

The day we went missing was the day we died.

Five years in hell forged us into a weapon which we use to honour a vow that we both made to our fathers who sacrificed their lives for ours. In their final moments, they told us the truth that our families' wealth had been built on the suffering of others. That they had failed our city and that it was up to us to save it and right their wrongs.

But to do that without endangering the people closest to us we had to be someone else.

We had to be something else.

July 3rd, 2011

Northern South China Sea

Lian Yu

I had no idea how long we had been drifting in the liferaft.

Everything had been a blur since the massive wall of water that had washed me and Daddy overboard. By overboard, I mean washed through a gaping split in the Wildcat's hull and into the ocean. We had endured a night and a good chunk of day before the storm had abated. I was cold and sore from the salt that chafed my skin.

Along with the two of us, the Wildcat's captain, Hackett, had survived, and he was lounging on the other side of our not so luxurious rubber raft. Daddy faded in and out of consciousness and he talked about this and that. I had endured an hour of him telling me how much he loved me and that I would survive and take my place in Chicago.

I had spent most of my life relying on others and rarely doing things for myself. I was a spoilt daddy's girl and I was getting the idea that I was about to lose my Daddy.

The Present

Monday, June 6th, 2016

Late Evening

Central Chicago

It was dark as the helicopter unloaded its passengers before it launched and headed northwest for the airport.

But before the six men could leave the rooftop, two forms emerged from the bright landing lights at one end of the long rooftop.

"Who's that?"

"Where'd they come from?"

"Get the chopper back, now!"

There was confusion on the part of the five security men. The first man went down to a kick in the stomach from the shorter, purple hooded form. The second and third men attacked the green-clad

form with a yellow and green hood. Both forms carried compound bows in their left hands and had quivers of arrows on their backs.

The fight was over very fast, a matter of fifteen seconds. The taller vigilante nocked an arrow as his colleague did the same before she dropped one of the security men who had clambered back to his feet and had tried to attack from the rear.

“Dumbass!” she growled as like quicksilver, she shot the remaining two security men in the right hands as they belatedly reached for their pistols. “Two more dumbasses!”

One reeled away in agony while the other received the compound bow in his face and he went down like a rock.

Kick-Ass turned to the suit.

“Please, wait, wait...”

Kick-Ass ignored the pleading as he seized the man by his tailored suit jacket.

“No, please!”

The suit was thrown off the helicopter pad and onto a lower part of the roof, where he landed on an air-conditioning unit. Kick-Ass followed him as I kept watch. The grill over the wildly spinning conditioner blades was kicked in with a spray of sparks as it contacted the blades beneath. The suit was terrified as his head and face was forced closer to the lethal blades.

“No, please!”

“Marcus Redmond, *you’ve failed this city...*”

“Please, don’t... Please . . . don’t.”

“Cell phone,” Kick-Ass growled. “Inside pocket, call your partner. Tell him to give those pensioners back their money.”

“Please, don’t.”

The cunt was begging...

“Do it now.”

With that, Kick-Ass and I were gone.

July 3rd, 2011

Northern South China Sea

Lian Yu

Daddy had told me how he had failed the city of Chicago.

I did not understand – Daddy was perfect; he could not fail anybody. He told me about a list of names – again, I had no idea what he was talking about. I had dozed off and when I awoke, I saw Daddy and Hackett staring at three bottles of water and a small pile of MREs.

"A few days. Maybe. Best guess?" Daddy asked.

"With the current, maybe a week from the Paracel Islands," Hackett replied.

Daddy looked at me and he had a strange expression on his face.

"We're not going to last. The three of us. But you can. You can survive. Make it back to Chicago. I ruined our city. You can save it."

Daddy had lost his mind?

"Just rest, Daddy."

"This is my penance. This is what I deserve. But you..."

Daddy touched my face. I began to cry.

"...you're my absolution."

With that, Daddy pulled a small revolver from behind his back and he shot Hackett who rolled over the side into the water. I was stunned – I think I screamed.

"Daddy!"

"I love you, Mindy. Survive!"

With that Daddy put the gun to his head and...

The Present

Tuesday, June 7th, 2016

Early Morning

Barrington Hills

"It's okay, it's okay; I'm here..."

I was covered in sweat and I looked up into Dave's eyes. He was worried; he always was when I had a nightmare.

"Which one?" He asked simply.

"The raft."

"He did it for good reason. If he had not, then we would never have met."

My mind drifted as Dave's soothing voice continued.

July 6th, 2011

Northern South China Sea

Lian Yu

No matter how I felt, I knew that remaining with my father's dead body would not help me.

I wrapped his body in the partially deflated liferaft, I could not think of anything else to do and he was way too heavy for me to move. The beach was small and sheltered between some towering rocks. It was already past noon and I knew that I would need to find shelter, not to mention food and water.

As I had headed up the beach, I had taken a last look back at the raft.

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After having awoken next to a dead body, I had almost given up hope, having also just endured a somewhat turbulent night. Then, out of the mists had come this shockingly horrific sight and I had felt a chill run down my spine. All I had been able to see were towering spires of rock – it was land, but it was not exactly the coast of Maine!

The sandy beach had rapidly turned into rocks and then thick tropical trees. I kinda wished for a machete as I pushed through the thick underbrush. I was glad that I had abandoned ship in a pair of long slacks, some sneakers, and a long-sleeved shirt. So, where was I headed? While drifting close to the island, I had been more than a little surprised to see something in the sky – for a moment, I thought it might have been a plane searching for us, but no...

The plane plunged down through the sky and just before it vanished behind the jagged peaks, I saw the aircraft split in two, the cockpit plunged downwards while the large part of the fuselage drifted away before it then plunged downwards and both sections vanished from sight.

I was certain that the island was uninhabited – who would want to live on an island that looked like it had been ripped from Mordor in Middle-earth. Somebody may have survived the crash, either that or I might find a radio or supplies in the wreckage.

I could only hope.

The Present

Tuesday, June 7th, 2016

Barrington Hills

As Mindy showered, I lay on the bed and flipped lazily through the Moleskin notebook.

There were many names written down, none of which I recognised. A couple ran a bell or two but that was that. I needed to find our next target and continue our quest for vengeance for those that had wronged our city.

My head jerked up as Mindy appeared from the shower. Not unusually, the towel was being used to dry her long, blonde hair, as opposed to covering up her body. Not that I minded, of course. Mindy's body was almost as familiar to me as my own and despite all the scars and skin damage, she looked amazingly beautiful. Her body had changed a lot since I had first seen her naked and not necessarily in a good way.

I thought back to the first time I'd seen her naked.

July 10th, 2011

Northern South China Sea

Lian Yu

We had had enough of smelling like dogs and to be honest it was becoming uncomfortable.

Mindy and I had been together for four days and on the island for six. As far as we knew, we were very much alone on the island. It was not exactly a paradise but we had found a remarkably beautiful valley which had a rushing stream that ran down from one of the taller peaks on the island that seemed to be forever partially hidden in mist.

The stream emptied into a lake and the water was pure – we had been drinking it and we had filled up our water containers with it.

The Present

Tuesday, June 7th, 2016

Barrington Hills

As I dried my hair, I noticed Dave watching me.

He knew my body as intimately as I knew his. It did not bother me; we had shared death together, we had shared hell together. We had been sharing our bodies for four years in various ways. Read into that what you wish, but needless to say, I was no longer a virgin in more ways than one.

I smiled as my mind drifted.

July 10th, 2011

Northern South China Sea

Lian Yu

“I’ve had enough,” I exclaimed. “I need a bath – and I’m sorry, but so do you, Dave.”

“I know!” Dave replied.

“That water looks so inviting...”

“You go first...”

“Why me?”

“Ladies first...”

I scowled.

“I am no lady...”

I stopped as I realised what I had just said. Dave grinned.

“Ha, ha!” I growled as I turned and headed for the water.

The Present Day

Tuesday, June 7th, 2016

Barrington Hills

Mindy had that faraway look – she had had it several times since our return; though this time, she was smiling.

I could remember all our happy times – there were not all that many of them – and most were soon after we had landed on the island and found each other. At first, Mindy had been a bitch and very standoffish. Actually, I had hated her at first. From day one she had been a drama-queen, a lazy tramp and a stuck up bitch.

But then, after a couple of days, the ice queen had thawed slightly – if not, the swim in the lake might never have happened.

July 10th, 2011

Northern South China Sea

Lian Yu

I had watched Mindy as she left the clearing above the lake.

Initially, I had had no intention of watching her . . . but I was a teenage boy and well... I had followed her and stopped within the treeline where she could not see me. Mindy was standing beside the water and after a brief look around her, she pulled off her shirt and placed it carefully on a rock close to her. Next, she toed off her sneakers and undid her belt and the button on her slacks. The slacks fell to the ground where they revealed Mindy's skinny but surprisingly muscular legs and thighs. She was left wearing her halter top and a pair of sky-blue panties.

She paused and seemed to glare in my direction – for I moment I thought that she had seen me but then Mindy crouched down, faced away from me, and she pulled off her top and then in a single smooth motion, she removed her panties.

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With that, Mindy slid down into the water and was quickly past her waist in the water. As I watched, she turned slightly and I could make out the small mounds on her toned chest. The baggy clothes that she had worn had hidden a body that had barely any fat on it – she had obviously exercised regularly.

Mindy pulled her long blonde hair out of its ponytail and then ducked her head underwater before she thoroughly rinsed her hair through. She spent another few minutes swimming around before she turned back towards me and her clothes. The thirteen-year-old girl made no effort to cover herself as she rose up, out of the water.

As the water ran off her body, I noticed the small dark patch at the top of her legs – not much, but enough to show that she had started puberty. As Mindy dressed, I quickly returned to the clearing.

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Mindy reappeared several minutes later, her wet hair tied back in a ponytail. She was grinning at me and for some reason I felt scared.

“You enjoy that?” She asked.

“Enjoy what?” I replied innocently.

Mindy scowled.

“I know that you were looking – well, what did you think?”

“You mean, about you?” I stammered uncomfortably.

“Yes, about my body – and be very careful about what you say!” She growled.

“Very nice – compact and, err, developing nicely...”

I lapsed into silence and waited for the sky to fall, but instead, Mindy smiled.

“Thanks,” she laughed and then she smirked. “Your turn...”

The Present

Tuesday, June 7th, 2016

Barrington Hills

I was secretly very pleased by what Dave had said.

Mind you, if he had laughed, then I would have killed him, right there and then! I had to admit that I hated my body as it was then. Nothing seemed to be right. My legs were too long and skinny – my ass seemed to that of a young boy and my thighs were tight but larger than I would have liked. My stomach was my favourite part and that was as hard as concrete.

There was *nothing* to say about my chest, mainly because there was *nothing* there – I’d seen bigger bumps on an ice-rink and there was no reason to wear a bra, so I was not wearing one. As for that other place – the amount of thatching had been pretty pathetic, I thought. It was dark brown in colour and there was a reasonable amount of it, but it did not cover very much.

While I had not minded Dave seeing my non-existent chest, for some reason I had been very shy about him seeing that very private area between my legs. In fact, Dave was the first person to see my vulva ever since I had stopped wearing diapers. Mind you, I had felt a weird thrill as I had paraded naked and I had felt things that I had never felt before...

July 10th, 2011

Northern South China Sea

Lian Yu

I had already seen him topless and for his age, he was not too bad up there. He had a few muscles, but nothing like mine and I intended to work on that...

I knew what Dave probably had, but I actually found myself giggling as I thought about it. I knew all about the ‘birds and the bees’ – Mom had covered all that when I was ten. I stopped giggling when Dave kicked off his sneakers and he slid down his pants. He turned away from me and I just glared at his back – he wore boxers – striped, blue and white ones.

I laughed as I saw him turn towards me and smile nervously. Then, quick as a flash, the boxers were off and he was in the water – I saw nothing!

..._...

I enjoyed watching him wash. For a boy of his age, he had a nice body – ‘for a boy of his age’; what the fuck did I know about boys? Nothing – never seen one, and generally, I tried to avoid them. I thought them ignorant and they tended to annoy me.

I took a deep breath as Dave began to leave the water – not exactly a candidate for a Diet Coke advert but for a thirteen-year-old girl with hormones on a deserted island... Okay – not big, but not small – I had nothing to compare him with. There was a good quantity of hair – way more than what I had, but that was not exactly hard. Damn, I realised that I had been holding my breath in eager anticipation – I also felt tremors in my stomach. Was that just sweat?

I shook myself out of it and found that Dave had his boxers back on and was working on his pants.

Dave was smirking wildly as he returned to the clearing. I blushed badly and I felt the heat as it seared my cheeks.

The Present

Tuesday, June 7th, 2016

Barrington Hills

“I know what’s going through your mind – do you still get yourself off with that scene?”

I scowled and quickly put my hands behind my back.

“You know I do...”

I felt my face go really hot.

Later That Morning

It had been decided that we *did* need to go up before Judge.

“You coming, Speedy?”

“The first four times were enough for me, Dave; I’ll sit this one out.”

“Mrs Lizewski, the cars are ready,” Diggle announced.

Snarky – she obviously had not forgiven me for the other evening.

Outside the Courthouse

Naturally, there was a marauding hoard of news reporters and photographers outside the courthouse as we pulled up in the Bentley. They began yelling and snapping away they moment Diggle opened the rear door. I felt Mindy’s hand as it tightened around my own – she felt intimidated by crowds and the press were like an army as they pushed forwards.

"Mr Lizewski..."

"Miss Macready..."

The calls were relentless.

"How does it feel to return to civilization after five years? What happened on that island...?"

We ignored everything and with the help of Diggle and Sarah, we pushed through and gained the relative sanctity of the courthouse.

The Court Room

"...There was a storm. The boat went down. I was the only survivor. My father didn't make it..."

"...The engines cut out and the aircraft dropped out of the sky. My father died in the crash..."

Mindy had gone first, then myself. We then made a joint statement.

"When we reached the island, and we found each other, we knew . . . we knew that we were gonna have to live for both of us... And in those five years, it was that one thought that kept us going."

During the entire event, Mindy was gripping my hand tightly; almost enough to restrict blood flow. Our lawyer stood.

"Your Honour, we move to vitiate the death-in-absentia filed after David's aircraft accident and Mindy's disappearance at sea aboard the Wildcat, five years ago. Unfortunately, we will not be requesting that the declaration of death filed for the petitioners' fathers, James Lizewski and Damon Macready, be rescinded... These two families are only entitled to one miracle each, I'm afraid."

Within minutes, it was over and we were both very much 'alive'; at least as far as the law of the land was concerned.

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Mindy and I, with Marty in tow, left the courtroom and fast as possible and we moved quickly down the stairs and...

"Hi."

"Hi," replied Erika, somewhat surprised to see me. "What are you doing here?"

"Oh, they were bringing us back from the dead."

"Legally speaking..." Mindy added.

"What are *you* doing here?" I asked.

"My job."

"Right."

"More like the DA's," quipped Joanna, Laurel's colleague from the CNRI "Hi."

I noticed another lady, just behind Erika.

"Dave Lizewski."

“Emily Nocenti.”

“Dave just got back from five years on an uncharted island. Before that, he was cheating on me with my sister. He was with her when she died. Last week, he told me to stay away from him. It was really good advice. Excuse me.”

“It was nice to meet you,” Emily said as Joanna guided her off after the angry Erika.

“Yeah, let's go,” Mindy suggested tactfully.

“Come on, buddy. Shake it off. Let's go,” Marty added.

Outside the Courthouse

There was another media circus underway as we left the courthouse.

“Mr Somers. One question, sir.”

“I don't know what I've done to earn this witch hunt from Ms Lance and her bosses at the CNRI, but I can tell you this: I am an honest businessman and I will fight this slander to my last dime and breath. That's all I have to say. Thank you.”

I glared at the man and I saw Mindy doing the same – I could see the anger rising from within her like a volcano about to erupt. I guided her behind the throng of media and...

..._...

“Oh, there's Mr Lizewski...”

“Do you want to follow up?”

“Tell us what happened inside, Mr Lizewski...”

For once, we were both grateful for the presence of Diggle and Sarah as they forced their way through the assembled hoards.

“Step back everybody, please,” Sarah insisted.

“Can you give us a couple comments?”

“Before you go, sir...”

The fucking vultures were persistent!

“Comments about the island?”

“What happened?”

“Step back!” Sarah almost yelled.

“Hey man, I'll make you swallow that Nikon,” Diggle suggested to one reporter. “Back.”

..._...

John Diggle and Sarah Clarke slammed the rear door once their charges were securely inside.

They both turned to scan the crowd before they headed for the Bentley's front doors, only before they could get anywhere near them, the Bentley's engine came to life and with a squeal of tyres the luxury motor accelerated away.

Before either of the security experts could say a word, Marty chipped in.

"This happens to you two a lot, doesn't it...?"

Diggle growled.