

"NEW YORK"

by
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TABITHA "SCOTTY" SCOTT

So I finish grad school.
International Affairs. Your
typical, poli-sci, nerd-cliche. Top
of the class, published twice,
interned at D.C. You know. Ready to
change the world. I'm all set to
move to New York, and work at the
U.N. Then I met Hamilton. I'm in
the food court, having a smoothie
and this guy comes out of nowhere
and just sits right next to me. "Is
this old man about to hit on me?"
He just says "You're not going to
New York", hands me a folder and
walks away. Welcome letter, health
benefits, security clearance, and
plane tickets. For my first
assignment. In Baghdad. Nine days
later, I'm providing tactical
support for counter-insurgency
agents. Don't ask me why I wasn't
in New York instead. I already
asked and I don't know. My first
op. It was pretty much a cluster.
The agent's cover gets blown. His
parents were Iraqi-born, but he
grew up in Cleveland. Linguistics
is usually pretty good about
vetting the accents, but out in the
field, it's real easy to slip up
and mispronounce a syllable here
and there. He broke character. They
broke his skull. We couldn't
MEDEVAC him out in time. That was
the last time I ever cried after an
op. There's no crying in The
Company.