall with squad four, and finally, Dan and Sam will flip a coin for the south and west hall of the castle, because those halls are probably already torn up, thanks to squad three, who as you know have very low attention spans and will rend anything that comes their way if they have horns and/or scales." None of the agents laughed at Tara's joke. She frowned when she noticed that not even Julia laughed. "It was a JOKE, people. Gosh, you guys are a really tough crowd."

"I don't want to take the west or the south halls," said Sam, crossing his arms, "Why do I have to get stuck being the clean up crew for squad three? We are Agents trained to search and destroy, not play janitor to a bunch of overgrown frat boys." Tara rolled her eyes.

"Sammy, listen, I know that you wanted to go out and follow your dream of becoming the next Miss America, but you made a promise to me that you were going to give up your dream and become an agent that kills evil demons. Don't give up on another dream, Sammy! We have to go for the win!" Tara said mockingly to Sam.

"HAHA that you can be such a joker, boss!" Julia said with a fake smile on her face, "Almost as funny as the time that you-

"Dude, I think she just called you a chick," Dan whispered into Sam's ear. Sam glared at Dan furiously and smacked him on the side of the head.

"Sam, I don't have time for complaining," said Tara, swinging open the helicopter door, "You can agree with me or you can be wrong." Tara then did a back flip out of the helicopter and skydived all the way down without a parachute directly into the skylight of a posh bedroom. Tara turned just in time to see a young woman in a red dress with holes in it karate kick an agent from squad three directly in the head, knocking it off. Tara quickly realized it was Veronika and grew terrified. Veronika slowly turned around and met Tara's terrified gaze. Veronika smiled sweetly.

"Why, hello there, Sunshine." Veronika then turned into a blur and then before Tara knew it, Veronika had materialized right next to her. "What is up, girlfriend? I don't believe we have met. As a matter of fact, I don't even think I have ever met a female Defense Against Demons agent. I haven't had female company in a while, and was praying for the day that a pretty young girl such as you would come along one day to be my new BFF." Veronika pushed Tara onto the queen sized bed and then sat right next to her. She then sighed, "You see, I'm looking for my Best Friend, Illyra. She has been missing for quite some time. She knows a very important secret that I could like, SERIOUSLY benefit from. Now, I believe that someone in your little Super Friend Squad knows where my acquaintance is sleeping, and I'll gladly rend through you all one by one to see which one of you has the secret prize that I need oh so badly. I'll kill your boss; I'll kill your friends; I'll Veronika then inched herself closer to Tara until her face was only centimeters from Tara's ear, "and I'll make you watch when I do." Tara could hear Veronika's satisfied grin. She then kneed Veronika in the stomach.

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â Drop dead, Medusa.â Tara said, standing up from the bed. Tara then pulled out her scythe and stabbed Veronika right in the back. Veronika let out a yelp and turned around. She glared at Tara and pulled out the scythe. She then chucked the scythe right at Tara, who quickly knelt to the ground, narrowly missing it.

â Thatâ wasâ ..SO RUDE! Here I thought we were just having a fun, good natured talk between two gal pals! But no, you just get up and stab me in the back; ironically, it wasnâ t metaphorically.â Tara was scared stiff; she did not know what to do, so she ran out of the bedroom and did not look back. â HEY COME BACK!â Veronika said angrily, â Iâ M NOT DONE TALKING TO YOU YET!â Tara quickly tried to look for the closest mystic to try and distract Veronika with some kind of containment spell. Finally, she came across Alyson, a witch who was, coincidentally, best friends with Tara.

â Alyson! I need your help! Veronikaâ s chasing after me!â Tara said in an out of breath voice.

â Wait, do you want me to kill or contain her?â Alyson said, with an unsure expression on her pretty face.

â CONTAIN! CONTAIN!â Tara shouted, running towards the stair well that she thought might lead to the dungeon.

â WHERE ARE YOU, CRETON?!?â Veronika shouted in a shrill voice. Tara ignored it and kept running down the stairs towards the dungeon. When she got there, dozens and dozens of Veronikaâ s Spider Grunts were there to greet her. Tara was puzzled: where were all of her agents? She reached for her scythe only to find air. She had forgotten to grab the scythe out of the wall after Veronika chucked it at her.

â Oh, Crap.â Tara thought, â This is going to hurt A LOT.â She got in her fighting stance as all the Spider Grunts ran at her at full speed. She kicked and punched her way through the crowd of spiders, gagging whenever she looked back at the bloody carnage. After she got through the crowd, she found special Agent Eric Shaman chained to the wall, bloodied and bruised from the torture. â Oh my goodness, Eric, are you going to be alright?!?â Tara asked worriedly, breaking Ericâ s chains.

â Gee, Tara, I donâ t know, I was just strapped to a chair, killed seven different ways, resurrected seven times, and then strapped to an uncomfortable marble wall. I think Iâ m going to be just peachy!â Eric said grouchily.

â The answer I was looking for was â Oh my goodness, Tara! I need your warmth and comfort to stay alive! Thank you so much for coming to my rescue!â Tara said sarcastically. Eric glared at her.

â Please just get me out of here, Buffy. Iâ ve been cramped up for over an hour.â Eric leaned on Tara, hopping on one leg. Just then, a presumed-dead grunt started giggling. â What are you giggling at, Ugly?â Tara asked, glaring at the mangled body on the floor.

â Iâ mâ laughingâ because youâ ..donâ tâ ..donâ t realize your friend â ..there isâ ..isâ broken.â Said Callao, weakly and snidely trying very hard to speak through his wounds.

â Afterâ ..the first five or six timesâ ..he willâ ..come backâ ..wrong.â

â Heâ s lying! Iâ m perfectly fine!â Eric said, angered by Callaoâ s accusation.

â For the time beingâ ..yesâ ..perhaps you are. Markâ ..myâ ..wordsâ ..youâ ..Mayâ ..lookâ ..Realâ ..but youâ ..are broken inside.â Eric, enraged, found a broom on the wall and stabbed Callao with its opposite end right through his eye.

â That was a very rude thing of him to say. Come on, letâ s get out of here.â Eric said, breathing hard. They walked up the stairs carefully, only to find Veronika sitting on the north hallâ s red carpeting with the unmoving body of Alyson lying on her lap. Veronika was laughing quietly while she slowly stroked Alysonâ s brunette curls. She looked up when she saw Eric and Tara on the top of the stairs. She was bleeding from a cut on her left eye. Then, the next sentence she said shocked Tara:

â I know where she isâ ..!â And then she started laughing, â You know, Tâ ..probably wasnâ t very smart to give me the only Super Friend that could help me. I was beginning to feel worried that all my torturing was never going to get me anywhere. All I had to do was let some other agent point me in the right direction.â Tara froze. She had forgotten: Alyson was the top general in Defense against Demons; she was the only one who knew where Illyra was. Tara was outraged and tried to attack Veronika, but Eric held her back. â Itâ s really convenient that by a twist of fate you would dim wittingly give the girl up to me.â

â Thereâ s nothing we can do right now.â Eric said, and just when he said it the helicopter lowered its ladder down a window above the hall. Tara climbed up after Eric, who was struggling to maintain balance in

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his still-healing legs.

“Talk to you later, T!” Veronika said, laughing obnoxiously. When Tara and Eric got back to the Helicopter, they only found Julia, holding an ice pack to her shoulder.

“Any survivors?” said Tara, on the verge of crying as Eric swung the door shut. Julia looked up and nodded her head no. Tara then fell to the floor of the helicopter and began to cry.

Eric was angry when they got back to base. He didn’t even go to the chief doctor for his necessary Treatment. Instead he went into the training room and practiced punching a punching bag. “I am SO not broken.” He thought, “I am completely fixed. Wait, no! That came out wrong! I am absolutely perfect!” Eric was very frustrated about what Callao said. “I feel fine!” He thought once again. He was so wrapped up in his own thoughts that he did not realize that he had already punched the punching bag off the chain and was now only punching the air. When he finally came back to the folds of reality, Eric stood very still, cocking his head to the left while examining the broken punching bag that was now lying lopsided against the wall. He suddenly let out a small, exasperated sigh, which then grew into a loud, shrill scream. He ran towards the punching bag, knelt down, and suddenly started to wrestle with it. He was punching it as if he were engaged in a death match; punching and scratching the punching bag, then suddenly flipping over, acting as if he were being pinned by the bag. Finally, he snapped out of his fit of rage, and rolled out from under the bag, breathing heavily. He blinked a couple times, and then left the training room looking absent minded and insensate while he walked through the long corridors of the Defense against Demons headquarters. Fellow comrades tried to approach him, asking him what it was like to be kidnapped by THE Queen Veronika; he just absently brushed them off and headed toward Dr. Andrews Lab, which was now right at the end of the grayish fluorescent hallway. Commander Voll, the Manager of that particular base, suddenly moved in front of Eric, blocking his intended path towards Dr. Andrews Lab.

“Agent Shaman, may I have a word? I must speak to you about what has happened to you in the last seventy two hours. What did that monster do to you? How can you not be damaged at all from the torture? You don’t seem to have any broken bones or-

“I am not BROKEN!!” Eric screamed, slamming Commander Voll through the drywall interior. He then charged over the limp body of the Commander and stopped right next to Doctor Andrews’s door. He then put his most sincere smile on his face and knocked on the door before entering. “Hello, Kathy,” He said in the sweetest voice he could muster, “I am ready to have my check up.”

Tara and Doctor Kathleen Andrews stared through the glass of the two-way mirror at the fetal-positioned Eric Shaman. He was now mumbling unintelligibly, once and a while shouting “I am not broken!” Tara was bewildered how such a dramatic change in a person could only happen in only two hours.

“How could this happen, Doctor Andrews? He seemed perfectly fine when we came back to base. He was kind of quiet, but that didn’t really bother me because he usually only has the social skills of a high school chess team member. That gross spider thing, Kai or whatever said he was ‘broken’. This has to be linked to that.” Tara thought out loud. The last few hours have been very rough on her as well. Her usually bright, beautiful features were now red and blotchy from crying. She was disgraced; she had let the last part of her squad die, with the exception of Julia. She had gone up against the queen bee, and not only let her win the fight, but also unknowingly sacrificed the only person who knew where Illyra was stashed, Alyson. In a moment of panic, she gave the literal Queen of Hell the only person in the world that could actually help her succeed in her evil goal. On top of all that, she brought back a lunatic.

“I think I know what happened. There is an Austrian translation with a sort of Resurrection spell. It resurrects the human, but only returns fragments of them, in a way.” Doctor Andrews replied, “The soul is broken into smaller and smaller pieces every time it is returned to the body. After a certain amount of resurrections, there won’t be any soul left to return. In the soul’s place there will only be rage. There would be no conscience; he would only be a mere killing machine.” Tara took a couple moments to contemplate this new information. Callao had said Eric was ‘broken’; did this mean Eric was now an empty shell of his former self?

“How many resurrections does it take to become fully zombified?” Tara asked with a huge knot strangling itself in her stomach.

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â It only takes nine times for this to happen, I think.â Doctor Andrews reported to Tara, biting down on her lip very, very hard. The doctor and Eric were always close friends, and they even came to the base together to join the Defense against Demons cause. They were even going to get married at one point, but for some reason the Doctor broke it off. Doctor Andrews was almost a decade older than Tara, with long, brunette locks tied in a bun and cute, young looking features. Even though she was only about thirty five, the doctor almost looked exactly Taraâ s age of twenty six.

â Well, Eric has only been resurrected seven times, so is there a way to get the fragments of his soul back? Is there some sort of backup soul he can get?â Tara asked with her hope plummeting by the millisecond.

â The only thing we can do now is watch him. If worst comes to worst, the only thing left of him will be a ranting lunatic.â Doctor Andrews then looked up from her clip board to see Eric looking through the mirror directly at Tara. Tara also saw this and suddenly got chills.

â Doctor, can Eric see me through the mirror?â Tara asked. Eric leaned into the glass and started knocking on it.

â He shouldnâ t be able to. He hasnâ t had his treatment, so he shouldnâ t be able to see any better than a regular human.â The doctor then started scribbling on her clip board, mumbling the words she was writing down. Eric was still knocking on the glass, now smiling in a very sick, creepy way.

â I SEE you, T!â Eric shouted in a sing song voice, â Iâ ll ALWAYS SEE YOU, T!â Tara started to shake. Eric was directly focused on her. His knocks on the glass suddenly grew louder, as if he was increasing the strength he was putting on the glass. He then added his other hand and was now banging on the glass with both hands. â I SEE you, Tara! I see your pretty eyes and earsâ !I see your pain and regretâ !I will always see youâ !.I bet youâ re broken tooâ !so much pain, so much sadnessâ !.the pretty maidens sitting in a row would not appreciate such sadnessâ ! they said they want you to be punished. I must do as they say, or they shall rap my hands for itâ !..â Eric then chuckled to himself, â Now, we wouldnâ t want that, now would we?â Eric then started ramming his body at the glass, and on his third try, he broke through the glass and tackled Tara to the floor. Doctor Andrews tried to help, but was quickly brushed aside and knocked unconscious by Eric as if she was a pestering fly. â They want you destroyed, like me, Tara! Weâ ve always been a team, and now we get to share one more thingâ ! insanity! Wonâ t that be fun?! Huh, Tara, ISNâ T THIS GOING TO BE FUN?!â Eric started punching Tara, who was shrieking on floor. She was terrified; without her Treatment, Tara did not have all of the super strength that the Treatments gave her. The usual Strength enhancer only lasted for about a day and a half, and her last Treatmentâ s effects ran out after the Castle Battle.

â GET OFF OF ME ERIC! PLEASEâ !getâ !offâ !â Tara shrieked, but since Eric was strangling her now, her words became weaker and weaker. Tara, now starting to get dizzy, reached for anything on the floor that she could use to hit Eric with. Her hand finally brushed up against the doctorâ s clipboard. She then slipped a pen stuck in the clipboard and stabbed it right into Ericâ s left leg. He screamed and backed away from her crab style. He then looked up from his wound and glared wildly at Tara. She was up on her feet now; hoisting the unconscious Doctor up on her shoulders, fire man style. She ran out of the room to grab help. â Someoneâ !help me please!â Tara cried. She was bruised and bleeding from her spat with the rabid Eric, who was now getting closer and closer to her.

â Tara..? Where did you go? We were not done with our play date! Please come back, Tara! Iâ ll be lonely.â Eric said playfully. Now he was creepier than ever; he was acting as if he was a violent five year old! Tara searched frantically in the hallway; no one is in sight.

â Wow, thatâ s horrible timing for this hallway to be deserted.â Tara thought. Eric then yanked back her brown ponytail, pulling her to the floor. She cried out as she dropped poor Doctor Andrews. Eric then started dragging her to the Doctorâ s corner office at the end of the hallway. Taraâ s head became full of different scenarios this could lead to. Eric was in full control, dragging her by the hair. Tara then felt her terror then grow into extreme anger. She then all of a sudden grabbed Ericâ s right leg, with one hand on his shins and the other on the lower half of his thigh. She then swung herself so that she was now between his legs; her hair hurt like heck, but she quickly told herself that pain was just a state of mind. She then used her own leg as a sort of balance and put it directly on his right knee cap. With her last remaining strength, she bent his right leg until she heard a snap. Once again, he fell to the floor and cried out in pain. Tara then stood up and ran full

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speed from the hall. Eric was crying on the floor, still saying those words.

â Iâ mâ !notâ !broken.â

Veronika sat in her first class on the plane. If there was such thing as a perfect paradise existed, Veronika thought it might be pretty gosh darn close to this.

She sighed, â Oh my goddess, Callao. There are a lot of pretty crappy things in this new world, but first class aerospace travel- not one of them.â Callao was in the seat next to her, in a long cream colored trench coat and a long sombrero, reading an issue of Us Weekly.

â Indeed, your Imperial Viciousness, I am also enthralled in the Aerospace Travelerâ s lap of luxury. My seat has a massage feature built in!â Callao said. Veronika frowned.

â I want a massage feature! Switch seats with me, Callao!â Veronika demanded the painfully obvious Spider Demon. Callao frowned, not wanting to move. â Callaoâ !do I have to remind you of how I resurrected you without losing one small fragment of your essence? How I gave you another shot at the after life out of the bottom of my black vortex of a heart?â Veronika asked. Callao begrudgingly stood up from his seat and allowed Veronika to take it. â Why thank you, servant. Your loyalty will be rewardedâ !eventually. But for now, I need a nap.â Veronika got her â Can I Have a Bite?â Blindfold out of her carry on bag and put it over her eyes. Callao then put down his Magazine and eventually started getting bored. He then saw a fourteen year old boy playing with a Nintendo DS. Callaoâ s interest started to spark up and he proceeded toward the vacant seat next to the boy.

â Pardon me, but may I ask of what nature your Pazanian Message sender is?â Callao asked the boy. The boy looked up from his game and looked at Callao quizzically.

â You mean my DS? Itâ s a game system, you weird creeper. Iâ m playing Mario Kart.â The boy then turned back to his game, trying to ignore Callao looking over his shoulder. Callao felt hurt and really wanted to play the boyâ s game.

â Iâ m going to borrow this.â Callao said, and with that he grabbed the boys DS out of his hand and grasped it in his gloved legs.

â Give me my game back! Itâ s mine! Flight Attendant! He stole my game!â The boy started shouting.

â Shh, itâ s time to sleep.â Callao said. Callao then breathed directly into the boyâ s face, making him fall asleep. He then somehow managed to restart the game and taught himself how to play. After about an hour Callao gave up, mainly because the boy was awakening.

â I do not like this game. It is pointless, and annoys me; and yetâ !I am compelled to play on. This is very strangeâ !.â Callao then felt his coat being tugged up, and he looked up to find Veronika, fully rested.

â Come on, you indolent twit. Itâ s time for a landing.â Veronika said, pulling Callao towards the cockpit.

â But my liege, we still have an hour left until we reach our destination of Nebraska!â Callao protested loudly. He wanted to go back to his game.

â I know, dummy. But the Planeâ s destination isnâ t necessarily ours.â Veronika told Callao,

â When we reach the airport, it will take a bus ride, a train ride, and then a taxi to get to the Church Of Our Lord. I am TOTALLY not waiting that long, and Iâ m not going to run their either.â Veronika opened the Cockpit door with ease. The two pilots looked away from their work and saw Veronika and Callao standing over their shoulders.

â What are you doing in here?!â demanded the pilot on the right, â This part of the plane is restricted from all passengers!â Veronika in response rolled her eyes.

â Oh ho, I am no ordinary passenger. You see, my name is Veronika, queen of the Underwo-â

â I donâ t care! Youâ re not allowed to be in the Cockpit!â shouted the pilot on the right, who seemed to be doing all the talking for both of the pilots. Veronika turned to him and snapped his neck. She then knelt down next to the pilot on the left.

â Rude,â she proclaimed in a motherly voice, â I was talking.â She then sat on top of the dead pilotâ s lap and took the controls. Callao knocked out the other pilot and took his seat next to her. She then took the speaker that lead all the way to the back of the plane. â Attention all Wal-Mart Shoppers, this is you new captain speaking, we are going to make an emergency landing inâ !.oh, well, right about now.â Veronika then seized the controls and steered straight down.

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Tara stood next to General Voll, who was lying in the Emergency Room in the Headquarters of Defense against Demons. He had broken several ribs and had a fracture in his skull. "Ah, Ms. Harris, Ms. Harris; I am not pleased with you." The general said, "I don't even know where to begin, but I'll give it a shot. Number one, your team had been destroyed by Queen Veronika's forces in the Castle Battle under YOUR leadership. Number two, you came back to Headquarters with an unstable hostage. You were even warned by one of Veronika's grunts that Eric Shaman was quote 'broken'. Also, you endangered and killed Alyson Riker, our head witch and also my most trusted commander in DAD, who, might I add, was one of the only ones in this base that knew the ancient origins and burial place of Illyra, the strongest Witch in the Underworld. I assigned her to be the leader of Squad Three to search out Shaman, not play bodyguard for you against Veronika! These screw ups can not go unpunished. Tara Harris, I'm sorry to say, you are here by dismissed from Defense against Demons indefinitely." Tara was panicking; she had no where else to go. "General Voll, this is a mistake! You know I'm totally capable of myself in the field! Alyson was my best friend, and I probably won't ever forgive myself! But this job is all I've had over the years besides her. You can't just take away the only two things in my life that I care about in three days!" Tara said. She needed to make this right somehow.

"I don't care for sob stories. Miss Harris. I am sorry for your loss, but I have to do what is best for the entire department's safety, and if that means having to discharge you, then so be it. I am truly sorry, Tara. But we are talking about good human lives here; I don't think you can undo what you unknowingly caused with your carelessness." The general replied, "Now, pack your belongings and please leave." Tara tried to protest again, but knew it was no use. She turned and left the room. She had been in this building for almost five years; where could she go after so many years fighting? Tara thought of a way she could try to win back a position in the agency. General Voll was speaking the truth; Tara's own fear and panic had gotten her discharged, and there was nothing she could do about it. But maybe she could somehow contain Veronika and her little lap dog witch. Before she could do anything though, she had to get her Treatment from Doctor Andrews; she felt weak already even though she only had her treatment twenty-four hours earlier. Tara started down the long, fluorescent hallway. She could still see blood from where Eric had dragged her. She was still shaken up from that whole experience. She opened the door to Doctor Andrew's corner office. Doctor Andrews had her nose in a clipboard yet again. She had scars on her face from the attack with Eric, who was now in Supreme Lockdown in building 270 in Cleveland, Ohio.

"Tara, it is very good to see you again. Are you ready for your Treatment?" The doctor asked. Tara almost smiled, remembering that Doctor Andrews tried to forget every bad thing that ever happens to her. Apparently, she wasn't aware that Tara had been dismissed yet.

"Yes, I would like a treatment; thank you, Kathleen." She hopped up on the bed by the wall. Doctor Andrews then attached the wires on to Tara's arms, legs, and sides of her head. These weekly treatments were very necessary to the DAD field work. The treatments that Tara went in for were created only for her kind of agents in the government. The treatment allowed Tara's speed, strength, agility, and healing process to increase by ninety eight percent! The treatment did give off some jolts of pain, making you jerk and move all around the bed. The treatment also worked through clothing, so the agents did not worry about not taking their own clothes off for it. After every treatment, Tara always felt a little drowsy. She sat perfectly still as the shockwaves pulsed up and down her body. She let out a few grunts by accident, forgetting just how much these treatments could hurt. After what seemed like millions of horrible hours had gone by, the Treatment was finished. Tara then sat up from the table and said goodbye to the doctor, almost totally oblivious and insensate to her surroundings. Tara started down the fluorescent hallway yet again, remembering the traumatic experience that she had provoked unintentionally; there was no undoing the trauma she must have induced on poor Doctor Andrews. "It was all my fault," Tara thought wearily. She had acted carelessly; she had gotten her best friend killed, and if she only could have seen what was going on behind Eric's eyes, she could have stopped him from hurting Doctor Andrews, who is probably so far in the denial process she doesn't even remember Eric's attack. Tara then ducked into a stair well to get to her fourth floor sleeping quarters.



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She then entered another fluorescent hallway and went into Room D4. She then came into the room she used to share with two people from squad three before the Veronika Incident. She was now all alone in the dark blue room. She lied down onto her bed and closed her eyes. After everything that happened the last few days, she definitely needed a nap.

She opened her eyes to see only a bright white all around. She wasn't in her room anymore, but just a clear, white space. At first, Tara thought she was alone in this space; but then she saw a female silhouette, which was odd because there were no shadows to hide in. The shape then came into focus, and it turned out to be Alyson. Tara then smiled, seeing her old friend in a sun dress and having her brunette hair go down her shoulders wildly. Alyson also saw Tara and smiled back, waving slowly. Tara then saw that Alyson was not alone; Veronika had suddenly appeared behind her, holding some sort of dagger in her left hand. She gestured to Tara to be silent, and tiptoed toward Alyson, who was completely oblivious to Veronika. Veronika grabbed Alyson by the shoulder and yanked her onto the tip of the dagger blade. Alyson's calm smile had transformed into a massive expression of shock. Veronika smiled triumphantly and shoved Alyson off the knife. She then stepped back and marveled her handiwork. Tara ran over to where Alyson was now gasping for air on the ground. Right before she reached her, Tara was blasted back by an powerful force.

"Whoa, whoa, there, sweetie," Veronika said, filing her nails, "No one touches the merchandise unless I SAY they can touch the merchandise. Plus, you've already seen this particular item, haven't you?" Veronika grinned mischievously at Tara. Tara shrank to the ground and started crying. Veronika scoffed. "Wow, this is pathetic. I've never seen someone like you so fragile. You pretend that you have everything under control, have everything carefully planned out, but in cold hard reality- you're just as scared about the climax as everyone else in this mortal coil." Tara was still weeping on the ground.

Veronika then sat on the floor next to her. "Cheer up, Super Girl. At least you didn't die! Well, not yet at least, cuz I'm most likely going to kill off your whole race eventually."

Tara was angry, but for some reason did not stop crying. She finally calmed down enough to say, "Why are you here?"

"Why am I here? To show you what you've done, cupcake. What your stupidity and weakness has caused. I bet it hurts, doesn't it? All the grief, the sadness, and when it comes time to point fingers, everyone's index is pointing straight on to you. This scene replays in your head over and over again like the Pilot of Cheers. It's funny how you weren't even there when poor Ally here bit the dust."

"Stop saying that," Tara said, "Stop saying it was my fault!"

Veronika giggled, "But sweetie, it was your fault! And technically, since I'm in your dream, I didn't even say any of that. I'm just a big ol' figment of your imagination."

Tara was getting confused. "Then why would I be saying such awful things to myself?"

"Well, it's most likely you think you deserve all of this mocking, which you do, and also you keep reliving a death that you unknowingly caused. This isn't exactly a stumper, T. You've locked yourself in your own little personal emotional torture chamber to help you deal with the feelings you feel. Once again, way to prove humans are morons, Miss Tara Harris. Brava. Really." Tara stood up, ashamed. Alyson was now long dead, skin almost blue. "Now then! Let's have some fun." Veronika said. She grabbed Tara and threw her to the ground. Tara stood up and charged at Veronika. She tried tackling her to the ground, only to collide with Veronika's stomach as if she had just tried tackling a semi-truck.

"Ow! How did you do that?" Tara said, spinning in a dizzy frenzy.

"Well, they don't call them Abs of Steel for nothing, now do they, Sweet Cheeks?" Veronika grabbed Tara by her collared shirt and threw her up to the sky, which was just an endless area of white. Tara landed face down on the ground. She groaned and tried to stand up.

"Veronika! Why are you doing all of this? Why are you in my dream beating the living crap out of me? Shouldn't you be taking over the world?" Tara asked, trying to distract Veronika from throwing her like a football once again.

"Don't ask me, Lover," Veronika said with a sigh, "How many times do I have to tell you that this is YOUR dream, not mine? I'm not here on my free will; in fact, I'm not really here at all. This place, these events, they're your punishment. They're your sentence."

"But WHO is the judge? This isn't even a fair fight!" Tara shouted, now fully enraged.

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“ WHY ISN’T THIS GETTING TO YOU?!? YOU ARE THE JUDGE! HECK, YOU ARE EVEN THE EXECUTIONER AND THE JURY! ALL OF THIS, EVERY LITTLE SEGMENT OF IT IS ALL YOU!” Veronika shouted, now extremely frustrated, “ You wanna know why you are here, you ignorant little girl? It’s because you think you need more than just sadness and grief for a punishment; your sub-conscious thinks that you need a real punishment, to be not just mentally scarred and depressed, but actual, physical pain. You think it will give you justice and peace to hurt yourself, but really it’s just making you look like a naïve, distressed girl who doesn’t know anything about this world. Tara, did I ever tell you that the hardest thing to do in this world is to live in it? And yet, you continue to complain and feel sorry for yourself. Your whole emotional race disgusts me.”

Tara let the realization sink in; Veronika was speaking the truth. She had made mistakes, and just stayed in silent humiliation, keeping her feelings sheathed. This must have made her fall farther and farther down the spiral only known as depression. Over the past few days, Tara realized she had changed; she was quieter, and did not feel a thing.

“ Eric was right,” She said partly to herself, “ He wanted us both to share the same insanity. Being broken. I am broken, aren’t I?”

Veronika started laughing, “ Sweetie, you are like, PAST broken. There’s barely anything left of you to be broken. Way I see it; you are just a shell of a once happy girl who enjoys beating the crap out of innocent Vampires for cheap thrills and money to pay the bills. Oh, it’s okay though; most people nowadays that work for the government are secretly broken. All it takes is one bad day for a person to reveal their real emotions; the ones that you get in the deep dark wells of hearts. You, my friend, have just been introduced to that one bad day, just like Eric had. Only he’s a little bit ahead of you, since he’s now shown his emotions in physical form. He revealed his emotions long ago in his dreams, like you are doing right now. And then there goes the slide of depression, increasing speed as time goes on.” Veronika stopped laughing and was now serious, waiting for Tara’s reply. Tara now knew everything.

“ We’re all secretly broken, aren’t we? Not just me, not just people who work for the government, everybody.”

“ Right you are, finally.” Said Veronika, rolling her eyes, “ You New Humans are SO slow. Now shut up so I can beat you up.” Veronika started moving towards Tara with her dagger in hand. Her body once again became a blur like it did in the castle. Tara was now the one rolling her eyes. She caught both of Veronika’s hands and used her momentum to thrust Veronika behind her. She cracked her knuckles as Veronika flew towards the wall.

“ Wow, Veronika; has anyone ever told you that you are extremely jaded? The world isn’t the horrible place you make it out to be. There is good in everyone, and yes, our race as a whole isn’t perfect, but we’re working on it.” Tara then moved toward Veronika, who had gathered herself up after the flight. She grabbed her throat and rose her off the ground. “ Now, get the heck out of my dream you jaded trash heap.” Tara then swung Veronika on the ground.

Before Veronika landed on the bright white floor, Tara awoke from her bed, covered in sweat. She opened her eyes to a gunpoint. Julia stared straight at her, weapon transfixed between Tara’s eyes.

“ I am sorry, Miss Harris,” Julia started, gun shaking in her hands, “ But General Voll asked me to escort you out with your things. Now please, gather your belongings and accompany me to the outside.” Tara hesitated for a moment. She couldn’t leave now; she had to get resources! She had to win back the trust of everyone! She had to take down Veronika! Tara finally sighed to herself, looked at Julia sadly, and started to pack her things in her small, purple bag. After she had everything packed, she and Julia started down the hallway, suitcase in tow. When they reached the stairwell, Tara suddenly moved faster than she ever had before, turning to face Julia and knocking her blaster out of her hand. Julia was too slow to react; Tara had already had her in a headlock, blaster aimed directly at her temple.

“ Now then, Miss protÃ©gÃ©,” Tara said, struggling to keep the obviously treated Julia in her grasp, “ You are going to take me to General Voll, like ASAP. I need to learn a couple things from the grandmaster himself.”

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“Please, Miss Harris!” Tara asked, “why are you doing this?” General Voll pleaded, tied up to the bed rather tightly, “Can’t we sort this out?” Tara stared at the General in silence for quite some time. She had knocked out Julia, plus all of his nurses and doctors tending, and locked the door of the hospital room. Tara had General Voll tied down in extremely tight restraints.

“I am sorry, General Voll, but you are not exactly participating with me here.” Tara said, sincerely apologetic, “You are giving me no choice. I need info only Alyson could give me, and since she is gone now, you are the next one up to the plate.”

“It is not your job to ask questions, you ignorant girl! You are a search and destroy agent, a grunt nothing else! You are supposed to be the brawns, not the brains!” Tara struck General Voll right in the cheek.

“I don’t think you are in the position to call me names, Old Man,” Tara said through clenched teeth, “Now tell me what I want to know.” The General was shocked for a moment, and then sighed.

“All right, Tara, what do you need to know?” He said with the biggest grimace that Tara had ever seen. Tara scowled.

“I need to know all about Queen Veronika and the Sorceress Illyra’s back stories; where did they come from and what are their weaknesses?” General scowled right back at Tara.

“All the squads were briefed on all these back stories before the Castle charge; were you even listening then? You should have known all of this already! No wonder you were so foolish, you didn’t even know what you were up against!” Tara continued to scowl.

“Well, I was listening, sorry. It is not my fault that those meetings are so boring, I mean seriously, it is like open mouth, insert revolver!” The General growled at the last statement. He sighed and started to speak.

“Queen Vreoonik (her REAL name) is older than time itself, I don’t even know the specific age. She ruled the world with a powerful fist over a race of creatures known as the Old Ones. The Old Ones were all immortal, and were almost indestructible. Veronika, or Vreoonik, killed anyone who challenged her throne, and she did it with a song in her heart. The Old Humans were awful looking, with pointed teeth and sharp features, almost as if they were lazily carved out of a piece of wood by a teenage boy scout. The Old Ones did not realize their flaws until they made a new discovery; one of Queen Vreoonik’s pet chimpanzees had given birth to a New Human. The Man was beautiful, with handsome features that every Old One lusted for. Suddenly, More New Humans overflowed the World, outnumbering the Old Ones. The Old Ones tried everything to eradicate this new race, but it was too late; the New Humans had them surrounded. The New Humans were not as strong or fast as the Old Humans, but it did not matter since they had stronger numbers. The Old Ones were forced to abandon their old world and start new.” Tara thought about this information for a while.

“Where did they flee to though? It couldn’t have been far, since I run into the Vampires every time I patrol downtown!” Tara interrupted. General Voll sighed impatiently.

“I was getting to that. Anyway, Vreoonik got her advisor, Illyra, to create a parallel reality to start their new world. Vreoonik has called this new world the Underworld, so we are sticking with that name. However, this world was temporary, as ours is. It started to crack and crumple, causing some denizens to run back to our world and create havoc. They quickly realized all the nourishments that kept them going had long dried out over time, so they resulted in sucking the New Human’s blood. Vreoonik was outraged that our race hadn’t died out on Earth yet, so she was determined to rid us of it. Illyra was assigned to watch the Underworld while the Queen was away. Veronika was forced to send for her advisor to forge a spell powerful enough to kill off the whole New Human Race. However, when Illyra arrived about eight years ago to join her Queen, she was ambushed and captured by our troops, who held her in a secret hiding place from the Queen. Alyson was the one who came up with the place; a church she grew up going to called The Holy Light of God in Nebraska.”

Tara paused. “What does Illyra look like?” She said, “What if she escaped and used a disguise?” General Voll chuckled to himself.

“You can’t miss this particular Sorceress. She looks very strange, with jet black hair and blue highlights; she also has a tight, blue armor designed to specifically fit her own body. She also has fiery red

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eyes, which doesn't really go with the rest of the ensemble in my opinion. There, is that all you wanted?" Tara shook her head.

"I need to also know about the Spider things," She stated.

"Those are Veronika's worshippers; specifically created by Illyra to give Veronika more worshippers." Tara paused, trying to think of her next step.

"What about their weaknesses? How do I defeat them?"

"You don't." General Voll replied grimly, "You can only contain them. They are too strong for even us; we can't completely eradicate this race, only damage them and run them into hiding."

"So how do I do that?" Tara asked impatiently. People were starting to bang on the hospital door.

General Voll thought for a moment, as if trying to recall something.

"You need a Temporal Rift Spell;" He said finally, "This spell opens the Gates to every dimension that has been created for a short period of time. You could imprison the two of them so they can never make harm in our world again."

"But what about Illyra? Won't she try to conjure a spell?"

General Voll shook his head, "If you imprison them in the right dimension, she will not have enough resources to conjure any spells. The only other dimension I can actually think of right now that has her resources is the Underworld, which is long gone. All the other ones just have fire, water, or blank space."

"That spell is perfect! Who knew I'd get this much information from you just by tying you up? Please give it to me!" General Voll hesitated for a moment.

"Miss Harris! If I give you this spell, and you actually succeed with this plan of yours, then you must promise me one thing."

"Of course I will, General. You have been very helpful." Tara said calmly in her expressionless voice. The General cleared his throat. "You must promise me that you will discontinue all activity with DAD. I've watched you slowly become quieter and quieter over the last few months. You need to stop this all together, start a new, normal life before the darkness of this job swallows you whole." Tara stood shocked. Even the top General knew of her breaking soul.

"I'll promise. Please hand over the enchantment now." Tara handed Voll a pen and a piece of paper, releasing his right hand so he could write. He quickly jotted down the Spell. Just as he was almost done, the door busted down and the newly awakened Julia came in with a new blaster she must have obtained from someone else, for Tara had taken hers after she knocked her out. Voll handed Tara the spell and she quickly looked for an escape route. She quickly grabbed an air conditioning vent above her and tore off the cover. She then thrust herself up into the vent, narrowly missing Julia's poor blind shots; Tara then army crawled her way through the vent system until she could see the DAD underground Garage under her. She grabbed the nearest car, which was an old, beat up Camaro. She broke its passenger seat window and climbed in. She then hotwired the car, using the skills she had been taught at age eight by her older brother, Matt. She then escaped the garage, with no one following her. She traveled at the Camaro's fastest speed. She was headed toward the Holy Light of God. She was going to finish what she started.

"Nebraska, here I come!" I guess! Tara thought to herself.

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Veronika groaned and sat up from the wreckage that she caused. "Goddess, I need an Aspirin. That was one heck of a flight!" She rolled her head from side to side and cracked her neck. Veronika looked at the wreckage she caused and smiled. It was a complete masterpiece. She also examined the corn field she landed in. There was a sign next to the Corn Field that said Avalanche, Nebraska; Fourteen miles. Veronika smiled. Who knew she would land so close? She then heard a small groan come from a pile of baggage left from the passengers. Veronika dug through the old fragments of bags and found the crumpled, half-dead Callao, missing two out of his eight legs. She laid Callao down on to the ground. "I'm not going to carry you to the church, if that's what you're staring at me for. Come on, you have six other legs left; I'm sure you can make the trip." Callao was silent throughout the walk to the church. Veronika thought it was because he was mad at her for destroying the game he was playing. After for what seemed like hours of walking, they finally came across a tiny, run-of-the mill church. "Wow," Veronika said, staring at the small church, "No wonder I never found Illyra on my own. Goddess- this is SO typical. How the heck did

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humans get the impression that Iâ€™m afraid of Catholics?â€™ Veronika grumbled. She swung open the tall cedar doors of the tiny church to find four priests standing at the other end of the church kneeling by a cross. She marched towards them with Callao in tow and gave them her most serious looking stare â€™ Okay, so Fathers, to make my sitch short, Iâ€™m looking for someone. I know you know where she is, so Iâ€™m just going to have to rip through you one by one until you tell me where she is.â€™ One of the priests, who was bald and obviously terrified, started shaking in fear.

â€™ It is the Beast! It is the Beast!â€™ He cried, pulling on another priest, â€™ We must run!â€™

â€™ Okay, One: that whole â€™ itâ€™s the Beastâ€™ thing baldy, it kind of hurts my feelings; and number two: If I really wanted to kill and/or fight you old dudes, you could tell by the being dead already. Now You, Baldy, direct me towards Sleeping Beauty before I do something violent.â€™ She grabbed the man by his collar and gave him her most fierce glance. He finally stopped shaking and gave in.

â€™ I will never lead you to her! I would much rather die than assist you!â€™ The priest cried. Veronika groaned.

â€™ Goddess, canâ€™t you stupid humans just cooperate for once? I mean, this world wasnâ€™t even yours in the first place, it was mine! And then Bam! A couple monkeys come together and make a hairless chimp and suddenly Iâ€™m being chased out of my own kingdom with pointy sticks and Church Water! Itâ€™s my world, and Iâ€™ll kill your whole species one by one to get it back.â€™ Veronika then moved in for the kill. Callao stepped in her way.

â€™ Be careful, my liege, theseâ€™ Religion Fanatics are not worth it. We have already wasted enough time.â€™ Veronika then calmed down, realizing Callao spoke the truth,

â€™ Fine, whatever, Iâ€™m over it. Just make them sleep and letâ€™s find Illyra.â€™ She then moved past the priests and started breaking through all the wall of the church. She finally came to a mural that looked like the gates of heaven and covered a whole wall. She removed the painting to find a thick steel door with a key pad coming from the middle of it. Veronika smiled. â€™ Yahtzee!â€™ She cried in triumph. The bald priest once again got up his courage to speak.

â€™ You do not know the combination to the door! There is no way you could open it!â€™ He cried with a satisfied smile on his face. Veronika rolled her eyes.

â€™ Callao, I thought you took care of the Father here! Why, then, is he still conscious?!?â€™

â€™ Forgive me, your Imperial Viciousness, for I did not know he was still conscious.â€™



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