

Two weeks later

Saturday, February 22nd, 2014

In the two weeks since Marcus had gone home, a lot had happened.

Marty had been in touch and, apparently, he had been accepted onto a college course at Chicago University. He was intending on taking a major in Computer Science, with a minor in Mathematics. He would be in Chicago for a few years so Dave had offered to give him a room, until he found a place of his own, and Mindy had agreed.

Marty said that he would help provide technical support for their other activities. He would come and stay for a week or two in March, then he would see about finding a place of his own and a job. His course did not actually start until the third week in September.

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Dave had his motorcycle permit.

He had managed to complete the Basic RiderCourse and he had been able to pass the M Licensing Exam. That had given him the Class M endorsement so he was legal to ride a motorcycle. Mindy was actually very impressed that Dave had passed *first time*. Dave thought that she had expected him to fail. He intended to take the Basic RiderCourse 2 in the coming weeks to get some more training and experience. For that course, he would need to hire a motorcycle and he would then be able to gain experience with increasing sizes of motorcycle before he tried the big Harley Davidson. Dave was able to wind up Mindy as he had a *real* licence and not just a fake as she had.

Chloe had spent the past week begging Mindy to allow Shadow to go out on a patrol with Kick-Ass and Hit Girl. In the five weeks, since they had first met Chloe, Mindy had assessed and monitored Chloe's abilities as well as planned Chloe's training, to improve her strength and agility. The past week had also been spent training Chloe on the FN Five-SeveN Mk2 pistol which Chloe proved to be a natural at using.

So far, there was not much that Chloe *was not* a natural at, just like Mindy.

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That night was to be the night that they would take Shadow out with them.

Mindy went through the ground rules with Chloe, for about the twentieth time. Chloe had started to complain, but Mindy had cut her off, each time.

"If, you get hurt, I am *not* dragging your sorry fucking ass, all over Chicago!" Mindy stated, very seriously. "*This* will be *your* audition. Fuck up and we forget we ever knew you."

"Okay. But we'll see *who* fucks up tonight," Chloe challenged.

"Tonight, is going to be *so* much fun," Dave said, sardonically.

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They intended to patrol the area around the new Safehouse which was still going through the final legal stuff, before it became theirs.

They wanted to know what the area was like and if it needed to be cleaned up before they moved in. With Chloe being so new to them, they did not tell her *why* they were patrolling the area. Yes, they trusted her, but she needed to prove herself, to become a full part of their team. It had occurred to Dave

that their little team needed a name. So far, nothing workable had come to mind. He had not asked Mindy about a name as he was more than a little scared of what she might suggest!

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It was a twenty-three-mile, forty-five-minute, drive from the house down I-90 and I-94.

The Safehouse, itself, was surrounded on all sides by other industrial units. Eighty metres to the east, was a train goods yard and across the two hundred metres of goods yard, was a residential district. A hundred and sixty metres to the west, was a large high school. It should be possible to approach and leave the area anonymously. Public transport in the area was also very good.

Not surprisingly, they found business while they were walking up a badly lit alley, between some industrial units, and not far from the Safehouse, when six men jumped out.

"What the fuck do we have here?" one asked, loudly.

"Halloween ain't for fucking months," another said and he laughed.

Kick-Ass, Hit Girl, and Shadow instinctively spread out; Shadow was in the middle with Kick-Ass on her left. Hit Girl drew a Katana, slowly, and she allowed the light from a building to shimmer along the length of the highly polished blade.

"You think you're a fucking ninja, little girl?" the first man jeered.

"Okay, you cunts, who's gonna die first?" Hit Girl growled.

The smile quickly vanished from the first man's face.

"Fuck this!" a third man exclaimed as he pulled out a pistol and shot Kick-Ass in the chest.

Kick-Ass just took a pace back which absorbed the impact from the bullet.

"Fuckin-A! Let's get the fuck outta here!" the second man yelled and they all ran for it.

"Come back, we kill ya!" Hit Girl yelled after them.

"That was interesting," Shadow commented and she laughed, nervously.

"Not all our work is killing. You need to use appropriate force; not every criminal deserves to die. Some just need to look into a career change," Kick-Ass explained.

As they continued their patrol around the top border of the industrial area, some four hundred and thirty metres north of the Safehouse, they passed by a closed store, an Aldi. Some cars were still in the parking lot and as could be expected at one in the morning, there were some idiots trying to steal a car.

There were three of them, teenagers.

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"Go on then, Shadow," Kick-Ass directed, quietly, and he prodded the young girl forward.

Shadow took a good grip on her Jō as she stepped out of the shadows. She felt really nervous, but she took a deep breath and shouted at the men.

"Hey! Cheap shit losers! Stop screwing with a car that somebody probably worked their fucking ass off to pay for!"

The three men turned and one smirked.

"Who's the fucking little ninja?" the man asked, and he laughed, but he stopped suddenly, as Shadow felt Kick-Ass step out of the shadows behind her and prod her forward.

"Fuckin' hell, I think it's that Kick-Ass dude, you know, the one who wasted all those fucking ninjas!" another man exclaimed and he pulled out an eight-inch blade.

The other two men did the same. One of the men came at Shadow with his knife. Shadow ran forward and she struck out with her Jō. The blow smashed the man's wrist, before she spun and drove the end of the Jō into the chest of the next man and the other end of the Jō, she rammed into the remaining man's back. All three men were on the ground and the man with the smashed wrist was screaming. One of the men looked up at Shadow.

"Who are you?" the man asked, incredulously.

"I'm Shadow!" Shadow growled back.

She felt a hand gently squeeze her shoulder.

"Good work, kid," she heard Kick-Ass say from behind her.

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"So?" Kick-Ass asked.

"I was impressed. Shadow handled herself well," Hit Girl replied.

"She was nervous, but she fought them off herself. I think she did good for her first night," Kick-Ass said.

"That was good, letting her have a go herself; she needs to build up her self-confidence. I saw her hesitating, but then I remembered that I had felt the same, back when Daddy sent me out alone, for the first few times," I responded.

"I was a little jumpy, my first few times out, too; not to mention meeting a little, psychotic eleven-year-old," Kick-Ass commented.

Hit Girl smiled, and she felt warm inside as she thought back to Rasul's apartment.

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The trio continued their patrol and headed back south, towards the Safehouse and then on to where they had parked *Speedy*. They each removed their masks and covered over the top half of their combat suits. After driving home, they pulled directly into the garage and once the garage door was closed behind them, Mindy turned to Chloe, only to find that the girl was fast asleep on the back seat. Mindy prodded her awake and Chloe reluctantly got out of the car, before she headed upstairs to bed. Chloe had the bedroom on the opposite corner to Dave and Mindy and she had been keeping some spare clothes there, over the past few weeks. Mindy checked in on her, before she went to bed. Her combat suit lay discarded on the floor and Chloe was fast asleep.

Mindy actually felt very happy as she slid into bed, beside Dave. She received a kiss and then he fell asleep.

Mindy followed seconds later.

The following morning
Sunday, February 23rd

Chloe woke up late; it was almost eleven in the morning.

After a refreshing shower, she got herself dressed and headed downstairs for breakfast from where she could smell something delicious cooking. As she walked into the kitchen, she could see Dave standing at the stove and he was shovelling some bacon out of a frying pan onto a plate, beside which, there was also a plate of fried eggs and another of fresh pancakes. Dave turned around and he saw Chloe.

"Morning, kid! Sleep well?" he asked.

"Great thanks," Chloe replied.

"You did really well, last night, Chloe. Well done!" Dave said.

"I second that," Mindy agreed, as she sat down at the kitchen counter.

"Thanks," Chloe said, and she felt herself blushing.

"Hungry?" Dave asked.

"Damn straight!" Mindy and Chloe said together.

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After breakfast, Dave asked Chloe to come into the living room where they both sat down on a couch; Mindy seemed to vanish.

"Okay," Dave said, smiling. "Crunch time."

Chloe felt a bit worried and she had a feeling that Dave must have noticed.

"Don't worry, Chloe," Dave said pleasantly. "Just thought it was time for a chat."

"Okay," Chloe replied, somewhat apprehensively.

"We want you to join our team," Dave explained. "But we have rules. Now, Little Miss Assassin tries to bend and sometimes break the rules and when she does, I come down on her like a fucking ton of bricks. Being a teenaged Hero, sucks. I know from personal experience and Mindy bitches about being a teenager, every other day. However, you will have responsibilities; Mindy always thought she knew everything about life and that her age was irrelevant, but she has learnt the hard way, that she is *not* invincible and despite her physical and mental skills, she is still a sixteen-year-old girl and in a few cases just needed to grow the fuck up. You *will* fuck up, just as Mindy did and I *will* jump down your throat, or kick your fucking ass, to bring you back in line. That is for both your safety and ours. Understood?"

Dave paused in his lecture and Chloe nodded her agreement.

"You will be part of a team, where you will be an *equal* partner. Yes, Mindy and I are the senior partners, but we are all equal. Basically, what that means is that if any of us fuck up, we expect the others to tell us we fucked up. When you fuck up, *and you will*, we will tell you that you fucked up *and* we will tell you why and teach you how to avoid making that mistake again. I've fucked up more times than I care to think about and the famous Hit Girl? She has made her own fair share of fuck ups, most of them due to her age and lack of worldly experience. Therefore, if one of us says, you fucked up, *do not take it to*

heart; learn from it. If you fuck up badly *I will* tell you that you fucked up badly and, if necessary, stop you coming out with us.

"I'm used to being kicked, punched, and sworn at; Mindy has tried everything, but when she acts like a stupid little teenaged girl, I tell her that and she tries to look cute and wriggle her way out of it, but that doesn't work with me - not anymore - nor do her threats of bodily harm. While on that subject, Mindy will never intentionally hurt you - she may threaten to dismember you or something similar, but that is just her way. Don't get me wrong; she *is* perfectly capable of carrying out her threats. She *will* hurt you during sparring sessions, but you get used to that and just learn to avoid her kicks and punches. Injuries are a part of our lives, now, and we have all suffered a lot of damage to our bodies . . . but we're still here. You still want in?"

"Yes!" Chloe replied, with a big grin on her face. "I promise to do my best. I know I'm young, but I listen, and I learn."

Mindy reappeared within seconds.

"You sticking with us?" she asked.

"Throw away a chance to work with 'Little Miss Assassin'?" Chloe exclaimed. "Never!"

Mindy glared at Dave, but she smiled at me.

"Welcome aboard, Shadow," Mindy welcomed, with a huge grin.

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Next, they discussed the obvious.

How to keep Chloe's activities secret from her parents and the kids at school. Chloe explained that her Dad was usually off at sea; he was a Commander, in the Navy. Her Mom, so far had not commented on all of her sleepovers with Abby. As for Abby, she lived with her mother, who worked nights, so nobody had noticed Chloe missing at night, so far. Abby's father was in the Navy, too, another Commander.

"You *will* get hurt and you *will* get bruised, out there. We will need to come up with cover stories, or somebody will think that you're getting beaten up, regularly," Dave said.

"I heal quickly," Chloe offered.

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There was a knock on the door, the side door.

Chloe was a bit surprised to see a small pistol suddenly appear in Mindy's right hand. Mindy went over to the door, checked the spy hole, and then she frowned before she opened the door a crack.

"Go away!" Mindy suggested, before she shut the door.

The knocking continued.

Mindy opened the door again. Chloe could just about make out that it was a young girl who stood outside.

"Go aw-," Mindy started.

"Abby! What the hell!" Chloe yelled, interrupting Mindy.

Mindy stared at Chloe for a moment before she yanked the girl, who was apparently called Abby, inside and closed the door. Mindy put her arm across Abby's throat and pinned her to the wall. The pistol appeared to have vanished, just as quickly as it had appeared.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" Mindy growled, dangerously. "How the *fuck* did you find this house?"

"I was worried about Chloe. She never called last night. I pinged her cell; not difficult," Abby explained, quickly. "No need to go all Hit Girl, on me . . . jeez!"

Abby seemed to be a bit of a geek . . . a bit like Marty.

"Mindy, *let her go!*" Dave directed.

Mindy glared at her partner, but she released her hold on Abby.

"You two *must* be Kick-Ass and Hit Girl!" Abby said with a smile.

Mindy looked mad and so did Chloe.

"Look, I won't spill; you have my word. I spill, you kill, right?" Abby said still smiling.

"You've got *that* fucking right!" Mindy growled, angrily.

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After another minute Mindy calmed down.

"Hi Abby, I'm Mindy," Mindy said and she held out her hand.

"Dave," Dave said as he held out his hand.

Abby shook each of their hands, in turn.

"Hi, I'm Abigail Hunt," Abby said.

Abby was about the same height as Mindy, with a slim build and long brown hair.

"Sorry, guys . . . my fault, I fucked up," Chloe said dejectedly and she looked ashamed.

"No Chloe, you didn't. Your friend is just very clever and she obviously cares about you," Mindy conceded. "What does your Dad do in the Navy, Abby?"

"He's an Information Warfare Officer and he spends a lot of his time with computers; I picked up some things," Abby replied. "Need a hacker?"

"A hacker?" Mindy mused, and then she chuckled. "Could be useful. We might need someone to help provide support and comms. You think you could help with that?"

"Definitely!" Abby replied, enthusiastically.

"We'll see," Mindy said, laughing.

Authors Note: *Both, Dave and Mindy's home and the proposed Safehouse, are real properties in Chicago. Admittedly, I have not left many clues, but it would be interesting to see if anybody could identify the area where the proposed Safehouse is located, or even the proposed Safehouse itself. No prizes, but I will let everybody know how clever you are.*

Updated: December 2017