

The Joy of Revenge #Chapter 161 - Read The Joy of Revenge Chapter 161

Chapter 161

CHAPTER 161 Highland Oaks Massacre

Joy

From the pub, we drove to the commercial complex to change our mode of transportation.

Parked in Xavier's warehouse were several motorcycles. We each took one motorcycle and drove off towards Highland Oaks with Cristos as our leader.

We veered off the main road heading to the high-end residential area and drove on the grassy terrain, passing through scattered trees and vegetation, until we approached the forest that hid part of the tall brick wall that formed the beautiful enclosure of Highland

Oaks.

"Dina, we're on site," Cristos said as we parked our bikes under a tall cottonwood tree. The forest surrounding Highland Oaks was surprisingly well-kept. There were hardly any dried leaves on the ground and the grass and bushes were trimmed. The people who lived here undoubtedly spent a lot of money keeping the landscape behind the wall maintained. Judging by the beautifully furnished roof decks and terraces, the scenery the forest had to offer was the allure of this community.

is at "According to Sam, the masked men have divided themselves into groups. One group the gate, one at the far east, another at the center while the last group is right in your area,

Dina said.

"Okay, so that means we have to split up," Sebastian said. "Girls, you stay here at the coroner's house, while C and I head for the center first. Then, C, you and I will split up. You

take the far east and I, the gate."

“Wait. Hold on a sec. You're injured, D,” Ki ki argued. “You stay here while the three of us

head out.”

“She's right, D,” Cristos said. “You and Link secure this perimeter. The girls and I will clear the center first before splitting up.” Sebastian scowled, but he had no say in the matter. His stitches may not hold if he were to engage with any of the masked men. “Fine,” he reluctantly agreed. “You guys have your CCTV cameras with you?”

“Yep. Don't worry, Dina. You'll have eyes soon,” Cristos said.

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“Copy,” Dina said. “Outdoor security systems are off. Primo, I have to warn you... These perps knew where the CCTV cameras were and they also know the homes with outdoor security systems. And up to now, I don't know how they got inside. Clearly, they had help.”

“This is Liam's work,” Sebastian said.

“And what about Hughes?” Ki ki asked. “She could have done this.”

“This isn't her forte,” Cristos reasoned while gunshots rang out from inside the community. “We'll argue about this later. Right now, we need to save all those innocent people.”

“Dina, standby,” Sebastian said through coms. “Wait for my signal to cut the power to this grid.”

One by one, we went up the wall. After signaling for us to hold our positions, Sebastian went ahead and positioned himself behind a bunch of bushes surrounding a tree at the front of the coroner's yard.

“Link, we're here,” Sebastian said, informing Link.

“I have a guesthouse full of frightened people and the Martins are here,” Link said, his anxiety straining his voice..

"It's a small gang of seven and from what we can tell from their erratic behavior is that all seven of them are high. Do you have night vision goggles? Grab them. Dina will be cutting off the power soon," Sebastian whispered.

"Goggles check. Gun check."

"Good. There are people running down the street," Sebastian said, peeking over the bushes. "I need you to pull them to safety while I get a location of the first target. He seems to be hiding in the trees."

Link came out of his front door waving at the four people who were scurrying to find a hiding spot. All of a sudden from behind an oak tree located in Link's neighbor's yard, a man with a goat mask stepped out, shot at them then laughed.

I heard Sebastian's sharp intake of breath.

"Dina, cut the power," Sebastian said. Cristos, Kiki and I quickly slipped on our night vision goggles over our heads, giving us a clear view. I saw Link guiding the people safely into his house while Sebastian screwed on a CCTV camera on the tree.

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"Go," Sebastian ordered us. "Count down once you've neutralized a target."

The three of us stood up from our hiding spots and walked quietly through the yard and

onto the street.

Kiki signaled us and pointed to one of the masked men wearing a wolf mask making his way down the street towards Sebastian. "Let D handle that," Cristos whispered. We parted allowing Mr. Wolf free access. "Follow me. This way to the center."

We slowly walked through the eerie streets where bodies lay, scattered on the cold, dark pavement. I could already see the headlines on tomorrow's news... "Many Shot Dead: Highland Oaks Massacre".

From behind the bushes of a yard, a man with a pig's mask emerged, walking towards us. He was talking on his phone. "McDowell residence," he uttered, passing us. "What the f uck is a deed of sale anyway? Alright. I got Wolf and Goat in that area. We'll kill them and search the house." He picked up the pace and headed towards Sebastian.

Sebastian was right. This was Liam's work..

As we walked further into the gated community, we heard gunshots.

"One down," said Link.

"Two down," said Sebastian.

"There is another headed towards your direction, D," I said.

"Got it, V, Sebastian replied. "Link, hold your position."

A sudden gunshot erupted, echoing from a distance, which caused the nearby people to scream and cry out. It was loud... large caliber.

"Three down," Sam said through coms. "You guys counted seven, but there's three at the gate and two at the other side of the residential area. I'm going to assist the girls."

"Copy that," Sebastian said. "Where's X?"

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extraction"

"You heard Sam," Cristos said, pausing to screw on a CCTV camera on a nearby tree. "Let's split up. Count down when you've killed your target.

We gave him a salute and veered off, making our way to the gates of Highland Oaks. There were a bunch of people hiding in that area, afraid to move.

It was pretty smart to guard the gate. No one in or out.

There were dead bodies lying on the street, on the sidewalks, and the lawns of the houses. It was s

so sad to see how these rich people only thought of themselves. None of them opened their homes to save one life. None.

| saw a woman walking on the road, clutching her arm. | was about to help her, but Ki ki grabbed me and shook her head.

"If she cries out, we're good as dead," K iki whispered. "The only way to help her and all these

people is to kill these b astards. Come on."

| felt a pain in my heart as we passed the wounded woman, but K iki was right. If | tried to help her, she would definitely turn hysterical.

Agunshot at the gates rang out, causing those hidden near it to cry out and scream.

There were more people than | imagined.

According to Sam, there were three shooters guarding the gate. As we approached, we saw

r the third shooter. We one with a rat mask and another with a horse mask on. We looked

couldn't find him.

He was hiding somewhere. We needed to ask Sam.

"Sam, third shooter's location?" K iki whispered.

"He's right above you," Sam said. | looked up and there he was, seated on a thick branch of the huge oak tree, playing with his assault rifle. The mask he had on was a gorilla head. "I'll shoot him down to grab the other two's attention. When they walk in, shoot them in the

back."

*Copy," | whispered.

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the wall. Since we needed to wait, I placed a CCTV camera above my head.

When I was done, I peeked around the brick wall and saw a pair of headlights approaching. We needed to kill these two before that car arrived.

I took my gun out and screwed on a silencer. Each gunshot made these people cry out. I didn't want to add to their stress. "Standby," Sam said. I looked up and saw Mr. Gorilla-Head, aiming his gun at the window of the closest house. He was getting bored.

Aloud gunshot sounded, followed by the characteristic whizzing sound of a bullet. The nearby people screamed, agitating Mr. Gorilla-head. He aimed his weapon, using the people's cries as his gauge.

However, the bullet pierced his chest before he could move or react. He fell from the with a loud thud causing the nearby people to scream.

"Four down," Sam counted down.

tree

The raucous caused the two masked bandits to enter the residential area. They quickly made their way towards the cries and pleas, aiming their guns at their direction.

Before they could shoot, Ki ki and I aimed our weapons at their backs, squeezing our triggers almost simultaneously. They fell to the ground like paper.

"Five down," I counted down.

"Six down. Come on, V," Kiki whispered. "Back to the coroner's house. We can't be seen." She pointed at the headlights. "Sam keep an eye out for more, including that car. That car may

have reinforcements.”

“Roger.”

Before following K iki, | took my goggles off and peered through my binoculars to take a look

at the incoming car. It had the characteristic BMW emblem.

“Liam’s here,” | growled, pocketing my binoculars. | raised my gun, wanting to shoot, but |

had to wait.

“Soon, V. You'll get that a sshole soon. But until then, may all of this weigh on his

conscience... heavily.”

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Cristos

“Four down,” said Sam.

“Five down,” said Joy.

“Six down,” said K iki.

Two left.

There were bodies everywhere. This was just plain cruel.

Liam’s plan, | assumed, was to cover up the deaths at the Ol’ Barn and the deaths of the Martins by creating a massacre.

“| have two in my sights,” | whispered. | had cautiously walked towards the last two shooters who looked as if they were wandering around. The moon was covered by the clouds, so there wasn’t an ounce of light..

These idiots didn't even bring a flashlight.

"Dude, I can't see s hit," I heard the one with a bird's mask complain. "I'm going to take my

mask off."

"You f ucking m oron. You want people to know who you are? We'll be castrated and left to b eaten by the vultures when people find out we did this," the one with the dog mask said. "How about we use our phones?"

"Why didn't I think of that?" Bird said. "Hold on. My phone is here somewhere. He struggled to find his phone.

I was right behind them. I could smell the acidic scent of their sweat. I'm guessing they could smell me too.

"You smell that?" Dog asked, sniffing.

"Smell what?" Bird answered with a question. He was still fishing out his phone from his pocket. What a loser.

cologne Dog answered pulling out his phone from his pocket. 6/8

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"Boo!" I aimed my gun at the back of their heads and pulled the trigger. They both fell

forward.

"Seven and eight down," I said through coms. "Heading back to the coroner's."

As I ran back, I noticed a car speeding towards this direction. We needed to leave.

We were about to head up the wall when we saw someone come down.

It was Xavier.

"Found you," Xavier said.

“Why are you here?” | asked.

“All this s hit was Liam’s idea. The killing isn’t over. No one knows the shooters are dead. | suspect, Liam is going to make it look like he is negotiating with the criminals when in fact he’ll be killing the Martins, Link included. We need to get Link to safety.” Xavier slipped on his goggles and walked casually towards the Old McDowell house. We followed him while the girls stayed behind.

“Link, make it appear you are talking on your phone. Liam is coming to kill you. You need to leave.”

“What about the people in my guesthouse?”

“Liam won’t touch them, but you... you need to leave.”

*| can’t leave the Martins here. If they die here, they’ll pin it on me and I’ll be part of the police most wanted.”

Xavier scratched his head. Saving anyone from the Angels of Darkness was like saving a snake.

*Fine,” Xavier reluctantly agreed. “Girls, you go ahead. We can’t allow your cover to be blown.”

“Copy.”

“Masks on and no speaking,” Xavier ordered us. Lou, | need a van to transport the Martins. and make sure you have black hoods to cover their heads. We’ll meet you at the boundary to Arnold County.”

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CHAPTER 1

“Copy that, X.”

Highland Oaks Massacre

“Link, open the door.”

Xavier walked in and came out with the Martins. He took Tomas, pushed Ford to Sebastian while Link assisted Norma.

“A BMW has stopped at the gates,” Sam said. “Get out!”

As a demonstration, Xavier went up and over the wall. It was a struggle, but we were able to get the Martins over the fence. Once Link was on the other side of the wall, Sebastian followed. That’s when | noticed a flashlight heading towards our direction. | clicked on my harness and up | went.

Liam was here.

Chapter Comments

Morgan

| heard*

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CHAPTER 162 If They Only Knew

Liam

| couldn't get a hold of Demon. His phone just kept on ringing. | decided to call the Sheriff

instead.

"Are you finished at the Ol' Barn?" | asked.

"Yep. Everything is clean," the Sheriff said. "We're on our way to Highland Oaks in our tactical suits."

"Good. Go to the back of Highland Oaks. At the hidden door, there should be a bunch of motorcycles and a gang of masked men. Kill them. Use silencers."

| looked behind me. There were several cars at a distance headed this way.

"Henry, drive faster. | need to get there before anyone else does." | knew | shouldn't have cleaned myself up, but there was blood all over my mouth and face.

As we sped down the road towards Highland Oaks, | noticed it was pitch black outside. There was no power, not even the streetlights along the road were on. How was it possible that the rest of the town had power while this high-end residential area had none?

Just before we reached the gates of the community, Henry abruptly stopped, causing me to hit the passenger seat in front of me. "What's wrong? Why did you stop?" | asked, rubbing my forehead.

"Mayor, there are bodies lying on the pavement, Henry answered. "I can't drive on them, over them or around them. There's just too many of them."

What?!

"They were only supposed to kill the Martins. | gave distinct instructions to make it appear as if they were shooting at people. Sure, maybe wound some, but not kill. The people were supposed to be a cover up. What happened?!" |

yelled. He winced at the sound of my loud voice, amplified within the confines of the car.

“Mayor Cohen, didn’t I suggest you use your guards instead of employing a gang Bismarck? I also suggested not to give them drugs until the job was done. It would keep

from

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imagined these people to be bunny rabbits or something,” Henry pointed out. I rubbed my forehead.

This was my fault.

I promised Demon anything if he and his crew did this for me. He, unfortunately, wanted a down-payment in the form of drugs. “Henry, I needed people who were disposable if ever they were caught,” I remarked, “and my guards would point directly to me as the mastermind. No one should know it was me.” I pointed out. “Well, I need to get inside. The Martins aren’t at their home which leads me to assume they’re at the old McDowell residence. I need to pretend I’m saving them, so I can kill them and pin it on this gang. These idiots haven’t done the one thing I instructed them

to do.”

“Mayor, I highly suggest not to. These addicts may still be inside, armed. They will kill you-”

-Henry was unable to finish his sentence. He was interrupted by the loud screams coming

from outside.

People from inside the residential area poured out through the gates, pushing against each other. They ran wildly in every direction while screaming and yelling like crazed animals.

The light from my car was their beacon of light.

Perfect. They'll think I'm their hero.

"Turn off the headlights once I've gone through the gates," I told Henry. "I think the gang has left the vicinity or these people wouldn't be running out. I'll be in and out, before Jack and the rest of the people get here. And don't worry, I have my bulletproof vest on and I'm

armed."

Before I walked out of the car, I took a flashlight from the glove compartment.

Luckily, the massive number of people scrambling out earlier had completely thinned down,

there was no need to push my way through to enter the gated community. If the Martins weren't at home, then it only meant they were at Link's house... the Old McDowell residence.

I figured they would go to him after the paranoia of believing they were the target set in.

No problem. I knew my way there even in the dark.

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CHAPTER 162 They Only Knew

Once I was inside Highland Oaks, Henry shut off the headlight: just as he was instructed. Leaving the residential area in complete and utter darkness once more. I glanced behind me and noticed the cars were now a short distance away.

I turned my flashlight on and ran down the street, avoiding the bodies that were strewn all over the concrete road. Come tomorrow, he would become a nightmare for me, but I already had a plan in mind. I just needed to throw some money at Just in time too. The Spring Fortey Bee Celebration would commence in a couple of days.

Money and parties would make this all go away.

At the Old McDowell residence. | found the front door of the house open to my surprise. walked in my flashlight on, wondering where they were. | went upstairs and found all the rooms empty. | tried the basement and found it empty as well

Where could they be?

| was standing in the hallway. looking through the window out into the backyard and notions

the guesthouse.

If they weren't there, then I'd like it to Norma's house to the. Maybe Demon overlooked a

hidden door or something

| turned to exit through the back door when | saw a piece of paper on the Anchen counter

was a small note.

Tomas has signed the text of sale. | will tell you to make arrangements.

| crumpled the piece of paper and threw it in the sink.

Link had the deed of sale and the Martins were gone.

Good damn: The Mans were so fucking lucky.

pulled out my phone to locate them using the tracker in Tinmas car, but strange

pinged at Norma's house

They must have used Linic's car.

Fuck! | didn't have a tracker on it.

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CHAPTER 162 If They Only Knew

And this darkness all around me was not helping.

I decided to call the power cooperative. Not having any light was f ucking irritating.

"I need the power back on at Highland Oaks. There's a situation here and we need-"

And like magic, the power came back on. Was someone f ucking with me? "Thank power is back on," I said and hung up. What the f uck was going on? Did Pete know about this? Was he behind all of this?

It was impossible. I made these arrangements yesterday afternoon.

Was he watching me?

you.

That

Maybe his capo was following me. I've been meaning to search through my father's files for his identity, but I keep forgetting. I will do that first thing once I get home.

I walked out the kitchen, confused and anxious. As I passed the living room, three women screamed. They made me jump from fright.

"Oh my gosh! Mayor Cohen! We didn't know it was you. We thought it was one of the shooters," the youngest said before bursting into tears. "Oh thank Go d! This means we're

saved."

"Come on. Let's get you outside, so emergency services can help," I said.

"Link told us to tell our rescuers there are people in the guesthouse," the oldest of the three

said.

"You know Link?" I asked surprised.

“Not really,” the oldest answered. “He saved us from a shooter and told us to stay here, so he can help more people. We don’t know what happened to him? Is he okay?”

“I don’t know. I came looking for him because he called on me for help. But first, let’s check on those people at the guesthouse,” I said ushering them out the front door.

Outside, I saw Link’s car parked out front. If Thomas’ car is still at Norma’s and his car is

here, how did they leave?

Maybe they used Norma’s car. I sighed. I didn’t have a tracker on her car either. I’ll have the/7

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With the three women clutching my jacket, we went to the back to help the people in the guesthouse. I tried the door knob to see if it was locked. It wasn’t.

Screams erupted as I swung the door open. I switched on the lights and found the guesthouse packed with frightened people. When they saw me, they all let out a sigh of

relief.

“We’re saved!” They all cheered. I placed a finger on my mouth to shush them.

If they only knew...

“When we are all out, you can cheer. For now, I need everyone to stay quiet. Come on everyone. Follow me,” I instructed. They followed me quietly through the streets and out of the gates where emergency services and the media greeted them. Everyone broke out into an applause as I brought the people out to safety. Jack who was standing beside a body of a fallen deputy, looked shocked to see me with so many people.

“Mayor, how does it feel to be a hero?” One of the press asked. I needed to make an ambiguous statement.

“If there is a hero, it is the people who go far and beyond the call of duty. This is a tragic event. Let us mourn for the people we have lost. Excuse me. There are pressing matters I

have to attend to.”

The deputies at the scene were placing yellow tape up, prohibiting the public from entering

the area. I made my way to the people processing the crime scene and gave them instructions to give me a list of names of the deceased so I can provide benefits to the

families.

I walked to Jack who was still standing over the body of his deputy. He had his bulletproof vest on, waiting for his men who were busy putting on theirs.

His face was dark, his jaw clenched, and his hands balled into fists.

“Liam, please tell me you had nothing to do with this,” Jack whispered, his voice eerily low.

“Jack, people can’t just disappear. I needed a way to make everything look like a massacre without using the Killing Fields as a burial site, I reasoned.

“Plus, I also needed a way to kill

the Martins without making it look like they were the intended targets.

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“Good men lost their lives today,” Jack said, his hands balled up into fists.

“This didn’t need

to happen.”

“Well, the damage has been done. I don’t need to remind you that you are as much a part of this as I am,” I murmured low. “You make me sick,” Jack muttered angrily. “After today, you are on your own. I don’t want to be part of any of this anymore.” “If you turn your back on me now, I’ll make sure you never get appointed as Undersheriff u go down with again,” I threatened. “And before you get any bright ideas, if I go down, you go
me.”

He stared at me like I was a lost cause.

da warning.

“Liam, I’ve done so much for you. But not like this,” Jack said, his tone held “You’re going to pay for the burials and compensate their families or we’re through.”

“Done,” I replied. “Jack, I’m doing this for all our sakes. After tonight, this town is ours. No more treading on eggshells. We will be kings. I’ll even make sure your debt is wiped clean. forever. You can start a new life with Kik i. Buy a nice house, raise a family. Trust me, Jack.”

“If I’m going to be a king, I don’t want anymore of this s hit. We are here to protect and serve,” Jack reminded me. “Well, this is going to be a long night. I need to process the whol residential area, but before I can do that, I need to make sure this area is clear.”

“The Sheriff is on his way to contain the area. Make sure no one is alive.”

Jack nodded his head and walked away.

Jack headed towards the deputy coroner, leaving instructions to bag the deputy, then gestured for his deputies to follow him inside Highland Oaks.

I told those punks to cause mayhem without hurting people. If they had to shoot at the

people, shoot them in the leg or arm...

To pretend they were on a killing spree.

But this, this was an actual mass shooting.

“Mayor Cohen,” a woman said, tapping my shoulder. “Thank you for saving my life. You’re my hero.”

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CHAPTER 142 Toey Only Ce

I smiled sadly, nodding my head in appreciation.

But I want a hero.

I walked over to the ambulances to check on the people. To my surprise, I found Link sitting on a stretcher, getting himself checked by the EMTs.

His lips curved into a lopsided smile, but his eyes held a coldness in its depth, 20

Unfortunately, he had my dead of sale

I vowed to deal with this

Chapter Comments

He lost

dora

his eyes held a coldness in their depths

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CHAPTER 163 Suspects

Jack

After instructing emergency services to bag the deputy lying on the side of the road leading to Highland Oaks, | entered the residential area with all the deputies | had at my disposal. We needed to check its residents, evacuate if necessary, and take down the suspects.

There was only one way in or out and that was through the gates. But according to the victims, the suspects appeared from inside Highland Oaks. It was a possibility they got in by climbing the wall. And if indeed they were already gone, they must have exited the same

way.

If this were me, I'd leave at the first sight of flashing lights.

pe was their

Judging from the carnage, the suspects knew they would be killed on sight. Escape only way of surviving. They must be gone. | pulled out my phone and called the station. "I need checkpoints at all the entrances and exits in town. Suspects are wearing skater punk outfits and may be on drugs. Be advised. They are armed and dangerous."

The witness | interrogated when | arrived at the scene said the shooters were wearing animal Halloween masks. He said there were maybe six to ten of them, he wasn't sure. They all appeared from inside Highland Oaks with guns in their hands. Judging by their outfits, he said they looked like skater punks, wearing muscle shirts, baggy pants and sneakers.

"They said they wanted to play 'Hide and Seek. They told us they would give us twenty seconds to hide and if they found us, they would kill us. We all thought it was a joke at first, but when they started shooting at the guards and the deputies, we all made a run for it. inside Highland Oaks," he said. "We tried banging on the doors of the residents inside, but they wouldn't let us in."

"Do you remember the masks they were wearing?" | asked.

“Let me see... One had a gorilla mask on. Another had a werewolf mask on. Then, there was one with a nasty pig head mask, one with a crazy rat mask, a creepy goat mask, a horse mask, and a dog mask. | think there was one with a bird mask on, but I can’t remember. All | remember is they had really animal masks on.”

“You’re shivering and look all wet,” | said, noticing the water dripping from his clothes.

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CHAPTER 163 Suspects

“| hid in one of the pools. It was the only way | could hide without anyone giving my location away. The women just kept screaming. There was a group hidden in a toy house about several feet away from where | was. This one woman, who was with them, couldn’t stop crying. The one wearing the werewolf mask found them and killed all of them. There was nothing | could do,” he said regretfully, his eyes downcast. “If | had only brought my gun with me, | would have probably saved a life or two in there. But it was no use. They knew where to find us. Good thing the power went off It bought the others some time to find a good hiding spot.”

“The power went out?” | asked. When | arrived the power was on. | did notice the streetlights were out on my way here, but those things happen.

“Yeah, about a good fifteen minutes maybe twenty. I’m not sure. Anyway, the ba stards had trouble finding their way in the dark,” he said. “I don’t know if this is helpful, but they seemed utterly happy when they shot a person dead. It was like they were high or something.”

“And how did you know it was safe to come out?” | asked.

“| saw the lights from a car. Then, | saw the people hiding in the nearby tree climb down and make a run for it. | decided it was better if | ran out with them. For cover,” he stated, then his eyes widened in embarrassment. “I’m sorry, Jack. | didn’t mean it that way. It’s just, you know, my survival instincts kicking in. | hope you won’t take it the wrong way.”

"I understand. No need to be embarrassed. You've been really helpful, Greg," I said, ending the interrogation. "I think you should change out of those wet clothes and get something warm to drink before you catch a cold."

When I saw Liam come out through the gates that was the only time I noticed his black BMW parked off on the side of the road. I had a sinking feeling he was the mastermind of

this mess.

And I was right. He hired a bunch of doped out gangbangers to cause mayhem. What I didn't understand was why they had to kill all these people?

But Liam wasn't sure there would be a mob here... only until late in the evening. If that were the case, what were his original plans?

To kill the residents? I doubted it. Kill Norma, Ford and Thomas? It was highly possible.

"Guns out," I instructed the deputies as we passed through the gates. "We are looking for

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pornos wearing animal Halloween masks."

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CHAPTER 163 Suspects

"Jack, here's one," a deputy named Frank said, pointing to a dead body in the middle of the entrance. "And there's another." He pointed to a dead body in front of me. This one was

my wearing a crazy rat mask. I holstered my gun and took out a pair of latex gloves from pocket.

"I want you guys to knock on the doors of the houses and see to it the people inside our safe," I instructed the others.

I crouched down to check for a pulse. He was dead. There was a gaping wound in his back.

"This one was shot in the back," | said. "What about that one, Frank?" He bent down to take a look.

"Same. Hole in the back," he answered.

"What mask is he wearing?" | asked. Frank turned his head and shifted his position to get a

look without moving the dead body.

"Scary horse mask, Undersheriff," he replied.

"Jack, here's another," a deputy named William said. He was standing beneath a huge oak

tree beside the road. This used to be a place where old oak trees thrived. The contractor cut

them down leaving a few for aesthetic reasons.

| walked over and saw a big ass hole where his heart was. Looked long range and big caliber. Sniper?

"He's the one with the gorilla mask," | said. "We got three dead. Greg said he saw maybe six

to ten of them. That means there are more we need to find."

| decided to go left and check near Norma Martin's house. They were Liam's intended target, so there must be a couple of perps lurking there

Unlike the area near the gates, this place was clean of carnage. My guess... because it was further away from the gates. | saw Norma Martin's house and several vehicles parked in front of it. All the lights in her house were turned on, so | decided to take a look.

"You guys make sure there aren't any bodies at the end," | instructed the deputies. "I'm going to check here. The mob was here because of the Martins. They could probably be the reason why there were shooters here in the first place."

| rang the doorbell. No answer. | knocked.

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CHAPTER 163 Suspects

To my surprise, the door swung open.

“Norma! Ford! This is Undersheriff Jack Emery,” | yelled out. Nothing. | decided to walk in

and check.

The place looked like it was searched. Everything was in disarray. | also noticed the pillows on the couch had bullet holes and the paintings on the walls were slashed with knives.

The kitchen was the same... all a mess. Cabinets and drawers were open, broken plates, glasses and mugs on the floor. These as sholes were instructed to find something.

It must have something to do with the pharmacy. | remembered Liam talking about a deed of sale with Link earlier. That must be it.

| went upstairs and found the bedrooms all cluttered. The master bedroom was the worst. Norma's walk-in closet was all one big mess.

| noticed Norma's jewelry box was empty and her safe was open. | moved the door to take a look and saw the safe was empty. Not only were these guys murderers, they were thieves as

well.

| heard someone calling me from outside. From the window of Norma's bedroom, | saw

William waving at me to come down. They found something.

| quickly went outside, hoping they caught one.novelbin

“Undersheriff, there are two bodies at the end. One with a dog mask and the other in a bird. mask. Bullet in the back of their heads. We found this near one of the bodies.” In his gloved hand was a smartphone.

| took a plastic bag from my pocket to secure the phone. It was evidence.

“That’s five. If we’re lucky we only need to look for one more, but | highly doubt there were only six of them,” | said. “Let’s go to the other end, near the old McDowell residence.”

Now this end had a lot of dead bodies scattered on the pavement. The houses here had bushes and trees and their backyards had sheds or guesthouses. Plus, this area was closer to the gate.

As we walked, | saw a door open at one of the houses and a lady came out. It was Dr.

Hughes.

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CHAPTER 163 Suspects

| gestured to the deputies to continue their search while | spoke to the good doctor.

“Dr. Hughes, it’s best if you go back inside where it’s safe unless you feel it’s better if you evacuate. We’re still looking for several shooters,

“How could this have happened, Jack? This is a peaceful neighborhood.” She looked terrified. “| saw them shooting at people. Men with masks. | called the station, but it took forever for you guys to come.”

“I understand, but we’re here now.”

“| know | have to process the dead bodies, but I’m so traumatized. Have my assistant bag everyone and I’ll come in first thing in the morning. Thank you, Undersheriff.” She turned and walked back to her house. | saw Sarah at the doorway, smiling smugly. | suspected she believed Liam was going to take the fall for this.

| sighed. This was a nightmare. And it wasn't over yet.

| found the deputies scattered near the McDowell residence. They were crouching down at

three dead bodies.

| walked towards Frank who was examining the bullet hole on the dead man's chest.

"Jack, this one is wearing a pig mask. Just like the one with the gorilla mask on, he has a large gunshot wound to the chest," Frank said, handing me a smartphone. Nice, another one. "I got that phone from the one over there wearing a wolf mask. He has one gunshot wound to the chest. Small caliber. Judging by the trajectory, I say it came from over there." He pointed to Link's car. "And that one near the tree?" | asked.

"Multiple gunshot wounds to the chest. Assault rifle from the looks of it. Goat mask. That makes it eight. However, from a message on that smartphone, these guys had a leader.

Someone named Demon. He told them to check the old McDowell residence for a deed of

sale. | have no idea what deed of sale he was referring to. Seems like the new defense attorney was their target."

| glanced at the house and noticed the door was open.

"Anyone inside?" | asked.

"No. | spoke to some of the survivors and they said | ink hid them in his questhouse onca 15/6

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CHAPTER 163 Suspects

shooting started. That's where the good mayor found them."

Since Frank, William and Lewis were on our payroll, they knew to keep their mouth shut.

“If there’s anyone else who’s a part of this gang, I think they’re gone by now, Jack. My guess, they’re going to flee from this state,” Frank said. “My hunch is the mayor killed them off. Sniper is proof of that.”

“Well, we could say it was us, that’s why the power was cut and the Sheriff is missing. He’s our sniper,” I said, taking my phone out and dialing Liam.

“I need confirmation. How many were they?”

“Nine,” Liam answered. I remembered seeing someone on a motorcycle as I drove by, but it was too dark to get a good look. He must be the one named Demon.

more a

“There’s one he’s alive,” I said. I heard him mutter a curse.

“Just tell the Sheriff what you know and to come on out. The press is waiting.”

Chapter Comments

Morgan

the people inside are* safe

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Chapter 164

CHAPTER 164 A Coordinated Effort

Sheriff

My men and I were stationed at the hidden door, just right outside Highland Oaks, waiting for Liam's call, so we could enter the residential area. I was tired, but an absentee Sheriff during a tragic time spelled murder for his career.

Just as Liam said, there were motorcycles parked against the wall, but there was no sign of a gang. I had a feeling they were still inside Highland Oaks causing mayhem, but it seemed pretty quiet.

Or maybe... they hoofed it out of here.

My phone suddenly vibrated. The call I have been waiting for. I took my phone out from pocket and to my dismay, I saw Jack's name on the screen. novelbin my

'Sheriff, eight out of the nine suspects are dead. I don't know who did this, but I suspect Liam had his hired guns kill these asholes to shut them up,' Jack said. 'Unfortunately, their bodies are scattered all over the place, so we need a plausible story. Might as well tell the media it was you and the other deputies who took these bastards down while they were shooting at all these people. I mean, it works... you and some of the men have done training with SWAT.'

'Yes, it does work,' I replied. 'As for the dead suspects, it is possible Liam's hired guns killed them off. I heard Liam tell the Colonel earlier to await orders after they brought all the cars to impound,' I said.

'You knew about this?' Jack asked, shocked.

'No, I didn't, but I kind of suspected after you showed me that alert. I actually found it strange Liam would want the dead bodies from the Ol' Barn transferred there. Anyways, we're here, positioned behind the wall. I need an alibi and being part of the team who took down a bunch of punks sounds better than Dan coming over to bring me chicken soup,' I

said. 'I could say we had intel a group of hoodlums were making their way to New Salem. No one else needs to know the details. So tell me, what do you know so far?'

“Nine perps, eight dead. Two died by sniper, long range, large caliber, one shot in the chest. One by assault rifle, multiple gunshot wounds to the chest. The rest small caliber. Two in the back, two in the back of the head, and one in the chest. I have two phones. One phone with messages from a Demon looking for a deed of sale. He’s currently on the run. I estimate

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CHAPTER 164 A Coordinated Effort

seventeen dead, however with the bodies from the Ol’ Barn, it brings up the casualties to thirty-five.”

“Anything else?” I asked.

“Suspects appeared around midnight, coming from inside Highland Oaks, asking the people to play hide and seek, that is, the suspects would give the crowd twenty seconds to hide and after the twenty seconds were up, the suspects would come and kill anyone they found. They killed the guards and deputies first, making the people run inside the residential area for cover. Power went off around ten minutes after twelve and lasted until twelve-thirty. Within those twenty-minutes, the suspects were killed.” “We were about done at the Ol’ Barn when the ruckus started at Highland Oaks,” I pointed out. “Convenient, don’t you think? Anyway, I’ll see you on the other side, Jack.”

I moved the brick which concealed the security panel and punched in the combination. The hidden door slid open.

“It’s time to play heroes, boys,” I said, walking into Highland Oaks.

“Remember, I do the

talking.”

Earlier at the station, I called the men to my office. I told them to dress into their tactical suits before we headed to Highland Oaks.

“What’s up, Sheriff?”

“There are armed suspects at Highland Oaks. We are going to kill them,” I stated nonchalantly. “Don’t worry, boys. We are going to be hailed as heroes.”

“Are we going to be paid extra, Sheriff?” One deputy asked.

“Sure boys. Just keep your mouths shut and let me do the talking. I'll tell the press it was a coordinated effort,” | assured them. | placed a map of Highland Oaks on the table. “We go through the back of Highland Oaks and pretend we've been doing clearing operations since the shooting started,” | explained.

“Sheriff, how are we going to go through the back of Highland Oaks? That residential community is surrounded by a tall wall,” one of the deputies asked.

“There's a door there, commissioned by Theodore Cohen. It was purposely hidden for cases like these, not even the blueprint shows it. But | know it's there and when it's time | need to

I'm going to tell the now Sheriff of its avistance” | said “We'll be using dirt bikes to

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CHAPTER 164 A Coordinated Effort

cut through town so we can get to the forest behind the community. After we enter, we proceed to the main gates of Highland Oaks looking like the b adas ses we are. So suit up, gentlemen!”

It's a good thing | get to end this day with a smile.

Xavier

| was on the phone with Joy, seated in the middle of the van, trying my hardest to stay awake, as Lou drove to Mandan. We decided to spend the night there, since, according to Dina, there were checkpoints being set up at all the entrances and exits within the town.

In the back were the Martins. Their heads were covered with black hoods, their ears covered with ear plugs, and they were asleep. We drugged them at Arnold County. | couldn't deal with Norma... she was a pain in the neck.

While we waited for Sebastian and Cristos to come over the fence, | pulled Link to the side.

“You have the deed of sale?” | asked Link. He nodded his head and patted his coat pocket. “Good. Use that as leverage against Liam.” | glanced at the

motorcycles. We only had three. S hit. "Since we have to save these as sholes, we don't have space for you."

"It's okay. I'll walk to the front and act like a victim. Liam won't be able to touch me with media around," Link pointed out. "Alright. Tomorrow, I'll ask Jake to move in with you. He can stay in your guesthouse... you know, just as a precaution," | said. "Sure. After tonight, | think | do need someone with me. To even out the odds," Link said, as we watched Cristos slide down with such finesse.

With Cristos over the fence, it was time to leave The Martins took one look at our motorcycles and shook their heads. | felt offended. My motorcycles were BMWs.

"It's the only way out of here," Link explained. "Look, it's either this or you go back inside. and deal with Liam."

"Well, beggars can't be choosers. Anyway, who are they, Link?" Norma asked, staring at me curiously. With the night vision goggles, masks and head gear, she couldn't identify us.

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"Some of my pals from the military," Link answered. "I needed help and they were only twenty minutes away. By the way, is there a safe place we can drop you off?"

"| have a place in Fargo," Tomas said. "Can you lend us a carr or something?"

"Sure," Link said. "Get on the motorcycle and well get you to that car."

"No other way, huh?" Tomas asked rhetorically. He quickly climbed up, seating himself behind Sebastian while Ford sat behind Cristos, however Norma, she kept shaking her head disapprovingly.

"I don't want to move to Fargo," Norma complained. "I like it here in New Salem."

"Norma, Liam is going to kill us," Tomas said. "We can't stay in New Salem. There's nothing left for us to stay. Link, I'll leave it up to you to sell all our properties. I will issue a power of attorney. Just don't tell them where we are."

"I won't," Link said.

"I'm not going," Norma said like a petulant child. "All my jewelry, all my clothes are here."

"You'll get more clothes and more jewelry, I promise," Link said. And with all his might, he lifted Norma and placed her behind me.

"What about you, Link?" Norma asked before we drove out.

"I'll be fine," Link assured her. "Don't give my friends any trouble, okay? They're risking their lives to save you. And oh, hold on tightly." At the boundary of New Salem and Arnold County, Lou was waiting for us with a white Once she got off the motorcycle, she complained about her hair sticking up from the wi

No wonder Tomas divorced her. She complained about everything.

I secretly handed Cristos and Sebastian each a syringe. We positioned ourselves behind the

Martins looking as if we were their guards.

"Please, get in," Lou said, courteously. Norma eyed him warily.

"Where are you taking us?" Norma asked, as if we were planning to kidnap them.

"My boss has instructed me to drive you to Fargo," Lou said. "If you may..."

04/7

CHAPTER 164 A Coordinated Effort

"Who's this boss-" I stabbed her neck with a syringe and pushed the plunger. She was out like

a light. | grabbed her waist to stop her from falling to the ground.

Finally, silence. She asked too many questions and talked way too much.

Beside me, Ford and Tomas collapsed onto the ground, on top of each other.

“Smooth guys,” | said.

“It's because of this family, people are dead. | mean, why couldn't they just give Liam the damn pharmacy in the first place?” Cristos exclaimed, pulling out his gun. “I should just shoot them in the head.”

“These guys have intel,” | reasoned. “Come on. Let's load them into the van.”

| helped Lou carry the two men to the back seat placing them beside Norma while Sebastian placed ear plugs and hoods over their heads.

We took off our goggles and boarded the van. Finally, some peace.

“Bo, you still awake?” Joy suddenly asked.

“Gosh, | must have dozed off,” | replied, yawning

“You need to get some rest. You've been up almost forty-eight hours,” she scolded me. “I going to take a shower and get some sleep. This day has been something else.”

“Alright. Get some sleep. We'll see you at the funeral tomorrow morning,” | said. “Good

night.”

“Good night, Bo.” | hung up, feeling at ease. This day may not have started out right, but it

did end well.

At Mandan, my men replaced us as soon as we got off the van.

“Drive them to Fargo and drop them off at a motel. Leave this with them,” | instructed, handing them a bag of money. “Then follow them when they wake. To make it easier for you, equip this bag with a tracker. Once you know where they're staying, if they have a car, place

a tracker on it.”

“Yes, Beaufort.”

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CHAPTER 164 A Coordinated Effort

“I don’t know about you guys, but I’m going to bed. I’ll see you guys in the mor-”

“Beaufort, we have a problem,” Max said, running towards me. “I know you’re tired, but this can’t wait ’til the morning.”

You have got to be kidding me!

“What is it this time, Max?” I asked, yawning. “Gosh, I’m so sleepy.”

“Randy wants to save his wife,” Max said.

US

“Christine? No one will touch her. She’s pregnant and a devout Christian,” I argued.

“She’s also one of Pete’s drug smugglers. When Randy left, Christine got a call from Dan and he said Liam was agreeing to her terms. Randy and Christine thought it sounded kind of fishy, so instead of meeting with Dan, she went into hiding. She’s at that motel along the highway near the Biker’s lounge.”

“Uhm, that’s hardly hiding,” I said. “Unless she changed her car and won’t come out until I don’t know like... forever.” Sebastian hit me in the chest and gave me a warning look.

“If we save her, what is in it for us?” Sebastian asked.

“Information,” Max answered.

“What kind of information?” Cristos asked.

“He’s willing to tell us the exact location of the drug laboratory.” I woke up... just li

Finally, an answer to an old question. Where in the world was that drug laboratory an

couldn't we find it?

“Well, Sebastian? Cristos? Is that good enough for you?”

Sebastian smiled. Drugs and smuggling was his arena.

“Let's go get her.”

| sighed. Truly, there was no rest for the wicked.

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Chapter 165

CHAPTER 165 Demon

Elam

The guilt was killing me. This wasn't what | had in mind.

But | needed to kill two birds with one stone. A massacre would hide the fact | killed almost twenty people at the barn while it would scare Thomas Martin into signing the pharmacy to me. All Demon and his gang had to do was kill them and get that deed of sale.

Yeterday, | had Lisa send a message to the head of the civic group who fought for female rights to spearhead a gathering at Highland Oaks in the name of justice. It wasn't long before | heard the whispers that people would be assembling right after my father's wake. When Link said there were people already at his residential community, | pretended to be surprised.

Despite the disapproval of Henry, I met with Demon at the gas station at the exit to Bismarck. Demon was a drug dealer of mine who dealt to the lowly addicts at the seedy part

group of the city. He got his name for wearing a stupid devil mask when he was with his thugs.

"I need you and your friends to cause a little mayhem at Highland Oaks. In return, I will make it worth your while," I said. "Highland Oaks? The snotty neighborhood in your town?" He asked.

"Yes. There will be a crowd gathering there. I need you to make the people believe a massacre has happened. You know... make-believe... pretend."

"Pretend? What do you mean pretend? You kill people or you don't. There's no such thing as pretend," Demon argued.

"All you have to do is shoot at anything, but people. They'll think you're murdering a bunch of them when in fact it's all staged. Then, I come in, throw some dead bodies in the area and we have a massacre. No one will have to know it's fake."

"There'll be so many eyes. I mean, you can't fool a bunch of people by scattering car on the road. And how am I and my crew suppose to get in and out of that area? Once the po-po

arrive, we're done for."

"There's a hidden door concealed in the wall that fences the back of Highland Oaks," I said,

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CHAPTER 165 Demon

friends will be needing motorcycles to get there. The door is in between two large oak trees. right around this area." I pointed a finger on the location of the door on the map. "These numbers right here is the combination to the security panel hidden behind a loose brick."

"Fire away... But don't hurt people, huh, MC?" He asked.

“Yes. See you get it,” I said, pleased. “When the people living there here the gunfire, they’ll be scared. See, pretend.” I moved the map and pointed to Norma’s house. “While your crew scare off the people into hiding, I need you to enter this house and get me the deed of sale to a pharmacy. You can kill everyone inside this house.”

“Hold on. I thought we couldn’t kill people,” he said.

“You can’t except for these people living in this house. Once you get me what I want, leave.”

“I need a down-payment. A brick of crystal meth,” he negotiated.

-I opened the center console and took out a brick.

“I need you guys to be there by midnight,” I said, holding the brick in front of him. He reached for it, but I moved the brick away from his hands. “Do we have a deal?”

“Yes. Just give me the drugs.” I shook my head.

“How many of you should I expect?” I asked.

“Me and eight others. Don’t worry, we’re gonna pack some serious heat,” he assured me. handed him his brick.

“Tell your friends not to hurt anyone,” I said.

He placed the brick in his satchel and took the map. “No problem.”

Actually, this was a problem. Demon wasn’t answering any of my calls and I didn’t know

where he was.

I was headed to Bismarck later in the day, anyway. I’ll find that as shole and inject him with his favorite juice.

To distract myself, I volunteered to serve hot chocolate to help calm the people. I was done serving almost everyone a cup when the Sheriff and his men came out through the gates, all in tactical gear, with their weapons in tow like military men in an action movie

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CHAPTER 165 Demon

The people gasped, then quickly broke into an applause, cheering the gallant men in uniform. The press came running towards them, with mics or cameras in their hands.

“Sheriff, have the shooters been contained?” A woman asked.

“Yes, the suspects have been neutralized,” the Sheriff answered, “except for one, unfortunately. We have been going from yard to yard and from household to household, searching through the trees and bushes looking for the one suspect. Currently, there are checkpoints in every entrance and exit in town and I assure everyone, we will not rest until we find him. In this town, we don’t take terrorism lightly.”

The people cheered and applauded.

I smiled. Everything was working out beautiful

From the corner of my eye, I saw Link walk up to the crowd with a cup of hot chocolate in his hands. He had a ga sh on his forehead from tripping after the power was cut.

I walked up to him, sipping on my own cup of hot chocolate.

“I should shake your hand, Link,” I said. “You saved all those people.”

“All in a day’s work,” he said. “Since Highland Oaks is shooter free, I better go back home. We’ll talk business later. See you, Mayor.”

I scowled. There was nothing I could do as of the moment. The press was here.

to wait until later.

Judging from what I know of Link, he’s going to make sure I pay.

Demon

It was a complete moron. I was chained up in what looked like an old basement, blood dripping from my arm. My wound was burning like a motherfucker, but all I could think of was shooting up.

Earlier, I decided to go straight to the mansion to collect the rest of my payment even though MC told me he would pay me at the gas station later in the day.

But I couldn't wait. I needed to leave and I needed to leave now.

3/6

CHAPTER 165 Demon novel bin

All my friends were dead and I knew their families were going to look for them. They definitely going to kill me when they find out they're all dead.

were

As I slowed down to turn onto the road that led to Cohen Mansion, I felt a sudden force go right through my right shoulder. I lost control of my motorcycle, toppling onto the hard concrete road.

It felt hot... so hot. I reached over and was shocked to feel something wet. I raised my fingers to the light and saw blood.

The next thing I knew, there was someone standing over me. He hit me with the butt of his gun, rendering me unconscious. When I woke up, I found myself handcuffed and chained, in this empty basement. There were Mo

windows, just a single incandescent bulb, lighting the whole room.

Suddenly, from above, I heard the basement door swing open. Then, I heard footsteps. coming down the stairs. I had no clue what this asshole wanted from me. I mean, I didn't have anything of value on me..

He was s

somewhat tall, had a muscular build. He was wearing a plaid shirt, jeans and work boots. I couldn't see his face or his hair since he had a ski mask on. But I could see his eyes.

He had chocolate brown eyes.

“Good, you’re awake,” he said. In one hand, he had a small, foldable chair and table other, he had a basket with certain provisions. I couldn’t see much of what was inside the basket, but there was a water bottle sticking out. He placed the basket on the floor, proceeded to set up his chair and table in front of me. After he was done, he placed

the basket on the table and sat down.

“This here’s food, water, and some medical supplies,” he said. “You be a good boy and tell what I need to know and I’ll feed you, give you some water and tend to your wound. You owe me nothing and you get nothing. Understood?”

I nodded my head. I was thirsty.

“What’s your name?” He asked

“Demon,” I answered.

“You’re real name...”

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CHAPTER 365 Daemon

Lester, I answered. “I’m Lester Morris.”

“Good start,” the man said, pouring some water in a disposable

cup. “And what brings you to

New Salem? Don’t be scared now. I’m not the police.”

I, uh, I was asked to, but kill some people and steal something, I answered. He reached over and gave me some water. I was starting to feel better.

“Who asked you to kill some people and steal something, Lester?” He asked.

Mayor Cohen, I answered. He poured some more water in the disposable cup and had me

take a sip.

Did he tell you and your friends to shoboct all those people?" He asked.

No, he wanted us to scare them off and pd pretend we were hunting them down. | told him, here ain't no such thing as pretend. Helantunted massacre, so we gave him a massacre,"

said.

'You know, those people were my friends, he heic taking my phone out from his pocket. 'MC? Does that mean Mayor Cohen?" "Yes," | answered.

'And what is this deed of sale?" He asked.

'Something about a pharmacy," | answered. | actually donon know what that is. On t internet, it says... it's like some document.". "Who were you supposed to kill?" He asked. This time, he took ok out some bandages, a sc a syringe, a scissor and a pair of forceps from the basket. Ikhawahithis kind of s hit. I'm fri

with a vet.

A family... the Martins and their lawyer. Some guy named Linksaidd. tossed the Martin house, but they weren't there and | couldn't find no deed of sale. lehadadyrhy homey check out the McDowell residence, but | heard an assault rifle. That scared the shi tlut out of me. Then, that sn iper shot. Holy s hit!"

"How do you know Mayor Cohen?" He asked.

Im his number one dealer in Bismarck," | answered proudly.

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CHAPTER 165 Demon

through. Then, I'm gonna lock you in this basement until you get those drugs out of your system. Hopefully, by next week, you'll be well enough to provide the evidence to take down Liam Cohen."

"You can't do that. Withdrawal is painful, man," | begged.

"Yes, | can," he said, smiling. "You'll thank me later."

He injected me with something...

And I fell right to sleep.

Chapter Comments

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Chapter 166

BOOK 3: RETRIBUTION CHAPTER 166 Aftermath

Liam

Thursday after the Highland Oaks Massacre

"Where is that as shole?" I asked one of my guards as soon as I exited my car.

"In the shed," he answered curtly, gesturing to the simple, one-story structure at the far side of

the mansion.

I quickened my pace, eager to confront him after days of searching high and low for him. As I approached, I noticed the door of the shed was slightly open. I pushed on the door, opening it bit wider for me to see what was inside.

The shed once served as a workplace for carpenters who were now long gone. The Cohen ancestors loved to have furniture built from scratch especially when trees were cut down to accommodate the creation of residential areas.

Now, it was a makeshift prison.

There, in the middle of the shed, handcuffed to a chair was Demon with his head drooping forward. As soon as he heard me walk in, he raised his head and took one look at me before spitting on the floor.

E

There was blood dripping from his nose, the red viscous liquid covering both his lips and his chin, while his right eye was swollen and bruised. | also noticed he had a nasty cut on his forehead. Apparently, while waiting for me to arrive, my guards decided to teach him a lesson.

But that wasn't enough for all those poor souls he and his crew had killed.

"MC, is this how you treat your friends?" He asked smirking, showing me an incomplete set of front teeth.

This little punk had some balls.

"You aren't a friend," | growled. "Tell me, Demon, what part of pretend did you not understand?"

"| told you, there ain't no such thing as pretend. You wanted a massacre, we gave you a massacre," he said, before spitting on the floor again.

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BOOK 3: RETRIBUTION CHAPTER 166 Aftermath

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"No one was home. | tossed the place and couldn't find no deed of sale. All | found were some papers and jewelry in the safe. It's all in the bag." He moved his head, gesturing to the backpack sitting on an old workbench.

"| messaged you to check the McDowell residence. Were they there?" | asked.

"| asked my homey to check, but he didn't message me back. That's when | heard an assault rifle, then this really loud bang that came from the nearby hill. Dude, it f ucking scared the sh it out of me! | didn't know what to do, so | left.novelbin

“Who do you think could have been behind all that?” | asked.

“| don’t know. Maybe one of the people living there. But | thought about it... You're the only one who has the army to kill us.”

“Well, well, look at you! Suddenly, you’re so bright, | said, clapping my hands, mocking him, hiding the fact that it wasn’t me. “I assume then, you know what’s going to happen to you now.

-Yes?”

| quickly pulled out my gun and shot him right between the eyes.

Goodbye, Demon.

| woke up with a start, raising my head from my desk, realizing | had dozed off. | wiped the drool from my chin then raised my hands above my head to stretch my body, trying to focus. | noticed the sheets of papers and file folders strewn in front of me and sighed. | was at

home.

Ever since last Friday, I’ve had trouble sleeping. | must have fallen asleep while trying to find out who Pete’s second in command was. | looked at all the folders on my desk and grimaced.

| wasn’t even halfway through.

| sighed. The thought of finding Demon and killing him was so ingrained deep within my subconscious that | actually dreamt of killing him.

| grabbed my phone to check for the time and uttered a curse. On the screen were several notifications, including a missed call and a couple of messages from Virtue. | quickly scanned her most recent message informing me she and K iki were already on the plane back. to Bismarck from Chicago with her wedding gown in tow.

S hit, | couldn’t believe | missed her call.

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Anyway, Bo and Chip would be picking them up from the airport. If there were people who could keep her safe, it was them. Knowing I wouldn't be able to go back to sleep, decided to take a shower, get dressed into more comfortable clothing and have dinner in my office while I went through each sheet of paper in these folders. I suspected there must be something about Pete's capo in these files, but I just couldn't find anything.

The warm water didn't do much to alleviate the stress I was feeling. Even though the week had gone by peacefully after the Highland Oaks massacre, the guilt and the anxiety of it all ate at me every day.

The Sheriff and his men were tagged as heroes, despite having done nothing. However, until now, we had no idea who had killed the eight masked men at Highland Oaks.

"Liam, I have been meaning to ask you this... Did you have the Colonel clean up your mess?" The Sheriff asked once he was done with the media. He found me standing alone beside an ambulance, overseeing the victims.

"No and to tell you the truth, I don't know what happened. I suspect their leader, Demon,

killed them off, so he could walk away with the payment I promised him," I answered.

"Well, he couldn't have killed them with both a sniper rifle and an assault rifle at the same

time... that's for sure," the Sheriff replied. My brow furrowed at his statement.

"What do you mean?" I asked, confused.

"I mean, those assholes were killed by more than one man," he answered.

"Two were killed by sniper, one with an assault rifle, the rest by small caliber fire arms, mostly close range. He couldn't have done all of that himself. If it wasn't the Colonel, then who killed these idiots?"

"I- I don't know... Could it have been Pete?" I asked. The Sheriff shook his head.

ins were

"I don't think so. One, Pete doesn't care about these people. Two, all his hired killed at the Ol' Barn. Three, I'm guessing he didn't know about this unless he has someone following you. And lastly, if he did know about this, he would have used this against you by now," the Sheriff explained checking his phone. + See? There isn't anything on social media pointing to you as the mastermind. I'm thinking maybe these thugs were gunned down by the townsfolk themselves. But none of these folks can afford a sniper rifle and none of them know how to fire one. Hand gun, sure, but a sniper rifle?" He shook his head to answer his own question. "Anyway, no one has come forward to take credit, even though they're heroes."

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"They're probably afraid they'll be taken in for manslaughter instead of self-defense," I reasoned. Sheriff Combs paused to think about it, then nodded his head in agreement.

"You're right about that. Anyway, where are the Martins?" He asked, looking at me straight in the eyes. "Jack says they're missing."

"I don't know, but we can use their absence to our advantage. Send out an APB stating the Martins are now wanted for the Highland Oaks Massacre," I instructed, "on the pretense they

press. hired a group of mercenaries, so they could escape. Tell Jack to announce it to the We'll plant some evidence in their house... maybe weapons and a burner phone."

He nodded his head and took a step forward to find Jack, who was inside Highland Oaks processing the crime scene. However, he stopped in mid-step.

"Liam, you may be on to something," he said unexpectedly. "Thomas is a member of the organization right? What if the Angels of Darkness got him out?"

“How could he have possibly known about this?” I asked incredulously. “No, it couldn’t have been the Angels of Darkness. Link called me earlier at the exact time these idiots were shooting at people. He sounded scared,” I pointed out.

“Fine, Thomas probably didn’t know about these thugs, but he could have called for help. Pete left his capo in charge while he was gone and Thomas must have asked him for a favor.” Sheriff Combs abruptly stopped as an unfamiliar female EMT walked by us. I was about to ask if he knew who she was, but he quickly continued voicing his speculations once she was gone. “And you may be right thinking the Martins themselves hired someone to help them

kill the escape. The only way for the Martins to get out of Highland Oaks safely was to mask men and that takes time to plan, being they were an unforeseen circumstance. Honestly, their deaths look synchronized, strategic and tactical. Someone with military training killed these guys. If it wasn’t the Colonel, then it was most probably the organization,” the Sheriff explained.

This is why I hired the Colonel. I wanted the organization out of New Salem.

“Well, ask Link,” I instructed. “He must know something. The Martins were with him during

the entire ordeal.”

“Actually, Link wasn’t with them the entire time,” the Sheriff replied.

“Apparently, while he was outside helping people evade the shooters, he tripped, hit his head, and lost consciousness.”

“Well I already searched the McDowell place. Even without electricity. I went through every

ever\6

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inch of that house. They weren’t there,” I said. “I even went to the basement.”

have a

“That's it,” the Sheriff exclaimed, waving his finger in the air. “The lights went out. Jack said power was out for twenty minutes. That's enough time to kill the thugs and get the Martins out of Highland Oaks. All they had to do is go over the fence and that isn't hard if you harness. I'm going to lead the investigation on the deaths of these thugs, just to get some clarity. I'll tell Jack to send out that APB and make the Martins our primary suspects. Liam, we need to be prepared for a retaliation. This isn't over.” The next morning, with the ongoing manhunt for the Martins as the masterminds of the shooting, I was able to console the people and offer them some comfort through the aftermath. After my father's funeral where only a handful of people were in attendance, I visited the bereaved families who lost a loved one at Highland Oaks including those we

killed at the Ol' Barn.

I was grateful Virtue was there to help me. With the guilt eating away at me, she became my rock, my foundation. She provided me something no one else could give me...solace.

At least I had someone who was there for me. I actually felt all alone.

However, the loneliness was more palpable at night when there was no Virtue standing or sitting beside me. I would lie awake in my bed staring at a picture of her that I took with my

and phone, longing for her, fervently wishing the picture would come alive. It was her hugs. her kisses I wanted and needed... to help ease the turmoil inside me.

Link left town unexpectedly without telling anyone. I only found out when I called him.

gone and Pete's Although I didn't really need that deed of sale, now that the Martins were g capo showed no interest of wanting ownership, it was best if it was in my safe, locked away with all the other important documents.

“Mayor Cohen, I was waiting for your call,” Link said, his voice light and cheerful. “Unfortunately, I had to leave town on important business, but I'll be back right before your wedding. Don't worry, I have the deed of sale in a safe place. I'll hand it to you when I get back. You can consider it as a wedding present. I heard him smirk before saying his goodbyes. He was a slick one... that lawyer.

Aside from my small problem with Link, I found myself faced with another dilemma. Christine never met with Dan. It was a shock to discover both Randy and his wife were

missing.

I always thought Randy was a doofus, however it seemed he had some tricks up his sleeve.

Well I had more

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Since Christine was near her due date, we suspected they couldn't have traveled far. I decided to send my men at every hospital and birthing clinic within the nearby cities and towns to keep a watch for the Evans.

I got out of the shower, towed myself dry and looked at myself in the mirror. I needed to shave and get a hair cut. I didn't want to look unruly at my own wedding.

Tomorrow was a big day.

Chapter Comments.

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Chapter 167

CHAPTER 167 Pete's Cause

Pete McDowell

It was half past two on a chilly Friday morning. I was outside in the cold, standing beside car, waiting near the hangar of a private airport right outside Bismarck.

The jet was

was supposed to arrive at two, but half an hour later, there was no sign of it in the

sky above, not even a light. And I was getting impatient.

Last Friday was a disaster. Brock and his team of Black Hawks never returned from the Ol

Barn. According to his partner codenamed Joker, who was watching the live feed of their assault, Brock almost had Liam, but a sniper got to Brock first.

my

It was shocking to learn Liam had hired a group of mercenaries to aid him. I had thought I had outsmarted him with my group of hired thugs, thinking he only had the Sheriff, Jack and those dumb deputies to defend him.

Again, I had underestimated Liam Cohen.

They were known as the Blue Rogues, a team of highly trained ex-military operatives led by a ruthless man who called himself the Colonel. I didn't expect Liam had the money and the connections to hire them, nor did Brock or any of the Black Hawks, who were, unfortunately to some degree, inferior to the Blue Rogues.

Unknown to the Black Hawks, the Colonel was the first person I contacted when I was shopping for a private army. I promised him I would double his

fee if he agreed to help me take back what was mine. However, through an encrypted email, he rejected my offer outright without even giving me a reason. Now I knew why....

After Brock's untimely death, Joker exercised self-restraint and decided against avenging his bestfriend. He said it would be suicide to attack and argued the Colonel would be expecting a retaliation anyway. He decided to keep a close watch over the Blue Rogues by hacking through the CCTV cameras in New Salem, vowing he would have his revenge when they least expected it.

I doubted he would, knowing full well what the Colonel and his army were capable of. But who was I to stop a person from fulfilling his quest for retribution when I wanted the same for myself.

I glanced up in the sky and saw complete darkness. Not even the moon or the stars were out

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to illuminate the dark sky. I wondered what was taking them so long to arrive. Joker's men said they left Texas right on schedule. Where were they? I kicked the pavement in frustration. Clearly, I was an underboss who the organization undermined.

I knew I should have gone to Texas with my capo. I would have, if it weren't for the steel rods framing my face. I had asked the hospital director to remove the infernal contraption yesterday morning, however, he arrived late in the afternoon, leaving me no choice, but to stay in Bismarck.

The private jet, the Consigliere had sent, left with my capo on board right on schedule. According to the spies sent by Joker, he was dressed in a nice expensive suit and was carrying a small attache case with him. It was obvious he had business to discuss with Dofia Ortiz, the very thought angering me. He was my second in command, yet he was the one the Consigliere requested. It was clear as day... They were undermining my authority!

I had first planned to scold the hospital director when he arrived, however, he looked

agitated as he walked into my room. After he placed his bag on the nightstand beside my bed, he politely asked one of my men for a double shot of whiskey to calm his nerves, before he began the removal of the external fixation rods.

He downed the amber colored liquid in one gulp, pursing his lips as he placed the glass back on the tray. I noticed his hands were shaking, like he was scared shitless.

“What the fuck happened to you, Doc?” I asked, more annoyed than concerned. Not only did I miss the plane ride to Texas, he had to see me while he was upset.

*I had an unexpected visit by your, uhm, delivery man,” he answered as he took a seat on a stool beside my bed. He began to massage the palms of his trembling hands while he rolled

his shoulders forward and backward, attempting to ease the tension he was feeling.

“And? What did he want?” I asked impatiently. Before he answered, he placed his right hand over his chest and took a couple of deep breaths.

“He wanted me to give you this,” the hospital director said, fishing out a small white

envelope from his breast pocket. I reached over, snatched the envelope from his hand and heaved a sigh of relief, noticing it was sealed. I turned the envelope over to find it addressed to me, nothing else.

I tore it open and found a small piece of paper with a number written on it. I flipped the

small note to see if there was anything else on it. Nothing.

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“Did he say anything to you after he gave you the envelope?” I asked.

"No. He was gone before I could react," he answered. "He cornered me as I was exiting my office. He was dressed like a janitor." "What did he look like?" I asked, urging him for a description. The last time I asked about the delivery man, he said there was a murderous expression in the man's eyes which scared him to death. It wasn't the description I was looking for, but it was enough for me to stop pursuing the subject.

The hospital directors's eyes focused on the space beside me as he recalled the appearance of the man disguised as a janitor. I noticed the fear emerge in the depths of his brown eyes, as if the man was standing right in front of him.

"He was tall, muscular and tan. He had a black beanie over his head and a medical mask covering his face, so all I could see were his eyes. He had dark angry eyes... the same

dark

eyes

of the man I saw last week..." His voice trailed off like a frightened child. At least, it was

-the same man.

"Geta

grip, Doc," I said. "He's not going to hurt you. If he wanted to hurt you, you'd probably be dead already. Now take these rods off of me. I need to look like my underboss self before the Consigliere arrives. And don't worry. That man won't bother you ever again. He gave me

his number."

"Oh, thank God!" He exclaimed, heaving a huge sigh of relief. Then he stood up, opened bag and began placing the tools needed to remove the rods. "I expect you'll pay me next now that I've helped you outside our previous arrangement." I rolled my eyes and scowl

was always, always about the money.

thing off of n

“Your money is in the drawer of the nightstand, | said angrily. “Now get this th before | shoot you!”

It took over an hour to remove the steel rods and the rest of my bandages. Luckily, my wounds and bruises had healed quickly although one of my eyes was still swollen and bruised. | decided to wear a black eye patch over it to hide the swelling, inadvertently giving

me a sadistic look..

After the hospital director left, | called in a hair stylist and had him dye all my facial hair a silver white to match my hair, making myself look much older than my years.

| looked at myself in the mirror after the hair treatments were finished and | liked what |

saw. | could hardly recognize myself. To complete my new look. | decided to use a cane to

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CATER!

Pete's Cause

disguise myself as an elderly gentleman.

Once | was dressed in an expensive navy blue suit, feeling like my old self again, | called the number printed on the piece of paper. As expected, the same creepy voice from last week

answered.

“I'd like to confirm my delivery,” he said, his voice deep and raspy. | couldn't believe someone living on this earth actually sounded like Freddy Krueger. “Midnight, after the New Salem Spring Honey Bee Celebration at the gas station along the road heading to Red River.”

“Correct,” | answered. “There will be a white van parked in front of the gas station waiting for you. Tell Cris, | expect him to be there during the delivery. And remember, | want my package unharmed and unspoilt.”

“I’m only a delivery man. You’ll get her in whatever condition she’s in. I’m no nanny,” he replied, his tone angry. “Sure, I’ll pass your message on to Cris. We’ll see you midnight.” It thought he was going to hang up, but unfortunately, he spoke again. “By the way, make sure -you have my payment with you. No payment, no girl.”

“How much was promised?” | asked, irritated. | suspected Cris had trouble getting to his stash which was in a rented storage unit in Mandan. But if | had knowledge of that, it was a huge possibility Lisa did too.

“Two hundred fifty,” he answered to my surprise

“That can’t be right. | only pay as much as 100 grand for a girl,” | replied.

“But this isn’t any ordinary girl, Pete. After tomorrow afternoon, she will be Mrs. Lia

Cohen,” he said unexpectedly.

“What did you say?” | asked, thinking | heard wrong.

Virtue and Liam were getting married... tomorrow?

“You heard me,” he said. “Two hundred fifty and not a penny less. See you... Pete.” He suddenly hung up on me before | could ask him any more questions.

| turned to Joker who was tracing the call. “Well?”

“The call pinged at a tower here in downtown Bismarck,” he replied, pointing at a specific location on a map spread out on the table. “I already sent a team to check it out.”

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Pete's Cause

However, instead of locating the delivery man, they found an empty, abandoned old building.

"Whoever your friend hired must be a lone transporter, a shadow," Joker said. "These guys are trained and have the necessary equipment to bounce their signal elsewhere. If he says he'll deliver, he will. Just make sure you have the money ready in cash." "I want him dead after he gives me what I want, I told Joker. He laughed.

"I've already lost my bestfriend and a team of good men just because of what you want, Pete," he said. "And if you think I'm going to have another team of men die just because of some girl, you're wrong. He delivers her to you, then he leaves. Right now, I'm more concerned about the Colonel and the Mayor of New Salem. I know the Colonel, he doesn't

kill innocent people. It's not part of his repertoire. From what I know of him, he's usually hired to kill as sholes like you or Liam Cohen. There's something going on here. Something we obviously don't know."

"I hired you to do a job and now you're telling me you don't want to follow my structions?"

I asked vehemently, ignoring what he had just said about the Colonel. "I should stop paying.

you if this is the case."

"Well, we can leave," Joker said, collecting all his gear. "Good luck on trying to take down Liam Cohen. You'll be needing it."

F uck. I still needed them to help me coerce the Consigliere to my cause.... I w dead.

Liam

"Fine. Just make sure your men are at the airport before the Consigliere arriv the men in Texas reported back to you?" He nodded his head.

ve

“They've followed your capo to a mansion and are waiting for him to leave,” Joke “They'll call us with more information later.” My thoughts were interrupted by several lights flickering in the sky. Finally, they wer

| took a small CB radio from my pocket.

“They're here,” | said. | waited for Ace, Joker's second in command, to reply, but all | got w static.

From a distance, a small private jet landed smoothly on the tarmac. | looked up at the sky to look for more planes possibly carrying an entourage. | smiled as the sky greeted me with pure darkness.

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After last Friday became one enormous mess, Lorenzo decided to fly to North Dakota to fix everything. He sent for my capo to help him convince Dofia Ortiz, so he could get away for a

while.

The plane stopped at the hangar. | fixed my black trench coat and waited for them to

disembark.

Lorenzo may be the Consigliere to the boss, but this was my territory.

Here, | was the boss.

POST COMMENT

Chapter Comments.

Morgan

no more updates?

Anna Murray

When are we going to get the rest of the book, | really want to know what is going to happen | just can't wait

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Chapter 168

CHAPTER 168 The Consigliere Arrives.

Pete McDowell

After the jet had made a full stop, the clamshell-style door of the sleek private jet opened and the stairs were laid out. Two female flight attendants alighted, cautiously walking down the narrow steps in their high-heeled black pumps towards the tarmac fronting the hangar. One was a blonde carrying an attache case while the other was a striking redhead who was carrying a black leather briefcase. As soon as their feet touched the paved ground, they quickly positioned themselves on each side of the jet's staircase to wait for their passengers

to disembark.

After several moments, my capo emerged, dressed in a dark gray suit, his head held high, looking dashing as ever. He fixed his jacket and adjusted his maroon tie, then played with the gold ring nestled on his pinky finger, apparently stalling, as if he was waiting for someone to announce his arrival.

He momentarily raised his hand to his ear, took a deep breath and smiled before finally climbing down the steps of the aircraft.

| grimaced as | watched both of the women's lips curl into provocative smiles. The blonde flight attendant quickly stepped forward to give him his bag, bowing her head ever so slightly while sliding the tip of her tongue over her lips.

As he reached over to take the attache case from her, he leaned forward and bent his head,

whispering something in her ear while his other hand rubbed her arm... seductively. Before

he could even raise his head from her ear, the flight attendant threw her head back and

giggled excitedly, exposing her long neck to his lips, obviously expecting him to kiss her on that sensitive area near her pulse. However, he suddenly coughed and straightened himself, gesturing towards the jet with his head. They had to keep appearances for the Consigliere.

The blonde woman sighed, then, tucked a lock of her dirty blonde hair behind her ear and gestured to him to call her. As a reply, he placed two fingers on his lips, sending her a subtle flying kiss.

I rolled my eyes at their exchange. Typical. All he had to do was show some interest and the women would melt like putty.

Sure, call me insecure, but I disliked being overlooked because he was just so... pretty. It was always like that ever since we were in high school. No girl ever looked at me the way they did him... like he was a piece of juicy steak they wanted to devour. When we were still in

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high school, he used to strut through the hallways of our school, looking like James Dean, walking past enamored girls, who were begging for him to look their way. No one else could compete with his good looks, not even Liam, who had a handsome car that compensated for

his lack of aesthetics.

Even if he could have his pick of anyone in school, he only spoke to a handful of girls. There was Nicole and Abigail, who were part of the popular kids, and Joy Taylor and Lisa.

The only girl who didn't care too much for him was Lisa. She had the biggest crush on Cris, who was a popular football jock back then. Despite being so gawky as a teen, Lisa threw herself at him every chance she got.

I ran my fingers through my hair in frustration as I remembered the shithole that was high school. Back in Texas, I was respected and adored because of who I was and the family I belonged to. Here in New Salem, I was bullied because of my heritage. If it weren't for my mother, I would have killed every single asshole in that godforsaken school.

After my capo

my capo's father died in a car crash, he was inducted into the organization as my right hand. Out of all the men in New Salem, it just had to be him...

Just because his father was my father's best friend.

When he arrived at the doorstep of our house in Highland Oaks wearing a suit, his ring and a smug smile on his face, I instantly knew. He had finally gotten what he wanted and I

stuck with him whether I liked it or not.

Well, he did help me solve a problem we had about a piece of land my mother wanted in turn provided me leverage against the Cohens and material to start a business that has earned me millions over the years.

Because of his new position and the relationship his father had with mine, I was forbidden to ever touch him or reveal his identity. Only a handful of people knew about my capo, although I suspected Norma Martin knew about him. My mother had a bad habit of being a loud mouth when she was drunk.

Fortunately, he has been a big help to me. Whatever Liam and his father had planned, my mother and I were the first to know. He played the idiot boy next door perfectly, making him well liked among the people. He was awfully good with his hands too. There was nothing he couldn't fix, allowing him access into people's homes. And he could sweet talk himself into getting whatever he wanted without any obstacles in his way.

What infuriated me though was the respect Theodore Cohen gave him instead of me. It ward

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obvious that racist pig never liked me. However, Noah Jensen knew his place. | was the underboss and him, a mere capo.

After Noah took the leather briefcase from the redhead, the one man | was waiting for finally emerged from the doorway of the jet. Lorenzo Ortiz was wearing a slate gray suit under his black trench coat. He had a streak of white in his midnight black hair, the two colors intertwining into a handsome curl over his forehead.

They walked towards me with smiles on their faces. Apparently, they had bonded on their trip here. | scowled, annoyed at their new found friendship.

“Pedro, it’s good to see you are healing nicely,” Lorenzo greeted me, his hand extended. “You look like a whole new man.” | took his hand in mine and shook it.

“| look like a battered old man, Consigliere,” | replied dryly. “Thanks to you and De Vega. If | had only known, | wouldn’t have agreed to meet him. | trusted you, however you sent me

into the trenches.”

“Pedro, if | hadn’t, De Vega and his niece would still be clamoring for your head. | gave them their revenge and kept you alive,” Lorenzo reasoned. “It may have been a painful experience,

but you are an Angel of Darkness. Pain is nothing compared to death.” He placed a hand on my shoulder and squeezed it. “And look at you now. You don’t look like the Pedro | know. You look... devilish.” He winked and gave me a warm simile. “Anyway, have you prepared everything | asked?”

“Yes, Consigliere,” | said, nodding my head. “Your mansion awaits.”

“Nestor, tell the flight attendants to load my bags,” Lorenzo instructed, walking to the limousine parked beside my Audi. The driver quickly opened the back door for him. “Pedro,

you

drive ahead and we will follow you.” He nodded his head at Noah and entered the

limousine.

Finally, I was alone with Noah.

“What happened in Texas?” I asked, following Noah to the group of flight attendants who were busy unloading Lorenzo’s luggage.

“Dofia Ortiz is pissed, Pete,” he answered. “Tomas was supposed to hold on to the businesses until she could send someone to fix everything for her. Now, Liam has control of everything and he’s backed up by a small private army. She doesn’t want any bloodshed, but if Liam isn’t going to agree to her terms, she’s going to have her assassins deal with him.” He waved at the attendants and gestured to them to carry all the luggage into the limousine

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The flight attendants nodded their heads and began loading all of Lorenzo’s luggage into the trunk of the limousine. For a person who was only going to stay for a couple of days, the Consigliere sure brought a lot..novelbin

“The Consigliere will be meeting with Liam during the parade to tell him Cynthia’s businesses aren’t his for the taking. If Liam disagrees, Veronica’s assassins are going to attack after the wedding. I heard he and Virtue will be flying off to New York and Hawaii for their honeymoon,” he explained, “Not only will they kill Liam, they’re going to kill Virtue too.

This isn’t her fight, Pete.”

I nodded my head in agreement. Virtue dead wasn’t good for me. Virtue was supposed to be

my star.

"I'll talk to Lorenzo and negotiate with him," I quickly said, earning a dirty look from him.

"No, Pete," he replied harshly. "I know what you're thinking. She is hands off. I'll figure all of this out. You just keep the Consigliere comfortable while I hatch a plan." He ran his hand into his blonde hair, clearly frustrated. "This wouldn't be happening if your mother trusted you to take care of the business rather than having it entrusted to a soldier. God damn it, Pete. You should have come to me!"

"Excuse me, but weren't you the one who wanted to distance himself from the business? Act like a mule rather than a drug lord? So people would think you were one of them?" I pointed

out. He scowled and shook his head.

"You don't get it do you? I needed people to trust me. Besides I thought you were going to inherit everything. Instead, your mother went to Dofia Ortiz so she could take control business and Ortiz appointed a soldier as interim. As an underboss, you are useless," he annoyed. "Well, the Consigliere and I are going to fix this. Come tomorrow, Liam will either be dead or in jail. I have enough evidence to keep him locked up for a very long time. The everything will right itself." He suddenly raised his eyes to look at me and in their depths, saw how much he loathed me. I stared back at him with the same loathing. The feeling was mutual. "You know, Pete, you could have just released the evidence you have against Liam rather than sending your people to kill him. But of course, you never think. You just do what suits you." He pointed to the flight staff who were now walking back to the plane. "They're done loading up the luggages. Come on. We'll follow you." He nudged me with his elbow and followed me to my car.

As we walked, I fought the urge to smile. I was going to lead them to their deaths.

I expected him to open the door for me, but instead, he placed a hand on my shoulder and

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twirled me around to face him. Then, he shoved me forcefully against my car.

With an elbow on my clavicle and his arm against my throat, he pushed me even harder. against the car. | looked at his dark face, surprised at the threatening expression of his eyes.

“What the f uck are you doing.

small

“Pete, you actually think we're idiots, don't you? You think | didn't know about your s army of men you hired to ambush us?” He growled, his face so close to mine, | could smell the unmistakable scent of whisky on his breath. “We wouldn't have stepped out of that plane. knowing you were planning to kill us. What you don't know is | have a small. of

army my

own.” He raised his head and called out. “Colonel, you can come out now.”

Colonel?

Atall man came out from the side of the hangar. He was wearing a dark suit with a light. blue shirt and a blue tie underneath. He was tall and muscular, with a weathered face, obviously tanned from being outside. | noticed the sinister looking scar that went through his eyebrow and | knew it was him. Joker had told me about the Colonel's scar.

He stopped beside Noah, his dark soulless eyes focusing on my face. He quickly noticed my anxiety and it made his lips curl into a mischievous grin.

“The boys took care of this a sshole's thugs,” he said, his voice low. “Mr. McDowell, you sho consider it as a favor. They weren't worth the millions you agreed to pay them.”

F uck!

Noah suddenly let go of me and grabbed the back of my head, tugging on my hair. | winced in pain. | wasn't fully recovered from the beating | had a week ago.

He reached into my coat and took out my gun. S hit. | was defenseless.

you have

“If you value your life, you'll give me what I want,” Noah growled harshly. “I know plans to kidnap Virtue. Once you deliver her to me and I become underboss, I'll let you leave North Dakota... as payment for the favor your father gave mine.” He pulled on my hair, banging my head against the roof of my car. “Do we have a deal, Pete?”

I nodded my head. There was nothing I could do. My men were dead and I... I was alone.

He let go of my hair then opened the car door before gesturing to the Colonel. “Make sure

this asshole does what he's supposed to”

5/6

11:19 Fri, Apr 5 M

CHAPTER 168 The Consigliere Arrives.

The Colonel took out his gun, screwed on a silencer and aimed it at me.

“Get in, McDowell,” the Colonel instructed. “Drive or I'll

Chapter Comments

Elizabeth Johnson

Great chapter, worth the wait. I knew Noah was bad!!!

Morgan

I knew it!

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43

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Chapter 169

Chapter 169 Ace Up My Sleeve Noah Pete turned to enter the car, but, stopped. | assumed Pete would do as he was told without any objections, but | was wrong.

“Wait a second,” Pete said, turning back to face me. “You?” He pointed at me. “You become underboss and | have to leave? Do you think I’m an idiot? | won’t agree to that. So, no, we

don’t have a déál.”

“| don’t think you’re in any position to negotiate, Mr. McDowell,” the Colonel reminded him while he kept his gun aimed at Pete’s heart. “So why don’t you do us all a favor and gét in

the car.” Yet, Pete didn’t move. He stood his ground and continued to stare at me, waiting for my response.

| noticed that the anxiousness in his eyes from earlier was now replaced with cold, unadulterated rage. | took a quick look at his gun and found the safety pointing on fire. | aimed it at his head, daring him to challenge me.

“If | were you Pete, I’d listen to the Colonel. Get in the car and don’t do anything stupid,” | warned him, the sides of my mouth curving into a malicious smile.

“You can’t kill me, Noah, and you won’t,” he scoffed, lifting his chin defiantly at me. “In case you didn’t know, I’m a valuable asset to Lorenzo So much so, he negotiated with De Vega on my behalf.” He moved his lower jaw in a circular motion, slightly wincing from the pain the movement caused. “Yes, it was painful, but it’s water under the bridge now and | am free from any and all obligations tying me to Ariana De Vega.”

To my surprise, Pete took a small step forward towards the gun in my hand. There was a proud smirk etched across his hideous face and a wicked glint in his eyes. This crazy so nofab itch was taunting me to shoot him.

“Okay, | admit, we can’t kill you without a good enough reason, but we can incapacitate you,” | said, lowering my gun. | leaned towards the Colonel and pointed at Pete’s lower extremities. “Colonel, how about if you and | take the use of his legs? Or perhaps his feet? He could stay in bed while we-”

“Woah! Hold on!” Pete interjected loudly. “Before the two of you get any ideas and shoot me 1/6

Chapter 169 Ace Up My Sleeve

may | remind you, Noah, that there’s still a small issue concerning a certain Virtue Sullivan.” “What do you mean, Pete?” | asked, annoyed.

“If, for whatever reason, | don’t show up to collect Virtue, | gave instructions to the delivery man to slit her throat,” he answered, a small smile tugging at the ends of his lips. “Since she seems to be very important to you, | somehow sense that a lifeless Virtue won’t be of any use to you. Am | right, Noah?”

F uck! | ran my hand through my hair in frustration. Needless to say, | had to rethink my plans and come up with a new strategy. For sure, | needed to keep an eye on this vulture, clone his phone and listen in on all of his conversations.

While | took a moment to come up with a plan to keep tabs on him at all times, Pete suddenly snorted with laughter, pleased at the apparent distress he was causing. As he continued to snort away, the Colonel and | looked on with disgust. The injuries he sustained from Ariana and her men made him sound like a pig with a bad cold.

“That’s right, gentlemen. | have an ace up my sleeve,” Pete said, after he composed himself. “So get this through your thick skull, Noah... | am still your boss. You, Capo Villegas, you work for me... whether you like it or not.” He crossed his arms in front of his chest, then

shook his head, acting like a disappointed parent scolding a child. “When this is all over, I’ll make sure you’ll pay for your mistakes. Maybe a good spa nking will do the trick.”

The Colonel chuckled, impressed that Pete still had the balls to threaten me when he was outnumbered two to one. I rolled my eyes at the Colonel, urging him not to encourage Pete any further. The Colonel coughed and quickly composed himself.

“That’s where you’re wrong, Pete,” I rebutted. “The only reason why you’re still breathing is because you’re considered family to Dofia Ortiz. Sure, you may be important to the Consigliere, but not important enough for him to disobey a direct order. For your information, Dofia Ortiz instructed the Consigliere to step aside, if Joy Taylor comes to

execute you.” His eyes widened at the mention of Joy’s name. “As for Virtue, I doubt the delivery man knows what you look like. All I have to do is use your phone, show up at the designated meeting place and present myself as you. See? Easy.”

“He knows my voice. You won’t be able to fool him—”novelbin

“Oh, yes I can. Delivery men are usually concerned with one thing and that is payment. Just as long as I show up with his money, the goods will be delivered to me, no questions asked,” I said, cutting him off and calling his bluff.

2/6

11:37 Sat, Apr 6 M.

Chapter 169 Ace Up My Sleeve 76%

I noticed Pete had begun to sweat, a tell-tale sign that I had backed him into a corner. “The way I see it, you have two choices. You can either agree to the deal I so graciously offered you earlier or die by Joy’s hand? So, what’s it gonna be, Pete?”

I was surprised to see his expression change from anger to fear at the mention of Joy’s name. He was scared of her. But why? She was technically nonexistent.

Honestly, I, myself, couldn’t believe Joy was back from the dead. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, she has come back to haunt us... or rather, hunt us. It was an inconceivable

thought hatched to mock us and scare us.

Nevertheless, I couldn't shrug off the feeling that maybe Joy was indeed back for retribution. But the mere thought of Joy on a killing spree was a ludicrous idea.

I guess the anxiety I was feeling showed on my face because Pete's mouth curved upward into a knowing grin. "I can see you're worried as well. What's wrong, Noah? Are you scared your best friend might find out who orchestrated the whole thing?" He asked, his voice dripping with disdain.

I chuckled, hiding my discomfort. I wasn't going to allow Pete to get into my head.

What I needed to do was up the ante. "You know, Pete, when I spoke with Dofia Ortiz, I pointed out to her that there wouldn't be a need to step aside if Joy presented herself. All Joy really needs is a good vantage point to shoot. You, my dear underboss, won't even see her coming." The smug smile on his face quickly disappeared.

"You don't think she's the one who killed my mother, do you?" He asked, his eyes widening the possibility.

Thanks for the idea, Pete. I'll use that premise.

Actually, I highly doubted Joy was Cynthia's killer. She couldn't even kill a cockroach, let alone a human being.

Earlier, in our meeting in Texas, I was caught off guard when Veronica Ortiz mentioned Joy Taylor. I asked her how she came to know that name, but instead of answering my question, Dofia Ortiz waved her hand dismissively at me, silently telling me that such things didn't

concern me,

She asked me if I knew Joy Taylor and I told her Joy was a sweet girl who couldn't hurt a fly. Although Dofia Ortiz sounded uncertain Joy would come to exact her revenge, she told us to

step aside if love would ever present herself.

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Chapter 169 Ace Up My Sleeve

I stared at P  te's frightful eyes and decided it would be better if he feared a ghost named Joy Taylor.

"Joy's the only one with a big enough grudge, Pete," I remarked. "If she's back to take her revenge, she'll probably kill every single person involved in the conspiracy."

I glanced at the Colonel and noticed he was listening intently, obviously interested in Joy. I had to move things along or I would be stuck trying to explain who Joy Taylor was and I didn't want to reminisce about a young girl with chestnut hair and aquamarine eyes.

I grimaced at the memory of her bloodied face and torn gown, but I quickly composed myself. Joy Taylor was my first... The first person I had to screw over so I could take my rightful place in the family.

This wasn't the time for regrets, Noah.

"Colonel, why don't you make yourself comfortable in the passenger's seat while I assist this tub of lard into his seat?" I was going to teach Pete a lesson.

The Colonel nodded in understanding, lowered his gun and walked to the other side of the car.

I quickly raised the gun in my hand and hit Pete on the side of his head. He howled in pain and stumbled backwards against the car.

"You aren't in charge anymore, Pete. I am. This was sanctioned by Dofia Ortiz herself. So get your fat ass in the fucking car or I'll break your jaw again," I threatened him.

"I won't be good to you injured," Pete replied harshly, wincing as he massaged his head.

"You're right. How about if I take this gun and shove it into your asshole? Ariana did say you purred like a kitten when she shoved that metal rod up your butt. Tell me, Pete, because

curious minds want to know... Did it feel good to be f ucked from behind?" | smirked, remembering how Ariana and her goons. defiled Pete while her father and | watched from the Smart TV at the penthouse suite.

He scowled at me and slowly raised his hands in the air in surrender.

Finally. Pete has finally realized there is nothing more he can do, but follow. He gingerly entered the driver's side of the car, placed both feet inside and reluctantly reached over for

the handle. 4/6 11:37 Sat, Apr 6 M.

Chapter 169 Ace Up My Sleeve

Before he could shut the door, | stopped him. "What is it this time?" He asked, irritated. 70%

"| want to know where you're taking us, Pete." | answered. "If your m were supposed to\RiL G3) | SsStime youlied bout the mansion the Consigliere asked you to procure for him." He The content is on Read the latest chapter there!

glared at me.

"For your information, | did what the Consigliere asked me to do. | was just expecting the mansion to be at my disposal once | got the both of you out of my way," he scoffed,

answering truthfully.

| sighed and shook my head. He didn't even think of the repercussions of his actions. "And after you had the both of us killed, how were you thinking of explaining yourself to Dofia Ortiz?" | asked. He laughed.

"That's easy. You were ambushed by Liam Cohen," he said slyly. Of course. "Veronica would then send all her men to kill Liam and allowing me to take back what was mine in the first

place." | pushed the muzzle of the gun against his temple. Pete was such an as shole. It took all of my self-restraint to keep myself from squeezing the trigger. | had to remind myself | still needed him.

He and Cris planned to abduct Virtue. According to the hospital direct

Pete was having. Mintué delivered to hiarby an Cris Murdock hired, at a gas station along the highway heading towards Red River. The content is on [Read the latest chapter there!](#)

Cris Murdock was another problem. He suddenly disappeared without a trace. | had though behehiad 53 the Bounty or as dead, lying in a ditch somewhere, but he was just here, in hiding, waiting for the perfect time to kidnap Virtue. F ucking rapists. The content is on [Read the latest chapter there!](#)

“New Salem is no longer yours, Pete. It’s mine,” pointed out, shoving the gun against his head. He winced and pushed the gun away.

After giving last minute instructions, | waited for the Colonel to put his seatbelt on before closing the car door. As they drove off, | checked my watch for the time. It would be sunrise soon, but | still had

so much to deal with before we drove to New Salem.

5/6

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Chapter 169 Ace Up My Sleeve

And one of them was seated inside that limousine.

POST COMMENT

Chapter Comments.

Elizabeth Johnson

Great to see you back dear author. Was worried the book would not be finished.

Tara Castelli

omg i cant wait for the rest. i actually thought the book was completed already:(plz update soon

[VIEW ALL 5 COMMENTS >](#)

CHAPTER 170 Exploit Noah

Inside the limousine, | found Lorenzo leaning comfortably against the dark leather seats of the vehicle, toying with a crystal glass filled with scotch. | noticed his blank stare and the circular movements of his hand and quickly assumed he was deep in thought.

New

He was probably thinking of ways to negotiate a deal with Liam. For the past ten years, Salem supplied all the crystal meth distributed throughout the Central States, earning over a hundred million dollars annually. It was a business Dofia Veronica Ortiz wanted to keep, but because of Cynthia's untimely death, her control over New Salem's drug laboratory and pharmacy was now compromised.

| watched Lorenzo take a sip of his drink. | eyed the amber liquid warily and debated whether | should warn him against ingesting anything from the minibar. Pete was the one who commissioned the limousine and it wasn't beneath him to lace all its food and drinks

with poison.

As the limousine accelerated towards the airport's gates, images of the Consigliere suddenly choking and gasping for air, his blood dripping down his face from the sides of his eyes, nostrils and mouth suddenly flooded my psyche. | pictured him begging me to help him, his eyes filled with confusion and fear. | imagined him grabbing my arms with his blood stained hands, his body convulsing horribly until he finally collapsed at my feet.

Ashiver ran down my spine. It was a thrill imagining the old man succumbing to such a gruesome death. If only my imagination could become a reality.

If Lorenzo were to die here and now, Veronica would be left with no choice, but to leave the comfort of her Texan home, fly to North Dakota on her world-class private jet, have her men bring Pete's tortured body to her, and kill him using the signature Ortiz M.O., leaving two positions vacant in the aftermath.

| would never become Consigliere since that position was reserved for an Ortiz blood relative. But because | was Pete's second in command, | would

surely become Capo Ba stone, the underboss of the West North Central States.. the very rank and title I've been gunning

for.

If only Pete would die... 1/15

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I would then be known as Capo B astone Nestor Villegas. I let out an annoyed sigh as the name played in my head. I detested my Spanish name. It just didn't suit me.

But Capo Ba stone Noah Jensen, now that had a nice ring to it.

The corner of my lips curved upward in a pleased smile as I imagined myself as underboss. My word would be law and I would have control over-

"Judging by that smile on your face, I trust you've dealt with Pedro," Lorenzo suddenly said, interrupting me from my thoughts. I looked out the window and noticed we had already exited the airport. I coughed to wipe the smile off my face, berating myself for allowing my thoughts to register on my face.

"Yes, I have, Consigliere," I replied nonchalantly. "He is no longer a problem for us." "Are you sure?" He asked doubtfully. I glanced at him, my brow furrowed.

I'm sure. He'll do everything we tell him to do in order to win back our trust," I assured him. "Consigliere, if I may speak freely?" I waited for him to nod his head before continuing. "If

you

have your doubts about Pedro, all you have to do is ask Dofia Ortiz to give you a green light. Simply explain to her that it is in everyone's best interest if we, uhm, do away with Pedro. Without him in the-picture, we no longer have to deal with such tedious

complications." I crossed my fingers, hoping he would agree with me, however, to my utter dismay, he shook his head.

"It does not need to come to that, Nestor. Pedro, after all, is family," he said before taking another sip of scotch. "My concern, as of the moment, is his

hostility towards me for sending him to Chicago. After seeing the injuries he sustained, I do understand his thirst to avenge

himself, but as, I am a high ranking member of this organization, it is forbidden. However, it is common knowledge that just like his father, Pedro lacks self-control, I fear he may act

rashly and put a gun to my head.” “I understand your concern, Consigliere. What do you need me to do?”

“I need you to lock him in his room from the outside... when I sleep. For my protection,” Lorenzo instructed. “Once I fix these problems here in North Dakota and all goes back to the way they once were, Pedro will forget I ever sent him to Chicago.”

“As you wish, Consigliere. If you want, I’ll ask some of the Colonel’s men to keep watch outside your room,” I suggested, looking out through the limousine’s window. We were 2/5

11:37 Sat, Apr 6 CHAPTER 170 Exploit speeding along the highway behind Pete’s car.

“I would like that, Nestor,” he agreed, obviously pleased at my suggestion. He raised his glass to his lips and downed the contents of his glass, wiping his mouth with the sleeve of his jacket. “Rest assured, after I have dealt with this Mayor Cohen, I will deal with Pedro myself.”

I turned my head to look at him and was surprised to see him grinning so... wickedly. “You just said a moment ago you don’t want to have him killed. So how are you going to deal with him?” I asked. He chuckled.

“Nestor, I’m not going to kill him. I need him for business,” he replied, amused. “You see, Pedro has a gift, a certain talent, and I plan to exploit his so-called gift.”

His words felt like a knife had pierced my heart. I had a sinking feeling Lorenzo was planning to reopen his sex trafficking den and Pete... well, Pete was skilled in the art of

abduction. Was this the reason why Pete and Cris were planning to abduct Virtue? I silently prayed for Lorenzo to collapse and die on the spot, but God wasn’t on my

“What do you mean, Consigliere?” | asked, playing dumb, hoping he would be willing to elaborate and clarify, but instead | was met with a stern glance.

“You are on a need to know basis, Capo Nestor,” he answered, placing an emphasis on the word capo. “Whatever business | have with Pedro is between the both of us. Know your

place.” | quickly turned my head away and scowled. As usual, | was casted aside due to rank.

Just like Pete, Lorenzo waved his title in my face, as a constant reminder that | was bene them. As a capo, | had no choice, but to obey.

However, there was one thing the Consigliere didn’t know. | plan to take Pete’s position. Pete was a stupid, petulant man-child and the organization, | believed, deserved someone better.

I’ve been patient. | have allowed Pete to play gangster in that little basement of his, knowing full well when his mother died, he would instantly lose the respect everyone gave him.

| kept my distance and worked in the shadows allowing Pete to believe that | rarely meddled in his affairs. Contrary to his beliefs, | manipulated each situation to my benefit.

| was the one who sent Cris the invite to the club frequented by Ariana De Vega. | know th3(5 11:37 Sat, Apr 6 CHAPTER 170 Exploit

wouldn’t be able to resist and | was right in my assumptions. They abducted her, tortured her and raped her. In the organization, everyone in the family was off-limits, unless sanctioned by Dofia Ortiz, so Pete, the idiot that he was, found himself in a tight spot once he touched Ariana.

De Vega’s retaliation was expected and the manner by which Cynthia met her death did not disappoint.

Yet, both De Vega and his niece denied ever killing Cynthia. All | could surmise was it had to be Liam, but | was wrong, it wasn’t him either. I, then, suspected Theodore since | knew firsthand that he was one slick motherfucker. With Cynthia out of the way, he and Liam could inherit the empire. Theodore Cohen was a well respected associate of the organization and with

the right amount of flair, it was quite possible for him to negotiate a deal with Veronica.

However, Theodore died, leaving New Salem at the mercy of Liam Cohen. In just one week, Liam killed all of Pete's loyal drug runners and the orserk" orchestrated 'assacre in the hopes of covering up the disappearance of the Martins, and with Pete out of New Salem, he negotiated for a bigger distribution price while increasing his profit percentage. The content is on Read the latest chapter there!

It wasn't panning out the way we wanted and Dojia Ortiz wasn't too thrilled to discover her cut had become so much smaller than before.

I ran my hand through my hair in frustration. Even with all the bugs I planted inside Cohen Mansion, I was clueless. It's either the Cohens had found my bugs or they knew someone listening and watching.

I asked Sarah to cause a scene during Theodore's wake to test the efficiency of the listening devices I had placed around the first floor. I was able to receive a recording, but not much after. All I got was static.

Liam probably had a jammer. It was the only logical explanation. The listening devices I had placed in every house in New Salem including the laboratory were all working except for those in Cohen Mansion, Virtue's store, Dom's, Bo's, the Sheriff's station, the pub, and the

stores on Main street.

Initially, I wondered if Dom, Bo and Chip were working with Liam, but when Jack mentioned they had

; O \\\ installed a jammer to kidnap the listening devices: Near the precinct, all my suspicions disappeared. I had offered to renovate Ol' Man Eugene's farmhouse in an effort to bug the place, but Bo said they liked how rustic the place was. The content is on Read the latest chapter there!

Anyway they were newcomers and weren't my concern. All their business operations were 4/5

11:37 Sat, Apr 6

CHAPTER 170 Exploit

legit and they never once caused a problem for me.

novelbin

Since | had bugged probably every household and almost every establishment in New Salem, | was privy to every secret, including Liam's secret meeting with @weerfeh Who advocated for women's rights. | heard him advise the women that a rally against Ford would give them media mileage across the country. | found it strange for Liam to propose such a thing given his relationship with the Martins as well as the organization itself, until | heard his conversation with that rat named Demon. Then it all made sense. The content is on [Read the latest chapter there!](#)

Liam will be shocked to find the Colonel is on my side. The Colonel was a former classmate and long time friend of my father's. During the summer, my father and | would go camping with the Colonel. The first summer | met the Colonel was the summer | found out who my father really was.

Pete was unaware | had undergone training and he believed me to be useless with a gun or a knife. | allowed him to believe | was just a redneck hick only good with a hammer and saw. It was my purpose to overthrow him without him even suspecting.

| felt the limousine slow down and heaved a sigh of relief. We were finally at the mansion Pete had procured for Lorenzo. | needed Lorenzo and Pete in their designated bedrooms, out of my way, so | could prepare.

Come tomorrow, | will become Capo Bastone Noah Jensen.

Chapter Comments.

Tara Castelli

POST COMMENT

| love this book so much. Do you think we can get a couple of chapters on updates instead of just 1. | rather wait a week for a couple to a few chapters. If possible please...

Tara Castelli it's says it was updated but I'm not getting the next chapter

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