

Testing the Blade

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A work of fiction, meant for adults. Read something else if you are not an adult, or are offended by stories with sexual content. Then again, if all you're looking for is in-out, in-out, in-out, you should probably read something else. I welcome constructive comments. Enjoy.

I started the morning by running a route to make sure I wasn't being tailed. After all this time, it's almost a reflex -- but it's never done without thought. That one time you don't pay attention, that will be the time it really matters...

I met a local supporter. All he knew was that he was to give someone a ride. I gave him directions and we started off.

It was a little over an hour out of town. I napped along the way. As we pulled up to our destination, a gate along a small county road, he asked, "Are you sure you'll be safe, Miss?"

Three men waited by the gate. A truck with a camper shell and what looked to be a rental car were parked nearby. Another contact who was flying in later in the day would be meeting us and giving me a lift back to town and my hotel.

"Yes, thank you for your concern," I told him with a smile. I rotated my left wrist a little, feeling the ceramic blade in its spring-loaded holder along my forearm. Even though I'm only about five foot four, I felt safe, or as safe as I could be in the circumstances.

He pulled up the gate. As I got out, I said, "Thank you again for your help." I closed the door, waved, and he drove off. I let my left arm hang down by my side, ready...

My greeters: two older men, forties, one tall and fat, the other shorter and thin; the third man had the hallmarks of a U.S. Navy Seal and looked to be in his late twenties, my age.

The fat one cried out in exasperation and anguish, "*This is kidon?* You?"

I didn't even bother to sneer. I'd been through it too many times before. "Where's my rifle?" I asked.

The thin one shook his head. "This way, Major." He indicated a path which led over the hill and started walking. The fat one soon took the lead, muttering to himself all the while. "They sent *a little girl*," he cried.

Damn them -- I'd agreed to take this work, but I expected I'd be able to take my own rifle with me. No, couldn't be done -- too risky, too easy to identify. Shit -- you smuggle technical

teams with trailerloads of technical gear in and out of the States all the time. What's so hard about one rifle? We'll provide you with one, don't worry. That's like using someone else's toothbrush, I told them with disgust. It will be a new one, better... That means I'll have to break it in, get it sighted -- days of work. My complaints fell on deaf ears. Deaf ears and numb behinds was more like it. I provided lists on what was acceptable, and how it had to be broken in and sighted. I wasn't optimistic. Being without my spotter, my sweet Rutu, was bad enough. Nobody to hold me in the morning, to snuggle with at night, to keep me at my peak, to squeeze me between her sweet thighs.

"You sighted in my rifle?" I asked the young one, who fell into step beside me.

He smiled. "Yes, ma'am." After a brief pause, he looked forward, and said in a loud clear voice, "We followed your instructions to the letter. It's good to be working with someone who knows how to break in a weapon properly."

I smiled, chuckled, and nodded my head. Things were looking up. I could almost hear the fat one complaining, cleaning the barrel so carefully after every few shots, recording the result of each shot -- and now seeing a short and seemingly overweight young woman...

"Thank you. I'm Mary," I said, holding out a hand. I was wearing thin leather gloves.

With a smile, he shook my hand. His grip was firm. "Daniel," he said. "Pleased to be working with you."

The fat one was still muttering as I paused at the ridgetop overlooking a valley. Down a ways a canopy had been set up. One more man was sitting by something covered with a cloth. "Your partner?" I asked Daniel.

"Yes Ma'am."

"Did you work together as a team?" I asked.

He gave me another grin. "Yes, Ma'am, for three years."

"One shooting, the other spotting?"

"Depended on the shot. Alex is a little better at distance, but I read winds better."

I nodded -- sounded like a good team.

"My spotter is at home." I missed my spotter, my sweet Rutu, undoubtedly sulking at home. I'm sorry we couldn't bring you my sweet, but you wouldn't have worked -- you weren't born and raised here, as I was for 16 years. I can almost see you pouting on our bed, one hand between your legs, idly fingering yourself. I can almost see you, smell you, and taste you...

We started walking again. Fat and thin were just about to the canopy. I spotted targets downrange as I observed the wind. "You marked off the range?"

"Yes, differential GPS. We came as close as we could to the altitude differences you wanted at 800 and beyond. Will you be needing a spotter? Always better to work with one."

I nodded. "Don't know yet -- I'd rather work with a spotter, but I've worked solo."

"It's a lot harder," he agreed as we walked the last few yards to the canopy.

The other seal, Alex, was still sitting down, even though the other two were now under the canopy. I almost laughed -- he was making a statement.

He stood up as we approached. I saw an eyebrow raise as he looked at me, then glanced to his buddy.

"Alex, this is Major Mary," Daniel said, introducing me.

I held out a hand and shook his. "Pleased to meet you Alex."

He smiled. "Pleased to meet you, Major."

"Please call me Mary. Let's see it."

Alex took the cover off the rifle. I smiled as I sat down on the tarp next to it. "Oh, this is very nice," I said as I looked it over. I took off my leather gloves and slipped on blue nitrile ones, making sure the cuffs stretched around my sleeves. No prints, no contamination.

I picked up the rifle. Heavy, but not too heavy for a .50 caliber, about 30 pounds. Very nice work on the mounts for the telescopic sight -- they have to be done properly or the recoil will knock it out of alignment. I asked about that, mentioning the name of a gunsmith as I checked the action.

Alex said in a loud voice, "It's good to meet someone who recognizes first-class work."

I worked the action, eyes open then eyes closed -- very nice, and I said so. I put it back on the bipod and lay down, sighting through the scope.

I sat up. Fat and thin were sitting in camp chairs near the back of the canopy. Fat was leaning forward, his head in his hands, still muttering in disgust.

"Let's look at your sighting sheets," I said.

Alex and Daniel sat down next to me and went over the records they'd kept for the break-in work.

“Good work, gentlemen,” I told them. “Let’s see how it shoots. Who’s spotting me?”

Daniel moved to the spotting scope as Alex handed me a box of ammo. I opened the box and looked at the cartridges. They had a precise look and feel to them. I picked two, placing them in my customary position. “Two rounds, three hundred yards, at your signal,” I said as I took position on my belly once more, putting on my shooting glasses.

“Range ready,” Daniel called out.

I raised my head a little from the scope. Part of me looked downrange, looking at the telltales, judging the wind, as another part of me put the cartridge into the action.

I sighted, taking a breath. Concentration on a ritual performed so many times -- let out half the breath, relax, aim, slack, squeeze. Cycle the bolt as I breathed in again, noting with detachment the hole in the target a little high and a little to the left and repeat -- exhale, aim, slack, squeeze, and see another hole appear about an inch away from the first, closer to the center of the target. I sat up, enjoying the ringing in my ears and the feeling in my body from the recoil -- like attention from a lover to me. Oh Ruty -- how I miss your attention.

Daniel looked up from the spotting scope with a smile. Alex moved over and took a look. As he raised his head he nodded as well, a nod of approval.

“Cleaning supplies?” I asked.

As Alex moved to get them, the fat one cried out in anguish, “Not again! How many times do we have to sit through this!”

Daniel said, “You could change the target.”

Fatty scowled.

As I picked up a cleaning rod, I said, “Nah -- too big a target to be challenging.”

Alex, Daniel, and the thin one laughed. Fatty grunted and walked up the hill.

I needed a strip of cloth for the middle of the cleaning rod -- it’s part of my ritual, keeping the middle of the rod from touching the inside of the barrel. I picked up a piece of scrap cloth with my right hand as I released my knife with my left. I cut off a strip the size I’d need.

Alex and Daniel observed me intently, looking at my left hand and the blade which hadn’t been there a moment ago. Alex gave me an inquisitive look. I handed him the blade.

He held it in his hand and whistled, nodding in approval as he handed it to Daniel.

As Daniel handed it back to me he asked, “Ceramic?”

I nodded as I wiped it on the cloth and resheathed it. "Custom piece from Boker."

We sat in silence as I went through the cleaning ritual.

"How did I do?" I asked Alex and Daniel when I'd finished.

Alex chuckled and shook his head. "Our instructors would be pleased," Daniel said.

Fatty returned, walking pompously. His fly was open, some of his boxer shorts sticking out. Alex frowned and started to say something. I put a hand on his arm and said, "It's not a big deal." That brought loud guffaws from everyone in the group, save one.

I returned the rifle to shooting position and picked out four cartridges. "Okay, 1000 yards flat."

"Finally!" fatty exclaimed.

In an urban environment, chances were I'd not be doing anything beyond 600 yards, 800 at the max. Still, I'd learn a lot at 1000. I dialed in the scope for that range.

Based on what I saw of the winds, I corrected my first shot a little left and up. Not quite enough correction, but very close.

As I settled in for my second shot, fatty started singing -- loudly. When he didn't quiet down after a few seconds, Daniel yelled out, "Shut up, asshole!"

That only made fatty louder. As he screamed at Daniel and stomped around behind me, I heard Daniel get up and scream back. Fine -- breathe, relax, aim, slack, squeeze.

Shot number two was about two inches away from the first one. I reloaded and squeezed off number three, pulling it more to the center, pulling it too much, about three inches to the left. Cycle the action smoothly as I breathed, and placed number four closer to one and two.

I sat up to see Daniel and fatty face to face about six inches apart, staring at each other.

"That's enough!" I shouted as I policed my used brass.

They both turned to me.

Alex looked at them both with amusement and disgust.

"Well?" the thin one asked, getting up from his chair.

Alex moved away from the scope. "Look for yourself. A five inch group at 1000 yards. A whole lot better than I could do cold, with a rifle I'd never shot before."

Fatty smiled from ear to ear, laughing and dancing with glee. The thin one took a look through the spotting scope and smiled. Daniel looked, then held out his hand. We shook again.

Fatty stopped dancing and approached me, smiling.

“Please accept my apologies,” he said, offering his hand.

When I offered him my still gloved hand in return, he raised it in his and kissed it.

“I understand,” I told him.

Alex and Daniel were nodding.

“I hope they did that to you during training,” I told them.

Alex nodded. “Oh yeah. Still, too much of a distraction and it’s easier to kill them.”

I laughed. “I think we all consider that.”

“What now?” the thin one asked.

“Another cleaning,” I said, “wait a while for it to warm up, and work the range. Run through this box of ammo and about a third of the next one.”

Fatty pouted. “Can we take a break for lunch? Please?”

I smiled. “Yes, cleaning first.”

The thin one suggested, “You could have him do it,” nodding toward his fat colleague.

My smile disappeared. “Anyone other than Daniel, Alex, or myself that touches this rifle dies.”

Alex and Daniel stepped closer to the rifle, protecting it, and me.

The thin one raised his hands. “Sorry! Trying to be useful!” He stepped back.

Fatty nodded his head. “I can replace targets. Can I keep the 1000 yard one?”

I smiled again. “Yes, thank you.”

Alex handed him two new targets. Fat and thin headed down the range.

As I sat and started cleaning again, Alex said, “That was very impressive shooting.”

I nodded. “Thank you for making it possible.”

Daniel asked, "Ma'am, what did he call you earlier? Kee something?"

I looked at the end of my cleaning tool. One more pass. I looked to Alex, and Daniel. "Kidon," I told them. "It means blade, bayonet ... or assassin."

They both nodded. "An honor to work with you, Major," Daniel said. "Just ask if you need a spotter." "Yes, an honor," Alex added.

Oh Rutu -- as I nodded in reply to them, making my last cleaning pass on this fine barrel, I looked them both over carefully, spotting the wedding ring on Alex's hand, but not on Daniel's. I thought about those winter nights on the Frontier, working with you, out on that hillside, with you leaning against me, our bodies pressing together to keep warm under a moonless night sky, and how much closer they pressed together when we were off duty...

"Lunch?" I asked after putting away the cleaning kit. I peeled off one set of blue gloves and put on another.

Alex moved with a big smile, pulling a cooler out from under a tarp. I had my choice of turkey or beef; I chose the turkey, and a Pepsi. It was cold and tasted very good.

The three of us talked as we ate. They told me of Central America, often making their shots through dense foliage. The last one they'd done, they spent a day up a tree blind, waiting for just the right breeze to hold a clear path open and their target to appear. Twice things weren't right. The third time the winds were right, their target cooperated, and they made the shot.

I shook my head. No dense foliage where I worked. I told them of our last, working with my favorite spotter (that's you, Rutu, if you didn't know). We were dug into a hillside in a pile of rubble. At sunset my spotter saw a glint of light off to our right. She swung her scope around and saw another sniper pair setting up shop. They had a nice blind, a better spot than we had. In the fading light we identified them as unfriendly, and called our superiors. Were they after the same target we were after? Our target in the valley compound below had pissed off quite a few groups. We don't like competition -- we were cleared to take them out. Isn't that going to alert our primary target? Don't worry, we were told, you'll know when to do it; wait for it.

A slight drop from our position, about 450 yards, the wind hadn't started yet -- not a tough shot. I set it up and waited. I watched them set up through my scope while my spotter watched the primary target area. I could swing back and fire in under two seconds if need be.

The rifle they had was an old one, East German or Soviet most likely, but with a very modern Western scope and mounting rings. Seen through my scope they moved in and out of darkness with the ease and synchrony of a pair that had worked together for a long time. I don't like competition, especially when they could be targeting friends or family.

"Get ready," Rutu hissed in my ear later. I didn't move, taking a slow, deep breath.

I heard noise from the valley floor below -- mortar fire. "Now!" she hissed.

I took out the shooter, parting his hair as he dialed in his scope. His spotter pulled him back into the darkness of their blind. As the mortar fire continued sporadically, the idiots in the valley below started shooting anti-aircraft rounds at the surrounding hills, including the one we were on. Someone sent up a parachute flare. The flare wobbled enough to cast its light into their blind; I took out the spotter, confirming the hit just as the flare dropped too low to be useful. I put a round into the receiver of their rifle, kicking it into the darkness of their blind.

I returned to my primary target. The compound in the valley floor below was boiling like a stirred-up ant mound, and with about the same amount of visible order. "Pull back -- we're done," Rutý hissed in my ear. We packed up and made it back to our pickup point.

Our commander praised us for a very good catch. They'd tentatively identified the pair we'd picked off -- very good and very active. After spending a few days living in a hole in the side of hill, we had some time off.

I looked to Alex and Daniel. Fat and thin had rejoined us as well, picking lunch out of the cooler.

Oh Rutý -- I didn't tell them about showering with you afterwards, how we scrubbed each other to get rid of the dirt and the bugs. I didn't tell them about chiding you once more for not checking for bugs. And you chided me for not completely shaving my privates -- that's when I took you to bed to check yours out much closer. Oh Rutý, I miss you so! I miss the way you taste, the way you moan, and the things you do to me!

After lunch things had warmed up enough to work the range. I wanted to shoot at different target elevations, temperatures, and wind conditions through the day. We worked methodically, with Alex and Daniel taking turns spotting, taking breaks to let the barrel cool.

I let them take a few shots so I could see how well the flash suppressor worked. They were professional -- they worked on a 600 yard target. Most of the men I'd worked with would have shot with their balls rather than their brains, and gone for the 1000 yard target.

I was working at 800 yards, in the process of squeezing off my third shot when the fat one started screaming behind me, making quite a racket with something. I made the shot, reloaded for the fourth, and then the fifth, a good, tight little group, all as he carried on.

I sat up to see him beating our lunch cooler with one of the folding camp chairs.

He looked to me with a smile, and then to Alex who was at the scope. "Well?" he asked.

Alex shook his head, frowning. "Under four inches at 800 yards. Those chairs cost money, you know."

Fatty shrugged his shoulders and sat on the cooler, his chair no longer useable for its intended purpose.

We were cleaning up after my final group when the thin guy returned with another man. I recognized him and nodded -- we'd worked together in the past. I had support from the first team on this one. The fat one came back up the hill from retrieving targets, huffing and puffing.

Our new arrival asked, "How did we do?"

Fatty beamed from ear to ear. "Fantastic!" He unzipped his windbreaker and pulled out a folded target, folded so a group of holes was visible. "This morning, 1000 yards, with me at my worst." he said as he handed the target to our new arrival.

Our arrival nodded, smiling. He handed the target back. Fatty kissed it, and before he put it back in his jacket, he said with some emotion, "In memory of my granddaughter."

We finished packing up and policing the area. We walked back to the road. I carried the rifle case. As I walked along, I knew I'd be sore tomorrow from all the shooting I'd done, and I smiled at the thought. Sore from the attentions of a lover -- oh Ruty, how I miss you! We'd come back from hours on the practice range and you'd start out massaging my back and shoulders, but you always got carried away, your strong hands drifting lower on my body, and soon I'd cry out and pull you to me...

Another car had joined the earlier two. I placed the rifle case in the trunk of the thin one's rental. I will be seeing you again in a few weeks my friend, I told it silently.

"Don't worry, we'll take very good care of it," the thin one told me.

"Yes, and again, my apologies," the fat one said.

I extended my hand, but we hugged and he patted my back. "For our families, our friends, our country," he whispered.

I exchanged hugs with the thin one. They got into their car and drove off.

I turned to Alex and Daniel. I held out my arms, smiling. I hugged one, then the other. "Thank you for all your help," I told them.

Alex said, "Let us know if you need a spotter. They know how to contact us."

"I will," I told them.

They got into their truck and drove off.

As soon as they were out of sight, my associate opened the trunk and took out a large plastic bag. I still had gloves on. The first thing in the bag was my wig with its plastic liner.

Title

Damn, it itched! Not as much as a Ghillie suit with days of desert in it, but close! I took off my knife, then stripped off the outer layers of clothing, down to the “bunny suit” I was wearing to isolate the inner from the outer layers. I dumped the gloves in the bag and let Peter peel the bunny suit off. It went into a separate bag. That left me in my sweats, feeling and looking a whole lot different. I set the knife on my left forearm and sighed as Peter closed the trunk, the bags safely packed inside.

“Will you need more training time?” he asked as he handed me cleaning wipes.

I wiped my face, neck, and hands. “I think not. If the conditions are really unusual, maybe, but I think not. Where am I headed?”

He smiled and opened the car door for me. I got in and fastened the seat belt, hopefully free of any contamination.

“Back to your hotel?” he suggested as he started the car.

I didn’t bother to make a face. I’d find out when the time was right. For now, I was a blade in its scabbard -- tested, sharpened, polished, ready to be used. A trip to the sauna and a good massage for me, then a light supper.

“The fucking goldfish are arguing over which target is number one and which is number two. I told them last night to quit screwing around and pick one, or we will,” he said as we pulled back on to the larger county road.

“But either one,” he told me with a smile, “will be much easier than your last one.”

I allowed myself a shudder -- those days and nights on the side of that hill...

But Rutu --at least it was with you! You to lean against me, ostensibly to keep warm, you who would lean over to me and whisper about the things you were going to do to me, how you were going to make me come over and over again, you who snuggles in my arms in bed in the morning, holding me and nursing at my breast.

Oh Rutu -- I want to be back with you, back in your arms.

“God’s will,” I said with a sigh.

FIN
08/01/2002

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