

Friday, June 3rd, 2016

Chicago, USA

West Lake Street

Our 'cave' was taking shape.

It had taken two days and it had also necessitated the ditching of our 'protection'. We had obtained equipment from sources all over the city and never from the same place twice. The work was hard and very sweat inducing.

Did I enjoy watching Dave sweat profusely as he swung sledges and battled with massive drills? I did – I was a bad girl; sorry Daddy... I did not just spend my time watching his rippling muscles, I also did *my* fair share. Back in the day, I had been a workshy teen who would do almost anything to get out of doing even a simple task.

All that had changed on that damn island.

The results of our labours were crude but functional – just what we were used to.

We had computers, we had power and we had light. The floor was clean and freshly painted in a dark grey matt – painting that had sucked big time and my back ached! After the floor, my job had been to clean out the bathroom in the basement – I felt myself baulking at what was festering in that room. However, after several gallons of bleach and a hell of a lot of scrubbing, I had produced a clean pair of toilets, two sinks, and a crappy shower.

At least I had been able to wash off the grime and the smell – we discovered that the shower was *just* large enough for two... Only just, so Dave had promised to buy a new one – much bigger and with much more power.

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After my shower, I went to investigate what Dave had been up to – he had been hammering and sawing and welding and I was curious – so sue me!

I was flabbergasted by what I saw... "A salmon ladder!" I exclaimed.

It was massive and went the full height of the basement. I couldn't wait to try it out – but there was no time to do much more than to sharpen a few arrows and ensure that we could still shoot.

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Dave produced a large container of tennis balls.

"You ready?"

"Are you kidding?" I retorted as I raised the compound bow in my left hand.

My quiver was securely fitted around my body. Dave was equipped in the same way. He flicked the switch on a machine and poured in the tennis balls. With a succession of thuds, a dozen tennis balls began to bounce around the basement.

I drew an arrow, nocked and released in a fluid movement before repeating the exercise another five times. As I lowered my bow after the sixth arrow was released, there was no longer the sound of bouncing tennis balls in the space. I looked over at Dave.

“Not bad for two damaged kids...” I commented as I mentally counted the twelve arrows that were embedded in the concrete wall of the basement.

Each arrow had impaled a tennis ball en route.

It was time.

Adam Hunt’s crimes were much deeper than just simple fraud or theft.

He was a bully who bribed his way out of any confrontation – even killing was not beyond him. But, he had not met us yet...

“Let’s go, Hit Girl...” I growled as I threw over her purple hood.

“Right with yer, Kick-Ass...” She replied as I donned my own yellow and green hood.

It was dark outside as we left the basement astride the dark green Ducati Monster motorcycle. Hit Girl was behind me, her arms tight around my waist.

An hour later

Central Chicago

Adam Hunt was not a happy man, but he had his own ways of resolving things.

“Mr Hunt, I’m sorry, but my people are determined on this...” Eric Grant, Erika’s boss at CNRI, insisted.

“I don’t care about your ‘people’. You don’t call off the dogs, I’m coming after you, Mr Grant. After your house, after your law license, your kids’ college funds... I will shred your life and I’ll do it because I can. I’ll turn you into a cautionary tale.”

Eric Grant’s resolve collapsed completely.

“What’re still doing here?” Hunt growled.

As a pair of size-large bodyguards appeared at the door, Eric Grant gratefully took his leave and rushed for the stairs.

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With a sneer, Hunt headed for the elevator, the two bodyguards in tow.

One bodyguard pressed the button beside the elevator. Ding! The elevator arrived seconds later and the three men entered it. Hunt stabbed the ‘Lobby’ button, somewhat impatiently, and the elevator doors closed; the elevator began to descend.

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P1

“What the fuck – piece’a crap; we should have stopped at the lobby...” Hunt growled.

P2

P3

P4

The elevator came to a halt and the elevator doors opened. The two bodyguards peered out tentatively – they both sensed a trap. The underground parking lot was very quiet and nothing moved. Hunt also sensed danger, he stabbed very button on the elevator’s panel – nothing worked.

“Check it out,” Hunt ordered.

As the two men left the elevator, the light mounted above them exploded and all the other lights in the parking lot went out as something clattered to the concrete floor. A few emergency lights snapped on to produce an eerie glow. One of the guards bent down and picked up the object that had shattered the light.

His expression spoke volumes – what the fuck? It was an arrow.

The guard instinctively reached for his pistol.

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There was a thud as an arrow pinned his hand to his chest. The man yelled out in pain and sank to his knees. His partner fired wildly into the shadows, where his bullets ricocheted around the parking lot and several car windows were heard to shatter.

Finally, the gun clicked on empty, the slide locked back.

“You missed...” came a voice from the darkness. The voice was unnatural, inhuman.

The terrified bodyguard ran back towards the elevator, desperately trying to reload his pistol. He never made it... A rapid pair of thuds and an arrow appeared in each of his thighs – one arrow had dark green and yellow feathers, the other dark purple feathers. The man collapsed onto the concrete next to the other bodyguard where both writhed in pain.

Hunt peered out of the elevator and he immediately wished he had not as two hooded individuals moved towards him out of the gloom.

Hit Girl kept her bow raised, an arrow ready to be released in an instant.

“What do you want?” Hunt bleated. “I’ve got money – I’ve got loads of money...!”

“I know,” I growled. “And I know how you got it. *You have failed this city!*”

I dropped a card beside the man who had wilted inside the elevator.

“Forty million dollars. To this account. By 10 PM, tomorrow night.”

“Or what?”

“Or we’ll take it – and you won’t like how...”

I signalled Hit Girl and we both turned to leave. But, as expected...

“If I see you again, you’re dead!” Hunt yelled out.

Hit Girl span around, her bow raised and an arrow coursed through the air – it whizzed past Hunt’s head before it embedded itself into the elevator wall. Hunt reached up and felt the thin cut on his cheek; his hand came away bloody.

“Same!” Hit Girl growled.

That night

Barrington Hills

We had a reception committee awaiting our return.

In the living room sat my mother, Mindy’s mother, Marcus Williams, John Diggle, and Sarah Clarke. Nobody smiled... My mother stood up.

“Mr Diggle informs me that for the past two days, you’ve been consistently sneaking away from him. From the security I hired to keep you safe. I think I deserve an explanation.”

“Me too, Mindy,” Kathleen demanded and Marcus looked pissed.

“I’m sorry,” I tried.

“I said an explanation, not an apology...” Mom was *not* happy.

Mindy chimed in.

“We were alone for five years. It’s been difficult being around other people...”

“Okay – just let us know in future...” Mom replied gently and I saw Kathleen smile.

“We promise to take them around with us,” Mindy said with a sly grin in my direction.

The following morning

Saturday, June 4th

“The simple things,” Mindy mused as she opened the fridge. “All that food, just a fingertip away...”

“Yeah, no climbing trees or killing things, just to eat,” I replied.

“The police came to talk to me about the kidnapping,” Marty said as he entered the kitchen and helped himself to a banana.

“What did you tell them?” Mindy asked as casually as she could with a cautionary glance in my direction.

“That I was unconscious. And you two? You both okay? You’ve been back, Dave, but you haven’t been . . . yourself. Want to tell me what’s really going on?”

“You’re right,” I replied. “About having a party. For anyone who forgot me, a party they’ll never forget...”

Marty’s demeanour instantly changed and he grinned. I grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge and left him in the kitchen with Mindy. I headed out into the foyer by the front door where I looked up at a large portrait of my father.

July 4th, 2011

November-Eight-Two-Five

We were out of control.

Amid the alarms in the cockpit came the spine chilling audio alerts in seemingly rapid succession.

“Sinkrate! Sinkrate!”

“Overspeed! Overspeed!”

“Terrain! Terrain!”

There was a short pause and then a loud whooping sound in the cockpit, followed by the worst:

“Pull up! Pull Up!”

The same words flashed up in red on the screens before me, just in case I couldn’t hear them.

I had no time to do anything before I saw greenery through the cockpit windshield and then...

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When I regained consciousness, I was still in the aircraft, but we were on the ground.

I could see nothing out of the smashed windshield. I looked to my left and saw my father, he was awake but in obvious pain. I looked behind me – the rear of the aircraft was gone . . . and so was Katie. I turned back as my Dad spoke.

“I started with nothing, David. But the more I earned, the more I paid. I paid with my soul. Lizewski Enterprises’ success was built on the pain and suffering of many. Pain and suffering which / caused . . . I failed our city.”

“Dad, don’t say that. You’re . . . you’re a good man.”

“You don’t know me. Not really. You don’t know the truth.”

The Present

Saturday, June 4th, 2016

Central Chicago

Adam Hunt was not a happy man – not least because of the fresh stitches on his cheek. He glared at the Detective before him.

“They were wearing hoods. A green and yellow hood, plus a purple one. They both had a goddamn bow and arrow.”

The Detective exchanged a glance with his subordinate, Hilton. Hunt noticed the glance.

“You don’t believe me? I got two bodyguards in the hospital. You think I did this to myself?”

Hunt indicated his cheek and then strode to a table – he seized an object and tossed it to Detective Lance. It was an arrow with green and yellow feathers. Detective Lance looked at the arrow and smirked.

“Thanks for your statement. We’ll put out an APB on Robin Hood.”

“Hey, pal, I’m not some grocer who got taken for his register. I have your commissioner on speed dial; I go to the front of the line.”

“Looks like Lizewski was telling the truth,” Hilton admitted.

“First time for everything,” Lance growled. “Get five or six sector cars here. A SWAT unit, too. Have them establish a perimeter. These hooded guys come here looking for trouble, they finds it...”

Hunt just glared at the two Detectives as they left.

That evening

Barrington Hills

“You clean up very nicely, Mr Lizewski.”

“So do you, Miss Macready...”

Mindy looked gorgeous. She was wearing a pair of tight-fitting black jeans and a purple blouse. On her feet were flat-soled shoes in black and she finished it all off with a black leather jacket. I noticed that she was itching.

“Still not used to it?”

“I’ve not worn a proper bra before and this one, while expensive – well, it fucking itches!”

“I’m glad I don’t wear them – still not used to wearing a jacket...”

We both headed downstairs and outside to where I was very surprised to see Sarah at the wheel of the Bentley. I opened the rear door and grinned...

“Put on your seatbelt, sir...”

Diggle was *not* taking any chances!

“You too, young miss,” Sarah added sternly as a grinning Mindy climbed into the front passenger seat.

Central Chicago

The Iron Works Club

We pulled up outside the club and I idly glanced up at the building across the road.

I alighted and helped Mindy out. While I was used to the paparazzi and the flashing of cameras, Mindy had been kept out of the limelight by her shrewd father. Yes, his loss and her loss had been big news, but they had only been multi-millionaires, not multi-billionaires, therefore, they had gained less press coverage. I held her hand tightly as we made our way past the incessant flashing and she did not relax until we were safely inside the club.

“Thank God for that!” Mindy growled. “I don’t know how you handle it, Dave...”

“Sometimes, neither do I,” I admitted as I checked my phone. “Clock’s ticking...”

Mindy grinned.

Across the street Adam Hunt’s Office

“What the hell is going on out there?”

“Some big party across the street, boss. For that Lizewski guy who got off the desert island.”

“Fuck...”

The Iron Works Club

“Does he wipe for you too?” Marty laughed as he noticed Diggle staring at Dave.

“He might, but if *she* tries, I’ll...” Mindy growled as she glared at Sarah who stood a few feet away.

I laughed and guided Mindy through the throng to the bar where we grabbed a pair of tomato juices – neither of us were ready for alcohol, not to mention that we might be working later that night. Then I paused as somebody caught my eye. Mindy noticed my expression and followed my glance.

“What is *she* doing here?” Mindy asked.

As I watched my innocent fifteen-year-old sister, I was worried. She was growing up too damn fast and then my jaw tightened as I saw who she was talking to. The man screamed ‘drug dealer’ and then I saw him slip her a small vial of something – I doubted it was anything even remotely innocent.

“Back in a sec...” I growled.

..._...

“Hey, Dave! This party is sick,” Thea shouted over the pounding music.

“Who let you in here?” I demanded.

“I believe it was someone who said, ‘Right this way, Miss Lizewski’.”

“Hey, Dave,” Trish swooned. “Do you remember me? Back then, my tits were smaller...”

I ignored the stupid girl and grabbed hold of Thea’s arm before I dragged her away from her friends.

“What’s going on, Speedy?”

Thea shrugged off my hand.

“What’s going on with *you*?”

“You shouldn’t be here...”

“Uh, *not* ten anymore.”

“You’re *fifteen*. You shouldn’t be here...”

“I love you, Dave. But you don’t get to come back and judge me. Especially for being exactly like you.”

“Thea... I know it couldn’t have been easy for you when I was . . . away...”

My sister laughed – it was unnerving.

“Away? So you’ve joined the Euphemism Club, like Mom. You were away? Unavailable? No, you were dead. You died. My brother and my father died. I went to your funerals.”

“I know...” I replied feebly.

“No, you don’t. Mom had her work. And I had... nothing. Now you all act like it’s cool; let’s just forget the last five years. Well I can’t. For me, it’s kind of permanently in there. So I’m sorry if I’ve turned out to be some major disappointment but this . . . me. . . is the best I could do with what I had to work with.”

I tried to hug my sister, but she pulled away and stalked off back to her friends. I turned away and I saw Mindy smirking at me.

“Like taking candy from a baby...” she hissed.

Mindy dropped the vial into a trash bin. I wasn’t watching where I was going, having been distracted by Thea. I cannoned into somebody.

“You’re . . . here,” I stammered.

It was Erika...

“I should’ve let you know I was coming. Marty invited me and...”

“No. It’s fine. I shouldn’t’ve dropped in like that before...”

“I came to talk. Mostly. Is there somewhere quieter we could go? Like an erupting volcano?”

I smiled and looked over to Mindy; she nodded and smiled.

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We climbed up to the rooftop where there was a comforting breeze and a much-reduced level of noise.

“I’m sorry . . . about saying I wished you were dead,” Erika began. “That was wrong.

“I’d be happy to be, if it meant me instead of her.”

“About Katie... There’s something... I’m afraid to ask . . . but I need to know. When she died . . . did she suffer?”

I lied.

“No.”

“I think about her every day.”

“Me too.”

“I guess we still have one thing in common then.”

BEEP!

I pulled out my phone. The timer read zero. Hunt’s time was up. I checked the account – nothing... I frowned; Hunt was not playing ball.

“Something wrong?” Erika asked.

“Just . . . someone who owed me some money. Didn’t pay.”

I looked at Erika and felt a feeling inside me that I had not felt in a while.

“I can’t believe I’m saying this... But if you ever really want to talk to someone – about what happened – I’m sure it wasn’t easy for you, and if you wanted I could try to...”

I felt my heart break as I knew what I had to do next.

“Erika, you always saw the best in me. Even right now, you’re looking for it, hoping that island changed me somehow, made me a better person. It didn’t. Stay away from me. I’ll just hurt you all over again. Only worse.”

We walked back down towards the party together.

“You should go,” I stated.

For a moment, Erika seemed disgusted.

“You’re wrong, Dave. That island did change you. At least now, you’re honest.”

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Erika headed back down to the party, while I took a shortcut through the kitchens. I saw Mindy as she came from the opposite direction, she smiled, but then she scowled. I found out why as I got closer.

“Something I can help you with, sir?”

I groaned audibly.

“Just needed a second to myself...”

I turned to find the smiling face of John Diggle.

“And I’d believe that if you weren’t so full of crap. Party’s this way. You too, young miss.”

Diggle gestured to a door. I reached for the handle and jiggled it before I stepped back.

“It’s locked.”

Diggle reached past me to the handle and...

I watched as Dave seized him around the neck and squeezed until he passed out.

Dave gently laid him on the floor.

“Where’s *your* minder?”

“Stuck in the ladies’ room,” Mindy replied without a hint of guilt or remorse.

I shrugged and we both dragged the unconscious Diggle into a dark cupboard. We both then headed outside to the next building and from there up onto the roof.

Nine minutes later

Across the street

Adam Hunt’s Office Building

We both landed on the roof-top in total silence.

I unhooked from the wire that was embedded into the building and immediately followed Kick-Ass towards the access door to the roof. The building had twelve floors – we needed the fifth. We had noticed the Police were around the building, including a SWAT team. We would have to remain as stealthy as possible.

We had agreed on a plan, but we knew that things could go bad, so we had planned for that too. We would come from two directions. I would take the elevator down, while Kick-Ass made use of the stairs – he needed the exercise...

The Fifth Floor

Constantine Drakon, Adam Hunt’s head of security, made a final check of his men in the lobby outside Hunt’s office.

“You two cover the elevators. The rest of you; stay in the corners and remain alert,” he ordered the six men in the lobby.

He turned and walked up to his boss’ office before he locked the plate-glass doors behind him. He nodded at Hunt.

“It’s past ten; he’s never getting in here.”

Adam Hunt stared down at the street, just as all the lights and the power went out...

Ding!

The elevator arrived and the doors slid open... An arrow shot out of the elevator, the moment the doors had opened wide enough, and put down one of the furthest gunmen. The men nearest the elevator moved just as a hooded figure appeared out of the semi-darkness of the elevator and used her bow to smash the knee cap of the man to her left. The man to the right tried to attack her, but he found a green arm wrapped tightly around his neck.

“She’s mine!” A coarse voice hissed as the neck snapped.

Random gunfire echoed around the lobby as the guards panicked. There were now two hooded figures bouncing from pillar to wall and back to the floor as they advanced up the lobby. It was impossible to see, but the shorter of the two, in a purple hood, smiled as she flew through the air and smashed her bow into a man's face in passing.

The other vigilante took shelter behind a pillar as automatic gunfire was sent in his direction. The shooter did not live long as an arrow with purple feathers pierced his chest and tore his heart in two – he was dead before he hit the plush carpet. His colleague attempted to take down the purple hooded vigilante, but he was kicked by the green and yellow hooded vigilante and sent smashing through the plate glass doors into Adam Hunt's office.

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Gunfire echo about the office as the guard was shredded by his own side, who were more than surprised by his smashing appearance. The two hooded vigilantes then appeared in the doorway, side-by-side, and they each released an arrow into the office. The first arrow impacted the final guard and he dropped in a corner of the office, the second arrow flew past Hunt's head and embedded itself into the wood panelling of the office.

"You missed!" Hunt laughed.

"Really?" The disembodied voice growled as the green and yellow vigilante aimed an arrow directly at Adam Hunt's head.

He was soon joined by the shorter, purple vigilante.

Before either one of us could say anything, a man in a dark leather jacket jumped up and seized hold of my bow and wrenched it from my hand.

I kicked out, but my attacks were inhibited – the man obviously knew the Martial Arts; very well. I span and drove a purple elbow into the side of his head. The man went down but sprang right back up again. Kick-Ass joined in and the man fought us both – yes, he was *that* good.

I barely noticed Hunt as he quickly left the office.

Down on the street

"They're here!" Came the yell from the cell phone.

Detective Lance raised his radio to his mouth.

"All units converge! All units converge!"

Dozens of armed Police ran towards the building.

The fifth floor

Hit Girl was kicked to one side and I felt myself picked up and smashed down onto a glass topped table.

The leather-jacketed man was on top, but I wrapped my legs around his neck and pulled him down to the floor which gave me time to regain my feet. We continued to fight, one on one, until Hit Girl was able to re-join the fight. I caught the man's wrist and wrenched it behind him so Hit Girl could kick him hard in the stomach. He fell back against the wall and then to the floor where he reached for a fallen MP7 submachine gun.

Just when he raised it towards me, I dived backwards as gunfire erupted in my direction.

I sent a knife at the man, just as he opened fire on Kick-Ass.

There was no way to know if my partner had been struck by a bullet, but at least the last man was dead. I jumped over the couch and then the desk to find Kick-Ass on his back – his eyes were closed and his hood had fallen back.

I landed beside him and roughly slapped him around the face. Nothing. I went to slap him again and found my left wrist held in a grip of steel.

“Let's leave that stuff for the bedroom, huh?”

I grinned and then turned as I heard movement and saw lights coming from the lobby – the Police had arrived.

“Plan B?” I enquired.

“Plan B,” Kick-Ass confirmed.

The Fifth Floor Lobby

The two Detectives entered behind the leading SWAT team, their pistols out and raised.

The boots of the SWAT team crunched on the broken glass. There were half-a-dozen bodies immediately visible and most bore obvious arrows sticking out of their bodies. As the SWAT team mounted the stairs the leader shouted out a challenge.

“Police! Lay down your weapons or we'll open fire! Lay down your weapons!”

The two vigilantes both sprang up from behind the desk and one sent an arrow into the doorframe closest to the SWAT team. The other fired an arrow at a window which shattered and they both dived through it, about two seconds apart.

The SWAT leader ran to the window and stopped in surprise as both vigilantes fired off arrows which trailed a cable and as the arrows impaled another building, they casually swung onto the roof of the building across the road.

“Tell me you saw that!”

“I did,” Detective Lance muttered. “Let's move!”

The Iron Works Club

The party was still in full swing as the Police ran in the door.

One SWAT member made directly for the DJ and cut the ear-splitting music. Detective Lance waved his officers off to search the building.

“Search the building. Roof to basement. Find them!”

Detective Lance then turned to address the party.

“This is the CPD. Party’s over kids.”

There were many groans and a lot of general verbal abuse of the CPD.

“Mr Eisenburg. Imagine my shock at finding you here. Roofied anybody special, tonight?”

Before Marty could respond, Dave intervened.

“This is a private party, Detective.”

The Detective turned to lay his eyes on Dave Lizewski as he stood there in his black jacket, trousers and white shirt, a drink in his hand. A few feet behind him, was Mindy in her purple shirt and black jeans – again with a half-consumed drink in her hand.

“Unbelievable,” Lance chuckled.

“Sorry, the music’s been loud...”

“Know anything about Adam Hunt’s place getting attacked?”

“Who’s Adam Hunt?”

“A millionaire scumbag, like you. I’m kinda surprised you aren’t friends.”

“I’ve been out of town for a while.”

Lance’s radio squawked.

“No sign of them.”

“No sign of who?” Mindy asked innocently – she was good at that.

“The guys with the hoods who saved your collective asses the other day.”

“You still haven’t figured out who that was? If it’d help, I could post a reward.”

Dave turned to the crowd.

“Two million bucks to anyone who can find a nutbar in a green hood.”

The crowd cheered in response as the Detective stepped closer to Dave. Rage and pain bubbled over.

“Did you even *try* to save her?”

Dave’s stomach plummeted. Unable to answer. That only enraged the Detective further. Detective Hilton attempted to intervene.

“Did you even *try* to save my daughter?”

“Let’s go, partner.”

I turned away from the enraged Detective . . . into Thea.

She must have heard our brief conversation. Disappointment was obvious in her expression.

“Did you try to save Dad? Or did you just let him die, too?”

The look in her eyes – the disappointment, it tore into me; she was the one person in my family that I was closest to... it was almost too much to bear. Words failed me as Thea turned to re-join her friends. I was out of character, so I turned back to the crowd with a forced smile.

“It is waaay too quiet in here!”

As the music returned to its previous earth-shattering volume, Marty approached.

“Some coincidence. You asking to have your party here and then Hunt getting robbed right next door. And by the same guys who rescued us at the warehouse. Two guys that I never saw.”

“I thought you were unconscious,” I replied darkly and I noticed Marty flinch away from me.

“I was.”

An obvious lie.

“That’s good...”

“What happened to you two on that island?”

“A lot.”

The next morning

Sunday, June 5th

Central Chicago

Adam Hunt’s Office

Hunt gazed angrily around his ruined office and the tarpaulins that covered the empty window frames.

“I want the entire security system overhauled. Card keys. Motion detectors. Everything military grade. No one gets in here again...” Hunt spied an arrow sticking out of his wall. “Ever!”

“Sir, your accountant is holding on line one...”

Hunt stormed over to his desk where he picked up his phone.

“What is it, Ron?”

Whatever Ron said, Hunt’s face turned a nasty shade of off-white.

“What the *hell* are you talking about??! Forty million dollars doesn’t just up and vanish...! Untraceable? IT’S FORTY MILLION DOLLARS! FIND IT!”

Hunt stopped for a second as he spied a shorter than normal arrow that was embedded in the wood panelling just behind his desk. *The arrow that missed!* Sudden realisation hit Hunt as he slumped into his chair.

“Shit. It was a goddamn set up...”

Hunt slumped backwards, broke and broken.

That same time

West Lake Street

“Cool!”

It was awesome to watch as \$40,000,000 drained out of Hunt’s bank account and into a temporary holding account. From there, the money was then separated into much smaller chunks and discretely deposited into back accounts all over Chicago.

“A job well done,” Dave commented as he opened the drawer beneath the desk and withdrew a certain Moleskin notebook.

He flipped open the page and ran his finger down the names until he found the one he sought: Adam Hunt.

A line was dutifully drawn through his name.

Barrington Hills

The atmosphere was tense.

Diggle was in trouble.

“Passed out in a closet! I think I’m starting to understand how my son’s been managing to shed you every day for the past week.”

“Mrs Lizewski, I don’t know what happened. If you wish to fire me...”

“I do. And you are . . . fired.”

“Don’t I get a say?” I demanded carefully.

“It wasn’t his fault. It was a couple of ex-bouncers who had some beef with me,” I explained and then I turned to Diggle. “We were in the kitchen; they came up behind you . . . you never had a chance. I tossed ‘em a few thousand. It’s all settled now.”

“I vote we give him another shot,” Mindy chimed in.

“This isn’t a game, you two, and Mindy – I know Sarah got locked in the ladies’ room, too. This is your lives...”

“Which we value very much. Besides, I think Dig and I understand each other. *Don’t we?*”

Diggle nodded.

“Yes . . . sir.”

I understood that Sarah had received a roasting from Marcus, but who could predict a lock failing like that!

CNRI Office

Erika was on the phone.

"...I don't think you have anything to worry about Mrs Di Dio. But that said, as your attorney . . . if, hypothetically, \$50,000 magically appeared in your bank account; it might be best not to speak of it... To anyone... Ever... God bless you too, Mrs Di Dio."

Erika hung up the phone.

"Weird."

..._...

Detective Quentin Lance sat down at the desk across from Erika.

"Strange day?"

"Strangest."

"Want to talk about it?"

"Attorney-client privilege."

"You know cops hate that."

"I think that's the point."

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes."

"He was throwing himself a party last night."

"Yeah. I heard."

"Celebrating his miraculous return from the dead; I wanted to send him right back there."

Detective Lance paused before he spoke again.

"I keep thinking about the last time I talked to her. On the phone. She said she was at that school of hers. But she must have been at an airport . . . with him. I was at work when she called. Busy with a case. Drug bust. Nothing big. But that day it seemed so important. More important than talking to my daughter. So I got off the phone."

"Dad..."

"Maybe if I talked to her for longer, I would've realized she wasn't at school. I could've yelled at her. Told her to get her ass home."

"No, Dad. The only lesson here is for both of us not to let Dave Lizewski back into our lives. Period."

Detective Lance nodded.

"So how's work?"

"A puzzle. These vigilantes. Hoods and arrows. It's surreal."

"Any leads?"

“No, but the Mayor wants me to establish a task force. Whoever they are – we’ll get them. It’s like I’ve always told you Laurel... We don’t need to go outside the law to find justice. I believe that. And by the time I’m done, these guys’ll believe it too.”

Late That Night
Northern Chicago

They met in a secluded parking lot, away from prying eyes.

“The Police failed to identify the men I hired to kidnap David, and they never will,” the grizzled man said

“Good.”

“Should we arrange another abduction?”

“No,” Alice Lizewski replied. “There are other ways of finding out what my son knows.”

That Same Time
Barrington Hills

“I wonder how our Mr Hunt is feeling?” I enquired idly as I cuddled into Mindy.

“Well,” Mindy replied. “From what I just saw of him on the news, he looked like he just got butt-fucked by a rhino!”

I laughed out loud at that.

No one has any idea how much the island changed us.

There are many more names on the list. Those who rule our city by intimidation and fear; every last one of them will wish that we had both died on that island.