

Day 55

Chicago

The searching continued.

It had been almost two weeks, now, since Marty had first seen the Ducati being seized.

Marty had gone back to New York and I was currently alone again. Marcus had been in contact and he had advised me that there was somebody who was busy taking out or attacking drug dealers plus one or two rapists. Not surprisingly, there were no witnesses to the attacks; any survivors never saw anything, of course. Marcus emphasised, that *no innocents* were attacked; it had to be Mindy.

Marcus was worried, very worried. He felt that the forced exile and loneliness could be affecting Mindy mentally and as a result, bringing out her more psychotic behaviour as a defence and hence resorting to a more predatory behaviour to survive. Marcus was concerned that if this went on, unchecked, Mindy might be lost forever, or worse, the Police would catch her and probably shoot first, ask questions later. I had to find her. She was obviously going out at night so I would need to do the same. Over the past week or so, I had been walking all over Chicago, learning the streets and routes.

Kick-Ass was about to visit Chicago's seedier locations that night.

I was wearing the full Kick-Ass costume with body armour.

I kept to the shadows, as I moved about the City. What would Mindy be dressed like? I would have to be careful whom I approached as it might be Mindy and she might attack first, out of pure feral instinct. This was my third night out and so far, I had seen nothing more than a few lowlifes who crept through alleyways carrying out their nefarious activities. One man told me, reluctantly, of a part of town which had gained a reputation over the past week or so, as a bad place for criminals to be. There was a black and purple menace, apparently, who was killing and maiming.

At last, information - useful information! Mindy was wearing black and purple, not overly surprising, I thought. Purple would make her feel comfortable, something she could feel in touch with, and something that she could relate to and, I hoped, keep some of her sanity. Purple had been a part of her life since she was six. That was good news, keeping in touch with her past life should be mentally stabilising, my amateur psychologist skills told me.

Without a thought for my own personal safety, I headed for the indicated part of town.

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Over the space of three hours, I moved from alley to alley. By ten o'clock, it was getting late and I was not having much success.

I was resting between two dumpsters when I heard a scuffling sound; somebody was moving up the alley. I looked out - carefully - to see a man with a hood pulled up over his head. The man was shuffling through the alley and then, without any warning, something appeared out of nowhere and kicked him to the ground. Before the man could utter a word or put up a defence against his attacker, a Balisong knife was driven into his throat and twisted. I could hear the man's gurgling, as his life ebbed away within seconds.

I moved to stand up and I opened my mouth to call out, but the attacker instantly turned to look in my direction and then fled.

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A thought suddenly occurred to me, as I ran after the attacker: what should I call out?

Should I yell 'Hit Girl' or should I yell 'Mindy'? Using her real name could get *her* into shit and she would *not* forgive me for doing that. However, did she want her Hit Girl identity shouted around Chicago? I could, of course, be completely wrong and it might be somebody else. Although the chances of another teenaged, blood-thirsty vigilante running around Chicago were very slim. Finally, I chose just to yell something generic.

"Hey!" I called loudly and I saw the 'attacker' hesitate for just a few seconds, before she continued running.

I felt joy inside me.

It *had* been Mindy; I could tell from the body language. The attacker was petite, with a feminine figure, despite the baggy clothing. She moved like Hit Girl and I knew that Mindy's favourite small blades were her Balisongs and she always kept them razor sharp. Most important of all: *she was alive*. Even better, she was not taking risks. She had not stopped to fight me; she had simply fled the scene. Clever girl.

I was so close; I had her in my sights.

I shot out of the alleyway and across the, thankfully, deserted street. I followed the fleeing girl into another alley where she dodged down a side passageway. She obviously knew where she was going, whereas I did not. I followed her down the same passageway. She was fast, but I was faster with my longer legs, however, Mindy was more compact and therefore more manoeuvrable. I also wore body armour, which was heavy. Nevertheless, I gave it my all but even then, I was losing ground on Mindy.

I was just in time to catch sight of Mindy, as she jumped upwards and with acrobatic ease, she grasped a fire escape and then scrambled nimbly upwards. I ran hard to the same fire escape and easily jumped upwards, but the climb was sapping my energy reserves

at an alarming rate. I hauled myself upwards and saw Mindy's shoes vanishing over the parapet at the roof level of the apartment block. I rushed up the remaining levels of the fire escape and leapt over the parapet to find a very empty rooftop. I looked in every direction and down into the alleys that I could see.

She had vanished.

Nevertheless, I still felt joy inside me. I had seen my Mindy. Now, I just needed to find her again and I hoped, talk to her.

I slept well that night.

I missed my score that night.

Somebody had been watching me. They had watched me kill that dealing bastard. I had decided, days ago, that I would pick my fights and only fight where I had the upper hand and where I could guarantee success; an unknown assailant was not a fight to pick, not right now. Strangely, though, the interloper had appeared vaguely familiar in the darkness and that voice - no, that was impossible. I would try again tomorrow night. I was enjoying the killing; it was keeping my anger and my despair in check. But as Daddy had taught me, I had not hurt a single innocent - only the fucking scum that deserved to die.

I did *not* sleep well.

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