

Tuesday, October 4th, 2016

Gotham City

The twins were very apprehensive, which was to be expected.

It had been exactly a year since either of them had last set foot in that godawful city and neither of them had smiled since they had set foot off the Gulfstream jet.

"I never wanted to come back here. . ." Danny commented and his sister nodded her agreement.

"You are both safe, okay?" Chloe insisted.

Stephanie had stayed behind with Jamie. She understood that it was a private trip for the twins who needed closure - she was also happy to spend some quality time with her brother, just the two of them. With Mindy, Dave, and the twins for the trip were Megan and Chloe. A small but potent force. There was not much chatter as they drove through the city from North to South; it was like a pall of gloom had passed over everybody. As they drove through Downtown, Chloe peered at a club to the right.

"I see they rebuilt The Velvet Beaver. . ."

Mindy grinned as Chloe looked wistfully at the 'ladies club'.

"That place is disgusting on so many levels," Megan growled as she remembered the DVD which she had shared with Curtis.

"What?" Anne-Marie asked.

"We did an operation there - well, Chloe did."

"First and only operation I ever did while naked," Chloe mused.

"What?" Danny exclaimed.

Megan chuckled.

"That club is a place where women have sex with other women. Chloe infiltrated them and to maintain her cover, she had to go naked while having sex with another woman," she explained.

"Ewww!" Anne-Marie muttered as her face went bright pink to match that of her brother.

"That's what I thought, too," Chloe said. "It was scary, but it was also exciting and it was something very different."

"You would never find me doing *anything* naked!" Megan declared.

"Except stripping in front of a couple dozen people, forty feet beneath Chicago," Chloe pointed out with a grin.

"That was different - *you* went naked in *public*!"

"Okay - enough talk about Chloe's eccentricities," Mindy ordered as they crossed over Sutter Bridge and reached their destination.

The twins looked at each other with foreboding etched on their young faces.

Gravesend Cemetery

The graves stretched for hundreds of yards, almost as far as the eye could see.

If Gotham was short of anything, it was not dead bodies. Many of the graves were two-hundred-years-old with some even older. The city was an old city dating back hundreds of years since its inception. The family wove their way in and out of the gravestones, some of which were a good six feet in height and massive. The grave when they found it, was headed by a large chunk of granite. It had been paid for and installed by Bruce Wayne, almost a year before.

Here Lies an Honourable Man

***Edward Jamieson
died October 4th, 2015
defending his family***

And His Loving Wife

***Emily Jamieson
died January 11th, 2012
a victim of Gotham***

***Loving Father and Doting Mother
to two very special children***

Neither child could say anything for several minutes as they fought back the tears but both eventually succumbed and hugged their new parents, not wanting to take their eyes off the final resting place of their real mother and father.

"We miss you, Daddy. You too, Mommy."

Anne-Marie spoke for her brother as well. Danny was not taking it well and he was still sobbing even as Dave hugged him.

"We're in a better place, now. We have people who love us and they are doing everything they can to protect us. Our lives are really good, back in Chicago, and we've learnt to look after ourselves. Thank you, Daddy, for allowing Dave and Mindy to look after us - they're doing the most amazing job, despite the times when we misbehave."

Mindy looked down at the grave, remembering her pledge to the man before he had died.

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The man hesitated and he looked over at his kids before responding.

"I was told that you would get me and my family out of Gotham."

"You have our word, Mr Jamieson," Mindy replied, looking over at the kids.

"I want you to promise me something . . ." Ed Jamieson began, following Mindy's gaze. "If anything should happen to me . . . they are only seven-years-old and they have nobody else. I can sense when people are good and I can see that you both respect each other. If anything happens to me, I want you to see that they are looked after. Please, promise me."

The man appeared desperate and he was certain that things were not going to end well. Mindy looked over at Dave, who nodded.

"You have our word, Ed. Anything happens to you, your kids will be looked after and taken far away from Gotham," Mindy confirmed.

Ed nodded and called his kids over.

"Dave, Mindy. These are my children, Anne-Marie and Daniel."

Ed turned to his children.

"If I'm late back one evening, Dave and Mindy will look after you, understand?"

They were only seven-years-old, so obviously they did not, however, they responded dutifully.

"Yes, Daddy."

"You do anything and everything that they ask of you and you will both obey them, without question, understand?"

The twins were now looking a little worried, but again they replied in the affirmative.

"Yes, Daddy."

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Dave could remember the night like it was yesterday. The bullet-riddled house. The dying man. The distraught youngsters.

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Blood gurgled from the man's mouth as he forced out his final words.

"Promise me that my kids will be looked after. Make sure that they know about me at the right time. Promise me that you will keep them safe."

"As if they were my own, Ed. As if they were my own," Dave promised.

It was a promise that he would keep, no matter what. He also vowed to avenge the man, maybe not that night, but he would be avenged.

"Thank you. . ."

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Dave felt the anger surging up within him, just as it had a year before.

Mindy sensed the anger but she did not comment. They had talked about it and Dave had insisted on taking the lead. Mindy had agreed without further thought, leaving the task to her husband. She had not been there during Edward Jamieson's final moments but Dave had been and Mindy knew that the moment had affected her husband deeply.

Dave wanted to avenge Edward Jamieson and provide closure for his children.

Two hours later

Wayne Manor

"Welcome, all!"

"Thank you, Alfred," Mindy said as they were waved into the capacious entrance hall of the Gothic manor.

"Mindy!" Selina Kyle exclaimed as she ran to Mindy and hugged her.

Bruce Wayne laughed as he saw Mindy's expression.

"Hi, Dave, welcome back to Gotham," he said, offering his hand to Dave who shook it warmly.

"I can't say I'm glad to be back. . ." Dave breathed.

"It grows on you," Bruce replied sourly. "You remember, Aiden?"

"Hello, young man - you've grown since France," Dave commented.

"Hello, Mr Lizewski."

Dave laughed.

"Mr Lizewski is my father. Call me Dave."

"Hi, Dave," Aiden said with a grin.

After the remaining introductions, they all went through into the study for afternoon tea.

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"Bruce?"

"Hello, Anne-Marie. How may I help you?" Bruce replied.

"My brother and I wanted to thank you . . . to thank you for what you did for our parents."

Bruce smiled down at the little girl and he went down on one knee, looking into her deep brown eyes.

"It was the least, that I could do. I just wish I could have done more."

"Gotham was our home but now our home is Chicago," Anne-Marie continued. "I know that what you, Selina, and now Aiden, do in this city would meet our Daddy's approval. He loved Gotham but he hated what the criminals did to it. We know that our Daddy worked for bad people and probably did bad things but he loved us and he cared for us."

"Not bad, Anne-Marie," Chloe said.

"Thank you, for that, Anne-Marie," Bruce said with a smile.

"We've seen the Hit Cave," Danny grinned. "Can we see the Bat Cave?"

Mindy scowled - she hated *anybody* using 'Hit' before *anything* expect for 'Girl', as in 'Hit Girl'. Joshua laughed, knowing Mindy's thoughts on the subject.

"Calm down, Mindy - you might blow a Hit Artery!"

Mindy closed her eyes and she took a deep breath before forcing a smile and not raising to Joshua's bait.

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The twins looked on in awe as the fireplace vanished. Aiden grinned as he replaced the remote in the book and Selina placed it back on the bookshelf.

"You need something snazzier than that damn remote," Joshua commented.

"I considered a bust of William Shakespeare - tip the head back and flip a switch," Bruce commented. "Selina wasn't so sure."

"That's like something from a 1960's TV show," Selina explained. "I wanted something cool - not sure what at this point. . ."

"How many steps?" Anne-Marie asked as she gazed downwards.

"One-hundred-and-eighty-four!" Aiden announced with a flourish as he looked over at Mindy. "May I escort the famous Hit Girl, below?"

"Who told you?" Mindy asked, good-naturedly.

"You think I'm stupid?"

"No, we don't, Aiden - or should I say, Nightwing."

The boy grinned - he loved the recognition. Very few people knew that Aiden Hutton, a boy by day, was Nightwing, a vigilante, by night.

"You're beautiful," Aiden commented as he grabbed Mindy's hand and led her down the stone steps.

Mindy went along for the ride, ignoring Chloe and Joshua who were wolf-whistling and making crude remarks. The twins followed, counting each step as they went.

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"...180, 181, 182, 183 . . . 184!"

Anne-Marie and Danny were both out of breath by the time they had made it to the bottom of the stone steps. They passed through a door which Aiden held open and into the Vehicle Park. Their eyes went wide at the sight of the motorcycles and the towering cave.

"Way better than the Hit Cave!" Danny exclaimed.

"Daniel!" Mindy growled.

"Suck it up, Mom - you can't have the best of everything!"

Mindy stalked off towards the Training Area, not trusting herself to speak.

"What are those?" Danny demanded as he caught sight of two very black objects.

"The Bat and The Cat?" Bruce replied with a wink at Selina. "Oooh, you wouldn't be interested in those."

That night

West Side

Midtown

The evening's revellers were out on the town - as they were, every night.

It was the usual mix of couples, singles, prostitutes, and God only knew what came out of the Gotham gutter after dark. Many headed for restaurants, while others made for bars and nightclubs. One particular nightclub was located on the corner of Robinson Avenue and West 15th Street. The nightclub was pounding with sound.

It was borderline deafening and definitely an aural health hazard. Sai Maroni was in a happy mood as he sipped his drink. His empire was thriving ever since the death of Carmine Falcone and Fish Mooney. He and that freak, Penguin, had an understanding and they generally kept out of each other's way. He had not been troubled by the emerging vigilantes known as Batman and Catwoman - what a pair! Maroni was not scared of the badly named halfwits - they were making an impact on certain freelance operations but they had not dented any of his own - although Penguin had lost quite a bit of money to them.

Then, Maroni's eyes were drawn to a disturbance, over near the entrance. In the strobe lights, it was difficult to see what was going on. One of his bodyguards went down hard as something large

pushed through the security. Above the music, screaming could be heard as people scrambled out of the way of the raging bull which was wiping out Maroni's security like they were nothing.

Whoever it was, they appeared angry, very angry.

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As the raging bull came closer, Maroni chuckled and the mob boss shook his head - he had recognised the person advancing on him.

Another of his men was kicked to one side while another was physically picked up and *thrown* half way across the room. Maroni had to acknowledge the veteran vigilante's moves. The man appeared to be on his own - not that that appeared to be hindering him, in any way, as he made his way directly towards Maroni. Finally, the table before Maroni was thrown to one side, complete with its complement of glasses and bottles, to smash into the wall. Maroni took in the green and yellow markings on the combat suit. It was not hard to tell who it was that was standing just inches away from him.

Now, what could one of Chicago's most famous vigilantes be doing in Gotham? He knew that Hit Girl and her entourage had waged a bloody war, just about a year ago, in the city, and they had killed off most of his 'competitors'.

"Hello, Kick-Ass!" Maroni yelled over the pounding music. "How may I help you?"

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Maroni flinched as the armoured mask came right up to his face.

Kick-Ass did not speak for almost a full minute. Maroni knew the tactic - intimidation - he had used it enough, himself. For someone more used to intimidating, it was not nice being the one on the intimidated side. Yes, Maroni felt intimidated - who would not be when they came face to face with such an accomplished vigilante!

"I want to find the man who ordered the Jamieson hit, last year. You have twelve hours to find the man and then to call this number."

"Or, what?"

"Or, I put the blame on you . . . and I . . . well, I will kill you."

With that proclamation, Kick-Ass turned away and walked towards the exit. Nobody stood in his way - everybody gave him a very wide berth indeed. Maroni followed - keeping a discrete distance between him and Kick-Ass.

Maroni made it to the entrance of his club, just in time to see Kick-Ass jump into the right-hand seat of a four-ton, eighteen-foot long, black monster that sat on a pair of tracks. The 600-horsepower diesel engine roared as the tracks spun on the tarmac before gripping and the black monster roared off, closely followed by a

twin which emerged from a side street. Maroni could see markings below the gull-wing doors on each vehicle - or maybe tank might have been a better description. It was them, Batman and Catwoman with a pair of new toys. Very apt, Maroni had to admit. The menacing black vehicles would fit into Gotham very well, he thought as the tracked vehicles vanished around the end of the block.

Maroni returned to his club, shaking his head.

Beneath Wayne Manor

"We're clear!"

Mindy breathed a sigh of relief. She hated it when Dave was out on his own - she worried. It had been an easy mission - but they were in Gotham and Gotham was the very *definition* of unpredictability. Actually, Dave had not been alone - he had had Batman, Catwoman, and Nightwing with him. Actually, Mindy had been more than a little jealous that Dave had got to ride in one of the new Ripsaw mini-tanks.

Now, they just had to make it back through the raging city.

Gotham

To say that the city was in a worse state than on their previous visit was not far wrong.

Naturally, the two tracked vehicles attracted attention as they roared through the city, taking mostly backstreets to avoid too much attention. Nonetheless, the citizens and criminals of Gotham were 'connected'. As they roared past the Gotham City Police Headquarters on East 12st Street, they found themselves with a small entourage of vehicles which were not being driven by law-abiding careful drivers. Then, once they had turned up 5th Avenue towards Starr Bridge, they could see a problem, a few blocks ahead.

Their route was blocked at East Trident Street. Kick-Ass braced himself as Batman stomped his foot on the brakes and the four-ton vehicle slithered to a halt on the blacktop with Catwoman and Nightwing following suit beside them. Ahead of them, were well over a dozen of the Penguin's goons. Behind them, came their entourage of five vehicles which all skidded to a halt and unloaded sixteen more fighters - Maroni's men.

They each wanted a piece of Batman, Catwoman, and Nightwing - a chunk of Kick-Ass was just a bonus.

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"We've faced worse," Batman commented.

"No, we haven't," Nightwing replied.

"There's . . . five, ten - err, carry the seven . . . thirty of the cunts!" Catwoman concluded. "Maybe a few more."

"There's four of us," Nightwing pointed out.

"Sounds like an unfair fight," Kick-Ass threw in as she drew his Ko-Wakizashi swords. "For them. . ."

There was the sound of rubber skidding on blacktop and a motorcycle slewed out of Trident Street and came to a rapid halt. Two shapes leapt off and brandished their own bladed weaponry.

"Thought we'd come to even the odds," Wildcat growled as Shadow took up position beside Catwoman.

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A short distance up Trident Street, about a block from the looming fight, an unmarked car sat at the side of the street with two men in the front seats.

Detective Harvey Bullock lowered his burrito and glared at the impending criminal offence just a block away. He looked over at his partner, Detective Jim Gordon who sat in the driver's seat.

"Do you ever feel that you are always in the wrong place at the wrong time?" Bullock complained.

"All the time, Harv," Gordon replied as he started the engine and pulled away from the curb. "All the time."

"Shotguns or AR-15s?" Bullock continued. "Maybe both."

Gordon accelerated down the block before stopping in the middle of the street. He pushed open his door and jumped out.

"GCPD! Put the weapons down!"

He and Bullock dived for cover as bullets pelted their vehicle.

"What the hell, did you do that for?" Bullock yelled.

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They were the opening shots in a war which was going to consume the city.

The fight was harsh as the vigilantes clashed with Penguin and Marconi's men. It was a general free for all as Penguin's men also attacked those of Marconi. Amongst the fighters was a bald man - Victor Zsasz - who blasted away with a pair of chrome pistols, targeting Maroni's men and what he saw as the annoying vigilantes who had caused nothing but trouble in the city he loved.

Kick-Ass was enjoying himself. Two bodies lay bleeding on the blacktop, dead, near his feet. Another quickly joined them as he smashed the back of his armoured fist into the eager face. Bullets struck his armour which the veteran vigilante ignored as he continued his rampage around the junction. Not all that many feet

away, Batman was laying out a carpet of Penguin's goons - some got back up, only to be put back down again by the black-clad vigilante. Nightwing had partnered up with Wildcat and they both covered each other as they ensured that they remained in the very centre of the maelstrom of fighting humans. As for the women. Catwoman was lashing out, literally, with her whip and dragging unwilling men within range of Shadow's lethal bō-staff.

As the men dropped, the fight began to wane and those remaining were having second thoughts about their chosen career path.

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As the final man fell to the blacktop to join his pals, the six vigilantes were all who remained standing.

Except of course for the GCPD's finest who had expertly mopped up all those who had tried to escape in their direction.

"Is that it?" Detective Bullock growled as he sauntered up with his pump-action shotgun resting on his right shoulder.

Detective Gordon gave his partner a withering look before he turned to Kick-Ass.

"Always good to have you guys in town," Gordon chuckled. "But you do leave a mess!"

"Sorry about that," Kick-Ass growled good-naturedly as Wildcat strode over, wiping the blood off her highly-polished Katana. "Can't take the girls anywhere!"

"Not my fault they leak blood," Wildcat commented.

"You miss biology in school?" Shadow queried. "Bodies are full of the shit."

"You're just as messy," Wildcat retorted.

Whilst the girls were bickering, Kick-Ass turned his attention to Trident Street where three black SUVs were heading in their direction.

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The vehicles stopped and three men dismounted from two of the vehicles.

The men moved into positions which covered the third SUV. Each of the men was armed with a modern SIG Sauer MPX submachine gun and their demeanour showed them to be professional mercenaries. Finally, a door opened on the third SUV and a slim form appeared from the rear. It was a woman - a strikingly beautiful woman, even by the limited illumination from the street lighting.

"And *who* might you be?" Jim Gordon asked.

"My name?"

"It would be nice?"

"Sophie Falcone, James."

A short time later

Wayne Manor

The fighting in Gotham had taken a toll on Megan.

Not a physical toll, but a mental toll. She hated the city for many reasons. She hated the criminal levels in the city. She hated the darkness that enshrouded the city. Above all, she hated the memories that being back in the city brought to the fore. The girl had suffered at the hands of Falcone's men, Maroni's men. Gotham had changed Megan inside and it had forced her to grow up, fast. She had only been eleven at the time - a daunting series of events for such a young girl to endure.

Curtis had been injured - she herself had been in pain from injuries. Then had come the extreme torture of the man who had tried to kill Marcus.

"I need some fresh air," Megan stated as she returned from a shower and made her way past the living room.

"Don't get lost!" Chloe laughed.

"Funny!" Megan called back as she headed outside.

*This chapter continues in the standalone **Chapter 5** of my other story, **The Trials of Kick-Ass and Hit Girl**. Due to the disturbing content of that chapter it was decided not to feature the content directly in **Forsaken**.*

*However, the events played out in that chapter are deemed critical to future events in **Forsaken**.*