

## *Under a Killing Speaker*

### *a sonic novel*

« It is sometimes an appropriate response to reality to go insane » thought Vargos while closing the massive iron door of the *psychodungeon*. She dropped two capsules of *Serionin* in her mouth and swallowed them without hesitation. While swiftly making her way through the labyrinth of infinite corridors, the rumble of low frequencies surrounding her got more intense, followed by resonating masses of piercing pitches turning around her head like a swarm of mad insects. *They* were approaching.

As the chemicals were spreading in her organism, her echolocative sensors got more accurate which made it easier to estimate the distance of her pursuers. If she could reach the *Tower of Torments* before them she would be safe for a while.

Vargos was born blind. She was the last in a series of *metahumans* called *Tarterians* who got created in a secret military compound just after the *proto war* ended.

Although having a human envelope, *Tarterians* featured genetically modified nano-organisms allowing them to cast extreme abilities. One of them being a highly developed hearing systems like bats or dolphins. All *Tarterians* were blind though. Their ears were their eyes.

« Skill is a function of chance » said Vargos to herself while entering the Tower of Torments. As she thought she could rest for a while and put her thoughts together, grand clusters of intense tinnitus brutally erupted in her brain followed by an extremely loud sub-bass signal that nearly made her defecate. They were using sonic warfare to incapacitate her. As of now, escaping was impossible.

While preparing herself to engage her oponents, Vargos' aural pains ceased as suddenly as they came. She sharpened her senses and tried to locate her invisible ennemies. It was silent. A relative silence though as she could still hear two sounds inside her : her nervous system in operation and her blood in circulation. Or maybe was it yet another acoustic illusion? The mysterious followers seemed to have disappeared though.

Vargos swallowed three capsules of *Serionin* and focused on her senses. Infinite darkness. She had the same characteristic than a human having lost the sense of seeing as she possessed two *bulbus oculi*, but they were covered by a thin membrane of flesh, like if she had permanently closed eyelids without the possibility to open them. Infinite darkness. She could nevertheless feel different sources of light and her absence of vision was balanced with extraordinary hearing properties.

« My focus determines the reality around me ». As this thought passed by her consciousness, her heart was reaching hundred forty *bpm*. The molecules of *Serionin* were making a good job. Vargos' echosensors sent a four thousand hertz wave in front of her. The architecture of the tower reacted immediately reflecting the signal back which helped her

to determine precisely the shape of the stairs. She now had a clear representation of the space surrounding her and ran her way up the tower. The ascension took long minutes as the regular sound of her hard silicon shoes resonated on the stairs like a rain of tiny impacts. Short of breath, she progressively could perceive in her own intimate darkness a spot of white light ahead of her followed by a warm air flow. The exit to the top of the tower was only a few meters away as she suddenly felt a strong blow on her left shoulder accompanied by a deafening burst of sound reverberating all around her like a pernicious resonance. Vargas got brutally pushed against the stairs, and had only a nanosecond to get on her feet and jump through the exit door in front of her before a second louder blow, which would have been fatal, smashed the stairs in front of her, turning the old stones into sand. Her katana, sharp as the big blue shark's teeth, quickly made its way from under her black trenchcoat and pointed menacingly in front of her as she reached the platform outside the tower and got in fighting position. Vargas noticed that her slashing weapon would be of no use against her enemy. As the sound of an electronic glissando was growing louder towards her, she recognized the sonic signature of her opponent: a *mutated Kirloster*. They were quite rare in the *psychodungeon*. It was a creature made of roughly assembled pieces of human corpses and some robotic elements. Its specific feature was four rotative directional speakers spread around its torso and able to shoot corridors of frequencies up to hundred ninety decibels. If Vargas would get hit by one of this maximised sound blast, her internal organs would immediately collapse causing irreversible death. Luckily, the Kirloster needed a few seconds to cast another corridor of fatal frequencies. Feeling her opponent was preparing its dangerous blow, Vargas used another weapon: She threw a *sonic screen device (s.s.d.)* in the direction of the Kirloster. The little blue sphere made of non-existing metal stopped its trajectory just fifty centimeters in front of the dangerous sets of four speakers ready to beam their audio death. The *Kirloster* noticed the maneuver, however too late, the *s.s.d.* exploded silently and created an invisible wall of particles while its four speakers shot the fatal blow. The dangerous sound waves got blocked by the particles wall and redirected against the Kirloster this time strongly amplified by the device. Hit by a noise storm of nearly two hundred forty decibels, the sound of a 5.0 Richter earth quake, the Kirloster got literally disintegrated under the sound pressure.

Vargas had defeated her opponent. Her hand nervously searched her pocket for the pack of *Serionin*. There were only two capsules left in the package. She swiftly threw them in her mouth and dried the sweat that was dropping from her forehead. She was now on the platform outside of the tower which was overhanging the city. Although she couldn't see the landscape, she felt the warm air saturated by pollution. She had no other choices than going back in the *psychodungeon*. But there was a major problem: She ran out of drug.