

Ariel  
by  
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INT. FOOT BRIDGE, NIGHT

ARIEL, 20s, petite and diminutive, in a long coat and glasses, stands near a stairwell door. Her posture is poor, slumped and mousy with her head down. On the pavement around here are the bloody bodies of HELEN, DYLAN and RYAN. All three corpses wear dark hoodies and masks. The back of Helen's head has been blown out, Ryan is bleeding from his head and Dylan has a knife in chest. A pistol rests in Helen's hand.

Ariel stands frozen and mouth agape as her wide eyes look around her. Above her, a security camera looks down at her.

EXT. APARTMENT PARKING LOT, NIGHT, A FEW DAYS AGO

(NANCY'S P.O.V.)

NANCY, 20s, walks through her apartment complex parking lot. She is confronted by Helen, Dylan, Ryan and LUCAS, all wearing hoodies, masks and surgical gloves, close in on Nancy. Ryan holds a roll of duct tape. Lucas holds a small propane torch and a brand.

HELEN  
Hello, sweet baby.

DYLAN  
Think baby wants to play?

NANCY  
Please, I don't want any trouble.

HELEN  
Oh, it won't be any trouble at all.

They get closer to Nancy. Nancy puts her hands up as a defense.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Come on, baby. Let's play.

Nancy backs away. They get even closer.

NANCY  
No! Please!

Helen slaps Nancy. Ryan and Dylan grab Nancy.

HELEN  
Play for me, baby. Play for me!

Lucas approaches with the brand. It is in the shape of the ELDER SIGN, a diagonal branch with three smaller branches going off in one direction and two other branches going off in the opposite direction. The brand is glowing hot and comes ever closer.

NANCY  
Nnnoooooooo!!!!!!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. NANCY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM, DAY, DAYS LATER

Nancy sits on a couch and watches the television. She has a fresh scar on her face from the Elder Sign brand. Ariel sits with her.

TELEVISION NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)  
Police are still searching for a woman and three men they say have beaten and sexually assaulted seven women and four men over the last month and a half.

Nancy's eyes begin to tear up.

TELEVISION NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)  
(CONT'D)  
Due to the suspects wearing masks, police have no description of the perpetrators at this time...

Ariel picks up the remote control and turns off the television. Nancy begins to sob. Ariel leans in and hugs her.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. FOOT BRIDGE, NIGHT, A FEW DAYS LATER

Helen, Dylan, Ryan and Lucas stand at one end of the foot bridge and watch people passing by. A woman in workout clothes jogs across the bridge.

LUCAS  
Her?

HELEN

No.

Another woman walks by.

LUCAS

What about her?

Helen groans.

HELEN

Try again.

DYLAN

The choice cannot be careless. It is like cooking a gourmet meal, Like a Chateaubriand. You can't have any old ingredients. Only the freshest, finest cut of meat will do. Helen is very good at shopping. She has a sense for the best ingredients.

Ariel enters the bridge.

HELEN

Ahhhhh..

RYAN

Hmmmm....

DYLAN

Yes. The best ingredients. The gods will be pleased.

HELEN

Places, everyone. Places.

They all put on their masks and pull up their hoodies.

Ryan and Lucas run ahead and past Ariel. They then turn around to face her. Lucas pulls out the brand and torch. Ryan lights the torch for him. She sees them and stops. She turns around to see Helen and Dylan behind her. They laugh as they close in. Ariel's hands shake as she raises them.

Ryan lunges at Ariel and she turns away. Ryan trips and runs head first into the corner of the cinder block wall. Blood spurts from his forehead as he falls to the pavement.

Ariel looks back and sees Dylan thrust at her with a knife. She tries to get away but gets entangled with him.

He freeze. He looks at the knife in his chest and then up at Ariel before collapsing.

Helen sees Ryan and Dylan go down. She glares at Ariel.

HELEN (CONT'D)

You bitch! You are so going to pay for that.

With one hand, Helen grabs Ariel by the lapel of her coat and with the other puts a gun to her head. Ariel panics and tries to twist away. The gun goes off and the back of Helen's head bursts with blood. Helen falls backward.

Lucas looks at his fallen comrades and then at Ariel and then runs away.

Ariel stands frozen and mouth agape as her wide eyes look around her.

INT. FOOT BRIDGE, EARLY MORNING, LATER

Crime scene technicians take photos of the bodies. Ariel sits in the back of a police car. The door is open and her feet rest on the pavement. DETECTIVE REBECCA PERKINS, late 30s, looks in on her.

PERKINS

Do you need anything, honey?

Ariel shakes her head.

BROWN

Hey, lieutenant.

Perkins looks up at DETECTIVE SCOTT BROWN, 40s. He is holding up a tablet PC.

BROWN (CONT'D)

I think you want to see this.

Perkins looks over to Ariel.

PERKINS

You just stay here. I'll be right back.

Perkins walks over to Brown. He shows her the tablet PC.

BROWN

Pulled this off the security system.

On the tablet pc plays a video of the security camera footage. It shows Helen, Dylan, Ryan and Lucas approaching Ariel and attacking her.

PERKINS  
That poor thing.

BROWN  
She's damn lucky.

PERKINS  
I'll say.

Perkins goes back to Ariel.

PERKINS (CONT'D)  
Hey. We just looked at the security footage. I think we have everything we need. There's no need to keep you. Are you going to be OK?

Ariel nods her head.

PERKINS (CONT'D)  
Would you like us to give you a ride home?

Ariel shakes her head.

PERKINS (CONT'D)  
Are you sure?

She nods again.

Perkins pulls a couple of cards out from a pocket.

PERKINS (CONT'D)  
Alright. Well, here is my card just in case. OK?

She nods.

PERKINS (CONT'D)  
You're sure you don't need a ride.

She nods again.

PERKINS (CONT'D)  
OK.

Ariel stands up and departs. Perkins and Brown watch her leave the FOOT BRIDGE.

FADE TO:

INT. DOJO, DAY, IN THE RECENT PAST

Martial arts students wearing red gi tops and black hakama practice various techniques.

Ariel stands in front of the arts class.

ARIEL

It is important to remember that tension is the enemy of fluid movement. If you relax you will find that often things will give themselves to you.

INT. FOOT BRIDGE, NIGHT

Helen, Dylan, Ryan and Lucas close in on Ariel.

INT. DOJO, DAY

ARIEL

Don't look like a martial artist. You don't want your enemy to suspect anything. Don't let them know that there is a fight going on.

INT. FOOT BRIDGE, NIGHT

Ariel puts her hands up and backs away.

INT. DOJO, DAY

One student stands in front of Ariel. Another stands behind her holding a kicking pad.

ARIEL

Exploit the weak line of his balance and then use what is in your environment as a weapon.

A student attacks Ariel. She evades the attack and then uses an arm bar to throw him head first into the kicking pad.

INT. FOOT BRIDGE, NIGHT

Ryan lunges at Ariel. She evades the attack and then, subtly use an arm bar to throw him head first into the corner of the cinder block structure; all the while she acts scared.

INT. DOJO, DAY

ARIEL

There is a natural tendency that when we grab something we don't want to let it go.

Ariel demonstrates by grabbing her own wrist.

ARIEL (CONT'D)

This also tells your opponent where you are at through this connection. That gives away too much information. Therefore, learn how to use friction to grab without grabbing.

A student thrusts at Ariel with a wooden training knife. She evades and then uses the friction of her arms against his to fold his arm in a manner that turns the knife against himself. She then braces the pommel of the training knife against her forearm and presses it into his chest.

INT. FOOT BRIDGE, NIGHT

Dylan thrusts at Ariel with a knife. She evades and uses the friction of her arms against his to turn the knife back at him. With the knife braced against her forearm and pointed back at Dylan, she pulls him forward and as he falls she forces the knife into his heart. Dylan falls to the pavement with the knife stuck in his chest.

INT. DOJO, DAY

A student stands across from Ariel and holds an orange rubber training pistol.

ARIEL

Don't fight the weapon. You'll lose. Fight the person and in doing so you will be able to turn their weapons against them.

The student grabs Ariel by the lapel and holds the training pistol to her head.



She evades and turns the pistol against the student so that the barrel is under his chin and pretends to pull the trigger.

INT. FOOT BRIDGE, NIGHT

Helen grabs Ariel by her coat lapel and puts the gun to her head. Ariel evades and turns the gun back on her so that it is under her chin. Ariel puts her finger over Helen's trigger finger and squeezes. The gun fires and Helen drops to the pavement.

INT. DOJO, DAY

ARIEL  
Don't let size be an issue.

EXT. STREET, EARLY MORNING

From behind some bushes Lucas watches. He sees Ariel leave the FOOT BRIDGE and walk to a bus stop.

INT. DOJO OFFICE

Ariel stands in front of a bulletin board. On the bulletin board is a map of the city with circles and lines on it and newspaper articles. On various points on the map are written names, dates and times.

EXT. STREET, EARLY MORNING

Lucas follows Ariel from a distance across the street. He still has the torch and brand with him.

INT. DOJO OFFICE

With a sharpie marker, Ariel draws lines between the various points. She draws the last line slower and at the end of the line write "tomorrow".

EXT. STREET, EARLY MORNING

Ariel sees Lucas. They make eye contact. Ariel's posture goes from slumped to straightened. She takes off her glasses, shakes her hair out and smiles. Lucas smiles and starts walking across the street toward her.

INT. DOJO, DAY

ARIEL  
Remember, just because I'm small...

EXT. STREET, EARLY MORNING

As Lucas enters the street a car horn blares and tires screech.

INT. DOJO, DAY

ARIEL  
...doesn't mean that I can't hurt  
you.

EXT. STREET, EARLY MORNING

Lucas flies through the air and lands on the street. The DRIVER of the car gets out and goes to Lucas.

INT. DOJO OFFICE

Ariel looks over the map. The lines she drew form the Elder sign. She takes a sip from a cup of tea.

EXT. STREET, EARLY MORNING

Ariel puts her glasses back on and returns to her slumping posture.

Ariel walks into the sunrise.