

Tuesday, October 4th, 2016

Scotland

"Whitehall 4281," the voice with a hint of American accent said after the call was connected.

"I . . . I was given this number to call by my fiancé - I haven't heard from her in quite a while and I am very worried."

"Please hold."

Andrew was very worried - he had not seen nor heard from Cassie in almost two weeks. Her home was empty and there were signs of a hurried exit.

"Connecting you now. . ."

There was a stream of beeps before another voice - a computerised one.

"Encryption negotiated. Call is secure."

"Andrew?"

"Cass!"

"Hi, Andrew . . . Oh, God - I'm so sorry for running out on you," Cassie said quickly.

"Are you in trouble?"

"Kind of."

"Can I see you?"

"Not right now - but I'll see what I can do."

"Okay - I love you, you know."

"I know and I love you so much - I miss you, Andrew."

"Take care, Cass."

"I will, I promise."

"Love you."

"Love you."

Liverpool, England

Position: 53.4279° N 3.1485° W

At anchor, 415nm logged

MY Caledonia

1817 hours

"You got a party dress in your bag?" Electra asked as they all scrambled to get changed after the naming ceremony.

Mary grinned.

"I'm even lugging a sodding mourning dress!"

It didn't take long for all the girls get changed - most were surprised to find new clothes awaiting them. There were many squeals of delight as they all changed.

"Wow!" Olivia grinned as she saw Kaitlin emerge from the gangway. "I never saw you as a girly girl, but you scrub up nicely."

Kaitlin actually blushed as she twirled so everybody could see the pink party dress which stopped at her knees and the pearl-coloured pumps.

"You don't look too bad, yourself," Kaitlin replied.

Olivia wore a knee-length dress in dark blue which was attracting the attentions of Craig and the other boys. However, all attentions shifted when something yellow appeared.

"Bloody hell!" Jeremy commented.

"Damn!" Christopher added as Craig's mouth simply fell open.

The yellow dress appeared to clash with Mary's red face but nobody appeared to have noticed.

"That is *not* the dress which was packed for you," Ginny exclaimed.

The dress was yellow and sleeveless. The problem, at least from Ginny's point of view, if not the boys', was that the dress ended somewhere mid-thigh, showing off much more of the thirteen-year-old Princess' skin than would be deemed proper. Her long brown hair hung loosely across her shoulders.

"They seem to like it," Mary said, indicating the drooling, speechless, boys.

"They're boys - they have a dick which has probably taken the blood from their brains," Ginny explained rather crudely.

Mary's went redder and she sat down between Olivia and Jessica who wore a plain cream, knee-length, dress.

"She's fine, Ginny," Cassie directed. "Let her enjoy being a teenager - we were all one once."

"That's what I'm afraid of," Ginny commented dryly. "I remember what *I* was like at thirteen."

"Me, too!" Cassie laughed.

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There was music with plenty of food and drink.

Jeremy was over the moon because his father was there. Yvette too, was pleased to have her family with her. Everybody needed the time to decompress. Naomi and Harper were still very sore from having a ceiling drop on top of them, but apart from some bruising, they were okay. Indeed, Harper's dress was short enough to expose a large bruise on her lower thigh which the girl found very sore if anybody accidentally rubbed up against it.

Mary was spending the time listening to *Vengeance* stories and catching up on what had been going on over the past few weeks.

"Before the visit to the police station, we all went to McDonalds - holy shit that was fun!" Olivia exclaimed as she munched a cheese burger.

"How come?" Mary asked.

"Apparently, Naomi, Kaitlin, and Harper were blacklisted from the Pizza Hut in Stirling - Cassie said a hand grenade would have caused less of a problem than those three."

Mary looked over at the three, not-so-innocent-looking girls as she cocked an eyebrow.

"It wasn't intentional," Kaitlin protested.

"It never is, with you," Cassie threw in.

"I was an innocent bystander," Harper tried.

"Explain the overflowing toilets," Cassie demanded.

"Oh - forgot about them," Harper muttered.

"That was a very humiliating day," Cassie commented.

"It was," Kaitlin agreed.

"Not for you idiots - me!" Cassie growled.

"I get no respect!" Kaitlin whined as everybody laughed.

"I keep hearing about this girl, Stephanie," Mary said. "Who is she?"

"She's the reason that we are free," Electra stated simply.

"Without her, we might still be *Predators*," Harper confirmed. "Stephanie could be seen as worse than use, when it comes to killing. She became the ultimate *Predator*, of a sort."

"Stephanie was discovered by Hit Girl - she was taken in by Hit Girl," Cassie explained further. "When Hit Girl found out about what her own government was doing to children - creating killers in her own image - she went ballistic and vowed to take down *Urban Predator*."

"And she did," Naomi confirmed. "It was during the attack on the facility in Toulouse that me and Kaitlin were rescued and we found a new home in Scotland."

Kaitlin cuddled up close to Cassie who hugged her youngest daughter.

"It hasn't even been a year, yet," Naomi continued. "But our lives are so much different. It took a few weeks before I could remember how to be a little girl - how to play and have fun. We had our ups and downs - Kaitlin destroyed a police BMW before we figured out that us *Predators* needed an outlet."

"Is that why you went out on the streets of London, against your grandfather's will?" Mary asked Electra.

"Yes, it is."

"Electra is a little different to us," Harper explained. "Electra started off life as a Yellow - basically a cast off from the recruitment. She met Stephanie during one of Stephanie's punishment sessions and Stephanie helped to train her."

"You saw my scar - that was from another *Predator*. She was called Abigail: she was a rising star, like Stephanie. They were pitted against one another, and the sadistic bastards threw me in as a millstone around Stephanie's neck - they hated Stephanie with a passion. Abigail slashed me during a fight - the idea being that Stephanie would be distracted by my injuries. Stephanie won the fight and Abigail survived - she now lives in Chicago where Stephanie is helping her readjust."

"They're friends?" Mary was very surprised.

"What happened in the past was bad, but we were all forced into it, against our will. We've come to terms with it - sort of. All of us here were trained to see

the other *Predators* as competitors," Harper explained. "Me and Naomi were rivals and we hated each other. . ."

"Now they're all over each other," Kaitlin commented. "They'll be having lesbian sex, next."

Harper ignored Kaitlin and continued.

"Yes, Stephanie and Electra hated Abigail's guts - they almost killed Abigail the first time they met again, a few weeks back. But, with help from us all, they've become uneasy friends, if you like."

Mary was stunned by everything she was hearing. There were times when she thought that her own upbringing sucked - but. . .

"Hey!" Craig intervened. "This is supposed to be a party and I want Olivia for a dance."

"A snog, more like," Harper muttered causing Olivia and Craig to blush violently.

Jeremy stepped forwards and he held out his hand to Mary.

"Would you care to dance, ma'am?" he asked and Mary actually giggled as she went very red in the face, but she took his hand. "You're very beautiful."

"It's enough to make you sick," Kaitlin growled as she made for the buffet for more food.

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"So, how are my girls doing?"

"We're fine, mum," Sarah replied as she saw her mother sipping a cup of tea, in the kitchen of Safehouse VY over the video link.

"I hope you are both behaving - you two together is enough to cause your father heartburn."

The two adult women gave their mother a withering stare before they both grinned.

"We're being perfect angels," Cassie grinned.

Alexandra burst out laughing at that comment and it was a good minute before she recovered enough to see her two daughters looking very annoyed with her.

"You two couldn't be angels if your lives depended on it!" Alexandra chuckled. "Your halos are around your ankles - much like your knickers usually are!"

"Mother!" Sarah exclaimed, her face reddening.

"Well, I'll leave you two for whatever, while Amy and I settle down to a game of Scrabble. Stay safe, girls, I love you both very much."

"Love you, Mum."

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"Thank you, Craig," Olivia swooned as they danced together.

"No problem, Liv," Craig replied with a cheeky grin.

"No, I mean it," Olivia persisted as she wrapped her arms around the boy and then she kissed him on the cheek.

"Oh, God!" Kaitlin growled, appalled by the display. "Get a fucking room!"

"Be a good little girl, Kaitlin," Olivia said. "Fuck off!"

Kaitlin's mouth dropped open in a mock show of annoyance and she stalked off to cause some trouble elsewhere.

"Where were we," Olivia mused as she began to kiss Craig again.

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Kaitlin was annoyed to find that her usual points for causing trouble were not readily available - Cassie was off with her sister, presumably on the bridge. Naomi was chatting with Christopher while Harper was getting rather close to Jeremy. Mary was talking to Marinette and Adrien while Electra sat with Lynn, leaving Yvette, Jessica, and Kaitlin unattached and loitering.

"You going to kiss, or what?" Kaitlin asked as she came around behind Harper and Jeremy.

"Let's go find some fresh air, Jezza," Harper suggested as she grabbed Jeremy and she pulled him out onto the deck.

Kaitlin scowled as Naomi took Christopher off in the same direction with a sly grin. She then looked over at Jessica and Yvette.

"Aren't we a bunch of sorry bitches!" she exclaimed. "And don't you even think about it - I ain't a fuckin' lesbian!"

"Never crossed my sordid mind," Jessica replied indignantly.

"Moi non plus," Yvette added with a scowl.

The following morning

Wednesday, October 5th

Liverpool, England

Position: 53.4279° N 3.1485° W

At anchor, 415nm logged

MY Caledonia

0700 hours

"All hands, all hands, rise and shine!"

"Fuck me!" Olivia growled as she forced her eyes open for a brief moment, before burying her head in her pillow.

"I'm so tired," Harper muttered.

"That's what comes from snogging all night," Kaitlin said as she flipped on the overhead lights and scampered off up the steps to the deck above before she come to any physical harm.

"Little bitch," Naomi moaned.

Olivia scrambled out of the bed and she quickly stripped off for a shower. She could hear water running, so she knew somebody was in the bathroom, but she pushed open the door anyway. She recognised the silhouette through the glass of the shower cubicle.

"Morning, Mary!"

There was a squeal and a little scream as Mary tried to cover herself.

"I'm showering!" Mary called out indignantly.

"So, what?" Olivia responded as she sat on the toilet to pee. "Princesses have different bits to us commoners?"

Mary laughed.

"No - same as you," Mary confirmed.

"Yep!" Olivia agreed as she stuck her head into the shower and ran her eyes up and down Mary.

"You're the first person to see me naked since I was about six," Mary advised Olivia.

"Me too, until I met this lot - nudity ain't a big thing around here."

"So, I've noticed - but, we're older and have. . ." Mary persisted as she resisted the urge to cover up her private parts.

"Hairy parts?" Olivia grinned. "That's what Kaitlin calls pubic hair. We are what we are and all our bodies are much the same, plus or minus some hair and boobs."

"True - but I'm still not walking around naked, out there."

Olivia grinned and vanished. Mary was relieved to be able to go back to her shower in private - only that did not last long as the naked Olivia soon returned and she was not alone.

"Behold, the naked princess!" Olivia proclaimed as Yvette, Naomi, Harper, and Jessica all peered into the shower.

Mary blushed bright red and she laughed.

"You're so cruel, Olivia!" Harper grinned.

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At 0800, on the dot, the anchor was weighed and Caledonia, headed in an easterly direction to clear Anglesey.

Ahead of them all, there was a 465-nautical mile voyage towards the south coast of England. The voyage would take two days. Jeremy and David had left the yacht at Liverpool, along with Eric and Alya. Yvette was very pleased to have her family remaining onboard. Mary, too, was remaining aboard - she had spoken with her father, briefly, to advise him that she was safe and having fun. She did comment on his letter and how she was being treated like a normal teenager, rather than a princess, twelfth in line to the throne.

He was very pleased to hear that!

Off the Anglesey coast, 50nm east of Dublin

Position: 53.3482° N 4.8.55° W

Course: 205°, Speed: 14 knots, 481.7nm logged

MY Caledonia

1245 hours

The Irish Sea was rough and some of the youngsters were struggling to re-find their sea legs.

For Sarah and Keira, it was perfect weather to be pounding through the waves - it was after all the career that they had both desired since they were very young. For Sarah, a life at sea continued, however, Keira had different

responsibilities but despite that, she was still on the Reserves List and thus liable for recall in time of war. Keira missed the spray, the soothing motion of the waves and the challenge of safely navigating a vessel through treacherous seas. The world's oceans were a hard mistress to serve.

"You enjoyed this?" Harper asked her sister.

"I loved it. The sea was my life. I miss it."

"You gave it up for me," Harper said, feeling bad about taking her sister's dreams away.

"Yes, I did - and I'd do it again, Harper."

Kaitlin pretended to stick her finger down her throat.

"Enough!" Sarah ordered. "Kaitlin, go find Cassie and ask her for a long stand, please."

"No problem," Kaitlin said and she vanished off the bridge.

Harper laughed.

"You're nasty!" she grinned. "I love it!"

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Forty minutes later, Kaitlin returned, looking perplexed.

"Yes?" Sarah prompted.

"Cassie says she hasn't got one - I stood for ages while she checked, though - she wants a can of dehydrated water," Kaitlin responded.

Harper struggled to keep a straight face, as did Jeremy.

"Tell her I'll have a look for one, but only if she gives you a copper magnet. Then, when you come back, we need to fill in an ID-ten-T form, for you."

"Back soon!" Kaitlin said as she vanished again.

"Wait for it. . ." Sarah directed with a wink at Keira.

"HEY!" came a shout from a few feet aft.

Kaitlin reappeared, her face looking very pink and she was struggling not to laugh. Harper and Jeremy couldn't take it any longer and they fell to the deck laughing so much that they could barely breathe.

"I hate *all* of you!"

"Hi, sweetie," Cassie grinned from behind Kaitlin. "You found that dehydrated water, yet?"

"Not funny, Mum!"

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Whilst Kaitlin was extremely intelligent and her mind worked very fast, she was also very susceptible to suggestion and the eight-year-old could be very gullible at times - however, it was all part of the charm which was Kaitlin.

Everybody loved the cheeky little girl who was always, or so it seemed, out to cause trouble. She loved to be in the thick of whatever was going on - a fight, a game, or just talking. She was the youngest in *Vengeance*, but she never let that get in her way. She could keep up with the older kids without much work - the girl was incredibly fit - and she could fight almost as well as her elder

sibling. The overriding factor for Kaitlin was her loyalty. Jasper had once referred to her as like a Jack Russell, yapping along by your ankles. Only, he meant it out of respect, not as a joke. If you had Kaitlin watching your back, you knew that you were safe and that she would never let you down - ever. Her excitement and happiness were infectious and difficult to avoid.

Cassie loved her and she knew that she could never replace the youngster.

MY Caledonia

2102 hours

"Come on, Electra, today!"

"Okay! We're . . . twelve nautical miles east of . . . St David's, South Wales."

"Position?"

"Err . . . Position: 51.8335° North 5.6462° West."

"Course?"

"Course is 189° magnetic. Speed is 14 knots and we've logged 580.9 nautical miles."

"Very good, Electra," Keira praised as the youngster blushed happily. "We're going to make competent sailors out of you all before this is over."

"It's a lot of fun," Mary commented as she studied the chart.

Her eyes followed the pencilled line south towards Land's End and then east, up the English Channel. What were they going to find wherever it was that they were going? She could vividly remember that scar of Electra's and she hoped that nobody else was going to be maimed so cruelly. Vengeance were teetering on the edge of something - but what? Mary had been struggling to figure out what was going on - but she was too young and way too inexperienced to figure it out on her own. Electra stood beside her friend and she smiled up at the Princess.

"As long as we're all a team, we'll get through this," she said.

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Outside, it was very dark.

The radar showed a few contacts several miles away and it was possible to see their navigation lights through binoculars as the yacht peaked a wave. The lights were faint but still visible. The night-time watches tended to be boring and for some on their first night-time watches, they found it difficult to remain awake. However, if one person were allowed to nod off, then human nature tended to subconsciously encourage other members of the watch to fall asleep, thus leaving the vessel at risk of collision or worse.

Keira kept an eagle eye on her charges as the watch wore on and there was a steady flow of hot tea and coffee available - the kids drank the tea. It was a time for talking - quietly, so as not to wake anybody else aboard - and walking the decks to ensure that the yacht was in a suitable state. The youngsters would watch out for trailing lines or ropes and any damage to safety rails as they walked from bow to stern and stern to bow. Electra and Mary would take their time walking the decks, once per hour, during the shift.

The two very different girls, from two very different backgrounds, were borderline inseparable, Keira had noticed. The Princess had attached herself to

two people onboard – other than Electra, Mary spent a lot of her time with Olivia. From Keira's point of view, Mary appeared to enjoy the human contact from girls who, through no fault of their own, had had their lives blighted. Mary was not in control of her own life due to her lineage. It was obvious that the girl craved normality and she appeared to love not being treated as a princess. Indeed, Mary was a fun child to chat with and very mature in her outlook on the world.

The thirteen-year-old Princess had impressed every adult aboard and the kids loved her. Her skills still had a distance to go before she was even remotely close to the advanced Phase 2 *Predators*. However, her current skills were not to be laughed at – she could put somebody down, when angry . . . and when she was properly concentrating. That was something which the girl needed to work on – her concentration. There were times where the world could be ending around the girl, but she would be happily chatting and giggling, without any idea of what was going on around her. That extended to her fighting – somebody could blindside her without taking any precautions what so ever. Electra had made Cassie aware of what had almost befallen the Princess on one of her trips out.

Electra was not smug about saving Mary's life, just pleased that she could help – Electra was a very special young girl.

23nm NNW of Land's End and 30nm NNE of the Isles of Scilly

Position: 50.4022° N 6.0231° W

Course: 179°, Speed: 14 knots, 783.3nm logged

MY Caledonia

0715 hours

As they approached the north end of the Lands' End Traffic Separation Scheme which would take them safely between Land's End and the Isles of Scilly, Keira studied the sea around them through a set of high-powered binoculars.

"Is it back?" Sarah asked cryptically as she entered the bridge.

"You're early," Olivia commented.

"Good morning, Olivia."

Olivia grinned as she handed Sarah a mug of coffee.

"Thank you," Sarah said before she turned towards Keira who stood on the port bridge wing. "Is it back?"

"Yes – I saw the feather about five minutes ago."

"Feather?" Craig asked.

"Periscope feather – we're being tracked by a nuclear-powered submarine of the Royal Navy," Sarah explained.

"Trafalgar class," Keira commented.

"Keira should know – she used to fly Lynx and Merlin helicopters for the Royal Navy. She used to hunt submarines, so she knows her periscopes," Sarah clarified.

"Why would a submarine be tracking us?" Olivia asked.

"We are currently HMG's most wanted," Keira offered dryly.

"Will they torpedo us?" Craig asked.

Sarah laughed.

"No - we're way too small for them to waste a multi-million-pound Spearfish torpedo on. If they wanted to take us, they would put an SBS force aboard during the night."

"Great," Craig moaned. "I won't be sleeping tonight."

"They're just keeping an eye on us in case we decide to commit treason," Keira grinned.

"You lot go get some breakfast - time for the forenoon watch," Sarah said, and the kids vanished, closely followed by Keira.

"Hi, Sarah!" Harper and Kaitlin shouted as they appeared on the bridge, full of energy.

"Great!" Sarah moaned as she took another gulp of coffee.

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After passing south, between Land's End and the Isles of Scilly - a run of around two and a half hours, they turned east.

The middle of the afternoon watch saw Keira back on the bridge and *Caledonia* thrusting through the waves about twenty nautical miles southeast of Falmouth, where they altered course northeast and headed for southern England, east of the Isle of Wight. The next leg was ninety-eight nautical miles long, on a course of 073° which would take seven hours to complete. It would mean several very boring watches as *Caledonia* ploughed along on autopilot before they would pick up their final legs for the remaining thirty-five nautical miles to their next port. They were due to dock at around 23:30 that night.

"This is so boring!" Naomi commented.

"I think it's great," Jessica disagreed.

"It is a tiny bit boring, but I'm enjoying learning something new," Craig said. "It's good to learn something that isn't killing."

"You've got a point there," Naomi conceded as she went back to her chart exercise which Keira had provided.

Despite Naomi's feelings of boredom, she put her best work into the chart, just as she did for everything that she put her mind to.

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Down below, Mary and Olivia were receiving instruction on weapons from Cameron.

Both girls while familiar with weapons, still had a lot to learn. Olivia had a great eye and the rounds fired during the attack on the Isle of Man were perfectly aimed - Olivia was having trouble coping with what she had done, the fact that she had killed two men. Everybody was doing their best to keep her mind off what she had done, but there was the undeniable fact that if Olivia had not killed those men, then some of their own might have died.

That was no consolation to Olivia, but she figured that it was the best she was going to get. Craig had been there as a shoulder to cry on and Mary had been there to talk to. Electra had offered words of hope that she would get past her developing nightmares.

"Where are we going and what are we going to be doing once we get there?" Little Miss Inquisitive asked.

Cassie looked down at her youngest and she smiled.

"We are visiting Poole Harbour," Cassie explained. "We have a lead a few miles inland."

"There going to be any gunplay?" Harper asked with a hopeful expression.

"Well - we hope not, but the way things are going, anything's possible!" Cassie replied.

"What are they so happy about?" Natasha asked as the two girls ran off, laughing and yelling.

"Harper thinks she's Dirty Harry and Kaitlin wants to be John Wayne."

"I just hope that things are calming down. I wasn't happy about Olivia having to kill so soon," Natasha said.

"She had no choice, but she is not alone," Cassie replied.

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The entry into the harbour was dangerous and it took both Keira and Sarah to ensure that they were following the correct track.

Most of the crew were fast asleep as they passed through the chain ferry at Sandbanks. Natasha and Cameron were up in the bow with Craig where they stood ready with the forward lines. Jasper, Cassie, and Mary were on the aft deck standing ready with the after lines. They were coming alongside portside to; therefore, large plastic fenders had been strategically deployed to protect the yacht's expensive glossy paintwork from the concrete dock. Keira took one final look aft before they lost sight of the English Channel. Plainly visible in the darkness, was a single flashing amber light which correlated with a radar-return, about five miles astern of them. The contact was moving at a crawl, barely four knots as it headed towards The Solent, passing to the north of The Needles lighthouse which was located at the western tip of the Isle of Wight.

Twenty minutes later, they were moored alongside at Poole Quay, after a bit of nifty manoeuvring to turn the forty-metre yacht within her own length, thus pointing the bow towards the exit - should a quick departure be required. Waiting on the dock to meet them were Craig and Trevor. They had arrived in the seaside town, several hours previously and had been busy acquiring suitable transport which was parked alongside the quay. They both came aboard and were quickly reunited with their family members before an armed watch was set and those not on watch retired to their cabins.

What might the next day bring?

Later that same morning

Thursday, October 6th

Poole Harbour

Position: 50.7120° N 1.988° W

Alongside, 568.8nm logged

MY Caledonia

0922 hours

Breakfast was an hour late due to the late arrival.

"Kaitlin!"

The eight-year-old looked up at Natasha.

"What are you doing?"

"Getting the marmalade."

"Why can't you just ask rather than reaching across people who are trying to eat?"

Kaitlin muttered something under her breath and shrugged.

"Olivia, could you please pass me the marmalade?"

Olivia complied with a smile.

"Thank you, so much, Olivia."

Olivia rolled her eyes as Kaitlin hammed it up.

"Drama queen!" Naomi chuckled.

"See," Cassie pointed out. "You have perfect manners, Kaitlin - should you choose to use them."

"Manners are for dicks," Kaitlin commented.

"Should be fine for you then," Naomi suggested.

"Would you like me to rip out your throat, dear sister?" Kaitlin asked sweetly.

"Would you like me to rip the head off Princess Twilight Sparkle?"

"Touch her and I will. . ."

"Okay!" Cassie called out. "Get back to eating, we have a busy day ahead."

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"Aren't we somewhere close to where we found Steph's brother?" Electra asked later that morning as they drove through the market town of Wimborne Minster.

"Observant, Electra - very good," Cameron commented causing the girl to blush happily.

"Where are we going?"

"We have an appointment with somebody," Cassie advised from the front seat as she drove.

Behind Cassie in the black Audi SQ7 were Harper and Naomi, sitting either side of Electra. Sitting in the third-row seating, alone, was Kaitlin. In the blue Audi SQ7 behind, Natasha and Ginny sat in the front with Natasha driving. Seated behind them, were Mary, Craig, Olivia, Jessica and Jeremy. The third vehicle was being driven by Jasper with Keira beside him and Christopher, Yvette and Alya behind them. Marinette, Adrien, and Eric remained back at the yacht for onboard security along with Sarah and Lynn. Everybody in the vehicles wore a combat suit under their clothing, with masks and weapons hidden from view. They were all acutely aware that the previous meetings and trips out had not gone all that well.

About forty minutes later, they turned off the main road and they headed up a narrow, metalled road. After another turn or two, they stopped outside the decaying remnants of a building.

"Secure the area!" Cameron ordered as everybody dismounted.

"Not you, Princess," Natasha ordered, stopping Mary and pushing her back inside the Audi. "Keep her there, Ginny."

"What's going on?" Mary demanded.

"Not now, Mary," Ginny ordered.

Mary was forced to watch everything from the safety of the Audi. Her friends were all spreading out to take up positions in the surrounding tree line and check for anybody in the surrounding area. All were armed but none were wearing their masks, considering it was broad daylight. The surrounding area was not exactly plush landscape, Mary noticed. Apart from the derelict building which looked like it had been a substantial house at some stage in the past, the area was just dirt and mud. It looked like somebody had been using it as a race track for off-road vehicles. After about forty minutes, which felt like three hours to Mary, Ginny opened the door and waved her charge out of the 4x4.

"Come, Mary," Ginny said as she kept a hand ominously close to her holstered pistol.

"What is going on?" Mary tried.

Nobody answered her as she was escorted - yes, escorted - by Ginny and Natasha to the derelict house. Mary was waved inside to where she found Trevor and David waiting with Keira and Electra. Beside them, there was a large wooden table which looked like it had been there for quite a while - the top had been cleaned off, however, and a white tablecloth had been draped over it. There were half a dozen camp folding chairs arranged around the table.

"A meeting?" Mary asked.

"Yes, your Highness," Electra confirmed.

"What's with the formality?" Mary asked.

Mary never got an answer as Keira yelled out a warning.

"Arriving!"