

Author's Note: *Events in the first part of this chapter, and the latter part of the previous, will operate in parallel with the latter part of Chapter 318: Hit Girl in San Diego - Part I and also with Chapter 319: Hit Girl in San Diego - Part II of my other story Forsaken.*

Tuesday, August 30th, 2016

The Apartment

"Well, that all went to shit," Juno commented as she pulled off her jacket.

The young girl grimaced as she pulled her black top off and then she ripped apart the Velcro which strapped on the ballistic vest. She pulled off the thin under-shirt and glared at the bruises on her chest.

"She had us dead to rights," Guinevere moaned as she examined her own bruises of which there were a much greater number.

"You beat her off," Juno pointed out.

"Like fuck, I did - she let us go."

"What?"

"She was toying with us - if not, we'd both be very, very dead.

"As opposed to just 'dead'."

Guinevere grimaced at the comment.

"You saw her mask, right?"

"Yeah."

"Who do we know that wears a mask - and is an exceptional fighter."

"I dunno."

"I'll give you a clue: the markings on the mask - what colour were they?"

"Purple . . . oh, shit!"

The dawning comprehension of whom she may have been fighting scared the living daylights out of Juno.

"We were trained in her image. We were trained to take her down. I failed - I'm second-rate behind the likes of her."

"Guinny, I love very much, but you do talk some crap."

"I wish I could be as good as her - you notice the man she was with, last night? I bet that was her partner, Kick-Ass."

"Could have been worse, in retrospect," Juno grimaced.

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Juno looked over at her cousin as she left the bathroom.

"What's wrong, Ginny?"

Guinevere was looking very pensive.

"How did she find us?"

"Maybe she followed us, last night."

"Nah - she must have used a tracker . . . but how?"

"You left all your clothes in the changing room, when you stripped," Juno pointed out.

"No - she would not have had the time. How about you?"

"Me?"

"Yes - you dumped all your kit and performed your naked warning leaving your clothing unattended."

Juno blushed at the mention of her impromptu striptease the previous night - the comments and laughter still rankled.

"We still going ahead with tonight?"

"No - we go tomorrow night."

The next morning

Wednesday, August 31st

The Apartment

Juno was still sulking.

She was upset at the comments that the fat bastard had made about her body and she was upset about what she had set in motion, just the previous morning, getting Guinevere's ass kicked as a result.

"It wasn't your fault, Juno - but you should not have shot her; you know she'll probably kill us - she knows where we live," Guinevere had commented.

"I'm sorry."

"If she wanted us dead; we'd be dead."

To try and alleviate the other problem, Guinevere had gone out and dragged Logan back to the apartment.

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"Logan, would you please tell Juno what you think of her," Guinevere ordered.

Logan looked a little confused and self-conscious while Juno just glowered at her cousin.

"I think she's funny and I like her company. She . . . she's also very beautiful."

Logan was blushing furiously as he spoke.

"What do you think of her body," Guinevere persisted.

"Perfect. . ." Logan muttered with intense embarrassment.

Juno actually giggled.

"You happy now, oh sulky one?" Guinevere asked. "Logan obviously thinks that you have a perfect body and that you're a beautiful young woman."

"Yeah - thanks," Juno muttered, her face a violent red colour. "You want a Coke, Logan?"

"Please."

The apartment

Later that evening

"All set?"

"Yeah - let's get this done, Lilith."

The two girls slunk out of the apartment after dark and headed into the city. It was the night - it was the night in which they were going to take down the distribution centre . . . or they would die trying. 'Well, maybe not the second part,' Guinevere thought.

They were both as prepared as they could be . . . she hoped.

Mid-City, just south of Downtown

"Fuck!"

"What's wrong?" Lilim asked.

"The guards - there's way more than before; almost double," Lilith complained.

"We can take them," Lilim said encouragingly.

"Lilim, thanks for your vote of confidence, but it's going to be way more difficult."

"I want to continue - we must."

"Yes, we must."

Both girls crept from shadow to shadow, avoiding the bright lights.

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The first kill, unsurprisingly, went to Lilith.

The *Predator* darted out of the darkness and she came up behind a female guard. The guard knew nothing until a blade sank into her chest and pierced her heart, tearing it in half and killing her all but instantly. Lilim covered her companion with Glock 43, complete with attached suppressor. Lilim had shown her competence with the weapon, despite having never actually taken a life.

Lilim looked down at the dead woman. It was the second person that she had seen die before her in the past few weeks. She was still struggling with that aspect of what she was becoming. She did not want to kill, but her maturing mind told her that one day, it would be necessary - but could she actually do it; she had no way of knowing until that time. Lilim snapped out of her thoughts as Lilith indicated it was time to move. They moved closer to the target building, taking a circuitous route, until. . .

"What the fuck!" Lilith exclaimed as she came across two dead bodies, each with a single bullet wound to the head.

"Somebody else here, you think?" Lilim asked as her eyes darted everywhere, looking for trouble.

"Maybe. . . ." Lilith muttered.

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It was crucial to gain entry to the facility before the men inside realised that something was wrong - if they were concerned for their safety, then they might kill their workers. Lilim managed to put down a guard before she and Lilith discreetly made their way towards the target building and headed inside. It felt good to Lilith to actually be inside the building with clothes on . . . for a change. Even Lilim felt weird considering on her last visit she had voluntarily stripped naked and paraded her body before dozens of eyes, both male and female.

They closed from the northern end of the building and stopped within the confines of the shadows, a few feet from the dazzlingly bright arc lights. As before, there was a group of about thirty naked women going about their taskings. Watching over them, were twelve men, each armed with either a pistol or an automatic weapon. At the head of the T-shaped table, a large guard stood before the counting room where there appeared to be some very heavy security - at least six men were visible around the man who was busy counting a decidedly large amount of cash - much more than previously.

"You ready, Lilim?"

Lilim took a brief look around and then she nodded.

"Remember, close your eyes and cover your ears - we move the moment the flash subsides. Good luck, honey."

Lilim nodded and both girls readied themselves. Lilim pulled the pin of the M84 stun grenade and held the safety lever in place while Lilith pulled the pins from two identical grenades.

"Fire in the hole!" Lilith growled as she threw her grenades out in the light.

Lilim did the same, but then she frowned as four identical looking objects shot out of the darkness on the far side of the T-shaped table. Lilith saw them and she dived on top of her cousin, with her hands over her own ears as Lilim covered her own.

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The detonation of seven stun grenades, each good for 180 decibels, was like the very gates of hell opening and the entire building shook as the sound reverberated around the structure. The million-candela flash multiplied seven times was just as immense, like staring into the sun and every person within the facility (excepting the four vigilantes) reeled in pain from the combined effects of disorientation, confusion, loss of balance, and loss of coordination. They all suffered from intense inner ear disturbance, tinnitus, and deafness - not to mention the flash blindness.

The incredible sound had Lilith and Lilim rolling around on the ground, the enhanced effects of the grenades not blocked by their hands. They were totally unaware of what was going on around them as they both struggled to regain their feet and understand what was happening to them. Then they both felt a strong hand grab them and haul them both to their feet.

"Fucking get up!" came an electronically enhanced voice.

Lilith forced herself to respond, reaching for Lilim as she did so. She looked up and saw that mask from the previous day and she backed away, pulling Lilim with her.

"Watch yourselves!" the voice growled before the masked vigilante pulled out a pair of pistols and began shooting.

Lilith pulled her own pistol and she dragged the stunned Lilim around the corner into safety.

"Get with it Lilim!" she yelled and the younger girl shook her head a few times as her mind came back into focus along with her vision and hearing.

"I'm okay. . ."

"Let's get back into the fight, girl!" Lilith yelled over the gunfire.

They both ran towards a group of men coming from another part of the building - there were four men and two women, each armed with an automatic weapon. Lilith opened fire, dropping two before the others dived for cover.

One of the injured men struggled into the shadows, the other never moved again.

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Lilith and Lilim were pinned down by the guards, but the guards were also pinned down by Lilith and Lilim - a classic stalemate. However, they were smart - the main group kept Lilith's attentions while one of the men flanked the two girls.

Lilim had no idea what made her do it, nor why, but something made her turn to her left, her pistol following her eyes, just as she had been taught. A guard was standing a little over a dozen yards away and his pistol was aimed at Lilith. Lilim just reacted; she adjusted her aim and she squeezed the trigger three times without any conscious thought.

The guard staggered backwards two steps as the three copper-jacketed slugs drove into his chest, then he dropped his pistol and sagged to the ground. Lilith took a moment to check on the gunfire from immediately beside her and she grimaced behind her bandanna - Juno had just taken her first life. However, Lilith filed the fact away for later . . . assuming they actually survived the night.

Then Lilith sniffed the air. . .

"Shit!"

"I smell something," Lilim called over.

"Fire!" Lilith replied - as if they did not have enough on their plates! "Stay low and move under the smoke."

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The smoke had changed things - everybody was fully aware that the fire department and the police would be along in mere minutes. Lilith moved so she could get a better angle on the guards - Lilim followed suit, keeping Lilith covered. Lilith dropped another gunman leaving the remaining two to jump out of cover and run - they never got far as moving six yards before they were both gunned down by Hit Girl. She glanced in their direction as she ran past with a little wave.

Lilith growled at that - she was being upstaged by the very person that she was trained to destroy . . . only that was now in her past. Lilith had a new life, just as Hit Girl did. If Hit Girl could protect Chicago, then why should Lilith not protect San Diego. That put her on a par with Hit Girl, if not by skill-level, then at least by tasking.

Lilith ran after Hit Girl with Lilim by her side. After a few dozen yards, Hit Girl vanished into the black smoke and Lilith suddenly realised something . . . she was lost. She had absolutely no idea where she was or which direction was which. All she could see was blackness. Listening did not help, either - all she could hear was gunfire and the crackling of flames.

Lilim was choking on the black smoke and she sank to her knees. Lilith felt panic beginning to grow inside her - she'd fucked everything up and taken her cousin down with her. The smoke was

thickening and the heat was building. Lilith was soon on the ground beside her cousin, coughing. They crawled what felt like a considerable distance but apart from obstacles they never found an exit.

"I'm sorry, Juno - I've fucked things up. . ."

There was no answer from Lilim, she had passed out from the smoke. Lilith was just seconds away from passing out herself when she felt somebody close by and she heard a voice.

"Hang in there, guys. . ."

She felt herself being picked up and then nothing as her world went black.

An hour later

Outside the industrial area

When Guinevere regained consciousness, she found herself lying on the ground, hidden behind some bushes.

She began to look around her in a rising panic, but she stopped as she laid eyes on Juno who was coughing violently. Then she noticed more - they were in a very safe location, about a hundred yards from the ferociously burning building and well beyond the lines of firefighters who were intent on containing the blaze. Then she saw Juno's confused expression as the girl stared over at two good-sized bags.

Guinevere unzipped one and her eyes went wide as she took in all the cash which was crammed inside the bag. The other bag was identical - there had to be tens of thousands of dollars all together. Lying on top of the cash in the second bag was a cell phone and a folded note. Guinevere unfolded the note and she read the bold print:

Just in case

Take care

Your friends from the Windy City

Guinevere smiled as she got to her feet and grabbed hold of the first of the bags - she winced; money was notoriously heavy. Juno studied the piles of cash for a moment and then the note before she zipped up the second bag.

"Did we just get the 'Fusion Seal of Approval'?"

"I would assume that the 'Fusion Seal of Dis-approval' is death; so, I'd have to say: yes."

"Cool," Juno commented as she hefted the second bag onto her shoulder.

Two hours later

The Apartment

They were both exhausted as they lay in the bath together.

It was still very early on the Thursday morning. The bathwater had been changed three times, but it was still black with soot. Guinevere was in a very bad mood and Juno accidentally kicking her in the snatch with her foot did not exactly help - despite the younger girl's apology.

"Damn you, Hit Girl!" Guinevere exclaimed. "Why did you have to be there?"

Juno grimaced at her cousin.

"If she and Kick-Ass had not been there, then we would be very, very, dead," Juno pointed out.

Guinevere sighed at the annoyingly accurate comment

"They were really good," she admitted. "They managed to take down the whole facility, even while keeping an eye on us - even taking down the goon squad guarding the money man before finally rescuing us and carrying us to safety. On top of that, they even gave us the money."

"They sound like invincible guardian angels when you put it like that."

"I know - the fact that we are still alive means that Hit Girl did not see us as a threat in any way."

"Thanks for keeping me alive, Guinny."

"Yeah, the kick in the snatch was a great 'thank you', honey!"

"It was an accident - my legs are long and not easy to manoeuvre," Juno complained.

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An hour later, both were lying in Guinevere's bed.

"So . . ." Guinevere began.

"You worried 'cause I killed a cunt?" Juno asked as she stared at the ceiling.

"Yes."

"Don't be - the cunt deserved it; he was going to shoot my Guinny."

Guinevere smiled.

"You did your job, guarding my back - thanks."

"I know I should feel bad about killing a guy but . . . I can't feel bad about killing him; it was self-defence. I was defending the only

person I have left in my life. It was a no-brainer - the cunt was dead the moment he tried to kill you."

"Well-reasoned."

"I surprise myself, sometimes."

"You did well, Lilim, and I am very proud of you."

"Thanks, Guinny - I love you very much."

"I love you, too, Juno."

Later that morning

Thursday, September 1st

"Guinny?"

"Yeah, honey?"

"Why do you have an envelope in your jacket?"

"I don't."

"What's that, then?" Juno asked as she pointed at something which had fallen out of Guinevere's jacket.

"I don't know," Guinevere replied as she picked up the long white envelope.

She examined it carefully - it was plain, sealed, with nothing written on it. With extreme care, she cut open the top with a sharp knife. Inside, were a neatly folded set of papers. On reading the top page, Guinevere discovered that they were a contract for a storage locker. As she flicked through the pages, two access cards dropped out, along with a piece of card with two six-digit numbers printed onto it.

Guinevere smiled up at Juno.

"I think it's time to go for a ride, honey."

Storage Locker 476

Guinevere was more than a little annoyed to find out that the storage locker in question was less than hundred yards away from her intended safe haven.

Did Hit Girl know more than Guinevere had thought? Guinevere swiped one of the two access cards and she entered the associated pin - the main gate to the storage facility slid open and they were able to ride in. It took only a few minutes to find the locker which was located in a secluded part of the facility where nobody could observe them without being easily visible. The locker itself appeared large with a full-size garage-door-style roller shutter.

Guinevere parked the motorcycle and she swiped the access card in the adjacent reader and punched in the pin again. The door silently motored open.

For safety, Guinevere drew a small pistol and she carefully pushed through the opaque plastic, vertical blind which hung from the ceiling obscuring any view of the locker's interior from outside. As she entered, the lighting came on automatically and she stopped dead so fast that Juno cannoned straight into the back of her.

"Holy fuck!" Juno breathed before Guinevere could say a word.

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Before they did anything else, Guinevere wheeled the motorcycle inside and she pressed a switch on the wall which closed the roller shutter.

"Don't touch *anything!*" Guinevere warned as she moved slowly to check out the space.

It was large, about the size of a thirty-foot shipping container. The rear section of which was stacked of packages of varying shapes and sizes. Despite Guinevere's warning, Juno headed directly for the packages and she began to poke around.

"Juno!"

"Look - more money; tons of it!"

"Juno. . ." Guinevere tried but even she was entranced by the neatly packaged cash which was stacked up to the left side of the container.

The other packages were stacked up to the right side of the container. As Guinevere ran her eyes across the markings on the packages, she identified most of the packages as containing weapons. All of the packages were factory-fresh and many were sealed, indicating virgin weapons. Juno pulled open a large cardboard box to reveal body armour.

Then, the ever-curious Juno discovered another white envelope stashed amongst the packages. She ripped it open and pulled out a single piece of paper. Once she had unfolded the piece of paper, and with Guinevere peering over her shoulder, she read the text out loud:

'So, you found the unit. It, and everything in it, is yours. The unit is paid up for twelve months. It should serve you well; considering it isn't far from your safehouse. Use it well, Lilith and Lilim.'

Guinevere was astounded but she was also very concerned by the wording of the letter. Hit Girl was obviously going out of her way to support them both. Worryingly, Hit Girl knew all about them. She knew where they lived. She knew their codenames - she would also know their real names. The storage unit had been taken out in the

name of some nameless corporation which Guinevere did not recognise, but it made for an ideal cover.

A part of her - the *Predator* part of her - told her to run, to leave it all behind and to start somewhere afresh. She had been taught that any contact with Hit Girl was to be avoided, but she also knew that most of what she had been told about Hit Girl by her *Urban Predator* instructors was completely wrong. However, it was not her decision to make. She turned to Juno and then sat down on the concrete floor. Juno followed suit.

"Honey, we are a team, yes?"

"Yes, Guinny."

"In that case, from this point on, we make decisions together. I will no longer be making any more life-changing decisions that affect you without seeking your consent. The past few days are a case in point. Hit Girl knows who we are. She knows that we are Guinevere and Juno. She also knows that we are Lilith and Lilim. She knows where we live. I was taught to treat Hit Girl with suspicion, but she has not done anything to hurt either one of us - ignore that scrap beneath the train station - and if anyone can keep a secret, she can. My training, however, tells me to run and seek a new secure home, but now that I am able to think for myself, I can see a future for us in San Diego. We have money - a lot of it. We have weapons. We have back up, I suppose, should things go really bad."

"What are you asking, Guinny?"

"What do you want to do, Juno? You just say the word, we pack up and go buy a house. We live our lives out as normal human beings. We forget about *Urban Predator*. We forget about vigilantism. We are a team and I want to know what you want out of this partnership."

"You do know that all that crap you just spewed out can be summed up in one sentence, don't you?" Juno replied. "Just ask me: Do I want to continue to save lives in San Diego?"

Guinevere smiled and she repeated the question.

"Do you want to continue to save lives in San Diego?"

Juno paused for dramatic effect with an enormous grin on her face.

"Hell, yeah!"

Juno then dived at Guinevere and she pushed the older girl down onto the floor, hugging her tightly. Finally, she planted a big kiss on the horrified Guinevere's lips.

"You know I don't go in for this kinda thing, huh?" Guinevere tried as she cringed. "And definitely not with my own cousin. You want sex, you go see Logan."

Juno giggled and she gave her cousin another kiss.

"Wherever you go, Ginny, I go. Juno and Guinevere. Guinevere and Juno. Lilim and Lilith. Lilith and Lilim. You are not getting rid of me *that* easily! Besides, if I wanted to have my way with you, I would have done it when we were naked in the tub. I have had female fantasies, just not any with you in them, although those red pubes are to die for!"

"Good to know," an embarrassed Guinevere growled as she pushed the thirteen-year-old girl off to one side. "Let's go get something to eat; I'm starving."

"Can I come?"

"Well I ain't leaving you hear with a ton of cash and a ton of weapons," Guinevere chuckled.