

She was almost fourteen-years-old and she was both a rarity and a curiosity at her school, despite her having been there for going on two years.

Unlike most girls her age, she also had a minder. That was a big part of her young life that she hated. She had plenty of friends at the school but she also enjoyed 'escaping' into the *real* world; much to the chagrin of her Personal Protection Officer.

So, why did she have a PPO? The primary reason was because of who her grandmother was, who her father was, and who she was. Her father was Robert, twin brother to Edward. Their mother was Her Majesty The Queen, making them in turn: Prince Robert, Duke of Kintyre and Lorne and Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex. Therefore, the thirteen-year-old's full title was: Her Royal Highness Princess Mary of Kintyre and Lorne. Or more simply: Mary Alexandra Anne Mountbatten-Windsor. Quite a mouthful, either way! As a result, most of her friends called her Mary, or more simply, 'H'.

Yes, she was royalty and therefore she had protection, twenty-four-hours a day, seven days a week.

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***Kensington Palace***  
***London, England***

She was fed up with the constant intrusion into her personal life.

Somebody was almost always watching her. It had never really bothered her until she turned twelve and she started to get creeped out by all the cameras, the police officers, the protocol. Her favourite pastime was crime. Reading *about* crime - not committing crime! She was also entranced by the goings on in Chicago. She loved reading about Hit Girl and Kick-Ass as they fought crime in Chicago with *Fusion*. She often dreamt of being a vigilante and she so desperately wanted to visit Chicago to see them in action.

Then something wonderful happened, not a million miles from where she went to school in Scotland. *Vengeance* had appeared on the streets of Chicago. That had clinched it - she wanted to become a vigilante and ultimately, she wanted to become a *Vengeance* vigilante. There was a catch to her plans - she could not go *anywhere* without her PPO. Even going for a wee entailed somebody loitering just in case the toilet paper should choose to attack her while she had her knickers around her ankles!

Her succession of Personal Protection Officers had taught her many skills since she was about four-years-old. She knew how to protect herself and she held a red belt in Taekwondo. When she was eight, she had mastered firing a pistol and a rifle. Her father was determined that she should be able to defend herself should something bad occur. Her current PPO was Sergeant Ginny Turner. Mary thought that Ginny was the best PPO ever!

Ginny was thirty-years-old and a career protection officer. She had served for six years in the Diplomatic Protection Group (SO6) until the amalgamation of several protection departments into Protection Command. She had transferred from Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection (PaDP) to Royalty and Specialist Protection (RaSP). After a year running around after some very minor royals, she had been offered the task of chaperoning the petulant daughter of Prince Robert. The two had been introduced and they had hit it off almost immediately.

Thereafter, Ginny had spent two fun-filled years running around after a young girl just entering her teenaged years.

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***Saturday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016***

She should have been at her boarding school, up in Scotland, but instead, she was at some 'function'.

Functions meant boringly stiff pomp and circumstance which drove her around the bend. Oh, she enjoyed the fancy dresses and having her hair put up, but it was all so boring - curtseying and smiling sweetly for total strangers. She hated people calling her 'sweet' and 'cute' - that was for when she was a little girl, not for teenagers!

There came a knock on the door of her bedroom where she was getting ready.

"What?" she called out impatiently.

"Security sweep, ma'am," came the reply from the other side of the door.

Functions meant *additional* security which also drove Mary up the wall and down the other side.

"Okay!" she growled.

The young man in a suit entered and he began his walk around her bedroom, checking that the windows were sealed tight and that nobody was hiding under the bed or behind her toothbrush.

Mary held an object up in the air.

"Maybe you'd like to check my tampon before I stick it up my vagina - just in case somebody put a bullet in it!"

The young police officer coloured and bolted for the door.

"Mary!" came a disapproving growl.

Ginny walked in the door, an angry glare on her face and aimed squarely at Mary. Not very many people were able to tell the Royal Princess what to do, or tell her off - but Ginny was one of them and Mary had a lot of respect for Ginny and as such, she hated getting into trouble.

"Sorry - I . . ."

"I know you hate all the pomp, but your father enjoys your support. You've done it before - you'll be fine."

"I'll be a disaster!"

"Go put your tampon in and let's get going before the ambassador arrives," Ginny suggested with a grin as her charge's cheeks went pink and the youngster fled into the bathroom.

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Ginny smiled and she shook her head. Mary was full of spirit and she could be a loving young girl, but she could also be a tomboy which usually resulted in her getting into a lot of trouble. Mary thought that nobody knew about her night time excursions outside the Palace but Ginny was wise to everything that her charge did - that was her job and she was very good at it. Mary was streetwise, despite her privileged upbringing and Ginny had done everything that she could to help the girl by training her discreetly in various topics which included self-defence and some thinly disguised offensive actions.

Ginny had long decided that if she had tried to stop Mary, then Mary was strong-willed enough to have just gone ahead behind Ginny's back, exposing herself to even more danger. Clandestine support was the name of the game.

"You plugged up, yet?" Ginny called out.

"Can't a girl stick things in her vagina without the whole damn world knowing?" came the angry response.

"My daughter causing a ruckus, as usual, Sergeant?"

"Mary is rebelling in her own way, your Highness," Ginny replied after a brief curtsy in deference to her charge's father, Prince Robert.

"So, I hear!" the Prince chuckled as his daughter appeared.

Mary stopped dead as she saw her father, her cheeks going from pink to red.

"You didn't hear that, did you, Daddy?"

"A young lady should be a little more conservative about her nether regions, eh, Mary?"

"Yes, Daddy. . ."

The very embarrassed Mary grabbed Ginny by the arm and hustled her out of the bedroom while her father just chuckled as he followed his wayward daughter and her protector.

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It was a small gathering - just twelve not so not-so-close companions.

"Announcing, His Excellency George Hamworth, United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

"Mr Ambassador, His Royal Highness Prince Robert, Duke of Kintyre and Lorne."

"Your Royal Highness, may I present my wife, Elizabeth."

"Good evening, ma'am," Prince Robert replied with a nod as the lady curtseyed. "May I introduce, my daughter, Her Royal Highness Princess Mary of Kintyre and Lorne."

Mary curtseyed just as she had been taught almost since the moment she could walk. She hated it, but she would do anything for her father, so she made him proud by being his little girl.

Next came the dinner with exquisitely arranged place settings - another thing which had been taught to a very young Princess Mary. The layout often confused the unwary and those not accustomed to fancy dining. Arrayed before the thirteen-year-old were ten items of silver cutlery, four crystal glasses and two plates. Of the four glasses, Mary had ever only used the one. Due to her age, the glasses intended for the red wine, white wine, and the champagne were strictly off limits, even if they were filled. Mary was limited to making use of the water glass only, which was sometimes filled with a cordial of some description, often lemon.

As for the cutlery, she had an arsenal at her disposal for the often six-course (or more) meal. That evening, they began with seafood, before moving onto soup, a fish course, and then the main dinner with a side-salad. Bread and butter was also provided. There were times that Mary was amazed she did not weigh thirty stone! Finally, there would be pudding followed by coffee and maybe a good cognac, neither of which Mary would partake of. During the entire meal, Ginny would be standing three feet away, watching everybody like a hawk, ready to gun down anybody who interfered with her principal, her protectee.

Naturally, Mary's father had his own protection detail - three men who followed him everywhere, not to mention is equerry, a mid-ranking Royal Navy officer. The visitors also trailed their own security contingent. The American Ambassador had three Secret Service men, complete with dark glasses, attempting to blend into the surroundings - but failing miserably. Outside, there would be the ubiquitous monster armoured suburban ready to whisk the important man and his wife to safety should somebody get a little drunk and attempt to stab the Ambassador with a butter knife.

Mary enjoyed the food - it was always the best. Often, the chef would produce a special plate which would look just like those placed before the adults, but consisting of items much more befitting a youngster. It was not unknown for her to be eating a cheese burger, reduced to its constituent components, while the adults chomped away on some fancy dish. The meal would otherwise be very boring, mainly due to the fact that she was a child and usually

the adults would ignore her completely in the traditional, but old-fashioned, 'children should be seen but not heard' euphemism. However, Mary's ears perked up that evening as she heard the Ambassador bring up the subject of *Vengeance*.

"We've been hearing a lot about the vigilantes that you have in Scotland, Your Highness. They appear to be very similar to our own, Hit Girl, in Chicago," the Ambassador said.

"I have been briefed on them, but I am strictly neutral in such affairs and I can neither condone, nor deny what they do. I will admit, off the record, that they appear to have the support of the populous as they target some very undesirable people," the Prince replied.

"It is a very strange world in which we live in, where we allow masked vigilantes to use violent and often murderous methods to remove people who could just as well be dealt with by the police and the courts," the Ambassador replied.

Mary had a growing dislike for the American. He obviously disapproved of *Vengeance* and, she assumed, *Fusion*. That also meant that he disapproved of her.

"You have something to add to our conversation, Mary?" her father asked as he recognised her annoyed expression.

Mary started, unused to being drawn into conversations between the adults.

"I . . . I don't really have anything to add. I am merely a young girl who has no interest in such activities," she replied in what she figured was a very diplomatic and neutral response.

Her father chuckled, not fooled for a moment.

"Your Royal Highness, I am sure that a young lady, such as yourself, is much more intelligent than you are letting on," the Ambassador offered.

Mary blushed and she took a deep breath before replying.

"Thank you, sir. I think that what *Vengeance* and *Fusion* do in their respective countries is of key importance. They take down people who the authorities are unable to touch. They take over where the police and courts stop. I will agree that, at times, they can get very violent and people die. However, I also believe that if you take on the likes of *Vengeance* and *Fusion*, then you should expect to suffer the consequences. If you don't want to die at the hands of Hit Girl, or Nemesis (my personal favourite, but the way), then criminals should hand themselves into the police for their own protection. The police should only protect them if they spill everything and confess their crimes in exchange for that protection."

Mary felt her cheeks warming up as everybody stared at her.

"Well reasoned, Mary," her father said with a smile.

"Definitely a controversial view," the Ambassador said. "It was also a very intelligent and well thought out view, your Royal Highness. There are many who would agree with every word of it, however, I am not one."

"Thank you, sir, I hope I did not speak out of turn."

"Not at all. You are just showing that despite your tender years, you are a very intelligent young woman who is attuned to what is going on in her own country. Your father must be very proud of his daughter."

Maybe the asshole wasn't as bad as she had originally thought, Mary figured. Her father beamed down at his daughter, full of pride for her intelligent remarks.

"Thank you, your Excellency. Indeed, I am very proud of my young daughter. She is maturing fast and she is developing her own views on what she sees going on around her," Prince Robert said with a wink towards Mary.

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Once the adults had retired to another room for cognac, Mary was free to return to her bedroom and quite literally let her hair down.

"You did well, Mary," Ginny commented as she followed her charge up the stairs.

"Thanks - I'm not used to joining in with the conversation."

"You're growing up, honey, and you have some remarkably mature views on the world."

Mary blushed and she gave her protector a hug.

"Thanks, Ginny."

Mary felt drained as she sat on the end of her bed. Ginny helped her to remove the dress which while expensive was not all that comfortable to wear. Next came the hair, which Ginny unpicked so that it hung naturally over Mary's shoulders. It was late, approaching ten o'clock.

"Get into your nightie and into bed, honey. I'll see you in the morning."

"Night, Ginny - love you."

"Love you too, honey. Night."

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***The Dollar Academy***  
***Scotland***

The return to school was a non-event.

The 'Ooh, a Princess' thing had long passed and she was generally treated like any other girl at the school. Her best friend was a girl the same age, called Leia. She occupied the bedsit next door to Mary. She and Mary had become good friends almost from the moment they had met. Crucially for Mary, they had become friends before Leia had found out who Mary's grandmother was. . . That had resulted in almost two weeks of Leia bursting into giggles whenever she saw Mary. After a lot of shouting, from Mary, Leia had come to her senses and their friendship had resumed. To Mary, those had been a very embarrassing two weeks.

Mary usually went out of her way to be invisible. She hated being singled out for anything and worst of all, she hated anybody drawing attention to her lineage. Yes, there were a few bitches who tried to suck up to her, or just bully her - although bullying was nigh impossible with the omnipresent Ginny. The Protection Officer was also very skilled at becoming invisible. She was known about campus and the teaching body allowed her full access to everywhere and unrestricted access to Mary at all times. Indeed, one male supply teacher made the mistake of refusing Ginny entry into the classroom where Mary was studying - he quickly became very well acquainted with the nearest wall and he was never seen at the school again.

Everybody was aware that Sergeant Turner was armed with a pistol and a billy club as a minimum. The other kids at the school mostly had no issues with Sergeant Turner. The girls generally saw her as a positive role model and empowering the female gender. As for the boys at the school, they definitely had no problem with a beautiful woman 'packing heat', as one teenage boy had eloquently termed it. Indeed, many a boy would while away the night-time hours dreaming of Sergeant Turner and her pistol while they masturbated their lives away.

Ginny lived on the campus, in the same building as some of the teachers. Her role was full time, but while at a Palace, other security personnel would take over once her charge was in bed. At the school, Ginny had no other backup and she would have to be on hand should an incident occur. Her accommodation was quite literally yards from where Mary lived. It would take less than a minute for Ginny to be at Mary's side ready to make the ultimate sacrifice for the girl and her family.

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Mary had started to sneak out at night, when she was twelve - just a few short weeks before she was to become a teenager. The Palace had ceased to provide the relevant distractions that an almost teenager needed. Mary wanted a thrill, something that would really excite her. The girl rarely got into any major trouble - there really was not much to do around a Palace; they were not exactly designed with children in mind and definitely not modern children.

When she was six, Mary had received the wroth of her father for the first time ever when she had attempted to take a pistol out of a

police officer's holster. She had been forced to apologise to the officer who had then quietly talked to the girl about firearms safety and how a pistol worked. It had been her father's idea to stop firearms being seen as a temptation. His rational was that if she knew all about them, then her fascination would wane. A nice idea in theory, but it appeared to work, at least from the outside.

One night, she had managed to elude the roving foot patrols in the corridors of the Palace - and the cameras - before carefully slipping outside and spending a good two hours running around the darkened gardens. Mary also saw the temporary escape as a form of rebelling that could not hurt anybody. Two nights later, she had repeated her previous feat, improving her method of escape as she went. After those two experimental operations, Mary was able to 'escape' whenever she wished without anybody being any the wiser.

She was not stupid. She knew that one day, she would be found out. But until that time, she was going to enjoy herself as much as was humanly possible for a young Princess.