

# The Joy of Revenge #Chapter 111 - Read The Joy of Revenge Chapter 111

Chapter 111

CHAPTER 111 Bargaining

Liam

I was sipping champagne inside Virtue's boutique watching customers purchase clothes and accessories with this goofy grin on my face.

I just couldn't believe it. Virtue said yes to my proposal. The moment she said yes, I had vowed no one would hurt her not even Pete McDowell. She was under my protection. Come Spring Formal, I will make sure she is protected and will instruct all my men to shoot to kill...

While I relaxed, Virtue helped her customers with fittings including choosing the right accessories to match their purchases. She was patient and soft spoken and looked genuinely sincere as she assisted everyone who came to her with a question.

I yawned, finally feeling the restless nights I've had sleeping at the hospital. It was so uncomfortable trying to get some sleep on the only chair inside my father's hospital room for the past few nights. My lack of sleep topped off with the champagne was making me woozy. I needed to get some rest.

What I needed was a vacation. I should have Dan plan a trip so I could take Virtue to Chicago with me to do some shopping. "Liam, let's get you into the office," Chip said, noticing I was tired. "You can make yourself comfortable on Virtue's couch. It's big enough for you to sleep in."

unpose to be

"No. I probably just need a cup of coffee," I said, feeling embarrassed. This was suppose a celebration and here I was practically falling asleep.

"I'll bring you a cup after you take a nap. For now, you should go and get some rest," Chip-

urged me.

“Chip’s right. You need some rest, Liam. Come on. I’ll help you put your feet up,” Dan said, suddenly appearing by my side. I nodded my head reluctantly, handing my empty glass to

Chip.

“You don’t think Virtue will mind if I leave her for a nap?”

“Of course not,” Chip said. “Her shop is your shop. Go and make yourself feel right at home.”

776

I followed Dan into Virtue’s personal office. It was set up like a huge lounge area with a nice

stay here

the middle of the room under a fur rug. It was clean, soundproof, and cool. I inhaled deeply as I walked inside, taking in the scent of Virtue’s expensive perfume. Ah, I could

forever.

I loved her scent... I could live everyday just sniffing her.

soft I went directly to the couch and sat down, sighing as my back pressed against the cushions. Dan dimmed the lights and took a seat behind Virtue’s big white customized desk.

“So, when will the big day be happening?” Dan asked while I closed my eyes. I shrugged my

shoulders.

“I’ll have to talk to Virtue first, but I’m thinking Virtue is the epitome of a June bride. It will give us enough time to get to know each other more before we tie the knot,” I said lazily.

“Sounds good,” Dan said. “It’ll give us enough time to plan the wedding too. What about a pre-nup? Are you going to ask her to sign one?” I laughed.

“We haven't gotten married yet and you're thinking of divorce. Personally, I don't think I need one. What I do need is an heir. Imagine having a little boy and a little girl looking like Virtue. I'm assured handsome kids.”

“A pre-nup is just for you to protect your assets, Liam. If you promise her a specific amount, she won't run after the mansion or any other property you have,” Dan murmured.

“But she may take custody of our children. That I won't allow, Dan. Divorce is out of the question. The only thing that will separate us is death,” I muttered under my breath. Dan paused realizing what I meant.

“No, Liam. You can't do that to her.” I know killing her wouldn't give me any satisfaction, but I had to protect my own interests and I didn't want any of my children to live away from me.

It would break my heart.

“No one will take my children away from me, Dan. No one,” I replied, hoping to end the

conversation.

“Fine. Just don't be difficult, Liam. Virtue is such a nice person and I know she's patient. If

you at least meet her half way, I believe the both of you will stay together until old age. To tell you honestly, I actually see her as someone who can serve as councilwoman,” Dan said, a wishful tone in his voice. That was actually a great idea. Cris was becoming a liability and Virtue would make a great replacement.

2/6

I raised my arm and pointed at him. “This is the reason why we're friends. You have so many great ideas. Virtue will make sure a Cohen will preside over the people if she becomes councilwoman. She'll give them everything they want while we continue our operations from under their noses. Who knows? I can run for a national position while she stays here and becomes mayor. It will be like a dream come true,” I mumbled, exhausted.

I fell asleep, dreaming of my future with Virtue. I dreamt of our happy family.

In my dreams, | saw my father happily playing with the children in our front yard, while waving at us as Virtue and | left the mansion to go to work. It was picture perfect.

Suddenly, | found myself at his bed at the hospital. He had a scowl on his face... a far from the happiness | saw just a moment ago.

cry

“Son, are the rumors true? You proposed to Virtue Sullivan?” He asked. There was no use hiding anything from this man.

“Dad, contrary to what you might believe, Virtue will make a good wife,” | argued.

“Liam, you're suppose to marry someone else,” my father said. “I’m sick and tired of being a puppet. This woman I’ve arranged for you to marry will be our ticket to becoming masters of our own universe. Aren’t you tired of working for someone else? Because I’m tired. You need to do this for us, Liam. Virtue Sullivan is just a pretty face. | guarantee that she will become a liability for us. If | were you, just hand her over to Pete.”

“Dad, I’d rather kill Pete.”

“And have the big boss kill you for killing him? You aren’t thinking straight, son. We can’t touch them. Our ancestors made sure of that,” my father argued. “If only | had the guts to fix

this... Now, it's too late.”

“What do you mean?” | asked, pulling a chair and sitting down beside his bed.

“| should have married Cynthia McDowell when | had the chance. All | had to do was swallow my pride. When they moved to New Salem, Victoria Ortiz suggested | marry Cynthia. and take the position as Capo Bas tone from Pete. If | had just done what she recommended. me to do, you would be Capo Ba stone, not that sniveling child Cynthia called a son,” he

explained.

“Dad, if you couldn't do it, what makes you think | can?” | asked. “You had the chance to marry for love. | want that. | want to have the freedom to choose who | marry. Virtue may

not be part of the Angole of Darknace, but | soo her being good for this family. As for Pete.

3/6

I'll talk to Ortiz. Maybe we can come up with an arrangement. Don't worry, Dad. I'll fix this. | promise. Just accept Virtue as your soon to be daughter-in-law.”

My father nodded his head, accepting my promise. | heaved a sigh of relief, thankful | took the chance of bargaining with him. “Alright then. Just know I've always been proud of you,

Liam.”

“Thanks, Dad.”

| reached over and grabbed his hand. My father and | don't always see eye were family.

Family was important to me.

to eye, but we

Jack

My phone was vibrating. | took it out of my pocket and answered the phone call. It was the

Sheriff.

“Jack, | need you to come to the hospital. We have a big problem,” he said.

“Sure, Sheriff. Should | tell Liam that I'm headed there?”

“You're with Liam?”

“Yeah. It’s the opening of Virtue Sullivan’s boutique. I’ve been here since ten managing the crowd. Why? Does this have anything to do with Liam?” | asked. | heard the Sheriff sigh.

“It’s good to know you’re with Liam. | need you to drive him here. | need his permission to conduct an autopsy on his father’s body. | need to rule out foul play,” he explained.

“Theodore Cohen is dead?!” | blurted out without thinking. Good thing | was away from the

crowd. “Why hasn’t anyone told Liam?”

“I’ve been trying to get a hold of him, but he won’t answer my phone calls,” he answered.” Since you’re already there with him, | need you to tell him and bring him here.”

“Sure, Sheriff,” | said, not knowing what else to say. “I’ll grab Liam and head to St.

Elizabeth’s.”

4/6

Liam about his dead father. | couldn’t do it. | needed help.

| decided to ask Virtue for her help.

The crowd had begun to disperse now that the food and drinks were almost gone. | saw Noah talking to Linda Jacobs near the long table which was now full of dirty plates and glasses that Bo’s staff were now collecting.

“Norma says he’s headed to Texas before he makes his way back here. | don’t know where he’s going to stay since he sold their house. Someone snatched it right up according to Lisa. And to think that house costs a pretty penny,” Linda Jacobs said to Noah. She suddenly covered her mouth when she saw me coming.

| wondered who they were talking about.

“Hey Noah, have you seen Liam?” | asked, hoping he knew. | couldn’t find Liam anywhere.

“He’s inside with Dan,” Noah replied while pointing at the store with his thumb. “Hey, everything okay?”

“I just need to find Liam,” I said, not wanting anyone else to hear the news of Theodore’s passing. “Excuse me.” I rushed inside and saw Virtue helping one of the townsfolk with a

dress.

“Virtue, I’m sorry to bother you, but I need your help,” I said. She smiled at me and gestured for Chip to help the woman with her dress while she spoke with me.

“Sure. What can I do, Undersheriff?” She asked sweetly. I bent down to whisper in her ear.

“Something has happened to Theodore Cohen. I need you to tell Liam for me,” I answered. She looked up at me, surprised. Her smile quickly disappeared as she saw the grief in my

eyes.

“Oh my God!” She exclaimed. “Uhm, Liam is in my office taking a nap. Right this way please, Undersheriff,” she said gesturing for me to follow her.

I followed her to the back of the store, past the fitting rooms and the storage room to two doors standing

g across from each other. The one on the right was the bathroom while the one on the left was her office. All the doors except for the storage room door were painted a dark charcoal color which contrasted sharply against the white paint of the walls. If I were to buy a new house, I would consider painting it a charcoal gray. It was manly and warm.

5/6

Virtue opened the door to her office and I followed her inside. Soft orange lights glowed from the light installation of the ceiling, making the room appear dark. No wonder those things had so many kinds of lights on them. You could play with them to make some of the lights your nightlight when needed.

Her ring sparkled against the light and I felt a wave of jealousy. However, I had to set it aside. There were more important things to think of like the death of the former patriarch of

our town.

Virtue walked quietly to Liam who was seated on the couch... snoring. He was really tired. She put a hand on his arm and gently roused him from sleep.

“What?” Liam asked as his eyes opened.

“Liam, darling, I’m sorry to have to tell you this, but something has happened at the hospital.”

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The Joy of Revenge

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Chapter 112

CHAPTER 112 Denial

Joy

It was dark in my office and Liam was having trouble focusing. He couldn’t see how pleased I

was.

When Jack asked me to tell Liam about Theodore Cohen, I wanted to smile and tell Jack that nothing would give me more pleasure.



Slowly, the people on our list were succumbing to their deaths. Patience was definitely a

virtue.

“What is it?” Liam asked as he sat up from the couch, rubbing the sleep from his eyes with his fingers.

\*The Sheriff called. He needs us to go to the hospital, Liam,” Jack gently said from behind me. Although I knew, I needed him to say it. The pain in his eyes made it clear, but Jack

didn’t say anything specific. I needed to hear it coming from him. I wanted him to say

Theodore was dead.

Liam rubbed his eyes. “What do you mean, Jack?”

“I don’t know how I’m going to tell you this, but the Sheriff said your father has passed. away,” Jack replied. I wanted to smile, but I pursed my lips into a frown instead.

Theodore Cohen was definitely dead! Another one bites the dust.

Liam blinked rapidly and looked up at the both of us. I could see the disbelief in his eyes.

“That’s not possible. He was supposed to be discharged this afternoon,” Liam argued.

“I don’t know what happened, Liam,” Jack said. “If you want answers, we need to go to the hospital now. The Sheriff is waiting for us.”

“I’ll go with you, Liam,” I offered, acting as the ever dutiful fiancé. Of course, I needed to be

at his side.

But in reality, I wanted to know what angle the Sheriff was looking into so the boys and I could plan accordingly. 1/4

12.00 Mon, Apr

## CHAPTER 112 Denial

| was about to tell him that he needed support, when suddenly, my office door opened and Dan and Cristos walked in. Dan turned on the lights and | noticed the frantic look on his

face.

“Liam, we have to go to the hospital. It’s all over social media. Your father had a heart attack. and died. We need to go now!”

| quickly glanced at Cristos, wondering if they had anything to with that. Knowing the Sheriff, they would want to keep it quiet while they investigated.

Liam quickly stood up and hugged me tightly, trying to gain some strength. “Virtue, you stay here with Chip, Dom and Bo. They’ll protect you, right, Chip?”

“Of course, Liam. We’ll keep an eye on her. But may | ask why she needs protection?” Cristos asked, puzzled.

“Now isn’t the right time to tell you. | need to get some answers first, then I’ll tell you,” Liam’s voice croaked with emotion. “Just stay here and I’ll call you later if | need you at the hospital, okay, Virtue?”

| nodded my head and gave him a kiss on his cheek. “I’m so sorry for your loss, Liam.” He caressed my cheek and kissed me on the forehead.

“| love you,” he whispered. “Dan... | need you to drive me. I’ll have Henry bring my car to the hospital later. Jack, you follow us in your truck.

“I’ll drive your car to the hospital, Liam,” | offered again. Liam shook his head.

“You stay here with people | can trust, okay?” Liam said and hugged me again. “I can’t afford. to lose you. Chip, I’ll leave you with Virtue. Men, let’s go.”

Jack, Dan and Liam quickly exited my office, leaving me and Cristos behind.

| sat down behind my desk while Cristos locked the door.

“That was a nice touch. Who put it on social media?” | asked, grinning.

“Dina,” he answered smiling. “We need to send a gift to Emma and Autumn. This wouldn’t be possible without them.”

“You better tell Bo to get ready. Norma Martin will be running to him for help.”

2/4

12:00 Mon, Apr 1 MG

CHAPTER 112 Denial

Of course.

Liam

As I rushed out of Virtue's, many of the townsfolk who were still there offered their sincere condolences. I nodded at them, acknowledging their kind words, not knowing what I should

say.

I was still in denial.

I had just dreamt of my father a moment ago and now he was dead. This wasn't happening.

“Liam, I just heard. I'm so sorry, man, Noah said. He was standing right outside the shop with Linda Jacobs.

Linda Jacobs... she was one person I needed to help me with my father.

“Linda, have your people meet me at the hospital, please,” I instructed.

“I will, Liam,” she answered as I walked away. As I glanced behind me, I saw the people gather to watch us leave. Jack went ahead to get to his car.

After Dan unlocked his car, I climbed in, put on my seatbelt and waited for Dan to drive. I pulled out my phone from my pocket and saw all the missed calls from the Sheriff and my father's cardiologist, but none from Ford Martin,

I explicitly told Ford Martin to keep an eye on my father and to call me if something happened. The asshole didn't even bother to message me, but my father's death was all over social media.

Who the fuck did that? Maybe he did, the dick.

It was a quiet drive to St. Elizabeth's. Once Dan entered the parking area, | jumped out.

"Liam!" He cried out startled.

"Just park the f ucking car and meet the hospital.

me inside!" | shouted, running towards the entrance of

| was angry and | wanted to pin the blame on someone. My father didn't die of a heart

3/4

12:00 Mon, Apr 1 M

## CHAPTER 112 Denial

"Liam, son, the medical examiner just arrived. | need you to give your consent," the Sheriff said as | approached him. He was standing at the entrance of the hospital with a couple of his deputies.

"Why is my father's death all over social media?" | asked angrily.

"We're trying to figure that out. | confiscated all of the nurses' and doctors' phones. I'm having the deputies go through them," he answered.

"And where is Ford Martin?" | asked.

"He's here somewhere. Why?"

"I need to speak with him."

The Sheriff's phone pinged. "The medical examiner needs your Ford after we speak to the medical examiner."

consent asap. You can talk to

| walked inside the hospital and noticed everyone was looking at me. | ignored the stares, averting my eyes to the side. | was about to push the button of the elevator when | saw Ford standing at the doorway of the ER.

The as shole!

| couldn't control myself. | rushed towards him and grabbed the cloth of his light blue

scrubs.

“What happened, Ford?! Why didn't you call me?!” | yelled in his face.

Jack pulled me off of him while the Sheriff pushed Ford away from me.

“You killed him! I'm going to make sure you rot in a cell for the rest of your life!”

Chapter Comments

Susan Wynne

hoping for a update soon

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Chapter 113

CHAPTER 113 Acceptance

Liam

Currently, | was seated in one of the antique chairs of my father's huge walk-in closet going through his collection of expensive cuff links, hoping to choose the perfect pair to go with the suit | had already chosen for him to be buried in. As | scanned each one, my eyes. suddenly filled with tears. | blinked, allowing the tears to fall down my cheeks. Since | was alone, | allowed myself to succumb to the grief that | had kept at bay. Honestly, the anguish

was feeling felt like a brick wall laying upon my bare chest.

I

This was supposed to be a happy day.

The most beautiful woman I have ever laid eyes on had accepted my proposal. She was a treasure. Extremely kind and caring. However, once I heard the bad news, all the joy I felt disappeared... replaced by an ache from the loss of a man I loved... despite all his flaws.

Ford Martin, the nurse I had entrusted my father's care to, was escorted to a conference room on the fifth floor after Jack was able to pry my fingers off of his light blue medical scrubs. The Sheriff quickly cautioned me, advising me to stay calm while they conducted their investigation. He didn't want assault charges to be brought up in case the medical examiner ruled out foul play. Honestly, I wanted to beat Ford Martin to a pulp, but the Sheriff was right. I had to keep my hands to myself. I raised my hands above my head in surrender, muttering a crude apology while I watched a terrified Ford and an elderly woman with a furious scowl on her face quickly enter the elevator with a deputy by their side.

Seeing Ford so scared gave me an immense satisfaction.

After I formally identified the corpse of my father and gave my consent for a post-mortem examination, Dan excused himself to go back to the lab in Hillcrest, stating he had a problem to fix.

"You want me to go with him?" Jack asked me as Dan exited the hospital. He sounded suspicious. I couldn't blame him.

ing an eveo

on

"No. I need you with me," I answered. "Besides, I have people at the lab keeping him... especially from that office of his where he plays gangster. Come on. I need you to escort me to Cohen Mansion. All my bodyguards are completely worthless."

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CHAPTER 113 Acceptance

Sheriff Combs, Jack and I left the hospital and drove to Prairie Hill to pick up some of my father's personal effects while we waited for the medical examiner's results.

It was hard to accept that my father was dead. But I had to force myself to face the reality that from now on, I would never see him walk the rooms or the halls of this house ever again. Never would I see him seated at the dining table, never would I hear his disapproving voice, never would I see those cold gray eyes staring back at me...

He was gone too soon.

I sobbed quietly as the realization dawned upon me. My father was no longer with me. I was now... all alone.

Yet, I also realized I was now my own man... that I was now the only authority over New

Salem.

The tears stopped as I basked in the pleasure of being the only Cohen left standing. My father wasn't here anymore to call the shots. I was now the big man in this small, pitiful

town.

I glanced at myself in the mirror and I saw myself smiling.

Finally, acceptance.

I heard footsteps and voices as my father's bedroom door opened. I quickly wiped the trail of tears from my cheeks as well as the snot from my nose and composed myself. Luckily I was able to fix myself before the double doors of my father's closet opened, revealing Sheriff Combs and Jack, both with impatient looks on their faces.

"Liam, are you done yet?" The Sheriff asked, taking the suit I had hung near the entrance. "Dr. Hughes just called. She said she's found something that suggests your father may have been murdered. Also, the media are waiting for you at St. Elizabeth's. They need you to make a brief but formal announcement regarding Theodore Cohen's passing. We need to go

back

to the hospital right away.”

As they both entered the closet, the light from the late afternoon sun came bursting in, shining on the diamond cuff links my father said were a gift from my mother. I took them out of the jewelry box and placed them gently inside a small satin bag before placing them inside my inner coat pocket..

My lips curved into a small smile. It was the perfect choice.

2/5

CHAPTER 113 Acceptance

anniversary.

My father only wore the cuff links once a year to celebrate their wedding again.

heart of hearts, I believed my parents were both happy... now that they were together

“Sheriff, there’s no doubt in my mind my father was murdered,” I said, placing the jewelry box back inside the drawer I took it out from. “I’m hoping the evidence is enough to substantiate my claim. If the evidence suggests Peter McDowell had a hand in this, I want you to start cleansing this town of all the filth he left behind. I don’t want anyone in New Salem to be associated with him. Do we understand each other?”

“I understand completely, but we do have one other problem,” the Sheriff replied, walking out into the bedroom with the suit in tow.

After I closed the drawer, I gestured to Jack to pick up the box of shoes I left on a small wooden table while I picked up a small bag packed with some of my father’s personal belongings off the floor. I followed Jack out of the closet, shut off the lights and closed the doors behind me. I planned to keep everything in its place just like how my father left it.

“What other problem?” I asked, turning to face the Sheriff. There was always a problem of some kind.



“Pete has someone working directly under him. His officer-in-charge-”

“His capo, Sheriff,” | said. “I don’t know who he is nor does Dan. | have a feeling my father

may

have had an idea who this capo is, but unfortunately, he’s dead.”

“Dan's another problem, son. He’s a soldier of the Angels of Darkness, right?”

“Yes, he is, but Dan’s loyal to me. | can vouch for him.” | pointed at the door and gestured to them to exit the room. Here we were, standing and having a casual conversation in a dead. man’s room. It felt weird.novelbin

“Liam, he’s loyal to the organization,” Jack said, finally contributing to the conversation as he followed the Sheriff out of my father’s room into the hallway. “If word gets out we are going after everyone who has ties with the Angels of Darkness, who do you think the big boss will call first? Add the fact that we don’t know the identity of Pete’s capo. He can pull the rug

doorbell in from under our feet at any time. Personally, | don’t want the bastard ringing my the middle of the night and my mom opening it only to find a gun aimed at her head. | suggest we ask Dan to call the big boss and ask who the so nofabitch is.”

| walked ahead of them and load them down to the first floor via the grand staircase of the3/5

## CHAPTER 113 Acceptance

mansion while continuing our discussion.

“Jack, you just can’t make certain demands. You have to give something to the big boss in exchange for valuable information. And | will tell you an identity of a capo will cost a pretty penny. I'll have to look into my resources first before Dan even thinks of talking to Ortiz, so | know how much | can offer her as a sign of my goodwill.”

“So, do | postpone the re-opening of the infamous Killing Fields of New Salem until you get that information?” Sheriff Combs asked as we reached the grand hallway on the first floor. | grimaced. It was part of the Cohen legacy | wanted

to keep secret. The Killing Fields was a large stretch of land owned by my family just on the other side of Prairie Hill where many of the bison of North Dakota passed through. During both my great grandfather's and grandfather's terms as mayor, New Salem was the sanctuary of the Angels of Darkness assassins. They often buried their targets there so no one would ever find them.

My father, with the helpful cooperation of the Sheriff and his deputies, used the Killing Fields to bury his sworn enemies. When they had cleaned out the town, they closed the area and placed a sign warning people not to enter due to the wandering bison in the area.

"I prefer we start as soon as possible. Pete's second in command never interferes in Pete's messes and I'm guessing once we start killing Pete's men, he'll be so scared to even try, knowing we'll kill him too," I replied. "Start with two of Pete's well-known associates living in Hillcrest. If Dan tries to get in the middle, then you know what you guys need to do."

"Are

you seriously telling us to kill Dan?" Jack asked, shocked I would even suggest it. Dan was a friend above anything else.

"If he tries anything funny," I answered gruffly. "If he doesn't, then there's no problem."

"You sure about this, son?" Sheriff Combs asked, looking at me dead in the eyes. "Once I start ripping families apart, there's no turning back."

I sniffed, taking a second to think. Better to do it all at once. It lessened the chances of one of them fleeing or talking.

"I'll ask Dan to message all of Pete's remaining men, then we strike," I replied to the Sheriff. "May this serve as a lesson. They should have thought of the consequences before they touched my father. Now that he's dead, they no longer have a bargaining chip."

"Tell Dan to tell all of Pete's men that Pete is providing a cash bonus. That will get them to

all come at the same time without any of them becoming suspicious. Schedule it for

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## CHAPTER 113 Acceptance

tomorrow evening at the lone barn near the Killing Fields,” the Sheriff instructed before opening the door of his car. | shook my head. His suggestion was all wrong.

“Let's no be so hasty. Dan might warn Pete’s men instead,” | told the Sheriff. “| propose scheduling the meet for Friday night when we usually pay our dealers. | will instruct Dan to tell them we are moving payment to the barn since Hillcrest is now a target. Anyway, the barn was our prior meeting place before Hillcrest became operational. They won’t suspect a thing.”

| noticed the uneasiness in Jack’s eyes as he nodded his head in acknowledgement to my plan. | knew what he was thinking. A massacre was a far cry from killing one single person.

| didn’t care. They killed my father. If | could accept the fact that | no longer had a father, than they could accept the consequences of their actions.

If they were on Pete’s side, then they were my enemies. And anyone against me shouldn’t be left standing.

“Fine, but you have to take part in this,” Jack muttered under his breath. He looked squeamish.

| placed a hand on his shoulder and squeezed it. Of course | wanted in.

“It will be my pleasure, Jack.”

Chapter Comments.

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## Chapter 114

### CHAPTER 114 Occupied

Joy

| sighed as | sat down behind my desk with my phone positioned in front of me, waiting for the press conference like every other person in this town. The sun was finally setting and the only other people in my shop were Dina and Cristos.

News of Mayor Cohen's press conference spread quickly throughout the town. The media, | heard, were already stationed at St. Elizabeth's ready for Liam to make his announcement. The townsfolk, who were so eager to listen to what he had to say, either went home to watch him on television or went directly to the hospital to offer their support.

After Liam left my store earlier, | noticed the crowd thin down almost immediately. When lunch time came, my store was empty except for a few demanding customers who wanted a number of alterations to suit their tastes. Luckily, the evening dresses they wanted were made by me, so | knew what to alter and how to alter the dress without ruining the fabric.

To Sebastian's amusement, Dom's was empty as well. Since both our stores were empty, it wasn't a surprise when Xavier came bustling into my shop carrying tons of food.

"Norma and her friends are organizing a vigil for Theodore at the hospital," he said as he placed the bags of food on the counter. He had changed into his usual T-shirt and jeans combo sans his favorite blue apron. Xavier couldn't stand being in pink. Sebastian chuckled while he rummaged through the bags. "Norma isn't going to like it when she finds out her son is the primary suspect for the dead person she's organizing that vigil for. She'll probably faint if Liam and the Sheriff decide to broadcast their investigation."

"Any word on what's going on at the hospital?" Xavier asked him. Sebastian shrugged his shoulders and opened his mouth to answer, but Cristos spoke up.

"Autumn says the Sheriff has confiscated their phones, each one of them are being questioned and the deputies are searching through their lockers using

their K-9 units,” Cristos enumerated to our astonishment. “Imagine... all of that being done without a warrant.”

“Police can conduct a search without a warrant just as long as they have reasonable suspicion of exigent circumstances and believe me, finding Theodore’s murderer is pressing,” Sebastian explained. “How are you communicating with Autumn anyway? Emma gave explicit instructions to refrain from messaging or even calling her.”

gave me

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## CHAPTER 114 Occupied

“Autumn has a burner phone stashed somewhere in the hospital,” Cristos answered, taking out his phone. “For someone who physically stands out in this town, she seems to get around without being seen.” Cristos tapped on his phone and handed it to Sebastian. “By the way, Dina sent me the video of Liam and Ford Martin’s little scuffle when Liam arrived at the hospital.” Sebastian and Xavier laughed while they watched the video. After they were done, Sebastian handed the phone to me so | could have a look.

When Liam grabbed Ford's shirt, | knew Liam wanted to kill him. | zoomed in on the video to get a good look at Ford, trying to remember who he was when we were children. As | continued watching the short video, | noticed a scar on his right arm and it hit me. Ford was the older boy | fought with when | caught him looking underneath my skirt at the playground.

“The Martins will soon become outcasts in New Salem,” Sebastian said, looking quite satisfied as he ate. “How's Dina doing with the footage we have of the hospital?”

“She’s done editing Emma and Autumn out from the video,” Cristos replied. “When the Sheriff watches the footage, all he’ll see is Ford heading to Theodore’s hospital room with all the necessary medications in his tray... like any other day. The evidence will surely point to him, no matter what he says to refute it. Cristos suddenly turned to me. “Virtue, | have Dina pulling all of your videos and pictures off of social media. | don’t want your parents finding out and flying here unexpectedly. It will ruin all of our plans.”

“Quick thinking,” I said, agreeing with him. There was always a chance my parents might see me on social media. I didn’t want to give my father a heart attack. I took a slice of gourmet pizza and stood up to go to my office.

“Speaking of my parents, I need to give them a call. I know they’re busy fixing that dilapidated villa I purchased for them in Italy to keep them occupied. Seems to be working. They haven’t called for three days which is a first.”

“Sure, honey. Say hi to them for me while you’re at it,” Xavier said winking.

“Don’t worry about the mess. I’ll have my staff clean it up. Anyway, my grocery store is practically deserted. I’ve already told my staff that we’ll be closing early, so they can join the vigil if

they want to.”

Once Dina was done doing her magic out in the back, she came into my shop with her fake resume to apply as my sales associate. Xavier needed her around to do tech support while I needed someone who knew how to use a gun.

Sebastian quickly taught Dina how to use my cash register before going off on his own. Since

2/5

## CHAPTER 114 Occupied

the townsfolk were all preoccupied with Theodore’s death, he decided to go and oversee some of his ‘other businesses’ which usually meant he was going to talk to De Luca or see another one of his men.

Xavier, on the other hand, had promised Norma he would go to the hospital and participate in the vigil. While he joined Cynthia’s old crew, he instructed his men to keep an eye out for Pete and told Sam to stay with Noah. After the grand opening ceremony this morning, Noah went straight to his office to meet with Lisa and Link to begin renovations on the McDowell

residence.

As for Cris Murdock, he was on sick leave according to Dan, but Sam had eyes on his house just in case Cris decides to leave the comfort of his home.

Nicole, surprisingly, was missing in action. According to Cristos, before she entered the Waldorf Hotel, he noticed the angry glint in Nicole's eyes. He said she looked like she was already planning her vengeance. Noah better watch his back.

After | had finished with the alterations in the small tailoring area in the stockroom, | went

to

my Office to see if the press conference had started. Luckily, media was still on standby at

St. Elizabeth's.

| kicked off my shoes and leaned blissfully against my chair as | waited for Liam, my fiancé..

when Cristos knocked.

"I need to go to the pub," Cristos announced. He quickly walked in and sat on the couch, yawning. Poor Cristos. He was tired. "Since Dina won't be able to handle the influx of students who will be coming in the next several days before the Spring Formal, I've hung a 'Help Wanted' sign in front of your shop. You also need someone to help you alter the gowns You can't do it all on your own."

"Ugh, you're right," | said, yawning. "I should've thought of that before opening this store. | hope | get the help I-"

We suddenly heard a chime coming from the front of my store, alerting us that someone had

s pugs

just walked in. Cristos rolled and was about to stand up to take care of it, but |

gestured to him to stay seated. Dina could handle this.

After several moments, a soft knock sounded on my door. The door opened and Dina popped her head in, her bright eyes t winking with mischief.

Dina was one of those brilliant minds that couldn't sit inside a classroom even if you taped

her to her chair. She was petite and slender half-Asian and half-Italian, with light brown.

3/5

## CHAPTER 114 Occupied

almond shaped eyes, rosy cheeks, nice flawless skin and pink thin lips. Her fine brown hair if was cut into a short pixie cut, but styled with long bangs she could twirl behind her ears she wanted to. She was wearing an asymmetrical pink top and white skinny jeans paired with high-heeled pink stilettos.

"Miss V, a Miss Nicole is here to see you," she said. I glanced at Cristos and saw him grimace. Nicole always spelled trouble. "Anyone else inside?" I asked, putting on my bunny slippers. I'm wearing flats from now on.

"No, Miss V," Dina answered, coming inside the office. "Before I told her you were here, she wanted me to give you a box and an envelope... and she's acting really strange. She keeps whispering for some reason and she keeps hiding her face with her scarf."

"She and her boyfriend covered the store with CCTV cameras and listening devices," I told her. "Flip the sign at the door and close shop. We won't be entertaining anyone else," I said, standing up from my desk and handing her the keys. "Will you be okay opening the store on your own tomorrow morning?"

"No problem, Miss V. I'll have my husband come in with me tomorrow," she said, smiling at me. I smiled back. She was so small, but so energetic.

"Come on, Chip," I gestured to Cristos. "Let's see what our unexpected visitor wants." He scowled before getting up on his feet. Unfortunately, he still needed to deal with Nicole before leaving to go to the pub.

I followed Dina into the shop and instantly saw the lone figure of Nicole in a long sleeve fitted maxi dress with blue and white stripes. She was wearing white sneakers and had a black scarf wrapped around her platinum blonde hair. When she turned to face me, that's when I noticed the big-rimmed sunglasses covering her eyes. She was trying so hard to keep herself



hidden.

Shockingly, she wasn't wearing any make-up which | thought was a better look for her. She actually had nice skin under that full face of make-up she usually puts all over her face.

"Virtue, hi," she greeted me. "I'm so sorry to bother you, but | don't have anyone else to turn. to." Her voice was barely audible against the soft sound of jazz music playing in the store.

| wanted to reprimand her... That's what you get when you bug every place in such a small town. Nowhere was safe.

"Nicole sweetheart | thought you were flying in later this evening." Cristos said from behind

## CHAPTER 114 Occupied

me.

"Chip, you're here," she said nervously. "I was hoping to speak to Virtue alone. |, uh, I..."

"You know | can keep a secret, Nicole," Chip replied gently.

"| know you can, it's just that... well, | need a favor from Virtue and maybe you won't like having your bestfriend help me," Nicole said.

"Come on," | placed an arm around Nicole. "Why don't we speak in my office?" Nicole shook her head and pulled away from me. "Please not here. Can we talk somewhere else?"

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Chapter 115

## CHAPTER 115 Box

Xavier

Night had fallen on New Salem.

I was seated in my car which was parked at the far end of the parking lot underneath some trees away from the glaring street lights... silently waiting. Cristos may know what was happening at the hospital, but I had eyes on everything else.

Max, a capo of mine, told me a certain platinum blonde was heading this way. I had him wait at the airport for Nicole's arrival and told him to follow her while Sam kept a close distance

to Noah.

Honestly, I believed Nicole and Noah were truly meant for each other. They were both trouble. But despite all of Nicole's efforts, for Noah, the feeling wasn't mutual...

He wanted Virtue for himself.

When Joy accepted Liam's proposal, I caught a glimpse of the jealousy, disbelief and pain in Noah's eyes. But when Liam exited Virtue's to go to the hospital, I saw the smug satisfaction.

on his face.

I even noticed how his eyes narrowed darkly as Liam walked away.

I suspected Noah was planning to cause trouble for the town's 'newly engaged' couple.... leading me to question how and when. Thus, I ordered Sam to tail him while I instructed Dina to prioritize the listening device Joy had planted in his house.

If anything came up, I wanted to be the first to know.

While Cristos was in Chicago, | asked Dina to check if Noah had any offshore accounts. Despite whatever Sebastian or Cristos believed, | suspected he was sitting on a large nest egg, pretending to be poor. Unfortunately, Dina couldn't find anything on Noah Jensen except for his bank account at the local bank. Sure, he had a hundred thousand dollars in his

account, which is a lot given the state of the majority of the townsfolk, but | believed Noah

had more... millions more.

| don't know what it is, but Noah just rubs me the wrong way. He's someone who | believe can't be trusted.

1/6

## CHAPTER 115 Box

"X, she's driving a vintage silver BMW," Max said through our communication devices. "She's in a blue and white dress carrying a blue tote bag. ETA about ten minutes."

"Copy, Max. Sam, what's the location of your target?" | asked.

"He's heading northbound towards St. Elizabeth's," Sam said. "Followed by the real estate agent, Lisa Murdock."

"Don't lose sight of him," | said. "Sebastian's men can't find Pete anywhere in the Bahamas. | have a strong feeling that as shole is here somewhere and Noah's going to be the one who leads us to him. Anyways, I'll be headed to the hospital in a bit. | just need to find out why Nicole is on her way to see Virtue when she should be driving to the hospital. This doesn't feel right."

"Copy that, X, Sam replied. "Holler if you need assistance. Link is headed towards you as we speak.

While | waited, | silently watched my staff as they went about their way to close up the grocery store. Although some of my employees were Blood Disciples, most of them were townsfolk and they all wanted to go to the hospital to give Liam their support.

Liam...

It took every ounce of self-restraint | had not to kill him. | don't know if he ever noticed, but Joy cringed every single time he touched her. Fine, it was hardly noticeable, but | could te

"X, she's entering the parking lot," Max suddenly said, interrupting my thoughts. | turned around and saw the unmistakable round headlights of a vintage BMW... Nicole's mother's

car.

\*Standby," | told Max. "I'll handle this."

Nicole parked in front of Virtue's, exited the car, and placed a pair of sunglasses over her eyes and a blue tote bag on her shoulders. There seemed to be an outline of a box protruding from her bag. | assumed the box was for Joy.

From where | was parked, | could clearly see the inside of the brightly lit shop through the storefront windows. Nicole entered, bowing her head while she rummaged through her bag. She took out a brown rectangular-shaped box and a white envelope from her tote and proceeded to the counter to speak with Dina while she covered her face with the blue scarf wrapped around her head.

2/6

## CHAPTER 115 Box

| quickly exited my car and headed over.

Max said when Nicole walked out into the airport earlier, he saw the anger in her eyes while she hurriedly walked outside to grab a cab.

But her

rage didn't bother him. What bothered him was the wicked smile that played on her collagen filled lips as she climbed into the cab.

Nicole was up to something and I bet her target was the one who made Noah leave her in Chicago in the first place. Whatever was in that box was bad news.

Apparently, Dina was thinking the same. Instead of receiving the box, she spoke to Nicole with her hands to her sides. I uttered a prayer hoping Dina would just tell Nicole that Joy wasn't there. But unfortunately, Dina pointed her thumb towards Joy's office before leaving

the counter.

Nicole left the box and the envelope on the counter and turned around to look at the -clothing displayed on the racks. She nodded her head appreciatively as she flicked through

each of the dresses.

I quickened my pace, keeping my eyes on her face.

After going through one rack of clothing, she pulled down her sunglasses and glanced at the box on the counter. Then, the unthinkable happened... her lips curled into a sinister smile.

That b itch!

Nicole slowly made her way to the huge mirror on the east side of the store, covering h eyes again with her sunglasses and replacing her evil smile with her poker face. That's h o

Joy

by and Cristos found her as they sauntered out to greet her.

This was my fault. Joy's shipment of CCTV cameras and monitors was delayed. I was in charge

of that.

I knocked loudly on the glass door to grab Dina's attention. Dina spun around and found me with my face against the glass. She rolled her eyes at me before slightly opening the door.

"Sorry, we're closed, Sir," Dina said, pretending not to know me. Smart.

"I'm good friends with Virtue. And that guy, Chip, cousin," 1 3/6

g over there... he's my

I

## CHAPTER 115 Box

quickly explained. "I'm Bo. I own the grocery store next door. Can I come in? I have something to ask them." Dina smiled before she swung the door wide open.

"Miss V, Mr. Bo is here for you," Dina announced. She quickly closed the door behind me and scurried back to the counter, casting a wary eye on the box.

"What are you doing here, Nicole?" I asked, pretending to act surprised.

"I just got here from Chicago and I wanted to congratulate Virtue for finally opening her store. Well, that, among other things," she answered slyly.

"I'm sorry. What I meant to ask you is why aren't you at the hospital? Everyone is either headed to St. Elizabeth's or is already there for the vigil. The press conference has probably already started and Liam must be in the middle of answering questions concerning his father's death." Nicole's eyes widened and her face paled. She looked like she was going to

faint.

She didn't know?

"Wait! Theodore is dead?!"

"Didn't anyone tell you?" I asked, puzzled. I'm actually about to head on over. I just stopped, by to ask if Chip and Virtue wanted to come with me."

"Uhm, I can't. Liam told me to stay away from the hospital," Joy said. "I'm duty-bound s I'm his fiancé. Joy raised her hand to show off that diamond of hers..

Cheap. I would have gotten her something more expensive. Joy deserved better.

We all stared at Nicole who stood rooted to the spot. She was clearly in shock.novelbin

"C-Congratulations, V-Virtue," the bitch finally spat out. "W-We'll have to talk some other time. I-I have to go to the hospital... Liam needs his friends. She

gaped at her own faux pas. “Uhm, no offense, Virtue.” Joy’s lips curved into a small smile.

“None taken, Nicole,” she replied. “Tell Liam if he needs me, all he has to do is give me a

call.”

“No problem. I will. W-Well, bye, everyone,” Nicole said, walking towards the door. But before

she could even touch the door handle, Dina called out to her.

“Miss Nicole you left your box” Dina said, pointing to the box.

4/6

## CHAPTER 115 Box

“I’ll take that,” I said, walking to the counter. Nicole waved her hands and shook her head, gesturing for me to leave the box on the counter. “You want me to leave this here?” I lifted the box off the counter. It was heavy.

What the f uck was in this thing anyway?

“Yeah. I need Virtue to give it to Noah... since, you know, they’re neighbors. Both the box and the letter are for him,” she answered, flustered.

“I heard Noah is going to the hospital. You can just give it to him there,” I said, walking over to her with the box in my hands. “Come on. I’ll help you find him. He won’t be too hard to spot in the crowd.”

She nodded her head meekly and with shaking hands reached for the box. I pretended to drop the box, wanting to see her reaction. I wasn’t disappointed.

She screamed.

I looked down at the box. In my hands was an explosive. Heavy, small and scary... so scary that it shouldn’t be in the hands of a heartless, jealous, vengeful little bitch like Nicole.

“I’m sorry,” Nicole said, composing herself. She took a couple of deep breaths. “Inside is. something very fragile.” She took the box and placed it in her bag.

"I bet," Cristos said, an angry scowl on his face. He knew what was inside the box. "Ni g Virtue's isn't a delivery service. If you want to send Noah a package, I suggest you hire a courier. Now, let's all get the hell out of here, because I'm needed at the pub. Bo, kind escort Nicole to her car. Virtue, please put some shoes on while I grab some of my things from your office. You and Dina are coming with me."

"Nicole, after you," I said, walking to the door and opening it. She sighed and with her head hung low, she exited the establishment.

We have a little bomb maker in this town. This wasn't good.

I have to do something.... I don't want Joy's car to suddenly explode.

While Nicole started her car, I ran towards mine so I could follow her to the hospital.

"Max, I need you to do something for me," I said through my coms as I turned on the ignition and drove to the exit of the parking complex right behind the vintage BMW.

5/6

## CHAPTER 115 Box

"Sure, X. What is it you need me to do?" Max asked.

"I need you to put Nicole in the hospital. Mug her, run her off the road, push her off a cliff... just use your

your imagination. I don't care what you do... Just make sure she isn't able to use her legs or better yet, her hands. That fucking bitch knows how to make an IED."

"I have something in mind, X, Sam suddenly said. "Let's give Nicole a taste of what Miss JT suffered in the hands of her rapists. We won't rape her. We'll just hurt her and make it look

like Pete did it."

That'll work.



“Call that actor who Pete hired to do the switcheroo. Offer him a million dollars to play the

Underboss.”

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Chapter 116

CHAPTER 116 Accident at the Intersection

Nicole

| was seated in my car, utterly frustrated at the turn of events as well as angry at myself for not having a plan B. | had planned this so well. | was suppose to leave the box at Virtue’s, make it appear | needed her help, then change my mind when she rejects my offer to talk somewhere else. | would instead instruct her to give the items to Noah before quickly leaving her boutique, thanking her for all her help.

Then, once she was inside her car, alone, | would detonate the bomb.

It was perfect.

| just didn’t plan for Chip or Bo to be there. Why, oh why, didn’t | manage to include them in my plans?

| hit the steering wheel with my palms before turning on the ignition of my mother’s car. D amn it! Why did those men always have to be by Virtue’s side, anyway?novelbin

| threw my sunglasses on the passenger’s seat of my car right beside my bag before driving out of the parking lot. | wanted to scream. Once again, | wasn’t

able to accomplish what | set out to do. | wanted to hurt people and make them suffer. Especially Noah...

| wanted him to feel the pain | was currently experiencing from my bleeding heart.

| quickly turned to the exit of the parking lot and noticed Virtue's red Mercedes-Benz. Hmm... | could always place the bomb underneath her car.

S hit! Why didn't | think of that before?

For now, I'll just defuse the bomb once | get home.

There will always be another day to cause mayhem.

| glanced at my rear-view mirror and saw Bo's Land Rover right behind me. For someone who usually kept to himself, all of a sudden he was so outgoing. Before Virtue, he was quiet and tight-lipped, although very polite. But now, he was off dating older women, socializing and organizing events.

| grimaced remembering the arrogant tone in Bo's voice from earlier. It was clear Chip had,

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## CHAPTER 116 Accident at the Intersection

Noah...

| scowled angrily as | recalled the confrontation we had last night.

After his maddening display at dinner, Noah excused himself to use the restroom to compose himself. | left Dan and Chip at the private dining room to check if he had calmed down. | found him outside, speaking to someone on his phone.

"I'm not at home and no, I'm not at the pub either. I'm in Bismarck for business. I'll just see you when | get back, okay? | promise. I'll probably be back later tonight. No, not tonight. I'll see you tomorrow," | overheard Noah say before he turned around to find me standing

baking him. "I gotta go. I'll call you back in a bit!" He pocketed his phone and ran his fingers

through his hair. "What? What is it this time, Nicole?"

"I just wanted to see if you've calmed down," I answered. "Noah, you know you don't have the power to take Liam down. Even if you tell everyone he raped Joy Taylor, no one is going to

believe you."

"I was calm, but you just had to bring it up again," he replied, exasperated. "I don't care if no one believes me because what I know is the truth. Right, Nicole?" Noah asked, his chocolate brown eyes glistening with malice. "Stop playing innocent, Nicole. After all these years, never once had I ever asked you about that night." I wanted to kick myself. I shouldn't have said

anything.

"Stop it, Noah. Let's forget about all of this and enjoy Chicago," I pleaded. "Anyway, that's all in the past. To me, it never happened." He grabbed me tightly by the arms and shook me.

"But it did happen, you cunt," he said through clenched teeth. "You honestly think I don't know what you did?! Oh, I got all the little details from Abigail. She said you and Lisa were the ones who lured Joy into the boy's gym. I can't speak for Lisa, but I definitely know you knew what was going to happen to her. Tell me, how much did he pay you, Nicole? How

much?!"

"Five grand," I spat out. "He gave me five grand. All I needed to do was get Joy to the boy's

gym.

And no,

I didn't know they were going to do that to her. Now, let go of me!" He pushed me away, utterly disgusted.

"You're just as guilty as Liam," he said, his voice low. "I want you stay away from me. I have

plans and you aren't included in those plans."

“Oh yeah? And who’s included in your plans? Virtue?”

2/5

“She doesn’t concern you,” he answered dismissively.

“She doesn’t? | have eyes, Noah. I’ve seen how you look at her,” | said angrily. “Let’s not forget the things you said to Chip at dinner... that honorable display of yours was because you want her.” | laughed at him like he was a bad joke. “She’s out of your league, Noah. She’s better off with Liam rather than you who’s barely a carpenter.”

“Ain’t that right, Nicole? I’m barely a carpenter? Oh, | get it. What you mean to say is you’re out of my league too,” he pointed out, shrugging his shoulders. “I’m guessing you’re old enough to find your own way home, because you and I... we’re over. You get that? We’re over!” He picked up his purchases off the sidewalk and turned, leaving me. “I’m heading to the airport and taking whatever flight there is back to Bismarck.”

“Sure, go run home to Virtue. | bet she’s just as disgusted with you as you are with me!” | screamed after him. He paused and slowly turned around to face me.

“You don’t know anything about Virtue, Nicole. But this | can say... Virtue isn’t a slut who has to sleep her way to get what she wants unlike someone | know,” he uttered.

“Fuck you, Noah! You and I... we’re the same. You sleep with anyone too. You’re even sleeping with that troll Sarah Hughes,” | spat out. “One day, when you least expect it, | swear, I’m going to cut you penis off!”

He quickly closed the distance between us and shoved his face right in front of mine. As | stared into his angry eyes, | suddenly felt his hand against my throat.

“You shouldn’t even bother going back to New Salem, Nicole,” Noah murmured angrily. “Because if you do, I’m going to squeeze the life right out of you.” After he uttered those words, his hand tighten around my throat, making me choke. | struggled against him, trying to wriggle my way out of his grasp.

Suddenly, he kissed me one last time and quickly pushed me away from him. | bent down and coughed, catching my breath. | lifted my eyes to look at him

and saw him smiling down at me... so eerily. | couldn't believe the man standing in front of me was the same man | desperately loved.

"Before | go, | just want to offer you a piece of advice. Keep those legs closed, Nicole. Every house I've been to in New Salem smells like your pu ssy juice. You probably squirt all over

their walls."

The nerve!

3/5

| picked up one of my bags and threw it at him. He laughed at my reaction, then spun around to hail a cab.

The sudden sound of a car honking behind me made me jump. The light at the intersection. had turned green. | sighed. | was so absorbed in my thoughts, | didn't even notice the change of the traffic light.

| pressed on the gas, slowly accelerating through the intersection, and noticed the traffic up ahead. The hospital was just several blocks from where | was. | decided | should just park at the convenience store and walk the rest of the way there to avoid traffic. | was a

already in the middle of the intersection when | noticed a pair of headlights coming

right at me.

It's true that everything goes in slow motion when you're facing death. | turned the steering wheel and stepped on the gas, desperately maneuvering my car away, but the speeding truck hit the back of my car.

Never drive angry, my mother would always remind me. Clearly, mothers know best. | was so angry after | left Virtue's store, | forgot to put my seatbelt on..

| flew out of the windshield, landing with a thud on the pavement while my mother's car spun round and round, bouncing like a ball against the concrete road. After one last somersault in the air, it finally hit the post of the nearest street light and exploded.

| couldn't move. Every place in my body hurt. It was excruciatingly painful to even think

My eyelids suddenly felt heavy. | was about to close my eyes and drift off to sleep when | heard footsteps walking towards me above the throbbing sound echoing throughout my aching head.

"| need an ambulance at the intersection of Main Street and Prairie Avenue. There's been an accident. There's a victim lying in the middle of the street, female, possible spine and head injury," the man said calmly before pausing. "Of course, | won't move her. Just tell the EMTS to hurry." | tried to move my eyes to the direction of his voice, but even that was painful.

No, I'm not going to die. | need to live to get back at Noah. This was all his fault.

"Nicole, | called an ambulance. | can't move you, but | can keep you warm. I'm going to put a blanket on top of you okay? And whatever you do, don't close your eyes. | need you to focus on my voice or anything that can give you comfort. Hang on, Nicole. Help is on its way."

4/5

## CHAPTER 116 Accident at the Intersection

| tried to focus on my surroundings, but everything nearby was a blur. | opted to speak. It parted my lips to ask the man's name, but | couldn't form the words. | finally decided to just stare up at the night sky and watch the stars twinkle above me. | was determined to keep my eyes open... like a good little girl.

I saw one star seemingly winking at me as | imagined using a chainsaw to hack bits and pieces off of Noah's body. The pleasure | felt made the pain disappear.

Focus on anything that can give you comfort...

| focused on the image of Noah's blood staining my hands...

It gave me hope.

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Chapter 117

### CHAPTER 117 Hit and Run

Xavier

| watched in horror as the delivery truck plowed through the intersection aimed at one car

and one car alone.

| may have told Max to run her off the road, but | didn't order him to kill her. | just wanted her to be admitted to the hospital with a broken leg or maybe a couple of broken ribs, but | didn't intend for her to die...well, not just yet.

Sure, she did something s stupid... She targeted Joy, but that was to get back at Noah.

Nicole was Noab's kryptonite...

It seemed Nicole would go to great lengths to hurt Noah. | believed she was the one who would help me take him down... After she had the time to cool off and think things through.

Luckily, Link came out without a scratch. He was in a white Audi SUV, driving alongside Nicole's BMW when the truck sped towards them. He was able to veer away and stop just as

the truck hit Nicole's car.

The BMW bounced up and down like a huge basketball against the hard concrete before exploding against a street light. "Max, you seeing this?" | asked through our coms. He was a few cars behind me.

“Affirmative, X,” Max answered. “It doesn’t look like it was an accident.” He was right.

Obviously, Nicole had become someone's problem and that someone put her on his hit list...

Which raises the inevitable question, who?

It couldn’t have been Liam. He valued his friends. His only beef was with Pete.

She seemed to be close friends with Dan although Cristos mentioned she annoyed him in a

way.

Jack was like Liam. He also valued his friends. He’d kill for them, but I doubted if he would

## CHAPTER 117 Hit and Run

That left me with only three men on the top of my head. The notorious underboss Pete, the ex-boyfriend Noah and the sadistic Cris.

Fortunately for Nicole, this attempt on her life made her a valuable asset to me.

She needed to survive.

up and

“I noticed when we were waiting for the light to turn green, the truck had its hood.

the driver had his head stuck underneath like he had car trouble. He was gesturing to the

cars behind him to drive ahead,” I said, as I quickly drove my car off to the side. I needed to

get to the driver of that truck.

I took off my seatbelt and exited the car.



“Maybe the truck driver was stalling purposely.... waiting for her,” he replied. “X, I’ll drive ahead and park my car at the convenience store. Holler if you need me.”

I ran out to the middle of the intersection and saw Link on his phone, walking towards a lone female body in a blue and white dress lying with her back against the cold hard pavement. Her legs and arms were splayed out and she wasn’t moving.

“I need an ambulance at the intersection of Main Street and Prairie Avenue. There’s been an accident. There’s one victim lying in the middle of the street, female, possible spine and head injuries,” I heard him say. “Of course, I won’t move her, just tell the EMTs to hurry.” He pocketed his phone and quickly walked towards me. “She flew out through the windshield her car. I’m guessing she didn’t have a seatbelt on.”

“How is she?” I asked.

“She’s conscious,” he answered. I heaved a sigh of relief.

“You deal with her,” I told him. “I’m going to go and have a small chat with the driver of that truck.” He nodded his head.

“I have a blanket in my car,” he said. “The operator told me to keep her warm, but not to move her.”

“Sure, keep her comfortable,” I said, nodding my head. “Don’t let anyone else near her until the paramedics arrive. And I need you to call our doctors. If it’s possible, I want her transferred to another hospital.”

“I’m on it, Bo,” Link said, before running back to his car to grab a blanket for Nicole

2/6

## CHAPTER 117 Hit and Run

I dashed towards the truck and saw a man emerge from the driver’s side. He was walking unsteadily, rubbing his forehead with his fingers. He was of average height, dark hair and tanned skin, with a mole on his right cheek. He was wearing dark blue coveralls and black

boots.

He was someone I've never seen around town before.

"Hey, you!" | yelled as | approached. He raised his head to look at me, the shock apparent in his dark eyes. He lowered his hand from his forehead and pointed at himself. "Yes you! What the f u c k, man! Didn't you see your light was red?" | asked angrily. Instead of answering me, he turned around and hurriedly walked away from me.

"Don't you walk away from this!" | yelled after him. He didn't stop. Instead, he bolted. "Stop him! He's trying to get away!" | yelled to anyone who could hear me. However, everyone was preoccupied. It was all up to me.

Thank goodness | had changed into my sneakers.

| chased after him as he ran across the intersection towards the direction of the hospital. He apparently knew there was crowd gathering there.

"Max, | have a dark haired man in dark blue coveralls headed towards you," | said, panting as | ran. The f u c k e r was fast. "Copy that, X," Max said. "I'm across the street from you," Max answered, "and | have eyes the target."

| glanced to the right and saw Max walking casually towards the driver who was desperately trying to reach the crowd. The assembly of people were so near that | could hear them chanting prayers for Theodore Cohen.

Just before the driver could enter the dense mob through a gap between a group of people, Max quickly positioned himself in front of him and with one fluid move, struck the man in the neck, right at the Adam's apple.

The driver fell back, clutching his neck while gasping for air. He tried to call out to the people, gesturing for them to help him, but his pleas were ignored.

Max quickly pulled him up, twisting his arm around his back. The driver howled in pain, but his cries were drowned out by the cheers and chants coming from the townsfolk.

3/6

CHAPTER 117 Hit and Run

| stopped underneath the trees along the sidewalk, away from the street lights, to catch my breath. Without loosening his hold on the man's arm, Max pushed him towards me. Fortunately, we were well hidden in the darkness.

| patted him down, looking for his wallet or a phone. | found his wallet in his back pocket and his phone in a pocket up front. | pocketed the phone before searching for any

identification.

"It says here your name is Miguel Hernandez," | said. "Born in Mexico City, thirty-eight years old, current address is in Houston, Texas. What are you doing all the way in North Dakota, Miguel?" | waited for his answer, but he refused to open his mouth.

Max pulled on his arm. "Answer him or I'll break your arm!"

"| was called to fulfill a promise," he cried out.

"A promise to whom?" | asked.

"| can not tell you," he replied. "I am sworn to secrecy."

This asshole was a member of the Angels of Darkness!

"Get him out of here," | told Max. "I want you to find out everything he knows. I'll go back to

the intersection and tell everyone | lost him in the crowd. You know what that means."

"That means you and | are going to be best friends, amigo," Max said, smiling. "And | can promise you, we are going to have lots of fun together. Later, Bo."

| ran back to the intersection, thankful the paramedics and the firemen were already there. Surprisingly, Jack was also there, overseeing everything.

"Undersheriff, oh thank God, you're here," | said, catching my breath.

"I chased after the driver who hit Nicole's car, but | lost him in the crowd. He's around five foot eight or maybe nine, dark hair, tanned skin, a mole on his cheek. He looked maybe around mid or late thirties wearing dark blue coveralls like a mechanic. How's Nicole, by the way?"

“She’s over there. EMTs are prepping her up before they drive her to the hospital. | already got a statement from your attorney. | need to get a statement from you, Bo,” Jack said. | nodded my head. It appeared Jack was all business. Of course, he had a lot on his plate at the

moment.

“|

was dri

driving behind her... heading towards the hospital. When the light turned green and 1/5

## CHAPTER 117 Hit and Run

her car didn’t budge, | h onked my horn to get her to move. | actually regret doing that now,” | said sheepishly. Jack patted my shoulder.

“This wasn’t your fault, Jack said. “So you were behind Nicole in that lane. Where was this

truck?”

“Over there,” | pointed to the left side. “While we were waiting for the light to turn green, | remember seeing the driver was outside of his vehicle checking the engine. Seemed like he was having car trouble or something. Anyway, one second, the truck looked like it was having trouble starting. The next, it was in the middle of the intersection heading straight

towards Nicole.”

“And the driver fled the scene?” Jack asked.

“Yup. | confronted him and asked if he had seen that his light was red, but instead of answering me, he ran. | chased after him, but | lost him in the crowd.”

“Thanks, Bo, that’s all | need for now. I’ll radio in the description of the driver and give all the information you gave me. This is now a hit and run investigation,” Jack said.

“Is it okay if | go and check up on Nicole now?” asked. He smiled.

“Sure, Bo. It’s nice to know Nicole has friends she can count on,” Jack replied before walking

to his car.

The sounds of sirens echoed all around me. The EMTs had placed a neck brace around

Nicole’s neck and had securely strapped her in a stretcher before moving her into the

ambulance.

| walked up to a female EMT who was talking to Link and coughed to grab her attention. | had to stop myself from smiling. It was Autumn | forgot she was a Nurse Paramedic.

“How is she?”

“From my initial assessment, she has a fractured leg, fractured wrist and a broken collar

bone. Vitals are stable and she’s conscious. We’ll check for any head or spinal injuries once she’s in the hospital,” she answered. “Honestly, it could’ve been worst. She’s one lucky girl.”

“How can | have her transferred to another hospital?” | whispered.

“She needs to have an injury like Abigail’s and she has to have her next of kin or family doctor sign for the transfer.” she said. “This is the reason why Abigail can’t be transferred. 5/6

CHAPTER 117 Hit and Run

Her mother won't authorize it.”

“Got it. I'll speak to Ms. Davis and hope she can help me transfer her out of here. Thanks for your help.”

“No problem. Well, | gotta go. The docs are already waiting for her. They probably see her as a great distraction from all the trouble the hospital is in. In case you didn’t know, the mayor is suing the hospital for his father’s death.”

Link and I waved goodbye as the ambulance rushed off. Luckily, no one else was hurt from

the crash.

“I gotta make a pit stop at the pub, so I need you to follow her, Link. Present yourself as the family’s attorney,” I instructed. “Also, I need you to draw up a Power of Attorney making you Nicole’s guardian. I heard that Ms. Davis was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer’s. If the family doctor won’t sign the transfer, I want you to do it, I instructed.

Got it,” he said. “I called our doctors, by the way. One is flying in tonight to make an assessment. While the doc makes her assessment, I’ll have the papers printed out ready for

Ms. Davis-”

The sudden sound of my phone ringing interrupted him. I pulled it out and saw the name

Dom on the screen.

“What-”

“I need your help. I’m at Pete’s mansion on Huff Hills and there’s a team of mercenaries who’ve entered the compound,” he said..

For the love of God...

“I’m on my way.”

Chapter Comments

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Chapter 118

## CHAPTER 118 Huff Hills

Sebastian

There wasn't any good news coming in from the team of men | had sent to the Bahamas.

When | called earlier, they informed me there was no sign of Pete McDowell at any of the largest densely populated islands. To widen the search and cover more area, my men decided to split up, each one assigned to visit a designated area.

The Bahamas had thirty inhabited islands...

And | only sent five men to conduct the search. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack.

This was a huge problem. None of us had a clue to where Pete was.

And we were running out of time. The Spring Formal was next week..

to

Dina was going through all the feed from airports, bus terminals and train stations within the Central States, hoping to find Pete through her facial recognition software. Cristos was following the news on the series of sexually assaulted exotic dancers, waiting for another pop up so he could triangulate a location. The most recent victim was a woman in a town near the North Dakota and Minnesota border. Cristos believed Pete was rounding up all his subordinates and allies in his territory, making Cristos suspect a war was brewing.

Xavier, on the other hand, said he was keeping tabs on someone he believed may lead us Pete, but didn't mention anything else. He said if he found something, anything, he promised he would tell us, but not until then.

As for me, all | had was the information Marla gave me. Since De Luca was back in town, | asked him to accompany me and check out the McDowell mansion up on Huff Hills before heading over to the cabin at Red River.

It was reckless not to tell Xavier and Cristos my plans, but I wanted answers right away.

As they say, "If you want things done properly, you have to do it yourself."

I intended on getting the information we needed... for Joy's sake.

Since the McDowell residence in New Salem was cleaned out before Link could even purchase the house, I figured it was possible there might be some things at Huff Hills or at that cabin along the river that could point us at the right direction. CHAPTER 118 Huff Hills

I felt lucky. Theodore's death was a success. I believed I could accomplish one more feat before the day was over.

De Luca and I arrived at the foot of Huff Hills in a black SUV, dressed in our tactical gear, just as the sky grew dark, with the last of the sun's rays disappearing from the horizon. We parked several blocks away from the lonely mansion sitting atop the highest hill and decided to hoof it the rest of the way to do away with the chance of being heard or seen.

All the lights inside the old gothic mansion were off. The only light illuminating the massive compound was an orange hued bulb at the front porch.

From afar, the mansion reminded me of one of those old haunted houses resting atop a spooky mountainside.

According to a website, the Huff Hills mansion originally was owned by a family ancestor of the Taylors. The man made his money growing wheat and was said to own prime farmland

from here to New Salem.

Undoubtedly, the Taylors were once the richest in North Dakota up until the Cohens came.

Although the mansion's structure was old, it looked well-kept. The front door, walls and shutters had a new coat of paint on them while the lawn was cut, the bushes around the porch area were neatly trimmed and the grounds were swept clean.



There were no cars parked on the paved driveway nor were there any security roaming

around, not even a dog

As we approached the tall black iron gates to the estate, I noticed the gates were chained together with a huge silver padlock. "This padlock and chain look new," De Luca whispered as he bent down on one knee and picked the lock.

Whoever was here just left. That gave me a bad feeling.

I turned around to survey the dense forest in front of the house and I suddenly felt uneasy.

Pete might be expecting us.

I was about to tell De Luca that we should just come back another time, but he had already entered the estate, swinging the gates free of the thick chains, so I could pass through.

2/6

## CHAPTER 118 Huff Hills

What the hell... If Pete was inside, I'll just kill him. Problem solved.

"I don't see any CCTV cameras in the area. Do you think the house has an alarm inside?" De

Luca asked.

"It probably does. We need to go through the front to check. I'll shoot the light out. Ready

tools to pick the lock on the front door," I said.

your

"Copy," he replied.

Crouching low, we quickly crept towards the porch. I took my gun out from its holster, screwed on a silencer and aimed for the light.novelbin

The shattered glass from the bullet hitting the bulb made a loud enough sound.

I gestured to De Luca to stop moving. The noise could have alerted anyone inside. If there was someone inside, we would definitely see some movement. Fortunately, nothing.

I gestured to De Luca to proceed to the front door. He hurriedly went up the steps and took

out his tools to pick the lock.

While he focused on unlocking the door, I took out my jamming device and turned it on. If the house had a wireless alarm system, the signal, which would supposedly alert the police, would be blocked. If it wasn't a wireless alarm system, then we had exactly thirty second cut the phone line.

"Alright," De Luca said, sliding a neodymium magnet along the door. "Now, I just need a magnet to unlock the top lock." After he heard the unmistakable click of the lock, De Luca slowly turned the doorknob and slightly opened the door, looking closely for some tripwire. Then, with a smug smile, he swung the door wide open. "After you, sir."

I swiftly entered using a small flashlight to illuminate my surroundings. I saw a characteristic red flash of a security panel. It was a wired house alarm.

I followed the line, found the wire to the landline and spliced the wires with a pair of Lineman's pliers. Once that was done, I opened the security panel and took out its battery source. The blinking red light disappeared instantly.

I quickly turned off my jamming device. I needed a signal for my phone.

"What do you want to check first?" De Luca said.

3/6

## CHAPTER 118 Huff Hills

"There must be an office in this place," I said. "Let's look for it and search in there. If it isn't on this floor, we'll go upstairs."

We flashed our flashlights around as we quietly roamed through the first floor of the house. The furniture was covered with white linens while the rugs laying on the hardwood floors

were covered in plastic.

The kitchen was immaculate. | went over and checked the sink. There were no dirty dishes.

and the sink itself was dry. That was a good sign.

“Sink’s dry. Means no one has used the sink recently. Come on. Let’s go over there. | saw a

door to the left of the staircase.”

We quickly left the kitchen and headed to the direction of the staircase where | had seen the door. | tried the doorknob and the door opened.

chair | was right... it was an office. An empty office. Only a wooden desk and single wooden was inside. De Luca rushed towards the desk and began opening its drawers one by one. | surveyed the room and looked closely at the light switch and walls. When Xavier broke into the coroner’s house, he said the coroner’s files were hidden behind a wall which swung open by pressing a button underneath the light switch.

There was no button underneath the light switch. | ran my fingers along the walls. There were no indentations. | checked the floors for scuff marks. Nothing. This room didn’t have

secret panel.

“| found something,” De Luca suddenly said showing me sheets of crumpled paper.

“Where did you find that?” | asked.

“They forgot to empty the trash, De Luca said, pointing at a trash bin underneath the desk. “Anyway, this is a print out of an itinerary for a flight from Texas to Chicago under a name Luis Villegas. This was dated yesterday.”

“Another one of Pete’s aliases | gather,” | said.

"This is strange," he murmured, puzzled. "My asset at the FBI told me the capo who fled from Texas was a man named Luis Villegas."

"There's no one in New Salem by that name," I said, knowing that for a fact.

"He could've changed his name." De Luca said.

4/6

## CHAPTER 118 Huff Hills

"Even then... this is the Mexican mob we're talking about," I reasoned. "He'd definitely stick. out in New Salem just like Pete. I haven't met anyone who looks Hispanic unless he went

under the knife."

The sound of screeching tires made us both turn our flashlights off. I walked out of the room towards the living room window and peered outside.

A dark van had stopped in front of the gate. Four men walked out... all of them... armed.

S hit!

I took out my phone and dialed. I had to call Xavier. Since the backyard opened to a cliff, there were only two ways out... Through the gate or over the tall concrete fence.

"What's-"

"I need your help. I'm at Pete's mansion on Huff Hills and there's a team of mercenaries who've entered the compound," I quickly explained, pausing as I heard the unmistakable sounds of sirens on Xavier's end.

What was going on in New Salem?

"I'm on my way," Xavier said. "How many are there?"

"Four," I answered, peeking through the window again. The four men were huddled together while they prepped themselves. They all had vests on which meant I had to shoot them

the head to

kill them.

“They're the welcoming committee. Rig the entrances with explosives. That'll take a couple off your back,” Xavier instructed. “ETA twenty minutes, unless I get caught speeding. Since Mandan is closer, I'll alert the men and send them to your location. And Dom, wear your

earpiece.”

After hanging up, I opened the backpack I brought... packed by Xavier himself. Inside a clear pouch was some semtex and in a black case were charges and detonators. Easy peasy.

“De Luca, shield yourself behind the kitchen counter. The only way they'll be getting inside.

is through the windows. Aim for their heads.” De Luca took the safety off his gun and readied

his ammo.

“Time for some target practice on live bait.”

5/6

## CHAPTER 118 Huff Hills

I molded a small amount of semtex and stuck it on the front door, inserting a charge. I did the same for the back entrance and handed De Luca the detonator, instructing him to detonate when they twist the doorknob.

Armed with the detonator for the explosive I stuck on the front door, I went back to the living room window to check on our guests. They were casually walking across the paved driveway, looking quite pleased.

I smiled and positioned myself behind the couch.

Let the games begin.

Chapter Comments.

Susan Wynne

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Chapter 119

CHAPTER 119 Saving Sebastian

Xavier

| was

as speeding through the highway like my life depended on it. | didn't have to change in New Salem, so | sent word to the Blood Disciples in Mandan to have my provisions waiting

for me in Bismarck.

After instructing our men in Mandan, | called Cristos.

"I'm currently on my way to Bismarck. Dom called me for help," | said.

"What do you need?" Cristos asked. This is what | loved about the guys. We were always in

sync.

"I need you to send me a satellite image as well as a blueprint of the mansion at Huff Hills straight away," I replied as I drove. Thank God there wasn't any traffic.

"Sure thing," Cristos said. "Sending now." My phone pinged, notifying me the data I

requested had arrived. "Do you need us to—"

"No. Pete may have someone watching Virtue's every move," I said, cutting him off. "He's somewhere close. I can sense it. Right now, the best thing for you and her is to stay in New Salem and stick together. But I do need Dina. Have Lou pick her up." "Dina's already on the phone with Lou," Cristos said. "Virtue and I will be at the pub until all

of this is over."

"Do not leave Virtue's side, Chip. Whatever you do, guard her with your life," I instructed. "And make sure Dina has an earpiece. I need to communicate with her."

"Copy that," Cristos said before hanging up.

After exiting the highway into Bismarck, I stopped at the nearest gas station. I instructed one of my men to meet me there. I couldn't bring my car. Someone from New Salem would easily recognize me. Plus, I needed to change.

As always, waiting for me was a white service van. It was a good disguise if ever I needed to stop and install a camera.

I opened the back doors of the van, hopped in, and began undressing. Everything I needed./7

## CHAPTER 119 Saving Sebastian

From the gas station, we sped through the city to the looming hills which housed several of the affluent people of Bismarck. Pete's mansion was located near the top of the highest hill which was a great vantage point if I were inside, but a huge problem for me outside. I needed to find higher ground.

Adjacent to Pete's mansion was another sprawling mansion about a quarter of a mile away. If I could just get on top of the roof, I could get a good view.

Time to call Dina.

"Yep?" She greeted me.

"Location?" I asked.

"Sitting behind a speeding white van with all the hardware and software I need.

"Excellent. First, I need you to cut all CCTV footage from the whole area of Huff Hills," I said. I heard her mumble 'okay' followed by the distinct sound of her fingers tapping on her keyboard. "Then, I need you to call the people at the Clark Residence and tell them to leave their house. Check if they use gas to cook. If they do, say your system has detected a leak and they need to evacuate the premises."

There was a whole lot of clicking and mumbling before she replied.

"Yep, they use gas," Dina said. "I've hacked into their security system and monitored

by CCTV. I'll call you once they're out."

"Good and make it quick," I said. "I need that house. Once I get Sebastian out, I'm

up on top of their roof and see who comes after. Tell them to stay out for at least several hours. And Dina put on your earpiece. No need to call, just speak to me through coms

"Alrighty," she said and hung up.

"Our men are already at the foot of the hills," my driver said as I got off the phone with Dina.

"How many?" I said, putting on my earpiece.

"Three groups of five. Chef is leading them," he said chuckling. I smiled. Chef hated guns, but loved knives. I decided to get in contact with him.



“Chef, come in. This is X,” | said through our coms.

2/7

## CHAPTER 119 Saving Sebastian

“Have you and our men intercept. We need to draw them outside,” | replied.

“Copy.”

| glanced at my driver. “Speed up.

At the foot of the hills, we sped upward, swerving our way through the slopes. | took out my binoculars and noticed smoke coming from the house. Sebastian rigged the house with explosives which meant the two cars heading towards him must be the cavalry.

As we got closer, | could already hear the gunshots. | switched coms to speak with Dina.

“Dina, divert all 911 calls from this area,” | said.

“Already did,” Dina said. Good girl.

“And has the Clark family left their house yet?” asked while putting my backpack on and placing the strap of my sniper rifle over my shoulder.

out The

“They're scrambling gunshots are scaring the shit out of them.” novelbin

“Of course,” | replied. “Now, for your specialty. | need you to cause a black out.” She giggled.

“Power grid will be offline in three... two... one,” she counted down.

All the lights from all the homes and buildings in the area went out including all the street lights. | readied my night vision goggles. It was pitch black outside.

| tapped my driver's shoulder once | saw the spark of lights from the gunfire. “Stop here. Park the van in the forest and if anyone else comes, inform us.” | opened the back door and jumped out.

| lowered my night-vision goggles over my eyes.

“S, what's your status?” | asked through coms.

“Alive. But there are several men shooting at us from outside,” he answered. “One is hidden among the bushes at the front porch and there are two at the back.”

| moved my head from side to side and cracked my neck muscles. Time for me to go save Sebastian.

3/7

## CHAPTER 119 Saving Sebastian

| dashed through the forest heading towards the sound of gunfire until | reached a clearing near the cars of my fellow Blood Disciples. | heard a bullet whizz by and decided to shield

behind a huge tree from the ensuing gunfight.

mys

Obviously, Pete's men came prepared with their night-vision goggles. | could tell because their aim was still pretty good.

It was time to make things interesting.

First, a distraction.

Dina, | need the power back on in this sector and this sector alone,” | said through my communication device while | took out my military gas mask from my backpack. | took off my night vision goggles and placed the mask over my head.

“You never make things easy, do you, be back on

X?” Dina said. “All units standby. Power will

in three, two, one...”

The streetlights fronting the gates of Huff Hills mansion suddenly came back on causing everyone was stupi

tupid Pete's men to howl from the glare. | counted seven of them. Luckily for us, one enough to come out of hiding while removing his goggles. The Blood Disciples shot at him from all directions. One down.

His teammates quickly aimed their weapons at us and began shooting like a bunch of cr lu natics trying to hopelessly avenge their comrade's death. Apparently, they had a lot

ammo...

But did they bring masks?

Time to find out.

| took out a smoke grenade from a side pocket of my bag.

"Units, I'm popping smoke," | warned. When | called them earlier, | told them to bring a list of provisions, one of the items a gas mask.

Still shielded by the tree, | popped the canister open and threw it underneath one of the cars blocking the gates.

Smoke quickly filled the air. Without masks, the hired guns quickly moved away from the smoke, coughing. A few came out with their hands above their heads, in an act of surrender.

4/7

## CHAPTER 119 Saving Sebastian

"Approach with caution," | instructed my team, taking my gun out and walking towards the one who was closest to me. He was on his hands and knees coughing. Using the butt of my gun, | hit him on the back of the head rendering him unconscious. We'll take this one in for questioning.

From the corner of my eye, | saw one of his buddies desperately trying to aim his gun at me while wiping his eyes on his sleeves. | quickly raised my gun and shot him in the head. Never hesitate. Two down.

"X, we got this," Chef said. | glanced at his direction and saw the four other hired professionals already lying on the ground. "Search their pockets and their cars," | instructed, then pointed to the one | had knocked out. "Keep this

one alive for questioning and kill the rest.” | gestured to Chef. “Chef, you’re coming with me.”

The gray smoke was clearing up a bit as we entered the gates.

“S, we’ve entered the compound. Standby for rescue,” | said, yanking Chef to a nearby tree at the sound of sudden gunfire. As we took cover, | pointed to the lone shooter hiding in the bushes surrounding the porch.

He nodded his head, gestured he would be going the other direction and took out a knife. | nodded my head in understanding. He needed a distraction.

“Hurry, X. I’m wounded,” Sebastian said, coughing.

F uck!

“Dina, contact HQ at Mandan and tell the Doc to have the infirmary ready. We’ll be there in ten minutes give or take,” | said through coms. Doc used to have a clinical practice until he was sued for malpractice. Now, he treats us scumbags instead. “Got it.”

After removing my mask, | moved to another huge tree which was a bit closer to the porch. | aimed my gun at the flower pot above the shooter’s head and shot a

at it.

Instead of aiming inside the house, his gunfire was now redirected at me. He was using a powerful assault rifle. | could hear the bark of the tree cracking with every shot he made.

While he was busy shooting the tree, | screwed on my silencer. All we needed to do was wait?

CHAPTER 119 Saving Sebastian

until he ran out of ammo.

Suddenly he stopped. | peeked around the trunk of the tree, aiming my gun towards the shooter. However, Chef got to him first. | watched with satisfaction as the asshole fell to the ground with a knife stuck at the back of his head.

“Chef, there are two more out back, | said through coms.

"I'll take care of those as sholes," Chef said. "You tend to Domenico."

I ran towards the huge gaping hole at the front of the house, crouching low. Aside from the shooter with the knife behind his head, there was another laying on the ground. Before entering the house, I shot him in the head. Just needed to make sure he was dead.

"S, where are you?" I whispered.

"Kitchen," he replied, then paused as a bullet whizzed by him. "Hurry."

I silently prayed Sebastian wasn't badly wounded.

Boss Domenico would definitely catch the first flight here and kill me himself if anything

bad were to happen to his one and only son.

I quickly crept towards the back of the house, making my way to the black and white marb

kitchen island.

For an old house, the inside was modern with an open floor plan. I was traversing the din area and was just about to reach the kitchen side of the island when the sounds of heavy footsteps on the wooden deck of the backyard made me take cover against the living side.

They were like cockroaches. There were so many of them.

I could hear Sebastian's labored breathing and the scuff sounds-from his shoes as he struggled to move away from the owners of those footsteps.

I needed to come up with a plan.

"Who are you?" A man asked. I turned my head to peek around the corner and noticed the night vision goggles over his eyes.

I moved my head back and scanned the dining area for a light switch.

6/7

CHAPTER 119 Saving Sebastian

I smiled.

| love it when a plan comes together.

Chapter Comments.

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Chapter 120

CHAPTER 120 Basement

Xavier

In a squatting position, | waddled quietly to where the dimmer was.

He was a huge mo fo with an assault rifle and a companion behind him, so | needed to time

things right.

| had my gun ready. All | needed to do was reach for the light switch.

“Who are you?” The man asked, slowly moving forward, his assault rifle aimed downward at

Sebastian.

“No one, | heard Sebastian’s curt answer and his sharp intake of breath. Sebastian was clearly hurting, even though he had a high pain threshold. | should know, I’ve watched him fight at the pits back when we were in college. | won a lot of money because of him.

“WHO ARE YOU?” The man asked again, but this time he sounded pissed. “Answer me or I’ll shoot you.”

“Then shoot,” Sebastian taunted him. “As you can see, I’m already bleeding out. Just put me

out of my misery.”

“We need him,” the man behind the huge motherfucker said. “Our orders-”

“I know what our orders are! You don’t need to-

Perfect. They were arguing. I quickly turned the dial to the brightest setting and heard the men cry out from the glare coming from their night vision goggles. Without hesitation, I stood up and squeezed the trigger, shooting at the man who spoke to Sebastian. He dropped his gun and stumbled forward with a shocked look on his face. Blood trickled down his nose from the bullet wound on his forehead before he collapsed on the floor with a loud thud.

I quickly aimed my gun at his companion who I noticed was grasping his neck with his hands. Apparently, Chef got to him first. Blood dozed out of his mouth as he desperately tried to stop the blood from gushing out of his neck.

However, the cut was so deep, he succumbed to his death, falling sideways beside his dead friend.

Nice.

1/6

## CHAPTER 120 Basement

out from a bullet wound near his right shoulder. I checked the wound and saw it was a through and through away from any vital organs. Clean shot. All he needed was the Doc to stitch him up and he was good as new. I took out my knife, cut open his tactical gear, and placed a white cloth over his wound. He grimaced in pain.

I chuckled. “Big baby.”

“Since you

saved my life, I’ll let that slide. By the way, De Luca is hiding in that room over there.” He pointed to the door behind me. “Why am I not surprised?” I said, knowing De Luca was a coward. “Of all the people you could bring with you, it had to be him... the pretty boy. Chef, get De Luca out from there.”

Chef opened the door and looked in. “Uhm, no De Luca, but there are stairs that lead down

to a basement.”

| assisted Sebastian to his feet, then took his left hand and raised it to his wound. “Keep pressure on that,” | instructed before talking through the coms. “Men, secure the perimeter. Dina, make sure to transmit my feed to Cristos. We found something and are going to conduct a search.” | called out to Sebastian who was walking towards the basement door. “You should really go see the Doc.”

“I’m going downstairs. | need to see what’s down there,” he mumbled like a petulant child. and disappeared from the doorway. | rolled my eyes.

Someone needs to save him from himself.

“Fine,” | said, placing a listening device beneath the countertop. | rummaged through my

bag, found a small CCTV camera and pinned it on my tactical gear. Cristos needed to see

what we saw.

| walked towards the basement door and noticed Chef standing beside it.

“Aren’t you going

to come with?”

“| dislike basements,” he admitted. For such a big man, he had so many aversions. “I’ll just stay up here, if you guys don’t mind, and guard the door for you.” That sounded good.

“You’re right. We need someone to guard the door,” | said. “Holler if there’s a problem. Gun?” He patted the vest of knives he was wearing.

“I’m all set,” he said, then pointed at the dead bodies on the floor. “If | need a gun, I’ll just borrow his.”

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CHAPTER 120 Basement



Alrighty then.

| quickly went down the stairs to find a slightly opened steel door. No wonder De Luca left Sebastian on his own. He was preoccupied with picking the lock.

| coughed, covering my nose with my hand. The smell coming from the room was horrible, like something died down here.

| swung the door open to air out the room and gasped in horror to find a young girl lying naked on a king sized bed with her arms hanging above her head, chained to the wall.

The room was dank, dirty and dim with horizontal slit-type windows. As | approached the bed, | noticed she had blonde hair just like Joy's.

The hairs on my arm quickly stood up as | imagined the horror of Joy chained up like this inside this smelly dirty room at the mercy of Pete.

As De Luca picked the lock of the padlock on the chain around the girl's wrists, | helped Sebastian cover the girl with the soiled bed sheets she was lying on. She had many bruises. and wounds over her body.

Aside from the bed and the girl, there was nothing else in here, not even a chair.

"Do you have any water?" Sebastian asked. "She's dehydrated."

| nodded my head and rummaged through my backpack without saying a word, still in shock to find a young girl in such a distressing state. | took out my water bottle, then leaned over to check her pulse. It was faint and erratic. She was near death. | lifted her head gently and placed a few drops on her pale chapped lips.

| saw her pink tongue lick the water from her lips. "More," she whispered. | raised her head, placed the spout of my water bottle in her mouth and allowed her to sip. After drinking, she opened her eyes a little. The skin around her eyes were bruised and she smelled of her own

urine and feces.

| felt so angry. Pete had no right to this to these girls.

“Just a bit more and I’m done. There you go. Free,” De Luca said, finally unlocking the padlock and unchaining the small wrists of the young girl.

Her hands dropped on the bed. She didn’t have any strength left.

3/6

## CHAPTER 120 Basement

“Are you the police?” She asked in a hushed voice.

“Not exactly,” | answered. “But we’re going to take you home. | promise.”

“Thank you,” she murmured, before fainting. | picked her up from the bed and handed her to

De Luca.

“Chef is waiting upstairs,” | said.. “Take her to Mandan and tell the Doc to patch her up. S, you go with her. I’m going to install a CCTV in here, then I’m going to take a look around.”

“No, | want to-” Sebastian protested, but | cut him off.

“What | need you to do is be with her and gain her trust,” | told him. “Besides, look at yourself. You’re bleeding all over the place. You really need to go and see Doc.”

Sebastian nodded his head and gestured to De Luca to follow him. | took a small portable drill from my backpack, drilled through the wall fronting the bed and placed a small camera inside the hole | created. Then, | quickly placed a few listening devices underneath

the bed.

| was placing a bug on the headboard of the bed when | noticed a small button beside it. | pushed it.

The wall on the right side of the bed swung open. Inside was a cage with a women lying in the center. Unlike the other girl, she had a thin white night gown on.

She also had blonde hair just like Joy's. She was tall and thin, bruises all over her arms and

legs... and she wasn't moving.

| unhooked my small pouch of tools from my belt and picked the lock. After several moments, | was able to open the cage. | checked for a pulse and let out a sigh of relief when | found one. It was strong.

"I'm thirsty," she moaned.

"What's your name?" | asked, grabbing my water bottle from the side pocket of my bag and wetting her lips. She licked her lips then opened her eyes. | noticed they were blue just like Joy's eyes.

| moved her hair away from her face. Although her eyes and hair were like Joy's, she didn't look like her.

4/6

## CHAPTER 120 Basement

"Cris, stop playing. I'm Virtue," she mumbled. "Why did you leave me locked up for days. Did you forget about me?"

The hairs on my arm stood up again. All this time, Pete and Cris were fulfilling a fantasy.

Asick, twisted fantasy where they brutalized Virtue over and over again.

All this while, we were focusing on Pete, thinking Cris was just his wingman. He was playing

all of us for fools.

Cris wasn't mentally ill. It was just a ploy.

| lifted the girl in my arms. Just like the first one, she was light as a feather and smelled like urine. | headed towards the door and quickly went up the steps to find Chef waiting.

"Take the girl and leave," | instructed Chef. "I'm going to do more snooping around."

“The men have rigged the gates to the mansion with explosives,” he said, handing me a detonator before taking the girl. “That will buy you some time.”

“Thanks,” | said. “Keep me posted.” He nodded his head and left.

“Dina, | want you to check on Cris Murdock. I’ve been too focused on another that | forgot about him,” | said, heading towards the study of the mansion. On the blueprint, the office

was near the stairs.

“Actually, Primo has been keeping a close watch on Cris Murdock, X. He believes Cris is sti in contact with Pete,” Dina answered. “Anyway, we saw Cris standing in front of the pub through CCTV. Primo thought it odd, so he called the Blood Disciples posing as Bo employees to come to the pub for drinks,” Dina answered. Good. At least Cristos wasn’t as reckless as Sebastian.

As | walked through the mansion, | was fighting the urge to set the place on fire. But if | did, Pete wouldn’t come back. | wanted him to return, so | could personally shoot him myself.

| found the office and like the coroner’s, it was empty. Unfortunately, there was no switch or anything to indicate a hidden room behind a wall.

| noticed the rug underneath the table. Unlike the rugs in the living room, this one didn’t have any plastic on it. | pushed the table and chair aside and rolled the rug up.

The so nofabitch had a hidden basement door.

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## CHAPTER 120 Basement

However, this didn’t lead to the room where we found the two girls. This was an entirely different section.

| was about to open it when | heard static fill my earpiece.

“X, we got a couple of bogeys headed your way, moving fast. ETA seven minutes,” Dina said.

1 switched coms to speak with my driver.novelbin

“I need you to stall the vehicles heading towards the mansion. He laughed. My driver was ex-military and was waiting for an opportunity to cause mayhem.

“By all means, X.

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