

Tuesday, November 29th, 2016

Safehouse E

Level 8 - Detention Level

"Willingly?" Doctor Reese asked.

"Yes. I'd had some alcohol, but that was all. I knew what I was doing."

"Do you know who it was - the girl?"

"No - I never saw her face, but she was one of us - she was a *Predator* . . . I saw the tattoo behind her right ear. I tried to apologise, but the girl was out of it. I felt horrible afterwards - two others went in after me, and then they congratulated me for losing my virginity, but I felt dirty, so dirty."

Doctor Reese was stunned by the revelation, although she could tell that the boy's remorse was genuine, and she suspected that he may have been drugged also. She looked over at her protector. Lucy was seething with hate and she glared at the boy.

"Look, Lucas . . . I need to escalate this."

Lucas simply nodded.

Lakeview High School

"Oh, sorry! Are you okay?"

The boy looked up to see who he had collided with, about to remonstrate, but then he saw it was that girl, Megan Williams. He felt fear shoot through him and he backed away,

"Are you okay?" the girl repeated.

The boy was more than a little surprised. Megan Williams had a proclivity towards violence, almost at the drop of a hat. Normally, the boy might have expected to be verbally abused in some crude manner, but no, the girl was *apologising!*

"I'm okay - err, thanks for asking."

Megan smiled, but then she felt a strong hand around her left bicep and she was shoved hard against the wall of the corridor.

"Hi, Chloe."

Chloe proceeded to rest the open palm of her hand on Megan's forehead for several seconds before then checking the younger girl's eyes before squeezing her cheeks.

"Open!" she ordered and Megan opened her mouth. "Tongue!"

Megan stuck out her tongue as Chloe finished her examination.

"You're normal, why?" Chloe demanded.

Megan grinned.

Chloe was not buying it, so she grabbed a boy out of the passing throng of students and slammed him against the wall beside Megan.

"What's going on, little cousin?" Chloe demanded as Curtis simply grinned at his cousin.

Curtis simply shrugged.

"I *will* get to the bottom of this, mark my words!" Chloe growled.

"Bennett!"

Chloe released Megan and Curtis as the school Principal glared down at her.

"Hi, Principal McClusky, I was just checking on my cousin, and my cousin-in-law," Chloe tried.

"Morning, Principal McClusky!" Megan announced happily.

"What's wrong with her?" a frowning Principal McClusky asked as she studied the smiling girl who usually caused more trouble than almost the entire student body combined to the point where the Principal had the girl's mother on speed dial.

"Do you like my hair, Principal McClusky?" Megan asked politely.

"It's better."

"Thanks. Excuse me, I need to get to class - don't want to be late!" Megan exclaimed as she gave Chloe a hug and she scampered off with Curtis trailing along behind.

"I know I should be angry about something, but. . ." the Principal muttered as she looked to Chloe for help.

Chloe simply shrugged, and she left the confused principal standing in the middle of the empty corridor.

That evening

Training Facility Echo

The Battle Bunker

For Abigail, it was like being called to the principal's office.

"Hi."

"Come and sit down, Abigail," Mindy said as she waved the youngster toward the back room which Mindy used as her private office.

Abigail looked around as Mindy closed the door. Mindy sat down without a word and then she stared at Abigail for a few moments.

"Something has come to my attention concerning events in England. I believe that those events involve you, but I could be very wrong."

"What events?" Abigail asked, unsure of what was going on.

"When you were found by *Vengeance*, you had suffered a traumatic experience," Mindy explained slowly - she was finding it very difficult considering the events in question.

"Oh," Abigail replied as she understood what Mindy was referring to.

"One of the *Marauders* has come forward with information relating to his time in London after *Urban Predator* folded, but before he came to the US and met FEAR. He intimated that he raped a *Predator*."

"You think he was my attacker?"

"It fits. I am heading below to speak with him. I wanted to inform you of what was happening . . . I also wanted to ask if you wanted to listen in - from behind a two-way mirror."

Abigail thought about that for several minutes before she responded.

"Can Stephanie come with me?"

"Of course."

"Do you think Lauren might come too?"

"I would expect so - let me get hold of them; I think they're training somewhere."

Safehouse E

Level 8 - Detention Level

Stephanie knew all about Abigail's attack, but Lauren did not.

"I'm really sorry, Abigail - I never knew."

"Thanks."

"We're both here for you," Stephanie said as they all turned to look through the glass. "Do you recognise him?"

"I don't remember much of anything, to be honest," Abigail responded.

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"I need to make you aware of a few things, Lucas," Hit Girl stated for the record. "You have been given a legal dispensation for anything which you did while with *Urban Predator*. The same applies for your time with FEAR, pending your rehabilitation. However, that dispensation does not cover events that fall in between. Therefore, you can be charged with rape, and we intend to transfer you to the relevant authorities for extradition to the UK where you will face trial for your crime. Do you understand what I just said?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Do you have anything to say for yourself?"

"I remember raping the girl, but not all of it. I definitely did something bad. I knew what I was doing, and I should have stopped. I wish I had . . . that girl did not deserve it."

"Had you ever seen the girl before?"

"No."

Lucas was sobbing again.

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Stephanie had listened to every word the boy had said.

"He's guilty," Stephanie proclaimed to the room. "Huh, Abigail?"

There was no response, so Stephanie turned to look at Abigail. Abigail had gone very pale and she was shaking. Then, before Stephanie could say anything further, she looked down and she saw a puddle of fluid expanding around Abigail's boots, a dark patch expanding around the crotch of her trousers.

"Abigail?"

"That voice."

Abigail was shaking even harder and tears began to pour down her cheeks. Lauren manoeuvred the younger girl over to a chair and sat her down.

"Try and talk to me, Abigail," Lauren prompted.

"I remember bits . . . he was there . . ."

"Bastard!" Stephanie growled.

"No . . . he was forced . . . I remember other boys pushing him onto me . . . I felt him pushing into me . . . then there was another . . . and another."

Abigail broke down completely and the two girls hugged her as she sobbed.

Training Facility Echo

Level 2

Curtis emerged from the bathroom feeling a little annoyed.

Twice in twenty-four hours, he had been attacked by Megan. The first time wasn't too bad, but the current attack - it was just plain wrong! Megan, of course, was grinning. Chloe stared at her cousin, and then at the grinning Megan.

"What the fuck?" she demanded.

"What was I supposed to do?" Curtis retorted.

"Fight her off," Chloe suggested as she studied her cousin's hair. "Why?"

"It suits him, don't you think?" Megan asked.

"No."

"I think it does," Joshua chuckled.

"Nobody asked you," Chloe growled.

"Why do you care?" Joshua asked. "You never used to like Curtis."

"That was then - this is now," Chloe pouted.

"Way cool!" Becky announced as she appeared in the accommodation. "Can I get my hair done, too?"

"Now look what you've started!" Chloe exclaimed. "No, Rebecca!"

"Harsh, much!" Becky responded to the use of her proper name.

Curtis found a mirror and he studied his fringe - it was a medium green which matched his body armour. While he had consented to just a tiny bit of colour, Megan had decided otherwise.

"Megan. . . I . . . I'm not talking to you, right now!"

Megan was still grinning as Curtis stormed off.

Safehouse E

Level Seven

"I am sorry, Lucas, but you cannot join the others . . . it's for your own safety."

Lucas looked up at Hit Girl.

"I understand, and I am sorry for what happened to that girl, and for letting you down."

Hit Girl nodded.

"Stay positive, Lucas."

With that, Hit Girl closed the door which locked automatically.

Glenview

Mindy grinned happily as she welcomed Marcus inside.

"What can I do for you, old man?"

"Why do I have two insane nutcases for daughters? First, I get a partner who goes wacko and then I inherit his daughter, who is just as wacko. Then, I marry a beautiful woman who turns out to have a daughter who is totally wacko. What did I do wrong in my past life?"

"You poor old man," Mindy laughed as they both headed into the living room.

"Hello, Marcus," Dave waved from the couch.

"How do you cope, Dave?"

"Huh?"

"Living with a wife who is wacko, a daughter who is almost off the wacko chart, a son who is not far behind, then twins who are quickly developing their own wackiness - not to mention the four-legged nutcases!"

"Hey!" Stephanie exclaimed. "I am not wacko - just a little bit nutty."

"Like a fruitcake with extra nuts!" Jamie laughed, much to his sister's annoyance.

"What has Megan done, now?" Mindy asked.

"That's just it," Marcus replied. "We had a call from the Principal."

Mindy winced - she'd been there, often enough.

"The Principal wanted to know if Megan was feeling alright - I understand that she was perfectly behaved and very polite."

"Megan? Polite?" Stephanie asked, surprise in her tone.

"I was well behaved and polite at times," Mindy commented.

"Yeah - in your sleep," Marcus replied.

Stephanie laughed out loud while Mindy scowled. Dave grinned at his scowling wife.

"Marcus. I think that being married to a normal woman must be so boring. Being married to Mindy is a challenge, but I would not swap her for anything, no matter how nutty she is."

Mindy grinned sheepishly.

"As for the ten-year-old wacko - she's another challenge, but she makes all other kids look boring in comparison. It's a parent's dream to have their

daughter wire her bedroom door to an explosive device when she's angry," Dave finished.

Jamie laughed his head off at that.

"I have to admit, having a cheerful little girl around is much better than the moody alternative," Marcus admitted. "I suppose I'll just have to live with it."

"You're a good father, Marcus," Mindy said as Marcus stood up to leave. "You were strict and tough, but I needed that."

"Thank you, Mindy," Marcus replied as he hugged his eldest daughter. "I just hope I do right by Megan and Damon."

"You will, old man."

South Woodlawn

"Well, this can't be good," Hunter chuckled.

"A lynching, maybe?" Leo added.

The pair of Predators had found themselves facing their triplet cousins and they each meant business, at least by the expressions on their faces.

"We want information," Sabrina Travers demanded.

"Yeah," Samuel and Simon added.

"What about?" Hunter asked.

"You two are not normal," eight-year-old Sabrina went on. "We don't mean anything bad, but we just want to know why you get covered in bruises, and we want to know where you vanish off to each night. We know that you had a part in the battle."

Hunter and Leo sighed. They had discussed the eventuality with their Aunt and Uncle, as well as with Mindy and Dave.

They also had a plan.

The following evening

Wednesday, December 30th

D-JAK Prime

The three Travers children had visited the dojang before, and they had even taken introductory classes.

They had seen their cousins sparring, although nothing like their true abilities. The three eight-years-olds knew that there was something about their cousins, and at times, their cousins had scared them with their, often violent, tempers. However, all that the youngsters had, were ideas . . . and none of those ideas was even close to what they were about to experience. They smiled as they recognised their instructor.

"Hi, Megan!"

"Hello, guys - you ready for me to blow your little minds?" Megan asked with a friendly smile.

The triplets frowned at the comment, becoming even more confused as Megan pointed at a doorway.

"Beyond that door is another dimension - a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance. A land of things and ideas."

The triplets' parents, Jeremy and Nicola Travers, were just as confused as their offspring. Nevertheless, they followed Megan through a normal-looking doorway which led to a corridor. The corridor turned to the right before stopping at a door which looked very heavy.

"You are about to meet your dreams and your nightmares," Megan growled somewhat theatrically as the steel-clad door swung open on well-oiled hinges.

Each stepped through the doorway into darkness, apprehension gnawing at their minds. As the door swung closed, silently, before audibly latching, Megan chuckled. The small group followed a path which felt like that of a labyrinth, and which concluded with a ride downwards in an elevator. Once the elevator had stopped, Megan spoke again.

"You've just crossed over into what some might call the Twilight Zone . . . however, you could refer to it as the Vigilante Zone."

The family group was astonished as they emerged into a steel and glass enclosure before passing through into a subterranean space with comfortable seating and a massive television.

"Welcome to Zulu," a voice announced, and five pairs of eyes went very wide as they found themselves face to face with the queen vigilante, herself.

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"Mommy, I'm scared."

"Have no fear, Sabrina Travers," Hit Girl said.

Sabrina Travers felt anything but reassured.

"How does she know my name?" Sabrina asked with fear in her eyes.

"I told her," came an electronically enhanced voice.

Unlike Hit Girl, who wore a dark grey uniform with her mask, the vigilante who had spoken wore a full *Fusion* combat suit.

"I am Cut-Throat," the vigilante announced.

While Sabrina was scared by the sight of Hit Girl, Samuel 'Sam' Travers was amazed to be so close to the famous vigilante. He was also transfixed by the armour-clad vigilante standing before him. The suit was a deep blue with highlights of a pale blue. The utility belt held twin pistols and various pouches for his equipment. On his back, were visible his twin combat machetes. Jeremy and Nicola Travers both had shrewd ideas who stood before them. They knew that their nephews had been out fighting with *Fusion*. Just once, they had asked the boys if they knew who Hit Girl really was, and the boys had answered in the affirmative - the question had never been asked again. Though neither of them had ever bargained on meeting Hit Girl face to face.

"And I am Relentless," came another electronically enhanced voice as a shorter vigilante appeared to stand beside Cut-Throat.

For Relentless, the weapons were the same, as was the combat suit, only the colour was different; a dark green with pale green highlights. With a nod from

Hit Girl, both vigilantes reached up and they removed their masks. The three eight-year-olds flinched but then their eyes somehow just got even wider in amazement at the grinning faces revealed before them.

"Hunter!" Sabrina exclaimed as she gazed up at her thirteen-year-old cousin.

"Hi, Sab."

"Wow!" Sam announced as he took in his eleven-year-old cousin's combat suit.

"This is amazing!" Simon added.

"Hello, boys," Nicola Travers said.

Glenview

Dave's patience was getting stretched to breaking point.

While Mindy was off at Zulu supervising a reveal for the Travers family, four smartass youngsters were going out of their way to be nasty to one another. Anne-Marie was doing everything she knew to annoy Stephanie and the yelling was getting beyond a joke. The boys were also goading one another, but they would then take a break and annoy the girls. Dave could tell that Stephanie was at breaking point and when she snapped - well, she snapped, and things tended to explode. It did not help that when Stephanie bolted from her bedroom, her foot found Horatio who had decided that Stephanie's doorway was a good place to stretch out and enjoy a snooze. The cat's howl, Stephanie's scream as various needle-sharp claws dug into her ankle, followed by quite a bit of swearing was enough to have Dave bolting up the stairs to see what was going on. The cat had been the final straw as Stephanie had stumbled and fallen onto her backside, causing Jamie to burst out laughing. Stephanie snapped!

"I want my Claymore back!" Stephanie demanded as she regained her feet, her fists clenched.

"Blowing up your siblings is *not* a solution, Steph," Dave responded reasonably.

"Isn't it?" the ten-year-old demanded angrily. "They won't leave me alone and I am sick of it!"

"They are just letting off steam, Steph, and I am sure that they are doing it out of love for their big sister."

"Love! My Claymore would be *full* of love as it detonated and blasted their worthless bodies into a cloud of bloody mess. They wouldn't annoy me after that. That would teach them a lesson they would *never* forget."

Dave chuckled as he struggled to defuse the simmering *Predator*.

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"I'm home!" Mindy called out as she closed the door to the garage.

"That's fucking obvious!" Stephanie growled as she strode past and vanished down into the basement.

"Am I missing something?" Mindy asked as Dave stepped out from the kitchen.

"The kids wound her up just a little too much," Dave explained with a chuckle.

"Any injuries?"

"Just pride . . . and Horatio got trodden on."

"I'm sure he'll survive!" Mindy chuckled as her keen eyes spied a pair of yellow eyes peeping out from under the couch in the living room. "I'd better go talk with our little hand grenade before she goes off again."

"Good luck."

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Mindy found Stephanie laying into a punchbag in the basement.

The punches and kicks were strong and violent. Stephanie's body language showed that she was very angry, and that anger went into every punch. Mindy walked over, and she stood behind the bag, holding it in position.

"What do you want?" Stephanie growled.

"I just wanted to spend some time with my eldest girl."

"I'm sorry for being angry with you upstairs."

Another savage kick followed up by a punch shoved the bag to one side and Mindy had to reposition it for the next strike.

"It appeared warranted, I suppose," she replied.

"I just want time to myself, but they won't leave me alone."

"Did Jamie wind you up when you were little?"

Stephanie stopped punching the bag for a moment as she thought back several years. Then she grinned.

"Yes. He used to think all of my toys were his and we'd fight over the stupidest things. But I loved him, and Mum used to say that he looked up to me which was why he was always annoying me."

"I know that you are not a normal girl, and your siblings are nowhere near normal. Dave and I are not normal and as a family we lead a very abnormal life. We all have a lot to cope with from our past lives, but we have one another and that is what matters."

"I know. I would never hurt them, and they know that - which is the problem."

"Yes. You'll happily rip the head off a total stranger and not think twice about his death, but as far as your siblings, I know that you would protect them with your life and never hurt them."

"I owe Dave an apology, don't I?"

"Horatio, too."

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Mindy and Stephanie found Dave and the kids watching TV in the living room.

Stephanie immediately went to cuddle up with Dave where she smiled up at him before apologising for her behaviour. The other kids each appeared and sheepishly apologised for winding Stephanie up.

"I can take it. Sorry for losing my temper with all of you."

"Do you still love us?" Anne-Marie asked, worry etched into her expression.

"It'll take a lot more than anything you are capable of for me to stop loving you, Anne-Marie," Stephanie replied. "That applies to you boys, too."

"I'm glad that's over!" Mindy exclaimed.

"Can I get my Claymore back, please?" Stephanie asked Dave.

"No."

"Just a little anti-personnel mine?"

"No."

"Flash-bang?"

"No!"

The following evening

Thursday, December 1st

Safehouse Q

"Charlotte! Dakota!" Sarah bellowed up the stairs. "You have visitors!"

The two girls came down the stairs looking a little apprehensive - who could be visiting them?

"Office," Sarah directed as she followed the girls down to the end of the house.

Sarah waved the two girls inside before closing the door and heading towards the kitchen. Charlotte and Dakota found themselves facing Lucy and Stephanie.

"We didn't do anything. . ." Dakota began.

"Sit, both of you," Lucy directed with a grin.

"Please don't send us back," Charlotte added.

Stephanie sighed.

"Stop being idiots!" she growled. "We are sending you both back - just not to *that* hellhole."

"What do you mean?" Charlotte asked.

"Both of you have proved to us that there is more to you both than being *Predators* or *Marauders*," Stephanie began to explain. "You can never undo what we were made - we will always be *Predators*. What matters now, is how you use those skills which you went through hell to learn. Now, this is your big break. A second chance. A chance to make something of your lives. There will be no third chance - just death."

"Where are we going?" Dakota asked.

"Home," Stephanie replied.

South Whipple

For Abigail Wilde, the past couple of days had not been fun.

She had barely spoken to anybody and she spent most of her time just going about her daily tasks. School was a blur, as were mealtimes. The revelations had brought her mixed emotions. Memories which she had hoped would remain buried, were now at the fore and she could remember almost everything which had occurred that afternoon in the East End of London. It had not been the boy's fault - he had been coerced, only it had been him who had taken her virginity and that was something which she could never get back. She felt a little sorry

for the boy as he was going to suffer and then spend the rest of his life in prison. Part of her wanted to kill the boy, however, another part of her wanted to forgive him.

Then, she remembered something else from that night.

Two days later

Saturday, December 3rd

The two girls received a rather special visitor that morning.

However, before that visit, Sarah had gathered them both from the basement where they had been playing on a Sony PlayStation with Lin and her sister, Xiāngxìn.

"What's wrong?" Charlotte asked tentatively.

"It is time for you two ladies to go pack," Sarah explained.

Sarah barely covered her ears as the two girls screeched happily before they both bolted for the stairs. An hour later, their visitor awaited them both in the office.

It was not whom they had expected.

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"Oh, shit!" Dakota exclaimed as she laid eyes on Hit Girl.

"Sit!"

Both girls sat down straight away almost making Hit Girl laugh.

"You have both exceeded expectations, and as such, I am sending you both home, and on to better lives."

Both girls grinned broadly.

"You will both travel, by air, to Scotland," Hit Girl explained as she handed each girl a cell phone. "These phones are keyed to your personal thumbprints. On each phone is a step-by-step guide for your trip. You deviate, for even one second, and I will hunt you both down."

Charlotte yelped as Hit Girl's tone got darker.

"If required, I will hunt you both down to the ends of the earth and when I find you, do you think I will be in a happy mood?"

The two girls had both gone very pale and they quickly shook their heads. Hit Girl could see that she had got the message across. She was pleased; the two girls were the first pair of *Marauders* to start a new life.

*The future for Charlotte and Dakota is covered in **Chapter 54: New Girls** of my other story: **Vengeance**.*