

Day 58

Chicago

I woke up still raging about the previous night.

I had found her.

I had found Mindy.

But *not my* Mindy.

I had meant every word which I had yelled at her. I felt like packing up and going back to New York and giving up on her; I'd lost her, for good. But . . . I decided to give her one more chance.

Just the one.

I started to gather my thoughts and figure out how I could get through to Mindy. I called Marcus and I told him that I had found Mindy. He was overjoyed, but he could tell by my tone that there was a catch. I explained the catch to Marcus and he wasn't exactly surprised. It was as we had discussed: Mindy had withdrawn into herself mentally. She was on autopilot.

I advised Marcus that I was going to have another go at getting through to her and he wished me luck.

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That night, I sat in the darkness of a rubbish-strewn, stinking alley, watching Mindy's window.

Her room was empty, I'd already checked, earlier that evening.

At about ten that night, I clocked a movement in the alley beside the fire escape. It *might* have been Mindy; the build was right. However, something looked off; the person was staggering. Suddenly, the person collapsed onto the floor of the alley amidst the rubbish and God only knew what.

Oh, shit! Please, not Mindy.

I ran down the alley and found a black and purple clad Mindy; she was breathing, but not moving and her eyes were closed. I scooped her up, just as I had done all those years before and I carried her up to her room, via the fire escape and the window. I placed her down, gently, on the bed before I closed the window and the blinds. Finally, I pulled off my mask and dumped my pack on the floor. I then turned on the light. The sight before me did not look good.

I pulled off my gloves and touched her top - my hand came away red; the purple top was soaked in blood. I pulled the top off, over her head. Underneath she wore a black shirt and it too, was sodden with

blood. I felt a surge of panic as I ripped open the shirt and my heart sank; her pale skin was covered in blood. I searched her pockets, found the Balisong in her pants pocket and I used it to cut the shirt off her. I searched for the wound, working my way down her left side and then across her stomach to her right side. There, I found the wound; it was under her right arm, just below the level of her breasts and it looked like a bullet wound. I checked the shirt. Yes, two holes, one in and one out. Thank God - there was no bullet stuck in her.

Mindy, what the fuck did you get yourself involved with, tonight? I searched her room and found some antiseptic liquid, sterile gauze, and a bandage. I cleaned the wound as best I could; the bleeding seemed to have eased, which was a good sign. I then covered the open wound with the gauze and wrapped the bandage, tightly, around her chest; thankfully, the bullet just seemed to have grazed her.

Next, I pulled off her boots and pants then checked the rest of her body for wounds. She had some vicious bruises on her left thigh and a small bruise on her forehead; but no more bullet wounds and no other visible, major injuries. Quite a few smaller bruises and cuts, but otherwise nothing else.

Finally, I pulled the sheets and blankets over Mindy and then I sat down in a chair over by the window and I watched her for the next hour or two before I finally fell into a relieved asleep.

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