

Monday, 20th June, 2016

Dempster Street

“Thought that was fun, huh!”

FEAR’s head snapped around to see a white-clad individual just feet away astride a large black Honda Fireblade motorcycle. FEAR only had seconds to register the armoured sole of the boot which then struck her full in the chest and she fell to the road but rapidly rolled away from her falling Kawasaki.

Medic swung her legs off the motorcycle and she removed her helmet before using the latter as a weapon. FEAR received the helmet full force across her face as she struggled back to her feet. She reached up for her war sword but only felt air as she ran for the truck which had just rundown Wildcat and she swung herself aboard as it passed by.

Medic climbed back onto her motorcycle and roared off down the street to where Hit Girl sat astride her Panigale.

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“Hey!” A voice growled over the comms. “Hit Girl ain’t the only one with goddamn reflexes, you know . . . wildcats have them too and I like to walk on the wild side!”

Hit Girl grinned as she saw the younger girl sitting on her haunches over at the side of the road. There were marks on her suit and helmet which showed her close call. Hit Girl was very glad of her mask which prevented anybody from seeing her tears of joy.

“Hit Girl, I am registering Wildcat’s bike as down,” Battle Guy called from Safehouse F.

Hit girl strode over to the wreckage and stood beside the forlorn Wildcat.

“It’s a gonna,” Hit Girl replied as Medic pulled up.

There was a puff of smoke from just forwards of the seat and below.

“What in hell was that?” Wildcat demanded.

“Just destroyed the electronics package so nobody can use it against us,” Battle Guy explained. “I’ve arranged for the CPD to recover Wildcat’s Ducati and FEAR’s machine. Ares is on his way to Raven.”

“Thanks, Battle Guy, I’ll take Wildcat back with me,” Hit Girl replied as a pair of CPD cruisers appeared and they secured both motorcycles from the growing crowd of bystanders.

“You okay?” Medic asked as she looked down at Wildcat.

“The only wound is in my heart,” Wildcat replied as she looked down at her Ducati – or what was left of it. “It was my first motorcycle . . .”

“Let’s go home,” Hit Girl suggested and she climbed back onto her Panigale with Wildcat clambering on behind.

With Medic following, Hit Girl turned for home before being joined by Shadow. Foxtail would stay behind with Raven until Ares arrived with Iron Hide.

“Err, Hit Girl?” Mist called.

“Problem?”

“Please take Trojan off our hands!” Mist begged.

“What the fuck is Trojan doing out . . .?” Hit Girl demanded but then she paused and felt the arms around her waist tightening. “Let’s rendezvous . . .”

Half an hour later, Wildcat was doing her best to persuade Trojan that she was all in one piece and that she was not hurt. Not that she minded feeling his strong hands running over her . . .

“Ewww!” Psyche growled as she grabbed Wildcat’s dented helmet and jumped up behind Hit Girl. “I ain’t riding back with those two!”

“Funny, Psyche!” Wildcat giggled as Trojan began to get more than a little personal with his gauntlets.

“Just had a thought,” Psyche called out as Hit Girl accelerated away. “Anybody checked to see if Wildcat has any kitties in her oven?”

Early the next evening

Tuesday, 21st June

Safehouse D

“I know it is not your birthday – yet – but considering last night, I decided you deserved this . . .”

The 112-hp 821-cc motorcycle was painted in an overall digital urban camouflage made up of the same browns found in Wildcat’s combat suit. The machine was fitted with carbon-fibre racing silencers on the engine exhaust, carbon-fibre front wing and various other carbon-fibre covers. Under the seat, the licence plate read ‘**WILD ONE**’. The motorcycle was fitted with a smoked windshield and LED turn indicators. On either side, at the rear, were a pair of 25-litre panniers in the same colour scheme as the rest of the motorcycle.

“Oh . . . my . . . God – a Ducati Monster!” Megan wailed.

“A Ducati Monster 821 Dark, to be exact . . .” I corrected her. “Dark, just like my little sister.”

“Thank you,” Megan said quietly as she gave Mindy a rather painful hug.

That same evening

Winnetka Avenue

“Where is it that you go? What do you do?”

“Kelly – stay out of it,” Katrina warned her younger sister.

“You came back home the other night and I know you were in pain; you were hurting. If I didn’t know better, I’d have thought that you were somehow involved in that fight at Damen Silos.”

“Kelly, where do you get these ideas?”

“Kat, I’m not stupid . . . Oh, my God – are you one of those that Hit Girl has been fighting?”

“Kelly, I’m your sister and I’ve never lied to you.”

“So, why are you?”

“You know what happened to Dad – he was killed by Hit Girl. You know what happened to Mom – she died within months of Dad’s death; she couldn’t live without him.”

“Stay away from me, Kat – I want nothing to do with any of this.”

Later that evening

Safehouse F

Mindy had just returned from a short patrol.

As she pulled off her mask and walked towards the armoury, she saw Anne-Marie standing alone on the mat. She had tears streaming down her face and she was shaking. The shaking seemed to get worse as Mindy approached her daughter.

“What’s going on, Anne-Marie?”

“We’ve had a security breach,” Marty commented as he walked out of the Command Center.

“Who – Anne-Marie?”

“She misplaced her access card; it’s outside,” Marty explained as Anne-Marie began to cry even harder.

Mindy turned on the sobbing eight-year-old and she could see how hard the girl was taking it; Anne-Marie looked petrified. Mindy felt the anger building up inside her. Anne-Marie needed to be taught a lesson and in a way, that would never be forgotten. Mindy loved the little girl’s wayward behaviour – she felt it reminded her of herself at that age – only that wayward behaviour had been allowed to escalate to the point of carelessness that had put the entire organisation and dozens of people at risk.

Mindy seized hold of Anne-Marie by her wrist and began to almost drag the now screaming girl towards the steps down to Level 0. Chloe had appeared behind Marty and she suddenly felt worried for the eight-year-old’s welfare.

“Mindy . . .”

“Can it, Chloe!” Mindy snarled.

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Mindy dragged the terrified young girl into the Interrogation area and stopped. She looked down at the sobbing Anne-Marie without any sign of compassion for the little girl’s plight.

“You have disappointed me, Anne-Marie. You are not worthy to wear that uniform; take it off – now!”

The shaking Anne-Marie followed the order and she pulled off her boots, pants, and top. Mindy pushed the girl into the Holding Area and with a curt nod towards the camera and a flick of her hand, the cage door slammed shut. Anne-Marie began to scream.

"No, Mommy – *please!*"

"I have a recover to perform. Get used to your new home, girl!"

With that, Mindy turned and stopped before Chloe.

"Watch over her and keep her safe," Mindy said very quietly to Anne-Marie could not hear.

"I will," Chloe replied.

Mindy headed straight back upstairs, retrieved her helmet and climbed onto her Panigale.

"Battle Guy – send me a route!"

Less than a minute later, Hit Girl was gone.

Belle Plaine

Every access card had a built-in chip which allowed the card to be tracked.

It meant that each member of Fusion could be tracked within the Safehouse, if required, but it also allowed the card to be tracked if lost or stolen. The signal had brought Hit Girl to within one-hundred metres of the card.

"Okay, Hit Girl," Battle Guy explained. "I've set the tracker to high-power. It will only last about twenty-minutes but you should be able to get an accurate fix with your monitor. Take care!"

"Thanks, Battle Guy – how is she?"

"She's calmed down and Chloe is sitting with her."

"Thanks."

Hit Girl studied the five-inch screen mounted on the left lower arm of her combat suit. A map of the area was visible and in the centre, where she was, there was a small pulsing arrow symbol pointing to the left. She turned in the direction and followed the pulsing arrow for about eighty yards before she parked up the Panigale, removed her helmet, and continued on foot.

"Looks to be the third house on the left," Battle Guy announced. "The card has an elevation of about twelve feet, so expect it to be on the second floor. The monitor should guide you to the exact room."

"I have it – second floor . . . room at the back-right corner. I'm going in."

1437 West Cuyler Avenue

The house was very nice and spread over three floors.

All the lights were out, as might be expected for the late hour. Hit Girl made her way around to the rear of the property and climbed up to a small balcony. There, she bypassed the alarm on the door inside and picked the lock. A minute later, she was standing in a small bedroom with a single bed in the centre of one wall. The bed was occupied by a young boy of about ten-years-old. The door to the landing was closed.

The boy came awake as Hit Girl gently shook him. His eyes went wide at the shadow in the darkness but he did not scream.

"I knew you would come," he stated simply.

"You have something that belongs to me," Hit Girl replied.

The boy slipped out of his bed and he walked over to a small desk on an adjacent wall. He rummaged in his school backpack before turning and holding out the access card to Hit Girl.

"Thank you," Hit Girl said as she took the card and placed it securely in her utility belt. "I know you will be curious about that card and who it may have belonged to. You will not pursue the owner of that card. You will not mention the card to anybody – I assume you've told somebody, your friends, maybe?"

"Just my best friends, Mark and Kaleb. I'm Justin, by the way."

"Good – you pass on my warning, Justin. I shall know if you are searching for Rogue and I shall be very displeased . . ."

"Of course, Hit Girl. I would never do anything to put *Fusion* at risk. My friends will never believe me . . ."

"Give them one of these," Hit Girl chuckled and she passed over three of her 'Hit Cards' as Kick-Ass insisted on calling them. "Thank you for being so candid, Justin. Good night."

Safehouse F

Mindy headed straight down below when she returned to the Safehouse.

Anne-Marie was no longer crying but she looked very subdued behind the bars of the cell. Chloe sat outside the bars, watching the younger girl. Mindy clicked her fingers towards the camera and the cell door slid open. She went down to one knee and she beckoned for her daughter. Anne-Marie ran forwards and hugged Mindy tightly around the neck.

"Are you okay, honey?" Mindy asked.

"Yes . . . I'm sorry, Mommy."

"I know you're sorry. You made a mistake that put a lot of people at risk. That was a taster of what could happen to us if we are all exposed – we would all spend the rest of our lives in a prison cell. Do you understand how serious losing this card was?"

Mindy waved the dark blue card in the air and Anne-Marie's eyes followed its movements.

"Yes, Mindy, I do."

"Good. Now get dressed and let's get ready to go home."

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Mindy walked upstairs holding Anne-Marie's hand with Chloe close behind. There were a few relieved looks as Anne-Marie was seen in one piece . . . and smiling.

"Steph, could you take your sister and get her sorted out so we can go home, please?"

“Come on, jailbird,” Stephanie quipped but then she saw the pained expression on her sister’s face.
“Bad joke, sorry!”

Stephanie wrapped an arm around her little sister and gave her a hug before guiding her towards the changing rooms.

The following evening
Wednesday, 22nd June

Glenview

The three kids had finished their homework and everybody had eaten their evening meal.

Stephanie was sitting on the sofa with Horatio while Danny watched TV. Anne-Marie was busy helping Dave in the kitchen as part of her grounding. Mindy was busy feeding the ever-hungry mutts in the basement. Stephanie took a moment to smirk at Anne-Marie as she trudged past the living room with her arms full of neatly folded clothes destined for the bedrooms upstairs. Anne-Marie threw a scowl at her big sister.

A few minutes later, Anne-Marie walked past and scowled at her brother and sister enjoying themselves while she had one-hundred-and-one chores to complete before she could go to bed. Once Anne-Marie had gone back into the kitchen and was receiving direction from Dave concerning her next task, Stephanie gave Horatio a final cuddle and then headed upstairs for a shower.

Twenty minutes later

The British Sector

Stephanie loved the power-shower in her ensuite bathroom.

The amount of water that fell made the shower feel like you were beneath Niagara Falls. Stephanie relished the hot water as it ran over her body and she would stand under the torrent for almost twenty minutes enjoying the soothing nature of the water on her aching muscles after a hard afternoon’s training.

That evening was no different as she allowed the water to rinse the shampoo out of her long blonde hair. Then a voice dared to pervade her watery heaven.

“You know, one problem with having Hit Girl as your mother; it gives new emphasis to that common expression: ‘Mom’s gonna kill you’. So, I’m just gonna come out and say it: Mom’s gonna kill you!”

“*What* are you wittering about?” Stephanie growled as she recognised the voice. Anne-Marie turning up for conversations at strange times, such as while she was in the shower was nothing new.

“*That* – on your butt . . .”

Crap!

“Oh . . . Don’t tell Mindy . . .” Stephanie tried.

“I’m gonna so enjoy seeing you get roasted!”

“Get back here you little bitch!” Stephanie yelled as the younger girl bolted and vanished out of the bathroom.

The Kitchen

I heard the screaming and the yells coming closer as I made myself a coffee in the kitchen having just finished feeding three hungry canines and one starving feline.

The screaming turned out to be a giggling Anne-Marie with a very angry Stephanie shouting after her. The language was extremely foul as well as very aggressive and it appeared to consist of some rather creative ways for Anne-Marie to die.

Finally, Anne-Marie burst into the kitchen.

“Mom . . .!” She screamed as Stephanie, soaking wet and clad only in a towel, rugby-tackled her sister to the floor and then wrapped a hand over the younger girl’s mouth.

“Stephanie, let your sister go . . . what the *hell* is *that* doing on your behind, young lady?”

Stephanie released her sister and the ten-year-old quickly readjusted the towel to cover up her butt as she stood up, however, she was not quite quick enough.

“Was that a tattoo on your right butt cheek?” Danny enquired as he came to investigate the noise.

“Just what *I* was asking . . . when did you get that?” I demanded.

“A couple of weeks ago . . .”

“That looks fresh to me! Who went with you; you know it’s illegal to go without an adult present?”

“We bribed the guy . . . a hundred bucks.”

“You said ‘we’ – who else was with you?” I asked suspiciously.

“Not telling . . .”

I had a moment’s clarity and another girl drifted into my mind.

“Last week . . . you were out all afternoon with your aunt . . . admit it!”

“Not even if you pull my nails out with pliers!” Stephanie retorted.

“That can be arranged . . . Danny, find me some pliers . . .”

An hour later

West Columbia

“Mindy!” Marcus exclaimed as he opened the door. “What a pleasant surprise!”

I felt Stephanie shove her way past me and then turn to glare at me.

“Stephanie looks happy . . .” Paige grinned.

“I think we need Megan; is she around?” I asked with an evil grin.

“Megan!” Marcus bellowed up the stairs.

Megan came bounding down the stairs with her usual exuberance but she instantly slammed on the brakes as she saw her welcoming committee and the depressed looking Stephanie. Marcus waved Megan’s attentions toward me.

“Do you have something to show us, little sister?” I asked sweetly.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” Megan responded with an innocent smile.

“Megan,” I said slowly. “We *will* get to the *bottom* of this even if we have to strip you . . .”

Megan turned on her niece.

“You *told* them?” she almost screamed.

“I had no choice – it just came out . . .” the wretched Stephanie replied. “She tried to pull out my fingernails with pliers.”

“Somehow, I doubt that, Stephanie . . .” Marcus chuckled. “If she *really* wanted to do that, she’d have done it.”

“*She* made me get it on my butt!” Megan growled accusingly.

Stephanie looked outraged at the accusation.

“*She* wanted the pussy to wrap its tail around her right nipple!” Stephanie responded and I heard an audible gasp from Paige as she brought her hand up to her mouth and I saw the beginnings of a smirk. “Only . . . well, the man at the shop said her tits and her nipples were *too* small . . .”

Marcus looked appalled by the open discussion of his daughter’s chest. “The *man* . . .?” He growled.

Megan and Stephanie both instantly realised their error and they both dived back in.

“No – he never touched her . . .” Stephanie blurted out.

“I was wearing a tight T-shirt . . .” Megan added.

I knew what Marcus would have been thinking and I might have been on the same page to some extent. Marcus would have shot the man; I would have cut his balls off . . .

“So, missy, where is this ‘pussy’?” Paige demanded. “And no wisecracks!”

“On my right butt cheek . . .” Megan admitted with reluctance.

“Stephanie has a version of her Psyche symbol on her own butt cheek – Anne-Marie discovered it and Stephanie kind of showed all . . .” I explained.

“Dead meat . . .” Marcus growled as he glared down at the two girls who visibly wilted before him. “I should cuff you and haul you in, Megan.”

“Don’t; she’d enjoy the cuffs too much!” Stephanie growled.

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Marcus stormed off into the dining room where he helped himself to a large whiskey from the small bar he maintained there. Paige glared down at her daughter and put on an impatient expression. Megan groaned and knew what was coming.

“Do I have to?” the eleven-year-old wailed.

“Get to it!” Paige ordered and the girl slipped her pyjama pants down just enough to show the small pussy cat that resided on her right butt cheek.

“You too,” I ordered Stephanie who reluctantly followed suit and lowered her jeans and panties to expose the small ‘psyche’ symbol.

“A matching pair of idiots!” Paige commented. “Looks like a month, Megan . . .”

“I intend to give Stephanie the same,” I commented with an evil smirk.

Both girls groaned as they covered up their new body art.

Glenview

Anne-Marie had an enormous grin on her face as we returned home.

“Has the criminal been sentenced?” She asked gleefully.

I ignored her and turned to Stephanie.

“Get upstairs and get into bed. I don’t want to see or hear from you until the morning – is that clear?”

Stephanie glowered at me but she decided not to argue.

“We are very disappointed in you, Stephanie,” I said evenly as Dave came and stood beside me.
“Go!”

Anne-Marie opened her mouth to say something derogatory as her sister ascended the stairs but I intervened.

“One word from you, and you’re grounded too.”

The eight-year-old girl fled.

The following afternoon

Wednesday, 22nd June

Glenview

“Hi, girls!”

“Hi, Dave,” Saoirse and Morgan said as they entered the house.

“Hello!” Mindy said in surprise as the two teenagers entered the kitchen.

“Hi, Mindy,” Saoirse offered.

“Hi,” Morgan said with a wave.

“What’s up?” Mindy asked.

Saoirse looked over at Morgan who nodded back.

“We’ve come to speak on behalf of the condemned,” Saoirse said.

“Megan and Steph?” Dave asked and Morgan nodded.

“Let’s go get comfortable, shall we?” Mindy suggested.

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Once the four of them were comfortable, Saoirse looked up at Mindy.

“It’s our fault . . . well, mine actually, that they got the tattoos.”

“You?” Mindy queried. She was fully aware that Saoirse had a tattoo of a fox on her right buttock – in fact Anne-Marie was always going on about it, ad infinitum!

“When we were out on the boats, me and Morgan were talking and well, we talked about getting a tattoo each – to help us bond . . .”

Saoirse actually appeared embarrassed – that was rare in itself. Morgan took over.

“We’ve been spending a lot of time together as we get to know each other properly. SD’s been helping me get over my past . . . hence the change in hair colour. We’ve become true sisters in every sense of the word. SD has things she needs to talk about and some of those things can’t be discussed with her best friend.”

“Stephanie,” Dave stated and Morgan nodded.

“Yeah,” Morgan confirmed. “On Tuesday morning, we went to get these . . .”

Morgan shyly lifted her t-shirt just revealing a pink bra. There, just below her right breast and slightly under her right arm was a stunning tattoo that combined a raven with a fox. The black raven body sat below the black-outlined head of the fox. Saoirse did the same on the opposite side of her own body to reveal an identical tattoo. Each piece of body art was about six inches in height.

“Not bad!” Dave mused and Mindy nodded her agreement.

“Do your aunt and uncle know?” Mindy asked.

Morgan’s expression said it all.

“No.”

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“Did you enjoy getting the tattoo?” Mindy asked Morgan.

“It hurt – more than SD made out it would – plus it was humiliating!”

“I didn’t want to scare you,” Saoirse said kindly and Morgan grinned.

“Humiliating?” Dave enquired.

“I had to remove my bra and apart from SD, nobody has *ever* seen my breasts,” Morgan explained as she turned pink again. “I almost chickened out at that point and walked out of the shop. SD’s happy to show off her bits like most *Predators*, apparently, so she was topless within seconds!”

“So, how did Dumb and Dumber get involved?” Dave asked.

Saoirse giggled at Dave's comment before she turned serious.

"We met Megan and Steph later that afternoon," Saoirse explained. "It never occurred to me to lie about what we had been doing when she asked. You know, Steph, she's a nosy little bitch!"

Mindy laughed and nodded.

"I told them about the shop – the shop guy barely took a look at our slightly-fake IDs," Morgan added. "I said it was perfect for underage tattoos."

"What's the difference between a fake ID and a 'slightly-fake' ID?" Mindy asked.

"The ages were altered and we both look eighteen . . ." Morgan replied as her cheeks went a deep shade of pink.

"So, without you two, the *Psychotic Predator* and the *Pussycat* would never have gone for tattoos," Mindy summed up.

Saoirse and Morgan both nodded.