

Coming up in the **Forsaken Universe** . . .

Please be advised that some of what you see below may not actually appear in the story, or may be changed considerably. Most of the below will be out of context (on purpose) and not necessarily in the right order. Also, the below spans many chapters, so you may not see certain sections for quite a while.

Dark Days in Gotham

What might a new year in Gotham offer for the likes of Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle? There would be good, but being Gotham, it would also be tempered with something bad. Things were very different than before. Bruce was no longer alone. He had a partner. He had a cause. He had a purpose. That same partner supported him in every endeavour.

...+...

"Bacon and eggs, good lady?"

"Oh, God, no!" Selina squealed. "A glass of milk would be nice, thank you, Alfred."

"A glass of milk for the cat . . ."

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"Right!" Alfred dictated. "One holiday – by God, even if you two don't need one, I bloody well do!"

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"Would've just been easier to buy the bleeding shop!" Alfred grouched.

...+...

"Looks like it's been through a battle," Bruce commented as he took in the hastily repaired bullet holes in the hull and battle-scarred bridge windows.

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The yacht was 88 feet in length and displaced 67 tonnes. Her twin diesel engines could push the triple-decked hull to over thirty knots. The yacht's hull was a deep glossy blue with white upperworks topped off by a flying bridge.

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"Enough for three or four a day . . ." he mused as Selina just wished the deck would open up beneath her.

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Bruce could not stand it any longer and he pulled Selina close to him and he kissed her.

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We had been back from France for two days, yet the boy had barely spoken.

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*The two black-clad Gotham vigilantes studied the scene and took in friend and foe alike.
It was eight to two – fairly good odds.*

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“I hate to use guns, but for you, I’m making an exception. . .” Batman growled.

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“Jerome ‘I’m a fucking nutcase’ Valeska – he died in Arkham but now he’s alive again.”

...+...

“You want to know where we go at night?”

...+...

“...welcome, Nightwing...”

...+...

Predator

“Bad dream?”

*“Weird. I just saw my sister getting shot – she was in
Chicago . . . impossible; I killed her, years ago.”*

...+...

I was facing a much shorter adversary than normal.

*It was just a kid – a boy. He was about four inches shorter than me
and somehow, he seemed familiar – somebody from my past, I assumed.
His light brown hair was unkempt, just like the hair for most other young boys.
The fact that he had disarmed me so easily meant that he was Urban Predator.*

...+...

*The girl was good; she was obviously somebody who had received
training very similar to my own – could she be Urban Predator.*

I had disarmed her easily, but she had responded with force which I had not anticipated.

I could take her and I would kill her.

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“Fucking Yank pussy!” I growled.

The girl braced up as I spoke, then she snarled back at me.

“I am no fucking Yank – talk about an insult; I’m British, thank you very much...”

“That makes two of us,” I replied, a little surprised.

“Urban Predator?”

“What would you know about that, sweetheart?”

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“Stephanie Walker; I hear I’m famous in your world...”

“Psyche...” the boy exclaimed. “You fucking traitor!”

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“You have a codename?”

“They call me ‘Rage’.”

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Stephanie grabbed the barrel of the SIG and placed the muzzle against her forehead.

“Pull the damn trigger, if you’ve got the bloody balls for it.”

...+...

Vengeance

“In forty-eight hours, we come for you.”

“You can’t hurt me – I control everything and there is fuck all a trio of fucking roasters can do about it!”

...+...

“I think I can handle three little girls – trained killers or not!”

...+...

“It’s you, Kaitlin. . .”

“Am I that bad?”

“The Commander thinks he might be able to afford his own destroyer from your jar alone.”

...+...

“Scorpion – meet Twilight!”

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*She was painted in a matt dark grey and her registration code was painted in a slightly lighter grey on both sides of her tail: **G-VENG**.*

For the moment, she was unarmed – we were only there for a check ride.

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“Boscombe, this is Tango Victor standing by to taxi from Shelter Two-Three, over.”

“Tango Victor, Boscombe. Clearance to taxi for direct launch from Shelter Two-Three. Over.”

“Tango Victor, acknowledged. Out.”

...+...

“Am I gonna like this?”

“You like speed, Hit Girl?” Scorpion chuckled. “Hang onto your tampon!”

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“How’s your backflip, Hit Girl?”

I saw the horizon before me and then the night sky and then the horizon again as we backflipped and followed through with the rest of the loop.

“Cool, huh!”

“Fucking hilarious!”

...+...

The combat suit was full body and made up of sections. The dark grey undersuit weighed very little and it allowed the skin to breathe during extreme activities; it was also stab and bullet resistant to Type IIA standards. The modular contoured armour, in black with a broad gold trim, clipped onto the undersuit and joined to the other sections of armour to form a semi-rigid Type II and Type IIIA armour that covered the important parts of the body. The Type IIIA armour covered the chest and upper back. The armour was ultra-flexible and ultra-light which suited the younger vigilante.

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One glance into the shadows beneath her hood was generally enough to encourage even the most rampant male ego to seek a woman elsewhere.

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“She said her name was ‘Storm’ and that we were safe.”

...+...

Everything had returned to normal and most importantly, my secret identity was secure. I had helped to accomplish an amazing rescue. Dozens of kids had gained a chance of a new life. I did not envy them – not one bit. I missed the action; fighting crime in Paris just was not as exciting as running with Fusion.

As I gazed out over my city, I felt a surge of pride in what I was doing. I was a vigilante. I was the front line against what plagued my city. I was La Coccinelle.

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Their son was alive. Their son was an assassin. Their son was a killer.

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“What a fucked-up codename: Stripe! I ask you. From what I see you should never have completed Phase 1, let alone Phase 2. You did well in Fight Club, your third year. I always enjoyed those fights – hurt like the bugger afterwards, but that was life. No – you’re not what I’m looking for; it’s Polmont for you, boy.”

"Who are you?"

"They call me Foxtail."

...+...

The voice was electronically enhanced and it freaked the boy out. His mind was racing as he tried to process everything and come up with a plan of action. Five months of inactivity vanished in a flash as his training came back in a rush of anger. He executed a perfect release from the hand which gripped his face and he kicked out at his assailant. His kick was blocked but a quick feint and he struck the crimson clad individual in the chest.

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He was stunned to see that it was a young girl – a very dirty young girl, but still a young girl.

"Now, what is your name?"

"Electra."

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The hanger was large, about 120 feet by 70 feet, and the corrugated iron structure covered an area of about 8,500 square-feet. 96-foot-wide, main hanger doors faced in a southerly direction onto a large reinforced-concrete hardstanding of about the same area. The perimeter was an eight-foot tall, razor-wire topped, chain-link fence which enclosed an area of about seven acres.

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"Scourge is still undergoing advanced testing – Twilight, though, she will be here in, oh, five to ten minutes."

"Ten minutes?"

"Twilight is on a ferry flight from Boscombe Down. Our pilot, has our boss with her."

"Her? You have a female pilot?"

"Yes, we do. The best the Royal Navy has available."

...+...

"Vengeance, this is Twilight. Requesting landing clearance at Thunderbolt, over."

"Twilight, Vengeance. Clearance granted."

...+...

The Chief looked shocked by the revelation but he nonetheless shook hands with arguably the most violent woman in the world.

...+...

Normally, the girl's skills would allow her to fight off and where necessary, kill anybody who tried to threaten her life and well-being. That very life and well-being was, at that moment, at risk of being extinguished by her pursuers.

The girl reached under her leather jacket and she pulled out a small compact pistol. She raised the Taurus PT111 and fired off four rounds before the slide locked back on the empty magazine. She threw the weapon at one of her pursuers striking him on the head but not stopping his advance.

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The seven-mile drive would take mere mortals almost forty-five minutes – we managed it in twenty-five with a little help from a siren and blue lights.

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The girl was asleep. Her dark brown hair was long and loosely spread over her pillow. She appeared angelic to look at but considering my experiences and why we were there, I had other ideas. I walked over to her right side and gently eased back her right ear. Yes – the same tattoo Harper and the other girls had was there. I nodded at Nemesis as a nurse arrived with a doctor.

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Chloe wrenched open the rear hatch of the Range Rover and she pulled down the lower half of the hatch. There was a large steel enclosure in the back and Chloe released the catches on the lower gun tray.

“Bingo!” Chloe grinned. “Thank you, MIS!”

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“Time to die...” the man growled with a look of supreme pleasure as he squeezed the trigger.

“Just what I was going to say!” an electronically enhanced voice countered as a dark blue shape dove out of the darkness and put himself between the woman and the pistol.

Both hit the ground as another form, this one crimson, followed the other and put several bullets into the gunman who fell into a pool of his own blood. The man in dark blue armour stood up and helped the woman to her feet.

“Are you injured, Prime Minister?”

...+...

Forsaken

I had never touched a real live girl before, let alone removed the bra of one – I was just glad it wasn't a real bra; I had no idea how they worked. . .

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Her paintwork gleamed as if it had only just been applied, which in all accuracy, it just had.

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“Ocean Vigilante, you have a clear range for missile firing on bearing of two-four-zero...”

I turned from the chart and spoke to the helmsman.

"Helm, new course, one-seven-two, maintain eighteen knots."

"New course, one-seven-two," Hailee acknowledged.

I reached for the phone and pressed the button for ship-wide.

"All hands remain aft of the bridge and standby for missile launch..."

We were closed up at action stations and everybody was wearing a lifejacket and anti-flash hood with gauntlets.

Joshua turned a key from 'SAFE' to 'PERMIT' and a klaxon sounded. His finger hovered over a pulsing orange button.

"Missile one – shoot!" I ordered.

...+...

"Help me..."

"After what you have done?" I responded, coldly.

"She will kill me..."

"Maybe I should help her."

"I'll do anything..."

...+...

Titan was buried under tons of masonry and the last I saw of Foxtail was her motorcycle as it spun across the blacktop and smashed into a parked car.

...+...

"I am Stormtide – were you sent to kill me?"

I laughed. "No, I came to rescue you."

...+...

"You gotta help him – he is alone, please."

"Help who?"

"Rage – they'll kill him."

...+...

There were four kids to get up, showered, and dressed before breakfast.

...+...

She launched herself at Mindy and the younger girl shoved the older girl backwards so her mentor fell over and then she proceeded to punch Mindy in the face.

...+...

"I will not fight you... I know that you won't believe me, but I did not do it because I am cold hearted; I did it out of love – out of love for you."

...+...

"Who the fuck are you?" Tommy demanded.

"Забытый нас так быстро, молодой Фома?"

Tommy felt a cold chill as he heard the Russian words and translated them in his head.

"Александр..."

"Who the fuck are you talking to, Tommy?" Joshua called as he walked over.

"It's the bastard that slashed my chest. He's called Alexander."

"So, a bad fucker, then?"

"Yeah. Three against one, is not exactly fair, Alexander."

"No, it is not, Tommy."

"You expect me to give up and just hand myself over?"

"Oh, no, Tommy. I have far too much respect for you to expect that."

"До смерти!"

"I would expect nothing less..."

"What did you just say?" Joshua demanded.

"I said that we would fight to the death," Tommy replied conversationally.

"I figured that."

...+...

"Well, well, well – if it isn't the not so mighty, Stephanie Walker! Or should we call you, Psyche?"

...+...

"We are no longer Predators – we are much more; we are Marauders."

...+...

"Listen! If you stay with me, you must throw away your weapons and do not resist when they come for me – if you resist, they will kill you."

...+...

"That girl saved my life . . . she doesn't deserve to die. Saoirse, help me!"

...+...

"Rachel?"

Something shifted in my fogged brain and I saw a boy, six-years-old.

"Jamie?"

...+...

“Welcome to the club, Saoirse,” Joshua said.

“Club?”

“A club with a very limited membership,” Joshua explained.

“Welcome to the ‘I blew up Hit Girl’s Safe House club’!”

“Oh!” Saoirse breathed. “How many are in the club?”

“Two – including you – I am the founding member.”

“Did she forgive you?”

“Eventually . . . she rarely brings it up . . . unless she’s feeling bitchy!”

“I’m honoured!” Saoirse growled. “I think...”

...+...

“Walker!”

“Sir!”

“Please meet your new controller: Aurora.”

I turned to see a woman, dressed all in black, her amber hair tied back in a ponytail.

“Aurora, meet Psyche.”

“Hello Stephanie, my name is Miranda.”

“Hi. . .”

...+...

“Damn; it’s like fucking Baghdad!”

...+...

Wildcat, Hawk and Raven were using their armour and shields to protect the paramedics and their patients as they worked.

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An RPG powered in and struck a bullet-riddled patrol car. The car exploded and sent red hot shrapnel in all directions.

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Raven screamed as the shrapnel dug into her armoured back and rapidly burnt through the armour.

...+...

Out of the blue, the 12.7x55-mm STs-130VPS 76-gram bullet cut its way through the air at over 300 metres-per-second. It tore through the armour like it was nothing and the lifeless body dropped.

...+...

‘If you are reading this letter, then I am dead.’

...+...

Eisenhower stood her ground and she growled at the six men.

"It's just one wild mutt – who gives a shit?"

"Err – you might wanna reconsider that."

From out of the darkness behind Eisenhower, came seven very similar dark shapes all clad in body armour and with protective masks over their faces. They were identical apart from the coloured markings on their armour. Four of the animals moved to Eisenhower's left, the remaining three formed up to her right. All of them were growling in a decidedly unnerving way and saliva dripped from the bared fangs.

"Holy fuck!" one man almost whimpered at the sight of eight sets of very sharp teeth.

Slowly, the seven new dogs began to encircle the men.

...+...

... and something else ...

*All the leaves are brown and the sky is grey
I've been for a walk on a winter's day
I'd be safe and warm if I was in L.A.
California dreaming on such a winter's day*

...+...

"I could get used to this!" Sky commented to her twin sister as they both set foot on the tarmac.

...+...

"Six bedrooms – four in the main house. Master Suite on the second level. You two girls get to have a suite each on the main level. Every door is armoured, as is every pane of glass. The grass outback can handle a helicopter as required."

...+...

Each suit was of a skin-tight design and was made up of an ultra-flexible and ultra-light composite armour which covered every inch of the body from the ankles to the neck. Lightweight, high-strength, stab-resistant boots matched the suit colour. For the hands, armoured gloves extended up past the wrist. A mask covered their entire head and eyes down to the bridge of their nose leaving only the lower half of their faces exposed.

...+...

The city appears to have gained its own true vigilantes. Two females were spotted on the streets, late last night. Eagle-eyed vigilante spotters noticed that the women were equipped in a very similar and professional manner to those vigilantes known to exist in the City of Chicago. A select few attained a closer look at the vigilantes and identified a symbol borne on the left chest of each woman. The symbol was identical to that worn

by those same Chicago vigilantes that made up the organisation known as Fusion. Fusion is the organisation headed by the purple vigilante, Hit Girl.

...+...

“You are about to enter a world which is secretive by its very existence. You are about to enter the world of the vigilante. You are about to enter a purple hell.”

...+...

“You are shitting me!”

“You guys do not fuck around when it comes to Safehouses, do ya?”

“Hit Girl has a thing for being prepared – she must have been a boy scout in a previous life!”

...+...

The girl aimed down the room and then squeezed the trigger.

Bang!

Scream!

Thud!

Laughter!

“What the hell did you drop it for?” I demanded as Sky rolled around on the floor laughing.

...+...

“I see scum, Venom. Scum that prays on the innocent. Scum that needs to be taught a lesson.”

...+...

“You having a midlife crisis or something, Erika?”

“Or something...” Erika replied coolly.

...+...

“This . . . place . . . is . . . fucking . . . awesome!”

...+...

*All the leaves are brown and the sky is grey
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California dreaming on such a winter's day*