

Sunday, December 11th, 2016

Atlanta, USA

"Stormy - go get Psyche and the kids," Hit Girl growled.

Stormtide bristled, but she did not dare respond as she wished with Hit Girl on the literal warpath - she liked breathing. Not surprisingly, Hit Girl glared at Stormtide when she reappeared with just the boy.

"Can you not follow simple orders, Stormy?"

The tone brooked no argument but Stormtide stood her ground, glad that her emotions were hidden beneath a mask.

"Tell Hit Girl what you told me, Isaac."

The five-year-old boy hesitated for a moment as he stared up at Hit Girl.

"They took 'kenzie."

"Where is my daughter?" Hit Girl demanded.

"They hurt her, and they made her go with 'kenzie."

Hit Girl began to shake - but not with fear. Her chest heaved as her breathing increased and she lashed out, her armoured gauntlet shattering the side window of the Mustang before leaving a sizable dent in the adjoining body panel. Hit Girl marched directly over to where McGee was standing over a wounded gunman. The wounded man looked up at Hit Girl and he went very pale as Hit Girl grinned fiendishly, pulling the 18.5-inch purple-hilted Tanto from her right greave.

"I think we need to talk."

..._...

While what Hit Girl was doing went against what the Federal Agents were sworn to uphold, Gibbs sat with Patrick and they nonchalantly reloaded their expended magazines.

The local police were far too busy with the expanding riot to respond to the firefight - at least not immediately. Abby and McGee were busy collating everything that knew about the drug dealer known as 'Magic' and his lieutenant, Tony Ramon. When the red and blue flashing lights heralded the arrival of an Atlanta PD Crown Victoria, McGee halted the officers with his Federal credentials and officially took custody of the scene. The police officers left the scene to look after more urgent problems.

Behind Hit Girl's Mustang, Hit Girl ripped off the duct tape from the man's mouth.

"You ready to talk, yet?"

"Yes. . ."

Hit Girl slapped the tape back into place and she rammed her Tanto into the man's leg for the umpteenth time. The man braced up as he screamed, his sounds muffled by the duct tape. After waiting half a minute for the man to calm down slightly, Hit Girl ripped off the duct tape.

"Anything - I'll tell you fucking anything . . . just don't stab me again."

The man was begging as Hit Girl grinned.

"Let's hear it, and it had better be good or I come back to finish you off, you fucking pussy."

The man nodded as he began to spill the proverbial beans in copious helpings.

***Seven miles to the southeast
and just north of the airport***

North Martin Street, East Point

It took them less than an hour to reach their destination and formulate a plan of attack.

The armour-clad vigilantes would go in while the others covered the outside of the building to prevent anybody escaping. Hit Girl had vowed that nobody would survive the encounter that night. Abby and McGee had been able to hack into the building's security system and they had also been able to confirm the presence of Tony Ramon. The man was seen talking to a tall, thin man who appeared to be the boss - 'Magic'. The plan was simple: Kick-Ass and Hit Girl would hit the building with a frontal assault while Piranha, Stormtide and Fury would gain entry via a side entrance. Hit Girl had given one final order before they moved off to their start positions.

"No mercy."

The Bedivere Group

It was a name used to cover the building's true use.

The group was used to generate legal income for Atlanta's largest drug dealer. He worked almost unopposed as Atlanta was free of vigilantes and he had paid off key senior officers in the Atlanta Police Department. He operated a slick organisation which was perfect in every way from the legally employed staff, to his impeccable taxes. As far as he was concerned, he was untouchable, and nobody knew what his people did after hours.

At almost nine that night, the final employees were just leaving for the night after a long day at the office. They all worked hard, and they enjoyed their large salaries. The security guard at the reception desk in the lobby, who had taken over from the receptionist at six, stood up as a tall, well-built man pulled open the door and stepped inside.

"Sorry, bud - we're closed until eight, tomorrow morning," the security guard said.

"No problem," the man said as he looked around the lobby area and then took a moment to examine the glazed frontage of the building. "I'll be back."

The first-floor conference room

"I'm fucking certain of it, man."

"Certain of what," Hank 'Magic' Bedivere asked.

"It was a Chicago Vigilante!" the man exclaimed in a voice bordering on hysterics.

"This is Atlanta - we're over seven-hundred miles away from damn Chicago," Bedivere pointed out with more than a little disdain for his employee.

"He had that yellow and green mask, too."

Bedivere was about to respond when the building shook violently. He looked up to see glass and aluminium flying across the lobby and what could only be an SUV parked on top of the lobby reception desk. As he watched, a large form stepped out from the driver's seat.

"I fucking told you!" his employee yelled over the noise of falling glass and masonry. "It's him!"

"Fuck!" Bedivere observed unnecessarily as a very nasty thought struck him. "If he's here, then so is his bitch."

"That would be me!"

Bedivere spun around to see a purple-clad armoured form at the doorway behind him. The man fled out of the conference room via another door as his men poured bullets at the purple bitch in their midst.

"Stop fucking shooting me, you fucking bastards!" Hit Girl roared as she returned fire with her twin Glock 19 Gen4 pistols.

The warehouse

The 160-foot warehouse which extended out the back of the building was split in two along the length, with one being almost twice the width of the other.

Towering racks of equipment filled both warehouses and fulfilled the legal business needs of the organisation. Underneath the right-hand warehouse, the not-so-legal business needs were fulfilled by a classified basement which did not exist on any plans. A good chunk of the space was occupied by drug-related equipment and stores of product, with literal stacks of cash. But that was not all; a seventy-yard tunnel led to the south and came up inside a decrepit, rusty warehouse which was seemingly abandoned and condemned. As you moved up the steps from the tunnel, you found yourself in an area made from bricks. There were seven doors - all wooden, and very solid - which led into seven rooms. One was a room with couches, a television, and a compact kitchen. The other six rooms were little more than cells. None of the rooms had natural light and they were all soundproofed against yells and screams. At that point, only one of the rooms was occupied. The room stank of sweat and semen, both of which were overridden by the stench of urine and faeces. However, all that was hidden beneath the reek of fear and human distress.

The girl was naked, and she lay on a musty old mattress which, in turn, lay on the bare concrete floor. A dirty rag was tied behind her head, and it then passed across her mouth and was pulled tightly back into her jaw. Her wrists were bound above her head as she lay on her front and then tied to a ringbolt embedded into the concrete. Her ankles were spread and secured to a pair of ringbolts at the foot of the mattress. The girl's skin was dirty, and she did not appear to have been properly washed in days, if not weeks. The young girl was probably very beautiful beneath all the dirt. Her long hair, a pleasant light brown where the dirt was not embedded, also hinted to her previous beauty. The girl was tall with a well-formed body which hinted at her age which placed her in the late teens. She was asleep, mercifully. She had no idea how many men had visited her. She had no idea how many organs had penetrated her. The pile of fairly fresh, used condoms just within her line of sight hinted at maybe half a dozen visitors that afternoon. It was the same, three days a week - yes, they allowed her time off to recover between sessions of rape.

Not that she was allowed much rest as the other four days were spent with men staring at her body as she sat tied to a chair, or strung up, spread-eagled for

all to see. Men paid good money to see young flesh. A cursory hose-down in the central area where there was a drain was all that kept the girl vaguely clean. Her brain had long ago shutdown, ignoring what was happening to her human body. Her human mind was stored, safe and sound deep within her head. She had no idea how long she had been there, nor how long her torture would go on.

All she heard was silence as she slept the sleep of the dead.

Piranha, Stormtide, and Fury

While Kick-Ass and Hit Girl were terminating the drug dealers at the opposite end of the building, the three girls were attacking from the west end of the south side.

At precisely the same moment that Kick-Ass parked his SUV in the front lobby, Fury bolted to one side of the large entry door and flattened herself against the steel siding. There was a large explosion and the roller shutter crumpled to the ground. Four men turned in surprise, raising their weapons . . . just not fast enough as Stormtide coldly gunned them down with her Heckler & Koch MP7A1 PDW. She ran past their bodies as blood streamed across the concrete floor. The girl cared less for the men - they were the enemy and responsible for hundreds of deaths through their drug trade. She was followed by Piranha and Fury, both similarly armed. They ran down the rows of shelving, clearing each row, gunning down another seven men, all armed.

The three *Predators* moved and though as one with very little in the way of communication. No energy was wasted - all was spent on doing what they were trained to do . . . to kill.

Kick-Ass and Hit Girl

Kick-Ass kicked down the door to a corner office.

"Knock, knock!"

Two men fired off shotguns, the pellets rebounding off of Kick-Ass' heavy chest armour. He strode forward, ignoring the blasts and he yanked one of the weapons out of the hands of a gunman before turning the weapon on both men and adding some colour to the back wall of the decidedly boring office décor. He dropped the weapon and he stepped out of the office to where he found Hit Girl standing before Tony Ramon. The man was a good foot taller than the infamous vigilante, but he was rooted to the spot as Hit Girl produced one of her balisong blades flicking it open.

"Do you wanna know why I use a knife? Guns are too quick; you can't savour all the . . . little emotions. In . . . you see . . . in their last moments, people show you who they really are."

The man was shaking - obviously a bully who enjoyed dishing it out . . . but when the same came calling, he quite literally pissed his pants.

"Hit Girl!" Kick-Ass called out. "Stop playing with your food!"

"Okay," Hit Girl replied as she slashed the bastard's throat open. "Boring conversation anyway."

..._...

Hit Girl sprinted down the corridor which ran the full width of the building, past Kick-Ass' badly parked SUV in the lobby and onto a small open plan area.

Hit Girl paused as she registered muttering from behind a five-foot partition. She grinned as she drew her twin Wakizashi swords and rammed both through the partition and on into the two guards taking shelter on the other side. After a measured period of pain, Hit Girl withdrew her swords and she moved on.

"I think they got the point," she grinned to Kick-Ass who just shook his head in disgust at the bad humour.

Together, they raced up the fire stairs to the second floor having cleared the first. A man ambushed them at the exit from the stairs with a large machete which Kick-Ass easily defeated and turned on the dead man fighting. Kick-Ass rammed the blade through the man's stomach, pinning him to the drywall behind.

"Stick around!" the veteran vigilante growled as he moved on.

Piranha, Stormtide, and Fury

Fury was on point, her bō-staff separated into two halves and Fury wielded it with expert and deadly precision.

Piranha and Stormtide hung back, well out of blade range and the pair were more than a little concerned for their younger friend. She was getting a little wild and her fury was best not experienced. The youngster matched her real and code names without even trying. Stormtide cringed behind her mask as a man lost his head, quite literally, and Fury was sprayed with blood which she studiously ignored as she pushed forwards, for her next target. Piranha shook her head - she was worried.

"She blames herself," Piranha commented.

"Yep!" Stormtide confirmed.

"She's going to come off the rails with a bang," Piranha added.

"Oh, yeah," Stormtide agreed.

"Are you two bitches just going to stand there?" Fury demanded from several yards ahead of them.

Piranha and Stormtide ran to join their friend.

Kick-Ass and Hit Girl with Piranha, Stormtide, and Fury

They met up on the second floor, at the south end of the building.

"Well?" Hit Girl demanded.

"Fury's gutted everything we've come across," Stormtide explained. "Left a bit of a mess and that blood will never come out of the carpet."

"No sign of Psyche, the kid, or the boss man . . . err Boss," Piranha reported.

"Thank you, Piranha," Hit Girl replied. "Good to have a professional on board."

"Teacher's pet!" Stormtide growled as she stalked off.

Fury chuckled as she ran after Stormtide.

..._...

"The fucking bastard has to be here somewhere!"

Hit Girl fumed as she found herself standing on a mezzanine floor overlooking the larger of the two warehouses. She stalked along the mezzanine, looking down each row of shelves.

"I've got the fucking bastard!" she yelled as she saw a movement and she dived over the railing down to the concrete floor below.

The man panicked, running hard for his life. He bolted out of the side door which the *Predators* had earlier destroyed, and he quickly came under fire.

"Federal Agents!"

"Special Branch!"

Bedivere dived behind a car as some of his men came around the building and they opened fire on NCIS . . . and Special Branch. Bedivere was not hanging around and he ran south towards the railway, throwing himself over a three-foot fence. Hit Girl ignored the flying bullets as she calmly walked between the opposing sides.

"Get out the bloody way!" Commander Haig bellowed. "Bloody vigilantes!"

Hit Girl ignored him as she easily leapt over the same fence and ran after her quarry.

..._...

They ran through the darkness along the railroad tracks.

Hit Girl was in a deviously devious mood and she allowed her quarry to remain a dozen yards ahead of her - never closer. She could take him down whenever she wanted, but instead, she wanted to extend the chase. Did she get off chasing bad guys down? Hell, yeah! She loved the feeling of adrenaline in her veins. Ever since that first day when her Daddy had almost scared the shit out of her with a pistol and she had experienced her first ever burst of pure adrenaline in her veins. It was a feeling that intoxicated her even if it meant cruel and inhumane treatment for the person she was chasing - well, they fucking deserved it, right?

A little over three hundred yards later, Bedivere led them to the left, away from the railroad tracks, and behind a nondescript building.

..._...

Bedivere was not as fit as he used to be, and he struggled to stand as he found himself cornered by the most feared women in the United States of America - if not the world.

"I'm every nightmare you've ever had. I'm your worst dream come true. I'm everything you ever were afraid of."

Hank 'Magic' Bedivere felt genuine fear and he knew that the end was nigh - but his brain still struggled to find some way out of his current predicament. Hit Girl moved slightly to his left, so he began to move away, to his right. He hadn't realised where he had been standing, but Hit Girl had. Hank Bedivere fell backwards, about ten feet and landing at the bottom of a steel box. The sides were vertical with an odd angle at the top. As Hit Girl vanished from sight, he tried to find a way out, but the sides were bare metal with no handholds in sight.

"Oh, this brings back good memories," Hit Girl mused as she ran her hands over the control panel before her, then she shouted down to Bedivere. "I'm crushed

that we're never going to see each other again . . . just not as much as you will be."

"No!" the man yelled as a large diesel engine started up and he realised with increasing horror where he was.

The car crusher moved speedily, and Bedivere shrank into a ball as the sides closed in on him. Then he screamed, and he screamed . . . very quickly, though, there was a crunching sound, and the screaming stopped. The diesel engine died soon after as the crushing sequence ended. There was silence from within the crusher.

"What a douche!" Hit Girl muttered as she turned and walked away.

Back at Martin Street

"You found him?" Kick-Ass enquired.

"Yeah," Hit Girl replied nonchalantly.

"What happened to him?" Kick-Ass persisted.

"We couldn't get along - he was crushed."

"What the hell does that mean?" Kick-Ass asked his wife.

"A girl needs to keep her secrets," Hit Girl grinned as Kick-Ass simply shook his head.

It appeared to Hit Girl that the fight was over - only, there was still no sign of Stephanie or Mackenzie.

"I think I might have something," Commander Haig commented.

Hit Girl allowed herself to be led over to where one of Bedivere's men lay on the ground - a pool of blood spreading around his head.

"This, err thing, informed me that there is another floor," Commander Haig said, stamping on the concrete. "Just over here."

Hit Girl stared down at the large rectangular hatchway set into the concrete at their feet.

..._...

Leaving NCIS and Special Branch up above, Hit Girl took her team below.

It was obviously the core of Bedivere's drug world and it had protection. Submachinegun fire erupted out as the team found themselves entering a kill zone. But they were prepared and as Fury and Stormtide threw smoke grenades, Kick-Ass engaged with a Kel-Tec KSG bullpup 12-gauge pump action shotgun. The shells were enhanced breaching rounds which tore apart the supposed ballistic protection that the defenders were relying on for their safety. After their protection was gone, Kick-Ass' rounds tore apart blood and bone, ultimately leaving none standing - at least not in one piece.

The smoke from the grenades slowly dissipated as the smashed overhead lighting flickered giving the subterranean facility a foreboding air as Hit Girl's armoured boots crunched through broken glass, blood, and fractured bone. They searched every inch of the floor until they came to a single door remaining. Beyond the door, they could hear the sounds of somebody having the living daylight beaten out of them - then a girl's scream.

Without hesitation, Kick-Ass flattened the door and all five burst into the room with weapons raised.

..._...

"It's about fucking time you lazy twats turned up!"

Stephanie sat fuming with Mackenzie beside her and a large cosh held in her hands. All around her, men and women lay scattered on the floor, mostly unconscious. One moved and tried to sit up. Whack! The cosh cracked the man on the side of his head.

"Stay the fuck down, pillock! I've been waiting so damn long, I thought I'd have to put these muppets down and breakout myself!"

Stephanie stood up and she pulled Mackenzie with her, barging past Hit Girl and Kick-Ass as she made for the hatch leading upwards. Kick-Ass simply shrugged as he looked at his wife who seemed genuinely lost for words.

"She is so like you, honey."

Hit Girl just stood there, gaping at her daughter as she vanished from sight.

The tunnel

McGee found a concealed doorway which led from the room Stephanie had been held in.

The doorway opened up onto a well-lit tunnel leading to the south. The tunnel was about seventy yards in length and wide enough for three people to walk abreast without bumping into one another. Piranha and Stormtide led the way with Fury acting as tail-end-Charlie and guarding their backs. At the end of the tunnel, they stopped at a set of concrete steps. Fury went up first, keeping low. If there had been guards, they were long gone.

"Clear!" Fury reported as she stood in the centre of the space and studied the seven stout wooden doors.

She was soon joined by Kick-Ass and Hit Girl, who were closely followed by Special Agent Gibbs, and Commander Haig.

"Well, well, well, the proverbial hen house," Gibbs commented. "The bastard was into the sex-trade, too."

"Anybody at home?" Haig asked.

"We've found a kitchen and two empty rooms with some weird leather shit," Stormtide commented.

"What," Hit Girl grinned. "You and Tempest aren't into bondage?"

"No," Stormtide growled, pulling at her mask as her face heated up.

"Disgusting thought!" Fury growled with a mock shudder.

Kick-Ass kicked in the next door - the room was empty. As was the next, and the next. The final room, however, was occupied.

"Holy shit!" Kick-Ass breathed. "In here!"

..._...

The girl was naked, and she lay on a musty old mattress which, in turn, lay on the bare concrete floor.

Kick-Ass gently eased off the dirty rag which was tied behind her head and then passed across her mouth and which was pulled tightly back into her jaw. The girl moaned as she began to wake from her sleep of the dead. Kick-Ass swiftly severed the ropes which bound her wrists and her ankles. The girl's skin was dirty, and she did not appear to have been properly washed in days, if not weeks, in Kick-Ass' opinion. Very gently, Kick-Ass eased the girl up into a sitting position. The young girl was probably very beautiful beneath all the dirt. Her long hair, a pleasant light brown where the dirt was not embedded, also hinted to her previous beauty. The girl was tall with a well-formed body which Kick-Ass decided placed the girl in her late teens.

Fury appeared with a small bottle of water from the kitchen fridge and she tore open the cap. Kick-Ass gently poured a little into the girl's open mouth and her eyelids opened to reveal large brown eyes which were full of fear and panic. She took in the various faces arrayed before her - most of them masked. She looked down at her wrists and her ankles - they were free . . . she forced a smile. Her mind was slow to properly appreciate what was going on - she took the proffered bottle of water and she began to gulp the wonderful liquid down her parched throat.

"Easy now," an electronically enhanced voice growled, pulling the bottle away. "You're safe - and there's plenty more water; too much and you'll be sick."

The girl's head turned to stare into the green and yellow mask. She no longer cared who saw her naked anymore and men leering at her body was just a day to day activity which she tolerated as she had no choice. Was she really safe? She knew who she was, and she knew what she had lost. Would anybody believe that she was who she was? Would the nightmare that had been her life for weeks - or more, she had no idea - ever end? The masked vigilante gently wiped her face with a damp towel - she cringed as she saw the towel get dirty very quickly.

"Bloody hell!" Commander Haig exclaimed as he looked closer at the face before him. "The Lady Lara Cockburn, as I live and breathe!"

..._...

Hit Girl was struggling to comprehend how their trip to Atlanta had gone so badly wrong, but so right at the same time.

They had come to Atlanta to find a *Predator* in danger and recover a running *Marauder*. That had not gone too well. They'd found the *Predator* - a girl called Lily O'Brien - but in doing so, they had lost the *Marauder*. That had hit Hit Girl hard. The death of Lucas Charlton had not been expected - only he had died protecting the *Predator* who had turned out to be his half-sister. The boy had died a hero. Then, instead of heading back to Chicago with the *Predator* and the two young kids which she had somehow become responsible for, Hit Girl had gone on the rampage and taken down the person responsible for Lucas' death. Then, right at the very end, they had discovered a girl who had been used as a sex slave. The girl had turned out to be of English nobility, of all things.

They had found the girl some clothes and together with Mackenzie, she had been taken to a hotel to be checked over.

The Ritz-Carlton Presidential Suite

They had taken over the suite with the assistance of Special Agent Gibbs with his Federal credentials which prevented too much attention from the hotel

management who were told to forget that anybody had ever been there that evening.

They were not spending the night - they were just there to clean up the new acquisitions and prepare them for the flight to Chicago. Lara Cockburn had been the first to be shoved into the massive shower. She was still in a semi-comatose state as she had struggled to get used to being free. According to Commander Haig, the girl had been holidaying with her father, Lord Cockburn, in New York when she and her father had vanished. The body of her father had never been recovered, although, his daughter had been missing for a total of eight weeks by the time she was found. The girl was traumatised - naturally - and she needed to be seen by a doctor. That would be sorted out back in Chicago as Commander Haig wanted to keep her reappearance quiet for the time being. Once the girl had been cleaned up - with the help of Lucy and Shannon, she was dressed in new clothing provided by the hotel's remarkable concierge. The boy had not wanted to be separated from his sister, so Mackenzie and Isaac had both showered together, glad to be finally back together again. While they had been in the shower, Lily had been interrogated by Mindy.

"Who are they?"

Lily had cringed as she had brought back those memories.

"Their parents were killed by Bedivere - he burnt their house to the ground," Lily responded.

Mindy was certain that there was more to the story and she pushed Lily onwards with her explanation.

"I know you *Predators* get up to all sorts of shit, but taking in random homeless kids?"

"Okay," Lily admitted, coming clean as she looked over towards the bathroom. "I got their parents killed."

"How?" Mindy asked.

"I took the drugs their dad was supposed to be selling. Bedivere went crazy, not believing that he had been screwed over by a young girl. He killed them as a demonstration to the others."

Lily obviously felt immense guilt over her actions.

"Do they know?"

"No - please don't tell them."

"They're going to have to know, one day," Mindy said.

"I know."

Mindy ended the conversation as Mackenzie appeared with Isaac. Lily vanished into the bathroom to sort herself out. Again, the hotel concierge had come up trumps and the two kids received new clothing.

..._...

"You okay, champ?" Dave asked Stephanie.

Stephanie nodded.

"Some sore ribs and my bruised face - I've had worse," Stephanie admitted as she rubbed her left side.

Dave grimaced at the bruises on his daughter's face and Stephanie smiled. She had known that Dave and Mindy would come for her - no matter what. Stephanie could see Mindy looking at her and knew that she was well cared for as she grinned back.

"It's all my fault," Abigail stated from over on a couch.

Stephanie sighed.

"I've been so wanting to do this for ages," Stephanie said as she walked over, and she slapped Abigail hard across the cheek.

Abigail struggled to stifle the scream which almost escaped her lips, but a few tears fell down her cheeks.

"That make you feel any better?" Abigail asked a minute later.

"A little bit," Stephanie admitted. "Whine like a bitch, get slapped like a bitch!"

"You're so like Mindy," Dave commented with a chuckle as he walked past.

"What about it?" Mindy demanded.

"Yeah, Dad," Stephanie added with a grin.

Dave took a moment to look at both of them.

"Neither of you ever change," he said as he walked off.

"You picked the perfect man, mum, the perfect man," Stephanie muttered.

"Damn right!" Mindy replied. "Dave was one of my better decisions in life. Anyway, let's get you back to your bedroom and safety."

"Safety is overrated," Stephanie replied. "I have Hit Girl for my mum; I'm as safe as it's humanly possible to get. Plus, I've got a kick-ass Dad!"