Apocalypse Please

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It is the year 3008. The government has become a corrupt state, ruled by a band of radicals formed from a merge of the Democratic and Republican parties in 2056. The states were dissolved and formed into republics, based on time zones. New laws were passed which required the removal of ovaries from a woman in favor of periodical shots to guarantee “normal development.” Eggs were taken from the ovaries and placed inside incubators until they were mature enough to be fertilized from a general sperm supply provided by monthly drives in which all males are required to participate. Children produced from this method were more docile and simple minded, allowing them to follow direction and order without question.

In 2078, a small group of rebels broke into and destroyed the lab, creating chaos throughout the republic. The rebels then created a generation of children that had free will, who were carefully integrated into the system of non-thinkers. This generation became known by association with several violent movements that were led against the government, which led to a war in 2089. Most of the rebels were killed in the war, but those that survived formed an underground association of bounty hunters called EVAs, dedicated to restoring order to the former United States. This is their story.

May rolled over, brushed her long blond hair out of her face, and stared at the small red numbers on the clock next to her bed. She had another three minutes before the police chief came into the barracks and woke them up. Rolling back over on her other side, she reached carefully under the bed and grasped her shoes. Feeling around inside she touched a piece of paper and pulled it out, sliding it carefully into the waistband on the lower half of her sleeping tunic. May managed to do all of this before a very large, tall woman entered at the far end of the room, swinging the doors open violently, sending small pieces of plaster in a spray onto the beds near the door. A smaller but equally intimidating woman stood a few feet behind the first, hands clasped behind her.
“UP, ladies. We have a big day today,” she boomed. May swore there were people in China that could have heard her and wondered why she needed to be so loud when her entry had no doubt awakened everyone in the sleeping quarters, but kept these comments to herself. The chief began to walk slowly down the aisle between the beds, the assistant behind her, glancing first towards the girls on her right and then those on her left. As the assistant passed May, the two women glared daggers at each other. May was constantly at odds with her, and May had to wonder if for some reason the assistant felt threatened by her. The assistant would never know, but she did have a reason to fear May, because unknown to her, May was not like the other women in the room – May still had her ovaries and

After the chief had made her way around the room and satisfied herself that no one had escaped in the night, she ordered the women out of their beds and to the showers. Each woman dutifully grabbed her towel and government issued soap, fell into an orderly line, and was led to the shower room. The shower room resembled a Nazi gas chamber: there were a few large lights hanging from the ceiling and shower spigots along the walls and above them with the lights. The only way that it did not resemble a Nazi gas chamber was that water always came out of the spigots, since gassing had been outlawed some years ago after the war. The women were ushered into the shower chamber like cattle and the doors were closed behind them. A few minutes after the doors were closed, a stiff spray of very cold water rained on them from the spigots. Working quickly, they scrubbed themselves with the soap, which smelled heavily of lye, the coarse texture of which made their skin red and raw, and then rinsed before the water was turned off five minutes after they entered. The women were then herded into the preparation room, where their sleeping tunics had been replaced with their long sleeved, short skirted, red work tunics and knee length black boots. No one talked as they dressed. May found her towel labeled with her serial number, dried herself off, and put on the clean tunic. Making sure no one was looking, she took the paper (previously stashed in the waistband of her sleeping tunic and then transferred quickly to her soap container before entering the showers) and moved it from the soap holder and placed it under her breasts before zipping up her work tunic. After everyone was dressed, the women were then taken to the medical clinic next to the shower chamber for shots. This is what May had been waiting three weeks for. Not the hormone injections, but a chance to meet with her contact.

When her number was called, May got up out of the white plastic chairs and followed a warden through a white door into the examining room. May went behind a white curtain and changed into a hospital gown, careful to remove the paper and put it somewhere the contact would find it. She came back from behind the curtain and sat stiffly on the small examining table. The warden stood next to the door, supervising the entire check-up. The doctor entered the room, pulling a clean set of gloves on as he came. He showed no expression as he sat on a small stool in front of her and asked her to spread her legs and put her feet up on the table. The session was all business; no small talk was made as the doctor carefully examined her lower regions, taking the paper out and slipping it carefully into his sleeve as he turned to his tray. He turned back around with a long needle with which he gave her a shot, enabling her period to be suspended. May took a deep breath as the doctor delivered the shot and then relaxed as he pulled back, got up, and removed his gloves as he exited the exam room. May closed her legs, slid off the exam table, and returned behind the white curtain to put back on her work tunic.

May followed the other women in front of her as each in turn took various plates of food at the first meal. None of it looked very appetizing, but it was supposedly giving them nutrients that their bodies no longer provided for them. At the end of the food line, there were small cups of pills and vitamins that the women were required to take also. Regardless of the fact that she did not need them, May took them anyway and had to hope that she didn’t come down sick from having too much of something or nothing in her body. After taking a cup of vitamins, May moved to the dining hall and sat down at one of the far tables and was joined shortly by a slim woman with long brown hair that she had knotted to keep out of her face. May...
was jealous of her in this respect; the most she could do to keep her hair out of her face was to tuck it behind her ears.

“Looking forward to target practice today?” the brunette asked.

“Not particularly.”

“You’re the best at it. I thought you would enjoy it more.”

“I do it too much, if the truth be told. I’ve been handling a gun for years.”

“Is that why you joined the force?”

“You could say that. I joined the force to put my talent to use.”

The brunette paused and ate some of the meal in front of her, swallowed a couple of the vitamins, and then looked back up at May. “You’re different from the other women here.”

“Why do you think that?” May asked between bites.

“You seem different. You don’t ask as many questions. You know what is going on.”

“I don’t know any more than you do.”

“You just seem to know more; that is all.”

May shrugged and went back to her food and her vitamins. The two women continued to eat in silence until the bell rang for them to turn in their trays and proceed to the target practice range.

Boom, boom, boom.
Boom, boom.
Boom, boom, boom.
Boom, boom.

Guns went off in sequence, muffled only by the thick headphones each of them wore in addition to the protective glasses. May shot bull’s-eyes most of the time, much to her boredom and everyone else’s satisfaction. Though she tried to hide her natural talent with a gun, there was no real way around it. She had shot through the ranks and was just short of taking the trials to get her badge and becoming an officer, just because she could handle a gun. In May’s opinion, the new government had an extremely warped sense of priorities. She felt hot breath on the back of her neck as she reached down to grab another cartridge and fire another set of rounds. From the reflection in her glasses, she was able to see the outline of the chief and her assistant. The chief watched as May fired off another perfect set of bull’s-eye rounds and then moved onto the next cubicle. The assistant watched as she reached for another cartridge and then leaned forward, took the headphone from her ear, and whispered to her.

“Meet me in the coliseum at midnight. Bring a gun.”

“Why?” asked May quietly as she reloaded.

“Unfinished business,” she spat, replacing the earpiece roughly and following the chief to the next cubicle. May stared blankly ahead at her target for a moment before she finished her rounds. She then removed her headphones and glasses and set them on the shelf to her right as she exited the cubicle. Before she left, she quickly swept a few extra cartridges into her work bag, along with the gun, hoping and praying that no one would notice they were missing. Otherwise, almost a year of undercover work would be completely wasted.

May walked quietly through the shadows between the barracks as she made her way to the church. Even if you were meeting with a commanding officer, it was forbidden to be out of bed after seven o’clock at night. The entire camp shut down about an hour later, at which time all lights in the barracks were to be out and all recruits in their bunks. After May was sure that everyone had dozed off around nine, she carefully put back on her work tunic and black boots, took the gun and extra cartridges out from her work bag and slipped quietly out of the barracks. She first decided to go to the church, since it was early. Waiting until the searchlight passed over her hiding place, she ran quietly towards the church. She made it inside just as the searchlight made another pass over the yard and shut the door behind her. May took a deep breath and turned around slowly.

In such an age where the government was permitted to perform the ludicrous acts that it did, it surprised May that there were still churches left. Before her were spread out at least fifty pews on either side of the main aisle, leading to a grand altar, behind which was erected a statue of the Virgin Mother holding her child, both framed in light. She made her way slowly towards the front of the church and knelt at the steps of the altar. Bowing
her head, she spoke softly to the darkness:

"Hail Mary, Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death."

May crossed herself and stood up slowly. From outside, there came the faint wail of sirens, which meant that the rest of the camp knew there were recruits out of bed. May swore under her breath, drew her gun, and quietly made her way out of the church.

May managed to get away from the church before the camp security officers got there, and made her way towards the far end of the camp towards the coliseum. She entered through the spectators's entrance near the top and made her way down slowly towards the fighting ring. Upon stepping into the ring, the stadium lights came on, giving her the impression that it was day and not the middle of the night. She looked around carefully and made note of all of the various pillars and walls behind which she could hide if she got in a tight spot. Finishing her visual circle around the ring, she spotted the assistant in the center of the ring. May ejected her empty cartridge, put in a fresh one, aimed her gun, and walked purposefully towards the center of the ring.

"I see you avoided the welcoming committee." The assistant smiled, bemused. May said nothing and continued to stare her down.

"I find it interesting that you think that even if you are the best, you can stop death."

"I said nothing of stopping death, merely skillfully avoiding it."

"You cannot avoid it forever. We are born, thus we are destined to die."

"In this day and age, there are few who are born, yet many are created. Regardless, yes, we are all destined to die, whether we be born or created."

"Are you ready to die?"

"I'm looking forward to it."

The assistant's eyes narrowed as she drew her gun. She fired at a point just past May's head, the bullet taking some of May's hair as it flew past her.

"Another one bites the dust."

"Not if the dust bites first." May smiled.

Both women fired simultaneously, the assistant's bullet grazing May's shoulder and May's grazing the assistant's leg. May ran to the right and took shelter behind a large wall. Shots rang behind her as she ran and chipped the wall. She pulled the hammer and moving out briefly from behind the wall, made a pass at the assistant, who returned fire. May dodged bullets as she ran towards her, firing one bullet for every third the assistant fired. When May got close enough to fire a killing shot, the assistant swung her gun and connected with May's, throwing her sideways on top of her bad shoulder. The assistant got up quickly and ran towards her, delivering a swift kick into May's gut, which sent her rolling further away. She stopped on her back, her gun up, the assistant standing over her with the gun pointed down at her. She smiled down at her, ignoring the blood dribbling steadily down her leg.

"Hail May, Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among gunners, and blessed are the bullets of your gun, stolen. Holy May, Mother of Justice," the assistant began.

"Pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death," May finished.

Click, the assistant cocked the hammer.

Click, May cocked her hammer.

Boom.