Fallen Ivy

by natashajay

Summary

This is a story that centers around two special families: the Winchester's and the McGarrett's, both of whom lead two completely different yet equally dangerous lives, and two families brought together by one very special girl: Ivy.

A lot rides on Ivy, some says the end of the world while some says Paradise. Many believe that on that fateful night, twenty-two years ago, greatness in the form of a curse, had been thrust upon her, but again, many, including Ivy herself, believes it to be nothing but a burden nobody deserves to have on their shoulders.

Good and Evil are gunning for her, wanting to use her as a weapon at their disposal, and the Winchesters would fight like dogs for their Free Will.

Years ago, Ivy met Mary Ann and a bond immediately formed between them, a bond that could never be broken.

Then, Ivy met Steve and her childhood crush bloomed into an irrevocable yet unrequited love, but then, one night, it all changed, and unrequited love didn't seem so one-sided at all.

However, all good things eventually come to an end which left Ivy heartbroken and inconsolable, leading to consequences that not Steve, nor even Ivy ever imagined to occur, consequences that changed the entire ballgame...
Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
Prologue

“A kiss always means something!”

Mid-run, she momentarily lost her balance as the accusatory statement that acerbically slid past her lips exactly one year ago, reverberated almost painfully in her head. Her hands shot out to stop her fall and her palms roughly scraped against the graveled surface, nicking herself in the process.

Her breathing doubled up due to the amount of hysterical tears she shed – hyperventilation caused by emotional stress, she mentally supplied. A few hiccups were emitted as the simple act of breathing became an arduous task and she collapsed to her knees.

“Always be aware of your surroundings when you’re alone at night. Always!”

One of the many warnings her father imparted rang loud and clear but she didn’t care. Not now. Not when her heart felt like it had been ripped right out of her chest, torn into two dozen pieces and stomped on, turning into dust.

The betrayal stung.

The lies!

The heartbreak…

“That’s all I was. A rebound,” she cried to herself, each word interspersed with brutal sobs. All those fancy words he used, they all amount to the same thing, that she was simply a fucking rebound. “I thought he was different.”

“I thought he was the one,” she mournfully wailed as the cold wind slapped her face.

Still kneeling, tearful chocolate eyes scrutinized her palms, eyeing the drops of blood in morbid fascination and, for a brief moment – a moment that later on in life, she would regret the maudlin and pathetically weak fantasy her broken mind evoked in regards to utilizing suicide as an escape – she imagined the edge of a knife sliding past her wrists and wait for death to relieve her.

She blinked and a fresh batch of tears cascaded down her face.

Struggling to inhale and exhale, the incident that occurred over an hour ago hit her like a tsunami, its attack relentless and unforgiving as it forced her to relive and remember.

Dressed to impress, makeup and hair done to the nines, she elegantly slid out of the car, thanked the cabbie and paid him, her exuberance and genuine happiness prompting her to hand over a generous tip. Sauntering into the lobby, she beamed at the sight of the familiar face and rushed over to his embrace.

Pulling back, Glen squeezed her hand, his customary mischievous smirk materializing as he said, “You got me all worried, V. I called you two days ago.” He dragged a hand through his honey-blonde hair, his smirk sliding off, “Our commanding officer wants us back out there once the weekend’s done.”

“Shit! That’s not even two days,” she hissed, her left hand rubbing her forearm in irritation.
Glen sighed, giving her a nod of commiseration, “Sorry, doll.”

“I had some family business to take care of, otherwise I’d’ve been here the moment you called,” she mumbled, mostly to herself. Shaking her head, she forced herself to think positive thoughts. She still had tonight and all of tomorrow, any time is better than no time. “You didn’t tell him, did ya?”

His smirked returned tenfold, eyes raking her form in appreciation, prompting her to playfully smack his arm. “Nah. I got your back, V. Steve doesn’t know, but it’ll definitely be one hell of a surprise.” Giggling, she nodded and, throwing her arms over him for one last hug, she began to make her way to the elevator, his voice calling after her, “Lemme see you before we get deployed, eh?! Don’t let Doctor Love keep you all to himself.”

“I make no promises, Glen!” she called back, a lewd grin on her face.

Glen was a Navy SEAL, and basically, as pathetic as it may sound, the only friend of Steve’s that made an actual effort to get to know her. In fact, he liked her so much, he appointed himself as her wingman and ended up becoming one of her closest friends, a miraculous feat since, due to her lifestyle, friends were frowned upon and rare to come by.

The last time Steve was off-duty, it was over three weeks ago, and he surprised her. That weekend was one of the best weekends of her life. Before he got deployed, she made Glen promise to give her a call on their next break so that she could surprise Steve and the day had finally arrived.

A radiant smile blossomed on her face as she knocked on Steve’s hotel room and, like an eclipse, the sunny smile completely disappeared from view when the door swung open to reveal a towel-clad woman.

Usually, one would make the embarrassing conclusion that they had the wrong room, smile awkwardly and walk away in search for the correct one.

Usually …

Unfortunately, she couldn’t deny the truth staring right back at her, because she knew that woman. She thought Steve learned his lesson by now. She thought the familiar dark-haired, dark-eyed, smiling boyfriend-stealer had been kicked to the curb the last time Steve fucked up and kissed her exactly one year ago.

“Catherine,” she stated in a vitriolic manner, that accursed name leaving behind a sour taste on her tongue. Catherine continued to stare at her with wide eyes, a calculating glint passing through as though she were pondering of the best way to lie herself out of the conundrum of getting caught by the girlfriend. “You know, I’d say I’m going through a case of d éj à vu here, but the last time I caught you trying to steal my boyfriend, you at least had the fucking decency to have clothes on!” she viciously spat out, a hand balled into a fist by her side.

Taking a step back, one hand stabilizing the towel from falling, Catherine lifted her other hand, palm facing her in a ‘calm down’ gesture, “Look, I’ll just-, how about I get Stev-”

“Cath? Who is it?” the husky, seductive voice that never failed to generate a plethora of goosebumps from exploding over every sliver of skin on display, now chilled her blood to ice and her heart dropped to her knees when Steve appeared in view.

He was barefoot and had on navy blue slacks that hung loosely from his hips and no shirt, his six-packs, abs, biceps, triceps, pectorals – basically, his Greek God physique was on full display! Trails of water dropped down his naked torso from his wet hair that he was currently trying to dry
with a towel.

Entrancing green eyes widened on her and the towel slipped from his grip.

It felt like the entire universe froze on that moment, and she, the pathetic idiot, was clearly in the wrong place.

Clearing his throat, Steve, his eyes never leaving her, addressed Catherine, “Cath, uh, can you give us some, uh, privacy.” More than relieved to escape the awkwardness, Catherine immediately fled the room.

She snorted, “Lemme make a wild guess. She’s waiting for you in the bedroom for after shower sex.” A sarcastic whistle was next to follow. “Damn, and here I thought that was our thing, boyfriend,” she sneered.

As though she were a rabid animal, Steve hesitantly made his way towards her, both hands out, palms facing her, his steps calculating, and his eyes wary and assessing. “Let me explain-”

“Oh, don’t bother,” she lashed out, taking off her stilettos and tossing one right at his chest, the sharp edge piercing him hard enough to bruise and hopefully, leave a cut. “Last year, I caught you two making out, all disgustingly hot and heavy, and you said the exact. same. thing! ‘Let me explain’,” she mocked. “‘Cath and I, it didn’t mean anything’. Or, how about my favorite, ‘it’s you that I want, please, give me one more chance to prove it to you’,” she sneered viciously at him, tears unconsciously slipping past her eyelids. “Well, point fucking proven, Steven!” she screamed, tossing her other stiletto right at his forehead, prompting him to duck before its impact.

He quickly pounced on her, strong hands curling around both her wrists and locking them to her sides so that she wouldn’t lash out on him again. His voice had a soothing quality that sounded almost forced, “Please just let me-”

Like a deranged person, she shook her head wildly as though she were trying, and failing, to head-butt him, her curly honey-brown locks all over the place. “NO! I told you, I fucking told you. A kiss always means something. But you disagreed. Said it was a mistake, a test of sorts, to see if you still had feelings for that grubby boyfriend-stealing slut! But I loved you so much, I let it go, I renewed my trust in you, and look at us. LOOK AT US, STEVEN!”

“BE A MAN!” she snarled at him. “That’s what I want you to do. I want you to fucking man up and stop lying! You owe me that.”

Jaw taut, eyes stony and lips pressed together, he gave her a rigid nod and slowly, he released her wrists and took a small step back. That small step was worth more than words and hurt flashed in her chocolate orbs. “The truth is. I still love Catherine.”

And her heart shattered into more pieces…

“I never…no, I don’t think I ever stopped loving her,” he ruefully continued, not disconnecting his gaze. “When she left me for Billy, God, I was a mess. And then you came along and, and you helped me breathe easier. You helped me move on, like a balm. But these two years, while I was happy with you, my love for Catherine stuck, and I couldn’t-, I tried, believe me I tried! But, I
couldn’t shake her off.”

The entire time Steve delivered those heart-wrenching words, her head bobbed up and down, lips pressed tightly together and tears soaking her face. “And now?” she croaked, hating him, hating Catherine, but most of all, hating herself for sounding so pathetic and weak over a stupid guy!

“She stopped by last night, said she broke it off with Billy because it didn’t feel right…not being with me. At first, I tried to refuse her. I wanted to. But…I can’t. I’m incapable of letting her go. I gotta give us another shot. We’ve so much history.” And then, he lamely told her the famous last words, “I’m sorry.”

Sniffing, she nodded one last time and roughly dragged the back of her hand across her face, “Fuck you, Steve McGarrett. I wish you rot in hell you cheating scumbag! You and that whore of yours.” She turned to leave, but hesitated. Looking over her shoulder, she took in his shocked and guilty expression and spat out, “She’s gonna leave you again, Steven. It’s her M.O. Leaving is hardwired in her DNA. My only wish, is that when she leaves your ass again, I have front row seats to your heartbreak, jackass!”

And with those biting words, she fled, leaving behind the love of her life, the broken pieces of her heart and her stilettos without a backward glance.

And she ran, and ran, and ran, and then ran some more. For over an hour, she just…ran.

And here she was: broken and bleeding on the ground, unable to recover from her heartbreak and utterly lost.

Letting out another painful sob, she reached for her phone and called the first person that came to mind.

The phone rang for a couple of seconds, before-

“Hello?”

She let out another pathetic sniffle, “Hi, it’s—it’s me…”

“Ivy? What’s wrong? Why do you sound like you’re crying, where are you?” he shot off in rapid succession, concern coloring his accented voice.

“I don’t know. Somewhere in Montana.”

A grunt echoed from the other end, “All right. I’ll track you down, don’t go anywhere.”

“Okay. And Victor?” she quickly cried out. “Please hurry. I need you.”
Chapter One

Chapter Summary

Pilot.
And so, it begins.

Chapter Notes

Please DO NOT skip, it is very important that you read this to note the deviations I will be making from Canon as SPN begins in 2005 and Hawaii Five-0 in 2010:
(1) This story kicks off in 2005, therefore, John McGarrett dies earlier (Nov. 1st), Grace Williams is not 7, but 3-years-old, and the 5-0 Taskforce is created five years earlier.
(2) I don’t know the exact age of Mary and Kono, but here, they are both 22-years-old.
(3) All Steve McGarrett’s accomplishments as a SEAL is still the same, but naturally his age is different (29-years-old).
(4) A few events from S1 of Hawaii Five-0 will take place in S1 of SPN, however, most of it will kick off in 2010, which correlates with S5 of SPN, and during S5, all events of Hawaii 5-0 will occur naturally as the timeline is the same, 2010 – onwards. Any other deviations will be self-explanatory.
Enjoy! XD

See the end of the chapter for more notes

PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA

An inconspicuous black Mercedes with tinted windows sat stationary in an apartment building’s allocated parking lot, a block away from Stanford University. Inside, two women, a blonde and a brunette, were stuck in a spell of uninterrupted and tense silence, until the brunette suddenly curled her fingers into a fist and started to ruthlessly punch the steering wheel with all the rage-generated strength she could muster. Unintelligible slurs sprang forth from her lips and doe eyes narrowed to slits were moist with a combination of angry and frightened tears and she persistently beat the steering wheel, occasionally switching fists.

Finally exhausting herself, she stopped, heavy pants resonating the sleek car’s interior. Her grip tightened on the leather wheel, her shoulders slumping in defeat and head hung between them with her chocolate curls curtaining her red, tearstained face.

“Feel better?” the blonde spoke up, breaking the nerve-racking ambience.

A short bubble of hysterical laughter emanated from the brunette, her hair whipping around wildly as she shook her head, “Not even close.”

Large viridian orbs, clouded with concern, shuttered to a close as the blonde laid her head against the headrest. Steeling herself, she repeated her previous suggestion with as much neutrality as she could muster, “You know there’s another way, Ivy. Just say the word and I’ll turn the car round…"
No muss, no fuss, and you’ll get absolutely no judgment out of me. You know that."

Tossing her hair over her shoulder, Ivy, despite her puffy face and blood-rimmed eyes, offered her best friend a beatific smile – a feat none but Ivy Winchester could pull off. Clutching the blonde’s hand in hers in a desperate grip, Ivy responded with a barely visible shake of her head, “That’s not an option, Annie. It never was. You know-, I already told you, it’s not in my nature…”

She squeezed Ivy’s hand in response, “I know, Ives. Just had to put it out there. Again.” Silence ensued, but this time, the tension bled out and the best friends kept a camaraderie grip on each other as they contemplated the current dilemma. “So… Option A?”

“Option A,” Ivy echoed in agreement, her dull voice prompting Mary’s concern to skyrocket. The blonde twisted in the passenger seat to better gauge the brunette’s expression, “Whatchu gonna tell Bro-Squared?”

A spark of defiance reintroduced itself to chocolate orbs and Ivy’s entire face turned frantic, her grip on Mary tightening unconsciously, “Nothing! Dean and Sam cannot know! Annie, swear to me. Promise me you won’t say a word!”

One eyebrow quirked in astonishment, Mary yanked her hand from her best friend’s desperate hold, “Please tell me you’re joking? Ivy! …This isn’t something you can just hide, nor is it something that would go away just ‘cause you will it to. This is real, as real as you and me and all those evil bastards out there.” The blonde climbed out of the car and slammed the door shut, Ivy instantly mimicking her. “How exactly are you planning on keeping this from them? No, no. Scratch that,” her hands animatedly gestured overhead. “Lemme rephrase. For how long do you think you can keep this from them?” she snapped, hands on her hips and eyes like steel, two characteristic gestures that signaled exactly how serious the usually laidback blonde was, and as always they looked completely foreign on her.

In an attempt to avert the sensible inquiry, Ivy typically chose to act flippant, “Since when are you the voice of reason?”

“Since you obviously ditched your sense of reason on the car ride over!” Mary heatedly retorted, not backing down.

Bright-greens and chocolate-browns collided in an intense stare-off, neither one of them willing to back down with the stakes so high. Nineteen years of friendship established an intimate bond that could never be torn asunder by anyone or anything – not even Mary’s father succeeded in separating them, despite his best efforts and multiple attempts, but that’s a story for another time. Therefore, Mary knew that riding her hard and evoking her infamous temper would not put a dent in their sisterhood, for deep down, Ivy knew that the blonde only wanted what was best for her, and currently, while Mary’s personality was originally a flighty, eternal teen that treated most situations with notes of levity, she was capable of responsibility on her own terms, and she truly was a smart woman with a healthy dose of self-preservation, unlike Ivy’s current behavior, who seemed to be on a suicidal streak.

As the pair of steely greens continued to bore into her stubborn orbs, Ivy slowly came to the realization that she was fighting a losing battle. Breaking her gaze, Ivy expelled an anguished sigh, conceding her defeat. Instead of forcing Mary to see her way, the brunette attempted for a plea, “Fine. You win, Annie. I’ll tell them, just, just not now. Please, I need time.”

Mary pursed her lips and maintained her stare, measuring her best friend’s sincerity or if she was simply humoring her. A beat later, her lips quirked into a small smile and she nodded, assuaged. “I guess that’s better than nothing. I’m doing this ‘cause I love you, Ives, not to be a controlling
“I know,” Ivy smiled tightly; *and she did* – didn’t mean she had to like it.

The blonde frowned as though she overheard the brunette’s thoughts. Opening her arms wide, she softly said, “Come ‘ere.” A choked sob escaped Ivy and she gladly rushed into her arms, embracing her as though she were her anchor. Sad tears escaped Mary’s eyelids and she immediately carded a hand through Ivy’s hair in an attempt to soothe her, “I’m not going anywhere, Ives. I’ll be with you every step of the way, and so will Dean and Sam. Don’t you worry about a thing, you hear me?” Her response was another hysterical sob. From over the brunette’s shoulder, the pair of viridians landed on the familiar Impala that no matter what, *always* stood out in a crowd.

...*Dean was here.*

Comprehending the gist of the conversation seeping into the corridor from the crack under the door, the two women simultaneously rolled their eyes and invited themselves into the apartment in order to alleviate the tension Dean happily created. Even with nineteen years of familiarization under her belt, Mary still found Ivy’s acting skills a sight to behold. Not ten minutes ago, the brunette had been bawling her head off, depleting her energy and had basically been, over the five hour car ride from Los Angeles, a massive emotional ball of angst. However, looking at Ivy Winchester, one would have to squint hard to realize her current attitude was merely an iron mask.

“Are we late to the party?” Ivy smirked, eyes genuinely alight with happiness at the sight of her twin. Sam grinned wide in return while Dean rolled his eyes and softly bumped shoulders with Mary in greeting as she came to stand by his side. Approaching her freakishly tall twin, Ivy’s smirk didn’t falter, “Hey, Nerd.”

“Loser,” Sam greeted before he encased her in his arms and spun her around, her contagious giggles permeating the small living room. Letting her go, Ivy approached Jessica as Mary moved to embrace Sam. “Jess! Glad to see you stuck around.”

Jessica laughed, eyes crinkled in a smile as she accepted her boyfriend’s twin’s embrace. “It’s been a while, Ivy. Was beginning to think you forgot about us.”

“Wait. Hold on, you *know* each other?” Dean had been observing the Troublesome Twosome’s interaction with not only Sam, but Jessica, and it had become startlingly clear to the eldest Winchester that his baby sister and honorary sister weren’t strangers to the Stanford Campus. He had mixed feelings about it; a part of him felt betrayed that they visited Sam behind his back, while another part experienced a sudden surge of concern at the realization that maybe he shouldn’t have given Ivy free reign and demanded to know her whereabouts at all times.

Sam sheepishly lowered his gaze, his face the picture of guilt. Ivy and Mary however, didn’t share Sam’s qualms. Rolling her eyes, Mary playfully smacked Dean on the chest, “Oh *please*. Wipe that wounded look off your face, Uncle J knew about our little detours, so Ivy and I thought you did too. It’s not like we were *actively* keeping it a secret.” She shrugged for emphasis.

“He did?” Dean and Sam echoed in astonishment.

Ivy scoffed, a twinkle of amusement in her chocolate orbs, “*Duh!* Dad knows *everything.*” She stubbornly avoided Mary’s skeptical glare that spoke volumes. Dad *knew* everything – emphasis on past tense – as currently, Ivy was harboring a secret that not even her all-knowing father could ever
“You’ve been crying,” Dean bluntly observed.

Tense and on the defense, Ivy shrugged a shoulder and forced her expression into one of nonchalance, “Yeah, well, that tends to happen when one’s heart has been stomped on.”

And despite her disapproval at the brunette, Mary averted her eyes, shame consuming her at the reminder of her brother’s appalling behavior toward her sister in all but blood. Dean and Sam frowned in confusion, both of them needing the extra time to catch up and connect the dots. Jessica, on the other hand, gasped, a hand flying to cover her parted lips. “You and Steve broke up?”

“Ivy shrugged again. “Caught him and Whorins in the aftermath of doing the Devil’s Dance,” she spoke with such forced nonchalance, that nobody bought it, especially her brothers and Mary, all three of whom knew about the all-encompassing love the brunette held for Steve, a love that Dean and Sam strongly believed to be incredibly unhealthy.

Gritting his teeth and clenching his fists, Dean looked positively rabid as he growled, “No offense, Annie, but your brother’s dead meat. I’m gonna kill ‘im.”

Sam nodded sharply, “Nobody hurts Ives and gets away with it.”

“Trust me, you stooges gonna have to wait in line. ‘Cause I’m getting the first punch in,” Mary proclaimed, her expression matching her tone: dead serious.

Like the typical Hunters they intrinsically were, the trio furiously articulated their retribution, conjuring creative scenarios from the top of their head that even had Ivy, despite her heartbreak, wince in sympathy for Steve, and even Catherine as Mary vocally vowed to crush her like a bug if she ever saw her face. Soft-hearted and soft-spoken Jessica however, pinned Ivy under the full force of her compassionate gaze and pulled her into another warming embrace right before giving her the standard speech girls usually found themselves on the receiving end of when experiencing heartbreak, the customary “he’s not worth it”, “you deserve much better than him”, and her personal favorite – note the sarcasm – “one day, he’ll wake up and regret it”.

Thinking of Catherine Rollins and how compatible she and Steve were, not to mention their history, her role in the United States Navy and her venerable title! …somehow, Ivy doubted Steve would ever come to regret choosing the boyfriend-stealing skank over her, but she decided to keep those morose thoughts to herself, knowing that Jessica was simply doing her duty as a friend.

Not particularly in a rush to relive that heart-wrenching moment yet again, Ivy decided it was time to break up the pow-wow. She cut into the trio’s long rigmarole and demanded their attention, her tone snappish and reeking with impatience, “While I appreciate the sentiment you guys, we didn’t make the trip here for a Dr. Phil session! Can we get back on track, please?!”

“Right,” Mary caught the fraught note in her tone, a clear signal that Ivy was close to breaking into tears. She sent her a wink that screamed ‘I got your back, girlfriend!’ that made Ivy smile. “So, what exactly did we walk in on?”

Thoroughly distracted from their promised retribution and contemplations in regards to castrating a certain SEAL, the brothers reinstated their glaring contest. Sam, his bitch-face in full force, snidely spat out, “Dean here, was just telling me about Dad’s vanishing act.” He then shrugged, wholly unconcerned, “Said he’s probably working on a Miller Time shift and that he’ll stumble in sooner or later like he always does.”
Ivy bristled; while she commiserated with Sam and secretly encouraged him to carry out his dreams when he got accepted into Stanford, Ivy did not agree with his methods. She loathed the fact that he cut all contact with Dad and Dean – and while she understood his stance in regards to John Winchester after his parting words to him, she disapproved the way he alienated Dean, claiming he was “Dad’s obedient little soldier” when Dean sacrificed everything for Sam’s happiness and helped raise the twins since their mother’s death and their father’s obsession with vengeance. However, while Ivy understood both sides of the coin, hearing her twin speak so callously about their father, it irked her and not even their twin-bond could diminish her fury.

Sam noticed Ivy’s reaction, but he remained unaffected. He loved his twin, but he was adamant in his belief that Ivy could never truly understand his resentment of their father. After all, John Winchester was incredibly lax with the only girl of the family – his Darling Princess. He had always given Ivy more breathing space and a semblance of a normal life. From the age of three, John gave Ivy permission to spend her summers with their Uncle Roy in Hawaii, and Sam never got over the unfairness of the entire arrangement.

“And just before you two showed up, I was just about to tell him Dad’s on a hunting trip and hasn’t been home in a few days,” Dean pointedly revealed through gritted teeth, his green glare boring into Sam’s orbs that had suddenly widened in alarm, comprehension dawning on him.

Jessica shook her head. “There’s too much testosterone in here,” she remarked.

Her statement succeeded in palliating the tension, Ivy and Mary letting out a bark of laughter at the truth behind her observation. Unwinding his arm from around Jessica’s waist, Sam excused himself and the four Hunters relocated to the hallway to speak more plainly without civilian ears at hearing range.

To say Sam was amenable to their request would be a gross understatement. He fought tooth and nail, claiming he abandoned the Hunter lifestyle for good, and that Mary Winchester would have disapproved of their way of life – a major low blow that had Ivy’s temper make a hasty comeback. But in the end, after further argument and pleas, he acquiesced, unable to reject the three most important people in his life, especially after Mary’s puckish remark, “C’mon, Sammy. Think of it as a fun weekend road-tripping with your favorite people. Bad food, skeevy motels, arguing with Dean over the same damn music in the Impala… how can you say no to that? Fun times, if you ask me.”

Nodding wholeheartedly, Ivy made her eyes look even more innocent, “It’ll be just like old times, Sammy. What d’you say?” And in unison, the blonde and brunette rearranged their faces into an adorable pout and whined, “Pretty pleassee.”

While they waited for Sam in the Impala, Dean’s head tilted to the side, his eyes narrowing on the Mercedes. “Yo, Thelma, Louise, please don’t tell me you two stole a Mercedes,” Dean inquired in exasperation, almost like he was preparing himself for the worst-case scenario. He loved those two girls but, when separated, they were more than enough trouble and always had to have their asses rescued from the amount of trouble they miraculously managed to get themselves into, together…?

Forget about it. Together, the brunette and the blonde were an unstoppable force of nature and were appropriately dubbed many names, including, but not limited to: the Twin Terrors, the Troublesome Twosome, and his ultimate favorite: Thelma and Louise, it being a more apt description of their dynamics, forevermore relentless in their love for trouble and preserving their rebellious nature.

“Psht, of course not,” Mary smirked, a diabolical glint in her viridian eyes that had Dean swallow nervously. Resting her head in the crook of the blonde’s neck, Ivy continued, “Glad you think so
“high of us, Dean. Hetty lent it to us. She’ll probably have somebody come pick it up later.”

That had Dean turning around in the driver’s seat to stare incredulously, and with a healthy dose of suspicion, at the girls huddled in the backseat. “Hetty?! I thought you said you were coming from Aunt Deb’s.”

“And?” they intoned, sporting identical looks of boredom.

“And!” he scoffed, voice dripping in pure disbelief as he shook his head, barely sparing a glance as Sam opened the passenger door and clambered in, blinking at the trio in confusion. “You girls really need to practice on your excuses if you’re gonna start lying to me.” He was already pissed off over his ignorance regarding the girls’ constant visits to Sam and the recent revelation of Steve McGarrett breaking his sister’s heart; so right now, his tolerance had reached its lowest point.

Mary rolled her eyes, “You’re being dramatic. We were at Aunt Deb’s.”

“You know Hetty lives in the same area, Dean,” Ivy’s tone implied Dean was purposely acting dim.

Still, he didn’t release them from his glare as he attempted to gauge their honesty. Slowly, he drawled out a remark, “I don’t buy it. You’re hiding something.” The girls kept their poker face on as they held eye contact. “Nothing? You’re not even going to deny it?” They stubbornly remained silent, not bothering to agree or disagree. Huffing in irritation, Dean turned around and started the engine. “Women,” he muttered to himself.

**JERICHO, CALIFORNIA**

At first, Dean was under the belief that he was simply being paranoid and Sam agreed wholeheartedly, having reservations about his brother’s adamant belief that the girls were acting odd – well, stranger than usual. But that all changed when they made a short pit stop at the gas station to both, fill the Impala with gas and grab a quick breakfast from the convenience mart.

Loaded with coffee and junk food, Dean yelled for a peacefully slumbering Ivy, her form slumped on Mary, to wake up and proffered their favored black coffee. Eyes alight with joy at the mere sight of the rejuvenating drink and her greatest addiction, Ivy’s hand flung forward and, cradling the warm styrofoam cup in both hands, she lifted it to drink. However, before the scalding liquid could touch her lips, the blonde emitted a startled yelp and, without warning, she yanked the cup from her grip and hurled it out the window, its content splattering on the tarmac.

“Hey!” Ivy snapped, eyes dark with anger. “I was going to drink that!”

“Annie, what the hell?” Dean sounded more shocked than angry, confused at the blonde’s behavior.

Throwing Ivy a pointed glare that had the brothers gawking in bemusement, she took her proffered coffee from the eldest Winchester and chirped, “Thanks, Dean.” Imbibing a hearty sip, her eyes closed in bliss and she sighed, “Black. Just how Mama likes it.”

Her expression dark with fury, Ivy’s glare bored holes into the side of Mary’s head as she snidely remarked, “Just like your heart.”

“Melodramatic, much?” Mary sighed, looking a mixture of amused and exasperated.
Glowering, Ivy felt her last vestiges of control snap. Lunging over, she struggled with the blonde for the styrofoam cup and, letting out a yell of victory, tossed it out the window to join her murdered beverage with a loud, telltale splatter.

“What the HELL!” Mary shrieked.

Ivy had a smug smirk on her face, “If I can’t drink, neither can you. So take. that!”

All the while, Dean and Sam gaped at their unlikely behavior, dumbfounded. Parting his lips, Sam attempted to speak but then clamped his mouth shut to shoot his brother a bewildered ‘what the hell is going on’ look. Putting the nozzle back on the pump, Dean, after getting in the car, turned to face the fuming girls, both of whom had their arms crossed tightly against their chests and their backs facing each other, “All right, what is the matter with you two?!!”

“Nothing!” they snapped, throwing nasty glares at each other before promptly looking away.

Sam let out a soft disbelieving scoff, “You don’t actually expect us to buy that, do you? You girls are usually as thick as thieves. Now you’re down each other’s throats.”

But their only response was complete and utter silence and more confusion…

Credence to the girls’ bizarre behavior occurred shortly afterwards when they made a short stop at a bridge ahead in Jericho, where it was swarming with police activity. Reaching for the glove compartment, Dean pulled out a box filled to the brim with fake IDs, the brothers, Ivy, Mary and John’s pictures visible on them. Grinning, he handed an FBI ID to a displeased Sam then turned to the girls, his smile sunny yet hesitant as though he expected contention, “Hey, uh, how about you two sit this one out…? Four federal agents in one scene would probably raise some alarms.”

“Sure,” Mary shrugged.

Looking out the window, Ivy muttered, “Whatever.”

“Wait… that’s it? You’re not gonna fight me on this?” an incredibly taken aback Dean inquired, his gaze connecting with Sam’s, his stupefied expression mirroring his.

Ivy glared in response and Dean quickly raised his hands in a sign of peace as he got out of the car. “O-kayy. Moving on then. We won’t be long and-” Dean shoved his head into the open window in afterthought, “don’t burn down my Baby.”

Confidently approaching the bloodied car the police officers had surrounded, Sam grimaced, offering his brother an acknowledging nod, “Okay. You were right. Something’s definitely not right with Ivy and Annie.”

“I’m telling ya, Sammy. They’re hiding something, and I’m not gonna rest till I get them to spill their guts.”

Absolutely filthy, covered in muck and mud and dripping with water from having dived alongside Dean over the railing to escape getting totaled by the possessed Impala, the split-second Sam picked the lock of John’s abandoned motel room, Ivy barged inside, stepping over a line of salt in the process, and blew out a breath of relief, more than eager for a warm shower and a change of clothes. However, she stopped short at the complete mess before her, all the while, ignoring the bright-green glare she could feel boring into her back like a red dot sight.
“Whoa,” Sam breathed out, clearly of the same opinion as Ivy.

Every single vertical surface had maps, newspaper clippings, pictures and notes pinned to them, and every horizontal surface, including the bed and the floor, were littered with an assortment of junk, books and something of a hazardous-looking material that had Mary warily edging to Ivy’s side, prompting the brunette to roll her eyes at her lack of subtlety and irritating mother-hen behavior that was slowly exceeding touching and landing on suffocating. Stepping past them, Dean turned on the light by the bed, the collected attention shining on a half-eaten, moldy-looking burger. Picking it up, Dean sniffed and automatically recoiled; but instead of tossing it into the trash, he returned it to its original place.

Nauseated by the sight, Ivy clapped both hands to her mouth, fighting back the urge to hurl. “Dean, that’s—that’s disgusting. Throw it out—”

Doe eyes widening, Ivy slammed into Sam’s shoulder, who had started to approach his twin in concern, and ran towards the bathroom. In her rush, she didn’t take the time to close the door behind her, prompting her violent retching to echo disturbingly in the cramped motel room.

Dean blinked, confused, and with his thumb and index finger, tossed the offending burger into the trash. Meeting Mary’s disapproving gaze, he shrugged defensively. “What? Ivy’s seen worse than a mildewy, half-eaten burger. How’m I supposed to know she’d suddenly get affected by it. I’m not psychic,” he chuckled, Sam shifting uncomfortably going unnoticed.

“Still,” Mary huffed, turning to join Ivy. “That’s just nasty, Dean. Next time, toss it out.”

“Women,” he repeated himself, sharing an eye roll with Sam as they focused their undivided attention into deducing the mysterious ghost they encountered by the bridge, his zeal reinforced the second the bitch decided to possess his Baby.

However, not much needed to be done on their part as John Winchester already solved the case. It was a Woman in White. Unfortunately, it appeared that their father skipped town before ganking her, a very uncharacteristic attribute that prompted their worriment to skyrocket. Leaving Sam to trade ideas with Mary and a freshly showered Ivy who still didn’t look herself, Dean disappeared to the bathroom for a shower.

“You don’t look so good, Ives,” Dean remarked fifteen minutes later as he stepped out of the bathroom fully clothed, towel drying his hair. His sharp gaze assessed his sister, her arms hugging her stomach as she lay on the bed in a fetal position looking worse for wear. Smiling serenely, Mary patted Ivy on the arm and addressed him, “I think it’s food poisoning. We kinda indulged in sushi before leaving LA for Stanford.”

Sam emitted an impressed sound, his concern fading as he bought the spoon-fed excuse. Dean grimaced and wrinkled his nose, eyes flickering between both girls in disbelief, “Eugh! The only raw kind of food you’d ever see me eat, is a nice, fat juicy steak, rare.” He chuckled and donned his leather jacket, “Speaking of food, I’m gonna grab a little something to eat from the diner down the street. Who’s in? Aframian’s buying.” He smirked, waving the MasterCard in the air.

Beaming, Mary exuberantly jumped off the bed and joined his side, “Ooh, count me in.”

Unfortunately, bad luck struck the second they stepped foot in the parking lot.

“Problem, officers?” Dean flashed the two officers his most arrogant smile, keeping the attention fixated on him and therefore, away from Mary so she could sneakily call Ivy’s cellphone and give them a head’s up. Officer Jaffe ignored his attempt to waylay him, demanding for Sam’s
whereabouts, prompting Dean to play dumb, his smile never waning, “Partner? What partner?”

The other officer, Officer Hein, snuck up from behind and slammed Dean over the hood of the police car, handcuffs at the ready. Stepping in with fluid grace and her most innocent smile, Mary extended both arms out in a grand gesture, “What seems to the problem, officers?”

“And you are…?” Jaffe quirked an eyebrow at her, and the two Hunters didn’t fail to notice how his eyes lingered on her generous rack, Dean’s glare aptly suitable for the phrase: If looks could kill.

Despite her winsome smile and her beach girl appearance, Mary exuded a no nonsense attitude; she didn’t take too well to anybody harming her family. “Detective Bonasera,” she crisply retorted.

Hein scoffed and without warning, he pulled out another pair of handcuffs and proceeded to harshly cuff her. “So. Another Fake US Marshal. You get anything that’s real?” he scathingly commented.

Cheekily, Mary Ann grinned, “My boobs.”

“You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford one, one will be appointed to you by –”

______________________________

VAN DYNE MANSION

O‘AHU, HAWAII

Ankles crossed and propped on the opulent African Blackwood desk in his ostentatious and richly furnished Study, a handsome and sophisticated-looking man in his early fifties, with a tanned complexion, dark, wavy hair that had a naturally tousled appearance, a neatly trimmed royale beard and piercing sapphire eyes sat lounged on a chair, his posture the perfect picture of casual elegance.

The handset cordless phone of his landline sat perched between his ear and left shoulder, his expression somber as the person on the other end summarized recent events.

“Uncle Roy? You still there? …Say something.”

Emitting a long-drawn-out sigh, he acquiesced, “What can I say? I’m glad I didn’t have to bail you out this time, Mary Ann…?”

A masculine, noncommittal sound echoed from the other end and despite his current mood and the terrible tragedy that recently occurred in Hawaii, Royal failed to repress the fond smile from spreading on his lips as he overheard Mary and his godson banter in the confined space of what he correctly deduced to be a phone booth.

“Dean, Dean!” Royal called out. “One at a time, alright. One at a time. So, you have a Woman in White and John skipped town before getting rid of it. That doesn’t sound like him,” he frowned, wincing internally at his choice of words as he belatedly realized how it would sound to his distressed godson.

A mirthless chuckle came from Dean, “You don’t need to tell us twice. We all kind of came to the same conclusion. Anyways, got arrested for imitating an officer. Whatever.”
“And credit card fraud,” Mary pointedly added.

Royal shook his head and cut in before another quarrel broke out, “Just salt and burn the Woman in White and get out of town. And Dean? There’s a reason I sent the four of you authentic credit cards. Use ‘em. I don’t give a rat’s ass about what scruples you might have. We’re family, and family takes care of one another. Next time you’re arrested for credit card fraud, if you don’t bail yourself out, I won’t do it for you, you hear me?!”

Grumbling, Dean acquiesced, a bashful hint detected in his voice, “Yes, Uncle Roy.”

Honestly, Royal blamed John Winchester for his children’s incapability to accept aid when offered. Well… excluding Ivy, but only because Royal conditioned her to accept help from family from a young age and his goddaughter hated refusing him anything.

“Good boy. Now-” dismissing Dean, he focused his attention back on Mary, “-Ann, your brother’s been callin’ you. Why haven’t you answered?” Royal demanded.

Mary emitted a vitriolic hiss and he could hear Dean curse colorfully in the background. “One, I left my cellphone on charge in the motel room. So it’s not on me right now. And two, the only thing I have to say to Steve is to go to Hell!”

“He’s still your brother, Mary Ann McGarrett!” her full name sharp on his tongue as he narrowed his eyes into slits. “I, too, hate what he did to Ivy, and I’ll be having more than a few words with him next I see him. But despite what he’s done, it doesn’t change the fact that he’s your brother, family, and I doubt Ivy would encourage your treatment of him despite her current feelings regarding him.” Sensing Mary about to argue further with him, he interjected, “I don’t want to hear it. Once you’re done with this case, you call ’im back. He has something important to say to you that cannot be left on voicemail.”

“FINE!” she bellowed from the other end, and Royal instantly knew her incoming conversation with Steve’s gonna be a real ugly one.

Hanging up on them, Royal swiftly swung his legs off the desk and planted them firmly onto the ground before he buried his face into his palms. Rubbing his forehead, intense sapphires connected with two separate picture frames perched on his desk, one of him and John McGarrett and the other of him and his childhood friend, John Winchester. It must be a John thing, he mentally mused, to alienate their children and make terrible decisions when it came to raising them. McGarrett sent his children away and kept them separated, tarnishing their sibling bond at a young and fragile age, especially in Mary’s regard; on the other hand, Winchester took his children alongside him as he delved deeper into the supernatural world, and once a Hunter, always a Hunter… it was a permanent lifestyle, despite the few that preferred to believe otherwise.

And now?

A few days back, John Winchester up and vanished without bothering to leave a trace behind. The Jericho business was simply John’s way of wordlessly ordering his children to clean up his mess as he obviously had more important things to do than tussle with a vengeful spirit. Today morning, John McGarrett was murdered in his own house, his son forced to listen in on his final moments along with the gun that claimed his life go off all the way from Pohang, South Korea.

And Royal?

He was left to pick up the pieces both John’s left behind: Their children.
Sometimes, one statement was all it took to flip the world off its axis. One small change could make a monumental difference and change your life as you know it.

It appeared to be a normal, calm, breezy night, one that would evolve into morning, undisturbed. Dean had his eyes peeled on the road, his hand fidgeting with the radio; in the back, Mary had stretched herself on her back, her cellphone in hand vibrating nonstop and her expression clear that she was debating on whether or not she should leave it and let it go unanswered for the umpteenth time. In the passenger seat, Ivy no longer looked nauseous, but serene with her shoes off and her legs tucked underneath her as she ebulliently munched on Twinkies.

She missed Sam already. Truth be told, Ivy put up a convincing front, but like Dean, she had also gotten her hopes up that maybe, he would join them on the search for Dad. The four of them: Dean, Sam, Ivy and Mary hitting the road together and just letting loose. But then again, Ivy always liked to look at both sides of a coin and she understood where Sam was coming from. If she and Steve were still together, still going strong, Ivy wasn’t sure she’d be all gung-ho in regards to opening Steve’s eyes to the things that go bump in the night, irregardless of Mary’s awareness. Therefore, she, unlike Dean, couldn’t fault Sam for his preference in keeping Jessica blissfully ignorant to the world’s darkest secret.

Tilting her head to lean against the window, chocolate brown eyes narrowed in on Dean’s watch and she sucked in a sharp intake of breath. “Dean!” she urgently exclaimed, prompting him and Mary to abruptly meet her gaze in concern. “Your watch, Dean. It’s—it’s not ticking.”

That statement, that…observation, changed everything…

Swearing loudly, Dean abruptly swerved the Impala around.

Not long after, they stood congregated in front of the apartment building, a heavy-hearted Sam by their side, his large mournful eyes on the dying embers of what used to be his and Jessica’s home. Firemen and police officers attempted to keep back the gaggle of shameless gawkers from trespassing and despite the grave situation, Mary still had it in her to berate Ivy for her downright foolish actions.

Amid her tears and fruitless attempts to console her twin, Mary stalked over, grasped her by the wrist and forcibly pulled her aside and away from curious ears, leaving Dean to take over and provide Sam with much needed comfort. Huffing when they were a good distance away, Ivy wrenched herself from Mary’s vice grip and crossed her arms tightly against her chest. “What?” she hissed.

“What? WHAT? You tell me what!” Mary retorted, her words barely intelligible as she ground them out through tightly clenched teeth. The brunette rolled her eyes, stubbornly maintaining her silence. “I’d really like to know, Ivy, what the hell is going on through that thick skull of yours? What is wrong with you, are you completely incapable of looking out for yourself! We had an agreement, and if you don’t start taking care of yourself, I’m telling Dean and Sam. Now!”

Fear and doubt warred in Ivy’s expressive eyes. “You wouldn’t,” she scoffed, calling her bluff.

“You leave me with no choice, Ivy!” Mary snapped back, her husky voice resembling a muted scream. Letting out an irritated growl, the blonde slid both hands into her hair, fisted a clump of hair and tugged in pure frustration. “You nearly got totaled by the Impala. Then, Constance
attacked you and the safest route out was to have Sam drive the car through a freaking house! And, and, what the hell was that tonight?! You ran headfirst into a burning apartment, abandoning all sense of reason and self-preservation and you got burned. I saw it, Ivy. I know I did. Your hand got caught in the fire and don’t ask me how it didn’t leave a mark, but I know what I saw. Just please. Please, for the love of all that is Holy, what the ever-loving fuck were you thinking?!!

A strangled yell was ejected from Ivy’s lips as she twisted around on the spot and angrily met her best friend’s viridian glare. “It’s what I– we, do, Annie! We’re Hunters, we are of the self-sacrificing sort and you know that! If there’s a chance of saving lives, we don’t think, we just do. I can’t just stop being myself. I don’t care WHAT, I’m not… nobody can force me to stop being a Hunter. I’d rather die, do you get that?!”

“It’s not permanent, Ives. I’m not asking you to quit. I’d never ask that of you. Fuck, it’d be totally hypocritical of me. My Dad, he–” Mary furiously scrubbed her eyes at the mention of her father; John McGarrett was an unspoken subject, almost taboo. “He tried his very best to keep us apart, Ivy. And I fought him. Every step of the way, I fought him. So no, I’m not telling you to quit hunting. I’m just asking, no, begging you to slow down, to start thinking before you go charging in, guns blazing. What did you hope to achieve tonight? Sam couldn’t save Jess, what made you think differently, was it arrogance? Or, or was it a suicide attempt?” Ivy threw her a harsh, disbelieving glare. Mollifying her, the blonde raised both hands, “I’m trying to understand here, Ivy. So help me understand. Because I thought I knew you like the back of my hand, and you’re starting to scare me. And you know I don’t get spooked easily.”

Silence met the end of Mary’s heartfelt speech and, for a brief moment, the blonde got the impression that her desperate inquiry would remain unanswered. Then, Ivy parted her lips and spoke, her words coated with tears and misery and her doe eyes bright with unshed tears, brimming with untold emotions. “Ever since I was old enough to understand that my Mom’s dead and I’d never see her again, I’ve always wondered how she died. You know…? Was it painless, did she see it coming? Then I was mature enough to be given the ugly details of how she died and that, my whole life, the lifestyle Dad chose for us, it was all a vendetta to find and kill the son of a bitch who robbed me of a mother. And until tonight… Annie, my imagination, the scenarios I conjured, they’re nothing compared to the real thing. Like Jess, Mom was burned alive. It wasn’t a painless death. I was just a baby. Sam and I, we–we were just vulnerable babies, unable to lift a finger and help. But with Jess, I was overcome with hope. Hope that maybe now, what with me being an experienced Hunter, perhaps I could do something. Anything! But, even with all the experience under my belt, I’m still a failure. Useless.”

“You’re not useless, or a failure. You’re anything but.”

Wordlessly, Mary pulled her into a tight embrace and together, the two girls cried for their fallen friend. As her tears began to subside, Mary felt Ivy sag in her embrace, having cried herself to near sleep. Carefully, she led the brunette to the Impala and softly arranged her in a sleeping position in the backseat, letting her sleep off the excitement of the day. Turning around, Mary automatically stumbled back before she could collide into Dean and Sam, both of whom alternated their concerned and, in Dean’s case, suspicious, stares from the slumbering Ivy to Mary.

“You ready to clue us in yet?” Dean gruffly demanded, not even a tiny hint of a smile visible in his expression or his tone. Mary offered the overprotective brothers a tight-lipped smile and chose to rub Sam’s arm soothingly, silently offering her condolences and support, the dried tears littered all over her face a testimony to the fact that like Sam, she too would miss Jessica and was devastated over her death. Sam, with his infallible ability to read Mary and Ivy like a book, spoke up, his voice hoarse, “I’d rather not think about Jess, right now. I just, I want to know what’s going on with my sister. She hasn’t been herself and you’ve been acting extremely odd.”
Infusing levity, Mary grinned, “Eccentricity is like, my thing, Sammy. You know that.”

“Mary Ann!” Dean utilized her full name, a warning to the severity of the matter – a huge indication when Dean chooses ‘chick-flick moments’ over comic relief.

Capturing her lower lip between her teeth, viridian eyes flickered between the brothers, visibly conflicted.

“You guys are overreacting!” Ivy groaned from her kneeling position on the cool bathroom tiles, her cheek flushed against the toilet seat as she rested her pounding head. Beside her, Mary looked the epitome of concerned, choosing to keep her hands busy by carding her fingers through her golden-brown curls. Shaking her head, the blonde sarcastically quipped, “How silly of us. It’s completely normal to puke your spleen out! Do forgive us.”

She would never admit it, but the simple act of rolling her eyes – a favorite habit, and Ivy’s signature gesture that really should be patented by her – hurt like hell, like her eyeballs were super-glued to their sockets or something, which was ridiculous, right?

“Annieeee,” she whined. “You’re making a big deal out of nothing. I don’t need to see a doctor. I just need sleep, ‘kay? Breakfast didn’t agree with my stomach, that’s all. Case closed. Moving on. The end!”

From the other side of the locked door – Mary, with her quick reflexes and agility, managed to push through before Ivy slammed the door in her face and locked her out as well – Aunt Deb called out, “And usually, I would agree, Button. But unfortunately, you’ve barely been able to keep any sort of proper nourishment down for over a week. Don’t think I haven’t noticed the amount of time you’ve woken up in the middle of the night to empty the contents of your stomach.”

Ivy wrinkled her nose, “Ugh! Do you have to use such…clinical terms, Aunt Deb? It’s kinda freaky. Makes me feel like a lab rat.”

“Don’t change the subject, young lady!” a new voice, a distinctive rough voice, cut through Ivy’s attempt to downplay her symptoms, and as always, her arrival generated complete and utter stillness. Ivy and Mary exchanged a wide-eyed and open-mouthed look, obedience naturally coming over them at the intimidating woman’s presence. There was a scratching against the lock and shortly after, the door opened, revealing a smiling Aunt Deb, who looked much too smug, almost like the cat that caught the canary, and the formidable woman with the big-eyed glasses and an extremely short stature. Her eyes, magnified due to her glasses, narrowed in on Ivy’s pallid face and her lips pursed so thinly, they were nearly nonexistent. “You look like utter shit,” blunt and to the point as expected.

The brunette choked out a laugh, “You really know how to brighten up my day, Hetty.”

“Don’t be smart with me. I’m not here to coddle you. I’m here because you need a doctor. And if I have to drag you there by your hair, so be it. Now, up you get,” the dare to refuse her was palpable in Hetty’s expression and, defeated, Ivy tossed the smug Aunt Deb a dirty look. “But I’m fiinee,” the brunette whined, though she still rearranged herself into a standing position.

Disobeying Henrietta Lange was pure suicide.

Hetty looked unconvinced, “Humor us.”
An hour later, Ivy, surrounded by her best friend and her two old and quirky, adopted aunts, sat on the hospital bed, staring at the doctor with her mouth agape, his words not sinking in. “Say that again…” she whispered in disbelief.

The doctor beamed at her, “You’re pregnant. Two months in, actually. Frankly, I’m astounded you didn’t suspect anything when you first missed your premenstrual cycle.” Ivy blinked at him; of course she realized when the date of her period came and went, but she simply chalked it down to stress, especially after her breakup with Steve. She was depressed and crying nonstop and then she experienced the nausea, she didn’t think much of it. In retrospect, she should have suspected when the first month passed.

And then, the Doc said, “Congratulations.” And she flipped her shit.

“Congratulations!?” she shrieked, hysterical. “This is not good news. Not even close. I can’t, I can’t be a mother. How’m I supposed to know how to be a mother when I never even had one! No, no this is a mistake. Check it again. I’ll pee on a thousand sticks if I have to.” She pinned Hetty with a beseeching gaze, “Find me another doctor. I refuse to believe I’m pregnant. No. No fucking way!”

With her ninja moves, Hetty subtly ushered the bewildered and slightly intimidated doctor out of the room to give the four women privacy. Speechless, Mary simply gripped Ivy’s hand while Aunt Deb stroked her brown curls, her expression sympathetic. Hetty went for tough love, not bothering with the sentimental crap, “Suck it up, Ivy. You’re pregnant, you’re pregnant. Accept it. You’re not alone. You have us and your brothers, your father and Royal-”

“Oh my God! Dad will kill me,” Ivy groaned before she broke into giant sobs. “Steve, I, I can’t do this without Steve. I don’t want this. I don’t want to be pregnant. I, I’m a Hunter. I can’t stop hunting… I can’t hide this. I-”

Clearing her throat, Mary kept her tone neutral, “There’s always abortion-”

Glaring at the blonde with fire in her eyes, Ivy snarled, “I’m gonna pretend you didn’t just say that. I save lives, not end them. Especially not-” unconsciously, she reached out with a hand to stroke her still toned stomach, “-not my own flesh and blood.”

Deb and Hetty deftly masked their pride, Ivy’s violent reaction proof that she already decided to keep her baby.

“Annie? Ann?” Dean’s stern expression softened in his attempt to snap Mary out of her daze, concerned lines crowding on his forehead. Sam gently shook her shoulder and a pair of viridian orbs refocused onto the brothers. Turning her head to look at Ivy’s peaceful form, Mary whispered, “Nothing. Nothing’s wrong.”

Grudgingly, Dean and Sam admitted defeat, realizing they won’t be getting anything out of the stubborn blonde. Ever since childhood, those two girls had always been as thick as thieves and nothing short of a miracle would get either one of them to fess up without the other’s express permission.

Getting into the Impala, Dean drove towards the nearest motel, all of them in desperate need of sleep.
Many of you are probably disappointed Steve McGarrett didn’t make an appearance. Tell me about it, so am I. But I couldn’t squeeze him into this chapter. However, next chapter we’ll have A LOT of Steve goodness! ;)

Face-Claims:
-Ivy Winchester - Nina Dobrev
-Dean Winchester – Jensen Ackles
-Sam Winchester – Jared Padalecki
-Mary Ann McGarrett – Taryn Manning
-Royal Van Dyne – Charles Mesure
-Debora McGarrett – Carol Burnett
-Hetty Lange – Linda Hunt
Chapter Two

Chapter Summary

Steve faces off his father's murderer and the Winchesters and Mary's confrontation with the Wendigo brings secrets to light and endangers more than just Ivy's life. Roy is harbouring secrets and Steve grows suspicious of him.

Chapter Notes

Just a head’s up, as mentioned before in the previous chapter, John McGarrett was murdered on November 1st, 2005. Jessica's funeral takes place November 4th, despite the fact she died on the 2nd; it makes sense that her family needed time to arrange the funeral, right? So, anyways, this chapter begins on the 4th of November. The second scene, which takes place right after John's funeral is the 11th of October, which happens a day after the Winchesters make it to Blackwater Ridge – for the sake of my story, deviating from Canon, the Winchesters arrive on the 11th.

Also, another note I should have addressed the previous chapter, all electronics and technology available in 2010, will be available from 2005 onwards. Just a head’s up to diminish any confusion and stop any of my reviewers from pointing it out! XD

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Palo Alto, California

The distinctive modulation of Mary’s ringtone that had been ringing nonstop for the past two days and grating on everyone’s nerves blared loudly in the cramped motel room the Winchesters and Mary chose to take solace in for the duration of the mourning period. The blonde let out a disgruntled groan and, instead of checking caller ID – like a normal human being would – chose to snuggle deeper into the duvet and bury her no longer immaculately curled and hair-sprayed, but poofy hair under the pillow for emphasis. Sam, suit jacket discarded and tie hanging loosely and undone around his neck, was sprawled on the other bed, arm folded across his face and forearm pressed against his closed eyes, slowly peeled his arm off and lifted his head a fraction to stare at the blonde in annoyed disbelief as her cellphone continued to ring loudly in the background.

But it was Ivy who finally reached breaking point.

Still in her funeral attire – inconspicuous sheath black dress with a boat neckline, three-quarters sleeves and knee-length hemline, paired with closed-toe flats – the brunette, unable to sit about and lounge around with nothing but her depressing thoughts reverberating loudly in her brain to keep her company, and, in an attempt to repress the floodgate of tears that intensified with Jessica’s death, decided to drop down and perform squats to pass the time and distract herself, completely disregarding Sam’s incredulous expression and Mary’s lips that pursed in utmost disapproval.

The familiar ringtone that, in the past two days, had succeeded in blending in the four Hunters’ daily routine like background noise, snapped Ivy to attention; contrary to Mary’s beliefs, Ivy knew
her best friend was dodging Steve and Royal’s calls, she just didn’t know why. Stewing on the confounding reason, Ivy arrived at the conclusion that Mary wanted nothing to do with her older brother, having obviously taken the breakup personally and taken Ivy’s side and, while flattered, she didn’t want to come between two siblings, the position of her being the wedge between them utterly unattractive. However, coupled with Uncle Roy’s dogged calls, all of which were blatantly ignored by the blonde, the brunette reached to a grim conclusion that Mary seemingly skipped through due to her stubborn streak: whatever Steve wanted, it must be real important for him to get Royal Van Dyne to aid him in and form a tag team to persuade Mary into answering her calls.

Abandoning her self-prescribed regimen, with determined steps, Ivy stomped over, closing the distance between herself and Mary and aggressively yanked off the duvet that masked her form, wrestled the pillow from her grip and, after smacking the back of her head twice with the fluffy weapon of choice, the brunette grabbed the cellphone from the nightstand with unnecessary force and tossed it in the blonde’s face with a menacing, “Answer it!” before she stalked off to join Sam and snuggled into his side.

Scowling at the brunette, Mary’s expression abruptly smoothed out upon glancing at the unexpected name flashing on her screen, “Glen?” she responded, voice coated with confusion. Nestled in Sam’s freakishly long limbs, Ivy gave a sudden jerk of her head at the name of her wingman, guilt churning in her belly as she was suddenly made aware of the fact that she had abandoned her SEAL buddy after her catastrophic confrontation with Steve and Whorins, deliberately ignoring his desperate phone-calls and basically blacklisting him for no apparent reason other than him being Steve’s best friend. The moment the thought occurred to Ivy, a growl rumbled in Mary’s throat, her voice accusing, “Steve!”

Ahh… Steve must have smartened up, realizing that Mary wouldn’t answer his calls and tricked her. How deceptive of him.

Ivy rolled her eyes and suppressed a flinch, burying the pain and heartbreak that consumed her and wrapping her arms tightly around herself to quash the enticing desire to grab the phone from the blonde just for the sake of hearing the seductive, husky voice that resembled whisky, dark and smooth and pure sin. Sam, his twin-sense picking on Ivy’ pain, tightened his arms and legs around her and buried her deeper into his lean frame, dropping a kiss on the top of her head and prompting a smile out of her, albeit a weak one.

“Ten years you don’t call and now suddenly it’s all you can do!” Sparing Ivy an apologetic glance, Mary clambered out of bed and started pacing the room, her jaw ticking furiously. “After I ignored your seventeenth call, I honestly expected you to reach to the pretty obvious conclusion that I don’t wanna talk. Not with you.”

In Pohang, South Korea, Steve’s lips were compressed in an amalgamation of annoyance and fury and he disregarded Glen’s almost smug drawl of, “Told ya!” to shout in the phone, “Can you put aside your petty grudge for just two minutes, Mary. I’ve been trying to tell you som-”

“Petty grudge!” Mary shrieked, outraged. “Trust me, Steve, what I’m feeling right now is anything but a petty grudge. I’m ashamed to be your sister. What you did is inexcusable!”

Exchanging wide-eyed looks and identical grimaces, Sam and Ivy disentangled themselves, quietly rolled out of bed and went to leave the room to give the McGarrett siblings some semblance of privacy, especially since Ivy didn’t want to hear them argue over her and Sam wished to spare his twin the unneeded pain. That was, of course, until the door opened and Dean walked in, laden with coffee and doughnuts, announcing, “Alright, up and at ‘em. Eat, drink, refresh yourselves and let’s bounce.”
All eyes were on Dean, and even 9,252 kilometers away, Steve and Glen—who had demanded Steve put the phone on speaker so that he could shamelessly eavesdrop—froze upon hearing a new voice permeate through the phone.

“What?” Dean huffed, placing the heavenly caffeinated drinks and confectionary goodies on the nearest table. Mary, her cellphone limp in her grip and forgotten for the moment in her shock, and Ivy sent a pointed look at Sam, prompting realization to dawn on the eldest Winchester. “We can mourn on the road,” he said by way of explanation.

A scoff leaving her pouty lips, Ivy shook her head in utter disbelief, her tone resembling her current demeanor, “Wow! Can you be any more insensitive, Dean!?”

Glen’s curiosity morphed into grief upon hearing the familiar, naturally sultry voice he ached to hear for over a month now and Steve, unexpectedly, felt a pang in his gut and phantom icy hands clench around his heart. In his mission to get in touch with Mary, it never once crossed his mind that his sister was in the company of the Winchesters, but now, he could see with startling clarity that: who else would Mary be with—since they were toddlers, Mary and Ivy had always been like two peas in a pod, practically inseparable, and it was extremely rare to find one without the other.

“Mourning?” Glen mouthed his confusion. Steve shrugged, equally bewildered and his ears sharpened as he made out the plethora of voices surrounding Mary, easily able to distinguish his sister’s location to be in a confined space. While, shockingly, due to their families’ history and the closeness of the two girls, the only Winchester Steve ever interacted with to date, was Ivy Winchester. He never met or spoke with her brothers or father, but nevertheless, he managed to tell apart and correctly deduce the many voices that echoed in the room.

“Right,” Dean’s smooth and gruff tone filled the air, a mocking quality to it. “Remind me. Since when have we been the poster family for sensitivity?” he rhetorically inquired, clearly not expecting a single retort. “Well, except for Sam. He missed out on that specific gene pool,” he amended, sending a smirk Sam’s way.

“I resent that!” Ivy always aimed to surprise, “And, sensitivity is required since our brother’s girlfriend, who so happens to be Annie and my friend, got murdered. For Christ’s sake Dean, we’re still decked out in our funeral attire, we just buried Jessica!”

“Okay!” Sam yelled, his nonchalant façade beginning to crack. “Talking about Jessica so matter-of-factly is not helping!”

Steve and Glen turned ashen; it was not so much as hearing about a girl’s death, but that said girl was murdered that had a huge effect on them and Steve found himself concerned in regards to his sister’s whereabouts and the company she kept, never mind the fact that he dated her best friend for almost two years. His suspicions regarding his deceased father’s persistent hostility and single-minded belief for Mary to maintain her distance from the Winchester family made a sudden resurgence.

“Mary!” Steve renewed his attempt to capture his sister’s undivided attention, however, her name barely sprang forth from his lips when a venomous scream suffused with rage and irritation pierced his eardrums, courtesy of Ivy – “WHAT THE FUCK! MARY ANN MCGARRETT, GIVE THAT BACK RIGHT NOW!”

Furiously rubbing his ears, Glen winced and created a small distance between himself and the cellphone that lay innocuously on the table. On the other hand, Steve inched closer, annoyance and intrigue warring on his features, and belatedly, he took note that the sound of Ivy’s voice managed to do the impossible, and that is, it assuaged the numbness and all-consuming grief that took ahold
of him the split-second the gun went off in Hesse’s hand, signaling the death of his father; also, he belatedly realized it was Ivy’s presence in his life that softened the blow and the heartbreak Catherine inflicted. In the end, it all came down to Ivy Winchester...

“No!” With one hand, Mary hugged the styrofoam cup emblazoned with Ivy’s name close to her chest, viridians glowing with a warning, challenging the brunette to try and snatch it from her protective hold. “No coffee for you! I mean it!”

Another strangled yell escaped the brunette as she went to lunge at the blonde, unrestrained fury etched all over her gorgeous features. Dean, however, retaliated, and strong, unyielding arms held her back from tearing into the blonde. “Knock it off you two!” he grunted, struggling with the gracile brunette’s impressive strength. “What in the blazes is going on with you two? I want to know and I wanna know now!”

Eyes daring and voice taunting, Mary’s gaze never left Ivy, “You wanna tell ‘em, or should I?”

“You wouldn’t dare,” she hissed, her retort leaking with venom.

“Mary!” Steve bellowed, his impatience echoing in the cramped motel room, reminding the Hunters that Mary was in the middle of a phone call when Dean made his appearance. Frowning at the blonde, Dean’s glare altered to the forgotten cellphone held loosely in her hand, almost instantly recognizing the voice despite him never having met the man face-to-face, “Go finish your call, Annie. We’ll talk once you’re done.” He left no room for a rebuttal and Mary immediately obliged, ducking into the bathroom and slamming the door shut behind her, blanketing the room in silence.

“Speak!” was her one-worded demand, her patience running low. Scowling from the other end, he responded with a demand of his own, “What the hell was that, Mary?”

Dragging her hand through her poofy hair, she winced when her fingers got ensnared in the tangled mess, hair dry and crisp and forming knots due to the hairspray overload. “Mind your own business, Steve,” her retort blunt and caustic. But Steve was having none of that, “You’re my sister, which makes it my business.”

“Ten years of radio silence attests otherwise, brother,” she sneered, grossly taken aback by his audacity. “How dare you think you can simply waltz into my life after all this time and basically demand I give you the keys to my life! Whatever I do does not concern you, Steve. So, if you don’t mind, and I don’t particularly care if you do, just tell me whatever it is you wanted to say and leave me be. That way we can go back to our previous arrangement and I can blissfully get back to pretending you don’t exist.”

Making himself scarce, Glen quietly left the room as he felt like he was intruding in a private moment. For his part, Steve sucked in a sharp intake of breath, pain flaring within. He messed up, and his deeply ingrained self-preservation and his deft reflexes resulted in him losing his father, and because of his stubborn belief that his prolonged absence would protect Mary from whatever myriad of enemies he amassed in his career, he was losing-, no, he had already lost his sister. And what killed him, was Mary didn’t share his loss, and why should she? Evoked by their father and subsequently his abandonment, she created an ohana of her own, one that stuck by her through thick and thin, one that would never abandon her, not in a million years, and truth be told, Steve couldn’t fault her... nevertheless, it didn’t make it hurt any less and all the same, he couldn’t help but feel consumed with an unhealthy mixture of envy and resentment, all of it aimed at the Winchester Family.
Deciding to respect Mary’s wishes, Steve outright told her, “Dad’s dead. He was murdered two days ago…”

As Steve proceeded to summarize the events that led to John McGarrett’s death, Mary, speechless and for once devoid of any smart rejoinders, leaned against the wall and sank to her knees, despair and misery hitting her like a freight train, silent tears falling down her face in rivulets as she stared at the closed door, unblinking and a vacant look in her eyes.

“She’s been there for a long time. Maybe one of us should check in on her,” pacing erratically, Ivy’s rage seemed to have evaporated, replaced by concern when an hour passed and Mary remained absent, ensconced in the bathroom and emitting absolutely no noise. Her suggestion barely settled in when the door sprang open and the blonde in question emerged, her eyes bloodshot and dried tearstains littering her puffy face, eyes eerily vacant yet brimming with moisture.

All in all, Mary looked utterly woebegone – an alien sentiment.

Dean being Dean, in an attempt to infuse levity in any situation that reeked of melancholy, made a completely inappropriate quip, “Jeez, who died?”

“Tact!” Ivy automatically hissed, smacking his shoulder in admonishment while Sam facepalmed and turned his back on his brother, honestly not surprised in the least bit in regards to Dean’s lack of tact and complete insensitivity.

In response, Mary showcased her cellphone, her movements resembling a zombie, and she pointlessly announced in a monotone, “That was Steve. My uh, my, my Dad’s dead…”

The room was shrouded in complete and utter silence until Mary broke into another bout of uncontrollable sobs of grief and regret.

HECO-WAIAU HELIPORT

HONOLULU, HAWAII

Intense sapphire eyes methodically assessed the state of melancholic depression his niece struggled to hide behind an iron impenetrable mask, lingering a while longer on the forced smile curved on her lips, and he emitted a long-drawn-out sigh. “Won’t you change your mind?” Wordlessly, she firmly shook her head in negative. Another sigh, this one coated with a hint of aggravation at the sight of the blonde’s infamous obstinacy, “…Are you certain you don’t want to stick around a while longer? Be there for Steve.”

“Absolutely not!” she retorted, ‘Steve’ being the magical word that snapped her out of strike of silence. Sapphires pierced her, penetrating her soul with a high dose of disappointment and Mary looked away, her skin crawling with guilt and her heart weighing heavily as she secretly admitted that, despite her brother’s actions, she longed to see him. “I don’t want anyone to know I came, Uncle Roy. Not now. Not yet,” Mary decisively informed him, not a single tremor detected in her tone irregardless of the fact that she wished the opposite. “As far as Steve is concerned, I ditched Dad’s funeral, okay?”

In retrospect, it wasn’t hard to believe. Not only was Mary’s profound resentment of her father general knowledge throughout the Island of Hawaii, but that, coupled with the fact that Aunt Deb
and Hetty Lange attended the funeral and stood at the front with Steve and Royal in the row reserved for immediate family and friends, shed a significant spotlight on her absence and the blonde ensured not a single soul could identify her at the back of the crowd of mourners. She wasn’t ready to confront Steve and she sure as Hell didn’t want to linger longer than necessary in the Island. She mourned her father and now, she just wanted to return to her ohana and bury herself in the time-consuming, twenty-four/seven business of saving lives and successfully drown her own sorrows by blatantly ignoring it – and yes, she knew it was unhealthy.

“I hope you know what you’re doing, Mary,” Royal stated, his disapproval shining through. “And… I hope you don’t come to regret this one day.”

Eyebrows knit together. “I won’t,” she stubbornly retorted, oozing determination. Emitting a sigh and sparing him an apologetic tight-lipped smile, she threw herself into Royal’s paternal embrace, tears blurring her vision at the permanent and definitive realization that suddenly occurred to her: while she always held hope of reuniting with her father some day in the future, that day would never come. Not anymore; not when he was recently buried six-feet under not even half an hour ago. “I’m sorry for being so difficult. I swear, I don’t do it on purpose,” she tearfully stated, her words eliciting Royal’s arm to tighten around her slender form.

“You wouldn’t be my Mary Ann if you weren’t so stubborn,” he fondly breathed out, strong, calloused fingers carding through her blonde waves. “Now…” reluctantly pulling back, his lips lingered against her forehead and he smiled sadly. “I believe if you want to leave the Island unseen, it’s probably best you board my jet now before Steven arrives with your aunts in tow. Hmm?”

Nodding vigorously, Mary parted him with a loud smack on the cheek and turned to leave. However, just as she turned to leave, she abruptly halted in her tracks, her expression indicating that she was struggling with herself, bloodshot eyes conflicted.

“Mary?” he arched an eyebrow and stared expectantly.

Slowly, almost hesitantly, the blonde faced him again, conflicted expression steadfast. “Actually, there’s something else. Something you need to know, but Ivy’ll kill me if she finds out that I squealed.” Royal maintained his silence, simply meeting her gaze squarely until she cracked – a trick that never failed and one he incessantly exploited when Ivy and Mary were mischievous toddlers… not that they ever strayed from their mischievous ways, but that’s neither here nor there. As expected, Mary folded, confliction skating to guilt. “Ivy’s pregnant!” she blurted out.

The second she spilled her guts and uttered the forbidden words, the one word Ivy and Mary swore not to speak of until the former was ready, Mary’s eyes widened, she let out a startled gasp and clapped a hand over her mouth, shocked at her necessary betrayal.

“Come again,” Royal hoped he misheard her, but telling by her expression, he was certain it was not the case and his well-proportioned face crumpled. Instead, he changed tack, “Who, besides you and now I, know of this?”

Averting eye contact, still shocked at her betrayal despite her good intentions, she murmured, “Aunt Deb and Hetty. They, uh, they were the ones that forced her to see a doctor. Well, the credit goes to Hetty actually. She’s the one that managed to get through her thick skull.” Her lips quirked into a wry smile.

Like whiplash, he skipped to his next inquiry, “How long?”

“A bit over two months,” came the whispered reply. Sapphires shuttered to a close and he exhaled roughly from his nostrils, “So it’s-”
Interrupting the predictable conclusion he arrived at, Mary tearfully nodded, “Steve’s? Yeah. After the, after he uh, cheated on her, Ivy fell into a whirlpool of depression and waved it off as stress and then forgot all about the fact that she was two months late. I can’t get through to her.” Viridian greens implored intense sapphires to understand, to commiserate with her. “I can’t keep her in check, and she won’t tell Dean and Sam. Getting her to comply and stop risking her life is like pulling teeth, Uncle Roy!” finally able to complain to somebody that wouldn’t shoot first and ask questions later was a godsend and Mary was milking it for all it’s worth. “At first, she refused because she was scared, then she decided she didn’t want to trouble them what with Uncle J going AWOL, and now?! Now, that Mama Winchester’s murderer is back on the prowl, she’s got a one-track mind. I don’t know what to do.”

In an effort to calm her, Royal pulled her into a comforting embrace, silencing her hysterical pleas. Softly shushing her and dragging a hand through her hair, he said, “For now, remain as you were. Try keeping her safe and I’ll handle it. I’ll take care of this, I promise you.” Sensing her stiffen in his arms, he met her frightened gaze and detected the flash of guilt pass through her expressive eyes, “You did the right thing coming to me, Mary. Never doubt that. One day, Ivy will be grateful to you.”

Mary hadn’t disappeared into the private jet for even two minutes, when a sulking yet hopeful Steve approached, an eccentric aunt attached to either side of his arm. Viridian eyes identical to his sister’s, scoped the premises, skipping Royal’s intimidating form, and his expression fell. “She really didn’t come,” no question needed to be asked in regards to the ‘she’ he was referring to.

“I’m sorry, son,” Royal truly looked the picture of guilt. Hetty tossed a disapproving glare towards the private jet, as though her large-framed glasses had an X-Ray vision application installed and knew exactly where her wayward niece had chosen to hide.

Lips pursed, Steve sharply inclined his head, “Yeah. Me too.”

Deb patted his well-defined bicep, a fond smile on her wrinkled face, “Your sister will come around, Steven. Everybody grieves in their own way. You’ll see, before you know it, she’ll show on your doorstep.”

Steve emitted a scathing laugh, “This is Dad’s funeral, Aunt Deb. She didn’t-, shouldn’t have a choice! She should’ve been there, with me, with our family! She should have been there to pay her respects to Dad and send him off, not isolate herself and sulk like a spoiled child!” Royal glanced at the entrance of the jet from his peripheral vision, suppressing a cringe as he knew Steve unwittingly spoke loud enough for Mary to hear.

“You’re grieving, Steven. You don’t mean it,” Deb implored.

From behind her large-framed glasses, Hetty aggressively rolled her eyes. “Psht! Cease mollycoddling them and leave the boy be, Debora. Let him express himself the way he wants to. This is between Steven and Mary Ann, let them hash things out themselves,” Hetty shot back.

Not missing a beat, Deb petulantly retorted, “Oh, mind your own business, Henrietta.”

Chuckling fondly, Steve cut them off, embracing Deb first and then Hetty. “Thank you. Both of you. The fact you came means everything to me.”

“Oh, my darling boy. Where else would I be? Despite everything, John was my brother and I loved him dearly,” Deb choked out, tears pooling in her eyes. A bony hand gripped Steve’s strong one and Hetty gave it a comforting squeeze before she followed Deb into the private jet, “John was a good man, Steven. You find that son of a bitch and hunt him down like a dog, you hear me? Let justice
be served. But—” hesitating, she released his hand, cupped the right side of his face and smiled, “-most importantly, take care to yourself. Your health and safety always comes first. Your father would have wanted that.”

Swallowing the litany of endearing words he urged to say, Steve parted the strong-willed woman with a curt nod, “Will do, Hetty.” And he could have sworn he heard her mumbling: *Just like John.*

Entering the private jet, unlike Deb, who had immediately sprung to engulf the sobbing blonde in a hug, Hetty simply said, her voice matter-of-fact and expression impassive, “You, Mary Ann, are a coward.”

*I know,* reverberated dejectedly in her head as the jet took off.

To all those who were fortunate enough, or in some cases, *unfortunate enough,* in their life to have met Ivy Winchester and Mary McGarrett, a pretty general observation made was that the two girls had a habit of gravitating towards one another, and it was completely *natural*—natural and done without conscious thought. It had just always been that way, ever since they were three-years-old and Royal Van Dyne introduced his goddaughter to his honorary niece during the former’s first visit to Hawaii. Both girls possessed a sort of sixth sense when it came to the other and whenever one was in need of consoling or a shoulder to cry on, the other was automatically readily available.

However, upon Mary’s return from her father’s funeral, it was as though a brick wall had been spontaneously erected, creating a huge distance between the blonde and brunette and contaminating their natural-born bond with a stilted ambience, both girls walking around eggshells and in turn, sending wary glances when the other wasn’t looking.

For Ivy, she couldn’t locate proper commiserations or even construct a passable sentence that would appropriately express her sincerest condolences in regards to John McGarrett’s tragic and unexpected death. It wasn’t that Ivy wasn’t sympathetic or apologetic for the austere man’s death. On the contrary; John McGarrett would truly be missed, after all, he played a major role in her childhood, never mind the fact he took an antagonistic role. The brunette simply had no words to offer that would express her sincerest regrets and not make her sound like all the other mourners who offered condolences due to a sense of duty or proper etiquette, the words meaningless and platitudes empty.

At the end of the day, John McGarrett is—*was*… had always been a complicated man with good intentions.

Wordlessly thanking the waiter with a tight-lipped smile as he distributed the drinks, Ivy snatched her bottle of water and ignored the twin expression of bemusement Dean and Sam were giving her over her unlikely choice of non-alcoholic beverage. Rolling her eyes, Ivy kept herself busy by taking a swig, nose wrinkled in disgust at the banal taste and she couldn’t help but stare longingly at the bottles of beer Dean, Sam and Mary were currently enjoying, inwardly cursing Steve and his overenthusiastic sperm for the pure torment they were putting her through.

As chatter continued in the background, Ivy resumed her thoughts of the deceased, of a man who should have been an uncle to her, but never acted like one, of a man who always held her at arm’s length and stubbornly maintained a wide distance…

During the inauguration of the girls’ friendship, Steve, like his father, treated her with utmost neutrality bordering on civility, both men offering her curt nods and brusque greetings that reeked
of insincerity, merely tolerating her for Mary’s sake. Doris on the other hand, adored her, looking upon her as another daughter to coddle, dress up and spoil, especially after the particularly nasty revelation that Ivy didn’t have a single memory of a mother’s love. But then, Doris died and with her, John’s tolerance. Separating Steve and Mary, he sent them away and forbade the eight-year-olds from proceeding onwards with their friendship. Luckily, Mary’s guardian – John’s sister, Debora, refused to bow down to his whims which led to Mary’s introduction to John, Dean and Sam, and her induction as an honorary Winchester.

The fragile respect Ivy held for John McGarrett dropped dismally until… until she realized that, all this time, John knew of the Winchesters’ choice of lifestyle and didn’t want his daughter to get sucked into the Hunting life – too little, too late. Once Mary was of legal age, she blatantly disobeyed her father, bouncing from Hawaii to the mainland under both Royal and John Winchester’s tutelage, which frustrated her father to no end and tarnished the frigid yet civil relationship between him and Ivy. For that reason, Ivy found herself lacking the initiative to console her best friend.

Abandoning her half-full bottle, Ivy hopped out of her stool. “I’m out.”

Startled, Dean stared at his sister, concerned and confused at her questionable behavior, “Already?”

“I’m pooped out,” Ivy shrugged, deliberately avoiding eye contact. Lifting a hand, she absentmindedly waved goodbye and ducked out of the bar. Shooting to his feet, a relieved Sam parted them with a quick, “I’ll walk her back,” and ran after his twin, leaving Dean and Mary behind to stare at their retreating backs.

“They’re mourning,” Dean shortly explained, taking a long swig of his beer. Mary’s glum retort had his green orbs flicker from the door onto her. “Yeah,” she nodded in understanding. “Sam is. Ivy-”

“Loved your Dad,” Dean cut in. Smiling at the incredulous arch of the blonde’s brow, he cleared his throat, “Look, I may have had zero interaction with your family, well other than Deb, but I know my sister. In her own way, she was fond of your father and in her own way, she is mourning his loss.”

Shifting uncomfortably, Mary distracted herself by downing her drink. Wiping her mouth with the back of her hand, she let out a humorless chuckle, “You’ll excuse me if I have trouble believing that. Ivy’s not really good at keeping things from me-”

Interjecting the blonde once more, Dean matter-of-factly pointed out, “Silence speaks louder than words, Annie. But-” his gaze sharpened, his entire attention fixated on her, “-that isn’t what’s really bothering you.” His relationship with Mary might pale in comparison to the bond she shared with Ivy, but Dean had known her and had a hand in taking care of her since she was eight-years-old and left in the care of her spinster aunt. Therefore, like with Sam and Ivy, Dean had a knack for reading her.

For Mary’s part, she couldn’t shake off the alien sensation of being stuck in limbo.

In tandem, self-deprecating thoughts swirled in the recess of her mind. Guilt, grief and regret fought for dominance as she mourned her father, hating the way they last left things, bitter over the last moment she unknowingly shared with her father which was, as usual, another argument, and miserable for never having told her father that despite it all, she loved him. Then, the glaring fact that she betrayed Ivy haunted her; never before had Mary dared to do such a thing, but Royal needed to know – she was adamant about it. And, while Mary felt a surge of guilt, she couldn’t
find it in herself to regret her actions. If she were given the option of traveling back in time to reverse what she did, Mary’d refuse.

The most dominant thought that clung tightly to her however, was the conflicting thoughts regarding Steve. She hated him, yet loved him to death. She wished he could feel an ounce of the pain he was putting Ivy through, yet she despised herself for being the one to hurt him. She wanted to punch every inch of him, yet she yearned to be caged in his protective embrace. She fought the urge to curse his very existence, yet she was desperate to know why he abandoned her and felt justified while doing so.

And, in spite of every contradiction and surreptitious desire battling in the recess of her mind, Mary Ann McGarrett knew, without a doubt, if she ever found herself in desperate need of Steve’s help, he would come, no questions asked and no hesitation on his part. Yet the same couldn’t be said about her as she previously exhibited that very morning when she refused to stand by her brother’s side during their father’s funeral – for crying out loud!

“I’m a horrible sister,” she finally blurted out, her tone heavy with self-loathing. Unable to hold eye contact with intent jade eyes, Mary concentrated on her fingers, which were nervously peeling the label from her empty beer bottle. “I, I let Steve think the worse of me. I knew he needed me there at Dad’s funeral and, I kept myself hidden. I let him believe I bailed. And, yeah, I know I’ve the right to be pissed at him. And I am. I’m so mad at him, and not just for how he treated Ives, but for abandoning me. But… it was our Dad’s funeral. I should have been there by his side. I should have,” she hysterically breathed out.

Inclining his head, Dean voiced his agreement, “You’re right. You should have. But Steve’ll forgive you.” Seeking his gaze, Mary looked taken aback, her lips quirking in a diminutive, barely palpable smile. “What?” tone defensive, Dean scowled at her.

Throwing both hands up, palms facing him in a pacifying gesture, her barely decipherable smile morphed into a transparent smirk, “Nothing, nothing. Just, I didn’t peg you as Steve’s biggest supporter, that’s all.”

His scowl more pronounced than ever, a deep crease materializing between his brows, Dean forced an amicable tone, “Hold your horses, Annie. I’m not. However, while I’d like nothing more than to introduce his face to my fists. Repeatedly! If there’s one thing I know, it’s the importance of family and, as a big brother myself, I can tell you for certain that Steve will forgive you. You’re his little sister, his flesh and blood, to him, that’s more important than a grudge. Trust me.”

“I always have, Winchester,” Mary’s smile threatened to split her face in half as she bumped shoulders with him.

The next night, any remnant guilt Mary felt for confiding in Royal took off with the wind when the monster they were hunting near Blackwater Ridge was discovered to be none other than a Wendigo. A brief text to her honorary uncle summarizing their current hunt brought to light more than she ever expected.

“Mary, listen to me,” the urgency in Royal’s voice prompted Mary to stiffen, a bad feeling reverberating through her. Viridian orbs flickering between the three civilians and the Winchesters, she pasted on a convincing smile and effectively blended with the copse of trees, away from prying eyes and curious ears. “There’s something you should know about the Wendigo, mostly Hunters disregard this particular section in the lore because nobody is as ridiculously insane as Iivy!” anger and fear colored his tone and Mary’s heart stuttered. “According to the lore, a Wendigo considers itself lucky if it ever stumbles upon a pregnant woman, and it can sense one a mile away. Now, it all depends on how far a woman is into pregnancy; if the Wendigo spots Ivy, Mary, it’ll hoard her,
nothing and nobody will be as important to the Wendigo as Ivy will be. She’ll be preserved until she delivers her baby, which is when it’ll devour her. I don’t think I need to tell you what the baby’s fate will be…”

Her face the perfect picture of horror, Mary breathed out, “Oh my God!” Fear consumed her and froze her in place.

“Mary, I don’t care what you have to do. I don’t care what desperate measures need to take place or what your definition of betrayal is. In no uncertain terms can Ivy proceed with this hunt. Knock her out, drag her away, tell Dean and Sam. Whatever you do, the important thing is that you get her out of there!”

This was not how it was supposed to happen, not how Steve imagined the confrontation when he finally faced off with Victor Hesse – the damn ninja slinking out of the shadows in entirely black apparel – in person. Once again, the bastard managed to get the drop on him…

Leaping after one another from cargo to cargo, firing rounds – at least, that was until he became rendered weaponless – trading brutal blows and swift kicks, Steve could handle anything. He was trained to handle anything! He was trained to handle anything! What he couldn’t, didn’t, handle, however, was the casual, very matter-of-fact reference of his sister, her name innocuously emanating from the Irish terrorist’s mouth and that, that brought him to a disadvantage, and against his better judgment, the SEAL came to an alarming stop, wide incensed eyes penetrating his archenemy – his father’s murderer!

Panting roughly, Steve angrily breathed out, “What about my sister?”

A barely noticeable smirk lit up his ruggedly handsome features, sharp cheekbones lifting, “Dat caught yooehr attention, dedn’t it?” And to Steve’s bewilderment, the Irish man didn’t lunge for any of the littered weapons surrounding them, nor did he morph his stance into an offensive one. Instead, he casually straightened his posture and slipped his cellphone from his jacket pocket, the device emitting vibrating sounds and the screen lighting up with an incoming call. Taking two steps forward, Victor rotated the device, allowing Steve to put a name to the beautiful blonde-haired, green-eyed woman on his screen.

His heart stuttered to a stop and all comprehensive thought morphed into mush as his viridian orbs connected with identical ones frozen on the screen. “Why is-” crazed eyes lifted and bore into impassive bluish-greys as the cellphone kept vibrating. “My sister’s calling you! What did you do, huh! Plant yourself in her life to take her out-” he cut himself off at the patronizing look Victor gave him and unbidden, Anton’s voice reverberated in his head; words that barely made sense were now crystal clear – “Chasin’ me brahther and I around the world for five years, like a little doggy lookin’ for a bone. You dedn’t think we’d do our homework ahn you?”

“You son of a bitch!” Steve snarled through gritted teeth, angry dots infiltrating his vision and the background noise of Danny’s altercation with Hesse’s men white noise. He could only see Victor, can only hear Anton’s no longer cryptic taunts. To his surprise however, Victor scoffed and shook his head, almost like Steve was misbehaving on purpose. “O, come ahn, Steven. You’re reachin’. It may interest you to know dat I prefer brunettes over blahndes,” he smirked pointedly, not that Steve understood the true meaning behind his statement. “Me brahther… Anton ahn de other ‘and…” he trailed off, allowing his words to sink in.

The cellphone darkened. Two beats later, it vibrated again, Mary’s smiling picture illuminating the
screen which introduced a tick in Steve’s jaw, viridians darkening in such potent rage, it was reaching the point of suffocation.

Victor’s cold gaze softened around the edges when he glanced briefly at the picture of Mary, thumb hovering over the device as if he were contemplating whether he should take, what appeared to be, her obvious call of distress. Confusion consuming him, at war with the urge to throttle him and watch as the life left his eyes, Steve stared at him, head cocked as the harsh contours of his features softened, hinting that his sister most probably wasn’t “homework” as Anton put it, or a means to an end in the Hesse brothers revenge fantasy against him.

Bluish-grey orbs pierced him, Victor pocketing his vibrating cellphone to give Steve his undivided attention. “Tell me, Steven,” hands interlaced behind his back, he took a calculating step forward which Steve matched with a cautionary step back. “‘ow does one best explain dat deir brahther is respahnseble fahr deir boyfriend’s death?”

Eyes squinted, head inclined to the side and lips pursed in bemusement, Steve, after a moment of ringing silence, recovered his voice, “What? What are you talking about-”

“Because dat’s what me brahther was to your sester, to little Mary,” Victor passionately continued as though Steve hadn’t gotten a word in, staring intently as the color drained from the SEAL’s face. Cocking his head and blinking in mock confusion, Victor said, “Dedn’t you know?”

Steve emphatically shook his head, “No.”

“O yes. Quite serious, too,” Victor assured him, his tone scarcely neutral and eyes penetrating.

Gritting his teeth, Steve snarled, “My sister would never get involved with scum like your brother.” Though, to his ears, he sounded weak, words lacking the proper conviction as the proof of his baby sister’s innocently smiling face illuminating the Irish bastard’s screen flashed before his eyes, heavily stated otherwise. All of a sudden, he had trouble breathing, eyes slamming shut at his entire world spun out of proportion.

“Just like Ivy Winchester wouldn’t assahciate ‘erself wit de likes o’ me?” the deviously innocuous inquiry pervaded the air, prompting Steve’s eyelids to fly open and showcase expressive viridian orbs, wide with disbelief, a sheen of pain around the edges.

Growling, Steve took a menacing step forward. “What do you know about Ivy?” he all but demanded.

“I know dat she is a goddess!” the Irish terrorist spat back, face contorted in unimaginable fury and eyes ablaze with abstruse malice. “A goddess amahng us dat should be worshiped ahn an altar. Dat deserves to be treated wit love an’ respect. Ivy Winchester is de embodiment o’ beauty an’ cahmpassion and you broke ‘er, used ‘er and tahssed ‘er away like trash!” throughout Victor’s astringent yet impassioned speech, every word meant to attack Steve and defend Ivy, comprehension dawned on the Navy SEAL – comprehension that, for all intents and purposes, should be impossible because, Victor Hesse cannot be in love with her. Not Ivy. No!

And then, a lewd smirk materialized on his face, eviscerating all signs of anger and bitterness. As though the Irish terrorist had telepathic tendencies, he added more salt to his metaphoric wound, “But dat’s all right. I was de one who put ‘er back tahgether… You see, your loss, me gain.” Steve started to vigorously shake his head, denial etched all over his gorgeous and usually impassive features. But Victor had no mercy – not to Steven McGarrett, and definitely not after he destroyed Ivy from within. “Who do you think Ivy called after she walked in ahn you cheatin’ on ‘er in Montana?” He stopped shaking his head, instead mouthing silent negatives as a mantra… a plea.
Smirking full force, Victor imparted the unvarnished truth, “Dat’s right. Me.”

“You’re lying!” he snarled.

The condescending expression was back, “Am I, Steven.”

His leather jacket hugged around her, dwarfing her, and her shaking form encased by one strong arm, her front flush to his chest, Victor unlocked the door to the unadorned, musty motel room Ivy vaguely recalled reserving, having had believed she wouldn’t step a foot inside as she would be spending what remained of the weekend with her boy- now ex-boyfriend. The reminder had her form shaking with renewed sobs, interspersed with her slight shivering.

“Macushla,” he sighed upon sensing her tears slide down her face and onto his neck. Cradling her tightly, with one muscled arm, he effortlessly lifted her up and carried her bridal style, kicking the door shut with his foot and blanketing the room in darkness. Blinking twice, his honed senses adjusted to the dark and slowly, he closed the distance between the door and the bed, depositing her gently onto it before he leaned forward and switched on the lamp that sat on the nightstand.

Maintaining the silence in the room, Victor’s eyes landed on the duffle bag on the foot of the bed and rooted through it, pulling out the first-aid kit. Face scrunched up in what he correctly perceived to be stubbornness, Ivy emitted a petulant groan and attempted to pull away from him but he easily outsmarted her. “Love, you’re bleeding. You scraped your ‘ands and feet. Let me.” He decided he didn’t want to know why she had been running around barefoot and immersed himself in his task of cleaning her up, immensely adept at healing scrapes and bruises which were nothing compared to righting dislocated bones, digging out bullets, and stitching knife wounds.

The ambience had a comforting air to it and as he patched her up and lightly scrubbed the congealed blood that clung to her, he waited for Ivy to collect herself. And she did. “He, he cheated on me,” she confided, her voice a hush.

His movements stilled for a moment before he continued, blue-grey eyes focused on his task. “Dedn’t we already estabish dat?” while posed as a question, it came out as a matter-of-factly statement. A bubble of hysterical, humorless laughter escaped the brunette, shaking her head, “No, no. I mean, he slept with Catherine Rollins.” Stopping altogether, he rested both hands on her left foot and intently met her gaze. “Then he broke up with me. Said he never stopped loving her. God! What is wrong with me?!” she cried out in self-deprecation.

“Nahthin’!” he hissed abruptly, a gleam of rage passing through his breathtaking eyes, a certain coldness directed at Steve. “Absolutely nahthin’. You’re perfect just de way you are, macushla-”

“What does it mean? Macushla,” she slightly butchered the Irish endearment, prompting his lips to quirk upwards, his rage draining. Cleaning up after himself and putting the first-aid kit away, he folded his arms and smirked, giving her his undivided attention, “Why de sudden interest? It’s naht de first time I call you dat.”

She shrugged and stubbornly said, “I guess I’m tired of being kept in the dark.”

His expression sobered and, crouching before her, he tucked an errant curl behind her ear, “Me darlin’.”

“What?”
“Dat’s what it means. Macushla means me darlin’,” he revealed, intense orbs devouring her.

Gorgeous didn’t even describe her. She was a goddess: stunning, brilliant, virtuous, unlike any other woman on Earth—a force of nature! Even though her wide luminous eyes were bloodshot and swollen, dark mascara-coated eyelashes brimming with tears and stuck together in clumps, the tip of her nose red, and eyeliner smeared on her face due to her seemingly endless flow of tears, Ivy Winchester was a true beauty to behold—majestic and otherworldly.

“I bet you call all the ladies that,” a nervous laugh left her; probably they all swooned at the sound of his multiple-orgasm-worthy, husky Irish brogue.

A small shake of his head met her rhetorical statement, “Just you.”

Victor Hesse; terrorist, international arms dealer, soulless murderous bastard extraordinaire, was brought to his knees by this tiny slip of a girl… no, this goddess! Ivy Winchester is, was, would always be, his Achilles Heel, and to a dangerous man such as himself who had amassed an endless amount of enemies in his long, ill-fitted profession, it was a weakness he couldn’t risk having. But he was done for. There was no turning back, no changing the fact. He needed her.

“Oh,” she sucked in a sharp intake of breath, taken aback by not only his honesty, but the power of his words. Unconsciously shaking her head, she feebly said, “I, I had no idea. I…”

She trailed off. What could she say? ‘I’m sorry…?’ That she wouldn’t have dated Steve if she knew…? Ivy Winchester was a lot of things, but she tried to toe the line when it came to lying. She may be his one, his Achilles Heel, but the truth was, no matter how much she denied it or hated it, Steve McGarrett was hers. But… knowing what she did now, maybe, just maybe, she would have given Victor Hesse a chance long before Steve came along… long before she ran into him on that fateful night two years ago.

“If I’d have known—” she tried again. Only this time, Victor brusquely cut in, his tone firm and leaving no room for an argument, “I would ‘ave refused. When we met, you were stell seventeen, love. I may be a laht o’ things and ‘ave many irredeemable qualities, but one line I would never cross, is becoming romantically or sexually invahlved wit a minor. I was prepared to wait, but…” self-loathing evident in his tone, his lips contorted into a bitter sneer.

Comprehension dawned on her, “But, by then, I was with Steve.”

“Yep,” slapping both thighs, Victor stood up. Back turned, he went to disappear into the bathroom, give the brunette privacy, but before he could take a step away from her, a soft, warm dainty hand curled around his wrist and sensually slid into his large hand, fingers interlacing. Abruptly turning around to gauge her expression and meet her gaze, his eyebrow arched expectantly. “Ivy—”

“Stay,” she whispered, pouty lips barely moving to form the one word that had him nearly crippled with desire. Not releasing his hand, her grip tight and desperate and needy, almost as though she were terrified the lack of physical contact would make him disappear, Ivy rearranged herself into a kneeling position, inching closer to him until their chests were a hairsbreadth away, cleavage heaving and barely brushing against his muscled torso. And then she delivered the final blow, his customary icy orbs melting, blazing with lust, desire, desperation…want, so much want! “Victor. Make me forget. Make me scream your name until I can’t even remember his. Fuck him out my memory, please…”

And he came undone; what little self-restraint he had crumbling under the temptress before him—such a force to be reckoned with.
She barely had a moment to blink before he somehow, hands nimble and efficient, roughly slipped off the off-shoulder long-sleeved ruched mini-dress that fit her like a glove – clinging to her like a second skin – and barely left little to the imagination, unwrapping her like a present. Briefly, his lustful expression turned stoic, envy distinguishable in his eyes as he raked her form, glaring at the vibrant red lacy bra and matching thong as though it had offended him.

“Dis meant fahr McGarrett?” he growled, the possessiveness detected in his voice prompting a wanton moan out of her, hyperaware of him drinking in every curve and valley and sliver of skin bare to him while his large hands blazed fiery trails over her body. Panting and clinging to him, fingers digging into his scalp, she said, “His loss, your gain, right?”

Blue-greys too intense, heat pooled in him as he slowly dragged his gaze back to her face, taking in her wonderfully dilated soft chocolate orbs and prompting his brain to shut down. Wanton arms coiled around his neck just as his mouth was on hers, capturing her sultry lips between his, tongue plunging inside, drinking her in. His shirt was frantically tugged from his torso, separating his lips from her heavenly ones to latch on to her neck, sucking downward across her bronzed décolletage.

…and he started worshipping her all. night and all. day. long with reckless abandon!

A guttural yell echoed around them and Steve lunged with renewed vigor, bombarding Victor with intricate blows, including a karate chop to the neck. The Irish man retaliated almost instantly, first going on the defensive and then the offensive, managing to swiftly sidestep the enraged SEAL and bring him to the ground on his back. Palms on the ground, just as Steve managed to lift himself, Victor brought his leg out and threw a well-aimed kick at Steve’s face, hurling him off the cargo and onto the windshield of a vehicle below.

Dazed, in pain and numb with incandescent rage, Steve groaned and remained on his back. From his peripheral vision, he pinpointed his gun Hesse unarmed him of not long ago and he subtly shifted toward it. Up above, Victor grabbed and loaded a rifle before he stood up and stared down at the Navy SEAL’s bloody and exhausted form.

“An eye fahr an eye, Steven. You killed me brahther, I killed your father. Don’t make me kill you too. Think o’ Mary.”

The fact that Victor failed to mention Ivy’s name didn’t escape his notice. Eyes seeking his gun, he murmured to himself, “I am.” It wasn’t about revenge anymore. No. It was about keeping Mary and Ivy – two naïve girls who didn’t know any better – safe from this cold-hearted bastard. Panting, he met the pair of greyish-blue eyes, “There’s something you should know about your brother.”

Absentmindedly, his expression set in a perpetual frown, he asked, “What about ‘im?”

“He died the same way you did,” not hesitating, he grabbed the gun and smoothly shot Victor in the chest, twice. A surprised and pained gasp was emitted from his lips before he fell backwards off the container and into the ocean below.

Steve waited, eyes intent at the immensity of the ocean, but Victor Hesse never emerged…
VAN DYNE MANSION
O'AHU, HAWAII

A cacophony of disruptive sounds that consisted of doors forcefully slamming shut, the distinctive skittering of his help and unintelligible gruff demands, the loudest and most distinguishable noise being his butler’s harried attempt to halt and calm the intruder. Evidently, the door to his Study bursting open and bouncing aggressively against the wall as the intruder furiously barged in, proved his loyal help’s failure.

“We need to talk,” Steve snapped, not bothering with the customary pleasantries. Simultaneously, the harried yet immaculately dressed butler appeared by the Study’s threshold, a hand over his chest as he panted heavily, his British accent more pronounced in his displeased state, “I profusely apologize for the intrusion, Master Van Dyne. Lieutenant Commander McGarrett refused to be delayed and insisted he meet with you posthaste.”

His composure radiating utmost calm and nonchalance, Royal remained seated in his vintage cognac leather armchair situated behind his desk; his intense sapphire eyes flicked upwards to meet his butler’s distressed pair of grey orbs and he curtly raised a hand in a pacifying gesture, “It’s alright, Theobald. You can return to your duties.” Relieved, Theobald dipped his head in acknowledgement and left, softly closing the door behind him. Intense orbs penetrated Steve, and with the same hand, he motioned for him to deposit himself in one of the two armchairs before his desk, “Steven, please, have a seat.”

Stubborn, Steve remained on his feet, breathing heavily and staring at Royal’s other hand, which was positioned underneath the newspaper, clutching onto something that had a distinctive shape Steve would recognize anywhere. “You expecting to be attacked in your fortified mansion,” he pointedly remarked, a lilt of sarcasm in his tone as his eyes slowly traveling from his hand to scrutinize the man’s face. Smirking, Royal released the handgun from his vice grip and lounged in his armchair, making himself more comfortable, both hands interlaced and propped on his chest, “One can never be too careful. Old habits die hard, I believe. A term you are most familiar with, hmm.”

Emitting a grunt of agreement, Steve took the proffered seat, “You don’t look surprised to see me.”

“Oh, I’ve been expecting you,” Royal matter-of-factly revealed. “I must say, your dramatic entrance did take me by surprise.” He then took in Steve’s bruised face, butterfly bandages peppering his face and the conflicted spark in his impassive eyes. “Is this the part where I ask you what happened to your face and you give me some facile retort about the other guy?” his tone was dry, his smile wry and his features lacked any humorous lines.

Swallowing a snort, Steve shook his head; during his time away from Hawaii, he never once forgot Royal Van Dyne’s dry humor and matter-of-fact inclination. Come to think of it, it suddenly dawned on him that his peculiar mannerisms were startlingly familiar; Ivy and Mary apparently inherited it from the secretive and sly billionaire after all the time they spent around him. Snapping out of his deep contemplations and returning to the subject in hand, Steve bluntly said, “I killed the other guy.”

“Oh? And… are you planning on enlightening me on the person’s identity or would you rather I stumble in the dark?” Royal leaned forward to better gauge his honorary nephew, not liking the ruthless glint in his eyes. He inwardly sighed – John’s death changed Steve and, while understandable, Royal had hoped the Navy SEAL wouldn’t bottle in so much rage and discourage the addictive thirst for vengeance from taking hold, it would only do more harm than good;
example A: John Winchester.

The name was spat out with such malice and bitterness, “Victor Hesse.”

“Oh.” Royal sucked in a sharp breath, unable to properly formulate a more suitable response.

Suffice to say, Steve’s observation skills were flawless, “Correct me if I’m wrong, Roy, but you don’t look too happy about justice being served.” He didn’t give the billionaire a chance to respond. Steve was on a roll and had many questions that needed answering and he wasn’t about to allow himself to get distracted by the wily man before him. “In fact, a lot of things don’t add up. Hesse says he was involved with Ivy and that my sister got mixed up with Anton. At first, I didn’t believe it, I couldn’t! That was, until he got a call from, surprise, surprise, Mary! But-” a mordant smile curled on his lips, eyes evaluating Royal, “-you already knew that, didn’t you?”

“Steve-”

“DIDN’T YOU?!” the Navy SEAL bellowed, half-rising from his armchair, the fingers of his right hand curling into a bone-white fist before he brought it down, slamming against the ostentatious desk in a resonating bang. Much to his irritation, Royal Van Dyne didn’t so much as flinch, his composure unnaturally stoic and piercing sapphire eyes unblinking. Exhaling roughly from his nose, Steve abandoned the armchair, taking preference to pace around the opulent Study, making dents in the vintage wine-red Oushak rug.

Emitting a sigh that was an odd amalgamation of wary, mournful and resignation, Royal unbuttoned the sleeves of his shirt and folded them upwards before he stood and crossed the room to where his favorite decanter sat on the minibar. He proceeded to pour two short-glasses with bourbon, keeping one in his hand and the other on the table for Steve. It wasn’t until he took a hearty sip did Royal finally meet Steve’s blazing accusatory gaze, “Yes. I knew. I’ve always known, Steven. Not much gets past me. But that’s not what you want to hear, is it?” Steve looked away, prompting a sad nod from Royal. “You’re treading on dangerous waters, Steve. I made a promise to your father that I would always look after you and Mary, and I will. Always. But you’ve got to work with me here-”

“Why would you let Mary and Ivy be around known terrorists?!” Steve interjected. He wasn’t searching for platitudes, only straightforward answers.

Realizing Steve wouldn’t be deviated from this certain path, Royal downed his drink and poured himself another, “I’d say I got my reasons and that it ain’t none of your business, but something tells me it won’t be good enough. So, here goes.” Closing the distance between them, the billionaire squarely met viridian greens, shoving the short-glass of bourbon into his hand, “You don’t live in a world of black and white, son. There are many shades of gray – that’s where I live. I spent most of my life traveling among the grays and ignoring the black and white.” He abruptly put a hand up to prevent Steve from interrupting. “Yes; Ivy and Mary are, or should I say, were intimately involved with the Hesse brothers. Yes; I’ve known all along. Yes; I know exactly who they are and what they’ve done. No; Ivy and Mary do not-” that last one prompted a reaction out of Steve, eyes brimming with shock and such potent relief, it made him look vulnerable. “Tell me something, Steve. Victor Hesse shot your Dad, eh? Killed him in cold blood, never mind the fact, you killed his brother, your sister’s boyfriend, who, speaking of, she still has no idea is dead,” a dark eyebrow rose, cynical and extremely judgmental, clearly conveying the hypocrisy in Steve’s vendetta. “Did it ever cross your mind that, perhaps Victor was merely the weapon and somebody else pulled the trigger?”

“What? That’s ridiculous, Roy!” Steve exclaimed, downing his drink and hurriedly refilling it. Resting both hands on the minibar, head hanging between his shoulders, Steve’s voice was
whisper, “You’re saying my father’s death was ordered? Is that it?”

“I said no such thing,” Royal denied, his expression belying his words. “I know Victor, Steven. He don’t care two shits about your father, and yet, he killed him. Ask yourself this…Why?”

Snarling, he promptly retorted, “Because I killed Anton.”

The billionaire inclined his head, his hand gesticulating in a ‘so-so’ motion. “I’m guessing you planned on seeing me for another reason?” he smoothly changed the subject. Not that Steve bought it for a second, but, he decided to let it go – for now. He had his father’s box and hopefully, he’d piece together the clues in no time. However, he filed Royal’s black, white, and gray speech in the back of his mind to ponder over later, knowing that the wily man subtly weaved a major clue, a crucial message he wanted Steve to solve for himself. The retired Commanding Officer would never change, his dislike for handing straightforward answers on a silver platter one of his most prominent traits.

“I assume you’ve heard about the Governor’s task force that I’m leading,” it wasn’t a question. All the same, Steve stared at Royal expectantly.

“I did,” his answer was prompt and matter-of-fact. “Full immunity and means; full blanket authority; no red tape. Your rules, Governor Jameson’s backing,” Royal succinctly listed, taking a casual sip of his drink. The disclosure that followed immensely surprised the Navy SEAL, “Pat first introduced the proposal to me the day before you were expected to land on the Island. She wanted my advice, needed to know my personal opinion of you. Told her you were the best and only man for the job.” The ‘despite you’re a cheating son-of-a-bitch who broke my goddaughter’s heart’ was left unsaid.

Nodding and frankly touched by the formidable man’s admission, Steve licked his lips and parched his throat with a hearty gulp of bourbon, “When the Governor came to me with the proposition and gave me full authority to make my elite taskforce, it came with a stipulation attached.” Viridians connected with sapphires. “That you either become a member of my team, or I keep you on as a contact. Both cases, you got full immunity.”

“Is there a question in there somewhere? ‘Cause I ain’t seeing it,” Roy quipped, lips tugged in a half-smirk. He always had full immunity, the notion of red tape nonexistent in his life.

Steve huffed out a chuckle, “You gonna make me spell it out?”

“Wouldn’t hurt,” Royal’s smirk was now visible. A small beat later, he sighed, his expression more inviting as he acquiesced, circling the rim of his short-glass that never left his grip, “I got my own department ‘round the Big Island, it’s very hush-hush and only a handful of individuals got the right clearance.”

“Let me guess, I’m not one of them,” Steve stated, his features screaming his displeasure. Royal’s head dipped, completely unapologetic, “I trust you with my life, Steven, never doubt that. Unfortunately, my hands are tied. It’s best you remain in the dark on this one, son. Safer in the long-run.” Sensing the Navy SEAL’s next inquiry, Royal beat him to the punch, his response annoyingly vague and so damn cryptic, “Basically, all cold cases get transferred to me. Anything considered as weird and unsolvable is brought to my attention, where my team and I head the investigation.”

Mulling over his words, Steve reluctantly said, “I don’t like it. But… despite the Hesse business and your incessantly vague behavior, I do trust you. You’ll have an office waiting for you at Headquarters. However, I do need a favor.”
“I thought as much,” Royal huffed, sounding more amused than annoyed with a hint of exasperation. Steve had always been an insistent boy – tenacious was the correct word. It was rare for Steve to leave any mystery unturned and the more secrets kept from him, the more determined he got.

Smiling humorlessly, Steve asked that he call Mary, knowing that she wouldn’t answer his calls, evoking another argument between them. On one hand, Mary was with the Winchesters, in the middle of a dangerous hunt; on the other hand, Royal was worried about them and had planned on getting an update from Mary regarding the Wendigo and how she dealt with Ivy. For two days now, it’s all Royal had been able to think about, unable to concentrate on his work and barely able to get even a wink of sleep.

“Steve…” he hedged, letting out a weary breath. “Mary’s currently in Colorado. It’s nighttime there. How ’bout I give her a call tomorrow and make sure she gives you a call.” But Steve wouldn’t budge, dead set on speaking to Mary now, most probably to berate her and inform her of Anton’s death. Left with no choice, Royal made the call and, to Steve’s frustration, she answered after the first ring.

“Uncle Roy? What is it?” Mary sounded tired and on edge, her voice a whisper. Interjecting before Royal had a chance to get a word in, Steve snarled, “So you answer Roy, but when I call, it takes days for you to pick up!?”

Alert all of a sudden, Mary emitted a strangled noise that spoke volumes of how annoyed she was, “Seriously, Steve! It’s not a good time!”

“When is it?” he snappishly retorted. Cutting in before an argument could occur, Royal said, “I’m sorry, Mary. He wouldn’t take no for an answer. Although, if you’d stop screening his calls like I asked you to, we wouldn’t be here right now.”

In the background, the two men could clearly hear a plethora of voices speaking over one another, Ivy’s familiar voice pervading the Study as she heatedly argued back and forth with an unfamiliar man. “If you can stop being a dick for like, one second.” Ivy was saying, and Steve didn’t fail to see a flash of fear pass the eyes of the usually composed man that stood by his side. “Mary! I thought we discussed this. What is Ivy still doing there?” Royal breathed out in alarm.

“What are you talking about?” Steve frowned at the billionaire and, after receiving no response, he snarled at Mary, “Mary, what is he talking about?” But his inquiry went ignored by her as well, Mary’s frantic words directed exclusively at Royal: “I tried. I told her everything! She promised to keep her distance and stick to our side at all times.”

The billionaire immediately turned skeptical, clearly not pacified by Mary’s words and whatever promise Ivy made and, just as Steve parted his lips to demand answers – an action he was quickly tiring of – two incidents simultaneously occurred: a shrill scream rent the air, crying for help and Dean sternly bellowed, “He’s trying to draw us out. Just stay cool, stay put. Ann-, Annie, you’re, are you taking a call?! Get over here. Now!”

Royal felt a surge of relief, pride consuming him at Dean’s overprotective tendencies, not that he ever doubted Dean taking his role as the eldest seriously. On the other hand, Steve’s eyebrow jumped in surprise; while a part of him was glad the mysterious Winchester brother he never met ensured his sister’s safety, another part was envious of the fact that his sister treated him with obedience and reverence. And then, suspicion bloomed, nagging at him. It sounded like they were in danger, but what were they doing and why?!
As the shrill screams for help persistently pervaded the air, many events spurred into motion, all in the span of the thirty seconds Mary put them on hold. Many voices cried out for a ‘Roy’ to stop and come back, hurried footsteps thundered throughout Royal’s landline and finally, a gunshot rang in the air.

“Roy, no! Roy!” Dean bellowed, but his voice was quickly drowned by Mary’s terrified scream of “IVY! IVY, NO! IVY!”

As Mary apparently ran after Ivy, hysterically screaming her name like a prayer, an inhumane growl rumbled that was instantaneously followed by a bloodcurdling and spine-chilling scream renting the air that distinctively belonged to one, Ivy Winchester, and then complete silence ensued, broken after a startled pause. Mary, Dean and Sam screamed “Ivy” on repeat, but there was absolutely no answer and Mary’s cellphone lost signal, Royal and Steve forgotten on the other end.

“Mary? Mary! Mary talk to me!” Royal begged, his stoic mask and veneer composure cracking completely as what he fearfully predicted came to pass.

Glaring daggers at the billionaire, Steve hissed, barely able to hold on to his uncontrollable rage as it slipped through his fingers, “The line’s dead. What the hell is going on, Royal?!”

Steve ended up leaving, the appropriate word being stormed off, with more questions and absolutely no answers.

BLACKWATER RIDGE

LOST CREEK, COLORADO

Foreknowledge is a blessing, a gift, which is exactly what Royal gave them… and then Ivy went and mucked it all up with her heroic tendencies and complete lack of self-preservation. Mary told her; she explicitly told her: Stay away from the damn Wendigo, it has some creepy sixth sense when it comes to pregnant woman and that, if it caught her, it’d hoard her like a freaking dragon hoards gold. But did she listen? A big, fat, NO! Ivy simply did what she did best, which is do what she thought she knew best!

“That’s definitely no grizzly!” Roy exclaimed in shock, wide eyes trained unblinkingly at the spot the Wendigo and Ivy were last seen moments ago. His ragged exclamation promptly snapped Mary out of her chaotic thoughts, viridian green orbs blankly staring at the cantankerous and antagonistic guide that was a hairsbreadth away from death if it hadn’t been for Ivy sacrificing herself, despite the fact that they had been at each other’s throats since the hunt for Tommy Collins and the Wendigo began.

Her hands started trembling and she felt sick to her stomach. In an attempt to disguise the fierce tremor of her hands, Mary wringed both wrists and, her voice coated in unmitigated fear, bellowed Ivy’s name with renewed desperation. Scoping her surroundings with crazy eyes, the blonde halted at the brothers, both of whom were attempted to console Haley and Ben Collins, and she lost it, her fear morphing into rage, and her rage directed at the only available outlet. “What the hell is wrong with you!? Ivy is missing! Your sister is missing! Snatched by a cannibalistic freak of nature! Do something!” she shrieked. “Why am I the only one freaking out here!??” hands jumped to wildly tug against her blonde locks.

“We are worried!” Dean retorted, his tone biting. “But yelling her name won’t do us any good.
Ivy’s a big girl, she’s a skilled hunter. We’ve been in worse shit before, Annie. I’ve full confidence Ivy can stall and protect Tommy and his friends long enough for us to find the Wendigo’s hideout, rescue them and torch the son of a bitch.”

At the mention of Tommy’s name, the Collins siblings stared at the trio of Hunters with restored hope and, at the word ‘Wendigo’, Roy no longer appeared skeptical. Mary clearly didn’t share Dean’s confidence, her head vigorously shaking in negative as he delivered his speech. “No, no! You-you don’t understand!”

“No! You-you don’t understand!” Sam spoke up, his tone hard and unyielding, the capture of his twin having shaken him and dwindled what little patience he had. “You two have been keeping enough secrets, Mary Ann, and I’ve had it.”

Snatching Mary’s abandoned cellphone from the ground, Dean held it in the air, his thumb hovering threateningly over a single button he knew to be Royal’s number on speed dial, “You’ve been having a lot of whispered calls with Uncle Roy since we started this hunt so, I’m pretty sure he knows. So, what’s it gonna be Annie. Am I gonna have to call Roy, or are you ready to start talkin’?”

A hand rubbing her forehead while the other rapidly made circles over her frantically beating heart, Mary attempted to steady her jumbled thoughts, “Uncle Roy, he, he imparted a missing section of Wendigo lore that had yet to be proven by Hunters. Apparently, pregnant women are somewhat of a rare delicacy to a Wendigo. If found, the Wendigo stores them away until they give birth, basically making them fat and juicy.” Her nose wrinkled in disgust and her breath stuttered. “And then, well… they get a two for one. I-I don’t have to explain what happens to the newborn, do I?” she snidely spat out, her legs moving on their own accord in a frenetic pace to ignore the ashen faces of the three civilians and the identical looks of confused disgust the Winchester brothers tossed her way.

Sam was the first to find his voice. “What’s that got to do with-” he sucked in a sharp intake of breath, eyes wide and head frantically shaking in an amalgamation of disbelief and denial. “No…” he trailed off, his voice a mere whisper as he took two steps back. Concerned and impatient, Dean whipped around to gauge Sam’s reaction, eyes flickering swiftly between his brother and honorary sister. “What? Would any of you care to share?!” he grumbled.

“Ivy’s pregnant!” Mary finally, finally blurted out, her voice ringing in the air. She felt the burden lift from her shoulders, now tons lighter, and the relief of having the truth out in the open, overwhelmed her with relief. Blinking twice, Dean cocked his head and his lips twisted into a wry smirk, “Come again…”

“You don’t believe me.” While the matter-of-fact statement sprang from her lips, Mary knew Dean was simply neck-deep in denial. What older brother wanted to believe his baby sister’s pregnant, after all… and the Winchesters weren’t some regular case, they were hardcore hunters used to putting themselves between innocent lives and danger without even blinking or a moment’s hesitation. “She’s two months along. I begged her to tell you, I did. But you know Ivy,” as the silence escalated, Mary’s nerves intensified and she started to blather, babbling to fill the tense silence and make them understand. “She’s so damn stubborn, she wouldn’t listen. If it weren’t for Hetty, Ivy’d probably still be in the dark. She chalked it up as stress, the fact that she was pregnant didn’t even cross her mind. It’s Steve’s. Obviously it’s Steve’s and, and that’s probably another reason why Ivy wanted to keep it hush-hush, you know? We found out before we set out to spring Sam from Stanford, that’s why, why we were late. Say something!” she implored the dumbstruck brothers, unable to handle the silence a moment longer and running out of things to say.
But it was Roy, *out of all people*, to speak up, “Are you saying that, that she knowingly put herself between me and that, *that thing*, risking her life and the life of her unborn child in the process… why would she *do that*?” He looked horrified and guilty, never having met anybody as selfless as Ivy Winchester.

“It’s, it’s a part of who *we* are,” Mary absentmindedly responded, hand waving between herself and the Winchesters. “Usually we don’t think, we just *do*. The Wendigo was going to kill you, but he sensed Ivy close by and abandoned his efforts. He wasn’t going to risk losing Ivy,” she felt bile rise in her throat at her words.

Swallowing the lump from her throat, Haley shakily inquired, “How, how bad is it?”

Hands waving manically overhead, Mary used reference from one of her favorite books, “Put it this way, the Wendigo is the dragon Smaug and Ivy is the Arkenstone!” *That*, at long last, prompted a reaction from Dean, “WHAT?! Ivy’s *PREGNANT*?”

Like the domino effect, Sam returned to the present as well, shaken out of his deep reverie by Dean’s outrage, “And you didn’t think to *tell us*?! What the Hell were you *thinking*?”

“She *wasn’t*!” Dean snarled. He then glared at Mary when her expression transformed into indignation, her lips parted in full preparation of volleying back a defensive or scathing retort. “Don’t! Nothing you say will make a difference. Ivy wasn’t in the right frame of mind. You! *You*, on the other hand, you should have known better. Now,” exhaling roughly from his nose, he glared at everyone in general. “We’re going to find Ivy and when we do, you both are in *heaps* of trouble! And I’ll be having a few words with Royal, Deb and Hetty, mark my words! Now let’s get going. *Chop, chop!*”

True to his words, Dean ended up locating Ivy by unintentionally getting himself and Haley captured by the Wendigo and, trapped together in its creeptacular, bone-infested hidey-hole, Dean adamantly gave his bemused sister the silent treatment. After Sam, Mary, Ben and Roy rescued them, Dean kept his promise and torched the son of a bitch and thereby, transferring his rage onto Ivy and Mary.

Ducking away from Dean’s line of fire and his many creative statements that embellished how disappointed he was in them, how he expected *better*, and of how completely *irresponsible* they were, Sam nodding and humming in the background, Mary subtly skulked towards the door with the hopes of slipping out of the motel room unnoticed the split-second her cellphone rang, deciding Steve was the lesser of two evils. Unfortunately, not much got past Dean, his senses sharp and honed due to a lifetime of hunting and taking care of his younger siblings.

“And where do you think you’re going?” he demanded, tone gruff and stern.

Shaking her cellphone, Steve’s name on full display, she pasted on a disarming smile, “Big bro calling.”

Ivy tensed, *his* name making her heart flutter, an instinctive response she had yet to beat out of her system much to her agony. Sam however, let out a particularly loud scoff, eyes narrowed on the blonde, “Right. And since when have you been so *eager* to answer his calls?”

She shifted uncomfortably which elicited an aggressive eye roll from Dean. “Just go,” he huffed, intense orbs focusing on Ivy as Mary breathed a sigh of relief and slipped outside. She softly closed
the door just as the background was pervaded with the cacophony of shouts from the Winchester siblings, and answered the call.

“Wow. Color me impressed. Over a decade I don’t hear your voice. You don’t call. You don’t ask. You don’t check in. And now, you can’t seem to stop calling,” she snidely remarked. Mary knew her brother must be extremely pissed at her for ‘bailing’ on their Dad’s funeral; after all, she did overhear his cutting remark while she hid like a coward in Uncle Roy’s private jet. However, she wasn’t ready for his volatile temper to be fixated on her. His current temper could put Dean Winchester’s infamous rage to shame.

Exhaling roughly, Steve snarled through gritted teeth, “Anton Hesse, Mary. Anton Hesse!”

“What about him?” she retorted heatedly, confused and defensive. A humorless laugh rang in her ear, “You know, Royal did mention you and Ivy were ignorant about the Hesse brothers identity-”

She interrupted, not liking his tone and what he implied, “The fuck you talking about, Steve!?”

“They’re terrorists, Mary. International arms dealers. Interpol has them on their most wanted,” he spat out, not bothering to sugar-coat his words, his only purpose being to shed light on the consequences of her blatant ignorance. Mary paled, the color draining from her tanned complexion; international arms dealers didn’t come as much of a surprise knowing what they did, but terrorists? It was an inconceivable notion – impossible! Uncle Roy knew. He knew and encouraged Ivy and Mary. Victor and Anton met Dean, and the overprotective Winchester actually approved and formed a friendship with the Irish brothers in possession of a slight sadistic streak.

Hearing Mary’s muffled words of denial, Steve growled, “Victor Hesse killed Dad. I had Anton in custody and because I accidentally ended up killing him in the crossfire, Victor murdered our father. I heard the whole thing so don’t you dare, don’t you fucking dare call me a liar!”

“You killed Ant- Anton’s dead…” her voice died, morphing into an inaudible choked sob, courtesy to the fist pressed firmly against her mouth. She had been calling Victor because Anton wasn’t answering her calls… and all this time, he’s been dead, murdered by her own brother. Eyes heavy with moist and her vision blurred, Mary found her back slam against some random motel door and she slumped onto the ground, unable to carry her own weight. Her hand flew to the silver chain she wore around her neck and tightly clutched the dangling pendant that sat on her breastbone, the pendant suddenly cold against her warm skin. “No, it can’t be.”

He couldn’t believe his ears. He told Mary her supposed friend murdered their father in cold blood, and all she cared about was that her terrorist boyfriend is dead. “You’re not hearing me! Our father was murdered by Victor Hesse. Do you get that?”

“No, he wouldn’t. It can’t be. I know him! He’d never-”

“Yeah, well he did. Might want to inform your best friend that I killed her terrorist boyfriend too.”

“What, jealous?” Mary acerbically retorted, settling on anger to distract her from a world of grief. She blinked, then did a double take, “Wait, what… Victor’s dead?!”

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VAN DYNE MANSION

O‘AHU, HAWAII
The vast halls were doused in quietude, the mansion shrouded in pitch darkness. To anyone else, nothing would appear to be or seem out of place. But Royal Van Dyne wasn’t anyone. The only sound interrupting the silent night as he furtively ambled throughout his halls was the dulcifying soft gurgling of the delicate marble fountain at the threshold of the mansion’s luxurious and grand garden, the clear water melodic as it resonated in the surrounding silence.

The back door left ajar cast a yellow beam into the sultry night. It was an odd happenstance for any door in the impenetrable fortress of his family mansion to be left open, especially under his faithful butler’s all-seeing eye. Theobald Ainsworth was the definition of meticulous; he left nothing to chance, no stone unturned, and, as a rule, every source of entry were shut, locked and some were even double-bolted, each and every door and window rigged to the unhackable alarm system, a mission impossible and blatant suicide attempt to opportunistic burglars.

Intense sapphires zeroed in on a few trails of crimson dots and, armed with a gun that never left his person and a steel blade, Royal took steady chase, treading lightly on the padded flooring. Halting at the first step that led to the basement, his gaze landed on the slumped and soaked form of the dark-haired man who was panting heavily, one bloody hand adding pressure to his bloodied torso, blood seeping through his clothes and pooling onto the wooden floorboard.

Eyes hazy with pain yet equally alert connected with his gaze and his lips quirked into a half smirk, “Took you long enough, old man.”

Rolling his eyes, Royal put the safety on and tucked his gun away at the small of his back before holstering his knife in the strap around his ankle. “Victor,” he acknowledged the intruder, voice steady and nonchalant. “You know this constitutes as breaking and entering.”

“Naht breakin’ and enterin’. Just enterin’, because de back door was unlocked. Almost like you were expectin’ sahmeone, old man. Sahmeone like me, perhaps,” Victor’s flippant remark was interspersed with harsh painful gasps.

Crouching to be on the same level as him, Royal intently examined his chest, in particular, the two bullet wounds inflicted on him by Steve. “Theobald will have your head,” he absently murmured, unsheathing his knife once more. “He takes great pride in the strong fortifications of my Mansion and the precautionary booby-traps he personally had installed.”

A snort met his statement which quickly morphed into a grunt of agony when the elder man sliced open his shirt, dried blood clinging to cotton. “Yo-you made it too e-easy, Van Dyne.”

“I believe I did,” he acquiesced, wincing in sympathy as his chest was laid bare. “Steve always had great aim. It’s a miracle you survived.” He then trained the Irish terrorist with an intense stare, a stern flicker in his orbs, “Once the coastguards return with no news, Steve will start to doubt whether he succeeded in killing you.” It was a matter-of-fact statement, meant as an unspoken caution.

Victor faintly nodded, head lolling lazily against the wall. “You gahnna patch me up or keep starin’ at me all night while you impart me wit more words o’ wisdom? Your bloody nephew left two fuckin’ slugs in me chest, and walkin’ around wit dem as part o’ me anatomy is a bitch,” he sassed; he coughed up blood towards the end of his speech, putting emphasis to his severe state.

Expression grim, Royal called for Theobald, and a full minute later, his pristine butler appeared by their side in a silk suit pajama and let out a shocked and quite comical, “Oh my dear Lord!” before disappearing to sterilize his hands and bring forth the first-aid kit and necessary supplies. Staring after his butler’s retreating form in fond amusement, Royal chuckled, “Ah, Theobald. He’s grown used to patching me up. You’ll be right as rain in no time.”
Again, he responded with a faint nod. Then, he suddenly broke the comfortable silence, “Me brahther’s dead.”

“I know. I truly am sorry.”

“Fahr what it’s worth, I’m sahrry about your pal, John,” Victor breathed out, closing his eyes.

A curt nod and a laconic, “I know…” met the terrorist’s sincere apology.

Theobald returned at that moment, fretting over the Irish man as he injected him with a sufficient amount of morphine. As the butler expertly performed minor surgery on Victor, extracting the bullets from his chest, Royal broke into speech, a faraway look in his intense orbs, “Steve would have told Mary by now. Meaning Ivy isn’t far behind.” Victor sighed in agreement; he had been thinking amongst the same lines, Royal simply beat him to it. “They aren’t ready to know the truth. I can’t risk Steve finding out…”

Chapter End Notes

I didn’t make Victor and Anton’s Irish accent very strong. In Hawaii Five-0, while they had an Irish accent, not every word had a strong Irish brogue, so I hope I did them justice.

Face-Claims:
- Ivy Winchester – Nina Dobrev
- Steve McGarrett – Alex O’Loughlin
- Dean Winchester – Jensen Ackles
- Sam Winchester – Jared Padalecki
- Mary Ann McGarrett – Taryn Manning
- Royal Van Dyne – Charles Mesure
- Victor Hesse – James Marsters
- Glen Olsen – Wilson Bethel
- Deborra McGarrett – Carol Burnett
- Hetty Lange – Linda Hunt
- Theobald Ainsworth – Ian McKellen
Chapter Three

Chapter Summary

Steve’s crusade for answers turns into an obsession, Dean and Sam are at a loss when they finally discover Ivy's secret & certain revelations has Ivy reach her breaking point.

Chapter Notes

Funny Fact: When I first started working on this chapter, there was this huge block in my head. I estimated this chapter to be incredibly short but as I wrote, the chapter took a life of its own and it’s currently the longest chapter of this story! LOL! I guess these characters inspire me. ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Narrowing, dark eyes bore a hole through the blonde’s back, resentful at the unfairness of the current situation she was trapped in, mostly because of said blonde’s big, fat mouth, and she glared at her success in escaping her outraged brothers’ warpath, Dean and Sam miraculously putting up a united front to rally against her – two against one; cheating! – and they barely waited for the door to click shut before they jumped all over her.

“What were you thinking?” Sam’s furious exclamation failed to make even a minuscule dent in Ivy; the brunette’s toned arms simply folded together and she rolled her eyes, utter irritation radiating off her in waves. The issue of twins – in Ivy’s personal opinion – was the failure to intimidate or properly make the other feel chastised. In fact, despite the dire atmosphere, Ivy was actually battling with the urge to laugh at the sight of Bitch Face #4 – the constipated look, her fist pressed to her lips to forcibly subdue the bubble of laughter that threatened to erupt.

Dean on the other hand– “You think that’s funny?” he demanded, taking an irate step forward, “Something to laugh about!? This is serious, Ivy!” Well, big brother was a completely different ballgame. He had this natural skill for making Ivy feel ashamed, guilty, a failure… for forcing her to see the consequences of her actions in a different light in a way unlike their father who commanded respect and obedience with the sheer inflection of his tone.

However, the term ‘as stubborn as a mule’ applied to Ivy and she wasn’t about to allow herself to get cowed by her brothers. Going on the defensive, she tightened her arms across her chest and went toe-to-toe with Dean, she too, taking a step forward, “Just to be clear, you’re pissed because I what?! ‘Cause I’m pregnant or ‘cause I kept it from you!”

“Both!” Dean snarled, outraged, Sam dropping silent as the eldest Winchester commandeered the argument. “This won’t just go away, Ivy! This is real and permanent and life-changing, there’s no turning back. The fact that you were naïve enough to believe you could keep this a secret, from us—” a hand manically waved between himself and Sam. “What exactly was the plan, Ivy, huh?! Wear baggy clothes until you pop that baby? Drive yourself to the hospital when the delivery date’s
due?! How could you be so irresponsible?"

And something in her just…snapped.

It could have been a number of things that pushed her to her limit, all of which had been bottled up for two months, and she reached breaking point – Dean inadvertently echoing Mary; the fact that she got knocked up in the first place by the one man she has been crazy in love with since childhood, only for him to turn around and cheat on her with the one woman she despised with a passion; the radio silence from Steve; that she was going to be a single mother; her current condition making her vulnerable and incapable of doing her job correctly; Mary’s betrayal; her brothers’ lack of support; or maybe, maybe it was the infamous ever-changing hormones of pregnancy which Ivy had firmly believed it was nothing but an over-exaggeration, an excuse to hide the fact that those women were annoying crybabies.

“Why don’t you stick a cork in it, Dean!” she raged, face flushed and eyes dilated with anger, exhaling and inhaling sharply from her nostrils and if she were a dragon, she’d totally be spitting out fire at the current moment in time. “Let’s be real here, you hypocritical asshole! You’re the last person that can talk about irresponsibility; with the amount of fucking you’ve done, I wouldn’t be surprised to find a litter of your kids scattered throughout America–”

Having come to the abrupt realization that choosing to confront Ivy by playing bad cop, bad cop was a terrible idea, Sam placed both hands up in a peaceful gesture and attempted to intervene, “Whoa, calm down, Ivy. Dean, maybe we should-”

“Shut up, Sam! Just, just shut up!” Ivy shrieked, not wanting to listen to reason as every single negative emotion and self-abasing thought she had kept bottled inside for the sake of her sanity and to survive the crushing heartbreak was unleashed, like a tempestuous typhoon craving to devour and hurt and destroy everything that stood in its path. Tears unconsciously welled in her eyes, cascading down her cheekbones like rivulets, which had Dean’s stern glare softening, not that Ivy noticed. “You think I, I want this? To be saddled with a baby? I’m twenty-two! I’m nowhere near ready to be a mother, especially not a single mother! I’m a Hunter and- and I finally proved myself capable as the first female to be born into the Winchester line, and LOOK AT ME!” outright crying now, Ivy hugged herself tight and turned her back on her brothers and the identical expressions of pity displayed on their faces.

Emitting a long-drawn-out sigh, Dean placed a hand on his sister’s shoulder and softly pivoted her round to meet his gaze, encasing her in a gentle embrace, “Why didn’t you tell us, Ives? We’re family and the thing about family is you never have to go through anything on your own.” The return of her nickname and the affectionate tone he employed, discarding the accusatory gruff and sharp tone, had Ivy sniffle like mad, her bout of tears renewed with fervor.

“I was- I felt ashamed,” she tearfully revealed, averting her brother’s intense green eyes and her twin’s wounded puppy ones. “I’m always careful. I’ve been on the pill since I was fifteen! But, Steve he, he was gone for so long and I, I stopped taking them because well, obviously I won’t be intimate with anyone not my boyfriend.” Dean and Sam grimaced simultaneously at the implication of their sister doing the horizontal tango. “Usually Steve calls to check in on my location but that time he didn’t! He surprised me with a romantic weekend and using protection completely slipped my mind.” Shaking her head, Ivy released herself from Dean’s warmth and roughly wiped at her tearstained face, bloodshot eyes flickering between her brothers, “When Mary brought up the option of getting an abortion, I couldn’t, wouldn’t! The mere thought of killing my flesh and blood–Steve’s, it isn’t even an option. But at the same time, I can’t quit hunting; and my stunt last night? I saved a life, yeah, but that baby growing inside of me would’ve been better off aborted than becoming Wendigo chow. I’m not, I’m not ready to be a mother, to be a pregnant Hunter… telling
you guys, it would've made it real and it was easier sticking to blissful denial.”

A pensive ambience bathed the dingy room, each Winchester lost in thoughts that revolved around the bun that was currently baking in Ivy’s oven.

Recovering from the initial shock, Dean felt a zing spread within him, warming him to the idea of becoming an uncle in approximately seven months. Despite what Sam may think – and he mockingly commented on this certain subject a lot in the past – Dean always had a natural flair for children, like an inborn ability; what with him taking care of Sam, Ivy and later on, Mary, one had to be genuinely likable when it came to children with a sixth sense when it came to their needs. On the other hand, Sam was still having trouble trying to wrap his head around the fact that Ivy, his twin sister Ives!, was going to be a mother; it wasn’t that he thought she’d make an abysmal mother, no…deep down, if Sam were to be completely, a hundred percent honest with himself, he didn’t think Ivy was ready, not by a long shot. Ivy adored living on the wild side of the road, had many bouts of irresponsibility and was a perpetual teen. Sam could honestly say, he didn’t know how Ivy was expecting to raise a baby when she could hardly take care of herself…exhibit A, her impetuous decision to face the Wendigo knowing another life was at stake.

For her part, Ivy felt uncomfortable under the full weight of her brothers’ stares which would occasionally flicker to her belly. “Say something!” she huffed pleadingly, unable to take the unbearable silence a moment longer.

“Now that I’m not in the dark anymore, I can’t believe I didn’t see it,” and, to Ivy’s horror, Dean gestured a hand to her womb. “You put me to shame with the amount of food you store in there and you never show-” Yep, to Ivy’s horror, her eyes began to burn as tears blurred her vision and she hugged her stomach tight, “Are you calling me fat!?”

Sam’s hand automatically shot outwards to smack Dean on the back, his expression screaming ‘Dude!’ as he shook his head in disbelief. The only Winchester that had experience in pregnant women was their father and, unfortunately, he was nowhere to be found, but even so, even Sam knew that you never, ever insulted a pregnant woman had gained weight, not without their hormones lashing out. Realizing his massive mistake, Dean’s lips clamped shut, wide eyes fixated on his tearful sister and he stepped forward, “No, no, not at all. You’re skinny, Ives-”

“No! Don’t even bother, I know I’m fat!” each word was interspersed with sobs. “My clothes are all tight and small and they barely hide my stupid swollen stomach. I’m like a hippo! A FAT hippo and goddammn! My stupid hormones are all over the place, I hate this! I can’t stop blubbering,” no longer crying, Ivy groaned her irritation, hands animated in the air. Employing more tact than his brother ever could, Sam hesitantly approached his twin and drew soothing circles on her back, “Ives, maybe you should look into adoption…” He trailed off at the dual glares his suggestion evoked.

Ivy, who had calmed down considerably under her twin’s administration, abruptly sidestepped his touch, his hand dropping and hanging limply in the process. Standing beside Dean, she leveled him with a withering glare that aptly suited the saying if looks could kill… Dean, too, appeared displeased, his glare one of disbelief and he histrionically rubbed his ear, ‘I’m sorry, I think I heard you wrong because I could have sworn I heard some rubbish about giving a member of our family away to some strangers, Sam!”

“Look,” hands up and palms out, Sam attempted to appease them and, at the same time, drive his point home, hoping one of them would see sense. “I don’t mean to step on any toes here but, Ivy, you’re not ready to be a Mom, to be responsible for a life so fragile, constantly demanding your attention. Unless, of course, you’re planning on quitting the family business,” he sarcastically
concluded, scornful orbs flickering between his siblings, both of whom were staring at him as though a third eye materialized on his forehead. A derisive laugh slipped past his lips once he comprehended their reactions, knowing that permanently or even temporarily giving up hunting wasn’t anywhere on the menu, “Are you kidding me? What are you gonna do, huh, Ivy? Teach your baby how to differentiate monsters? Instead of singing a lullaby you’ll recite the exorcism-”

“Okay, that’s enough! You’ve made your point, Sam. And by the way, my toes? Completely crushed!” Ivy sneered, hurt clouding her chocolate orbs at her twin’s extremely low, and frankly insulting, opinion of her. “You think I’m that irresponsible? So irresponsible I wouldn’t do my best for my baby!? How dare you!” her smoky, naturally silvery voice morphed into a sibilant hiss and the spiteful part of her wanted to make him hurt like he carelessly hurt her by bringing up his irresponsibility when it came to protecting Jessica in his naïve and blatant imprudence, disregarding the cruel and dangerous world they lived in, in his desperation for a normal, apple-pie life, which culminated in her death.

Jaw slackening in exaggerated disbelief, Sam indignantly cried out in a slightly high-pitched voice, “You never remember to put the cap back on the toothpaste after you, Ivy!” Exasperation could be heard towards the end.

Gaping at him, Ivy blinked in shock, “Are you seriously basing my competence in raising my baby over the fact that I sometimes forget to-”

“Always!” Sam childishly interjected, folding his arms, his patented and original bitch-face – Bitch Face Número Uno – in place. Ivy hastened to speak over him, her voice loud and screechy, “That I SOMETIMES forget to close the toothpaste after myself!”

His countenance mulish, Sam’s comportment transformed from indignant to petulant, “And you never take out the trash.”

“No! You’ve never seen me take out the trash,” Ivy contemptuously retorted, glaring lethally at her twin. Shaking her head, she quickly cut in before Sam could dig an even deeper hole in the ground, “I may act childish and I may have a devil-may-care attitude, but that doesn’t mean I’m immature, Samuel!” Sam flinched at the sound of his full name; nobody, not even their father, ever called him by Samuel, always ‘Sam’. “And just because I rejected the choice of attending Uni, doesn’t mean I’m stupid! You think you’re better than me ‘cause I didn’t attend Stanford-”

“No!” Sam huffed out, cutting into what sounded like an intense diatribe. “Ives, I just-” downcast, he dragged a hand down his face, “I don’t want my nephew or niece to live like we did. They deserve better than a life on the road.”

The ‘Twinargument’ – as Dean and Mary so fondly referred to it as – reached to a unanimous end and the hard lines of her face softened once she finally comprehended what had Sam in a tizzy to the extent of attacking her with caustic comments. “Sammy… as twins, we share a lot in common, but the major difference between us, is I never harbored resentment over our lifestyle, over the way Dad raised us, like you do. I’m proud to be a Hunter, to save lives! Every time I save a life or gank a monster, is one more night I sleep soundly in bed.”

Deeming it safe to butt in now that Sam and Ivy called ceasefire, reaching a truce, Dean cautiously said, “I don’t want my niece or nephew growing up with strangers, Ives, but… I gotta say, I’m kinda with Sam on this one.”

“What?” twin expressions of disbelief met his, frankly astonishing revelation, both for different reasons; Ivy, that Dean opposed her and Sam, that Dean actually agreed with him for once as Dean, like Ivy, Mary and John, was a vocally proud Hunter. Dean threw his sister a defensive, placating
look, “Just hear me out before you argue with me, okay? Living on the road is no place for a pregnant woman. Hunting isn’t an extracurricular activity for one either. Your body’s gonna change, Ives, you’re gonna be slower, get tired more, feel sick… maybe it’s best you stay with Uncle Roy, go back to Hawaii at least until the baby’s out.”

Folding her arms, Ivy met his firm gaze with a challenging one of her own, “And then what, Dean? Huh! After I deliver my baby, you’ll argue that a newborn has no place on the road.” Dean and Sam’s expression said it all, that Ivy hit the nail right on the head. She shook her head, “No dice, Dean. Hunting’s my life, it’s the only thing I’m good at, what I’ve been raised to do! I can’t just resign and become a stay at home Mom! The apple pie lifestyle isn’t for me. I need adventure, I need a purpose, I need-”

“You need to think about the new life growing inside of you and put its needs before yours!” Sam interjected in a righteous, holier-than-thou attitude that had Ivy see red. Emitting an irate scream, Ivy aggressively pulled at her hair, “My answer’s a no. N.O. NO! I’ll take it easy, I’ll listen to my body and once I become too heavy, too slow, I’ll stick to the sidelines and take up research duty, but I am not, in no uncertain terms, heading off to Hawaii to frolic under the sun, drinking Mai Tai’s by the beach, okay? Not while Dad’s missing and definitely not with Mom’s killer on the loose! Don’t argue with me on this, you know how stubborn I can be.”

Trading grim looks, knowing that once Ivy put her foot down, attempting to change her obstinate mind was a hopeless cause – there was a better chance of Hell freezing over than Ivy changing her mind; sheer stubbornness being a damn Winchester trait that Ivy possessed in spades – Dean desperately inserted another bright suggestion, his only concern being the safety of his sister and her child, “What about Steve?” And maybe it was his imagination, but he could have sworn the temperature dropped in the room, triggered by Ivy’s chilly glare that could put an iceberg to shame. “We’ll take care of you, fine. But, after you deliver the baby, maybe an agreement of joint custody is our best option. That way the baby won’t live on the road-”

“And that would be something to look into if Ivy was even considering informing my brother that he’s about to be a proud Daddy,” a husky voice brimming with snark permeated the air and the Winchesters whirled around to see a red-eyed Mary join them, the door slamming shut behind her. She tossed her cellphone across the room and angrily stormed over to sit aggressively on the edge of the bed, arms crossed as she glared at the trio. “Isn’t that right, Ives?!?” she sneered, her complete three-sixty confusing them greatly.

Forcing nonchalance, Ivy shrugged, “Why tell him and ruin his newfound sickeningly sweet relationship with Whorins? He broke my heart. He left me. He chose her over me. He doesn’t have the right to know and he definitely has no say in the way I raise my baby. And I’d rather chop my hand off than have my baby call that bitch Mommy.” Sneering at nobody in particular, Ivy grabbed her purse, withdrew a bar of chocolate – Twix, her fav! – and violently bit into it, chewing on the rather large chunk. “Besides, it’s kind of a moot point,” she pointed out with an eye roll. “Steve’s a Navy SEAL, always off doing something classified. He won’t be around to play house.”

“Actually, not true,” Mary objected. “Steve recently joined the Reserves. He can still get called to duty and stuff, but he’s permanently residing in our old house.”

Eyebrows arched in unmitigated disbelief, Ivy snapped, “Since when?!”

“Since our Dad got murdered and he got offered a job by Governor Jameson,” she matter-of-factly retorted, more focused on chipping off the electric-blue polish from her nails than meeting either of the Winchesters’ intent gaze. “He’s the leader of an elite government task force in Hawaii. So maybe you should think about reconsidering, Ivy. At least Steve’d be able to offer the baby a roof
Taken aback by Mary’s viciousness, a slow frown materialized on Ivy’s face, brows knitting together and, when she spoke, she utterly failed in masking the hurt from her tone, “Okay, are you, are you mad at me? ‘Cause I’m the one who should be mad at you! You betrayed me! You didn’t just spill my secret to my brothers, but Uncle Roy, so what the hell, Mary Ann!”

Green orbs narrowed on the unceremoniously hurled cellphone and almost instantaneously, comprehension dawned on Dean. Sitting beside Mary, he leveled her with a kind, solemn look, taking in her red-rimmed eyes and wet face, “What happened with Steve, Annie? He said something and you’re dealing by lashing out.”

Dean’s attentiveness had Sam’s eyes widen in realization, Ivy’s aggressive stance relax and Mary emit a choked sob. Another tear slid down the blonde’s face and she cried out, “Steve said that, that Victor killed my Dad!”

“What?” three different voices echoed, various emotions bleeding through their exclamation.

Nodding hysterically, Mary clutched her pendant, “That’s not- that’s not all. He said he, he-” Another body-racking sob slipped past her lips, “Steve killed Anton and Victor! They’re dead!”

“That’s not possible,” Ivy refuted, her voice a hush and eyes wide as they began to well with tears. “Dad knows them! Uncle Roy vouched for them! Victor wouldn’t, he wouldn’t do that, not to John, not to your father!”

Mary gazed imploringly at her best friend, barely sparing much attention to Dean who, in a trance, stood up and paced a hole through the ground. “According to Steve the Hesse brothers are terrorists! They are- were on Interpol’s most wanted, Ivy. None of this makes sense! Why would Uncle Roy let us get involved with them if they’re terrorists?!”

Numbly, Ivy collapsed on the bed and engulfed the tearful blonde in a crushing embrace while she shed silent tears. Halting his dizzying movements, Dean stared at the girls with an expression of grim determination, “I don’t know. But I promise you, I will get to the bottom of this.” Sighing, hard eyes softening once he took in their state, knowing how important Victor and Anton was to them, he spoke in a kind yet stern tone that brooked no argument, “You girls get some rest. We’ve an early day ahead of us.”

Grabbing Dean’s arm, Sam scrutinized his surroundings from over his shoulder and, ensuring Ivy and Mary, both of whom had sullenly disappeared into the bathroom to take care of their nightly ablutions, were out of earshot, furiously whispered, “What are you planning?”

A fire had been lit in his green eyes, his tone gruff, “Now? Nothing. But tomorrow morning, I’m gonna have a little chat with Royal. He’s got a lot to answer to.”

MCGARRETT HOME

O‘AHU, HAWAII

“When he was five years old, I asked my son Steve what he wanted to be when he grew up—”

A diminutive smile pulled at his lips as he fondly recalled the memory that occurred in this very house over two decades ago. As his recently deceased father’s voice resonated from the tape
recorder and washed over him, that specific father-son moment echoed in Steve’s mind: Five-year-old Steve was in the garage, watching with wide, attentive eyes as his father worked on his pride and joy, the Marquis, when he suddenly inquired over his future profession; he didn’t even hesitate, didn’t take a minute to think it through, Steve proudly blurted, “I want to be a cop, Dad, like you.” The initial pride displayed on his face drained, replaced by compressed lips and a sad shake of his head, “Anything but that, son. The life of a cop is...is not easy...”

Snapping out of his trance, Steve rubbed his chin and proceeded to listen to his father’s reasoning, the regrets he carried with him pervading the Study as he forlornly spoke of the moment he lost his wife and sent away his kids and then, the topic changed, focusing more on Mary, instantly grabbing Steve’s undivided attention as he was desperate for insight to his father’s thoughts as he always wondered what the one-sided feud – or grudge – John McGarrett had with the Winchester Family.

“Thinking over my actions now, I don’t know, maybe I was unfair to my little girl. Unreasonable, maybe... Hard-headed, definitely. Doris, she loved that girl; Ivy Winchester. The moment she appeared in the picture, my lovely wife adopted her into the family. I never understood, but I tolerated that girl for the sake of my wife and my little girl—”

Steve’s confusion surged, unconsciously leaning closer to the tape recorder, all the while adamantly ignoring the fact that his heart did a somersault at the mere mention of his ex-girlfriend’s name.

“Never before had I seen two girls as close as Mary and Ivy; two natural-born rebels, sharp as a whip, mischievous, playful, full of light, smiles always adorning their faces whenever they were together, kindred spirits; the definition of two peas in a pod. And yet, when my wife died, I banned the girls from interacting with each other.”

Vividly, the Navy SEAL remembered the fallout of his father’s perplexing demand. It was a week after their mother’s funeral, and John was concluding the preparations for sending his children to Los Angeles. Ensnared in his room, Steve was distracted from his chaotic thoughts and furious pacing over not only his mother’s spontaneous death but his Dad’s decision to separate him from his home and his family, at the sounds of arguments that shook the foundation, reverberating acidly against his shut door. Despite her age, Mary Ann McGarrett was a terrifying sight to behold, stubborn to the core and fiercely disobedient, unwilling to part with her best friend. That, Steve grimly admitted, was the moment Mary started to resent their father.

“To sleep better at night, I convinced myself it was for Mary’s own good, but another voice in my head, one that sounded uncannily like my late wife, claimed the opposite, that a part of me, acted out of jealousy.” Steve’s heart ached upon hearing the dejected sigh emit from his father. “Ten years later, once Mary reached the age where she could publicly disobey me, I realized, my little girl wanted to be like John Winchester when she grows up, and apparently, she succeeded—”

On that confusing note, one that didn’t make any sense whatsoever, Danny barged into the room, distracting him and prompting him to abruptly turn the tape recorder off. Irritated eyes with a hint of exasperation fixed on his quirky partner, he snapped, “What is it with you and walking into people’s houses?”

Glancing over his shoulder, his expression one of exaggerated innocence, he matter-of-factly stated, “Well, I knocked—”

“I didn’t hear you knock,” he promptly cut in, eyebrows raised. Danny, however, insisted, a hand extended towards the window, “Well, I did, I knocked, and then I saw you through the window and I thought you nodded.”
Voice low and flat with almost no inflection, Steve laconically stated, “Didn’t knock.”

A short banter ensued that mostly pertained to the Jersey Detective’s inappropriate attire where Steve remarked on the fact that nobody in Hawaii wore a tie and Danny retorted his three-year-old daughter gave him the tie he was currently wearing for Father’s Day – never mind the fact that what three-year-old girl had pocket money? But Steve decided to let that one go – culminating to Steve making a skeptical comment about the blonde’s patent leather loafers.

Deciding that the best method to get the Navy SEAL to drop the subject regarding his obsessive need to dress professionally was by creating a diversion, Danny swallowed the remnant malasada and inclined his head toward the red toolbox that sat on the middle of the table, its paint fading in places, “That your dad’s stuff?”

Depositing the tape recorder back to its rightful place and slamming the toolbox shut, Steve grunted an affirmative, arms crossed together as he sat back down. Expression solemn and hands interlocked, the shorter man attempted to get a read on Steve who had an impressive mask of apathy shielding his emotions, “You get anything from it?”

“There’s more questions than answers,” Steve sighed, frustration palpable in his tone. And wasn’t that the truth; as far as Steve knew, the only Winchester to ever leave the mainland and step foot in the Island of Hawaii, was Ivy, the brunette having been a ward of Royal Van Dyne during the summers from the moment she turned three. Also, his father never left Hawaii. So, why the animosity? Why separate the girls? A stack of questions piled up and the only ones that could provide him with answers were either dead or not around, unless… Filing away the sudden epiphany that hit him, Steve furrowed his brows and turned to Danny, another important matter coming to mind, “Talk to the Coast Guard?”

Blue eyes stared a beat longer at his interlocked hands before lifting his gaze to meet Steve’s, “Yeah. Uh, they didn’t find Victor Hesse’s body yet.” Viridian-greens glared at the wall, frustration and exasperation and irritation clouding his features before he buried his face into the palm of his hands, and Danny jumped to reassure him, “That doesn’t mean that they won’t.”

Raising his head to meet a pair of confident blue orbs, hands dropping and palms connecting to form the universal pleading gesture, the note of desperation could be heard loud and clear in Steve’s next inquiry, “What if he’s alive?”

“You emptied a mag into the guy,” Danny stated, his countenance a hundred percent serious and eyes bright with incredulity that Steve could even think otherwise. “He’s fish food,” he tactlessly emphasized. When Steve still looked unconvinced, he emitted a long-drawn-out sigh, “Look, Admiral Shepard knows that this is the guy that killed your father. He’s got crews on it 24/7, they will find Hesse’s body.” And okay! Danny was beginning to get really vexed with the Navy SEAL; apparently, Steve decided to peel off the impassive mask, his mien screaming one emotion: disbelief. Exhaling roughly through his nostrils, Danny’s hand performed animated movements and his reassuring tone turned snide, “Or you know what, maybe, if you’re done beating around the bush—sarcasm!—you’d like to make things easier and just let me know what’s on your mind.”

Abandoning his chair, Steve began to pace, his tone frustrated and his admission free from doubt, “Color me crazy, Danny, but I think that scum survived. Like a rodent. I think—no. I’m certain, he’s alive—”

“Steve!” Danny barked out, prompting the taller man to quit his dizzying pacing. Hands out in a pacifying motion, he calmly said, “There’s no way Victor Hesse could survive that! It’s not possible. He’s got two bullets in his chest and he fell into the bottom of the ocean. Trust me, he’s fish food. He’s a goner, I’m telling you.”
Eyes bright with realization, Steve absently breathed out, “Not if he had help.”

“The entire Island’s on the lookout for him. Who in their right mind, would help that man, Steve?!” the blonde challenged him, attempting to make the taller man see sense. But Steve only became more adamant as he suddenly found himself capable of looking into recent events in a much different light, a clearer one, “I can think of somebody in particular. Somebody immune to red tape; someone who’s untouchable…”

Major renovation was taking place in Ali‘iolani Hale’s interior, which was where Headquarters for the Governor’s elite task force – which has yet to have a proper name – would be situated. The spacious floor was covered in a thick layer of dust; the hallway was littered with junk, haphazardly discarded toolboxes just lying around most of which were opened, its contents scattered; ladders strewed the path; plastic sheets protecting the floor were trampled on; paint pervaded the air, wafting throughout the floor and burning a few nostrils in its trajectory. And in the middle of all the chaos stood Royal, who had been barking instructions at his personal interior designer who, in turn, snapped orders at her crew, extremely nitpicky about the state of his office when suddenly, he received a phone call from his godson, interrupting his productive morning.

This was what Steve and Danny walked in on upon their arrival, approaching Chin and Kono who stood congregated around the large state of the art computer desk screen.

“Nobody makes Ivy do anything. Dean. I thought you’d know that by now,” Royal huffed into his cellphone, looking a tad bit annoyed as he carded a hand through his naturally tousled jet-black hair. Piercing sapphires then proceeded to half-heartedly roll in irritated exasperation and his hair was abandoned as he lowered his hand to stroke his royale beard, eyes snapping shut for a split-second before reopening, only to connect with a pair of blatantly curious viridian-greens. “No, son-Dean! Listen to me. I know you’re scared, if I were in your place, I’d be too…” Another exasperated sigh, “I don’t know where you father is— Damn straight it’s the truth-, you know what, hold on, Dean. Hold on!” he snapped.

Pressing his cellphone to his chest and disregarding his nephew and the other members of the Task Force, Royal allowed his gaze to collide with the alluring pair of licorice-black ones that belonged to his interior designer, “Nova darling, I’m gonna need you to call back your crew. I need to take this call.”

A slow, sly smirk that spoke volumes of familiarity replaced the gorgeous brunette’s cool, professional smile and the unexpected informality between them shocked Steve and his team. “Sure thing, Roy. You tell that sexy godson of yours Nova says Hi,” and, after parting him with a mischievous wink, all emotion bled from her mien, returning to utmost professionalism to bark at her crew to take a half hour break. “I’ll be back in thirty, Roy!” she hollered at him from over her shoulder, smoothly sidestepping the various junk and ogling workers, her expensive stilettos resonating loudly as she departed the premises.

Chuckling, Royal shook his head fondly at her retreating back before retiring to his half-finished office, the door snapping softly behind him. His derriere perched on the corner of the desk, Royal placed the device on the desk and put Dean on loudspeaker, “Alright, Dean, we can speak freely now.”

“Was that the Brazilian hottie?” apparently, Dean’s priorities became skewed whenever a pretty face, one he happened to be extremely familiar with, was inserted in the picture. Suppressing a
laugh, Royal let out a sigh, “You’re incorrigible, Dean.”

An indignant noise echoed from the other end, immediately followed by Dean’s defensive retort, “Hey, she started it.”

A quality Dean and Nova had in common: They were blatant flirts, a seductor and a temptress, respectively. Nova Azevedo was a descendant of a prominent and prestigious family from Brazil and distant relations of “the Mother of the Brazilians”, Dona Teresa Cristina; the Azevedo Family immigrated to the United States in 1890, two years after slavery had been abolished, and five years later, permanently settled in the Island of Hawaii, which is how the Van Dyne’s and the Azevedo’s came to know each other – through Royal’s grandfather and Nova’s great-grandfather. In turn, Royal introduced Nova to Ivy; the beauty of Brazilian descent was Dean’s age and therefore would occasionally be delegated the task of babysitting his rebellious goddaughter, which, in turn, was how the Azevado’s were introduced to the Winchester’s. Dean and Nova’s relationship consisted of flirtatious banter and inappropriate innuendos, though in the end, it was all harmless fun and Royal learned to either tolerate their unique personalities or ignore them altogether.

“Back to the issue, Dean. I haven’t got all day,” Royal brought Dean back to the matter at hand and Dean’s nuance swiftly morphed, conveying utter solemnity. Gruffly, he snapped, “Damn right, Uncle Roy. I don’t know what to believe anymore. You let us get involved with known terrorists and you chose not to tell us? Does Dad know!?”

His godson’s reaction and spewed accusations were to be expected. The moment, the very moment, Victor informed Steve of his and Anton’s connection with not just Ivy but Mary – unable to turn down the offer of taunting Steve, lashing out because of his brother’s death – he knew a call from either one of his godchildren was on the horizon. “Listen to me, Dean. This is important. Anything I keep from you, everything I do, there’s a plausible and damn good reason, you hear me!? Yes, what Steve said about Victor and Anton is the truth, but Victor is on our side here—”

Registering the slip-up, Dean let out a sharp intake of breath, his tone oozing with realization as he cut him off, “Is? You mean Victor’s alive?”

“Damn it!” Royal hissed, facepalming himself at his careless mistake. Contrary to how he portrayed himself, Dean Winchester was an incredibly astute individual, publicly misconstrued as the brawn only, his level of intellect wholly underestimated. “This stays between us, Dean. I mean it. There’s a witch hunt out for Victor and until I manage to get him to the mainland, nobody can know, not even Ivy. Can I trust you to keep this between us?” it wasn’t an order, but a plea, a hope for Dean to understand that he needed his cooperation.

The line was filled with a spell of uneasy silence as Dean weighed his response, analyzing, calculating. “As fishy as this is, Uncle Roy. You’re family,” a wary note could be detected in his tone though he sounded confident in whatever decision he reached to. “I trust you. But... sooner or later, I want answers!”

“And you’ll get ‘em, I promise. If I weren’t worried about word leaking to Steve, I’d find a way to clue you in, but my hands are tied. A lot’s in risk and the...the information I have, Dean. It’s dangerous. Telling you would put a mark on you, Sam, Ivy and Mary, and I can’t have that.”

Unseen to Royal, Dean’s eyes grew wide and he fervently nodded, “I can’t either. My job’s to protect them. Whenever it’s safe for me to know, I’ll be here. I’m...” he cleared his throat, uncomfortable with the chick-flick moment. “I’m always on your side.”

Smiling fondly, Royal closed his eyes in gratitude; he truly felt like the luckiest man in the world
for having such amazing nephews and nieces, unwilling to trade his family for anything. “I know, son. And I don’t know where your Daddy is. But I’ll try and narrow down his location, at least make sure he’s alive and well. You know your father, damn stubborn and annoyingly good at covering his tracks. He don’t wanna be found, you bet your damn ass he won’t be until he wants to be.”

Godfather and godson communicated a bit longer about lighter topics, mainly in regards to arranging an appointment for Ivy with a gynecologist in Los Angeles – a matter that had become their utmost priority – that way Deb and Hetty could be included. No sooner had he disconnected the call did Steve barge in, knocking once and not bothering to wait for the necessary permission for entry. Suppressing an eye-roll at Steve’s actions, Royal pleasantly asked, “What can I do for you, Steve?” No doubt, the man watched him like a hawk, impatiently waiting for his conversation with Dean to end in order to confront him on an issue he had his suspicions of, a suspicion Steve instantly proved to be correct.

“You can tell me where Victor Hesse is,” a muscle flexed in his jaw as Steve unblinkingly met the older man’s gaze, viridian orbs flinty and stance stiff, the superficial veins in his arms protruding due to the pressure of his crossed arms against his chest.

Dark eyebrows flew upwards at the brazen accusation – irrespective of just how right he was – and Royal instantly shot to his feet, briskly shortening the distance between himself and the door, slamming it shut in case of prying ears – he wouldn’t put it past Detective Williams to have positioned himself somewhere in hearing range – and pinned his nephew with a withering look. “Now I know you didn’t just accuse me of harboring a terrorist,” despite his expression, his tone was mild, borderline suggestive, allowing Steve a subtle out. But the Navy SEAL didn’t take it, accepting the challenge head-on, unwilling to stand down, “Yeah? Well, maybe I am, Roy.”

“Word of advice, son,” sapphire orbs blazed with a hidden fire. “You gonna make pretty ugly accusations like that to a man of my stature, you better have some damn solid proof to back ‘em up. So…” the retired Commanding Officer extended both hands out in a grand flourish and magnanimously asked, “You got any proof, or you just screaming your suspicions out left and right, ‘cause that’s sloppy work son, and Joe White taught you better than that.” His exterior was a combination of mocking, indignation and a hint of amusement, however, beneath that involuted exterior, Royal was damn proud of Steve, proud that he had the balls to stand up in the face of his superiors – or well, ex-superior – and his sharp deduction skills, not backing down despite the lack of proof to support his suspicions. ‘Just like his father…”

Gnashing his teeth together, Steve furiously took a step forward, “I don’t need tangible evidence to corroborate what I do know, Roy! Your face said it all; yesterday, when I informed you Hesse was dead, your initial reaction wasn’t relief and it sure as hell wasn’t joy that your friend’s killer got what he deserved. No, it was quite the opposite. Then I find out you’ve known about their interest in Mary and Ivy and you did nothing!” Inhaling and exhaling harshly, Steve kept a lid on his emotions – most particularly the miniscule bubble of envy – and in a voice of forced calm, said, “But it was Danny coming to me with news from the Coast Guards that helped me see things clearly. The entire Island’s on the lookout for Victor Hesse, Roy. Now, let’s say he survived the fall, swam his way out…he’s still got two slugs in his chest. He can’t exactly walk into a hospital for treatment and not expect to leave with cuffs. I can only think of one person with the resources and immunity to offer a man like that the help he needs, somebody who got a lot of contracted employees on his payroll, like perhaps a doctor, a nurse, someone that specializes in medicine.” Someone like Theobald Ainsworth went unsaid. “So then, I thought to myself: who on this Island fits the bill?” the rhetoric, extremely sarcastic inquiry was thrown at his face, the blame heavy in those expressive viridian eyes.
“Excellently deduced, Sherlock,” Royal dryly remarked, his stance laidback and wholly unconcerned that Steve hit it on the nose. Sliding a finger across the dust-sprinkled desk, he absently glanced at the coat of dust painting the tip of his index finger and addressed the younger man, “Tell me something, Steven. When you got struck with that... fascinating epiphany, did you come up with a reason why I would help the man that killed my friend? I’ve known your father for more than half my life, I promised to look out for you and your sister. Now why would I betray my old friend like that?”

Frustrated, Steve emphatically shook his head, a prominent frown on his forehead, “That’s what’s got me stumped. I don’t know!”

Giving him a knowing nod, Royal donned a winsome smile, piercing eyes twinkling incandescently, extinguishing its previous blaze, “If I may put forth a suggestion, son. Let’s shelf this conversation aside, put it on a temporary hiatus, hmm? Once you have an answer, you let me know.”

Reluctantly, Steve agreed, though he knew he wouldn’t rest until he either got the proof he needed or his uncle confided in him; family or not, Royal was keeping secrets from him, harboring his father’s murderer – if his suspicions turned out to be correct, he would never forgive the billionaire. Likewise, Royal’s thoughts were along the same lines, knowing, without a doubt, that Steve’s agreement wasn’t a promise to quit searching for the answers he needed. In fact, Royal expected Steve to begin trailing him every once in a while, probably scout out his mansion or barge in unannounced – again – to snoop around for Victor. Truth be told, Royal was looking forward to it; he always enjoyed a good challenge.

“Anything else on your mind, son? Something you need to get off your chest…” Royal arched a brow expectantly, head cocked to the side as he scrutinized his nephew.

Steve appeared to be struggling with himself, but eventually, his curiosity won out, his need for answers too powerful to refuse. “What’s the deal with that family? The Winchesters,” he elucidated when Royal offered no response. Still maintaining a stubborn silence, Steve huffed out a sigh of irritation, “I may not have paid attention before, which I only have myself to blame. I'm the one that kept my distance from Mary, I thought it was for her own good but…” Trailing off, self-denigration colored his features and he hastened to collect his thoughts, “Every time I contact Mary, she’s in some kind of trouble. I don’t think I’m comfortable with my sister hanging around…them.” If his father was adamant on forbidding Mary from getting further involved with the Winchesters, Steve had to put his faith in John McGarrett, he must have had a real good reason.

Profound surprise flashed across the older man’s handsome visage, “Two years with Ivy and not once did you ask about her past?”

“All I know is that her mother died when she was young,” Steve huffed, displeased with his lack of knowledge. “I learned quick enough not to pry, not to ask questions; every time I did, she grew silent, became uncomfortable. Once she actually walked away,” a mirthless laugh slipped past his lips. “What I managed to deduce for myself, she’s a trust fund kid. Lives off your money,” he shrugged, totally disregarding the glaring disapproval etched on the billionaire’s face.

“You shouldn’t jump to conclusions, Steven, it’s unbecoming.” Steve threw Royal a sour look, prompting a chuckle out of the older man. However, in the blink of an eye, all mirth vanished, replaced by melancholy, “The Winchesters don’t live a pretty life, and their story, well, it’s not a good one. There’s a reason why Ivy clammed up whenever you brought it up.” Undeniably curious, Steve stared, viridians burning with curiosity. “It’s not my story to tell, but I suppose a few cliff
notes won’t hurt…” He swallowed thickly and dragged a hand down his face, the certain topic regarding the Winchester’s downfall not one of his favorites; him and John went way back, he knew Mary during her youth, had been John’s best man. “When Sam and Ivy were only six-months-old, somebody broke into their nursery in the middle of the night. Their mother, Mary, she was… their cries on the baby monitor woke her up and she walked in on the intruder standing over their crib. That freak was doing, only God and Mary knows,” he mumbled more to himself.

Steve had gone as pale as a sheet, his tanned complexion an unhealthy shade and he compressed his lips together. Eyes wide with horror, he didn’t think he wanted to know anymore and he could now definitely say he understood why Ivy was unforthcoming with the particular information. Six months old? Jesus! Steve had been under the false impression that Ivy had been much older when her mother died… at least three or four, as he recalled his ex-girlfriend mention once or twice in passing that she didn’t have any substantial memories of her mother, which was why Doris basically adopted her into their household and treated the brunette as another daughter.

“I can only assume the intruder was furious at getting caught, or the interruption, can’t say ‘cause I don’t know… Mary was murdered over their crib, her body set ablaze,” Royal paraphrased, unable to give the Navy SEAL the unabridged version since he was oblivious of all things Supernatural, something unanimously agreed on, a consensus after much deliberation. “Nobody believed John Winchester when he claimed his wife was murdered and that the burning down of his house wasn’t an accident but arson. If you look it up, I guarantee, you’ll find the case was brushed off as an unfortunate gas leak,” a cynical scoff left his lips and he sadly shook his head as he recalled the distress call he received twenty-two years ago.

“I fold!” Royal good-naturedly slammed a hand on the rounded table and lightly tossed his cards face down into the muck. Wade Gutches let out a hyena-like chuckle, cunning eyes fixated on the pair of bright sapphires right across him, “And here I thought the youngest Commanding Officer’d be more of a challenge.” A twinkle introduced itself as he crowed to the other two, “Well, I raise an extra week!”

Groaning, Gary West echoed Royal’s action, discarding his hand, “Fold!”

It was immediate, three pairs of eyes flickered to the fourth Commanding Officer with the most seniority, a waggish grin plastered on his face, gravelly chuckles escaping him. His grin morphed into smirk as sparkling gray eyes collided with cunning brown. “Call!” With much enthusiasm, Joe White revealed his hand. “Royal Flush! Read ‘em and weep, Gutches!” he vaunted.

“Ah, damn!” Gutches forcefully tossed his hand. “It’s no fun playing with you, White! It’s the third damn time in a row you’ve won!”

Head back and roaring with laughter, Joe responded with a smug salute and offered Royal, who he had taken under his wing, a cheeky wink; Royal had recently been promoted, despite his age – how he managed that? Joe wasn’t permitted to say as it’s highly classified information: the information so sensitive only a handful, including himself, had security clearance, the secret as protected as the five-thousand tons of gold bullion stored in Fort Knox – and it was the Van Dyne Heir’s very first poker game.

“Take it from us, son. When it comes to placing bets, play it safe with White; he’s undefeatable when it comes to poker,” Gary told Royal in a conspiratorial manner. Then, in a stage-whisper, he inclined his head toward Wade, “Gutches over here never learns.”

Eyes rolling aggressively, Wade exclaimed over Royal and Joe’s roars of laughter, “Shut your
Merciless ribbing ensued and halfway through, Royal’s cellphone blared – the first commercial mobile phone released by Motorola in the young billionaire’s possession – startling him and the three elder men. Sapphires widened a fraction at the familiar voice on the other end, and the graveness of his tone which was thick with tears had Royal’s stomach lurch, fear and concern almost crippling him, “John, John, slow down, I can’t understand you when you slur your words.” Faint sounds of a siren wailing in the background combined with the cacophony of alarmed yells automatically revealed that something had happened to his family.

“She’s, she’s gone, Roy,” John managed to choke out. “Mary, my Mary... d-d-dead!” and on cue, six-month-old Ivy began bawling. Royal felt numb, his vision staring to blur with tears; his hand started to shake, beckoning the elder men’s undivided attention, all laughter gone from their eyes to be replaced by concern as they gauged his mournful expression. Clearing his throat, Royal swallowed back his need to blubber like a child and called forth all his training until his face morphed into an imperturbable mask, “Keep it short and simple, John. What. Happened?”

The tearful explanation he received, interrupted by John himself as he stuttered through his confusion, revealed to Royal all that he needed to know – the intruder was no burglar or kidnapper. No. Mary was killed by a supernatural being and he doubted it was a fluke. Mary may have walked away from the Hunting life but in reality, a Hunter could never abandon the life; any small sounds, anything suspicious would have a ‘retired’ Hunter on the lookout in an instant. No, Mary wasn’t killed by some run-of-the-mill monster. The intruder was smart and, guessing blindly, Royal had a feeling it was premeditated, it’s target Sam or Ivy, perhaps even both and Mary was simply collateral, otherwise, why appear in the nursery?... standing over their crib?

“Listen to me. You need to hold it together, alright? Your kids, they need you. You need to be strong for them, you hear me, Johnny,” using John’s endearing nickname worked wonders, the younger man’s tears descending to soft hiccups. “Good.” He emitted a long-drawn-out breath and dragged a hand down his face, thinking furiously and ignoring the three concerned expressions he was on the receiving end of; he couldn’t put it off any longer...it was time. “Johnny, this ain’t no gas leak, I believe you-” to which he received a large sigh of relief. “There’s a woman, she lives in the same district, her name’s Missouri Moseley, you’ve heard of her?” A baffled affirmative had him continue, “Go to her. Tell her what happened-” though he was certain she already knew; nothing got past that psychic, “-she’ll be expecting you. And, tell her, tell her I sent you. I’m gonna put in a request for leave and meet up with you in a week, alright?”

It was time John knew...

Naturally, John being John, couldn’t leave it at that, the Marine in him demanding answers. “Just follow orders, Johnny. Do what I say!” Reluctantly obeying him, Royal hung up and turned to the other three, his grief bleeding through now he no longer had to put up a strong front for John and slowly, he explained the situation.

Exactly one week later, Royal found himself parking in front of a dingy motel in La Cygne, Kansas, scrunching his nose in distaste at John’s poor choice of sequestering himself and his children in, displeased with the hovel when John had not only his own earnings, but money from the Van Dyne’s in his disposal to spend as he wished. Approaching the correct room, his fist barely brushed against the door when it flew open, a furious John on the other side, his complexion flushed with anger.

“How dare you keep it a secret from me, Royal! You had no right!”
He didn’t expect, not even for a second, to receive a warm reception and while John had a right to be mad, it still rankled. “Watch your tone, little brother!” he snapped, stepping into the room. All irritation vanished at the endearing sight before him: four-year-old Dean sat on a sorry excuse of a twin bed, each hand hovering protectively over Sam and Ivy, both of whom were gurgling—obliviously happy—on the bed, their tiny fists attempting to clutch onto their big brother’s small hand. “And how are my precious godchildren?” he cooed, instantly getting an excited “Uncle Roy!” from Dean who, despite his exuberance, smartly remained by his little siblings, unwilling to leave their side.

Approaching them, Royal placed a kiss on the top of Dean’s shaggy hair and cupped the twins’ bald heads before turning to John, inclining his head to the bathroom for privacy. Ordering Dean to take care of the twins, John stormed into the bathroom and immediately broke into a rant, not holding back, “I was skeptical at first. Missouri sounded crazy; capital C! But then she mentioned you and it all made sense. Throughout my childhood, you, your father, your sister, you were always on edge, acted like soldiers, like we were in constant danger.” When Royal maintained his silence, John furiously spat out, “Did my mother know?”

“No,” he curtly responded, dragging a hand through his dark hair. “John, the reason my Dad moved me and Isa to the mainland was because our Mom died because of the supernatural. Meeting your mother, falling in love with her, marrying again, it was something Dad never saw coming. He thought keeping it from you and Millie would keep you safe. If you don’t know what to look for, it won’t come after you. In hindsight—” he quickly snapped, palms facing his furious step-brother in an attempt to cut him off from snarling an interruption, “-it wasn’t the best decision. But it kept your Mom alive, it kept you alive, gave you a normal life, a proper childhood—”

“But my wife died! My Mary, gone…” he choked out, tears springing from his eyes and cascading down his face. He whirled around and harshly wiped them away before burying his face in the crook of his arm. His voice muffled, he continued, “If I’d have known, I would’ve protected her, could’ve kept my family safe and whole!”

Expression apologetic, Royal softly gripped John’s shoulder, “Johnny…” Informing his little brother that his wife was a retired Hunter was incredibly difficult and the revelation a huge blow to John, but Royal couldn’t, wouldn’t!, have his brother doubt his ability to protect his children and blame himself for Mary’s death. This one was on Mary, not him. John couldn’t protect her from something he didn’t know.

Recovering from his shock and anger at being kept in the dark, at Mary’s need for secrecy, John’s resolve strengthened and his thirst for vengeance so potent, John Winchester became a new man and a highly skilled and capable Hunter, his primary goal, was to kill the bastard that took Mary from him and robbed his children of a mother, taking his young, innocent children along him for the ride.

“…from that moment on, John dedicated his life to searching for his wife’s killer, passing the torch on to his children,” the billionaire sadly concluded.

Before Steve had a chance to process the overload of information and insight to Ivy’s past Royal surprisingly offered, the door opened and an accented voice pervaded the office. “You handsome men ready to get your fine asses out so me and my crew can get back to work? We don’t have all day, Royal,” Nova’s sassy remark had the billionaire chuckle, glad for the distraction; traveling through memory lane really took a toll on him, which was why he always preferred to leave the past in the past.
Turning around, Steve arched a brow at the young employee on first-name basis with the imposing billionaire; viridian orbs scrutinized her in disinterest, not the least bit affected by her exotic beauty – unlike Danny. He sharply assessed her appearance, taking in the painfully tight, yet contradictory professional outfit she chose to don that left little to the imagination: black pencil skirt that emphasized her bottom and a white shirt with ruffled sleeves, the first three buttons undone to give everyone a good view of her décolletage and shameless cleavage; her dark sleek hair that fell loose in waves to the small of her back however, was tied tightly into a bun, large gold hoop earrings on display.

“Right, I’ll get out of your hair,” Steve uttered in a dry and detached tone, not giving Nova – who appeared astonished and was vehemently taken aback by his lack of interest in her or even a glimmer of lust in his eyes at the sight of her like most men – a second glance. He nodded at a smug Royal who smirked and followed him out. “That Nova, one hell of a woman, aye?” Royal chuckled, head shaking fondly at the personification of lust whose eyes were fixated on Steve’s back like a hawk.

His comment prompted Steve’s steps to slowdown and he emphatically shook his head, “She’s got nothing on Ivy.” It was spoken fondly, the statement genuine and automatic, like praising and complimenting Ivy Winchester had become second nature to the Navy SEAL and that, more than anything, had him halt completely, his body stiffening and complexion turn a shade paler, eyes wide upon realizing what exactly he admitted out loud. “I-I mean, I meant Catherine. Of course,” he feebly rectified.

“I’m sure you did, son. I’m sure you did,” Royal clapped Steve on the back and left, approaching Nova, her face sporting a sly smirk quite identical to his, proving that she too, heard him loud and clear. She clucked her tongue, “I knew Mr. Tough-Guy still has feelings for Ivy. I should inform her immediately-”

The instant a manicured hand reached for her cellphone, Royal laid a hand over hers, stopping her. “This doesn’t concern us, Nova darling. I’ve told you many times to keep your nose out of people’s business,” he looked down at her, his tone rebuking and eyebrows raised.

Stomping her foot, she pouted, “But-”

“No, but’s. This is between Steve and Ivy; best we don’t we get involved,” he firmly interjected, his voice brooking no argument.

Simultaneously, a flustered Steve stormed over to Chin, footsteps determined and expression screaming that he meant business. Disregarding Danny and Kono, he addressed him, “Chin, What can you tell me about Ivy Winchester?” He was no fool nor was he easily swayed when he put his mind to something; while Royal spoke the truth, Steve saw his actions for what they were: an attempt to distract him from his fact-finding mission. If Royal wasn’t gonna give him the answers he needed, Steve had absolutely no problem searching elsewhere.

However, to his surprise, it was Kono who laughingly provided a response, revealing her familiarity with the enigmatic brunette. “Ivy?” Kono grinned, eyes bright and lively at the subject. “If Ivy were here, she’d somehow find a way to convince me to lie down here and make dust angels. Probably in the form of a dare,” she chuckled, her hand performing a negligent sweep over their dusty surroundings. The ex-surfer’s astute orbs clashed with those of her boss and a wry smile replaced her childish grin, “Though something tells me that’s not what you wanted to hear, Boss.”

Sighing, Steve’s attempt to reassure her and subsequently demand an answer out of Chin was interrupted by his cellphone. A frown furrowed his forehead and he promptly took the call, “Yes, Governor.”
All in all, the day shaped out to be a pretty good one, never mind the fact she missed her graduation from the police academy and the celebration dinner. She couldn’t bring herself to care…that much. After all, what rookie – whether they were fresh from the academy or not – had the opportunity to kick some Russian spy’s ass, aid in stopping a national security breach and save the life of a really cool kid? Kono, that’s who!

Admittedly, Chin had a point – not that she was in any rush to tell him – ‘doing the job makes you a cop’ and Kono truly felt like one; saving lives and kicking the bad guys’ asses was much better than walking across a stage. Also, it helped that her team, her ohana, took the time to get dressed in their respective official uniforms and went all out, convening at the half-finished headquarters and enacting her own graduation at the end of the exhausting day, welcoming her into the fold as a permanent member of the government’s task force. And to top it off, Steve had them over to his house for a celebration barbecued dinner at his house were they sat at the lanai – good food, friends, family… Kono couldn’t ask for more.

She was halfway through her second beer when she got the call she had been anticipating the most. Practically vibrating with excitement, Kono hurriedly excused herself from the table and whisper-screamed one of her closest friend’s name, creating a distance from the three curious men as she sauntered towards the direction of the ocean, “You called!”

Bell-like laughter echoed in her ear. “I did promise,” the smoky-silvery voice with a perpetual mischievous accent retorted, not missing a beat. “C’mom, Kones, I’ve been counting down the days since you joined the Academy. You honestly thought I’d forget?” she scoffed, eliciting the smile on Kono’s face to brighten.

“I wasn’t being literal, Ives. Just an observation,” Kono mock-huffed, fist planted on her hip. Ivy’s retort was dry and sharp as a whip – subtle laughter hugging each word – highlighting the brunette’s quick-witted personality and incapability of letting a statement slide without getting a word in, “An observation of the obvious, more like it.”

The recent graduate’s eyes rolled half-heartedly in their sockets, “Are we seriously doing this? A battle of wits…Now?”

“Buzz-kill,” Ivy teased. “So, tell me, tell me. I want details and pictures and any hotties on the force with you and-”

“Whoa, slow down, Ives! One question at a time,” Kono was overcome with nervousness at their conversation’s direction, knowing the time had come where she would have to come clean to her friend. She bit down on her lip and with her toe, drew squiggles and random shapes on the sand. Ivy must have sensed her sudden distress as she went completely silent on the other end and patiently waited – not that Kono would know, but Ivy was implementing Royal’s tactics on her. “Last week, my cousin Chin Ho, he-he approached me along with two others for a favor, they-they needed an inside woman on a case…” glad for the lack of interruptions, Kono summarized her eventful week, beginning from Steve offering her a task that would earn herself extra credit and ending at where she currently stood, at Steve’s property with a beer in hand.

When the silence became much too loud and uncomfortable for Kono to bear, she fidgeted and pleaded, “Say something, Ives.”

A contemplative hum resonated from the other end, “I’m honestly surprised Steve’s settling down.”
Not really the answer Kono was looking for, “Are you mad at me?”

“Honestly, I’m kinda pissed, Kono,” the snappish response prompted Kono to flinch, her lips turning downward in an unhappy pout. “But not for the reasons you think. I’m not your warden, Kono. You make me sound like some, like some virago or-or something equally horrible. I’m proud of you, Kono! And, what happened between Steve and I, it’s got nothing to do with you, at all! You’re your own woman, Kones, you got an amazing opportunity, one only an idiot would refuse, and you took it. You’re ambitious, smart, loyal, fiercely protective and brave—I couldn’t ask for more in a friend.” Sucking in a sharp intake of breath, Ivy continued, her tone a touch forlorn, “Do I miss Steve? Yes. Am I jealous you get to spend most of your days working alongside him? Duh-” in unison, both girls emitted a giggle, “-But do I resent you? Am I pissed you’re on his team? Do I feel like you’ve betrayed me? Hell. No! If I were in your shoes, I’d’ve done the exact same thing.”

A tearful laugh slipped her lips and the rookie’s heartfelt words left an echo in her surroundings, “I love you, Poison Ivy.”

“Love you two, K-squared,” Ivy echoed her sentiment.

Meanwhile, on the lanai, the sound of his ex-girlfriend’s name leaving Kono’s lips had his attention wax and he felt a pang of annoyance when Kono walked off for privacy, his relentless need for answers and information regarding the Winchester family overwhelming him, almost to the point where it was dangerously morphing from curiosity to an obsession. Unconsciously interrupting whatever latest topic Danny had chosen to rant about, Steve turned to Chin, “You never gave me an answer.”

Emitting an offended sound, Danny huffed for the sake of broadcasting his irritation before he, too, pinned Chin under his blue gaze.

“You want to know about Ivy or about her family, Steve?” Chin patiently inquired, gulping down the remnants of his beer, instantly reaching over to grab another from the cooler and opening it.

“Both,” was the laconic response from the solemn Navy SEAL. “I didn’t even know Kono was friends with her.”

Chin’s eyebrows tipped upwards in surprise and he leaned forward ever so slightly, “Seriously? Steve, for around nineteen years, every summer, like clockwork, she spent her summers here. You’ll find that a lot of people in this Island know Ivy Winchester.”

Hand in the air, Danny didn’t wait for permission before blurting out, “Okay, question. Who is Ivy Winchester?” Uncomfortable, Steve fiddled with his beer and took a long nervous sip, leaving it to an amused Chin to enlighten the shorter man on the mysterious woman, “Royal’s goddaughter. From what I’ve gathered, her father and Royal are really close, the Winchesters live on the mainland, never settling down in one place, always on the road. He wanted to give his only daughter a semblance of stability so when she turned three, every summer he’d send her to the Island under Royal’s care.”

His confusion not even remotely appeased, Danny scowled, “Why don’t they have a house or something…They poor?”

“No,” Chin shrugged a shoulder, unconcerned. “As far as I know, it’s their choice of lifestyle. I don’t think anybody but Royal and perhaps Mary-” he carelessly jutted his chin towards a suspiciously silent Steve, “-Steve’s sister, know their reasons.”

Not completely certain Royal shared the entire truth regarding the Winchesters crusade for
vengeance, Steve maintained his silence. Intense sapphires pierced him next and masking his squirms, Steve loudly huffed, “Ivy’s my, she’s my ex. We…dated for two years. Called it quits nearly two months back.”

Snorting, Chin shook his head and spoke over the rim of his beer bottle, “Not what I heard.”

“You know?” surprised, Steve’s eyes widened marginally as they sought the dark pair. Tipping his head, Chin grimaced, “Oh yeah. Your sister made quite a scene.” Detecting Steve’s vehement confusion, he elucidated, his tone neutral, “I was here with your father having a drink. Mary stopped for a visit. They argued for a bit—” smirking at Steve’s scathing comment of “why am I not surprised” he continued, “—when Mary got a call from Ivy. She ducked out for privacy and when she returned… Brah, she was furious, ranting about you and of what happened. She didn’t stay long. Booked a flight to the mainland right after and hasn’t been seen since.”

The unspoken, that was the last time Mary saw her father alive, could be heard loud and clear, and Steve’s heart clenched.

Intrigued, Danny pivoted to better face Steve, “What did you do?”

“Not telling.”

“How’s that fair? I told you the story behind ‘Danno’. Come on,” the blonde Detective wheedled, but it was like begging a brick wall.

Stance stiff and voice firm, Steve snapped, “I said no. It’s, it’s highly sensitive. My relationship with Ivy and… and it’s a sore topic. So just drop it, okay?” But he could tell, it was written all over the shorter man’s face, there was no way in hell Danny was about to give in that easy. Sighing, Steve pinched the bridge of his nose, “If I promise to tell you another time, would you drop it?”

Expression contemplative, Danny nodded, acceding, “You got yourself a deal.”

“Great!” he sarcastically quipped, clapping his hands together. Viridian greens trapped the pair of dark pools under his intense gaze, “You were trained by my father. You have any idea why he was so bothered by that family? Why he didn’t want Mary around them?”

The native met Steve’s penetrating gaze, uncertainty in the upturned corner of his compressed lips; he looked like he was mulling a few facts over in his head, searching through the myriad of memories that consisted of conversations with McGarrett Senior. “Honestly,” he slowly drawled out, receiving a sharp nod from Steve and a curious expression from Danny. “I always had a feeling your Dad was jealous of Ivy’s.”

“Jealous?” Steve scoffed at the term, head shaking diminutively in major disbelief, his eyes however, had a sparkle of amusement. “Why would my father be jealous? It doesn’t add up. I can’t— I don’t see it.”

Taking another swig from his beer, Chin retorted, “Can’t you? Look Steve, you don’t know this because you were away and lost contact with your sister, but…Mary looked up to John Winchester. She loved that family like they were her ohana. The moment she turned eighteen, she joined them on the road, choosing to follow John Winchester’s footsteps instead of your father’s orders.”

“Oh yeah, I definitely see it,” Danny lightly commented, looking slightly pissed. “The mere thought of my daughter looking up to Stan instead of me… makes me wanna punch someone. Preferably Stan,” he sneered, the name of his daughter’s stepfather spat out with potent venom.

All of a sudden, his father’s voice resonated in his head – ‘When he was five years old, I asked my
son Steve what he wanted to be when he grew up … I want to be a cop, Dad, like you’ – and yeah, Steve had to admit the possibility that maybe his father was jealous.

She didn’t know how much more of this… situation she could handle; suffice to say, Ivy was extremely close, like barely-any-space-between-thumb-and-forefinger-close, to blowing a gasket.

It’s been eight days.

Eight frickin’ days!

Eight days of being cooped up in enclosed spaces, whether it was a motel room, a restaurant or the Impala; eight days of being treated like she were some china doll, prone to shattering into a gazillion pieces if she were mishandled; eight goddamn days where three pairs of eyes looked at her as though she were an invalid, incapable of looking out for herself or speaking for herself. Eight days of being coddled and babied and locked up – heck, she felt like Cinderella when her step-bitch-of-a-mother trapped her in her room, keeping her away from her Prince and her Happily Ever After.

In fact, Dean and Sam allowing her to venture outside to get nourishment was a damn miracle; and today started with one. The fact that Dean allowed her – key word, ‘allowed!’ she furiously grumbled to herself – to take his Baby out for a spin to get breakfast had Sam gaping at him in surprise and, relieved, Ivy giddily snatched the keys to her salvation and danced her way to the door, more than ready to get the hell out of dodge and breathe in the heavenly fresh air, enjoying her brief moment of independence and freedom – and yeah, she wasn’t exaggerating or being dramatic – when all of a sudden, it all came crashing down and the light at the end of the tunnel extinguished as her happiness was short-lived, all because of four innocuous words that spilled forth from Dean’s lips, “Mary, go with her.”

Dean and Sam discovering Ivy was pregnant changed everything and the eight days which followed was pure hell. Ivy didn’t know who was more surprised at Dean’s announcement, claiming that hunting would be put on hiatus, herself or Sam; either way, she was the only one that put up much of a fight, spending the first three days arguing back and forth with Dean – honestly, she’d have more luck receiving a response from a wall! – and it was an odd change in their usual dynamics for the dissent to be between Dean and Ivy instead of Dean and Sam.

If her brothers were insufferable, suffocating her with their mollycoddling, then Mary was a total nightmare, the mere prospect of spending any time with her an ordeal, such a large contrast when compared to their relationship before the revelation of her being pregnant was out in the open. Mary Ann McGarrett, the Louise to her Thelma, was no more; she was replaced by some obedient minion that took orders from Dean and Sam and completely ignored her wishes. In her head, Ivy took to calling Mary her silent shadow or her annoying Stitch, constantly stuck to her side and barely giving her any space to breathe.

Lips pursed, Ivy ached to punch her best friend in the face when she placed an order for coffee, only to have her pointedly clear her throat, viridian orbs narrowing into slits when her subtle warning went blatantly ignored. Changing tactics, Mary elbowed past the fuming brunette and smiled politely at the barista, substituting Ivy’s heaven in a cup for nettle tea! for crying out loud. Turning to meet her ferocious glare, Mary responded with a smug smirk, “Hetty recommended it. According to her, herbalists and midwives advise pregnant women to drink it.”

Ivy scoffed, her glare of promised murder not receding for a split-second. Of course Hetty
recommended it, and of bloody course her family was participating in hushed conversations about her behind her back. That short imposing woman with a ginormous personality drank nothing but tea, and Ivy guaranteed if somebody cut Hetty open, she wouldn’t bleed crimson, but freaking tea!

Hetty Lange should’ve chosen the career of a tea sommelier instead of Operations Manager for the Office of Special Projects.

The cutting retort Ivy had been prepared to volley at the blonde was promptly swallowed when the annoyingly perky barista squealed, “Oh! You’re pregnant?! How far along are you?”

“Not long enough!” the brunette sneered, her glare never leaving Mary, surprising the barista with her crabby attitude. Brushing past her, Ivy slammed a crisp bill onto the counter, snatched the bag of pastries and stormed out, leaving Mary to offer the barista an apologetic smile and an explanatory “hormones” before grabbing their drinks and rushing out – she wouldn’t put it past Ivy to drive off with the Impala and leave her stranded by the curb. And Mary must have sensed Ivy’s tolerance to be a hairsbreadth away from non-existent, for she kept her mouth shut when the brunette made a short pit-stop to buy a newspaper.

Taking note of the triumphant gleam in the deep pools of chocolate swirls, Mary let out a sigh, “You’re wasting your time, Ives.” Her comment had the soft twinkle turn sharp, impaling her with its icicle-like glare and Mary recoiled at the venom underlining her partner-in-crime, soul sister, best friend’s voice, “Nobody asked you, Stitch!”

Right, how could Mary forget, after nineteen years of friendship and sisterhood and rebelliousness, she got demoted to an extraterrestrial blue koala, and all because for the first time in ever, Mary chose to side against the brunette, never mind her choice was borne out of love and concern. “Call me whatever you want, Ivy. Bottom line, Dean’s gonna say no.”

Feigning ignorance, Ivy rolled the newspaper, folded it in half and gave a nonchalant shrug, “I’ve no idea what you’re talking.”

Skepticism hugged the blonde’s scoff, “Yeah, right. So you’re telling me you didn’t find a possible hunt?” Receiving absolutely no response, Mary pressed her back to the passenger seat and folded her arms, “You’re wasting your time.”

Parking haphazardly in front of the motel the four Hunters decided to take residence in, Ivy furiously pivoted in her seat, browns colliding harshly with greens, “Saving innocent lives is NOT a waste of time, Mary Ann!”

“You don’t get it, do you?” Mary snappishly retorted, also turning in her seat. “What do you think Dean, Sam and I have been doing? We’re trying to protect a life, your baby’s!”

“IT’S NOT YOUR DECISION TO MAKE, NONE OF YOU!” Ivy screamed, the last vestiges of stability having flown out the window. “It’s MY baby! I make the calls here, not you-”

Fist shaking manically overhead, Mary interjected with a sneer, “I’m its aunt! Dean and Sam, uncles! You want to risk the life of your baby’s fine, but not on our watch. So you can make me out as the enemy here, the overbearing shrew; see if I care. As long as you and that baby’s alive and healthy, that’s all I care about!”

Stepping into their room, Ivy ensured she kept her distance from the others, choosing the farthest bed and, huddling into herself, she grudgingly sipped on her bland tea. Mary on the other hand, distributed the coffee – lucky dickheads – and pastries around and joined Dean and Sam, grabbing a book at random and pouring through it. Doe eyes scrutinized them with displeasure, rancor
building up inside her as she proceeded to drink them in.

Dean, who disliked taking advantage of the trust fund under his name and the plethora of valid credit cards Royal munificently supplied each one of them with … Dean, who, if he had no choice but to use Royal’s money, incidents strictly categorized as an emergency – “It’s not my money, Dean. It’s ours. We’re a family!” their uncle constantly rebuked him – he ensured the money was spent frugally, preferring to go all out and carelessly throw money around with the money he won from poker or billiards and the illegal credit cards they had lying around. That very same Dean used a card under his name to buy books, and not just any books, but baby books!

Towers of books surrounded Dean, Sam and Mary – ‘Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy’, ‘Guide to Childbirth’, ‘The Expectant Father’ and many, many more! Heck, Mary was currently reading a book titled ‘The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding’ and the baby-mania was driving Ivy up the damn wall! None of them took her wants, her needs into consideration. Instead, they tossed her disappointed looks and on one memorable incident six days ago, Dean made the mistake of hurling over a book about baby names; suffice to say, Ivy’s reaction taught them a valuable lesson, which is, leave her out of their baby planning – Ivy had ripped the book to shreds and created a huge tantrum that had them fearing her blood pressure.

How were they to know that deep, deep inside, Ivy already picked out a name; that Ivy, despite babies never having been a plan for her future, chose a name for a boy and a girl, years ago? They wouldn’t; because they never asked – the thought never crossed their mind. What infuriated Ivy was their low expectations and frankly insulting opinion of her; that they thought she would irresponsibly put her baby in harm’s way, it hurt in the same level discovering Steve and Catherine together did. It was like Steve breaking up with her all over again.

It was time Ivy took a stand.

Draining the last of her – shudder – nettle tea, Ivy gripped the rolled newspaper and smacked Dean and Sam atop the head with it, grabbing their undivided attention and prompting Mary to emit an exasperated sigh and murmur a “your funeral.”

“Finish eating and pack all this shit up. I’ve found us a case,” Ivy opened the newspaper to the obituary section and spread it right under her brothers’ noses. “So chop-chop! Our latest baddie awaits no one.”

A painfully cynical expression graced Sam’s features as he loudly read the obit on Sophie Carlton’s death and what rankled Ivy most of all was the identical looks on Dean and Mary’s faces that she had grown adept at reading, a look which screamed they too, like her, believed it was something worth looking into, but they stubbornly kept silent, making Ivy feel truly alone – three against one.

“Are you guys seriously okay with letting people die? Lake Manitoc is like, a few hours away, you guys! I really think we should check it out!” Ivy all but whined. Radio silence met her plea. Ivy, however, decided to take a stand, and she wasn’t giving in easily and if she had to resort to drastic measures, then…so be it. “The trail for Dad’s getting colder every fucking day you spend your time reading books in motel rooms-”

“Oh please!” Mary butted in, eyebrows raised in chastisement. “You out of all people know that if Uncle J doesn’t want to be found, he won’t be. The moment we realized he wasn’t in Jericho, you knew he didn’t want us to find him. And until Uncle J does, he won’t show.” Dean donned an expression of reluctant agreement and Sam looked like he was about to begin arguing with Mary when a sudden epiphany struck him and he sought the identical eyes of his twin’s. “Speaking of Dad, you plannin’ on telling him he’s gonna be a grandfather any time soon?” his tone bled with
mockery, knowing the answer before Ivy snarled out a negative.

“Wait, what?” unlike Sam, this was news for Dean and he abruptly stood on his feet to glower at his little sister. “You’re not gonna tell him? Are you out of your mind?!”

Furious, Ivy sneered, “Are you? Use your brains, Dean! This isn’t the kind of news you just leave on the phone, ok? I wanna break it to Dad face-to-face. I’m not gonna leave a voicemail, telling him his daughter got knocked up and is about to be a single mom ‘cause the father has no fucking clue! ‘Cause Steve fucking cheated on me! Lay off!”

Furrowed lines softened and the stubborn set to Dean’s jaw relaxed at Ivy’s prudent reasoning. He gave her a short nod, “Fine. That’s sensible. Dad doesn’t deserve to hear about this over the phone. You’re right.” Joy snuck up on Ivy, her eyes brightening in anticipation, only for Dean to sharply brush a hand through the air, “But, we’re not leaving, Ivy. I’ll call Caleb, tell him to check Lake Manitoc out.”

Three pairs of eyes gauged her for an explosive reaction and Mary cringed, waiting for Ivy’s volatile temper to be unleashed. Lips parted, Ivy offered them a curt inclination of her head, “Okay.”

And in unison, three bemused “okay?” bounced against the walls.

“Yeah. Okay,” the brunette’s expressionless tone had the hair rise on their arms and they cautiously watched her, still expecting more of a fight instead of the obedient okay they received. Taking a deep breath, Ivy squared her shoulders and turned her back on them, putting around the room much to their growing confusion. Hands loaded with a few unceremoniously dumped outfits of hers, it was when Ivy withdrew her duffle bag from underneath one of the beds and shoved her clothes inside did comprehension dawn on them.

Dean flew forward, his hand steadying hers, “What do you think you’re doing?”

“Leaving,” Ivy roughly yanked her hand from his. Not trusting him to empty her belongings, she toted her bag to the adjoining bathroom in order to deposit her washing essentials. Stamping out the urge to slide onto the ground, curl into herself and cry her heart out, Ivy inhaled, exhaled and called forth every ounce of confidence she could muster and stepped out. She honestly wasn’t surprised to find Dean, Sam and Mary blocking her way out.

Spit flying, an incensed Dean snarled, “Like hell you’re leaving!”

Mary stared at her best friend in horror, realizing that their overprotective tendencies succeeded in pushing her, driving her away, “Ivy…”

“What are you gonna do, Dean, HUH?” Totally disregarding the blonde, Ivy angrily shoved herself into her big brother’s personal space, “Lock me up? Force my compliance? You gonna, you gonna handcuff me to the bed when I sleep and have Mary escort me to the bathroom so I don’t make a run for it? You gonna suffocate me more than you already are!? Eyes wild and tears smearing her face, she smacked both fists against Dean’s chest. Tight-lipped, Dean raised both hands up, his palms facing her, genuine sorrow coloring his features. “I can’t take this anymore! I’m pregnant not some senile invalid!”

Attempting to stop Ivy before she ran out, Sam cried out her name.

“Saving people, hunting things, the family business,” Ivy tearfully proclaimed. “What happened to that, huh? When did your priorities change? I get it, I’m pregnant and you’re terrified, you think
I’m not?! I know what I can handle and what I cannot; I know how to protect my baby. I needed you to support me, not smother me. To trust me, respect me. But all you did was judge me, make decisions for me and-and—” unable to continue, Ivy broke into tears, instinctively melting into the familiar embrace, clutching onto her twin as though her were his lifeline.

He tearfully mumbled apologies into his twin’s hair, shiny eyes capturing Dean and Mary, both their eyes also suspiciously moist. “We’re sorry, Ives,” Sam murmured, carding a hand through her hair. “You’re right. I’ve been such a hypocrite. I hated it when I was forced to follow orders and I turn around and do the same to you. I’m so sorry.”

“You know what?” clapping his hands together, Dean took a stab at lightening the ambience. Approaching the hormonal brunette, he clasped both shoulders and pulled her into a tight embrace, “Maybe some fresh air is exactly what we need. Let’s check Lake Manitoc out, huh?”

Ivy’s responding smile put the sun to shame.

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DEVINS/BARR HOUSE

LAKE MANITOC, WISCONSIN

A lake haunting…how wonderful!

It didn’t take long for the pieces of the convoluted puzzle to connect until a complete picture was produced. In fact, the town gave Ivy the heebie-jeebies; the four of them spent five days on the Peter Sweeney case and during the entirety of their stay, a haunted feeling resonated through her and for some confounding reason, the water called to her.

At first, arriving in town, it was a feeble echo when she first approached the body of water Sophie Carlton disappeared in. The sensation, however, increased after Will Carlton drowned in a sink… of all things. But it was the moment Bill Carlton was taken by Peter Sweeney’s ghost, did Ivy get blasted by an aberrant onslaught of insight that had her gasping in amalgamated confused fear. Not only did she somehow, spontaneously realize the spirit wouldn’t rest until it claimed its last victim, Sheriff Jake Devins, but as her eyes intensely sought the water for a sign of Carlton Sr., a grotesquely decayed face intently stared back, dark eyes dull and opaque and completely focused on her.

Terrified something was seriously wrong with her and knowing too much about the supernatural to know that what just happened wasn’t normal, Ivy chose to keep certain revelations to herself. When the Sheriff blackmailed them to leave town, glad for an ally, Ivy backed Dean up when he claimed the job wasn’t over, which culminated with them rescuing Andrea Barr from getting drowned in her tub and to where they currently stood, a red bicycle unearthed for all to see, shovels abandoned and four pairs of eyes staring at the barrel of a gun, listening to the Sheriff as he attempted to worm his way out of a murder accusation, lying to his daughter through his teeth and labeling the four Hunters insane liars.

That’s when Ivy heard it… the call: ‘come play with me … come play with me ’, the sinister voice of a young boy echoing ominously in the air, beckoning little Lucas from the safety of his house and into the dangerous depths of the lake, his body, like all of Peter’s previous victims, disappearing entirely from view.

“Don’t!” Ivy hissed, throwing her arm out and allowing it to slam against Jake’s chest, stopping
him from his noble attempt to sacrifice his life for that of his grandson’s. For all his incessant claims that they were speaking crazy, Jake could see reason with such startling clarity, desperation enveloping him as his wild eyes pinned Ivy in place, holding her gaze with an intensity that shook her, “You said it yourself. I can’t believe I’m saying this but, I believe you. If the only way to save my grandson’s life is by trading mine, then I’ll damn well do it!”

She could see, in Dean, Sam and Mary’s eyes that, while they despised the mere thought of accepting the easy solution Jake provided them with, it was the quickest way to save Lucas before he drowned. They didn’t like it; they were Hunters, they saved people, protected them, always came up with solutions that didn’t include collateral damage… but they were at a loss. Either the spirit remains, haunting the lake, continuing it’s killing spree until Jake’s inevitable death, or…or! they give the man their blessing, watch him sacrifice himself and leave the death count to just one. Unless… unless—

Once again, deep swirls of chocolate collided with the body of water, assessing its immensity, the decomposed face and dark-veined eyes glaring back at her and her mind was made.

“What are you doing?” Mary hissed, prompting Dean and Sam’s gaze to flicker onto her, eyes widening at her discarded leather jacket on the ground. She lifted an eyebrow, giving them a look that screamed how stupid she thought they were, “What does it look like I’m doing? I’m going in there.”

Shaggy brown hair violently whipped the air as Sam furiously shook his head, “Are you crazy?”

“We don’t have time to argue!” Ivy snapped, shoving Jake backwards for good measure, not trusting him to sneak off to the lake and allow himself to get dragged down. “Lucas doesn’t have time, okay? The more we argue, the less time Lucas has! We—” and here, she gestured at the four of them, “—have nothing to do with Sweeney’s death, meaning we’re immune to this crusade of his he has going on. We find Lucas, get out and deal with the spirit once we’re far away from this godforsaken lake.”

Detecting the considerable merit in Ivy’s plan and unable to come up with a safer way to get the kid out, Dean nodded, “Fine. Sam, Mary and I’ll go—”

“For fuck’s sake, Dean! I can swim; I’m a damn good swimmer! I spent nineteen summers in an island completely surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, if I can surf through that, I can swim through this,” the first female Winchester sneered, hand viciously gesturing at the lake. Predicting the irritatingly predictable argument Dean’s parted lips were about to make, she snappishly cut in, “Besides, pregnant women are recommended to take up swimming as exercise, so take that!”

An air of resignation engulfed the other three and they grudgingly accepted Ivy had won another argument. Before another weak comment could be made, Ivy ran headfirst into the lake, plunging into its depths, eyes open and frantically searching. At first, she sensed her brothers and Mary’s presence with her but after a while, Ivy started to lose track of time and she began to fear for Lucas’ life. Her instincts took over and she screamed – bubbles emanating from her mouth, her voice completely inaudible: “Come to me! Where are you!?” And to her immeasurable surprise, a powerful rush of water came her way, encircling her and when it finally dissipated, a small, decomposed body lay before her. “Oh my God!”

“IVY!” a collective screaming of her name met her ears the instant her head broke the surface, dragging Peter Sweeney’s frankly nauseating and moldy body in tow. “IVY, thank God!” Dean’s yell of relief cut through the air and he swam toward her, green orbs suspiciously wet and not from the lake. Confused, she cocked her head and allowed him to strangle her in a desperate embrace while also ensuring her grip never left the moldy souvenir; Sam and Mary were quick to join their
side, though their eyes were fixated in confusion at the body.

“Dean wha-” shaking her head, Ivy began tearing up, “Dean, you guys, I couldn’t find Lucas-”

“He’s fine!” Dean gruffly snapped, his voice harsher than he thought it’d be. “I found him. He’s with his mother and grandfather. Ivy, you’ve been down there for nearly twenty minutes! I thought you, we thought you were…” he trailed off, choking on the dreaded word. Frowning in utmost confusion, Ivy gasped, “What? No, I’ve been gone for a- for a minute, maybe two…”

A tremor in her voice, Mary asked, “Ives, whatchu got there?”

“Oh. I found Sweeney.”

Watching as her brothers salted and burned Peter Sweeney’s corpse, putting the vengeful spirit to rest, Ivy chose not to divulge in the inexplicable happenings that took place under the lake, not even the frightening fact that whilst down there, she had been able to breathe normally, not experiencing shortness of breath for even a moment or the need to hold her breath for the entirety of the twenty minutes she remained underwater.

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UNNAMED TASK FORCE HEADQUARTERS

Belatedly registering the late hour, Steve dropped the pen, deposited the paperwork into the desk drawer and dragged a hand down his weary face. A major downside to being a leader of the Governor’s Task Force was the irritating paperwork that came with it; Danny, Kono and Chin took off hours ago and right about now, the thought of his house and the comfortable bed waiting for him, beckoning him, was an immensely welcoming one.

Smothering a yawn, he flicked off the lights and closed the door to his office, more than ready to leave, when his sharp gaze landed on the source of light in the darkened hall that came from Royal’s office. Deciding to check on his honorary uncle, Steve followed the light and knocked lightly on the door only entering once a muffled “Enter” echoed from within. He walked in to find Royal hanging a framed canvas on the wall behind his desk, depicting an oil painting portrait, the achingly familiar gorgeous brunette in the middle enlightening him that the two men on either side of her were her brothers, Dean and Sam.

“Nice painting,” he remarked, stepping into the room.

A jovial, “Steve!” resonated in the room, the older man beaming at him from over his shoulder, eyes crinkled in a smile, “Give me a sec and I’ll be right with you.” Straightening the portrait, Royal rubbed his hands together and turned around, providing Steve with his undivided attention. “What can I do for you, son?”

Steve however, barely acknowledged the other man, his sharp eyes taking in the peculiar décor of the billionaire’s office, suddenly comprehending why his office took the longest to renovate, Nova and her crew having departed the premises that afternoon. The walls were painted a calming powder-blue, the ceiling an ombré of dark to light gray, the most noteworthy observation that instantly captured the Navy SEAL’s attention the smattering of flushmount ceiling lights that subtly shaped a pentagram. His eyebrows knit together as his eyes continued to peruse his surroundings, taking in the assortment of beaded rosaries that randomly littered the room and coming to an abrupt halt at the pure bronze holy water front, imbedded in the wall in the form of a decorative crucifix and his eyebrows flew upwards.
Chuckling, Royal clapped Steve’s shoulder. “I’m a religious guy,” he uttered by way of explanation, radiating utter nonchalance as though having a pure bronze holy water front usually found in churches in a man’s working place was completely normal.

“That’s not actually holy water, is it?” Steve had to ask, curiously examining the water in the basin. But all he got was a mysterious smirk. Rolling his eyes, Steve hesitantly inquired, “Don’t you think all this—” he waved a hand around the room, “—is a bit too much.”

Patting his back in a camaraderie fashion, Royal tucked his hands in pant pockets, “You should take pointers, Steven. One day, you’ll realize the importance of having a decorated room, every excruciating detail crucial. Then remember me and this very moment.” Mischief glimmered in the pools of sapphires, prompting the feeling of uncertainty to rise in Steve, not knowing whether or not the billionaire was pulling his leg.

“Right, I’ll bear that in mind, Roy,” he dryly retorted. There was a tugging in his peripheral vision and he felt a magnetic pull, forcing his eyes to flicker towards the portrait and devour the still-form of Ivy, her luciferous and captivating smile producing a lump in his throat and he swiftly looked away, clearing his throat awkwardly, lifting his gaze to meet Royal’s; he suppressed a shiver upon seeing the grin on his handsome face and the knowing glint in his orbs that looked suspiciously smug.

Before any words could be traded however, vibrations against the desk pervaded the air; viridians and sapphires traveled the length of the room, only stopping on the cellphone, Ivy’s smiling face flashing on the screen. If possible, Royal’s smile widened and his eyes turned fond; Steve on the other hand, quickly excused himself and left headquarters, stubbornly ignoring the sudden sensation in the pit of his stomach, squirming, yearning to hear her silvery voice and infectious laughter.

Catherine! He loves Catherine! – was the mantra revolving in the recess of his mind.

“Well, well, well. And here I thought you were avoiding your favorite uncle,” Royal cheekily uttered upon accepting the call. “Three weeks you don’t call, you don’t check in, I have to hear about your… situation from Mary—”

His reproach was sadly cut short by an emotional, “Uncle Roy…”

The dolorous quality palpable in her tone and the hint of tears choking her words had his heart stutter in his chest, fear gripping him, and he felt as though he had been doused completely in ice-cold water. “Ivy, what is it?”

“I-I think, I think something’s wrong with me. U-uncle Ro-Roy, I-I’m scared!”

Chapter End Notes

Face-Claims:
- Ivy Winchester – Nina Dobrev
- Steve McGarrett – Alex O’Loughlin
- Dean Winchester – Jensen Ackles
- Sam Winchester – Jared Padalecki
- Mary Ann McGarrett – Taryn Manning
- Royal Van Dyne – Charles Mesure
-Danny Williams – Scott Caan
-Kono Kalakaua – Grace Park
-Chin Ho Kelly – Daniel Dae Kim
-Nova Azevedo – Gracie Carvalho
-Joe White – Terry O’Quinn
-Wade Gutches – David Keith

End Notes

Don’t really have much to say except that this is my latest masterpiece that came to me and just wouldn’t go away. I hope you enjoy it, and I’ll try and update it weekly.

Ivy Winchester’s face-claim is Nina Dobrev! ;)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!