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Notices: This story contains violence and sexual content.

Summary: It's a regular Friday night after work for the young college student, Sarah Connor, who is traveling back to her apartment. On the fated night, her beliefs and outlooks are forever changed after a near kidnapping and a choice between life or death given by an estranged police officer.

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Series 2: **No Fate, Story #1**

I, Terminator

by Red Hope

Chapter 1 – To Protect

The current date was December 5, 2008 with the winter temperatures hitting a major low of thirty-three degrees in Los Angeles. Some locals wondered if it would snow, but it'd been a long time since anybody saw such a wonder in the City of Angels. The streets were busy with crowds, and many were in spirit for Christmas.

On a usual Friday night, a small, local restaurant called Overtime had a full house of hungry customers by seven o'clock. The servers rushed in and out of the kitchen to pick up orders of fries, burgers, cheesesteaks, sandwiches, or other greasy foods. The restaurant's air was thick from the fryer and followed any full belled customer out of the door. Occasionally the soda fountain shot off when a server filled up another plastic cup after darting behind the counter.

From the kitchen, a petite but well toned waitress shoved through the swinging doors and reentered the hectic dining area. She had two full plates in either hand and danced around a coworker on her way to her table.

"Here you are." The server slipped the plates onto the table and adjusted them in front of her customers. "Need any refills on the tea?"

The customer in the right booth seat flashed a smile and held up her empty cup. "Please."

"Unsweetened, right?"

"Yes. Thank you, Sarah."

The server, Sarah, dashed off with the cup, which chinked from the loose ice in it. She went behind the counter and hastily filled the cup to the brim with unsweetened tea. She returned it to her customer then made beeline for the kitchen because she suspected her next two orders were ready.

The night mostly continued as such at Overtime well until ten o'clock and the restaurant didn't shut down until eleven. Sarah was flat out the entire night, but she was always well rewarded by her tips. Despite the hectic atmosphere, Sarah still managed to slip a few text messages out to her friends, especially her college roommate.

Just a few minutes after eleven, Sarah turned the key in the front doors and gratefully listened to the latch lock the double-doors for tonight.

"It was a great night," the manager remarked from his spot behind the register. He was organizing the till for tomorrow and checked the profits from today. "Luckily this economy hasn't hurt us... too bad."

Sarah retrieved the keys from the front doors and joined her coworkers with clean up. "I think I made about a hundred in tips tonight."

"Sweet," Amanda cheered to Sarah. She was busing the last few tables. "I had about the same."

Sarah mirrored Amanda's grin, but she went behind the counter and did her usual task with organizing the clean cups for tomorrow. "How the numbers look anyhow, Chris?"

Chris, the manager, waved his hand at Sarah and cheerfully teased, "Like give me a moment, dear."

Sarah bowed her head and grinned, but it was hidden by her midnight locks that fell forward. She reached up hand by hand and brushed her loose strands behind her ears.

"So, you ready for that big exam next week, Sarah?"

Sarah lifted her head and studied her classmate, Amanda, but she went back to drying the cleaned cups under the counter. "I think so, but I'm more nervous about my competition tomorrow."

Amanda wondered back towards the counter with a loaded bucket of dirty dishes. "I'll never get how you're more stressed about your Jojo than your college classes."

Sarah softly chuckled and corrected, "Jujutsu."

Amanda just rolled her eyes at her classmate then disappeared into the kitchen.

"Two thousand for our shift," Chris finally announced. He twisted around to Sarah and proudly smiled at her. "That's not bad for our shift."

Sarah softened at his happiness. "Not bad at all." She returned to her almost completed task. "You work tomorrow, Chris?"

"Honey, you should ask when I don't work because it'd go faster." Chris gave out a dramatic sigh. "And where the Hell is Sammy?" He scanned the local area then complained, "She's always screwing around back there with Mexico."

"Pedro," Sarah reminded the manager.

Chris slapped his hand on the register. "Honey, I don't care if his name is Taco. He distracts Sammy too much."

Sarah chuckled at this then backed up from her spot at the counter. She tossed her damp towel onto her right shoulder. "Give her a break."

Chris stuck out his right hip and rested his hand there. "She's had plenty all night with Mexico." He rolled his eyes but joked, "She's been sucking on his burrito way too much."

Sarah laughed at his terrible humor, yet she covered her mouth. She dropped her hand but still bit her lower lip. She shook her head and slipped past the manager. "I'll go find her, Chris."

"You do that, Connor and let me know if you see any beans too!" The manager spied Amanda coming back out, and he muttered, "At least I have two reliables working tonight."

"Always," Amanda promised. She started wiping down the tables and organizing things like the chairs, sugar, salt, and pepper. She pulled a few items that needed restocking to the edge of the table as she went along.

Chris shot a dark glower at Sammy, who came out from the kitchen behind Sarah. He didn't comment though but was glad when Sammy helped with the shut down process.

Sarah focused on wiping down the area behind the counter. She suggested to Sammy to get the trash.

"So, what's your major again, Connor?" Chris was running the night's work through the register.

Sarah was washing out her rag then wiped down the counter. She glanced over at Chris, who was at the other end of the counter. "Engineering." She focused on her task to clean the counter. "Mechanical engineering." She knew Chris had her major down, but he just liked to give her a hard time about it.

Chris shook his head a few times then inquired, "Why didn't you get a business degree?" He worked to get the tape free from the register and give it a new roll.

Sarah chuckled and shrugged. "That's more my dad's thing... I couldn't get there." She finished with the counter.

"Yeah but it sure would have helped me out here in the restaurant." The manager started organizing the till and profit into separate cash bags.

Sarah shifted past Chris once she had the counter wiped down. "I can do it, Chris if you need me to."

"That's okay but thanks, honey." Chris demonstrated he was done by zipping up the blue bags. "Let's wrap it up, ladies... I have a hot date tonight at the movies." He headed into the kitchen and further back to get to the office.

Sarah thought about Chris's date or rather his boyfriend, Jason, who was a sweet guy. She'd hung out with them both on a few occasions, but she never really became too close to anybody. She continued to help her coworkers finish the restaurant preparations for tomorrow's busy day because Saturday mornings were crazy too and didn't lend to much prep time.

Soon enough, Sarah and the other workers at Overtime met at the back door. Chris had locked up the office's door then he shut off the last light by the back door. He stepped outside and found the other employees were waiting for him. He locked up the door then followed everybody down the well lit alley to the main street.

"Any plans tonight, Connor?"

Sarah realized that Chris probably thought she had a date since she'd changed out of her work uniform. She was never much for wearing her uniforms to or from work. She just took them home every other time to get them cleaned. "Not really. I may just pick up a movie. I have to be up early for the competition."

"How early?" Amanda inquired.

Sarah was busy zipping her black leather jacket in hopes it'd block out the cold. "It starts at nine, but I need to be there about seven thirty to get prepared and warmed up."

"Better you than me," Chris teased.

"Good luck with it," Sammy mentioned. She'd been mostly quiet tonight, and she walked along side Pedro, who was even quieter.

"Thanks." Sarah gave the older woman a smile. She noticed they were on the main street, which meant they'd split in half then eventually into singles.

"See you tomorrow, Amanda," Chris called to her. He bid the others goodnight, who went to the left at the end of the alley. He and Sarah though were headed to the right, but he didn't have far to go to the bus station.

"You taking the subway, Connor?"

Sarah slid her hands into her jeans' pockets after she popped her jacket's collar. She hated her neck being cold. "Yeah, I don't feel like walking it tonight."

"It's not safe," the manager reminded.

"The subway isn't much better," Sarah reminded.

Chris frowned at this but did counter, "But your chances are less since it's a shorter trip than walking to your apartment."

"I can't argue that." Sarah saw the entrance to the subway just on the other side of the block, but the bus stop was just up ahead. "I'll see you tomorrow night, Chris."

"See? I knew you had my schedule down," the manager bantered. He came to a slow halt by the bus stop sign.

Sarah spun around and walked backwards. She had a cheeky smile and the overhead light post lit up her beautiful green eyes. "I like to know how hard I have to work or get to slack off if Regina is on duty."

"Right." Chris had a grin, but he waved at Sarah. "See ya then, Connor."

"Tell Jason I said 'hello' for me." Sarah came to a stop at the crosswalk, her back to it.

"Sure thing." Chris suddenly lit up at realization and called, "Good luck tomorrow!"

"Thanks!" Sarah turned just after the crosswalk switched for her to safely go. She widened her small gait and rushed past the two cars that waited on a green light. She came to the subway entrance and bounded down the steps without any effort since she was well toned.

Sarah came to the hip high gates that blocked travelers from the actual platform. She fished out her pass card and swiped it over the sensor. She was chimed to go so she slipped between the open posts. She went down the steps to the platform that'd get her back to her university.

Despite it was late at night; the subway was fairly busy due to it being Friday. The train had another five minutes before it arrived so patient passengers spread out around the platform. Most generally plugged their ears with headphones that were attached to their iPods, or they had Bluetooths clipped in otherwise.

However, Sarah didn't typically do that because she worried she'd miss hearing something important, such as a scream or gunshot. Instead, she retrieved her Blackberry and checked out the most recent news on her ride back. Tonight was no different, and she pulled out her phone from her jacket pocket.

Sarah read the latest news about the pending inauguration of Barack Obama. She was excited about his presidency this coming January, especially because she'd voted for him. It'd been the first time she'd ever casted her vote in an election having just turned of age after President Bush took office.

After reading the news article, Sarah looked up from her Blackberry Curve and scanned the decent size crowd around her. She always had a habit of minding her surroundings and the people near her. She almost looked back at her smartphone's screen but hesitated when she saw a strange guy studying her. Once she made eye contact with him, he looked away and then slipped through the crowd.

Sarah shrugged it off despite it concerned her in the back of her head. She wasn't too worried because she kept a can of pepper spray in her satchel purse that she had slung across her chest. She subconsciously rested her right hand over her purse that leaned against her hip.

Finally the subway train arrived with a screeching jerk and the tunnel wind disorganized most passengers' hair. The doors chimed and asked that passengers exiting to make haste then the newcomers stepped past the doors.

Sarah strolled into the car and found an empty seat by a window. She returned to her Blackberry and read another article. She felt the train take off and her back pressed into the padded seat a bit deeper. After her second reading, Sarah peered up and unexpectedly found the same guy sitting across from her.

He had to be in his thirties or so. He was unshaven with a five o'clock shadow but short brown hair. He had a sculpted face and a scar that ran along his right jaw line. He wore a pea coat that went to his knees. His dark brown eyes bore into Sarah.

Sarah did her best to ignore him and just hoped he'd get off at a station before or after hers. She returned to her smartphone but couldn't really focus on it because from the corner of her eye, she kept a watch on him. She grew tenser because he refused to stop staring at her. It was as if he was analyzing her very carefully.

Finally at the next stop, the unshaven man stood up and carried his large form out of the train. He disappeared in the flood of travelers.

Sarah let out a low sigh and went back to her smartphone. She glanced at the woman seated beside her, and they gave her a funny look. But Sarah disregarded it and went back to the weather on her phone. She grumbled at another cold day for tomorrow.

Two more stations passed but on the next, Sarah stood up and clutched a metal pole until the train came to a full stop. She slipped out of the doors and followed the masses to the exit from the station. She locked her Blackberry's buttons then shoved it into her jacket pocket once she came out on the street. She had about a ten minute walk to her off-campus apartment.

Sarah had a hard pace because she liked a strong walk to keep her body fit. She occasionally had to dodge around a passerby. Yet she slowed when her smartphone vibrated in her pocket twice, which meant she had a text message. She retrieved it and unlocked the keys. She smiled at the message from her roommate, who confirmed they should watch a movie tonight. Sarah nearly laughed aloud that her roommate, Kelly, wanted the movies *Get Smart* and *I, Robot*; what a combination.

Sarah promised Kelly that she'd pick up the movies at the Blockbuster, which was on the next block. Just as she sent the message, her left shoulder slammed into somebody that'd passed her.

"Sorry about... that." Sarah had half turned and stood motionless on the street. But who she'd stumbled into just kept going without a second glance. She could tell it was a man yet that was it. She huffed at his rude manner and for being too nice about it. She instead continued to the movie rental store.

Inside the Blockbuster, it was fairly busy with last minute renters like Sarah. She wandered up and down the aisles to find her roommate's requested movies. She slowed down by Get Smart and picked up a copy. She flipped over to the other side and read the summary on it. She decided a good comedy would be what she and Kelly needed tonight after a hard week of classes.

Sarah wrapped her way around the new releases wall and stopped here or there to read a few other movies. She eventually found I, Robot and was dubious about another Will Smith movie, but she knew Kelly had a thing for him. She could bet they'd have to watch Hancock next weekend.

Eventually, Sarah slowly made her way towards the register but not without checking a few more new movies. She was reading over the movie Cloverfield when her skin rippled from goose bumps because of the nearby person. She slightly turned her head and looked at the average height but built man next to her. She crinkled her nose at his scruffy features and rough looking attire. She didn't care for his thin goatee either.

Sarah returned the movie box and pulled her hand away just as the front door chirped for a new customer. For some reason, Sarah's attention was drawn to the new customer, who starkly stood out from most average people.

Coming from the entrance, a police officer passed through the metal detectors and was removing the mostly white helmet.

Sarah developed thin lips at seeing a female police officer that obviously rode a motorcycle for duty. She could help but take in the officer's taller but lean body and striking, round face. Sarah couldn't imagine why a young woman would want to be in the LAPD.

The officer tucked her helmet under her right arm and approached the new release's aisle straight ahead. She was in regular uniform that included black pants, boots, and an official LAPD leather jacket. She caught the other woman's long stare.

Sarah instantly broke her obvious fixation on the officer once bright blue eyes spotted her. She fidgeted with her two movies after the officer stopped next to her.

The officer turned on her heels and skimmed over the new releases. She happened to pick the movie Cloverfield and read over the summary.

Sarah stole a fast glance at the officer's shiny name, which read O'Connor. She secretly smirked at the irony but strolled away and decided to pay for the rentals.

The officer now looked sidelong at Sarah and slotted her eyes. Yet she gathered herself and strolled down the new release aisle. Despite her growing distance from the register, she could easily make out the typical sounds of checkout and payment. Then after a long minute, a chirp sounded that somebody either entered or left Blockbuster. The police officer broke away from the movies and made her way back towards the front of the store.

Sarah heard the Blockbuster's door chirp behind her so she looked back and saw that unkempt guy coming out. She shrugged it off and zipped up her leather jacket but still picked up the pace. She hurried across the street when the white crosswalk sign went solid. Just behind her, she sensed somebody coming up on her fast.

"You see my friend up there?" the unkempt guy inquired.

Sarah was stunned that he was right at her side. She didn't have a chance to say or do anything when he moved in even closer.

"He has a gun and if you run or scream, he'll be happy to shoot."

Sarah slowed her walk more than anything, but he grabbed her by the wrist.

"Just keep moving."

Sarah finally looked at him and in a shaky voice, managed, "Who are you?"

"The name is Kyle," he answered. "Does that help you?" He had a sly grin and nodded at his companion at the end of the block. "That's my partner Derek."

Sarah focused back on Derek, who flashed a handgun between his open pea coat. As she came closer, it became clear that Derek was the same man from the subway. "What the Hell do you want?"

"You," Kyle merely replied.

Sarah couldn't control her erratic heartbeat then sweat coated her palms. She nearly lost the movie rentals. Her sneakers suddenly felt like lead weights as she came closer to the other man. Her mind was too scrambled to handle the situation other than the natural need to run.

Kyle noticed how Sarah's speed decreased so he gripped her arm harder. "Come on." He gave a jerk. "Don't make a scene, girl."

Sarah passed two people then she found herself about ten yards from Derek. She knew she had to make a move or else it could mean her life. She mentally recalled her years of jujutsu training, and instantly she performed the technique known as escape wrist grab.

She sharply brought up her locked arm but towards the left, twisted her wrist clockwise, and gave a swift jerk downward that broke her free.

Before Kyle could react, Sarah collided a back fist to his face then followed it up by a reverse twist punch directly to his stomach. She completed her attack with a roundhouse kick delivered by her right foot to his lower back. She returned to her fighting stance that left her on the balls of her feet, one fist, and movies still in her left hand. She had Kyle painfully on the street, but she quickly glanced at Derek, who made a run for them and yanked out his gun from his coat.

Sarah knew a gun full of bullets was far more dangerous. She back stepped but turned and ran in hopes Derek wouldn't openly fire in the streets. She noticed some onlookers had witnessed it and hollered for Derek and Kyle to back off. Sarah was headed for the street but jumped back when a car flew past her.

But to the left there was a motorcycle's low growl and rushed down the street towards Sarah and her attempted kidnappers.

Sarah was relieved to see the police officer arriving on her motorcycle, but after a quick glance over her shoulder she knew that Derek was almost on her. She spun around and accurately threw the comedy movie at Derek. "Get Smart, buddy!" Her ears were filled by the motorcycle's powerful growl.

Derek was slammed in the throat by the spinning movie rental. He clutched his throat with both hands because his windpipe was damaged by the strike.

Sarah turned back to the police officer, who stopped her bike right beside Sarah. But what shocked her was the Remington shotgun that the officer brandished and took aim right at her.

"Duck," the officer coolly ordered.

Sarah was already in the motions but actually fell down onto her ass out of sheer worry. She cringed at the crisp shot from the weapon followed by Kyle's yell for Derek.

Derek gave out a terrified cry but dropped out of the way before he was hit. He hoped that Kyle got out of the way too.

The police officer balanced the large Harley Davidson with her long legs, switched the shotgun to her left hand, and held out her right to Sarah. "Come with me if you want to live."

Sarah Connor stared at the officer's hand and registered those defining words. Behind her, she heard Kyle checking over Derek followed by Derek's yells. Sarah started to get up with her other rental still in her left hand, yet she took the officer's right hand.

The officer scooted forward in the seat as she directed Sarah behind her.

Sarah hastened to get on the bike with the officer. She looked back at her two attackers, who turned their angry faces to her. Then off in the distance, police sirens echoed down the street.

"Please hold on," the officer instructed. Her tone was calm and almost passive as if this was a normal event. She'd sat down and shifted her bike into gear, but she still vertically held the Remington in her left hand.

Sarah slipped her arm around the officer's trim waist just as the motorcycle sped away. She raised her sneakers to the foot bars. She had the I, Robot movie lightly pressed against the officer's hip.

The officer revved the motorcycle and forced the bike faster through the streets. The distance between them and the attack back near the Blockbuster grew.

Sarah tried to mentally catch up with what'd happened tonight. She had no clue who the men were or why they'd attacked her. She was initially thankful for the officer's arrival but now it occurred to her that she and the officer were running from the scene. Wasn't that illegal? And since when did officers run from a crime scene? Or made remarks about one wanting to live or not? Her earlier panic flared up again but there was nothing she could do except pray her faith in this officer's badge wasn't misguided.

Her ramped thoughts were stilled by the officer's expert spin of the Remington shotgun. Then the officer shoved it into a hard case that was attached to the side of the bike. Sarah swallowed, and a chill rippled down her spine. Now she debated whether or not her savior was really her best choice. She'd just have to wait until she had a chance to find out more about the officer and what'd happened earlier. She had few options now that the motorcycle was barreling down the streets at fifty miles per hour and an obvious destination was in the officer's head.

To be continued.