

Monday, November 28th, 2016

Safehouse E

Level 8 - Detention Level

"Grey, Warlow-Davies, Fincham, both Laus, Todd, and Dolan!"

The seven youngsters all turned to look at the voice which had called out their names - it was Stormtide.

"Go and pack your kit - you are all moving onto pastures new."

The youngsters hesitated for a moment before heading off to their accommodation. A few minutes later, they each reappeared with their kit packed in holdalls. They each looked worried and there were some envious looks from their colleagues who were remaining behind.

"Follow me," Stormtide directed.

Stormtide stopped the group a few yards down the corridor where Hit Girl was waiting.

"Grey and Warlow-Davies - I want a word with you two," Hit Girl growled.

"Stormtide - take the rest up to the vehicles."

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Charlotte and Dakota found themselves seated in a comfortable recreational space with a massive TV and soft chairs.

"Anything happen the other night," the purple-masked vigilante enquired evenly.

The two girls exchanged a glance - they had both agreed to tell the truth if anybody asked. Not that that was helping as both shook with fear.

"We had to help," Dakota explained as she took the lead. "That girl was being . . . you know."

"We could not just sit there and watch!" Charlotte bristled. "So, if you're going to punish us, then fucking get on with it, because I have a clear conscience for the first time in many weeks."

Dakota nodded her agreement to the fiery twelve-year-old's comment. They both expected the Heavens to come crashing down on their heads. Hit Girl just sat there for almost a full minute without any hint of movement which was scary to say the least. Then the bitch laughed.

"You both did very well. You bent the rules, slightly, but you did it for the right reasons. You also returned to the vehicle when you could have run," Hit Girl explained.

"Yeah," Charlotte growled as she pulled up her trouser leg. "And you would have taken our feet off!"

"Yes, I would," Hit Girl conceded. "It was a test. We wanted to see how you might react in an extreme situation. Putting your fear of me to one side to assist that girl was the best decision you two have made in a long time. You are both about to embark on the next stage of your young lives. You have everything ahead of you. Follow instructions over the next few days, and I promise you that things will get even better."

Hit Girl grinned inside as she saw the looks of hope on the faces before her. The two girls were working out perfectly and it was no lie that things would get better for them. They both deserved a new life and if they behaved, then that was what they were going to get. A lot of money and resources had been

invested in rehabilitating those youngsters and it was beginning to pay off with dividends.

"I gather you both fought a half-naked boy; must have been fun!"

Dakota grimaced and her face turned pink.

"I'm . . . well, I'm not into boys. . ."

Charlotte appeared startled. *Urban Predator* screened out (killed) those with certain sexual preferences, preferring to produce controllably bi-sexual orientations where possible. Dakota had done well to hide her orientation.

"No one is going to judge you, Dakota, nobody," Hit Girl said firmly. "Anybody does, well, you point them in my direction. Let's get you both to your friends and onto your new residence."

The two girls had calmed down and they were both grinning.

Safehouse Q

"My name is Sarah - some of you will know me as Discord and yes, I am a *Predator*. My job is to run this safehouse and I do to the best of my ability. You little shits will be living here until you are deemed worthy to re-join civilised society. You will have much more freedom than you did at your last place, but that can all be taken away very quickly and I will send you back. Upstairs, for the girls, and downstairs, for the boys, you each have your own bedroom with your name on the door. If I tell you to remain in your bedrooms, then you will do so. Meals will be served at a set time each day. If you are late to meals, then you go hungry. However, attending meals is important and part of your rehabilitation. You will each have tasks to perform around the safehouse. You will be responsible for yourself. You will be expected to shower daily and wear clean clothing. I expect you to help each other, if needed, and I want no animosity for previous acts as *Predators* or *Marauders*. Nobody leaves this house without permission - if you do, I slit your throats. Are any of these instructions unclear?"

"No," came seven responses.

"In your bedrooms, each of you will find new clothing. If any of it does not fit, let me know. If any of it is not to your liking, let me know. If something you need is missing, let me know. You need a toothbrush, toothpaste, or tampons - you let me know. For the moment, I want you all to go upstairs and unpack. Settle in and yes, you can come downstairs and make use of the family room or the rec room in the basement, as well as the kitchen. Please do not make a mess and do clean up after yourselves. Go."

The seven youngsters headed up and down the stairs as directed.

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The new clothing was a shock to them all.

It was all expensive and all in the correct sizes. They had expected cheap, basic clothing, but for the very first time in many years, they were all able to wear comfortable clothing that did not stand them out from the proverbial crowd. The Lau sisters had been given a larger room to share and both rapidly changed out of their bland clothing, grinning as they did so. For the older girls, it was a blessing to be able to wear comfortable underwear which again, was expensive - but oh, so comfortable. After a short while, they each ventured down to the rec room in the basement, where they found beanbags and a large-

screen TV. Before long, all seven kids were happily being kids for the first time in many years.

Sarah appeared, and she brought with her a tray of cold soft drinks and some snacks.

Glenview

"You okay, honey?"

Dave peered down at his wife, who was elbow deep in paperwork in the study.

"Yeah - I gotta get this shit done."

"Why won't you let Marty or Paige help you?" Dave asked, knowing that he was waging a losing battle before he even started.

Mindy refused to allow others to do work which she felt was hers to do. She was insistent. Some of the work related to their various cover stories - taxes had to be paid correctly, for example; Mindy did not want to go the way of Al Capone! It was just Mindy and the way in which she had been brought up. If she could do it, then she saw no reason to bother anybody else. Dave loved her for her stubbornness which he found very funny at times, much to Mindy's chagrin. She always had to plan things herself, double-checking, treble-checking. There was more to being a vigilante than just shooting people, being obnoxious, and blowing things up. Dave had witnessed that himself when Mindy had reinvented Hit Girl when she was just fifteen. He could remember it like it was yesterday.

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"Hey! What you doing?"

"Real superheroes modify their costumes."

"Oh yeah? Thought mine was kinda working for me."

"Like I said: real superheroes."

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Dave decided to have a little fun and he began to tickle Mindy.

"Dave . . . I need to finish this. . ."

"No, you don't."

"Dave!"

"Kick-Ass wanna play."

Mindy groaned but she stood up nonetheless.

"What do you want me to do?" Mindy asked.

"Hit me!" Dave demanded.

Mindy didn't flinch as she struck out at her husband only for her fist to be caught by a much larger hand and twisted. Then Dave slapped her right cheek, gently.

"What the hell?"

"Act like a bitch, get slapped like a bitch!"

"Come again?" Mindy demanded.

"Act like a bitch, get slapped like a bitch!"

"You calling *me* a bitch?"

Mindy and Dave exchanged several strikes, none reaching their target. Each strike was intercepted by the other.

"Weak!" Dave chuckled. "Don't hurt your vagina."

Mindy's mouth dropped open as she scowled.

"So, quit slapping me like one, then!" Mindy exclaimed.

Dave prodded Mindy's chest and Mindy backed out onto the landing.

"I'm not interested in a half-assed Hit Girl. You stop behaving like a little pussy!"

"I thought you liked my little pussy," Mindy chuckled.

"Did she just say what I thought she said?" Anne-Marie asked as she watched Dave and Mindy move between her and Stephanie.

"I wish she hadn't, but yes," Stephanie confirmed.

"What are they doing?" Anne-Marie asked.

"Good question," Stephanie replied as both girls followed their parents along the landing. "Foreplay maybe?"

"What's foreplay?"

"You *don't* want to know. . ."

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It was nothing out the ordinary for the girls to see their parents sparring, although, it was usually on a mat, and sometimes in the pool, but never around the home, however, their mother was Hit Girl, so there was no such thing as surprising in their home.

Mindy and Dave continued to exchange strikes, either from hands or feet, as they moved down the corridor past Danny's bedroom and towards the open living room on one side and the open foyer on the other. Stephanie's expert eyes noticed that the sparring was not even remotely serious, despite the bodily contact. Both were capable of seriously hurting the other, and Dave had the strength to quite literally snap Mindy in half, or to simply rip her head off, should he choose to. Stephanie figured that they both simply wanted to let off a little steam. Then they stopped kicking and punching, and Stephanie's eyes went wide for a moment and she cringed as Mindy shoved Dave up against the wall of the library and she kissed him before jumping up and wrapping her long legs around his waist. Stephanie's trained eyes saw the subtle set of Mindy's hips and she knew what was about to happen second before Dave found himself viciously twisted to the side as Mindy threw him down to the floor.

Dave simply laughed as he stared up into Mindy's green eyes which sparkled insanely.

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"Catch me if you can, lover boy!" Mindy called out as she grinned and threw herself over the balustrade and down into the living room.

"What the fuck!?" Anne-Marie exclaimed.

"Dollar, jar!" came Mindy's voice from down below.

"What's going on?" Danny demanded as he and Jamie appeared on the landing just as Dave jumped after his wife.

"Awesome!" Jamie exclaimed in an American accent that sounded suspiciously like Anne-Marie's.

As the four kids watched from above, they saw Dave tuck and roll as he hit the living room floor. Mindy kicked him backwards onto a couch, just as Jamie began to fiddle with his mobile phone.

"What are you doing?" Stephanie asked.

"Hold on. . . got it!" the boy responded as music began to blare from the living room sound system.

*Love, love is strange
Lot of people take it for a game
Once you get it
You never wanna quit, no no*

Stephanie cringed at the implications of the tune which she knew well enough and she was appalled by the look on Mindy's face as she looked at Dave with a cringe-worthy expression on her face which appalled the young girl.

*After you've had it, yeah yeah
You're in an awful fix
Many people
Don't understand, no no

They think loving, yeah yeah
Is money in the hand
Your sweet loving
Is better than a kiss, yeah yeah

When you leave me
Sweet kisses I miss*

"Quick! Turn it off, right the hell now!" Stephanie yelled at Jamie who petulantly shook his head.

It was too late.

"Sylvia?" Dave lay on the floor and he mimed to the soundtrack, looking up at Mindy who stood above him.

"Yes, Mickey," Mindy mimed back with a sultry look on her face.

"How do you call your lover boy?"

"Come here, lover boy!" Mindy beckoned with her finger.

"And if he doesn't answer?"

"Oh, lover boy!" Mindy replied with a look of absolute hunger on her face.

"And if he *still* doesn't answer?" Dave asked as Mindy sank to her knees and she crawled over to him as he crawled over to her.

"I simply say: Baby, oh baby, my sweet baby, you're the one!"

Then they both mimed to the music as they hugged and mauled each other.

"Baby, oh baby, my sweet baby, you're the one!"

Then, they kissed . . . and they kissed.

"I want to scratch my eyes out," Stephanie groaned as she fled towards her bedroom.

"That was truly disgusting," Anne-Marie added.

"That was fucking awesome!" Jamie grinned as Danny nodded his agreement.

"Dollar, jar!" Dave called out in between the kissing.

Early the following morning

Tuesday, November 29th

West Columbia

Megan awoke with a start.

Despite her bedroom being very dark, her keen eyes noticed that the bed beside her was empty. She listened, expecting to hear activity in the ensuite bathroom. It was nothing out of the ordinary for Curtis to get up for a pee. Megan's exceptional hearing detected nothing - maybe he had gone downstairs for a drink. She was fully aware of what the date meant for Curtis, and that meant she was doing her best to keep an eye on him. The twelve-year-old slipped out of her bed and she headed downstairs. Stretched out in the living room, she found Piper.

"You seen Curtis, Piper?" Megan asked the sleepy German Shepherd.

Piper simply looked over towards the front door. Megan frowned. Where might Curtis have gone?

"Got it!" Megan exclaimed. "Go back to sleep, Piper."

Memorial Park Cemetery

The boy huddled in the darkness, trying to keep warm.

He wanted to be in Washington D.C. but that was slightly out of his reach, but he also needed comfort from the person who had taken over from his parents. That person had taken him in when he had been alone, and she had kept him safe from harm. The twelve-year-old boy stared down at the marble grave marker, tears pouring down his cheeks.

Catherine Bennett

b. June 8th, 1974

d. October 16th, 2016

Beloved Wife, Mother, and Aunt

Gone from this mortal earth

But never to be forgotten

Curtis Bennett sank to his knees, his emotions taking over as he sobbed. There were so many things that he wanted to ask her. There were so many things which he wanted to tell her. It had been two years since his life had been torn apart so violently. For two years his Aunt Cathy had cared for him and treated him as her own. Why? Why did he have to suffer? First his parents. Then his aunt. And now, the person he loved was keeping something from him. His mind was telling him what it probably was, but his heart refused to accept it. He thought that he meant something to her. He thought that they could tell each other anything. They had both been through so much. He wanted to push for information, but he

did not dare, should things go bad and she pushed him away. He could not bear to lose somebody else - it would tear him apart. He pulled his coat closer and he gazed down at the simple words which, despite their simplicity, gave him solace.

He had no idea how long he had been kneeling there, sobbing his heart out, when he felt soft hands on his face and as he looked up, he looked into the gun-metal-blue eyes of Megan. She sat down beside the boy whom she loved, and she hugged him tightly. He sobbed, and he wrapped his arms tightly around the person he saw as his soulmate. He could not consider life without her, but there was something between them which was pushing them apart. He looked up into her eyes and he willed her to tell him. He could see hurt. He could see darkness. He could see Wildcat. He had been seeing a lot of Wildcat. He alone could recognise the subtle changes in her eyes. The subtle changes in her body language and her mannerisms. As far as he could tell, even Mindy was unable to recognise the difference between the wild, funny, engaging Megan, and the deadly, brave, bloodthirsty, ferocious, ruthless vigilante which was Wildcat. Recently, they were becoming one. Normally, when the suit came off, and the claws were stowed, Megan came to the fore. Not anymore, the suit and claws came off, but Wildcat remained.

Curtis had no problem with Wildcat, but he was concerned by what she might become if she could not go back to being Megan. He had heard about what Mindy had become when she had left New York. He had heard about how she had almost died. He was trying everything to prevent such a thing happening to the girl he loved. Only, Wildcat was not who he loved. He loved Megan . . . and Megan appeared to have gone. It was that hell-hole. It was that sick, malevolent city - it had to be.

"Talk to me, Megan. Talk to me!"

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Curtis saw the eyes close and he saw the tears.

"I can't."

"I need Megan. I don't need you."

"I *am* Megan!"

"No, you are not. You are Wildcat."

"Why do you care?"

"I love Megan. I love her for who *she* is. I don't have those kinds of feelings for Wildcat."

The eyes changed, and Curtis knew that it was Wildcat who was pressing her finger against his lips.

"What. . .?"

"No talking."

Curtis found himself dragged away from the grave and over into the dark shadows from a large tree.

"What. . .?" Curtis repeated, not knowing what in hell was going on.

"I said, no talking!"

Megan pushed Curtis to the ground and she reached for his belt, pulling it open. Curtis could see where things were going - he recognised her body

language and he figured that he may as well play along. Part of him sensed that it was the right path and that maybe there were answers at the end of the journey. Megan was being rough - very rough; just as she had been for weeks. He felt his trousers and his underwear pulled down to his ankles and then removed, along with his shoes and socks. He felt the cold of the surrounding air on places that never normally felt that sort of cold. His jacket was pulled off his arms, and his jumper and T-shirt removed. With a jolt, he realised that he was lying completely naked, under a tree, in a graveyard, at night. However, he was not alone.

A part of him had shrivelled up with the cold, only, Megan began to create a reaction as she shed her own clothing, her soft skin visible despite the darkness. Curtis felt his groin reacting to what he knew was there and Megan's fingers encouraged even more movement. Then Megan, her eyes boring into Curtis' own, gently settled her own groin onto his. It was an event which he thought might never happen, but definitely not before they were thirteen. Megan kissed him and as she moved her thighs slowly, she groaned. Curtis had mixed thoughts about what was happening, but he figured that 'the deed' was done, so to speak, so why stop. He loved her, and she loved him. With a kiss on Megan's lips, Curtis flipped her over and he remained both on top and within. Megan wrapped her arms around his torso, and her legs around his thighs. For Curtis, the pressure was restricting, but not enough to prevent what appeared to come naturally for him.

For Megan, it was a dream come true, but deep within her (not Curtis), there was a deep sorrow which was causing her emotions to rage within her. Curtis yelled out as her fingernails dug into his back. Then Megan felt those very same emotions which she had felt at the hands of that bastard, only they felt better; there was a difference, she realised. Then she began to cry with happiness which startled Curtis as he moved his thighs as quickly and as firmly as he could.

"It's okay - keep going," she smiled.

Curtis had not seen that smile in a long time - the smile belonged to Megan, not Wildcat. He reacted to that by increasing his pelvic movements and he saw the grin grow as the tears thinned. Then it happened, and he felt his body tensing up as the biggest orgasm ever hit him full strength at the very same time as Megan's fingernails dug even deeper and he stifled a yell as he emptied himself into Megan who then tensed up herself in a way which was very familiar as she screamed out in pure ecstasy.

For several minutes, they both simply laid there, wrapped in their jackets as rain pelted down beyond the tree's cover.

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It was Megan who broke the silence.

"It happened in Gotham."

"What exactly happened in Gotham?" Curtis asked, almost scared to ask the question which lurked in the darkest recesses of his mind - the place reserved for those things which you know are true, but you refuse to accept.

"The last visit . . . well, I went out alone."

"You did what!?" Curtis exclaimed, anger in his tone.

"I was stupid. . ."

"Too fucking right, you were!"

Curtis was not all that surprised to hear sobbing in the darkness. Megan rarely felt guilty, no matter what she did, but for once, she was feeling it, badly. Curtis was not ready for what Megan said next, despite what lurked deep in his mind.

"They cornered me. They stripped me. They touched me. One ejaculated over me. Another was hard and he . . . he pushed it inside me and he . . ."

While part of Curtis was astonished at the revelation, he also felt relief that Megan had opened up to him. Megan crumbled into him, sobbing her heart out, and he gripped her tightly. How could Megan have kept something like that so quiet? Did nobody notice? Somebody must have noticed. It was many minutes before Megan finally looked up at Curtis. Curtis could see that the eyes were one-hundred-percent Megan - Wildcat was in abeyance.

"I've not told anybody. Please don't tell Mom."

"I won't tell a soul. I am so very sorry, Megan - I really am."

"I wish I could have told you sooner, only . . . I felt so ashamed. I felt embarrassed and humiliated. I felt that you might not want me. It was horrible. I wanted you to be my first. Only . . . you were my first. It felt so different. I felt your love. I saw the love in your eyes. I felt your warmth. If I had known how I'd feel after us both making love, I would have had us fucking weeks ago!"

Curtis laughed.

"I love you, Megan, I really do. I've missed the Megan that I've known since I was ten. Now, I have you back."

Then the tears flowed for them both as they hugged under that tree in the dark graveyard.

Later that same morning

West Columbia

"Morning, all!"

Paige almost dropped the plate of pancakes in shock and surprise.

"Who are you, and what have you done to my daughter?" she demanded as she studied the immaculately dressed person before her.

Her short hair was still cut into its neat bob, and it was still white in the majority. However, the black section was back to her natural auburn colour with a pair of thin stripes, one purple and one brown, on her right side. Her school uniform was perfect, and she was wearing the correct tights instead of the ones which she knew would annoy her mother and the school principal.

"Morning."

Curtis, on the other hand, appeared a little dishevelled and tired as he shuffled into the kitchen. There was something, but Paige could not put her finger on it. However, her daughter had changed, quite literally overnight. Gone was the sullen pre-teen who went out of her way to make life hell for her mother and step-father. Instead, there was a model young lady, ready for school. Marcus appeared, and he frowned - he smelt a rat.

"What's with the hair?" Marcus asked - he was not complaining; it was a much-preferred colour.

"Normally, I might say: 'Bite me, Dad!' - but instead, I'll just ask if you like it."

"Yes, I do."

"Thank you."

Marcus knew that he should be mad about something, but he had no idea what. Megan was just like Mindy; they both got up to things behind his back, but they were both just too damn good at covering for themselves.

"Love you, Mom! Have a great day, Dad!" Megan said as she hugged Marcus before bolting out the door.

"What's with her?" Marcus asked, resigning himself to a chuckle. "Do I even want to know?"

"Probably not," Paige considered, still clueless as to why her daughter was suddenly behaving like the perfect child. "But let's just enjoy it."

Curtis simply shrugged.

"She's Megan, what else can I say?"

Safehouse E

Level 8 - Detention Level

"You have *no* idea *what* I've been through!"

Doctor Sarah Reese nodded, her expression neutral as she studied the fourteen-year-old youth.

"You're absolutely right, Lucas. Why don't you tell me?"

"I was nine when they took me. They turned me into a monster. They filled me with drugs and they made me do bad things. I hated it, but I had no choice, or they would put a bullet into my skull. Either that or send another *Predator* after me."

Lucy grimaced. It was her turn to chaperone the *Marauders* for their weekly sessions with either Doctor Reese or Doctor Charles.

"You had no choice, Lucas."

"I did later on."

"What do you mean? When FEAR offered you a new role?"

"No. In London. After *Urban Predator* folded, I was in England, somewhere outside Oxford. I ran from my handlers - they didn't chase me - and I found myself in London. Probably not the best place for a thirteen-year-old boy on his own, to be honest, but I had skills, and I used them. I found myself with a gang - they liked my skills and I used them to hurt people. Then they offered me a reward. I had never had sex to that point in my life. She could only have been ten-years-old. The girl was out of it - they'd given her a drug of some sort, I think . . . I . . ."

The boy was struggling to articulate the necessary words and he had to take a deep breath as tears spilled down his cheeks.

"I raped her."

