

Poetic Justice
By
Jonathan Brothers

Mara Blake silently cursed her stupidity for the hundredth time. The FBI agent wished she had never taken the cartel's bribe. Yet she had been only thinking of herself and as a result they had her in their pocket. They forced her to disclose numerous FBI cases, give a heads up on arrests, and even plant false evidence. Mara was above her head with them and they knew it.

What was even worse was that it took her a long time to realize it. For the first year she figured it was something she could shrug off. Yet as their demands grew so did her unease. Finally, Mara had enough and told them no more.

That was her second and last major mistake.

What Mara never knew, including most of the world, was that particular cartel also dealt in illegal nanotechnology. Not only that, but she quickly learned they were at war with a group out of Las Vegas. Both used the technology to create monsters in their hidden quest to topple the other. Though to be fair, it seemed the Vegas group were far more monsters themselves than the cartel she was beholden to. Rumors were that the leader of the other gang was himself an Improved, a new underground slang name for those using the nanobots to improve themselves.

The leader of the cartel, a man named Carlos, was not really interested in improving himself. However he was not above doing that to others. He would modify one of his underlings in an inhuman way and then send them on a mission to kill someone. Mara had even heard that the man had modified his two girlfriends. One apparently had six arms and a tail. While the other seemed to be a human-cat hybrid. She even heard that after their transformations both women could only eat meat; preferably still living and bloody.

Yet when Mara approached Carlos to tell him she was not his agent anymore, he had her beaten to an inch of her life. His enhanced goons overwhelmed and dragged her down to an underground holding cell. Then for far longer than she could tell, Carlos and his men tortured her. There was even a point where he threatened to feed her to his girlfriends, both of which barred their fangs at Mara with hungry pleasure.

However that was not even the worst of it. Carlos concocted an idea for something he always wanted: a monstrosly sized Improved at his beck and call. He chose her to be the one transformed.

When she awoke untold days later, Mara had been completely changed. She found she was far larger than before. The transformed agent realized she was now about the size of a truck or bull elephant.

Carlos had her transformed into some sort of four legged cross between a cat, gorilla, and lizard. Her overall body shape was that of a highly muscled flexible lean cat. Her head, when she could see her reflection, seemed like a combination of a dinosaur raptor coupled with many feline characteristics. Plus she had not two, but six golden eyes in two rows of three. Instead of having cat or lizard feet, her sharp clawed paws were much more like a gorilla's. Plus her tail was long, highly flexible, and snakelike. Finally instead of fur, her hide was covered by highly flexible tough green and brown scales.

Yet above all her changes, Mara was ravenous.

When Carlos first came in to see what his people had done to Mara, he was beside himself. Mara learned that despite her intellect and memory still intact, she could not speak. Plus he explained that his scientists had the nanobots make sure she would always obey him. Before she could protest, he gave her a simple command and she rapidly complied whether she wanted to or not.

After that Mara barely saw Carlos. For a while she roared out her anger and anguish. Then she began to mourn the predicament she was in. Despite her mind being intact, she was now no more than a monstrous animal.

When Mara did see Carlos, he always had someone he wanted her to eat. Despite her never ending hunger, she felt repulsed at eating humans. Mara remembered she had been one and what she was now was forced upon her. Most of the time she ate cattle. Yet when Carlos ordered it, she stalked, pounced, and then ripped apart the person. Almost mindlessly she slurped down her victim's remains. Once Carlos left, Mara quietly mourned what she did.

For a while Mara was unsure of how much time had passed. Yet she began to notice patterns that helped her establish the passage of the day. For example her cell had a bare concrete

floor, thick walls, and a high overhead. Yet it also featured two ventilation grates near the ceiling. After pondering them for a bit, she realized she could indirectly see when it was day or night outside. That allowed her to establish a day cycle.

Then on top of that, she was fed a live cow twice a day. Once in the morning and another in the evening. While she was repulsed at eating humans, she found those bovines were downright tasty. She saw them as living hamburgers which had been her favorite food.

After a while Mara had assumed that was how she was going to live the rest of her life. However, Carlos came up with a new way to use his pet monster. One night he ordered her to stand still. Then he walked right up to Mara's muzzle. He was close enough that she had to look down at him with her six eyed gaze. She so wanted to lash out and swallow him whole. However her conditioning forced her to stand there meekly.

"I have use for you," he casually spoke while wagging a finger at her muzzle. "You've been cooped up for far too long and I expect you want to stretch your legs a bit. Well here's your chance. You're going to be transported to the Nevada desert. There I want you to stalk and kill Geller."

Mara was surprised at the request. From her FBI days, she knew that Geller was Carlo's main opposition across the southwest. Yet she also later learned that the man was a recluse and an Improved.

"With the way you are now, you should have no problems accomplishing the task. Then afterward I want you to return to me. Nod if you understand," he commanded her.

Mara meekly nodded.

"Good, don't disappoint me."

Before she knew it, someone stunned Mara unconscious. Untold hours later found Mara waking up under the bright desert sun. She took a moment to blink the pain out of her six eyes before she looked around at her surroundings. When she did, Mara saw that they had deposited her into a ravine. Plus by the looks of the tracks, Carlos' men used a heavy duty truck to transport her before leaving.

On the one hand, Mara was tempted to run off. Here she was free in the desert and away from Carlos. However her conditioning forced her to follow his instructions.

Softly Mara climbed a hill using her four hand like paws for traction. Like a cat, she crouched at the top and peered just above the crest to get her bearings. Looking around, taking into account the vast flat landscape beyond the hills, Mara was able to spot Geller's compound far off in the distance. She estimated it to be well over five miles away.

Mara's FBI training kicked in and reminded her that with her huge body, Geller's men would see her coming over a mile away in the daylight. Because of that, she decided to wait until nightfall.

As she waited, Mara's stomach began to rumble. After a bit of hunting, she ripped into a captured bighorn sheep. It felt good stalking the animal as it allowed her some freedom.

Then as dusk began to fall, Mara worked her way towards Geller's compound. Creeping closer, she pondered the thick wall encircling the place. For a human, that wall would have been hard to get around. Yet to a large being like Mara it wasn't that big.

Studying the compound a little more, Mara contemplated her options. Before long she sort of had a plan, one that she had to make up as she went along. With that, she backed up and took a running dash at the wall.

Then at the last minute, Mara leapt up over the barrier. Landing gracefully on the other side, she saw she was in a garden of sorts. Off to one side was a human guard startled to see her. She dashed over and lashed a huge paw out at him. Grabbing the man, she brought him to her mouth and bit down. Briefly she was tempted to eat him, but Mara reminded herself she would not do that unless she was forced to.

Dropping the corpse, she began to work her way along the edge of the wall. Though her huge size made hiding almost impossible. Instead, she chose to dispatch those she found.

Five minutes and five dead guards later, she found Geller. The man had truly changed himself into a bazaar monster. His upper half appeared almost normal. Though his fingers were tentacles, his grinning mouth was full of sharp teeth, and he had more eyes than a normal human. His lower half appeared to be some sort of dinosaur raptor. Except jutting forward on either side of his human torso were two raptor heads while his tail appeared to have another head at its end.

"Hmmm... so you're what Carlos sent to kill me? I heard rumors that he would try. The puny human does not like doing his own dirty work. Though by the looks of you, I'm not sure if you can understand me even if you wanted too."

Mara chose to roar challengingly and launched herself at Geller. Though with him being smaller, he was able to adroitly leap out of the way. Yet Mara dug her claws into the ground to come to a sudden halt and change course.

Geller, for his part, let a loud roar out of all three of his raptor heads. While he did that, he extended two sharp boney spikes from his wrists. Satisfied, the Improved launched himself at her. However Mara countered by swatting out a forelimb. It connected slamming his body through the air. However, he twisted and landed back atop his muscled hind legs.

With that he tried again to attack. When Mara swiped at him once more, Geller dodged her swing. Coming close, he attempted to slam one of his wrist spikes into her hide. However her scales were enough to stop him from penetrating her.

Instead she tried again to grab him while he was close. Yet Geller darted out of the way. Then Mara abruptly realized he was unknowingly in range of her tail. She swept it out and slammed it into him.

She followed that up by rushing towards him while Geller was prone. With one hard gesture, she bashed her hand into the man and then grasped the injured gangster. Geller tried to bite her with one of his mouths, yet her thick scaly hide stopped him. Finally she brought him to her mouth and bit off most of his human torso. Spitting it out, Mara dropped the rest of Geller's body onto the ground.

Mara was about to dart back to Carlos. Then an idea occurred to her. There could be a good chance she might find Geller's nanobot stuff and transform herself back. Plus Carlos' orders never specified a time she had to return.

Mara was too large to enter Geller's house. So while dispatching those people she encountered, she peered into every window she could. Before long Mara concluded his machines were not there. She was about to give up hope until she spotted a non-descript cinderblock building off in a corner. Rushing over, she lifted up a garage rollup door and saw what looked like a lab.

Peering about, she saw no one inside. So delicately she squeezed her huge body through the door. Then ever so carefully she moved a few things out of her way and went deeper into the space.

Within moments she stood before a mainframe computer. While it may have been large for a human, it was rather small to her. Then every so lightly so as not to crush the keyboard, Mara used a claw to press computer keys.

Though she had no idea how to use the program, she soon learned a few things. While there was a way to direct the nanobots to do specific stuff, she had no idea how to do that. Yet she did come across a general list of things she could ask the nanobots to do. However a warning screen informed her that using any of those options would allow the nanobots freedom to choose. So in the end, Mara realized there was no way for her to get the machine to change her back into a human. Instead, she decided to try to change herself into something better than how she was now. So she chose what she felt was the best options to regain her humanity.

Satisfied, Mara looked around for the syringe full of nanobots indicated by the computer. Within moments she found it laying on a table. However with her huge hands, the syringe looked positively tiny.

Delicately she reached down and carefully picked up the thing. Mara realized with her scaly hide, trying to find a spot to inject herself would be tough. Finally she decided to inject the nanobots inside her mouth and into her bloodstream. For a short bit Mara did not feel anything and was beginning to think she did it wrong. Yet after a couple minutes she began to feel a buzzing burning feeling spreading throughout her body.

After a moment the computer alerted her that the nanobots were ready to go. Mara reached out and lightly touched the start button. With that the buzzing intensified. At first it seemed like it was all over her body. But within moments she felt a strange feeling begin to form along her back between her shoulders just behind her neck.

While she knew something was happening up there, Mara had no idea what it was. Her neck could not turn around enough to see what she was growing. Yet the strange feelings she felt seemed to suggest whatever it was, was emerging quickly.

Then abruptly all sorts of new feelings began to flood through her from what had grown in. First she found she could smell through it. The overwhelming scent she noticed was her own animal odor. Then she found she could hear through it. Finally she opened up a pair of eyes within it.

Abruptly Mara realized that the nanobots had grown a human torso out of her back. It looked exactly like her original body right down to the freckles on her hands. Peering down with her human eyes, Mara saw how her newly grown abdomen merged into the back of her beast body. Even more was when she touched the spot she could not only feel it with her newly grown hands, but also with her monster skin. Leaning over a bit, Mara even touched the top of her head and felt it from both sides. Plus she marveled at how she was peering about with both heads at the same time.

"Ca... can, can I speak? I can speak again! I'm talking," she happily exclaimed to the empty room. "I guess it sort of worked!"

Yet before she could comment further, Mara felt more things happening to the newly grown torso. First she felt a pressure form to the right of her human neck. Within moments her head was pushed to the left while a lump grew in. Soon this resolved into a second human head with all the same features as her first. After that two bumps formed below her arms along her human ribcage. These soon pushed out into another pair of human arms. Next the teeth in both of her human mouths fell out and were replaced by sharp fangs. Finally sharp talons grew out of each of her human fingers while a horn pushed out each of her foreheads. Then as a last touch, spikes began emerging at the end of her tail which she could use to gore things.

After a moment the computer informed her that the nanobots were complete. Yet something else occurred to Mara. With that she laid her main body down and rolled over to allow her human torso access to the computer keyboard. Now with human hands, she found typing to be much easier and faster than before.

Working with the machine Mara learned a couple things. One was she confirmed that the nanobots could not change her back to a human. At best they could only add or reconfigure things.

Then another idea occurred to her. She queried the machine and found a way to type in commands. Mara told the nanobots to reverse what Carlos had done to her mind. When she started the

process, Mara first felt the same buzzing feeling centered around her brain in her main head. Then after what seemed like a long time the computer reported the nanobots were finished.

Mara decided to test to see if it worked. She thought about just walking away from Geller's old compound. In the past, Carlos' compulsion would have forced her to discard the idea. Yet now she could freely think about defying his order.

"I'm free," Mara exclaimed out of both of her human mouths! Even her lower mouth let out a pleased roar. "Now let's get the bastard for what he did to me!"

Mara pressed a key causing the nanobots to destroy themselves within her. After that she stood up and carefully backed out of the space. Briefly she had to duck her newly grown torso as she squeezed through the door.

"If he's there, great, I'm going to tear him apart. If not then oh well I'll keep my options open." Mara spoke to herself while she left the empty compound. It felt good to speak out loud even if it was to herself.

Cautiously Mara worked her way back to the ravine she had been deposited into. Coming closer, she slowly stalked forward and then poked her newly grown torso above a hill top. She peered about using both human heads.

Down below was a large truck with an enclosed trailer. It had a ramp Mara assumed was for her to walk up. Around the truck were numerous people, some sported weapons while the others were just gossiping. Their postures suggested they might have already heard of her successful attack. Plus she spotted Carlos and his two altered girlfriends. He was smoking a cigar and gesturing to his lieutenants standing nearby. The man appeared to assume he was in no danger.

Mara debated whether to try sneaking down there. Yet she grasped that with her large size and no sizable concealment, she would not be able to surprise them. So instead she chose the frontal approach.

Climbing the rest of the hill, Mara guardedly worked her way down the other side. As soon as they saw her monstrous body crest the hill, everyone stopped to watch her. As she got closer, Carlos approached with a grand smile.

"You did it Mara, you took out Geller for me. I'm very," he suddenly stopped. His mood changed when he got a good look at the changes to her body.

"Hello Carlos!"

"What happened to you?"

"I improved myself. You like it?"

"Um, no I don't. I liked you better the way you were."

"Like an animal you mean?"

"Yes."

"Well get used to this. Though you won't have long I promise!" With that Mara launched herself at the man who had tortured and transformed her. Carlos' men quickly reacted and began firing at her. Yet they were not doing much to her scaly huge body.

Carlos stumbled backwards trying to get out of the way of the charging monster. However he was not quick enough as Mara lashed out to grab him before he could back away. She focused her monstrous six eyed gaze down at him. Though she used her human torso to keep an eye on the others. When they tried to rescue their boss, Mara whipped her tail around keeping them at bay.

"I have been so looking forward to this for a long time."

"But, but, you're not allowed to eat me. We had done something to you to keep that from happening."

"I fixed that. Though the one bright spot was that I've taken out Geller and now I'll get to kill you too. Goodbye," Mara bid him before she pushed him into her main mouth, bit down, and ripped his head and shoulders off. Something in the back of her mind suggested consuming him. In the end, she chose to give in to the poetic justice of eating him.

Hungrily she chewed the remains of the man who had tortured and transformed her. Seeing their boss killed and eaten took the fight out of most of Carlos' men. They fled from the scene while a few stalwartly tried whatever they could to harm her. Yet she lashed out while gnawing on the remaining bits of Carlos.

After a short bit, Mara crushed one with her paw, gored another with her tail, and bit a third. That was enough to convince the remaining few to run away. Briefly she watched them dash from the monster they created.

Out of nowhere came Carlos' girlfriends. Yet instead of trying to fight the giant monster, both Improved people kneeled and picked at the gory bits of Carlos that Mara had dropped. One chewed an arm while the other worked on a leg. Each kept an

eye on the larger monster. Satisfied they had their fill, both stood up and bowed to Mara before darting off into the desert.

Pleased she was free, Mara contemplated the gory scene she created. By that point there was very little of Carlos left. She felt good knowing she was digesting him. Briefly something in the back of her mind suggested snacking on the bodies. However her revulsion over eating humans came back in full.

Then it dawned on Mara that she could never go home. On top of that, staying there would attract attention sooner or later. Finally if she was going to live and not eat humans, she would need another source of food.

Mara's college geography lessons came back to her and she remembered up north were vast lands full of big bison. Those cattle like creatures would be perfect for her. Plus if she did it right, she could get there without being noticed.

Satisfied she had a plan, the monster who had been FBI agent Mara Blake began her long journey northward. Where exactly she was going to end up, she had no idea.