

Sunday, December 11th, 2016

Mindy was exhausted after what had to have been one of the most difficult weekends in a long time.

By six, that evening, she had:

A *Predator* in the medical centre at Echo with a stab wound.

A *Marauder* at large with no real idea why or where they were headed.

A daughter who had all but barricaded herself in her bedroom and would not be coming back out any time soon.

But, on a less depressing note, though, she also had:

Three more *Predators* who had been dispatched to Scotland.

Two *Predators* who had found a new home in Chicago.

One *Predator* who had successfully jetted off to a new life in Los Angeles.

And . . . a lead on a possible *Predator* in Atlanta, of all places.

So, let's go back to the previous morning.

Saturday, December 10th

That morning

Longmeadow Road

Doctor Jennifer Staite was pacing backwards and forwards, her hands twisting themselves into knots.

She had never felt so nervous - it was a huge decision, but one which she was determined was correct. It had taken much soul-searching, and a lot of two-way chatter with her husband, but they had both agreed that they needed something more in their lives. Her husband was a wonderful man - a bit eccentric, maybe - but he was the centre of her life. However, her focus was due to change . . . right at that moment. Jennifer had not been masked when she had seen each and every *Marauder*, and therefore, the two young girls immediately recognised her.

"Hello, Doctor," the eldest said with a smile.

Lin Lau was eleven-years-old. She was short, with jet-black hair, and she had the usual visual indicators of her Chinese ancestry. She had spent two-and-a-half years being abused as a *Predator*, and then six months as something worse. She had thrown down her weapons at the very first opportunity during The Battle, and she had been thankful for her arrest. The only thing that she had left in the entire world was her little sister.

Xiāngxìn Lau was almost identical to her older sister, only the nine-year-old was quite a bit shorter, but she was also very full of life and the youngster was always grinning. She looked up at Jennifer, and she smiled. Despite having been taken at the tender age of six and having endured the same punishing time as her elder sister, she had somehow coped better and now that she was free from everything, she was very much the normal child.

The two girls were inseparable, and Jennifer had rarely seen the pair apart. As she looked at them both, she knew that she had made the right choice. The two girls had climbed out of Mindy's Jaguar F-Pace and Mindy came up behind them. The veteran vigilante could see Jennifer's distraction and she could relate having only gone through the whole children thing about fourteen months previously herself. Finally, Jennifer snapped out of it.

"Come on girls, inside."

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Jennifer led the way through a pair of grey wooden doors, each glazed with an upper and lower glass pane.

The two girls followed, wide-eyed, as Mindy came up behind with the girls' holdalls and backpacks. Mindy grinned: how far Hit Girl had fallen; nothing more than a mere porter, she thought. Jennifer led them all through a library, a sun room, and into . . .

"This is the family room, right next to the kitchen - make yourselves comfortable, girls. You too, Mindy. Would you like a drink Xiāngxìn, Lin?"

"Yes, please."

"Yes, please."

Both girls spoke with a slight English accent having been born in the former British colony, and now Chinese autonomous territory, of Hong Kong and they had both been taught English from an early age. The two girls were stunned by the size of the house and a little overawed by everything. They both sat down on the enormous U-shaped couch and just simply gazed at one other. Jennifer came over and she handed each of the girls a can of Coke and Mindy a bottle of water.

"Ah, they've arrived!"

The two girls turned to see a man standing in the doorway. He was grinning, and he appeared very friendly.

"Girls, this is my husband, Rodney," Jennifer said happily. "Rodney, the tall one is Lin while the grinning one is Xiāngxìn."

"Hello, and welcome to your new home, girls," Rodney Staite replied.

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Jennifer had insisted on Mindy staying for lunch.

Mindy had things to do, but Jennifer was very persuasive, as was Rodney. Mindy had not met Rodney before that day, but she found him cheerful and funny, but with a sometimes-condescending personality.

"What do you do, Rodney," Mindy asked as they tucked into hotdogs which the two girls were enjoying hugely.

Thankfully, Mindy thought, the two girls were below the usual disgusting adolescent behaviour common of the *Predator* species, despite their past, and they were both able to eat hot dogs politely and quietly.

"I have two doctorates: physics and mechanical engineering. I work for Pearson Aerospace in Chicago where I am deputy-head of their Science and Research Division. When I am not at work, my hobby is researching the 'Lost City of Atlantis'," Rodney offered proudly and slightly arrogantly, before he paused briefly. "Oh, and I'm mortally allergic to any form of citrus."

Jennifer simply rolled her eyes.

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That afternoon

**Training Facility Echo
Dining Room - Level 1**

"Mindy? Out of Chloe and you, who is the most acrobatic and the most flexible?"

Mindy gave the diminutive Becky a condescending stare before ginning.

"Chloe is good, I'll give her that, but I am very flexible, and I have been known to hold my own without touching the floor."

"Can you do the splits?" Becky continued as Chloe just shook her head in exasperation.

"You challenging me?" Mindy asked from her seat at the next table.

Becky decided that she was pushing her luck, but she stood her ground as she leaned on Chloe.

"Yes."

Mindy stood up, and with all of Fusion watching and without any hesitation, she pulled her pistol from its holster, ejected the magazine, and then passed the package to Dave, who placed them onto the table. She unbuckled her belt, then she sat down and unlaced her boots, before kicking them off and she dropped her pants, stepping out of them. As usual, Mindy wore boy shorts underneath and she ignored the grins from the boys, all of whom had seen her sparring in much less. Mindy proceeded to demonstrate a perfect front split, sliding gently to the floor under perfect control.

"Wow!" Becky announced, impressed.

"Please!" came another voice and Dave received another pistol as Stephanie half-stripped and joined Mindy on the floor in a perfect front split.

"Okay, enough of this!" Mindy growled as she pulled her pants back on.

"Thanks," Becky said. "Other than you and Chloe, who else is really good at acrobatics?"

"Can I answer this one?" Chloe asked, and Mindy nodded. "That would be Megan - she is ultra-flexible, and she outshines me, and she is not far behind Mindy when it comes to being able to use acrobatics in a fight."

Megan grinned from where she sat opposite Curtis.

"Is that true?" Becky asked.

"I suppose it is," Megan admitted reluctantly.

"Believe me - Megan is very flexible!" Curtis confirmed. "However, I think Mindy's backflip is better."

"Than you, Curtis," Mindy chuckled. "Megan is very good and if you want to learn backflips, then she is good enough to teach her moves."

Megan grinned at the unexpected accolade. Becky opened her mouth, but Chloe shut it quickly.

"Just not today, Peanut!" she cautioned.

"D-JAK, next week," Megan promised a grinning Becky.

Safehouse E
Level Seven

The boy had endured two very lonely weeks.

He had been allowed out of his accommodation (cell) for three hours each day and he had been supervised every minute. He had not fought against his enforced incarceration - he had been the model prisoner, to be honest. Mindy had ensured that he had had books to read, plenty of food and drink, and some limited entertainment via an iPod. In Mindy's eyes, the boy was innocent until proven guilty - it could all be a case of mistaken identity, even though it seemed cut and dried. There was no actual evidence, physical or otherwise, linking Lucas to Abigail - just his word, and there was the Fifth Amendment to protect the boy; he was an American National after all. Mindy was way out of her depth as she normally had but one method of dealing with rapists - only this was much closer to home and that disturbed her.

Vicky Richards had been down in her capacity as a CPD Lieutenant to hear the boy's words and to figure out if there really was a case to be answered. She had been joined by Detective Erin Lindsay as a neutral observer who was well versed in the boy's situation. Unfortunately, Vicky and Erin had come away very worried for the boy's future. They had both spoken to Marcus in his capacity as a CPD Captain, and Marcus had reluctantly agreed with their supposition of the boy's guilt. They, in turn, had gone to see Jack Bay in his capacity as CPD Superintendent. With the assistance of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, the facts of law were identified, and a case was compiled. Peter Stone, the Assistant State's Attorney for the Deputy Bureau Chief of the State's Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Bureau, was brought on board and he had suggested contacting the British Authorities. The British Authorities, in turn, had passed the awkward issue onto Special Branch considering the sensitive and classified nature of the potential defendant's past.

Naturally, Special Branch had despatched somebody intimately familiar with the world of the *Predator*.

That evening

Training Facility Echo Bathroom - Level 2

It had been a strenuous day and Stephanie was desperate for a shower.

She stripped off and stepped under the hot water, enjoying the heat on her strained muscles and bruised skin. She turned her back to the changing room as she soaped up her body and she had just stood up and was rinsing off when she felt an arm wrap itself around her neck and something very sharp press into her left side.

"Don't fucking move a muscle, Steph - I've been waiting many years for this; you killed Kara. I needed her; she helped me stay sane. Then you had to go and kill her."

"Guinevere?"

"Yes, Steph - I know, you all trusted me, but I can't let this go. Kara was my friend in a place where nobody had friends. We needed each other. I hate to do this, but you know the *Predator* unwritten code: 'An eye for an eye'."

"I know where you're coming from, G, but please, you don't want to do this."

"You begging?"

Stephanie felt the point in her left side shift slightly, and she reacted instantly.

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"You still in the shower, Steph?" Saoirse called out as she entered the changing room. "You want to . . . holy shit!"

Saoirse suddenly got flashbacks to a young naked girl standing in a shower, another equally naked bigger girl lying under the streaming water, blood swirling into the drain.

"I know what this looks like," Stephanie began with a forced smile as she turned off the water.

"Talk about fucking déjà vu!" Saoirse announced as she threw Stephanie a towel. "Cover yourself up - have you no dignity!"

"Funny, bitch!" Stephanie retorted, wrapping the towel around herself as Saoirse grabbed for the phone mounted on the bulkhead just outside the showers.

"Surgeon to the level 2 changing rooms! Surgeon to the level 2 changing rooms!" Saoirse called out over the tannoy before she grabbed a first aid kit.

Saoirse could see what had happened - kind of. There was a bloody wound in Guinevere's side and a small knife lay on the tiles. Saoirse applied a field dressing to the wound and Stephanie held it in place. The sound of running feet could be heard and various faces appeared in the changing rooms.

"Re-enacting your glorious past, Stephanie?" Mindy commented dryly as she took in the scene while Jennifer began to check over the naked Guinevere.

"What's going on?"

Saoirse grabbed Juno as she ran through the door. She saw her mentor lying on the tiles and she quickly pulled her pistol. But before she could level it at anybody, Stephanie had stripped it out of the older girl's hand and then Stephanie shook her head.

"No, Juno; Guinevere did this to herself . . . Logan - get Juno out of here."

"What the fuck?" Nicholas demanded as he watched Guinevere being secured into an aluminium frame stretcher with a blanket wrapped around her.

Saoirse intercepted the angry *Predator*.

"Confucius said it well: 'Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves'," she said.

Nicholas recognised Guinevere's knife, and he saw Stephanie looking a little bewildered. He put two and two together very quickly and he got four as the answer.

"Oh, shit!" he groaned.

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Medical Centre - Level 1

Once Guinevere had had her wound treated and sown up, she was tucked up in a bed to rest.

"There's no lasting damage," Jennifer explained as she took a moment to check out Stephanie. "The blade missed anything important."

"Pleased to hear that, I am," Stephanie breathed. "I'm fine, okay."

"Just needed to check - that nick will leave a small scar, but you'll be fine."

"Christ, Stephanie!" Mindy complained as she studied her daughter. "You really do pick your times to cause shit - I need to go pickup Electra's grandfather and I'm going to have to put my foot down now."

"Since when have you been bothered about putting your foot down?"

"Smart-ass!"

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Chicago O'Hare International Airport

"Mindy!"

"Commander."

"Patrick, please."

Mindy grinned - she loved the British accent and Patrick's was smooth, refined, and perfect.

"Of course, Patrick - this way."

They walked back to where Mindy had parked her SUV and very soon they were on I-90, heading into the City. They talked, mainly about England, Scotland, Electra, and Patrick's family. After a very short trip, Mindy dropped the Commander off at a hotel for the night. They both knew that the following day was to be rather harrowing and neither was looking forward to it.

"Have a good night's sleep, Commander, Marcus will be by to pick you up in the morning."

"Good night, Mindy."

A little while later

Glenview

"Steph?"

"Go away!"

"Let me in . . . please?"

There was movement and Mindy heard the lock turn, but the door remained closed. With slight apprehension, Mindy turned the handle and she nudged the door open a centimetre. She checked the gap for any signs of a trip wire or other tell-tales.

"It's clear - I've no mines, remember," Stephanie growled from the bed.

Mindy closed the door behind her and she sat down on the bed next to her daughter. Stephanie was wearing her usual bedtime attire of an overly large T-shirt. It was obvious that the youngster had been crying.

"Bad day, huh?"

"Once upon a time, it was funny - now it sucks . . . I hate it; why does everybody want me dead?"

Mindy could understand Stephanie's feelings. The past year had been hell for her and so many people had tried to kill her - one coming so close. Mindy lay on the bed and she pulled Stephanie close to her. She had no idea what else to do, or what to say. For Stephanie, though, just having somebody to cling to was

all she needed. She had shrugged it off for so long, only for it to come back with a vengeance. Abigail, Saoirse, Summer Frasier, FEAR, Willow - so many people had made a concerted effort to kill her and all had come very close. She knew why - and she knew that there were others out there that wanted to do her harm - and she was sick of it. She just wanted to lead a normal life and be in control of that life, but no matter what she did, she failed, and somebody else tried to kill her.

Everything stemmed back to that girl, Kara Newton. Stephanie could picture the girl in her mind. It had not been her fault; she had been a victim of her situation. It was survival of the fittest at its worst and most depraved. Somehow, Stephanie had survived as the fittest - God only knew how. She had been noticed. Stephanie knew that she had probably been only days away from receiving a termination bullet in her skull. At the time, she had wished for it . . . anything to end the daily abuse and the never-ending suffering. Everything that had occurred from that point had stemmed from her killing Kara Newton.

"I wish I had never killed that damn girl in the shower!"

Mindy actually laughed, and Stephanie sat up, looking really annoyed.

"What's so fucking funny about that!"

"You're playing the same 'if' game, Steph - don't."

"I know - we've been through it before, but. . ."

"No fucking 'buts', Stephanie!"

"Thanks for being there for me."

"Always, Steph."

"Night, Mindy."

"Sleep Tight, Steph."

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Dave could see his wife's distress, and he knew why she was distressed.

"That damn word!" Mindy growled. "So damn small, but so enormous."

"If, huh?" Dave asked rhetorically. "The biggest word this world has."

"Tell me about it!"

"Fate has a nasty way of causing shit at the worst possible time. No matter what we do - or think we could have done - it cannot be changed. We've both played the game and it got us fucking nowhere."

"If she isn't out of there, tomorrow, then I'm sending in the big guns."

"Big guns?"

"Oh, yeah!" Mindy confirmed.

The following morning
Sunday, December 11th

Safehouse Q

Stephanie would not come out of her bedroom, so Mindy had just left her to her solace - she could wait as Hit Girl really had enough to deal with including a day of hell ahead of her.

Instead, Hit Girl had headed down to the safehouse to see the outgoing *Predators*. Four more of them were about to find new lives - leaving Sarah with but one ex-*Marauder* in her custody. Not surprisingly, Hit Girl had found Jake Wistrum waiting for her. The look of hope on his face was enough for Hit Girl to forget any ideas of winding the boy up.

"Are we going somewhere?" the twelve-year-old boy asked happily.

"Yes, Jake, you are."

"Please tell me I don't have eight hours on a plane with 'Jakey'," sixteen-year-old Kate groaned.

"Yes, you do," Hit Girl chuckled.

"Can't we check him into the hold?" Kate persisted.

"He's not *that* bad, Kate," fourteen-year-old Ewan commented.

"I promise to be good . . . Katie."

"Don't call me that!" Kate breathed.

Jake just grinned and Hit Girl laughed.

"Oh, Jake has two lovely little girls waiting for him, Kate. I think that they will both give him a run for his money - assuming they don't cut his balls off on day one," Hit Girl explained.

"Are they *Predators*?" Jake asked.

"Yes."

"Girl *Predators* are bitches!" Jake scowled.

"Fear us!" Kate growled, and Jake bolted up the stairs to start packing.

Hit Girl handed them their passports, personal papers, and cash for the trip. Kate took custody of Jake's packet.

"Good luck to all of you," Hit Girl said. "You will both be very safe in Scotland, I assure you."

"Thank you, Hit Girl," Ewan said with genuine conviction.

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Attention was then turned towards the fourth *Predator*.

James Todd appeared more than a little uneasy as he stood before Hit Girl. The thirteen-year-old was British, however, he had opted to remain in the United States.

"You ready to head somewhere a little warmer, James?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You will be joining a house full of girls, but I think you can tolerate that. Los Angeles will be a change for you - hopefully for the better. I am trusting you not to let me down."

"I promise not to let you down, Hit Girl."

"Here are your travel documents, your passport, and your personal documents. You fly out tonight. Stay safe, James."

"Thanks."

Hit Girl departed for her next meeting which was not to be so nice and friendly.

***Training Facility Echo
Medical Centre - Level 1***

"A few minutes, please, Jennifer."

Jennifer frowned, but she headed off to her office, nonetheless, closing the door behind her.

"How are you feeling, Guinevere?" Mindy asked.

"Fine, thanks," Guinevere responded, wondering if she was about to die.

Mindy correctly read her expression.

"I trusted you. I gave you everything you might need to survive."

Guinevere was beginning to shake with fear; the voice was ice cold, if not colder. Mindy did not raise her voice - she did not need to.

"I put my people on the line to save your sorry ass. Then, how do you choose to repay me? YOU FUCKING TRY TO KILL ONE OF MY OWN!"

The bellow scared Guinevere to her core. That only got worse as Mindy produced a wicked looking blade, about eight-inches long.

"Have you felt *real* pain, Guinevere Jones?"

Guinevere could not keep her eyes off the glistening point of the combat knife which Mindy was rotating in her hands. The fifteen-year-old girl had never felt so scared in her entire life.

"I have had my fill of you fucking *Predators*! I have spent weeks looking after a bunch of you little bastards who decided to go one step further and become fucking *Marauders*! You all make me sick! For some damn reason, I felt sorry for you all and I decided to help you bastards have a better fucking life. But do any of you motherfuckers show one tiny hint of gratitude? Like FUCK! Maybe I should incarcerate you with all the other little bastards, down below. Believe me, you little bitch, I'd keep you down there until you were fucking forty! Don't worry about Juno - I would have looked after her, and I'm sure Nicholas could handle San Diego without his fuck-buddy."

The glistening point of the knife was mesmerising to Guinevere and she could only stammer out a simple response.

"I'm sorry. . ."

"*SORRY!* You went after my *daughter!*"

"She's not your daughter!" Guinevere found herself responding as her anger built up inside of her. "You just felt sorry for the little bitch!"

"HOW FUCKING DARE YOU!" Mindy roared, a full head of steam building up. "She is my daughter for as long as she damn well wants to be, and no fucking trollop is going to tell me otherwise. Fuck you, you little cunt!"

Guinevere screamed as the knife flew in her direction and she closed her eyes, expecting never to see anything ever again.

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Guinevere still had her eyes tightly closed, her body shaking with fear.

"I will admit, you put on a good show," Mindy said calmly.

"What!" Guinevere exclaimed as she opened her eyes and she looked above her head to where the knife was embedded in the plaster an inch from where her head had been.

"The only reason that you are still living is because you had no intent to kill her," Mindy went on.

"What do you mean by that?" Guinevere demanded.

"You're not stupid, Guinevere - far fucking from it! You're a fucking Phase 3 *Predator* who was activated. Now, that tells me that you know your shit - but you failed to take down a Phase 2 *Predator* in a successful ambush. No - Stephanie would be very dead if you had wanted it . . . you would have been dead too - I would have blown your head apart. I know the little bitch has previous for killing in a shower, but I'm certain that you could have held your own . . . if you had wanted to. You are alive, right now, for one reason, Guinevere: you have a conscience."

"I suppose."

"Many of you do. I was intending on killing Foxtail, in response to her trying to kill Stephanie, but I saw that she had a conscience and I let her live - got hell from Stephanie, I can tell you! Stephanie had no choice in killing that girl and you know it - that was why you could not kill her."

Guinevere nodded.

"Is she okay?"

"She won't come out of her bedroom, thanks to your little attack."

"I wasn't thinking. I've fucked things up from end to end. I put my team at risk. I almost got them killed. Then I attacked Stephanie and put everything at risk."

"Fight it, Lilith, fight it."

As Mindy left the Medical Centre, Guinevere collapsed into tears and she sobbed as everything swamped her. On the next level, Mindy sought out Juno.

"Go to Guinevere - she needs you."

Nicholas made to follow, but Mindy stopped him.

"Guinevere needs Juno, right now - give her some space."

"I understand. Thank you for not killing my girl."

"I only kill bad people. Guinevere is not a bad person - and neither are you, Nicholas Hyde. Look after your team and support your girl."

"I will."

That afternoon

South Whipple

Abigail was already in tears as Mindy pulled up and things did not improve as she walked out of the house.

"I don't want to go. Do we really have to do this?"

"Yes, Abigail," Mindy replied as they both climbed into the SUV.

"Will I have to talk to him?"

"No. You don't even have to see him."

"I don't want to see him."

"Captain Williams, Lieutenant Richards, and Commander Haig just need to hear your side of events."

"It wasn't his fault."

"Yes, but he did something really bad, Abigail."

"I know."

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Chicago Police Department, District 21 Office of Captain Marcus Williams

The office was full to the brim.

As well as Marcus, Vicky Richards, Erin Lindsay, Patrick Haig, and Assistant State's Attorney Peter Stone, Mindy and Abigail were present. For the ten-year-old, it was all quite nerve-racking. Surprisingly, Mindy found Abigail holding on very tightly to her right hand.

"You are Abigail Wilde?" ASA Stone asked.

"Yes, sir."

"You are eleven-years-old?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are what is known as a *Predator*, am I correct?"

"Yes, sir."

"As I understand it, somewhere between July 29th and August 28th, this year, you got taken in London, England, yes?"

"I think so - it's all a bit fuzzy. I was with my friends: Shannon and Jamie. I went out to get a takeaway - I wanted to get Jamie something special."

Abigail stopped as her cheeks turned pink.

"Carry on, please," ASA Stone said politely.

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After Abigail had given her evidence, they all took a break.

"So, how are things at home," Vicky asked Mindy.

"Stephanie's refusing to leave her bedroom," Mindy admitted.

"Mindy tried that when she was younger - I just ordered in a pizza and grabbed some beers from the fridge; best damn movie night ever!" Marcus chuckled as Mindy scowled.

"She'll get over it," Vicky confirmed with a laugh. "Hailee was a little bitch when it came to doing things like that until she was about fourteen!"

When the break was over, Mindy took Abigail downstairs and away from Marcus's office - it was Lucas' turn.

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The boy was understandably very nervous, and he felt the vestiges of fear as he saw the people seated before him.

"You are Lucas Charlton?" ASA Stone asked.

"Yes, sir."

"You are fourteen-years-old?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are what is known as a *Predator*, am I correct?"

"Yes, sir."

"As I understand it, somewhere between July 29th and August 28th, this year, you were in London, England, yes?"

"Yes, sir."

"Between those dates, you have admitted to sexually assaulting a female - is that correct?"

Lucas stared at the floor for a moment as his body trembled with fear. He looked up at the ASA and he nodded.

"Yes."

"Do you recall who that female was, Lucas?"

"She was naked when they brought her in . . . very young, maybe nine or ten. I never saw her face, but she was not resisting the men who brought her in. She was facing away from me . . . I saw the dagger."

"The dagger?" ASA Stone enquired.

"Every *Predator* who passes basic training receives a tattoo behind their right ear in the form of a commando dagger."

"Thank you, Lucas. What happened next?"

"I was not fully aware of what was going on - they'd given me alcohol . . . Vodka, I think. They pulled off my clothes so that I was naked, and I just did it - I had sex with the girl. After the event, I was horrified once I realised what I had done. I was shoved to the floor and two men both attacked the girl."

"Sexually?"

"Yes, sir. They raped her."

"Was that the first time you had experienced sexual intercourse?"

"Yes, sir."

"What are your feelings about it now?"

"I hate myself for what I did, and it made me angry and it put me on a bad road which led me to make bad decisions - I saw myself as a bad person."

Lucas had lost control of his emotions and he was sobbing as he spoke.

"Thank you, Lucas - we'll call it a day there," ASA Stone said.

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Lucas was escorted downstairs for some food while Abigail returned to the office.

"As I understand it," ASA Stone stated. "You tried to kill yourself once you found out what had happened to you. Is that correct?"

"I felt horrified by what had been done to me, so I stole a kitchen knife and I slit my wrist - it was a stupid idea and very painful!" Abigail responded. "That boy did not force himself onto me - he was forced to rape me."

"That is yet to be proven," ASA stone pointed out.

"You have no proof that he was even there - it could have been some other girl."

"We know, but we have to go with the facts."

"What will happen to him?" Abigail asked with genuine concern.

"He will be put on a plane, tomorrow afternoon, with Commander Haig who will take him back to London . . . and trial."

"Will what I think be taken into account?"

"Yes, it will, Abigail."

Forty minutes later

"This came in from Washington, on Friday," Marcus commented as he pressed play on the video.

Vicky had not seen the video and she was intrigued.

"What does it mean?"

"All we know is that the girl is a *Predator*," Marcus responded as his eyes were drawn to a disturbance outside the glass windows of his office. "She is located in Atlanta. . ."

Sergeant Fellowes had been escorting Lucas Charlton past Marcus' office, on the way back to the safehouse when the veteran officer suddenly found himself slammed against the glass bulkhead, banging his head before his feet were kicked out from under him. Once he was able to focus on his situation, he saw Lucas smartly jump in the air, bringing his handcuffed hands to his front and he bolted for the staircase.

Marcus bellowed out a warning.

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"What happened?"

Sam Fellowes looked up at Mindy.

"I don't know. The boy saw something as we passed Marcus' office and then the next thing I know, he knocked me down and he bolted."

"We can track him," Mindy said. "I did not see this coming, I will admit. I thought he was going to stay the course."

"He admitted to rape, Mindy. The kid is facing some serious jail time."

"Considering the evidence, he was not entirely at fault, Sam. Even the person he attacked has admitted that. He also helped her to escape. Did he say anything as he attacked you?"

"Yes. He kept saying it was her. He kept saying he had to help her. I had no idea what he was talking about."

Mindy looked through the glass walls of Marcus' office and she saw the frozen image on the screen.

"I think I might have an idea," she mused.

Six o'clock that evening

Training Facility Echo

The Battle Bunker

Mindy studied the boy's track on the giant screen before her.

It made no sense; he was meandering a bit, but he was generally headed in a north-westerly direction. Maybe he was headed to Canada? No - that did not seem right. Minneapolis? There was something which was preventing Mindy from pressing the button which would sever his left foot - the screen was loaded, and the red button pulsed on the horizontal touchscreen. She was also not sending a posse after him - not yet.

"Where are you going, Lucas?"

*The future for Jake, Ewan, and Kate is covered in **Chapter 57: Dick** of my other story: **Vengeance**.*

*The future for James is covered in **Chapter 9: Dawn** of my other story: **Fusion: Los Angeles**.*