

*Erika was targeting the worst that Chicago had to offer, so it was no surprise that Martin Somers was listed in the Moleskin book. The City's DA and Police could not stop him. Erika thinks that she is the only one willing to bring him to justice. She was wrong.*

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***The Present***

***Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016***

***That Afternoon***

***West Lake Street***

It was finally time.

I was going to get to drool over Dave as he tested out the Salmon Ladder. While I proceeded to pound a punch bag into submission, Dave stripped off his t-shirt (awesome) and he reached up to grip the steel bar (so tantalising) – so . . . cue the music...

*Risin' up, back on the street  
Did my time, took my chances  
Went the distance, now I'm back on my feet  
Just a man and his will to survive*

The ladder worked perfectly . . . and as for the view...

*So many times, it happens too fast  
You trade your passion for glory  
Don't lose your grip on the dreams of the past  
You must fight just to keep them alive*

I actually missed the punch bag completely with my next punch – my attentions were *not* where they should have been and as for my raging teenage hormones...

*It's the eye of the tiger, it's the cream of the fight  
Risin' up to the challenge of our rivals  
And the last known survivor stalks his prey in the night  
And he's watching us all with the eye of the tiger*

I was downcast when Dave made it back down again...

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"Your turn..."

I grinned as Mindy glared up at me. However, she walked over to the ladder and moved the bar down a rung before she gripped it tightly in both hands. She wore nothing more than a sport's bra and her shorts (it was torture) – so . . . cue the music...

*Two worlds collide  
Rival nations  
It's a primitive clash  
Venting years of frustrations  
Bravely we hope  
Against all hope*

*There is so much at stake  
Seems our freedom's up  
Against the ropes  
Does the crowd understand?  
Is it East versus West  
Or man against man  
Can any nation stand alone*

Damn, seeing her body twist and her muscles flex – they weren't the only things that were hard...

*In the burning heart  
Just about to burst  
There's a quest for answers  
An unquenchable thirst  
In the darkest night  
Rising like a spire  
In the burning heart  
The unmistakable fire*

I smiled as she came back down again – her grin was enormous. The sweat was dripping off her but she had never looked so gorgeous... The moment that her feet touched the concrete floor, I swept her of her feet and threw her onto a thick mat. Her hypnotic green eyes looked up at me and I fucking melted inside...

*In the warriors' code  
There's no surrender  
Though his body says stop  
His spirit cries, never!  
Deep in our soul  
A quiet ember  
Know it's you against you  
It's the paradox  
That drives us on  
It's a battle of wills  
In the heat of attack  
It's the passion that kills  
The victory is yours alone*

It was so very different to our first meeting.

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**July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**Northern South China Sea**

**Lian Yu**

I was despondent and I had no idea what I was going to do.

I sat on the ground beside the remains of the five-million-dollar Cessna jet and I tried to forget that my Daddy was lying dead, only a few feet away from me. I knew that I had to leave the jet and my Dad but I had no idea where to go. I could not find any of the paper charts – they had been stowed

in the after section of the fuselage, which was missing. We had relied on the electronic charts during the flight which were now unavailable thanks to the dead computers.

For now, Dad was under a tarpaulin in what remained of the rear cabin.

...\_...

As I stood up and considered making a move, I saw movement in the trees a few feet away and I was stunned to see a young girl appear. Though she was very dirty and dishevelled, she looked like she might have been out on an afternoon excursion – she definitely did *not* look as if she had been marooned on a deserted island. She stopped at the sight of me and the downed aircraft. Her expression showed relief, instead of the expected surprise.

“I thought I’d *never* find the crash site,” she said matter-of-factly.

“Where’d the heck you come from?” I demanded.

“Our yacht sank and I was washed up on the beach – thatta way...”

She pointed back the way she had come.

“I’m Mindy, Mindy Macready.”

“Dave, Dave Lizewski...”

“I thought you looked familiar... You’re the billionaire’s son . . . from Chicago.”

“Guilty as charged...” I replied.

The girl’s tone was anything but approving and if anything, she seemed to look down on me as something unappealing. I took an instant dislike to Mindy Macready, but for the moment, she was all that I had.

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### ***The Present***

***Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016***

### ***West Lake Street***

I was no damn push over...

As Dave approached me, I bit my lip and I was overcome with sensations that I knew could tear me apart. He knelt down before me but I wagged my finger – no... Dave groaned – mind you, so did I inside . . . but it would be so worth the wait...

I pushed myself away from him and I watched his eyes as they moved up my legs from my bare toes to the top of my thighs. I scrabbled behind me for my phone; it was connected to the wireless speakers that dotted the basement. I had just a second to find a song and move before Dave began to ravish me... I found a suitable track and stabbed play.

The music started and Dave laughed.

*I've been meaning to tell you  
I've got this feelin' that won't subside  
I look at you and I fantasize*

*You're mine tonight  
Now I've got you in my sights*

I sang along to the words as I backed away from my man but I could not stop from giggling as I did so – Dave always complained that I was a 'damn tease', when it came to sex... Dave played the game as he always did and slowly, he moved towards me – his blue eyes sparkled as they stared directly at me when Dave joined in with the singing.

*With these hungry eyes  
One look at you and I can't disguise  
I've got hungry eyes  
I feel the magic between you and I*

I grabbed a rope and hauled myself up it, towards the ceiling, high above. As I went higher, I felt the rope jerk and there was Dave, right behind me – I dived across to the next rope and then the next before I threw myself through the air and landed on the support cable for one of the four punch bags. Dave grinned and he started to move in my direction – I noticed a considerable bulge in his shorts...

*I want to hold you so hear me out  
I want to show you what love's all about  
Darling tonight  
Now I've got you in my sights*

I decided to up the ante and I pulled off my sports bra...

"You fucking bitch!" Dave growled as he took in my bare breasts and the very ready nipples that seemed to stick out a mile. Dave was ruggedly handsome and the muscles that rippled as he swung from rope to rope, plus the sweat which accentuated the curves – the Diet Coke guy could go to fuck; I had Dave!

*With these hungry eyes  
One look at you and I can't disguise  
I've got hungry eyes  
I feel the magic between you and I*

I was feeling something; I could tell you! It was wet and I was certain it was not sweat that ran around my twat – I needed air down there. As I flipped off the top of the punch bag to land on my feet on the concrete floor, I gazed up at Dave and coyly beckoned him on with the forefinger of my left hand. While his attention was on the finger, I shucked my shorts...

*With these hungry eyes  
Now I've got you in my sights  
With these hungry eyes  
Now did I take you by surprise*

Dave was now gripping the last rope with a wrist of steel, his biceps rippling. I saw the lust in his eyes...

*I need you to see  
This love was meant to be*

...and in his shorts...

*I've got hungry eyes  
One look at you and I can't disguise  
I've got hungry eyes  
I feel the magic between you and I*

The rest of the track seemed to fade as Dave swung himself down to the floor and he dumped his shorts beside my own. I jumped up and wrapped my arms around his strong, muscular neck and my legs around his waist. I felt him knocking at my door . . . so, I let him in... The track changed and we continued to kiss deeply, Dave's tongue dancing the Merengue with my own, as he thrust deep inside me.

*I don't give a damn 'bout my reputation  
You're living in the past, it's a new generation  
A girl can do what she wants to do and that's what I'm gonna do*

Dave pulled out of me and I was thrown onto the mat – okay, I liked it rough...

*I don't give a damn 'bout my reputation  
I've never been afraid of any deviation  
An' I don't really care if you think I'm strange  
I ain't gonna change*

He jumped me and I wrapped my legs around his neck and a second later as I twisted my hips, I was on top. Dave placed his hands on my chest and he gently massaged the soft skin and very sensitive nipples. I struggled to contain the sensations that emanated from each nipple and which seemed to split – some going straight for my brain and the rest heading south for my clit... Dave smiled and then I found myself staring up at him as a pair of fingers began to caress said clit and I began to pant and moan as I tried in vain to control my body.

Dave had full control of my body – he knew exactly what to touch and for how long – there was nothing that I could do but enjoy the sensations that then built up between my legs and I felt like I was about to explode and then when Dave slid inside me, I wrapped my arms around him. I gripped him like I would never let go as we both built to a climax. My nails dug deeply into his back . . . I screamed out as he yelled with the pain and pleasure.

*So why should I care about a bad reputation anyway?  
Oh no, not me, oh no, not me*

I could not breathe, my vision was fading and my body was paralysed, but I still felt the surge of warmth as Dave erupted inside me. I could taste the salt of our sweat which ran into my mouth and I smiled as Dave rolled off me and I gripped his hand tightly.

“Thank God, for soundproofing!” Dave quipped and I giggled out loud.

*An' I don't give a damn 'bout my bad reputation  
Oh no, not me, oh no, not me  
Not me, not me*

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After we had disentangled ourselves and got back to our feet, the post-fuck, fuck-about began.

Dave would tease my very sensitive nipples while I would try to get him hard again – once or twice, we had ended up fucking again. But, for the moment, we had work to do; we had a cunt to fuck...

We showered and then pulled on our suits and hoods. We each selected our own tips, shafts and feathers to make up our quiver of arrows. My arrows were different to Dave's – we both had a subtly different approach to how we assembled our arrows.

We shared the pool of 'trick' arrows, though.

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### ***That Night***

#### ***The Docks***

"You, listen up," Somers dictated to his lawyer. "The longer this goes on, the more likely the media is to crucify me – you shut this trial down, you understand me?"

"Yes, sir..."

There was the twang of something flying through the air, then a thunk and a sizzle, followed by the lights going out.

More twangs and thunks, then grunts in the darkness. The lights came back on. Somers span around – three men were on the ground. Fear expanded inside him then he felt something on his neck and then his world went black.

...\_...

As he regained consciousness, Somers was gently swinging from side to side, and . . . upside down!

"Martin Somers..." came an unearthly voice.

"What – who?"

He looked around, hoping to see some help, but instead, he saw just dark, empty, dock. He also saw that he was suspended from a crane by his feet.

"You've failed this city," another, equally unearthly voice growled and Somers' head twisted around.

He could make out two hooded shapes – one green and yellow, the other purple. Both held boys in their left hands, with an arrow held in their right. The purple one released an arrow which he felt as it rushed past his inverted face.

"No, no, no..." he begged.

"You're going to testify in that trial..." the Green Hood began.

"You're going to confess to having Victor Nocenti killed..." the Purple Hood continued.

"There will be no second warning!" The Green Hood finished and the Purple Hood released an arrow which flew much closer and cut his cheek, deep enough to bleed.

As Somers gazed around him, he saw nobody, but then he fell the three feet to the ground as the rope that supported him was cut.

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***An hour or so later.***

***Barrington Hills***

"I hired you to protect my son... Now, I'm not a professional bodyguard, but it seems to me that the first requirement is to be close to the man that you are paid to protect."

"With all due respect, Mrs Lizewski, I've never had a client that did not want my protection."

"I hired you, Mr Diggle, and that makes *me* the client. Now, where do you think my son is going – with that girl – on their private excursions?"

"Ma'am, I truly have no idea," Diggle admitted.

"...and he truly doesn't."

...\_...

Alice Lizewski turned as her son strode into the room sporting an enormous grin.

"Then perhaps you would like to explain where it is that you two run off to."

"We've been alone for five years..."

"I know, honey..."

"Mom... All this . . . it's taking some getting used to, for both of us... We're used to being alone and outside."

"I want you to promise that you will both take Mr Diggle and Miss Clarke, with you on your next excursion – it is not safe; you have already been taken once and there is a maniac out there who is hunting the wealthy..."

"The maniac, as you put it, saved our lives."

"This is not a game..." Alice almost hissed as she struggled to control her tears. "I lost you once . . . and I am not going through that again..."

"Okay."

Mindy was hovering just outside the door and she nodded her own acknowledgement with a quick glance at Sarah who stood beside her. Alice Lizewski nodded and walked out of the room.

"We're sorry to cause you two so much grief," Dave offered to the angry Diggle.

"I served three tours in Afghanistan, Mr Lizewski, and you don't even come *close* to my definition of grief..."

"Tell you what," Sarah cut in. "You two ditch us, just the one more time, and you won't have to fire us..."

Both minders left the room and headed towards the Kitchen. Dave looked at Mindy and she shrugged.

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Mindy and I headed out of the room towards the stairs.

"Where you going?" I asked my sister as she passed by the door.

"Err, somewhere loud and smoky..." she replied. "And don't bother trying to pick-pocket my stash – I'm going to get drunk, instead."

I was worried about Thea, very worried.

“Thea... You think this is what Dad would want for you?”

“Dead people don’t *want* anything... It’s one of the benefits of being dead.”

“I was dead . . . and I wanted a lot.”

“Except for your family . . . don’t wait up...”

With that, Thea was gone.

...\_...

Of late, Thea had been a total bitch to Mindy.

I had tried to get Thea to be nice to my partner, but it was like trying to bring together a pair of hissing cats. Mindy had taken a dislike to Thea too, and I was stuck in the middle.

At least I was, until the next morning...

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***Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016***

“Dave...”

Thea barged in to our bedroom – not her fault, the door *was* partially open.

“Haven’t you learned to knock!” I growled and then I smiled.

Thea did not look at me. Her attention was locked on the full-length mirror that stood on the far side of the room and I followed her gaze. In the reflection, I could see Mindy getting dressed and...

“Oh, my God – those scars...”

Mindy had spun around and she glared at Thea. Thea had flinched away at the fierce look. I raised a hand to Mindy halting her from exploding.

“I never knew...”

Thea walked over to Mindy in a daze. Mindy was wearing slacks and a black bra. Thea reached out but snapped her hand back as if she was about to touch fire.

“You can touch; I won’t hurt you,” Mindy said calmly and she smiled reassuringly.

...\_...

Thea reached out with a trembling hand and she touched the bullet wound just to the left of and above Mindy’s right breast. She walked behind Mindy and matched the wound on the chest with the corresponding exit wound. Then she did the same with the much larger wound slightly above and to the right of the bullet wound. The scar tissue of the bullet wound was superimposed on that of the larger wound, indicating that the bullet had struck later.

She took in the tattoos, a large star shape above Mindy’s left breast and the four Chinese symbols arranged vertically on the left side of the stomach. Thea traced her fingers over the jagged scar that ran left to right, at an angle of 45-degrees downward, on the opposite side of Mindy’s stomach.



“How . . . how *did* you survive?” Thea exclaimed in a combination of astonishment and sadness.

She spun around and then yanked up *my* shirt. I did not stop her. She stared for almost a full minute with her left hand clasped over her mouth, her eyes wide. I saw the tears fall as she dropped her hand.

“Oh, my God – I am so sorry, Mindy. I’ve treated you like crap . . . and . . . those scars...”

Mindy pulled my sister into a hug as Thea cried.