

## ***New Year's Eve, 2015***

It was about to dawn.

Another year was gone and 2016 was right around the corner. My sixth sense – or rather my purple sense, as Dave called it – told me that something was going to explode on New Year's Eve and not just the fireworks, neither...

That night, I was out with Haze and Clarity. The three of us were on patrol with a single target in mind. The three of us were not alone, not that Hit Girl needed much assistance... Kick-Ass was a block over with Swipe and they were to be our backup.

We were in Times Square – well, just off to the side, in the shadows – and we awaited the expected trouble as the clock ticked ever closer to midnight. It was just before eleven when *he* appeared.

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"Holy, fuck!" Haze growled. "It's Mr Bondage!"

"That would be, *The Motherfucker*, bitch!"

I rolled my eyes as I studied the idiot and his entourage.

"Just the three of you, Hit Bitch?"

"Maybe..."

"Where's my pal?"

"Kick-Ass is *not* your pal!" I growled back.

"Well, he's gonna miss seeing his little bitch getting fucked," Chris D'Amico went on.

I scowled as I saw that fucking massive bitch in her red costume complete with the hammer and sickle. She sneered in my direction and I had a distinct feeling that she was very keen to make up for the last time.

As Chris and his goons had appeared, the crowds had moved away in fear. Strangely, there were not many cops about – in fact, I saw none! It was up to us to protect the citizens of New York – just the five of us...

"Hey!" came a familiar bellow. "Chris D'Amico!"

I saw Chris scowl at the use of his real name. He turned to face Kick-Ass and Swipe. His face showed great annoyance.

"How many times . . . I am *not* Chris D'Amico! I am *The Motherfucker!*"

Chris seemed mildly annoyed.

"Never – you'll always be Chris, I fuck myself, D'Amico – at least as far as *I* am concerned."

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## ***Kick-Ass***

Chris was *not* what you'd call, a happy bunny!

I glared back at him as he glared at me. I would never back down as long as he was alive. I owed him and I owed him big. I reached up and drew my Ko-Wakizashi swords. On the other side of Chris' cunts, I saw Hit Girl unsheathe her own Wakizashi blades. Beside me, Swipe drew his Ninja-To and moved a few feet away from me to give us both room to move.

Hit Girl, Haze, and Clarity were more than ready to fight.

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### ***Hit Girl***

Everything just seemed to explode into action.

Against the five of us, there were more than a dozen cunts, plus cockface. Maybe I started it – I was not sure, but Chris seemed to take offence at me shooting one of his cunts who had raised a pistol towards Swipe.

“Game on, motherfuckers!” I yelled as I pulled the trigger twice.

While I would normally see three to one against as pretty reasonable odds, we were also handicapped by needing to defend the petrified civilians who seemed to run about like scared chickens. The cunts seemed to take great delight in attacking anybody that they could reach.

Unfortunately, we were only five – therefore, we could only be in so many places...

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### **Safehouse K**

“Christ – it’s a cockfuck out there!”

Erika turned to Marty with a grin.

“What, exactly, *is* a ‘cockfuck’?”

“Dunno – but I think it must be something like what we are witnessing in Times Square,” Marty replied.

“You hacked into all these cameras?”

“Yeah – what of it?” Marty replied nonchalantly.

“Isn’t that illegal?” Erika persisted.

“So...”

“Mindy is having a bad effect on you, Marty!”

“You mean that I’ve lost a few pounds and gained some awesome muscle?”

“Not quite what I meant...”

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### ***Times Square***

Not surprisingly the place was heaving with thousands of people whose lives were now being threatened by over a dozen costumed individuals who were intent on causing mayhem. Many

looked around for the expected uniformed NYPD running to help. All they saw were other costumed individuals who seemed to be intent on fighting the other costumed individuals.

All around there were screams as people ran for their lives. Some stayed to fight, but not many had come equipped for a melee fight on New Year's Eve! Some threw some good punches and felled a cunt or two, but the cunts returned the favour with bats and knives. There were already several bodies on the ground – some were no longer moving and lay in pools of blood. The situation was not helped by the indiscriminate use of flashbangs which were being used at close range and would temporarily blind and deafen people when they detonated.

It was a one-sided free-for-all.

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### ***Hit Girl***

Annoyingly, the fucker that we most wanted was keeping a cunt or two between us and him.

We seemed to be mowing down cunts and we managed to save lives as we went. We used as much force as was necessary – which for most of the cunts meant death as none of us were fucking about that night. I drove a blade into the stomach of one fat fuck in a gaudy red costume. As he slid off my blade, I looked for my next target.

A few yards away, Swipe had removed the upper arm of one cunt who was left dumping the contents of his arteries into a nearby drain. Swipe grinned as he ran to assist Haze and Clarity who were trying to go after Chris – he was just visible in the crowd. I could not see Kick-Ass at first, but then he appeared as two cunts fell onto the blacktop before me – one with his face all bloody. I made the other cunt's face match his partner in crime with my boot and I was joined by my partner in many things.

"I think that might be all..." Kick-Ass began, just as gunfire was heard from several yards away.

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There was a roar of noise and then a fucking horde – yes, a fucking horde – of cunts spilled out of a side street and hurtled in our direction. While Kick-Ass and Swipe urged the remaining citizens to run, I stood firm with Haze to my left and Clarity to my right. I could see the fear in their eyes at what was coming our way.

The surge was being led by the enormous Russian woman – she had somehow vanished earlier on. Not sure how she could just cocking vanish, she was motherfucking *huge*! I heard running feet from behind me and I briefly turned in surprise to see eleven men running towards us. I was even more surprised by who was leading the charge.

"What the fuck?"

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### ***Kick-Ass***

Hit Girl's mouth hung open in surprise at who was running towards her.

I ran forwards and gently raised her lower jaw with a finger.

"Not a very threatening expression," I chuckled as the first of the men came to a halt beside us.

“Marcus!” Hit Girl growled under her breath before she raised her voice. “You’re fucking late!”

Marcus grinned from beneath the ESU helmet that he wore and waved the fully armed Emergency Service Unit cops to fan out on either side of us. We were now sixteen. Clarity looked up at the enormous ESU officer beside her who was armed with an AR-15 assault rifle among other weapons mounted on his body armour. He smiled down at Clarity.

“You ready, young miss?” he asked.

“Are you?” the thirteen-year-old vigilante replied as she readied her bō-staff for action.

The man just shook his head and stared ahead at the approaching horde.

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### **Haze**

The sights, the smells, and the sounds were all there.

It was a battle. The horde consisted of fucking animals. I could think of no other way to describe them. They were not human beings. They had changed into blood-thirsty animals. They cared less about their fellow man. They only wanted to maim at best and kill at worst. Everybody and anybody was fair game. The grins grew as they saw the NYPD and quite a few laughed as they saw that they were faced by a few ‘kids’ in body armour.

There was no sign of Chris D’Amico, Red Mist, The Motherfucker, or whatever the idiot called himself. I formed up with Clarity and Swipe. We would protect each other’s backs as we fought. Kick-Ass and Hit Girl would be able to look after themselves.

It did not take long before we were surrounded by the aforementioned animals and we were fighting for our lives.

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### **Swipe**

There was, I had to admit, an interesting selection of melee weapons in use.

I saw maces, baseball bats with nails in them, various and sundry blades, oh, and a bloody great big sledge hammer! I was enjoying myself, and it felt good to feel Clarity and Haze on each side of me – it always did... Focus idiot!

I stumbled over a fallen . . . body? Clarity grabbed my arm and prevented me from going down. If any of us went down, under the mass of feet, we would probably die.

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### **Clarity**

I was so far outside of my comfort zone; I might as well have been on Jupiter.

If I had not had Swipe and Haze with me, I might not have been able to stick with the fight. I was no coward, no way . . . but . . . I was more used to fighting one or two cunts, or minor criminals. Now, I was fighting for my lie against dozens of the fuckers. I had no choice. I had to support my friends. I had to protect New York or . . . or die trying?

Did I really mean that? That was some shit that Hit Girl might come out with. Things were just getting a little too real for yours truly. Could I let everybody down? If I survived the night, I would have to seriously look at my fucked up life.

Out of nowhere the cunt before me just seemed to stop dead as his head exploded in a cloud of blood, bone, and brain matter. Then another head went the same way . . . and another.

“Am I fashionably late?” a voice asked over the comms.

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### ***Hit Girl***

“Leon – good to see you back in action... Thanks,” I called back as I removed the left lower leg from an unfortunate cunt in black leather.

I had not noticed at first, but one of the ESU team was a woman. She fought really well and there were three cunts in her immediate vicinity who would no longer be hurting anybody. However, the tables had been turned as she had attracted the attentions of the two-legged Russian battle-tank. The ESU officer was way out of her depth as she used her AR-15 as a melee weapon without much outward success.

“Get away from her, you bitch!” I yelled and the mountain turned towards me.

“Ah . . . the little girl returns for another lesson.”

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### ***Kick-Ass***

Hit Girl was angry.

She seemed to have a bug up her ass where that Russian bitch was concerned. I had shot her, at least twice, the last time. That was when Swipe had received Hit Girl’s bō-staff in his leg after Hit Girl had stabbed the woman.

“Leon,” Hit Girl growled. “Don’t you touch that bitch; she is mine!”

“Copy that!” Leon replied as she continued to rain death down onto random cunts in the crowd.

To most, the fight looked very uneven. I knew Hit Girl. I knew what she could do. Every ounce of anger was unleashed by my pint-sized partner. She moved like Yoda did as he attacked Palpatine – maybe she was a secret manipulator of the force. Whatever, she moved faster than the super-size Russian. Every time the woman made to strike at Hit Girl, Hit Girl flipped out of reach.

The woman was angry but she seemed impressed by Hit Girl’s antics. It was obvious to all that ‘Mother Russia’, as another cunt called her, could snap Hit Girl in half, should she get her enormous hands on the much smaller Hit Girl. I did what I could to guard my girl’s back. I wanted her to concentrate on killing that monstrosity before her and not have to worry about anything else around her.

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### ***Marcus***

My God, she could move!

It was the first time that I had seen my Mindy in action. She was awesome. I had to thank Damon for training her so well. I also had to curse Damon for outing Mindy in a position where she needed such training in the first place. I was both proud and in awe of her capabilities. I knew that she could wipe the floor with ESU without them even knowing what had hit them.

I remembered the warehouse when Damon had died. Seeing the girl take down every one of Frank D'Amico's muscle – alone. She was no longer alone and I knew that she never would be. Kick-Ass was mere feet from her, guarding her back as she twisted and spun around the giant Russian. The rest of the fucking nutcases around her were just as loyal it seemed. Mindy also appeared to have a sniper in her . . . in her what? I laughed at the thought that had just formed in my mind.

In her fucked up Superhero club! That was it. I remembered that day, well over a year ago. I had broken into that Safehouse – in hindsight, it was a damned foolish thing to do. Mindy could have snapped my neck without breaking a sweat. Not that I had known that at the time. I had just wanted to see Mindy, for the first time in almost six years.

I had almost lost track of what was going on as some wild-eyed idiot ran at me. I shot him in the head with me Beretta.

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### ***Kick-Ass***

I sensed the endgame approaching.

Not a minute too soon – Hit Girl was exhausted; I could tell. I was hurting all over despite my superhero nerve endings. The girls were flagging too and despite his bravado, Swipe would not last much longer. Hit Girl had gone truly feral as she stabbed and slashed at the red mountain. The woman was dripping sweat and blood as she fought back.

The bō-staff came downwards faster than I had ever seen it move before. There was a flash of blood followed by a giant bellow as the massive woman stared at what remained of her left hand. It appeared that the metacarpal bones that made up the palm had been chopped in half.

“If I have to take you piece by piece...” Hit Girl growled as she swung around and lopped off the woman's right lower arm, just below the elbow.

There was another yell, but from across the Square. I recognised it for what it was and I drew my Glock. I emptied the entire magazine in the direction of that red bastard. I had no idea if any of my bullets struck my intended target, but I never got a chance to check as several cunts dived towards me.

By the time I had absorbed several punches and strikes from God only knew what, and then managed to put down two of the fuckers, I was very pleased to see Marcus' face as he punched out the lights of another cunt. The remaining yellow bastards ran off into the crowd. I was just about to thank Marcus when I saw Hit Girl finishing off the red bitch.

Blood was everywhere and I saw Hit Girl grin as she stared into the eyes of the giant woman.

“This *is* going to hurt. I am *very* sorry about that.”

Amongst the streams of Russian that flooded out of the bitch's mouth, there were certain English language phrases.

“You have improved little girl . . . you are truly a worthy adversary . . . I die..”

“Too damn right you die. I promised you a fucking. Now, you are going to get it! You fucking...”

With that, Hit Girl drove the blade of one sword deep up the woman’s...

“...cunt!” Hit Girl growled.

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With the death of their superweapon, some of the cunts began to leave Times Square.

There was no further sign of Chris – I had a feeling that the yellow bastard had fled which was no surprise. Despite the death of Mother Russia, there was still work to be done. Somehow, the death of such a massive cunt had revitalised us all and we fought with a renewed vigour alongside our strange partners, the NYPD’s ESU.

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Hit girl struck out at a large man with a tight-fitting mask over his head. He had muscles – lots and lots of muscles. Hit Girl’s fist struck his nose and a cloud of blood exploded into the air. The man actually growled out loud and Hit Girl wisely fled. The man chased after her and I could swear that Hit Girl was giggling! Yeah, the giggling sounded insane but it was still giggling. My girl knew how to have fun...

Hit Girl ran directly at a large building. She never looked back but watched her pursuer in the reflection of a large plate glass window. At the last moment, she dove to the left and jumped for a pillar beside the window. Her feet struck the pillar three feet in the air and she then launched herself backwards into a perfectly executed backflip. As she passed over the giant cunt, she drove her Wakizashi into his neck and down his body.

She landed on the blacktop and rolled to her feet. The cunt seemed to sag as the sword entered his body and he cannoned into the plate glass window which shattered all around him. He demolished the display of kitchen implements as he came to rest. Hit Girl ran over and jumped into the display where, after a short battle, removed her sword from the cunts body.

“Fucking bastard got blood on my sword!” Hit Girl swore as she seized a large kitchen knife from the display and drove it into the back of the cunts head. “That’ll fucking teach yer!”

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It was ten minutes to midnight when the fighting ceased and we all visibly sagged as we strove to regain some semblance of life.

We were all totally exhausted. Clarity dropped down onto a discarded pile of newspapers and she breathed out a very audible sigh of relief. The large ESU officer who had talked to her before the fight began came over and he sat down on the curb beside the young vigilante.

“You mind?” he asked courteously.

“Nah.”

“Here...”

The man passed up a sealed bottle of cold water which Clarity ripped open and began to down as the man did the same with another bottle. Other ESU officers began to pass out similar bottles to each of us. It kind of broke the ice.

"Thanks, guys," I offered.

"No, Kick-Ass. Thank *you*," the man beside Clarity replied. "Lieutenant Hal Edwards, NYPD ESU."

"Glad to meet you, Lieutenant," Clarity grinned as she shook his hand. "I'm Clarity . . . this is Haze and Swipe. You obviously know Kick-Ass and..."

"Hit Girl," Marcus offered. "The arch-vigilante. Number three on our most-wanted."

"Only number *three*!" Hit Girl growled as she kicked an empty Coke can across the Square.

"We can't condone what you do," Lieutenant Edwards said. "But we don't have to arrest you, either. You saved a lot of lives, tonight – including that of Raven, over there."

He pointed at the female officer who pulled off her helmet to reveal her flowing black hair. She smiled at Hit Girl.

"Thanks, Hit Girl. I really mean that."

"While we are all getting pally here, may I ask a serious question," Hit Girl enquired as she tried to hide her embarrassment.

"Go ahead," Marcus replied.

"Where the bloody-hell were all the fucking cops – down the goddamn doughnut shop!" She seethed and I saw a few angry glances from a couple of the ESU officers.

"They were all sent to a 'terrorist incident', down near Ground Zero – we don't know who or why, yet. But we *will* find out!" Marcus responded angrily.

"So, why were you guys here?" Hit Girl persisted.

"We smelt a fucking rat," Lieutenant Edwards said. "Who in their right mind would leave Times Square undefended on New Year's bloody Eve? Sergeant Williams, here – he joined us and then we heard of an 'incident brewing'..."

"Thanks for coming," Hit Girl replied and she held out her hand to Marcus who shook her hand with a nod and a smile.

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### ***Hit Girl***

While the ESU and the late arriving NYPD arrested the still breathing cunts, we all vanished into the darkness and found ourselves atop a six-storey building just as the clock ticked over.

"Happy New Year, Kick-Ass!" I growled as I jumped my man and I wrapped my legs around his waist, my arms around his neck. I planted my lips firmly on his and I listened as the immortal words of Auld Lang Syne echoed around the relatively empty Times Square.

There were still many New Yorkers about and they had watched the fight from afar. Now, they joined in with the words of Robert Burns:



*Should old acquaintance be forgot,  
and never brought to mind?  
Should old acquaintance be forgot,  
and old lang syne?*

It was the second New Year without my Daddy. But I was not alone. I had Dave. I had my friends. As I reluctantly pulled my lips away from those of Kick-Ass, I felt a surge of electricity like an electric shock. I longed to remain connected for all eternity, but I knew that that could only happen in the darkest depths of my sordid mind.

I began to join in with the chorus:

*For auld lang syne, my dear,  
for auld lang syne,  
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,  
for auld lang syne.*

As the music began to fade, I looked around the Square below and I took a deep breath and smelt the air around us.

"I love the smell of blood in the morning..."

Kick-Ass laughed and so did Haze and Swipe as they both stared out over the city of New York. Clarity just stared down at the carnage below us and I wandered over to her. I placed an arm around her shoulder before I spoke.

"Talk to me."

"It's just beginning, isn't it? New York is coming apart, right?"

"Until every D'Amico is dead and preferably shredded into a million pieces, New York will always be threatened," I replied gently. "Until that day, we will guard this city. We will be the watchers. To paraphrase a certain TV show: Night gathers, and now our watch begins. It shall not end until our death. We are the sword in the darkness. We are the watchers on the walls of Justice. We are the shield that guards this city from those who wish to do it harm."

"We are the Knights of Justice who watch over this city," Swipe chipped in, much to everybody's surprise. "We are the Knights' Watch."