

Tuesday, August 16th, 2016

**The United Kingdom
Scotland**

“Jasper, it is five in the fucking morning!”

“Sorry, Keira, Cassie said you wouldn’t mind the early call.”

“Tell her, I love her,” Keira growled.

“You, me, and Eric are flying to Chicago . . . in three hours.”

“What!” Keira exclaimed as she bolted upright.

Southfield Letham

“I *cannot* believe that you woke us all up,” Naomi groused as she leaned onto the kitchen table.

“It’s not even *six*,” Kaitlin added as she lay down almost on top of her cousin, her hair sticking up in every which direction.

“I hate you,” Harper growled as she slumped into a chair, her top inside out.

“Not early-birds,” Keira explained to Cameron and Natasha with a grin.

“You’re going out of town and you need babysitters?” Natasha asked.

“We are *not* babies!” Kaitlin growled.

“We have three *Predators* that need minding,” Keira explained. “The question is, Cameron, can you handle three little bitches?”

“I’m well used to bitches,” Cameron laughed.

“I don’t count,” Natasha grinned.

The three girls gazed up at Cameron, their expressions showing that they had a lot of trouble to cause.

“I have the perfect solution, should three young ladies step out of line, even for a minute,” Cameron commented as he delved into a kitchen cupboard. He placed onto the countertop, three very large rolls of silver Duct Tape. “If it comes to it, I tie ‘em up and throw them into the stables until you return.”

“You ever heard of ‘child abuse’,” Kaitlin asked sweetly.

“Normal children get abused – show me one *normal* child in this kitchen,” Natasha challenged.

“Cunt!” Kaitlin growled.

“There will be none of that, young Kaitlin,” Natasha said. “Mindy can now supply these in bulk. . .”

She produced a very large, pink-covered tin with two words printed on it: **Swear Jar**. Kaitlin opened her mouth to say something but she then thought better of it and she just scowled and allowed her head to hit the table top in disgust.

Keira laughed and she turned to leave.

“You know, Keira,” Eric commented. “I don’t think I have ever seen you happier.”

Keira laughed.

“I was never happier than the day I discovered that my little sister was alive – now . . . well, I need a holiday from her!”

“Hey! I can still hear you!”

“See you in a few days, sis!”

Somewhere over the North Atlantic

“So – we need to recover a Diplomatic Bag?”

“Yes. The Queen’s Messenger was attacked in Chicago and his two packages were taken. We have no idea what is in the packages, naturally, but they were double-sealed and hopefully still are. We hope it was just some jumped up junkie who thought he had something he could flog.”

“Why me?” Eric asked.

“I’d have thought you would jump to go see Abby,” Keira teased. “From what I’ve heard, you two. . .”

“Okay – no Abby talk, please. The question stands.”

“The bags have trackers and I have the codes. Unfortunately, the codes are classified NOFORN and UK EYES ONLY. You can use them with Abby, but the codes must be destroyed once you are finished with them.”

“And me?” Keira asked.

“This is a British operation, which means UK EYES ONLY – I have received special dispensation from the Foreign Office and Number 10 to go after the Diplomatic Bags using *Vengeance* with assistance from *Fusion*. Mindy understood the significance of the Queen’s Messenger and she called Commander Lawrence. To be honest, I’ve never seen HMG move so damn fast! Mainly, we need British operatives to recover the Diplomatic Bags and keep them in their custody until they can be delivered safely.”

“Delivered to where?”

“That would be classified at this point. However, we will have you, me, Cassie – and to some extent, Joshua Williams and young Stephanie. No foreign national is to be allowed contact with those Bags. Oh, yes, almost forgot. There will be a surprise for you when we land – you might want to read this on the way.”

“Okay. . .” Keira brightened up considerably when she saw what Jasper had to offer her. “Techs!”

“What about Electra? She has no idea. . .”

“Mindy is telling her, right about now,” Jasper replied.

Later that morning

The United States of America

Chicago, Illinois

Safehouse F

The young girl was thoroughly speechless as she received the personal tour from her friend.

“Well, Stephanie, you’ve definitely landed on your feet instead of your arse, like usual.”

“Thanks, ‘lectra.”

Mindy studied Electra for a moment.

“You wanna take part?”

“Me?”

“Yeah, you.”

“What can I do?”

“Electra!” Stephanie exclaimed. “You are a goddamn *Predator*, so act like one!”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Wildcat’s old combat suit should fit you. That should give you some protection. We’ll partner you with Jackal.”

“You called, oh mighty purple leader.”

Mindy rolled her eyes and gave Joshua a glare.

“Hi Electra, I am Joshua.”

“Another Brit – cool.”

“How about we get you changed and then you can show me what you can do,” Joshua suggested.

Some hours later. . .

Chicago Midway International Airport

“Good flight?”

“Yes, thank you,” Jasper replied as he shook hands with a tall man wearing a dark suit.

“You sure your pilot can fly it?” the man asked.

“Our pilot can fly *anything*,” Jasper laughed as he waved Keira into the hanger.

“She’s more beautiful than the tech manuals showed,” Keira commented as she smiled broadly. “She warmed up?”

“Fully pre-flighted and ready for launch, I’ve been told, ma’am.”

The Bell 429WLG was a medium-lift helicopter with seating for nine, including the pilot, or pilots. Keira was to fly the 3,400-kilogramme, twin-engine helicopter, solo.

“Not the stealthiest of colour schemes,” Keira pointed out dryly.

The helicopter was painted in what Bell called: Yellow, with Prominent Orange Accent and Ferrara Red Flashes. The registration was N96543 in orange on the yellow tail. Keira climbed into the front right seat while Jasper and Eric climbed into the rear where six leather seats were fitted in two rows of three, facing each other. Both buckled in facing forwards with Jasper seated behind Keira on the right side. Both followed Keira’s example and pulled on headsets.

“You two boys ready for some flying?”

Jasper and Eric looked at one other and they each exchanged a worried glance as the helicopter smoothly lifted into the air.

Safehouse F

Stephanie smiled down at her young companion.

Electra was feeling distinctly embarrassed as she stood before her friend. She had just been stripped and then re-dressed in a state-of-the-art combat suit.

“It’s a little big in places but it’ll do the job for the moment,” Stephanie commented.

“You sure she won’t mind?”

“No, I won’t,” came a voice and Electra span around to come face to face with the fully armoured Wildcat.

“I outgrew that suit a long time ago – you’re welcome to borrow it.”

“Thank you . . .”

“Megan – it’s good to meet you, Electra,” Megan said as she pulled off her mask and offered her right hand.

“Pleased to meet you, Megan – Steph has told me so much about you.”

“I wouldn’t listen to *anything* that girl says – she’s full of it!”

“Don’t I know it,” Electra replied with a laugh. “She should spend more time on the toilet; then she wouldn’t be so full of shit!”

Megan laughed out loud as the pink-faced Stephanie scowled.

“When you two bitches have *quite* finished, may we?” Stephanie demanded.

“Let me help you mask up – Stephanie knows shit about putting on a combat suit correctly,” Megan grinned.

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Jackal paused to take in the sight before him – it was his worst nightmare!

“Two of you?” he drawled through his electronically enhanced speech.

“Fear us!” Wildcat growled.

“What do we call *you*,” Jackal enquired of the shorter ‘Wildcat’.

“Me? They call me Rigour – fear it, Jack-ass!”

“Just great, another mouthy bitch – as if I didn’t have enough to handle,” Jackal commented dryly.

“What?” Wildcat enquired. “You can’t handle two little girls?”

“Bring it on, bitches!”

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As Shadow watched from the walkway she nodded approvingly at the way Rigour moved. No wasted movements, just carefully planned steps. Rigour anticipated Jackal’s movements – not that Jackal was really trying; that was obvious. He could easily kill both girls with a single punch each but no, he was teasing them, letting them both get in close. Jackal was telegraphing his actions so that Rigour could pick her next movement. Shadow was surprised that Wildcat was playing along – she was far too skilled to fall for one of Jackal’s ruses.

Then Shadow braced up as somebody slapped her armoured backside. She turned, expecting it to be Mindy. . .

“Daddy!”

Shadow ripped off her mask and she jumped into her Dad’s arms, wrapping her legs around his waist.

“Hi, sweetheart – missed you.”

“I’ve missed you, too – what are you doing home? Mom never said. . .”

“Mom didn’t know – I’ve just come from there. . .”

Chloe pulled back from her Dad and stood back on her own two feet.

“You two had sex, didn’t you?” It was more statement than question.

Ryan Bennett just smiled.

“That’s disgusting.”

“Where do you, think you came from, honey?”

“It’s just weird knowing your parents are still . . . you know.”

“It’s just as weird knowing that my little girl sleeps with a young man in her bed, each night. I’m sure you two don’t just sleep the night away.”

Chloe’s face went very red as she glanced down at that very same young man.

“Who’s the extra Wildcat?” Ryan asked as he followed his daughter’s glance.

“That, would be Electra.”

“Another *Predator*?”

“Yes – Cassie’s Dad found her.”

“Hello, Commander Bennett!”

“Cassie – please . . . call me Ryan.”

“Yes, sir . . . Ryan, sir!”

“How’s your old man?”

“Doing good – he’s down in the Falklands at the moment, on patrol.”

“That should keep him out of trouble for a while,” Ryan chuckled.

That afternoon

The Farm

“Wow!” Megan exclaimed as Mindy braked the Jaguar to a halt outside the house.

Megan dived out, along with Anne-Marie and Danny. Stephanie took her time but her eyes were also drawn to the yellow Bell helicopter which sat in the back paddock behind the barn. Stephanie scowled as the chilli red Mini John Cooper Works Clubman All4 skidded to a halt barely six inches short of Stephanie’s left leg.

“Chloe!” she yelled as the aforementioned teen leapt out of her car.

“Sorry – kind of got away from me,” she grinned unapologetically.

“She wanted to scare you,” Saoirse commented as she climbed out from the other side with Cassie and Electra appearing from the back.

The final arrival was Joshua, in his blue crystal Audi S3. His passengers were Dave, Abby, and Curtis.

“Chloe, you are a fucking nutcase and how you did not get a ticket, I will never know,” Abby proclaimed.

“I am what I am!” Chloe laughed as she walked over to the house.

“Hello, Mrs Lizewski,” Jasper announced as he walked towards the veteran vigilante.

“Hello, Mr Collins,” Mindy replied, shaking hands.

“Please, call me Jasper.”

“Of course, Jasper; please call me Mindy. This is my husband, Dave.”

“Hello, Dave, we haven’t met. Jasper Collins.”

“Those three are our children – Stephanie, Anne-Marie, and Daniel.”

“Very sweet – the latter pair; I haven’t met the illustrious Stephanie, who I have heard so much about.”

“Stephanie!”

“Hi, Mum.”

“This is Jasper Collins. He works for MI-5 and is he currently the HMG liaison for *Vengeance*.”

“Hello, Mr Collins,” Stephanie said, offering her right hand with a grimace of pain.

"A very polite young lady. I was very sorry to hear of your injury but I am very pleased to see you up and about. I speak from experience when I say you have a rough road ahead of you," Jasper replied as he gently shook her proffered hand. "I am looking forward to working with you."

"This, is Joshua Williams," Mindy said as Joshua came over. "He is our resident Brit, other than Stephanie. He is at your disposal, Jasper."

"Hello, Mr Williams – may I call you Joshua?"

"Yes, sir, you may," Joshua replied as he shook hands.

"Your father was a Royal Marines Commando?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hi, Mindy," Keira said, giving the purple vigilante a hug.

"Good to see you. You enjoying the new toy?" Mindy asked, tipping her head towards the helicopter.

Keira just smiled enormously. Before she could reply, there was an enormous squeal and everybody turned to see two people rolling about on the grass.

"I think Abby just found Eric!" Megan pointed out unnecessarily.

"Why's Eric got his hand down Abby's pants?" Anne-Marie asked innocently.

Mindy's eyes went wide and she quickly pulled Anne-Marie and Danny towards the house where she handed them over to Jack Bay.

"Things are getting a little X-rated out there, Jack," Mindy explained before she headed back out to watch the show.

That night

Glenview

The British Sector

"He's a great guy."

"Yes, he is – without Josh, I might not have been able to cope with this grand new life of mine," Stephanie replied.

Both girls were in bed, staring at the ceiling. Neither, were able to get to sleep, so they talked. For Electra, she was over the moon to be able to talk with her one friend that she had in the world – well a friend from her time with Urban Predator.

"I still can't believe that you got taken in by the very person that you and me were trained to emulate."

"Tell me about it – I feel a little like Cinderella."

"Almost every night, since we parted, I've thought of you, Steph. . ."

"Err, 'lectra, I'm not into girls . . . OW!"

Stephanie rubbed her left side where Electra had just dug two fingers in.”

“That was *not* what I meant, Stephanie!”

“Sorry. . . At least once a week, I endure a nightmare where I see everybody that I’ve ever known. I see the faces of everybody that I’ve ever killed. I see the faces of everybody I cared about – and yes, that includes your face. I relive killing that Newton girl in the shower. I relive killing those kids in the woods. I relive seeing those twenty-five dead bodies in Milan – those *Predators* who were murdered. I relive. . .”

Stephanie stopped speaking and Electra turned to look at her friend. She was shocked to see tears spilling down the ten-year-old’s face.

“I relive people trying to kill me. I relive those moments of hell while I was *Predator*. Then I relieve those more recent events. Those when I was *so* scared either for myself, or for somebody I cared for. I’ve been humbled by those who care for me. I struggle to understand why anybody cares for me. I still barely understand why Dave and Mindy added me to their family. When I was hospital, everybody cared about me – even my Mum did things that I never thought she would do for me. I never knew that anybody could love me as much as Dave and Mindy do.”

“Stephanie, you’re a good person, despite what they turned you into.”

“No, I’m not; I’m damaged. All I am able to do is kill and maim. I deserved to be strapped. I deserved to be thrown into the Cage. I deserved to have Saoirse try to kill me. I deserved to be shot.”

“Please, Stephanie, don’t be like this. You *are* a good person and do you want to know why?”

Stephanie did not reply, she just stared up at the ceiling as the tears continued to fall. Electra sat up and glared down at her friend

“You are so stupid, Stephanie. Where should I start? You helped a little girl to fight back against those who saw her as an easy target, despite knowing that it was against the rules. You helped protect the same stupid little girl to survive against all the odds. You gave that little girl a reason to live. That’s just the stuff I have experienced. This afternoon, I spent a lot of time talking with Joshua. He related a lot of stories about you. He told me about a young nine-year-old girl who held out the hand of peace to her nemesis. He told me about a young nine-year-old girl who allowed somebody who had tried three times to kill her, to sleep in this very bed. He told me about a young nine-year-old girl who risked her own life to save her little sister that she had only known for a few weeks.”

Stephanie still did not reply.

“You’re the perfect role-model, Stephanie Lizewski. If I could pick any person in the world to be my big sister, it would be you.”

Stephanie’s tears of self-loathing rapidly came to a stop. Stephanie blinked at Electra and then she pulled herself, rather painfully, up into a sitting position.

“Thanks, ‘lectra. You may only be young, but you always tell it like it is. Sorry for being a pussy and embarrassing myself.”

“We all need somebody to talk to. I care about you Steph – I owe you my life.”

***The following morning
Wednesday, August 17th***

The Farm

“Hello?”

Joshua and Stephanie were in the basement at the door to the Alternate Command Center. Joshua exchanged a worried expression with Stephanie as they moved further inside. They both froze as they heard giggling.

“Is it safe for an innocent ten-year-old girl to come in?” Stephanie called out.

“Yeah – is it safe for me, too?” Joshua asked.

The giggling became louder and Joshua easily recognised Abby’s giggles.

“Abby, are you decent, I have no desire to see your naked butt, this morning.”

“Joshua!” Abby growled as she appeared from behind a server cabinet, her face a little too pink.

“Morning, people,” Eric commented as he came out from behind the same cabinet.

“You two finished?”

“We might go back later to . . .” Abby said before she drifted into an embarrassed silence.

“We’ve finished the uplink for the helicopter and we’re about to go fit the tracker into the cockpit. Keira should be able to start searching for the transponders by ten o’clock,” Eric said quickly as he covered for Abby.

“Well, once you have the tracker done, you can go back to searching inside Abby for her transponder,” Joshua deadpanned as he and Stephanie left the room in disgust.

They both grimaced as they heard the giggling start back up again.

Later that morning. . .

Keira was in her element, two-thousand feet in the air and heading in a broad circle around the city.

Beside her, sat Megan who was grinning broadly. She was holding a tablet computer which was scanning for the Diplomatic Bags’ transponders via the helicopters recently augmented systems.

“You enjoying yourself?” Keira asked the young girl.

“It’s so awesome!”

“You looking forward to tomorrow?”

“Damn right!”

“What is he going to be? Eleven?” Keira teased, knowing full well the correct answer.

“Curtis is going to be twelve, thank you, very much.”

“What about you?”

"I've gotta wait until next month. . ." Megan responded dejectedly.

"It'll be worth the wait," Keira laughed. "Anything on that scanner?"

"Not a thing," Megan replied.

"Foxtrot, this is Five-Four-Three, over."

"Five-Four-Three, Foxtrot, go ahead, over."

"Foxtrot, you got anything on the transponder? Over."

"Negative, Five-Four-Three," Abby replied from Safehouse F. "Change heading to zero-one-one for fifty at two-thousand. Acknowledge, over."

"Foxtrot, Five-Four-Three acknowledges course change to zero-one-one for fifty nautical miles at two-thousand feet, over."

"Good hunting, Foxtrot out."

"Holy shit!"

"Huh?"

"Down there – that plane that almost bumped off Mindy; it's ginormous!" Megan exclaimed. "I can't believe she survived; everything is spread way the hell all over the place."

"I've seen bigger . . . plane crashes are like that – kind of reminds you of your mortality," Keira commented.

"Tell me about it – a few months back, I might have made a joke about Mindy being invincible; but I now know that none of us are invincible, our armour is just that, armour, not some magical force that can prevent all injury.

"Yeah, I heard about your visit to that hell hole."

"Gotham – changed my life, in many ways. Mom says that I went away a little girl who enjoyed being an all-powerful, invincible vigilante and came back a mature young lady aware of her mortality. I also experienced my first orgasm, but that's another story."

Keira laughed.

"You know, Megan, with everything I've heard about you, I can only hope that Harper grows up to be even half the young woman that you are."

Megan did not know what to say, so she said nothing as they continued their flight.

Two-thousand feet below and a little to the left. . .

Bell 429WLG N96543

"How strong is this transponder, Jasper?"

"Strong enough, I hope. Battery is supposed to last up to a week – we should have received a GPS signal pinpointing its exact location, but. . ."

“Must be underground, preventing a satellite fix – hopefully, the transponder signal is good enough to escape the building it is in,” Mindy concluded.

“We can only hope. Anyway, I’m enjoying being driven around Chicago by the purple menace, herself,” Jasper chuckled.

“I am *not* a menace!”

“There are certain people in HMG that would say otherwise, good lady.”

“Okay, sometimes I leave a mess behind; I understand that, now.”

“*Sometimes!*” Jasper deadpanned. “London is still recovering from your first visit to the UK.”

“Actually, that was *not* my first visit to London – but I’m saving that story for another day.”

“I look forward to hearing about it, one day.”

That evening

Glenview

“That smells wonderful – Mindy cooking?” Jasper asked as he walked in the front door, accompanied by Cassie and Keira.

“Hell, no!” Stephanie commented dryly. “You want food poisoning?”

“You want to lose the use of your other arm?” Mindy asked sweetly.

Stephanie grinned back, just as sweetly.

“Love you, Mom!” she preened in an appalling American accent.

Jasper laughed.

“Sorry, Jasper, these *Predators* are completely nuts,” Mindy commented dryly.

“Well, we *were* modelled on you, *Mommy*,” Stephanie continued in the same accent.

“Jasper, I am going to go reduce the number of kids I have, by one; back in a minute. . .”

Before Mindy had finished speaking, Stephanie, realising she was pushing her luck a little too far, had beaten a hasty retreat and vanished.

“She’s a great kid, Mindy – considering what she’s been through, it’s good to see her laugh,” Jasper said seriously.

“I know; we love her very much . . . despite her nutty behaviour.”

“Evening, Jasper – girls,” Dave called out from the kitchen.

“Hi, Dave!” Cassie and Keira called as they went through into the living room where Danny handed each girl a cold bottle of Budweiser.

“Thank you, Danny; you’re a real gentleman,” Cassie told the boy.

“Oh, for heaven’s sake,” Anne-Marie muttered as her brother’s face went pink.

“Shut up!” Danny growled as he headed back into the kitchen after handing Jasper another bottle of Bud.

“Ignore her, Danny – females like to be annoying; I speak from experience. . .”

“He has a valid point, young Daniel.”

“I am *not* going to raise to the bait, Lizewski,” Mindy offered as she sat down on a couch with her own bottle of Bud.

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An hour later, they were all seated around the table in the dining room and enjoying Dave’s steak with jacket-potatoes and salad.

“This is good. . .” Electra announced as she jammed another chunk of steak in her mouth.

Stephanie’s reply was unintelligible due to her own mouth being just as full. In the kitchen, Sophia, Razor, Kiara, and Horatio were digging into their own steaks – uncooked of course. For a change, Anne-Marie was very quiet as she dug through an enormous plate of food. Danny was the same, enjoying each and every morsel.

“ . . . To be brutally honest,” Cassie was saying, “meeting Hit Girl and her team was very scary; they all had a reputation – and not a good one depending on your point of view. Then, I found out about Stephanie and I wanted to do something to help. That was why I became Nemesis. I’ve never regretted it, not for a moment. I firmly believe in what Mindy does and I am very thankful that I have been able to do something to make this world a better place.

“Well said, Cassie,” Keira said with an approving nod.

“I agree,” Jasper added. “While I was dubious and very sceptical about what I was being asked to coordinate, I now see that both *Fusion* and *Vengeance* have a place on this earth. I’ve seen the ‘Hit List’. . .”

“It is *not* called that!” Mindy fumed.

“It’s appropriate,” Jasper persisted. “You should actually publish it; you’d have many assholes pissing themselves with fear.”

Mindy had to laugh at that. Stephanie grinned her own approval. Dave nodded.

“We’ll see,” Mindy offered with a grin. “I’ve yet to meet your own family, Jasper – maybe you should bring them over.”

“I would love to.”

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After Jasper, Cassie, and Keira had headed back to their hotel, Mindy peered in on the two resident *Predators* in The British Sector. Both girls were in bed, talking animatedly.

“You know, Steph, maybe we should get you a guest bed – one of those fold up, Z-bed things,” Mindy commented.

Stephanie looked over at Electra who was almost completely hidden but for her head. They exchanged glances and Stephanie whispered into Electra’s ear, both girls then began to giggle

insanely. Mindy rolled her eyes and coughed pointedly causing Stephanie to sort herself out and look up at Mindy.

“Nah, we’re good, thanks.”

Mindy chuckled.

“Just don’t go all lesbian on me, girl – we’ve enough of those damn things as it is!” Mindy growled as she headed out of the room accompanied by another round of girly giggling.

The following morning
Thursday, August 18th

Glen Oak Drive

“Morning, Saoirse, how are you this morning?”

“Very good thanks, Aunt Emily.”

Emily waited for Saoirse to sit down at the kitchen table and help herself to some cereal before she spoke again.

“I’ve noticed that Morgan has been very different, the past few days – is there anything that John and I should know?”

Saoirse laughed but she finished pouring the milk into her cereal before she responded.

“She has changed – only I think it best if she tells you.”

“Tells you what?”

“Morning, honey,” Emily said to her niece.

“Hi Aunt Em.,” Morgan replied happily. “Morning, little sis.”

“Morning, crazy bird – Aunt Emily would like to know why our shy little Morgan isn’t so shy anymore,” Saoirse explained giving Morgan a meaningful look.

Morgan flushed bright pink and her courage vanished.

“You tell her, please?”

“Stupid bird!” Saoirse growled. “Okay – you remember that thing I did, last week?”

“You demoing a strip search? Yes, you told us about it.”

“Well, this little birdy insisted on going through the same thing as me – I found it humiliating as hell, so I warned her, but. . .”

“I had to. . .” Morgan muttered to her astonished Aunt.

“Well, she put on one hell of a show! Curtis and Tommy almost fell off their seats as they stared at Morgan’s bare breasts – they did fall off when she bared the rest! I have to admit, it was damn hot!” Saoirse explained.

“Morgan – I’m impressed; I would never have thought that you could strip naked before an audience . . . well done!”

“Thanks, Aunt Em., I had to put my shyness behind me . . . it was *so* embarrassing, but the response from the boys – well, it was awesome!”

“You’re growing up into a fine young woman, Morgan – don’t let anybody tell you different,” Emily said, giving Morgan a hug.

Bell 429WLG N96543

Keira was airborne by nine, that morning.

Beside Keira for the search, was Curtis . . . and Megan with Electra. While Curtis had the left-hand seat, the two girls sat in the back, chatting like they were long lost friends.

“What’s it like being twelve, Curtis?” Keira asked.

“Surprised I made it, to be honest. But it’s cool – I feel older.”

“Has Megan had her wicked way yet?” Keira laughed.

“Don’t you dare answer that question!” Megan cut in.

The grin on Curtis’ face told Keira the answer.

“Steph was right; you two *are* a pair of dirty fuckers!” Electra commented.

“I . . .” Megan began before she was drowned out by Curtis.

“We have the transponder!” he almost yelled.

“Where away?” Keira demanded.