I

How do you deal with the fact that someone in your family is a bad person?

How do you decide whether or not that someone “deserves” to have some sort of karmic punishment happen to them?

How do you know if *you’re* a bad person?

Artemis had been struggling with these questions ever since she was a little girl. Her father? Not a nice guy. Even in and of as far as supervillains go. And she had spent a lot of her formative years thinking that, in a lot of ways, that his “badness” was inside of her too.

When she would see him get beaten by various vigilantes on the news, she didn’t often feel bad for him. Even then, she knew that he “deserved” it. That he deserved every beating that he took, and probably a lot worse. When she was younger, she hoped that the beatings and the jail time would have straightened him out. Like it did her mom.

As horrible as that sounded to say out loud.

Maybe she would have been able to live her early life without worrying that she was destined to be a “bad” person if her mother hadn’t been a criminal too. A reformed one, but a former villain none the less. A tamed Huntress who went straight after being put into a wheelchair, and as a consequence missed out on her daughters growing up. She had always been much more tender and loving than her father, even before the chair, but Artemis would often doubt whether or not she would have had the same experience growing up if her mother hadn’t been forced to retire from career villainy.

That isn’t to say that she didn’t love her mom and that she would have traded her for anyone else in the world! It’s just…

If both of her parents were criminals, at least at one point… who was to say that she wasn’t just like them? What if *she* was a bad person?

Growing up, she had done everything that she had thought possible to prove herself wrong. To show that she wasn’t just like her parents. That she wouldn’t grow up to be a Sportsmaster or a Huntress. And then she actually *was* working undercover as a villain namedTigress for a while, and…

It’s all very, very complicated.

Mentoring under a superhero had helped her to understand that she didn’t “have” to be bad—Green Arrow had done what he could to help her shoot straight, and it had allowed her to take the archery skills that she had learned from her father and turn it into something good.

If Artemis had ever been a “bad” person because of any genetic factors—either her nature *or* her nurture—she had proven to Ollie, The Team, and most importantly herself that she didn’t *have* to be bad.

Her sister, on the other hand, had never managed to go against that grain.

Part of that was, obviously, their dad’s fault. He had been raising them both as either potential successors or henchmen for his schemes since they were old enough to walk, and Jade had been getting it for a few years longer than she had. But at the end of the day, Jade had *chosen* to be a supervillain. A bad guy.

Maybe, in another life Artemis might have cracked under all of the abuse too. Turned out like her sister. Without the support of her mother, without Ollie’s mentorship, without The Team…

Without Wally…

She might have been a bad person too.

For whatever “bad person” meant anymore.

Getting married hadn’t changed her much. Roy—rather, *Will*, as he was calling himself these days—had been there for her and offered her a chance at a normal life, but she’d turned him down of course. Having Lian hadn’t done too much to soften her up either. Even coming together as adults and bonding over their shared childhood trauma… poof! Absolutely nothing!

When she had been incarcerated, Artemis had thought that it was the best thing that possibly could have happened to her. For her. Either she straightened up and flew right, became rehabilitated and joined society—maybe even putting her skills to use as one of the Good Guys—or she sat and stayed in prison. Either way, the world was better off.

Like everyone else though, Artemis never actually thought that it would *last*.

She was an assassin for God’s sake. Some kind of ninja with a cat mask.

If anyone outside of a Gotham superhero wearing pointy ears was ever going to be able to bust out of prison, it should have been her… right?

But once Jade had been released on parole, Artemis understood why she hadn’t broken out of whatever facility she’d been in for all that time. Why she hadn’t been able to.

The woman standing at the threshold of the doorway to her mother’s Gotham City apartment didn’t look anything like Jade Nguyen.

“What?” the fat woman gulped, “I stopped for a snack. That was a long taxi ride.”

Artemis and her mother had both been waiting with baited breath in the living room. She had been warning her daughter not to make a scene, and there had been this big dramatic moment, as close to a “fight” as it got with her mother, where Artemis had blown up and said something stupid…

But none of that had mattered when they saw Jade standing in the doorway, more than two hundred pounds heavier and as plush as a marshmallow.

“Step aside, little sister.” The fat woman chuckled in her contralto, “Let me give Mom a hug, why don’t you?”

Their mother had been similarly stunned. Petrified, even. Everything about her eldest daughter was round—from her formerly toned arms to her finely-shaped legs. Her face had become so chubby that just the tips of her well-defined cheek bones could be made out—she looked far less like a Cheshire Cat than she did your average, everyday housecat.

“It’s good to *be* home.” Jade took it upon herself to answer the stunned silence that her transformation had left in its wake, “Why yes, little sister, I would *love* it if you unpacked for me.”

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The transformation from Cheshire Cat, deadly assassin, to Jade Nguyen, lay-about with a hollow leg, was hardly an act.

Or if it was, it was a damn good one.

Jade had spent the small amount of time that she had been home with her feet up on the couch and her hands wrist-deep in bags of potato chips. Her big stomach rising high to her double chin as she slouched lazily through her days at home.

“What? You try keeping your figure after you have a baby—it’s hard, okay?”

Artemis and her mother were, rightfully, confused and concerned over the sudden and drastic change in her size. Mrs. Nguyen was already having enough trouble helping Artemis cope with the loss of her fiancée, and now there was another taboo subject huffing and puffing on her couch…

For the most part, they all simply didn’t mention it. Neither had Will when he showed up with Lian for a custody visit. But everyone was thinking the same thing that Artemis was:

What kind of captivity, what manner of prison, could take a trained assassin and turn them into someone who got out of breath doing stretches in the morning?

“Jade…”

“Don’t say it, I know that I’ve let myself go.”

The older Crock sister rolled her eyes and shifted uncomfortably on the couch, making her wide belly slosh beneath her great green hoodie. Her soft, lower chin creased at the jawline as she jostled into a more comfortable lounge.

“Do you pick on Roy as much as you do me?”

“Roy hasn’t put on as much weight as you.”

“True…” Jade rolled her eyes towards the window, “But the dad bod *is* kind of sexy.”

Jade chuckled a little and ran her hand over her stomach. A neat fold formed between the rolls of her belly in her reclined position, her plump fingers sinking ever so slightly into the fluffy fat of the top one.

“It happens to the best of us, I suppose.” She shrugged her meaty shoulders, “At least I won’t be causing too much trouble like this, will I little sister?”

Jade was a bad person. Artemis had known that for quite a while now. But did she deserve what had happened to her? Was this merely some kind of karmic punishment, meant by some greater power to teach her a lesson and help ground her to reality?

Or was it something more?

After all, it wouldn’t have been the first time that some great conspiracy had gone under her nose. This didn’t exactly seem like The Light’s M.O. either…

But Jade wasn’t the kind of person to just “let go”. Of anything. But especially not her combat abilities. With their childhood, she had always had to stay on guard. Getting soft, getting *fat,* was tantamount to letting herself become defenseless. Weak.

Her sister didn’t do weak.

Taken into account just how much weight she seemed to have put on in the small amount of time that she had been in captivity, and Artemis had all but convinced herself that something was up.

And she would need a little help to figure out what…

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“Don’t you remember all of the trouble that happened the *last* time that you put this thing on?”

Artemis cut her eyes at Zatanna. A little half glare that warned her not to push the issue any further.

“Just making sure.”

Artemis had retired from active field duty. Not just with The Team, but as Artemis. The archer superhero-slash-sidekick version of herself. Though that wasn’t to say that Artemis Crock, the person, hadn’t taken a back seat after—

“Still fits.”

Artemis’s voice lowered as the spell took hold. Her skin darkened ever so slightly, and her long blonde hair became jet black. The identity that she had taken on as Tigress, the one that she had used when she was going undercover with Kaldur, was a simple but effective guise that had served her well at the time.

After all, Tigress never had to worry about being a bad person.

Tigress was there to do a job.

The spell didn’t affect anything mentally. Artemis had known that from the very beginning. To anyone who wasn’t magically inclined, she was outwardly an entirely different woman—but on the inside, she was still the same person. But having a different face, name, and voice, effectively a different life that didn’t have any of the hang ups, was sort of freeing.

In a weird way.

And after all, Tigress didn’t have a fiancée to mourn.

All Tigress had to focus on was The Mission.

Staging a fight with the active members of the superhero community, getting caught, and sent to the same facility that had “rehabilitated” her sister so thoroughly was the easy part. She would have minor amounts of contact with agents on the outside.

One step out the door of superheroics, and now two steps back towards it.

“Just remember that we’re here for you if you need us.”

Zatanna placed a hand on Artemis’s—Tigress’s—shoulder and gripped it firmly. Friendly.

“Oracle has been digging up as much as she can on this place, so we’ll feed you intel as soon as we get anything substantial.”

“Guess I’m not the only one jumping back into field duty.”

A long, awkward silence hung between the two of them as memories of Barbara’s recent encounter with the Joker began to trickle back.

Barbara wasn’t a bad person.

She wasn’t a bad person.

Was tragedy just part of the job?

“She’s still getting used to it.” Zatanna finally said, “We all are.”

“We’re all getting used to bad things happening to us, or we’re all still getting used to the bad things that happen to us?”

Zatanna didn’t have an answer.

II

Artemis’s jaw still hurt from the haymaker that Guy Gardner had thrown at her.

They had needed at least a few heroes who weren’t in on the plan so that the fight would look more believable. The fact that nobody’s favorite Green Lantern had knocked her out with one punch wasn’t something that she was particularly proud about, or something that she thought that she would ever live down.

But it had gotten the job done.

The Tigress had been captured, processed, charged with costumed villainy and sentenced to time in the women’s wing of the Cathcart Criminal Detention Center—a private prison with an emphasis on rehabilitation of its inmates and the same facility that had held her sister Jade and turned her into a bloated parody of herself.

Artemis was going to be stepping back into the identity of a supervillain for the duration of her cover.

Becoming the “bad” person that she had always fought so hard against.

But it was ultimately for the greater good. Whatever was going on in here, she would find out and—

“Sup?”

If the clang of the metal bars closing behind her hadn’t ripped Artemis out of her inner monologue, the sight of her new roommate certainly had. A vastness of woman sat on the cot waiting for her, poured into a tight orange jumpsuit with a half of a head of hair that was almost just as bright. Her black tendril of a tattoo crawled up her body, from her exposed fleshy forearms to up the roll of her double chin and framing her eyes.

Artemis would have recognized her anywhere—even given the vast change in her physique. It was Shimmer, a meta that she and The Team had fought a few times.

At least, it had been. A couple of hundred pounds ago.

“Sup.”

But Shimmer didn’t need to know that she knew that.

“You the new meat?”

“Around here.”

Shimmer snorted, her fat face creasing in disdain and a sharp jiggle coursing through her belly-heavy physique. She pushed off of the cot, making the suspension creak and squeak in gratitude.

“I could tell.”

The well-fed villainess gave her new roommate a good once-over. She crossed her arms over her fleshy chest and shifted slightly on her hip.

“Name’s Tigress.”

“We ain’t supposed to go by our villain names in here.” Shimmer said with a little pique of her tattoo brow, “Doctor’s orders.”

Artemis hesitated. The one *good* part of having an identity that was separate from her superhero self (or even just Artemis the *person*) was that she didn’t *have* to worry about anything other than the Tigress persona and the mission at hand…

“Paula.” She said finally, “Paula Crock.”

“That’s an unfortunate last name.” the fat woman snorted, “But who am I to judge—Name’s Selinda.”

“Selinda?” the Tigress chuckled a little, “That’s a name.”

“Watch it.” The rotund redhead shifted on her fat little feet, “Doc ain’t cleared me for my *anger issues* yet…”

The fat woman toddled gut first, lowering her (comparatively) narrow ass back down onto the cot. Shimmer was built like a fridge—deep and boxy. Her gut hung between her knees as she sat with her legs bowed out, her chunky hands creasing at the wrists as she settled herself comfortably on the bed.

“Welcome to Supervillain Rehab.”

\*\*\*

Life inside of the CCDC wasn’t anything like what Artemis had been expecting.

Working with Green Arrow, she had gotten to see the inside of plenty of facilities for criminal reform. He was very clear about making sure that, if she was going to be his sidekick (and going undercover as his “niece”) that she would get a firsthand look at the way that criminals both super and mundane were treated in this country.

And boy, did he know how to show her the absolute worst ones.

But the Cathcart Center wasn’t anything like the “glorified processing plants that turned ordinary crooks into career criminals”, or any of the other various phrases he’d used when he talked about The Man and Criminal Reform.

“Hey, skinny, scoot over.”

Tuppence Terror had always been beefy. She had been tangling with The Team since all of them were still high schoolers. She and her brother, Terrence, made up both halves of the Terror Twins. Kids from the Deep South and… vaguely creepy about each other. Artemis would happily admit that seeing her like this—bottom-heavy, broad-bellied, and as solid as a bowl of jell-o—was mildly satisfying.

But Artemis really *would* need to scoot over.

Lowering her tank ass down into the large sofa in the rec room, Tuppence let out a low, raspy grunt of satisfaction as she got up and off of her feet.

Artemis had been befuddled by the facilities methods of reformation from day one, but she was never more confused than she was when she was in the womens’ common area.

Ostensibly, this was a facility designed for the super criminals that plagued regular citizens, as well as any sufficiently advanced, powerful, or dangerous hench people who may have worked with them. So Artemis could place quite a few not so friendly faces.

Quite a few of them were sporting more chins than she remembered though.

*Just like my sister.*

It wasn’t hard to understand how the extra pounds got there in the first place. This place’s idea of a common area was more than a little extravagant, if not very same-y. Lots of places to sit, big TVs so that everyone could see them, and in multiple parts of the soothing rec room, and a surprising amount of snacks.

*I’d make a joke about this being what our tax dollars are paying for, but this place is privately funded…*

As far as Artemis’s detective skills were concerned, there wasn’t anything else that was directly out of the ordinary. Nothing outward that screamed SINISTER PLAN, at least that grabbed her attention.

The PA system was there for inter-prison communications.

The aforementioned TVs and couches were, again, weird but not outright malevolent.

All the food was odd, but… was it? People *got* hungry, after all. Even rehabilitating super villains and criminals…

But what kind of explanation was there for why there were so many villains who were getting so *fat* in here?

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Group was a thrice weekly event in the CCDC—and the only “mandatory” event on their schedule.

Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (at least in the women’s center) the inmates would be corralled into different meeting rooms, and they would talk about their feelings.

And this kind of thing wasn’t inherently a bad one. The kinds of criminals that Artemis was used to taking down, the kinds of people that wound up in facilities like this, were often subject to some severe emotional issues. Or mental problems. Or mental problems that leant them to having severe emotional issues… or the occasional God Complex.

But the startling thing wasn’t that they had Group three times a week in this place. It was the fact that the incarcerated villains seemed to go along with it that was so startling.

“Alright, there are Choccos and decaffeinated coffee by the door here for anyone who wants them… but if it’s okay with everyone, I’d like to get started.”

Doctor Penelope Young was the doctor that had been assigned to Cell Block D. Artemis had already seen her four times now, and she still hadn’t been able to determine whether or not she had anything to do with the strangeness that gripped this place or its inmates.

For the most part, she seemed… normal.

Like, a normal doctor. Not a metahuman, not a member of some villain’s inner circle, not one lab accident away from turning into a supervillain. Just your average, every day, highly accredited doctor transferred from Arkham Asylum to help prisoners deal with the complex emotions that drove them to do what they did to get locked up in here.

“Why don’t we pick up where we left off last week?”

Artemis had done this kind of therapy a few times since she had started masking up alongside Green Arrow and The Team. Mostly with Black Canary. But it wasn’t until she’d sat down, wearing another woman’s face and living a fake life that she realized that she hadn’t been to any kind of therapy to help her deal with the fact that Wally—

“Paula?” Dr. Young said with a soft turn of her head, “Friday, we were talking about loss, and the effects that it can have on us.”

“…yeah.”

“Would you care to elaborate a little more on what your story and what drove you to take up your Alter Ego?”

God, where to begin? Most of Artemis’s life had been driven by loss. The loss of her father, in and out of jail. The loss of her mother after she was put into Blackgate Penitentiary for eight years after *she* lost her legs. The loss of her sister after she ran away from home when they were just kids. The loss of her identity. The loss of her fiancée.

“Not really.”

“Alright, we’ll circle back around to you.” Dr. Young said with a little nod of professional understanding, “Leslie, last week you were talking about how the loss of your career fueled you to—”

*God, that doesn’t even look like Livewire.*

The metal chairs creaked and groaned beneath the wide, dimpled asses that held them. Cell Block D was filled almost entirely with fat women. Some of them were just soft after not being able to get the exercise that fighting superheroes gave them, others were thickening out due to the food that was *everywhere* around the center…

And then there were chair-squashers like Livewire, Shimmer, and Tuppence Terror.

*The three most dangerous criminals in this block also happen to be the ones that have put on the most weight…*

Artemis wasn’t nearly as good of a detective as Dick was. Her time with Green Arrow and (admittedly) hot-headed personality had taught her to shoot her arrows first and ask questions later. But it wasn’t just an educated guess that their powers had something to do with the fact that they were the heaviest out of what was about thirty women.

*I guess that says a lot about how dangerous my sister is…*

*Rather, how dangerous she used to be…*

“Paula, would you care for a Chocco?”

Artemis wasn’t exactly happy about taking food in this place. It could have been drugged. It probably *was* drugged. Judging by the way that everyone was so crazy about food in here, it might have been laced with mild addictive chemicals. Or muscle relaxers. With the compulsive snacking that ran rampant in all parts of the prison, not just in Cell Block D, Artemis was wary about doing any unnecessary eating…

But Tigress—Paula—hadn’t exactly won over anybody. People weren’t talking to her. They still looked at her as an outsider. Not someone to be trusted.

“Thanks.”

“You’re very welcome, Paula.” Dr. Young smiled as she handed over a small stack of Chocco cookies, “Do you want some coffee to go with that?”

“…sure.”

The little paper cups of coffee didn’t smell strange. And they certainly didn’t taste strange. Except for the fact that it was really bad coffee.

“You know Paula, I think that you could really benefit from opening up. It’s not a sign of weakness to admit that you’re human.”

Opening up. Right. Which part? The fact that she was an undercover superhero-slash-sidekick who came out of an early retirement to investigate this place because her sister came back from prison really fat, or the severe emotional damage that had been done to her pretty much since the day that she was olde enough to walk?

That being said… Tigress had a mission to do.

“About two years ago, I had a fiancée who… didn’t come home one day.”

III

This was the fourth orange jumpsuit that Artemis had been issued.

The first one had been ripped during a scuffle with one of the other “new” inmates. The Carpenter threw a surprisingly mean punch for someone whose claim to fame was being handy with a drill.

The second one had been after two months of incarceration and playing deep under cover. It had to be widened along the middle and the seat, to accommodate for a widening rump and a thickening middle.

The third had come as her well-toned arm muscles began to soften and melt into sleeve-filling chub. Her stomach had stopped bunching into rolls whenever she bent over, and just squished into a meaty mass that made her grunt.

And now the fourth had come at a time when she had started sticking out in the front and the back.

“Extra weight looks good on you.”

Even after two years of being rehabilitated, and a little over six months since they had been rooming together behind bars, Selinda’s genuine expressions of affection still looked like that same cocky smirk that he gotten her punched so many times back when Artemis was still Artemis.

“Thanks.”

It was hard to keep track of what “normal” was in here.

With everyone eating all the time and the counsellors prodding all of these emotional buttons in the name of “helping” the inmates…

Artemis had basically been steered towards solving her emotional problems with food. And with a childhood like hers and a disappeared fiancée, it was hard not to let herself get swept up in the emotional band-aid that was comfort eating.

“At least you still look skinny next to me.”

The boxy redhead chortled, and Artemis smiled softly.

“I don’t know—my butt’s bigger than yours these days.”

“Not a high bar.” Selinda oof’d as she hefted her huge self up from the bottom cot, “Call me when you look like a ripe tangerine.”

*At this rate, that won’t be too long from now…*

\*\*\*

“I hear you’ve been making a lot of progress in group, Ms. Crock.”

The director of the Cathcart Criminal Detention Center was none other than Edmond Cathcart himself.

She’d heard the name in passing when it came to connections to superhero identities, but not much of note. Apparently he had helped Batman and Green Arrow once or twice, but not much else had come of his involvement with the caped and cowled crowd.

For all intents and purposes, he was just a simple psychiatrist. Nothing more, nothing less

Albeit, a simple psychiatrist who had devoted his life to rehabilitating criminals of the super and meta variety.

“How do you feel as far as…”

“Being a criminal?” Artemis—Tigress, or more formally Paula to the good doctor—said with a low growl, “Honestly I don’t feel like I could keep up with a *sidekick*, let alone—”

“Your weight.” He said sharply, cutting her off, “It’s not… it’s not *bothering* you, is it?”

And the answer to that was obviously, yes. It was bothering her. More than the weight that her sister had put on while she was incarcerated here, even though she had doubtlessly weighed more than her the last time that Artemis had laid eyes on her.

But there were a lot more things that had been bothering her. Things that she had never bothered to share with anybody because… how could they have possibly understood? The pain and the loss that she had felt after Wally’s disappearance had been excruciating and unbearable—and these therapy sessions…

Maybe it had helped for her to put on this face and pretend to be someone else, even someone who had been dealing with similar issues, so that she could put a layer between her and the other inmates?

A layer between her and Dr. Young?

Just layers and layers of—

“Ms. Crock?”

“Sorry.”

Six months going undercover, and all Artemis had to show for it was fifty extra pounds of fat. And that all of her problems had been dragged out into the forefront. So she ate *more* to help deal with them, because this place didn’t have like a prison yard that she could exercise in. Just cafeterias and rec rooms and quiet areas and the occasional *video game* console like playing Injustice was supposed to make her feel any less like murdering somebody and—

“Would you… like something to snack on?”

“That…”

Say no say no say no say no

“…actually sounds nice.”

The standard snack around here were Choccos. The doctors would give them out like candy during the Group meetings. They were pretty much everywhere. The food was really good in and of itself, and Artemis really doubted that she’d ever be able to go back to cooking for herself after having the kinds of meals that were prepared here at the CCDC, but she’d gotten really, *really* hooked on these things.

“Now, I want you to feel comfortable with me. I’m the *warden* (so to say, even if I don’t like that term) but I’m also the chief of staff here.”

Doctor Cathcart leaned back in his chair.

“Do you feel comfortable here?”

“Too comfortable.” The Tigress glowered, running a self-conscious hand over her stomach, “No offense, Dr. Cathcart, but this place isn’t good for much except for softening up your inmates.”

Dr. Cathcart clicked his tongue.

“Well… I’d be lying if I said that there weren’t some *benefit* in making dangerous super criminals unfit to perform the various heinous acts that got them placed under my care.” He took his glasses from the bridge of his nose and began to wipe them with a cloth that he pulled from his desk drawer, “After all, it’s a lot easier to catch a criminal who gets winded during their daring escape from the caped and cowled crowd, right?”

Artemis’s brown eyes widened.

*I knew it.*

“I knew it!” she exclaimed, “You *have* been fattening us up!”

The Tigress stood to her full height, the chair having scooted out loudly behind her. There was an awkward silence between her and her glorified warden.

“Nnnno.” He said, placing the glasses back on the bridge of his nose, “I’ve been providing a place where you, and others like you, can be rehabilitated and work on the various issues that have driven you to lives of supervillainy—albeit through a sort of unorthodox focus.”

Artemis furrowed her brow, standing still and silently demanding an explanation.

Dr. Cathcart merely sighed.

“You see, the Cathcart Criminal Detention Center aims to get down to the bottom of your X Factor—the reason *why* you decided to become a criminal.”

*I decided to become a criminal so that I could investigate you, but okay.*

“We want to pinpoint the reasons why people put on masks and do what they do. And in order to do that, we have to break you down a little so that we can build you back up.”

“Y-You’re serious right now.”

“Very.” He said it plain as day, as if he wasn’t talking to a woman who had gained fifty pounds in half of a year while under the care of his facility, “With how often super criminals break out of these kinds of institutions, we need to ensure that it’s at least *difficult* for them to do so. At the very least, that it’s hard for them to continue their active life of crime if they do manage to escape from our facility.”

“So you’re fattening us up… on purpose?” Artemis snarled in disgust, “That’s insane!”

“Now, we haven’t done anything of the sort.” He steepled his hands together and leaned forward, back onto the surface of his desk, “We’ve merely provided the food. The inmates bring their problems, and we offer a coping mechanism. A *temporary* coping mechanism. So that we can wean you into healthy, productive members of society.”

As much as it pained Artemis to admit… it had to have been her fault. There were no hidden cameras. There were no subliminal messages being relayed through the P.A. systems. There wasn’t anything of the sort. Just… as Doctor Cathcart said, a lot of food, and a bunch of people with severe emotional trauma.

“Haven’t you received the help that you’ve needed since you came to our facility?” he asked, spreading his palms wide, “Aren’t you closer to understanding the *reason* why you decided to pick a fight with a Green Lantern in the middle of Gotham Central Park?”

*Aren’t you closer to understanding why you’ve been so willing to stuff your face with cookies instead of dealing with the fact that Wally’s gone?*

“I… I guess so.”

“That’s what we’re here for.” He said with a tight smile, “We’re here to help you. But only if you let us.”

Artemis—in the guise of Paula Crock, the fearsome Tigress—sighed heavily and placed her palms flat on the desk in front of her.

“Alright… I’ve got some things that I need to get off of my chest.”

\*\*\*

Luckily for Artemis, The Tigress’s rap sheet was not nearly as long as a certain other predatory cat’s had been.

She was released legally, having been pronounced rehabilitated and placed on parole. She had been released to a burner address that lead to an empty warehouse that Oracle had managed to get registered as a residential address.

As far as the Tigress went, she may as well have been a candle in the wind.

For the second time in two years, Mrs. Nguyen opened the door to her modest Gotham apartment to find one of her daughters standing in the doorway, fattened beyond all recognition.

Artemis’s tanned belly swelled out into a round, fleshy apron of lightly browned fat as she stood in the threshold, shifting awkwardly on her fat feet. She wasn’t used to standing for this long, or taking the stairs. Her round face was red with exertion, and her face dripped with sweat all the way down to her double chin.

“Hi mom.”

“Hello yourself.” She said, looking up at her daughter with her eyes wide, “So I take it that the undercover mission was a success?”

“You could call it that.” Artemis huffed and puffed, “I wouldn’t, but I’d appreciate it if you would.”

Jade had been right where Artemis had left her on the couch, albeit with an extra fifty pounds clinging to her round physique. The two of them were quite a pair—two fattened daughters of the Sportsmaster, having waddled out of the gate at the CCDC emotionally healthy but physically exhausted. It was all she could do butto *not* mention the irony.

“They’ve got good Choccos, don’t they?” she laughed

“They really, really do.”

Artemis kicked one leg out in front of her and stepped fully inside—her round, shelf-like ass requiring an entire step all unto itself to bring her fully into the apartment. Crashing down with her sister, making the suspension of the couch creak and groan, she punched the older woman in the arm.

She had walked out of that place feeling like she understood Jade so much more now. They were both dealing with so much from their childhood, and now that they were together again…

Ugh, it was going to be hard to shake all of this emotional crap.

But not as hard as it was going to be to shed all of this extra weight.

“You got fat.”

“Yeah well, you haven’t exactly slimmed down since I went undercover.” Artemis scoffed, “You know, *you* were the reason that I went to that place—seeing you all fat and lazy had me worried that they’d like brainwashed you or something.”

“Nah.” Jade said with a laugh, “Just showed me that I didn’t have to keep running anymore…”

The two of them, with their mother, enjoyed a quiet moment together.

In Gotham City, those kinds of moments hardly ever lasted.

An explosion sounded from outside the apartment, way down on the street.

“Ah.” Artemis’s double chin creased in dismissal, “Let somebody else get it.”