

S C O T T M E E H A N



MILLENNIAL
GIRL

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MILLENNIAL GIRL

A Novel



INDIES UNITED PUBLISHING HOUSE, LLC

“The Lord helps the fallen and lifts those bent beneath their loads.” (Psalm 145:14)

ONE

April 2025 AD

I remember it all too well, a horrifying, vivid nightmare that was very real... and a traumatic moment I wish would simply go away forever.

“But it won't,” Asha mumbled to herself. “I have to get through this.”

Focusing back on the pages of her journal, she continued to read.

I was only two days away from completing my Special Forces training, the fifth and final phase. I was so close; I could taste the victory!

Asha raised her eyes briefly while running her tongue across her lips.

Just TWO DAYS AWAY, and I would become the first woman to ever be awarded the prestigious Green Beret!

Asha snuck a peek at the green felt beret placed neatly on her mantle and smiled.

I so wanted to follow the footsteps of my father, Master Sergeant Ron Hawkins. He was a legend in his own right for his exploits in Afghanistan and Iraq. I would not even be here if he wasn't so noble, rescuing a young Afghan girl in distress from the Taliban...She is my mother.

Asha sighed and looked up from her journal again, fixing her eyes on the portrait of her parents just to the side of her beret. “Oooh, come on, Ash, get through this tonight. I'm tired,” she told herself in the mirror behind the portrait.

I was good at avoiding capture by the opposing force; in fact, I was good at everything I put my hands to throughout the training. Although my confidence soared, I knew in my heart that nothing is entirely predictable. However, I never in my wildest imagination would have believed that I would be betrayed...by my own team.

Asha started to close her journal again but kept her thumb inside the crease and forcibly opened it again. “Now, Ash, read it now!”

I cannot believe that I let my guard down, but I should have guessed by the comments made towards me that even these civilian volunteers who were supposed to be helping me were part of a good ole boy network...who dreaded the idea of a woman wearing the Green Beret.

When I followed my “team” into a dark, abandoned shack, a lantern suddenly flicked on, which was against our stealth protocol during the operation. This should have been my first clue that something was amiss.

Then, I was surrounded by no less than five men...none of whom looked at all

friendly, including the ones who were supposedly on my team, the ones who led me here on false pretense. Don't show any fear, I thought to myself.

Before I could make for the door, one of them grabbed me by the arm while another lassoed me with a rope. I still had a free hand, a mistake for the nearest knucklehead. I reared back and let the dude who held my wrist have it just below his eye...I missed my target, which was the full flesh of his nose.

The hit was solid enough that it only angered him, and with the help from another punk, they succeeded in holding my hands behind my back. Too bad I was still half-tangled in the rope. Fortunately, I maintained some flexibility.

A toothy guy approached my front and said, "Time to teach you some manners, girly...uughh!"

That was all he was able to say because I didn't let him finish. Why should I have? I neither wanted to hear nor smell him. I swear, his breath reeked like he had been chewing skunk jerky or something. Foul wasn't the word for it. I wished I could have heaved on him.

But instead, with a grunt, I mustered my lower extremities with a full force of energy and placed a well-aimed kick right where it counts. "How's this for manners?" I yelled in the process.

"GAHH!" He doubled over, clutching his groin while screaming like a baby.

As for me, I was in full survival mode...my adrenaline running in high gear. The creeps behind me released their grip, either out of shock, fear, or both...and so I hoped.

Next, I went immediately into a basic shallow squat and waited. In hindsight, it would have been better if I had used this moment more wisely by bolting for the door. Unfortunately, I hesitated, only for a split second, but enough for it to become a costly mistake.

Because that's when I felt the most excruciating pain ever when the back of my leg gave way from a blunt, solid impact, just above my knee. The blow sent me crashing to the ground.

"Aaaahhhh! GOD!" I yelled. I remember that it really, really hurt...bad. I managed to turn quickly to see a giant buffoon standing over me with a baseball bat. He looked big and scary. Mud and sweat streaked his face, and his bare arms were muscular. He wasn't smiling. My skin twitched with alarm.

"Danger! Danger!" Asha blurted while throwing her journal across the room. Looking skyward, she uttered, "God...why? Why did this happen to me?"

Sliding her feet from under the covers, she stepped onto the carpet and hurried to the window. Breathing heavily, she threw it open to let the rush of cool air ride across her face. Asha's thick, dark hair tingled her shoulders and flowed in front of her like a waterfall when she leaned forward to pick up her journal.

Against the wall, Asha slid down at the window edge and allowed a teardrop to trickle down her cheek without wiping it away. Taking in the breeze and glimmering stars, she continued reading her journal.

Normally, I would have reacted with my lightning quick speed. However, that

was now seriously hampered. Someone snuck up behind me out of nowhere and kicked me in the back. My momentum thrust me forward into the guy with the bat. So, the odds were five guys and a gorilla against one girl. This was not a pretty picture, to say the least.

Two of the men grabbed me from behind while I was eyeballing King Kong and tossed me against the back wall, away from the door. I hurt. For the first time that I could remember...I felt a deep sense of trepidation.

I tried to jump up, I really did, but when I stood on my right leg, I quickly went down again. I was a sitting duck. The next thing I knew, my body was taking punches from every angle...fists flying like I was a punching bag.

I tried my best just to cover my head and face while my arms, shoulders and back took the blows...at least at first. When I tried to protect my mid-section from savage kicking, I momentarily exposed my face, and like angry bees losing honey, they repeatedly stung my exposed flesh.

Just when everything started fading to black, I heard one of them yell, "That's enough, boys. I don't think she'll try kicking us again. Bill, Mike, tie her to the post."

I was too weak to resist the dirt bags from dragging me across the floor and then tying my hands above my head to a wooden beam or pole. I will never forget the amount of pain I was in...and I remember trying my best not to groan, because to me it was a sign of weakness.

Asha closed her eyes and looked skyward, taking a deep breath. Then she continued.

There I was, hanging with my arms extending above my head when the leader walked up to me and rubbed his nose on my bloodstained cheek. I could barely see out of my left eye, which was nearly swollen shut. I remember being surprised that he wasn't the big goon. But this one had dark, evil eyes that pierced the soul.

"Quite a kick you have there, little darling. I betcha you can't do it again." He stepped back and nodded to the ape behind me, which I quickly surmised was the one holding the baseball bat, because he swung his blasted instrument of pain again, striking my other leg. *I will never like the game of baseball again.*

"Aaaahhhh—JESUS!" I yelled, panting for air like a hunted deer. *I wanted to remain defiant, however...a bad habit of mine.*

When I slurred, "You—your crazy swine!" through my gasping, *I spit blood from my mouth like a stream from a kid's squirt gun, aiming right at him. I could not hide my smirk since the splat was a bullseye between those eyes.*

The men standing around snickered. Dark eyes wiped the blood off with his sleeve and then reached around to grab the back of my hair. Yanking hard, he pulled my head close to his face. He tried to intimidate me by staring into my eyes while his nose was less than an inch from mine. I gave him the most defiant look that I could under the circumstances.

"I just saw something in your eyes that I didn't like, sweetie pie."

"Eh—twas the ref—reflection of the devil...you."

His piercing eyes continued to glare at me. "Wha—what doya want?"

“Want? You, of course. Just you—the first woman who is about to receive the Green Beret. You’re special, and we want a piece of you—especially the one you sent sprawling to the ground. Oh, he’ll get up soon enough.”

“Gah—God beats thdevil.”

“Well, darling, where is he now, hum?”

“Yu—yull see.”

“Hear that, boys? Her God is going to come get us,” he mocked.

I winced when he placed his grubby hand on my cheek and left it there. I thought about taking a chomp into his wrist but didn’t want to get rabies. Somewhere in the fracas, my hair came loose from the ponytail, and dirt-crust-ed, it was sticking to my face.

“I—I hate you. Don—don’t touch me.”

“You’re quite a defiant little missy, aren’t you?”

I was having more difficulty breathing as time went on, and I surmised that I was kicked or hit in the ribs. The muscles in my legs began to quiver also. Now I was worried that in short time shock would set in.

“Wa—water, ple—please.”

The voice behind me yelled, “We—we should give her some water, Ray.”

“Shut up, Jimmy!”

“Bu—but...”

“I said shut up! I know what I’m doing. Danny, grab me that bucket of water by the stool.”

“Th—thanks,” I murmured.

“You are quite welcome,” he said, laughing as he threw water from the bucket into my face. “You see, darlin, in these high-stakes games, we must make it as real as we can. Unfortunately, people sometimes do tend to get hurt. We want you to be fully prepared for the real world...of a true Green Beret.”

I closed my eyes, which were nearly shut anyway, because I could not stand the sight of him. Freako continued blabbing. “You’re in our neck of the woods now, lil darlin. Have you ever heard the saying, ‘What goes on in Vegas, stays in Vegas?’”

I forced my drooping head up a little and glared at my assailant, and with a meager grin I managed to say, “Nah—not Vegas, half-twit moron.”

I know...not the brightest thing to say under the circumstances.

Instinctively, I tried to move my legs.

“Aaaahhhh...ma—ma legs! I think y—you broke them!”

“Such a pity, and so close to the end of selection, too. Guys, remove her boots.”

While someone was busily removing my boots and socks...not gently, I might add, the ringleader grabbed my belt that was holding up my trousers, pulled out a large Buck knife, and cut it off. Then in one swift motion, he yanked my trousers down...over my throbbing legs.

“AAHH! GAAH!”

I took a deep breath and whispered, “Hel—help me, Je—Jesus.”

Then it happened...just when I thought bad would get very ugly, a blinding light appeared throughout the whole shack. I thought maybe my prayer was answered and I was entering the gates of heaven. Then I heard the boisterous and life-saving sound of helicopter rotor blades.

The voice over the loudspeaker blared, "ALL CLEAR!"

The next thing I know, a bunch of soldiers burst into the shack. I barely saw them, but the first guy stopped and was pointing a .9mm pistol at the ringleader. "Get away from her, PUNK!" he snarled.

The leader nodded and backed away from me. One of the men behind me must have cut the rope because I dropped like a sack of potatoes with a thud. Somehow, I stayed conscious, but barely. I only heard voices now...wanting just to go to sleep.

"Just following orders, sir."

Someone came over and covered me with a blanket or his shirt...or something. Thanks, I tried to say...but couldn't speak. He checked my vital signs, and I heard him say, "Captain, she's in a bad way."

The captain yelled, "Help him out. Secure a clearing to land the bird, now!"

The soldier helping me stood up, and I heard a commotion. Then I saw the ringleader fall beside me. He was bleeding profusely from his nose. Good, I thought.

Then I heard the captain again. "I will pull this trigger if you take another step! Now drop that bat, Sultan."

I heard that horrible thing drops to the ground next to me.

One of the bad guys said, "You can report us if you want, Captain, but we were ordered to treat her under the pretense of what she'd receive if captured for real by an actual hostile."

"Well, you bastards succeeded." The captain then spewed out a flow of words that would peel the paint off the wall.

Then I felt myself being scooped up by the soldier who came to my aid. He had me cradled with his massive arms up against his warm body. I remember trying to look at him but couldn't because of my head position. I was mumbling, "Dad? Dad?", but maybe I was just dreaming. That was the last thing I remembered.

Asha closed her journal and rested her elbows on the windowsill. Looking up at the stars, she quoted a verse from the Psalms.

"Lord, your heavens declare your glory and night after night they reveal your knowledge. They have no speech; they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."

**IF YOU ENJOYED THIS SCOTT A. MEEHAN NOVEL,
DON'T MISS:**

STARDUSK

Coming Summer 2022

A Historical Novel: In 1754, before the Revolutionary War, the British America colonies fought New France in the French and Indian War. When the Virginia militiamen under the command of 22-year-old George Washington ambushed a French patrol in the Battle of Jumonville Glen, nobody fought with more skill than the seventeen-year-old daughter of an Iroquois chief, known only as STARDUSK.